Miller's Church History

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00b Preface

Miller's Church History
Short Papers on Church History

by Andrew Miller.

Introduction

Preface

As all we know of history comes to us through books, I have examined, with some care, the authors which are most esteemed in this country and considered the most reliable. And although there is frequent reference to volume and page, this by no means indicates all that has been gathered from those histories. It would be impossible to say how many thoughts, words, and sentences, are interwoven with my own. The references have been generally given, not so much to verify what has been written, as to induce the reader to study them or whatever works may now be available as he may have opportunity. The materials are so varied and abundant, that the difficulty lies in making a selection, so as to maintain a continued historic line, and yet leave out what would now be neither profitable nor interesting.

Some of my earliest and valued friends, such as Greenwood, Milman, and Craigie Robertson, conclude their histories about the fourteenth century; Waddington, D'Aubigne, and Scott, about the middle of the sixteenth; and Wylie closes his history of Protestantism with its establishment under the reign of William and Mary. Dr. M'Crie's special histories and biographies are extremely valuable; and so is the history of Protestantism in France by Felice, the history of the Reformation in the Low Countries by Brandt, the brief history of the Middle Ages and the Reformation by Hardwick, and also Cunningham's history of the Scotch Church; but good general histories from the early part of the sixteenth to the present century are indeed scarce.

I have aimed at more than mere history. It has been my desire to connect with it Christ and His Word, so that the reader may receive the truth and blessing, through grace, to his soul. And it will be observed that I commence with the Lord's revealed purpose concerning His Church in Matthew 16. Other parts of the New Testament have been carefully examined as to the first planting of the Church, but its actual history I have endeavoured to trace in the light of the addresses to the seven Churches in Asia. This, of course, must be in a very general way, as I have been desirous to give the reader as broad a view of ecclesiastical history as possible, consistently with my plan and brevity.

May the Lord's blessing accompany the volume that now goes forth.

LONDON - ANDREW MILLER

00c Intro

Introduction

Many of our readers, we know, have neither the time nor the opportunity for reading the voluminous works that have been written from time to time on the history of the church. Still, that which has been the dwelling-place of God for the last eighteen hundred years, must be a subject of the deepest interest to all His children. We speak not now of the church as it is often represented in history, but as it is spoken of in scripture. There it is seen in its true spiritual character, as the body of Christ, and as the "habitation of God through the Spirit." (Ephesians 2)

We must always bear in mind, when reading what is called a history of the church, that, from the days of the apostles until now, there have been two distinct and widely different, classes of persons in the professing church: the merely nominal, and the real - the true, and the false. This was predicted. "For I know this," says the apostle, "that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20) His Second Epistle to Timothy is also full of warnings and directions as to the various forms of evil which were then but too plainly manifest. A rapid change for the worse had taken place from the time that his first epistle was written. He exhorts the truly godly to walk in separation from those who had a form of godliness, but who denied the power thereof. "From such," he says, "turn away." Such exhortations are always needed, always applicable - as much now as then. We cannot separate ourselves from Christendom without giving up Christianity but we can and ought to separate ourselves from what the apostle calls "vessels to dishonour." The promise is, that, "if a man . . . purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

It is interesting - though painfully so - to mark the difference on this point between the First and the Second Epistles to Timothy. In the first, the church is spoken of according to its true character and blessed position on the earth. There it is seen as the house of God - the depository and display of truth to man. In the Second Epistle, it is spoken of as what it had become through the failure of those into whose hands it had been entrusted.

Take one passage from each Epistle in illustration. 1. "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, . . . the pillar and ground of the truth." 2. "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour, and some to dishonour." Here all is changed - sadly changed. In place of divine order there is hopeless confusion; in place of *"the* house of God, the pillar and ground of truth," there is *"a* great house" - practically "the mystery of iniquity." In place of the house being kept according to the will of God and suitable for Him, it was arranged and ordered according to the will of man, and for his own personal advantage and exaltation. Thus early had the evils, which have been the sin and the disgrace of Christendom ever since, made their appearance. But this was overruled for good. The Spirit of God, in great mercy, has supplied us with the plainest directions for the darkest day of the church's history, and has pointed out the way of truth for the worst of times; so that we are left without excuse. Times and circumstances change, not the truth of God.

The Mistakes of Historians in General

Some historians, it is sorrowful to say, have not taken into account this sad mixture of evil vessels with the good - of true Christians and false. They have not themselves been spiritually minded men. Hence they have rather made it their chief object to record the many unchristian and wicked ways of mere professors. They have dwelt at great length, and with great minuteness, on the heresies that have troubled the church, on the abuses that have disgraced it, and on the controversies that have distracted it. Much rather would we endeavour to trace, all down through the long dark pages of history, *the silver line of God's grace in true Christians;* though at times the alloy so predominates that the pure ore is scarcely perceptible.

God has never left Himself without a witness. He has had His loved and cherished though hidden ones in all ages and in all places. No eye but His could see the seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal, in the days of Ahab and Jezebel. And tens of thousands, we doubt not, even from the darkest ages of Christianity, will be found at last in the "glorious church," which Christ will present to Himself, on the long-looked-for day of His nuptial joy. Many precious stones from the rubbish of the "middle ages" will reflect His grace and glory on that crowning day.

Blessed thought! even now it fills the soul with ecstasy and delight. Lord, hasten that happy day for Thine own name's sake!

The truly godly are instinctively humble. They are generally retiring, and for the most part but little known. There is no humility so deep and real as that which the knowledge of grace produces. Such lowly and hidden ones find but a small place on the historic page. But the insinuating or zealous heretic, and the noisy or visionary fanatic, are too clamorous to escape notice. Hence it is that the historian has so carefully recorded the foolish principles and the evil practices of such men.

We will now turn for a little, and take a general view of the first part of our subject, namely

The Seven Churches of Asia

These seven Epistles, so far, will guide our future studies. We believe they are not only *historical,* but also *prophetical.* Doubtless they are strictly historical, and this fact must be allowed its full weight in studying their prophetic character. Seven churches actually existed in the seven cities here named, and in the condition here described. But it is equally clear, that they were intended, by Him who knows the end from the beginning, to bear a prophetic meaning, as well as a historical application. They were selected from amongst many, and so arranged and described as to foreshadow what was to come. To limit their application to the seven literal churches then in Asia would be to mar the unity of the Apocalypse, and to lose the promised blessing. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." The character of the whole book is prophetic and symbolic. The second and third chapters are no exception to this. They are introduced by the Lord Himself in their mystic character. "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

The **number seven** is characteristic. It marks a complete circle of the thoughts or ways of God as to time. Hence the seven days of the week - the seven feasts of Israel - the seven parables of the kingdom of heaven in mystery. It is often used throughout this book, which takes up Jew, Gentile, and the church of God, as responsible on the earth. Hence we have seven churches, seven stars, seven candlesticks, seven angels, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials or the seven last plagues. Only in chapters 2 & 3 is the church seen as responsible on the earth, and the object of divine government. From chapter 4-19 she is seen in heaven. Then she appears in full manifested glory with her Lord. "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

In the body of the book, especially from chapter 6, the Jews and Gentiles come before us, and are judicially dealt with from the throne of God in heaven. But this will not take place till after the church - the true bride of the Lamb - is caught up to heaven, and the merely nominal corrupt thing finally rejected.

The **threefold division** of the book, as given by the Lord Himself, makes the order of events quite plain, and ought to have immense weight as a principle of interpretation in the study of the Apocalypse. In chapter Rev 1:19 He gives us the contents and plan of the whole book: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter," - or, literally, "after these things." "The things which thou hast seen" refer to the revelation of Jesus as seen by John in chapter 1; "the things which are," to the time-condition of the professing body as presented in chapters 2 & 3. "The things which shall be hereafter" are from chapter 4 to the end. The third division begins with chapter 4. A door is opened in heaven, and the prophet is called to come up. "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter," or "after these things." It is the same phrase in chapter Rev 4:1 as in chapter Rev 1:19. The things which are, and the things which shall be *after these things,* cannot possibly be concurrent. The one must end before the other begins.

When the number seven is used, not in a literal but in a symbolic sense, it always signifies completeness. It is evidently thus used in chapters 2 & 3. There were other churches, we know, besides those named; but seven are selected and associated to present a complete picture of what would afterwards be developed in the church's history on earth. The more important moral elements which then existed, the Lord foresaw, would reappear in course of time. Thus we have a sevenfold or divinely perfect picture of the successive states of the professing church during the entire period of her responsibility on the earth.

We will now take a rapid glance at the outline of the seven churches, and give a general idea of the different periods in history to which they apply.

Outline of the Seven Churches

Ephesus. In Ephesus the Lord detects the root of all declension. "Thou hast left thy first love." It is threatened with the removal of the candlestick unless there be repentance. *Period* - from the apostolic age to the close of the second century.

Smyrna. The message of Ephesus is general, to Smyrna it is specific. And though it applied at that time to the assembly there, it shadowed forth, in the most striking way the repeated persecutions through which the church passed under the heathen emperors. Yet God may have used the power of the world to arrest the progress of evil in the church. *Period* - from the second century to Constantine.

Pergamos. Here we have the establishment of Christianity by Constantine as the religion of the State. Instead of persecuting the Christians, he patronized them. From that moment the downward course of the church is rapid. Her unholy alliance with the world proved her saddest and deepest fall. It was then that she lost the true sense of her relationship to Christ in heaven, and of her character on earth as a pilgrim and a stranger. *Period* - from the beginning of the fourth to the seventh century, when popery was established.*

Thyatira. In Thyatira we have the popery of the middle ages, Jezebel-like, practising all kinds of wickedness, and persecuting the saints of God, under the disguise of religious zeal. Nevertheless there was a God-fearing remnant in Thyatira;, whom the Lord comforts with the bright hope of His coming, and with the promise of power over the nations, when He Himself shall reign. But the word of exhortation to the remnant is, "That which ye have already, *hold fast till I come." Period* - from the establishment of popery to the Lord's coming. It goes on to the end, but is characterised by the dark ages.

Sardis. Here we see the Protestant part of Christendom that which followed the great work of the Reformation. The foul features of popery disappear, but the new system itself has no vitality. "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." But there are true saints in these lifeless systems, and Christ knows them all. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." *Period* - from the eventful sixteenth century onwards. Protestantism after the Reformation.

Philadelphia. The church of Philadelphia presents a feeble remnant, but they are faithful to the *word* and *name* of the Lord Jesus. That which characterised them was keeping the word of Christ's patience, and not denying His name. Their condition was not marked by any outward display of power nor of anything externally great, but of close, intimate personal communion with Himself. He is in their midst as the Holy One and the True, and is represented as having charge of the house. He has "the key of David." The treasures of the prophetic word are unlocked for those inside. They are also in the sympathies of His patience, and in the expectation of His coming. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." *Period* - especially from an early part of this century but activity on all hands is now rapidly developing the last phases of Christendom.

*The title "Pope" was first adopted by Hyginus in 139; and Pope Boniface III induced Phocas, Emperor of the East, to confine it to the prelates of Rome in 606. By the connivance of Phocas also the pope's supremacy over the Christian church was established-*Haydn's Dictionary of Dates.*

Laodicea. In Laodicea we have lukewarmness - indifference - latitudinarianism; but with high pretensions, a boastful spirit, and great self-sufficiency. This is the last state of that which bears the name of Christ on the earth. But alas! it is intolerable to Him. Its final doom has come. Having separated every true believer from the corruptions of Christendom to Himself, He spues it out of His mouth. That which ought to have been sweet to His taste has become nauseous, and it is cast off for ever. *Period* - beginning after Philadelphia, but especially the closing scene.

Having thus taken a general view of the seven churches, we would now endeavour, through the Lord's help, briefly to trace these different periods of the church's history. And we purpose examining more fully, each of the seven Epistles as we go along, that we may ascertain what light is shed on the different periods by these addresses; and how far the facts of church history illustrate the scripture history of these two chapters. May the Lord guide for the refreshment and blessing of His own beloved ones.

01 The Rock Foundation

Chapter 1

The Rock Foundation

In commencing the study of any subject, it is well to know its beginnings - the original intention or plan, and the first step in its history. These we have in the clearest, fullest way, as to the church, in holy scripture. There we have not only the original intention, but the plans and specifications of the great Builder, and the early history of the work under His own hand. The foundation had been laid, and the work was going on; but the Lord Himself was still the only Builder: therefore, up to this time all was real and perfect.

At the close of the Jewish dispensation the Lord added the saved remnant of Israel to the newly formed church: but, at the close of the present or Christian dispensation, He will take all who believe in His name up to heaven in glorified bodies. Not one belonging to the church will be added to the congregation of millennial saints. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1Th 4:16-17) This will be the happy close of the history of the church on earth the true spouse of Christ: the dead raised, the living changed, and all, in their bodies of glory, caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we have the entire limits of the church defined, and the whole period of her history before us. But we return to the dawn of her day on the earth.

Under the figure of a building the Lord first introduces the subject of the church. And so infinitely precious are His words, that we may adopt them as the text or motto of its whole history. They have sustained the hearts and the hopes of His people in all ages, and in all circumstances; and they will ever be the stronghold of faith. What can be more blessed, more assuring, more peace-giving, than these words? **"UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH; AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.** "

In Matthew 16 the Lord questions His disciples as to the sayings of men concerning Himself. This leads to the confession of Peter, and also to the gracious revelation of the Lord concerning His church. It may be well to transfer the whole conversation to our pages - it all bears so directly on our subject.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Mat 16:13-18)

Here we have the two main things connected with the proposed building - the Rock-foundation, and the divine Builder. **"Upon this rock I** will build My church." But who is, or what is, "this rock"? some may inquire. Clearly, we answer, the confession of Peter; not Peter himself, as the apostasy teaches. True, he was a stone - a living stone in the new temple, "Thou art Peter" - thou art a stone. But the Father's revelation, by Peter, of the glory of the Person of His Son, is the foundation on which the church is built - "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But the glory of the Person of the Son in resurrection is the unveiled truth here. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Immediately on the confession by Peter, the Lord intimates His intention to build His church, and asserts its eternal security. "Upon this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

He Himself, the fountain of life, could not be conquered by death; but, in dying as the great Substitute for sinners, He triumphed over death and the grave, and is alive for evermore, as He said to His apostle John after His resurrection: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev 1:18) What majestic, what triumphant words are these! They are the words of a conqueror - of One who has power; but of power over the gates of hades - the place of separate spirits. The keys - symbol of authority and power - hang at His girdle. The stroke of death may fall upon a Christian, but the sting is gone. It comes as a messenger of peace to conduct the weary pilgrim home to eternal rest. Death is no longer the *master,* but the *servant* of the Christian. "For all things are yours whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or *death,* or things present, or things to come; all are yours: and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1Co 3:21-23)

The Person of Christ, then, the Son of the living God - in His resurrection-glory - is the foundation, the solid and imperishable foundation, on which the church is built. As alive from the dead He communicates life in resurrection to all who are built on Him as the true foundation-stone. This is plain from what Peter says in his first Epistle. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone .... ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." And further down in the same chapter he says, "Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious," or "an honour." (See margin.) May both reader and writer note well these two most precious truths in connection with our "Rock-foundation" - divine life and divine preciousness. These are communicated to, and become the possession of, all who put their trust in Christ. "To *whom* coming," not to *what* coming; it is the Person of Christ we come to, and have to do with. His life - life in resurrection - becomes ours. From that moment He is our life. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone .... ye also, as lively *[living]* stones, are built up a spiritual house." Christ's own life, as the risen Man, and all that He is heir to is ours. Oh, wondrous, marvellous, blessed truth! Who would not desire, above all things, this life, and this life beyond the power of death - the gates of hades? Eternal victory is stamped on the risen life of Christ, it can never more be tested, and this is the believer's life.

But there is more than *life* for every living stone in this spiritual temple. There is also Christ's *preciousness.* "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious;" literally, "the preciousness." That is, just as the life of Christ becomes ours when we believe in Him, so does His preciousness. The principle in both is the same. The life may be viewed as our capacity to enjoy; and the preciousness, as our title to possess our inheritance on high. His honours, titles, dignities, privileges, possessions, glories, are ours - all ours in Him. "To them that believe He is the preciousness." O wondrous thought! "He loved the church and gave Himself for it." Such then is our Rock-foundation, and such the blessedness of all who are on the Rock. Like Jacob of old, when a pilgrim and a stranger he rested on the stone in the desert, the whole panorama of heaven's riches in grace and glory passed before him. (Genesis 28)

Christ the Only Builder of His Church

But Christ is also the Builder of His church. The building against which no craft or power of the enemy can ever prevail is Christ's own work, though we read of other builders. **"Upon this Rock** I will build My church." It is well to be clear on this point, so that we may not confound what *man* builds with what Christ builds. There must be the greatest confusion of mind, both as to the truth of God, and the present state of Christendom, unless this distinction is seen. Nothing is more important to note here than that Christ is the only Builder of His church; though Paul and Apollos, and all true evangelists, are preachers by whom sinners believe. The Lord's work in the souls of believers is perfect. It is a real, spiritual, personal work. Through His grace in their hearts they come to Himself, as unto a living stone, and are built upon Him who is risen from among the dead. They have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Such are the living stones with which the Lord builds His holy temple; and the gates of hell can never prevail against it. Thus Peter himself, and all the apostles, and all true believers, are built up a spiritual house. When Peter speaks of this building in his First Epistle, he says nothing of himself as a builder. Here Christ is the Builder. It is His work, and His *only. "I* will build My church," He says.

Let us now see from the word of God what man builds, what materials he uses, and the way he goes to work. In 1 Corinthians 3 and 2 Timothy 2 we have these things brought before us. "A great house" is raised by human instrumentality: which, in a certain sense, is also the church, and the house of God: as in 1Ti 3:15 we read of "the house of God, which is the church of the living God." It is also spoken of as Christ's house in Hebrews 3, "whose house we are." But the house soon became sadly corrupted through human infirmity and positive wickedness. The authority of God's word by many was set aside, and man's will became supreme. The effect of human philosophy on the simple institutions of Christ was soon painfully manifest. But wood, hay, and stubble, can never be "fitly framed together" with gold, silver, and precious stones. The house became great in the world; like the mustard tree, in the branches of which many find a convenient lodging. Connection with the "great house" gives man a status in the world, in place of being like the Master, despised and rejected. The archbishop stands next to royalty. But the professing church is not only outwardly great, it is most pretentious, and seeks to put the stamp of God on its own unhallowed work. This is its greatest wickedness, and the source of its blindness, confusion, and worldliness.

Paul, as one chosen of the Lord to do His work, laid the foundation of "God's building" in Corinth, and others built upon it. But they did not all build with divine materials. The right foundation was laid, and every man was to take heed how he builded thereon. In connection with the true foundation, some might build **gold, silver, and precious stones, and others wood, hay, and stubble.** That is, some might teach sound doctrine, and look for living faith in all who applied for communion: others might teach unsound doctrine, and receive into the fellowship of the church persons in whom was no faith - the mere outward observance of ordinances taking the place of faith and eternal life. Here man's instrumentality, responsibility, and failure came in. Nevertheless, the builder himself may be saved, having faith in Christ, though his work is destroyed.

But there is another and a worse class of builders, who corrupt the temple of the Lord, and are themselves destroyed. We give, for the convenience of the reader, the entire passage Nothing can be plainer. "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire.... If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." (Verses 10-17)

We may further observe on the Lord's words, "upon this Rock I will build My church," that He had not begun to build it yet: He is telling them what He is going to do. He does not say, I have built it, or I am building it, but I *will* build it, and this He began to do at Pentecost.

But there is another truth most intimately connected with the history of the church, and linked up with its condition and character, on the earth, that we must notice, before proceeding with its actual history. We refer to the truth contained in the expression,

The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven

This leads to the "great house" - already referred to - of outward profession. At the same time we must bear in mind that though intimately connected, the kingdom of heaven and the great house are quite distinct. In title the world belongs to the King. "The field is the world." His servants are to go on sowing. In result we have "a great house," or Christendom.*

{*The terms "church," "a kingdom of heaven," and "great house," are scriptural, and somewhat different in their meaning as used by the Lord and His apostles. The term "my church," as used by the Lord, can only embrace true and living members. The primary thought in the expression "kingdom of heaven," surely refers to the *authority* of the ascended Lord. And all who profess subjection to Him are owned as in the kingdom. In the "great house" we see the evil, which had crept into the professing body through the failure of man, in *activity, so* that in result it is co-extensive with the kingdom of heaven and the professing church. But there is another term in constant use which is not found in scripture-Christendom. It is an ecclesiastical term, and originally meant all who were christened, or those portions of the world in which Christianity prevails, in distinction from heathen or Mahometan lands. But now it is used synonymously with the other three terms already considered. In a general way the four terms are used interchangeably, though originally different in their meaning and application. But where is it that there is not confusion?}

But when all that which is merely nominal in Christendom shall be swept away by judgment, the kingdom will be established in power and glory. This will be the millennium.

While still speaking to Peter about the church, the Lord added, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." The church as built by Christ, and the kingdom of heaven as opened by Peter, are widely different things. It is one of the great but common mistakes of Christendom, to use the terms interchangeably as if they meant the same thing. And theological writers in all ages, from assuming as a basis that they are the same, have written in the most confused way, both as to the church and the kingdom. The expression is *dispensational,* just as the similar phrase, "the kingdom of God," is *moral.* But unless we have some acquaintance with the dispensational ways of God, we can never rightly divide His word. That which Christ Himself builds, and that which man *instrumentally,* by means, it may be, of preaching and baptizing, must not be confounded. The church which is Christ's body is built upon the confession that He is the Son of the living God, glorified in resurrection. Every truly converted soul has to do with Christ Himself before it can have anything to say to the church. The kingdom is a wider thing, and takes in every baptized person - the whole scene of Christian profession, whether true or false.

Christ does not say to Peter that He will give him the keys of the church or the keys of heaven. Had He done so, there might have been some show of reason for the evil system of popery. But He merely says, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" - *i.e.* of the new dispensation. Keys, it has been said, are not for building temples, but for opening doors; and the Lord honoured Peter to open the door of the kingdom first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. (Acts 2) But the language of Christ about His church is of another order. It is simple, beautiful, emphatic, and unmistakable. "My church." What depth, what fulness there is in these words: "My church!" When the heart is in fellowship with Christ about His church, there will be an apprehension of His affections towards it, which we have no power of expressing. As it is, we love to linger over these two words, 'My church!' but who can speak of the measure of Christ's heart that is therein revealed? Again, think of these other two words "This rock." As if He had said, The glory of My Person, and the power of My life in resurrection, form the solid foundation of "My church." And again, "I will build." Thus we see in these seven words, that everything is in Christ's own hands, as "to the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

The Opening of the Kingdom of Heaven

The administration of the kingdom the Lord, in an especial manner, committed to Peter, as we see in the early chapters of the Acts. The term is taken from the Old Testament. (See Dan. 2 & 7) In chapter 2 we have the kingdom; in chapter 7 we have the King. The phrase, kingdom of heaven, occurs only in the Gospel of Matthew, where the evangelist writes chiefly for Israel.

The bringing in of the kingdom of heaven in power and glory on the earth, in the Person of the Messiah, was the natural expectation of every godly Jew. John the Baptist, as the Lord's forerunner, came preaching, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. But, in place of the Jews receiving their Messiah, they rejected and crucified Him; consequently the kingdom, according to Jewish expectations, was set aside. Nevertheless, it was introduced in another form. When the rejected Messiah ascended to heaven, and took His place at God's right hand, triumphant over every foe, the kingdom of heaven began. Now the king is in heaven, and as Daniel says, "the heavens do rule," though not openly. And from the time that He ascended until He return, it is the kingdom in *mystery.* (Matt. 13) When He comes back again in power and great glory, it will be the kingdom in *manifestation.*

The new economy Peter was privileged to open to both Jew and Gentile. This he did in his address to the Jews, Acts 2, and in his address to the Gentiles, Acts 10. But again we would draw attention to the fact, that the church, or the assembly of God, and the kingdom of heaven, are not the same thing. Let us be clear, in starting, as to this fundamental point. The identifying the two things has produced great confusion of thought and may be viewed as the origin of Puseyism, popery, and every human system in Christendom. The following remarks on "the tare-field," from a recent publication, bear directly on this subject, though they refer to a later period than the early chapters of the Acts.*

{**Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew.* By W. Kelly.}

The Parable of the Tares

"**Mat 13:24-25**. 'Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way' - exactly what is become of the profession of Christ There are two things necessary for the inroad of evil among Christians. The first is the unwatchfulness of the Christians themselves. They get into a careless state, they sleep, and the enemy comes and sows tares. This began at an early epoch in Christendom. We find the germs even in the Acts of the Apostles, and still more so in the Epistles. 1 Thessalonians is the first inspired Epistle that the Apostle Paul wrote; and the second was written shortly after. And yet he tells them that the mystery of iniquity was already at work; that there were other things to follow, such as the apostasy and the man of sin, and that when the lawlessness should be fully manifest (instead of working secretly), then the Lord would put an end to the lawless one and all concerned. The mystery of iniquity seems akin to the sowing of tares spoken of here. Some time after 'when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit' when Christianity began to make rapid strides in the earth 'then appeared the tares also.' But it is evident the tares were sown almost immediately after the good seed. No matter what the work of God is, Satan is always close upon its heels. When man was made, he listened to the serpent and fell. When God gave the law, it was broken even before it was committed into the hands of Israel. Such is always the history of human nature.

"So the mischief is done in the field, and never repaired. The tares are not for the present taken out of the field: there is no judgment of them. Does this mean that we are to have tares in the church? If the kingdom of heaven meant the church there ought to be no discipline at all: you ought to allow uncleanness of flesh or spirit there. Here is the importance of seeing the distinction between the church and the kingdom. The Lord forbids the tares to be taken out of the kingdom of heaven: 'Let both grow together until the harvest' (ver. 30) that is, till the Lord comes in judgment. Were the kingdom of heaven the same as the church, it would, I repeat, amount to no less than this: that no evil, let it be ever so flagrant or plain, is to be put out of the church till the day of judgment. We see, then, the importance of making these distinctions, which too many despise. They are all-important for truth and holiness. Nor is there a single word of God that we can do without.

"What then is the meaning of this parable? It has nothing to do with the question of church communion. It is the **'kingdom of heaven'** that is spoken of - the scene of the confession of Christ, whether true or false. Thus Greeks, Copts, Nestorians, Roman Catholics, as well as Protestants, are in the kingdom of heaven; not believers only, but also bad people professing the name of Christ. A man, who is not a Jew or a pagan, and who outwardly professes Christ's name, is in the kingdom of heaven. He may be ever so immoral or heretical; but he is not to be put out of the kingdom of heaven. But would it be right to receive him at the table of the Lord? God forbid! If a person falling into open sin were in the church, he ought to be put out of it; but you ought not to put him out of the kingdom of heaven. In fact this could only be done by taking away his life; for this is meant by the rooting up of the tares. And this is what worldly Christianity did fall into, in no very long space of time after the apostles were departed from the earth. Temporal punishments were brought in for discipline: laws were made for the purpose of handing over the refractory to the subservient civil power. If they did not honour the so-called church, they were not to be suffered to live. In this way the very evil our Lord had been guarding the disciples against came to pass; and the Emperor Constantine used the sword to repress ecclesiastical offenders. He and his successors introduced temporal punishments to deal with the tares, to try and root them up. Take the church of Rome, where you have so thoroughly the confusion of the church with the kingdom of heaven: they claim, if a man is a heretic, to hand him over to the courts of the world to be burnt, and they never confess or correct the wrong, because they pretend to be infallible. Supposing that their victims even were tares, this is to put them out of the kingdom. If you root a tare from the field, you kill it. There may be men outside profaning the name of God; but we must leave them for God to deal with.

"This does not destroy christian responsibility towards those who surround the Lord's table. You will find instructions as to all this in what is written about the church. **'The field is the world,'** the church only embraces those believed to be members of Christ's body. Take 1 Corinthians, where we have the Holy Ghost showing the true nature of ecclesiastical discipline. Supposing there are professing Christians, guilty of any sin you please; such persons are not to be owned, while they are going on in that sin, as members of Christ's body. A real saint may fall into open sin, but the church, knowing it, is bound to intervene for the purpose of expressing God's judgment about the sin. Were they deliberately to allow such a one to come to the Lord's table, they would in effect make the Lord a party to that sin. The question is not whether the person be converted or not. If unconverted, men have no business in the church, if converted, sin is not to be winked at. The guilty are not to be put out of the kingdom of heaven, they *are* to be put out of the church. So that the teaching of the word of God is most plain as to both these truths. It is wrong to use worldly punishments to deal with a hypocrite, even when he is detected. I may seek. the good of his soul, but this is no reason for punishing him thus. But if a Christian is guilty of sin, the church, though called to be patient in judgment, is never to suffer it; but we are to leave guilty people, who are unconverted, to be judged by the Lord at His appearing.

"This is the teaching of the parable of the tares; and it gives a very solemn view of Christianity. As sure as the Son of man sowed good seed, His enemy would sow bad, which would spring up along with the rest; and this evil cannot for the present be got rid of. There is a remedy for evil which enters the church, but not yet for evil in the world."

It is perfectly clear, both from scripture and history, that the great mistake into which the professing body fell was the confounding of these two things **- tares with wheat;** or, those who were admitted by the administration of baptism to all the official and temporal privileges of the professing church with those who were truly converted and taught of God. But the vast difference between what we may call the *sacramental* and the *vital* systems, must be clearly understood and carefully distinguished, if we would study church history aright.

Another mistake, equally serious, followed as a consequence. The great outward or professing body became, in the eyes and in the language of men - *the church.* Godly men were drawn into this snare, so that the distinction between the church and the kingdom was early lost sight of. All the most sacred places and privileges, in the professing body, were thus held in common by godly and ungodly men. The Reformation utterly failed to clear the church of this sad mixture. It has been handed down to us in the Anglican, Lutheran, and Presbyterian systems, as the form of baptism and admission clearly shows. In our own day, the sacramental system prevails to an alarming extent, and is rapidly on the increase. The real and the formal, the living and the dead, are undistinguished in the various forms of protestantism. But alas! most solemn reflection! there are many in the professing church - in the kingdom of heaven - who will never be in heaven itself. Here we find tares as well as wheat, evil servants as well as faithful ones, and foolish virgins as well as wise ones. Though all who have been baptized are reckoned in the kingdom of heaven, only those who are quickened and -sealed with the Holy Ghost belong to the church of God.

But there is another thing connected with the professing church which demands a brief notice here. We refer to

The Divine Principle of Church Government

Not only did the Lord give the keys to Peter that he might open the doors of the new dispensation, but He entrusted to him its internal administration. This principle is all-important in its bearing on the church of God. The words of the commission are these, "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The question is, What do they mean? Clearly, we believe, authority and power from the Lord, to be exercised in and by the church, but limited, in result, to this world. There is no thought in the Lord's words about the church deciding anything as to *heaven.* This is the false interpretation and the deceiving power of the apostasy. The church on earth can have nothing to say or do with what is done in heaven as to binding or loosing. The sphere of its action is within its own limits, and, when it so acts according to the commission of Christ, it has the promise of ratification in heaven.

Neither is there any thought here, we may add, of the church, or of any of its officials, coming in between the soul and God, as to eternal forgiveness or eternal judgment. This is the daring blasphemy of Rome. "Who can forgive sins but God only?" He reserves this power to Himself alone. Besides, the subjects of church government *are* pardoned, or, at least, are on that ground. "Do not ye judge them that are within?" It will only apply to them that are *within* the pale of the church. "But them that are *without* God judgeth." Of every believer in the wide field of Christendom it is said, "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10) Hence, the retaining or the remission of sins by the church is only for the present time, and strictly *administrative* in its character. It is the divine principle of receiving persons into the assembly of God, on the ground of adequate testimony to their conversion, soundness in doctrine, and holiness of life; and also of putting away impenitent offenders until restored by true repentance.

But some of our readers may have the common impression, that this power was only given to Peter and the rest of the apostles, and consequently ceased with them. This is a mistake. True, it was given to Peter only in the first instance, as we have seen; and no doubt greater power was exercised during the days of the apostles than has been since, but not greater authority. The church has the same *authority* now as then as to discipline in the assembly, though it lacks the *power.* The word of the Lord remains unchanged. Only an apostle, we believe, could speak as Paul does in 1 Corinthians 5. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This was spiritual power in an individual, not the judgment of the church.* The same apostle, in reference to the same case, says to the assembly, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." The act of putting away was the act, not merely of the apostle, but of the whole assembly. In this case, and in this way, the excommunicated person's sins were *retained,* though evidently a converted man. In the Second Epistle, chapter 2, we find him fully restored. His repentance is accepted by the assembly his sins are *remitted.* The overflowing of the apostle's heart on this occasion, and his exhortations to the church, are valuable lessons for all who have to do with church government, and are intended to remove that cold suspicion with which an erring brother is too often received back to the privileges of the assembly. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment [or censure] which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. " Here we have a case in point, illustrative of the government of the assembly according to the will of Christ. "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

{*"Delivering to Satan is an act of power-putting out a wicked person, a duty attached to the faithfulness of the assembly. No doubt, exclusion from the assembly of God is a very serious thing and leaves us exposed to sorrow and just trouble of heart, and that from the enemy: but direct delivery to Satan is an act of positive power. It was done in Job's case for his good. It was done by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5, though acting in the gathered assembly, and for the destruction of the flesh, and again, without reference to the assembly, in 1 Timothy 1, as to Hymanaeus and Alexander, that they might learn not to blaspheme. All discipline is for the correction of the individual, though to maintain withal the holiness of the house of God, and clear the consciences of the saints themselves."-*Present Testimony,* vol. 1, p. 392, New Series.}

This Principle of Church Government Still Applicable

But "how can these principles be carried out now?" is still the question and difficulty with many. Well, we must just go back to the word of God. We ought to be able and willing to say, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." (2Co 13:8)

The administrative authority and power of which we speak was given not only to Peter and the other apostles, but also to the church. In **Matthew 18** we have the working out of the principle laid down in chapter 16, "Tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever *ye* shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven .... For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

Thus we learn that the acts of the two or three, gathered together in Christ's name, have the same divine sanction as the administration of Peter. And again, in John 20, the Lord delivers the same principle of government to the *disciples,* not merely to the *apostles,* and that too on resurrection ground, where the assembly is livingly united to Christ as the risen Man. This is all important. The spirit of life in Jesus Christ makes the disciples free - every disciple free - from the law of sin and death. The church is built upon "this rock" - Christ in resurrection, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the *disciples* glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Here the Lord sets up, we may say, and fairly starts, the new creation. The disciples are filled and clothed with peace, and with the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. They are to go forth as His messengers, from the resurrection side of His empty grave, bearing the blessed message of peace and eternal life to a world bowed down with sin, sorrow, and death. The principle of their own internal government is also clearly laid down: and its due administration will always give to the Christian assembly a distinctive and heavenly character, in the presence of both God and man.

The Principle of Reception at the Beginning

But as this principle is the proper basis of all Christian congregations, it may be well to look for a moment at its operation in the days of the apostles. Surely they understood its meaning and how to apply it.

On the day of **Pentecost,** and for some time after, it does not appear that the young converts were subjected to any examination as to the reality of their faith, either by the apostles or others. "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Thus receiving the word was the ground of baptism, and fellowship; but the work was then entirely in Christ's own hands. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The attempt to deceive by Ananias and Sapphira was at once detected. Peter acts in his right place, but the Holy Ghost was there in ungrieved majesty and power, and Peter owns it. Hence he says to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?"

But this virgin state of things soon passed away. Failure set in - the Holy Ghost was grieved, and it became necessary to examine the applicants, as to whether their motives, objects, and state of soul were according to the mind of Christ. We are now in the condition of things described in 2 Timothy 2. We are only to have fellowship "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

After the church became so mixed with merely nominal professors, great care was necessary in receiving persons to communion. It was not enough that a person *said* he was converted and claimed admission into the church on the ground of his own statements: he must submit to be examined by experienced Christians. When one professes to be awakened to a sense of sin, and to be brought to repentance before God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, his confession must be examined by those who have gone through the same kind of experience themselves. And even where conversion is manifestly genuine, godly care, with tenderness, must be exercised in reception; something dishonouring to Christ, injurious to themselves, weakening to the assembly, may be entertained, even unconsciously. Herein spiritual discernment is needed. And this is the truest kindness to the applicant, and nothing more than a necessary care for the honor of Christ and the purity of communion. Christian fellowship would be at an end if persons were received on the sole ground of their own opinion of themselves.

In **Acts 9** we see the practical working of this principle in the case of the great apostle himself. And surely, if he could not be accredited without adequate testimony, who need complain? True, his case was peculiar, still it may be taken as a practical illustration of our subject.

We find both **Ananias at Damascus,** and **the church at Jerusalem** questioning the reality of **Saul's conversion,** though it was a miraculous one. Of course he had been an open enemy to the name of Christ, and this would make the disciples still more careful. Ananias hesitates to baptize him until fully satisfied of his conversion. He consults the Lord on the subject, but after hearing His mind, he goes directly to Saul; assures him that he has been sent by the same Jesus that appeared to him on his way to Damascus, and confirms the truth of what had taken place. Saul is greatly comforted, he receives his sight, and is baptized.

Then as to the action of the church at Jerusalem we read "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." Paul is a model man to the church in many things, and in this also. He is received into the assembly - as all applicants should be received - on the ground of adequate testimony to the genuineness of his Christianity. But while all godly care must be taken that the Simon Maguses may be detected, all tenderness and patience must be exercised with the timid and doubting ones. Still, life in Christ and consistency therewith must be looked for. (See Rom. 14, 15; 1 Cor. 5 and 2 Cor. 2) The church's path is always a narrow one.

Popery has shown its desperate wickedness in the evil use it has made of the church's prerogative to retain or remit sins hence all the abominations of priestly absolution. **Protestantism** has gone to the other extreme - probably fearing the very appearance of popery - and has well-nigh set aside discipline altogether. The path of faith is to follow the word of the Lord.

The ground being thus cleared as to the great fundamental principles of the church and kingdom, we come to the day of Pentecost - the first moment of the church's history on earth. Unless we understand the principles of Christianity, we can never understand its history.

02 Pentecost Fully Come

Chapter 2

The Day of Pentecost Fully Come

The Jewish feast of Pentecost may be called **the birthday of the Christian church.** It was also the anniversary of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, though it does not appear that a day was observed by the Jews in commemoration of the event. Fifty days after our Lord's resurrection the church was formed - its history commenced. The Old Testament saints form no part of the New Testament church. It had no existence in *fact* until the day of Pentecost.

All saints, from the beginning, have the same eternal life, they are the children of the same God and Father, and the same heaven will be their home for ever; but the Old Testament saints belong to another dispensation, or to the different dispensations which ran their course before Christ came. Each dispensation has its own rise, progress, decline, and fall, in scripture, and will have its own reflection in heaven. Neither persons nor dispensations will be undistinguished there.

Hence the Apostle in Hebrews 11, when speaking of the ancient worthies, says, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Surely if God has provided a *better thing* for us, it must also be a *different thing.* Let us not object to God's own word. Besides, our Lord in Matthew 16 says, "On this Rock I will build My church." And at the same time, He gave the keys to Peter to open the doors of the new dispensation. *Then* He had not begun to build His church, and the doors of the kingdom were not opened. But the difference between the *old* and the *new* will be more distinctly seen when we speak of the great events of the day of Pentecost. We begin with the types of Leviticus, chapter 23.

The children of Israel were commanded to bring a sheaf of **the first-fruits of their harvest** to the priest, that he might wave it before the Lord, to be accepted for them. This rite, we believe, shadowed forth our Lord's resurrection on the morning after the Jewish sabbath, the ground of the Christian's acceptance before God in the risen Christ. "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." (See Matt. 28 and Mark 16)

Seven full weeks after the waving of the sheaf, the feast of Pentecost was celebrated. The former was reckoned to be the first day of the harvest in Judea, the latter supposed the corn to be fully gathered in. Then they had a solemn festival of thanksgiving. Two loaves of bread, baken with the flour of the new harvest, characterised this festival. They were to be baken with *leaven,* and brought *out* of their habitations. Some have thought that the two loaves prefigured the *out-calling* of the church as composed of Jew and Gentile. Be this as it may, the *number is* significant. Two witnesses were necessary for a testimony in Israel. The leaven indicates, we doubt not, indwelling sin in the believer, and, of course, in the church, viewed in its time condition.

With **the wave sheaf -** beautiful type of the risen Christ pure and holy - sacrifices of a sweet savor were offered, but no sacrifice for sin. With the two wave loaves - type of those who are Christ's - a sin-offering was presented. Sin, being there, a sin-offering was needed to cover it. Though the one perfect sacrifice of Christ answered to God for both indwelling sin and the many actual sins of the life, still, as a matter of fact and experience, sin dwells in us, and will do so as long as we are in this world. All acknowledge this, though all may not see the completeness of the work of Christ. The Christian has by one offering been perfected for ever, though he may humble himself and make confession to God for every failure.

The typical significance of Pentecost was remarkably fulfilled in the descent of the Holy Ghost. He came down to gather together the children of God that were scattered abroad. (Joh 11:52) By this great event the system of Judaism was set aside, and the new vessel of testimony - the church of God - was introduced. And now, observe, the order of events. First,

The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ

Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, are the great facts or foundation truths, of the church - of Christianity. Incarnation was necessary to crucifixion, and both to resurrection. It is blessedly true that Christ died on the cross for our sins, but it is equally true, that the believer died in His death. (See Rom. 6; Col. 2) The Christian's life is life in resurrection. The church is built on the risen Christ. No truths can be more blessed and wonderful than incarnation and crucifixion but the church is associated with Him who is risen and glorified

In **Acts 1** we have that which is connected with the Lord's resurrection and ascension; and also with the actions of the apostles before the descent of the Holy Ghost. The blessed Lord, though in resurrection, still speaks and acts by the Holy Ghost. It was *"through the Holy Ghost"* that He gave commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen. This is worthy of special note as teaching us two things.

1. The character of our union with Christ; the Holy Ghost in the Christian, and in the risen Lord, joins them together. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." By the "one Spirit" they are united.

2. This important fact points out the blessed truth of the Holy Ghost dwelling and acting in the Christian also after he is actually in resurrection. Then He will not have - as He has now - the flesh in us to contend against, but will, ungrieved and unhindered, lead us on to the full joys of heaven - the happy worship, the blessed service, and the whole will of God.

The risen Lord next exhorts the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for "the promise of the Father," which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." It is no longer a question of temporal promises to Israel; that field must be left till a future day. The Father's promise of the Holy Ghost was an entirely distinct thing, and widely different in its results.

Several things "pertaining to **the kingdom of God"** having been spoken of between the Lord and His apostles, He ascends to heaven, and a cloud receives Him out of their sight. The Lord's return is also most plainly and distinctly taught at the same time. "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." It is quite evident from these words, that He ascended *personally, visibly, bodily,* and that He shall so come again in like manner - that He will again appear beneath the heavens, and be manifested to people on the earth, personally, visibly, and bodily; but then it will be in power and great glory.

The apostles and disciples had now learnt two things:

1. That Jesus was taken up out of this world into heaven:

2. That He was coming back again into this world. On these two great facts their testimony was founded. But Jerusalem was to be the starting-point of their ministry, and they were to wait for power from above. We now come to the second great event, important beyond all others, with respect to man's condition in this world - the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now, it is to be, not only God *for us,* but God *in us.* This took place on the day of Pentecost.

The Descent of the Holy Ghost

The time was now fully come. Redemption was finished God was glorified - Christ at His right hand in heaven, and the Holy Ghost come down to earth. God inaugurates the church and this He does in a way suitable to His own wisdom, power and glory. A mighty miracle is wrought, an outward sign is given. The great event is thus recorded.

Acts 2. *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."* It may be well here to pause for a moment, and note a few things connected with the descent of the Holy Ghost and the display of His power on this important day.

There was, in the first place, the accomplishment of the Father's promise; the Holy Ghost Himself was sent down from heaven. This was the great truth of Pentecost. He came from above to dwell in the church - the place prepared for Him by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. There was also the fulfilment of the word of the Lord to the apostles, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Not that the disciples then knew the meaning of this word but the fact was now accomplished. The full revelation of the doctrine of the "one body" awaited the ministrations of Paul; as he elsewhere says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12)

But further, besides the various gifts dispensed for the work of the Lord, we have something most blessedly personal, and quite new on the earth. The Holy Ghost Himself came down to dwell, not in the church only, but also in each individual who believed in the Lord Jesus. And, thank the Lord, this most blessed fact is as true today as it was then. He dwells now in every believer who rests on the finished work of Christ. The Lord had said, looking forward to this day, "For He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." These two grand aspects of the Spirit's presence were fully accomplished on the day of Pentecost. He came to dwell in each Christian and in the church; and now, blessed truth, we know that God is not only *for* us, but *in* us, and *with* us.

When "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power," He appeared in the form of a dove - beautiful emblem of the immaculate purity, of the meekness and lowliness, of Jesus. He was not to make His voice heard in the streets, or break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. But in the case of the disciples who were waiting at Jerusalem, it was altogether different. He descended on them in cloven tongues - tongues of fire; and sat upon each of them. This was characteristic. It was the power of God in testimony a testimony that was to go forth, not only to all Israel, but to all the nations of the earth. The word of God was also to *judge* all that came before it - it was as tongues *of fire.* God's judgment on man because of sin had been judicially expressed in the cross, and now the solemn fact is to be made known, far and wide, by the power, of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, grace reigns - reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Christ Jesus. Pardon is proclaimed to the guilty, salvation to the lost, peace to the troubled, and rest to the weary. All that believe are, and ever shall be, blessed *in* and *with* a risen and glorified Christ.

The astonishment and consternation of **the Sanhedrin** and the Jewish people must have been great indeed at the re-appearance, in such power, of the followers of the crucified Jesus. They had doubtless concluded that, as the Master was now gone, the disciples could do nothing of themselves. For the most part, they were plain uneducated men. But what must have been the people's amazement, when they heard that these plain men were preaching boldly in the streets of Jerusalem, and making converts by thousands to the religion of Jesus! Even historically viewed, the scene is full of the most thrilling interest, and has no parallel in the annals of time.

Jesus had been crucified; His claims to be the Messiah, in popular estimation, had been buried in His grave. The soldiers, who guarded His sepulchre, had been bribed to spread a false report as to His resurrection; the popular excitement had no doubt passed away, and the city, and temple worship, had returned to their former course, as if no great event had taken place. But on God's part things were not to be thus quietly passed over. He was awaiting the appointed time to vindicate His Son, and to vindicate Him in the very scene of His humiliation. This took place early in the morning on the day of Pentecost. Suddenly, and unexpectedly, His scattered followers reappeared in miraculous power. They boldly charged the rulers and the people with the guilt of His apprehension, trial, and crucifixion - that they had killed their own Messiah. but that God had raised Him up, to be a Prince and a Saviour, and to set Him at His own right hand in heaven. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom 5:20)

The sentence of **Babel,** we may also say, was reversed on that wonderful day. In the different languages, to which man had been doomed in God's just displeasure, salvation is proclaimed. This mighty marvellous work of God attracts the multitude. They are amazed, and speculate as to this strange thing. Each one, in the language of the country from whence he came, hears from the lips of poor Galileans the wonderful works of God. The Jews who dwelt at Jerusalem, not understanding these foreign languages, mocked. Then Peter stood up, and declared to them in their own tongue, and proved from their own scriptures, the true character of what had taken place.

Peter's First Appeal to the Jews

Thus we read: "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of *every nation* under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Capadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day," or, as we should reckon, nine in the morning - the hour of prayer in the temple.

Thus Peter takes the lead, and explains to the Jews, that the wonderful things they had seen and heard that morning, were not the result of excitement, but rather that which ought to have been looked for according to their own prophetic scriptures. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." But mark the *ground* on which Peter stands and preaches with such boldness. He stands on the ground of the *resurrection* and *exaltation* of Christ. This is carefully to be noted, as showing the foundation on which the church rests, and when and where her history commences. This was the first day of her existence, the first page of her history, and the first triumphs of God's ineffable gift to man.

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

We quote the words of another, on the blessed effects of Peter's first sermon, and of the presence of the Holy Ghost on the earth.

"It was not merely a moral change, but a power which set aside all the motives which individualized those who had received it, by uniting them as one soul, and in one mind. They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, they were in communion with each other, they broke bread, they spent their time in prayer: the sense of God's presence was powerful among them; and many signs and wonders were wrought by the hands of the apostles. They were united in the closest bonds, no man calling anything his own, but all divided their possessions with those that needed. They were daily in the temple, the public resort of Israel for religious exercises, whilst having their own, apart, breaking bread at home daily. They ate with joy and gladness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people around them. Thus the assembly was formed, and the Lord added daily to it the remnant of Israel, who were to be saved from the judgments which should fall on a nation which had rejected the Son of God, their Messiah. God brought into the assembly - thus owned of Him by the presence of the Holy Ghost - those whom He spared in Israel. A new order of things had commenced, marked by the presence of the Holy Ghost. Here was found the presence and the house of God, although the old order of things still existed until the execution of the judgment.

"The assembly was formed, therefore, by the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, on the testimony that Jesus, who had been rejected, was raised up to heaven, being made of God both Lord and Christ. It was composed of the Jewish remnant who were to be spared, with the reserve of bringing in Gentiles whenever God should call them."*

{**Synopsis of the Books of the Bible,* vol. 4, p. 8.}

This, then, is **the church of God;** a gathering together of those whom God has called to the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. Love rules and characterizes the newly formed assembly. The mighty victories which grace achieved on that memorable day fully attested the power of the exalted Lord, and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. Three thousand souls were converted through one sermon. Those who had been the avowed enemies of the Lord, and who had participated in the guilt of His murder, agonised under the power of Peter's word. Alarmed at the awful thought of having killed their own Messiah, and that God, in whose presence they now were, had exalted Him to His own right hand in heaven, they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Peter now seeks to deepen the good work in their souls - He seeks to humble the once proud and scornful Jews. "Repent," he says, "and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." He does not say simply, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved;" though, of course faith and repentance must go together wherever the work is genuine. But Peter, in this case, presses repentance. Their guilt had been great, and a deep moral work in their conscience was needful for their humbling. They must see their guilt in the sight of God, and receive the remission of their sins at the feet of Him whom they had rejected and crucified. Nevertheless, all was grace. Their hearts were touched. They sided with God against themselves - they truly repented, were pardoned, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now they are the children of God and have eternal life: the Holy Ghost dwells in them.

The reality of the change was made manifest by a complete change of character. "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Baptism, on the confession of faith; reception into the assembly; the Lord's supper, the fellowship of saints, and prayer, were their distinguishing observances. For the moment, the Lord's prayer, "that they may all be one," was answered, as we read in chapter 4. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." We will now turn for the sake of connection to chapter 10.

The Calling in of the Gentiles

Cornelius, the centurion, a devout man, and those that were with him, are now received into the assembly of God. Peter had intimated their call in his first discourse. He is now summoned of God in a special way and with special indications of His purpose, to open the door to those God-fearing Gentiles. Up to this time the assembly consisted chiefly, if not solely, of Jews. But God dealt tenderly with His ancient people considering their national prejudices. "Cornelius was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." They could have no objection, personally, to receive such a one. Thus God is gracious, tender and merciful. But no doubt was left on Peter's mind as to the divine will. God graciously silenced his reasonings, and overcame his unwillingness, with the mild reproof, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

Peter now proceeds, though slowly; it was a new kind of work for him. But nothing seems more surprising to Peter, than that the Gentiles should be brought into blessing, without either becoming Jews, or submitting to any Jewish ordinances. This to Peter, to the Gentiles, and in itself, was an immense step. It strikes at the very root of Popery, Puseyism, Apostolic Succession, and every system of ordinances. In this fact a flood of light is shed on the character of the present dispensation. "Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." Clearly, it was no longer necessary to become a Jew, or submit to external rites and ceremonies, in order to enjoy the richest blessings of heaven. Without the imposition of apostolic hands - though Peter himself, in divine power and authority was present - and before being baptized with water, they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. While the word of God was falling from Peter's lips, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard it. Before this, however, a blessed work, through God's grace, had been going on in the heart of Cornelius: he was a divinely quickened soul.

The *quickening* operations of the Spirit are quite distinct from being *sealed with* the Spirit. Before the Holy Ghost *can* seal, there must be something for Him *to* seal. He cannot seal our old nature; there must be a new nature for Him to seal. So that there must be a moment in every Christian's history, when he is quickened and not sealed; but sooner or later the work will be completed. (Eph 1:13) For example, the prodigal son was quickened, or converted, when he left the far country, but he was a stranger to the Father's love and grace; and, consequently, had not yet the faith that calmly rests in Christ as the source of all blessing. He was legal if not unbelieving, though quickened. Certainly he was not sealed of the Spirit, as to his pardon and acceptance, until he received the kiss of reconciliation, or the ring, the symbol of eternal love. The gospel of salvation is more than concern for the soul, however real. Christ-dishonoring unbelief may accompany, for a while, a genuine work of God's Spirit in the soul. The prodigal had a certain belief, that there was something good in his Father's heart, therefore he ventures to draw near. But surely this is short of evangelic fulness of faith. "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Wherever there is faith in Christ and His work, there is the seal of God. Paul himself was at least three days in the deepest exercise of soul, without the peace and rest which the sealing of the Holy Spirit gives. "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." (Acts 9)

But we return to the main point before us.

The Sealing of the Gentiles

Notice, then, this important fact connected with the bringing in of the Gentiles - they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost simply through the preaching of the word. At Jerusalem the Jews were baptized before they received the Holy Ghost. At Samaria the Samaritans were not only baptized, but had the apostles' hands laid on them with prayer, before they received the Holy Ghost. But at Caesarea, without baptism, without the laying on of hands, without prayer, the richest christian blessing was given to the Gentiles; though the *doctrine* of the church as the body of Christ was not yet revealed.

The grace of God, thus shown to the Gentiles at the commencement of the dispensation, has characterised it ever since. We are Gentiles; we are neither Jews nor Samaritans. Therefore God's ways in grace, and His order of things with the Gentiles, have a special application to us. There is no instance recorded by the inspired historians of one being baptized without professing faith in Christ; but if we are to follow the pattern of things at Caesarea, we must look for sealing as well as quickening - for peace with God as well as faith in Christ before baptism. The case of Cornelius stands at the very head of our dispensation; it was the first direct expression of grace to the Gentiles; and surely it ought to be a model for Gentile preachers and disciples. When the word of God which was *then* preached to Cornelius is *now* believed, the same effects, as to peace with God, we may rest assured will follow.

Preaching, believing, sealing, baptizing, is the divine order of things here. God and His word never change; though "times change," as men say, and human opinions change, and religious observances change; but the word of God - never. Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans, professed faith in Christ before they were baptized. Indeed baptism supposed eternal life *possessed* through faith, not *communicated* by its observance, as Anglican Catholics teach. "Grace is communicated life is communicated, by sacraments," they say, "and is only effected through these means; irrespective of any exercise of the intellect on the part of the person brought into union. Holy baptism is the means of conferring on the recipient a new and spiritual life."*

{**The Church and the World,* page 178-188.}

Such notions, we need scarcely say, are utterly opposed to scripture. Baptism, we affirm, *confers* nothing. *Life is* conferred by other means, as the scriptures plainly teach. Conversion, or "being born again," is effected, in all cases, without exception, by the Holy Spirit. As we read in 1 Peter "Seeing ye have purified your souls *in obeying the truth through the Spirit* unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Here the truth of the Gospel is viewed as the *means,* and the Holy Spirit as the *power,* in conversion. Christ, or God in Christ, is the new object of the soul. It is by the Spirit and truth of God that this blessed change is effected. Those who trust to *water baptism* as the means of effecting it trust, alas! to a great and fatal delusion.*

{*The following brief statements from the fathers of the fourth century, on the subject of baptism, will show our readers the sources, or the authorities, of much that is said and done in the present day by *the* ritualists. The *authority* of scripture is entirely set aside. "At Easter, and at Pentecost, and in some places at the Epiphany, *the rite* of baptism was administered publicly-that is, in the presence of the faithful-to all the converts of the year, excepting those few instances in which it *had* been expedient to perform the ceremony without delay, or where the timid Christian put it off till the close of life, after the example of Constantine: a practice for a long time condemned in vain by the clergy. But the fact of the delay shows how deeply the importance and efficacy of the rite were rooted in the christian mind. It was a complete lustration [purifying] of the soul. The Neophyte [new convert] emerged from the waters of baptism in a state of perfect innocence. The dove-the Holy Spirit- was constantly hovering over the font, and sanctifying the waters to the mysterious ablution of all the sins of the past life. If the soul suffered no subsequent taint, it passed at once to the realms of purity and bliss; that is, the heart was purified; the understanding illuminated, the spirit was clothed with immortality.

"Robed in white, emblematic of spotless purity, the candidate approached the baptistery-in the larger churches a separate building. There he uttered the solemn vows which pledged him to his religion. The symbolizing genius of the East added some significant ceremonies. The Catechumen [one in the first stages of christian instruction] turned to the West, the realm of Satan, and thrice renounced his power; he turned to the East, to adore the Sun of Righteousness, and to proclaim his compact with the Lord of life. The mystic trinal number prevailed throughout; the vow was threefold, and thrice pronounced. The baptism was usually by immersion; the stripping off the clothes was emblematic of 'putting off the old man,' but baptism by sprinkling was allowed, according to the exigency of the case. The water itself, became, in the vivid language of the church, the blood of Christ: it was compared, by a fanciful analogy, to the Red Sea: the daring metaphors of some of the fathers might seem to assert a transmutation of its colour.

"Almost all the fathers of this age, Basil, the two Gregories, Ambrose, etc., etc., have treatises on baptism; and vie, as it were, with each other in their praises of its importance and efficacy. Gregory of Nazianzen almost exhausts the copiousness of the Greek language in speaking of baptism."-*Milman's History of Christianity,* vol. 3.}

In the case of the Gentiles, now under consideration, even more than life was possessed before baptism was administered. They had the seal of God. Baptism is the sign of full deliverance and salvation as secured for the believer by the death and resurrection of Christ. Cornelius had life, was a devout man, but he must send for Peter, and hear words whereby he would be saved or fully delivered. The Old as well as the New Testament teaches this blessed truth most plainly. Israel, as a typical people, after being brought to God and sheltered by the blood of the lamb in Egypt, were baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Thus they were delivered out of Egypt, and saw the salvation of Jehovah. Again, Noah and his family were saved *through* the flood - *not by it.* They left the old world, passed through the waters of death, and landed in a new condition of things altogether. "The like figure, [or antitype,] whereunto even baptism doth also now save us .... by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (Exodus 14; 1Pe 3:21)

But what was the word, some may inquire, that Peter preached, which was accompanied with such remarkable blessing? He preached peace by Jesus Christ, as Lord of all. Christ risen, exalted, and glorified, was the grand object of his testimony. He sums up with these words: *"To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."* The blessing follows. The Jews present were astonished; but they bow, and own God's goodness to the Gentiles. *"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then Peter answered, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. "*

We now retrace our steps a little way, and notice some of the leading events, which, in order, precede chapter 10.

The First Christian Martyr

Stephen, the deacon and evangelist, is the first to receive the crown of martyrdom for the name of Jesus. He stands at the head of "the noble army of martyrs." He is perfect as a type - as the *proto-martyr.* Firm and unwavering in his faith; bold and undaunted before his accusers; pointed and faithful in his defence before the Sanhedrim; free from malice in his strongest statements; full of charity towards all men, he seals his testimony with his blood, and falls asleep in Jesus.

In some respects Stephen resembles the blessed Lord Himself. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," is like "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit;" and again, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," resembles "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" only Stephen does not plead their ignorance.

Already we see that troubles both within and without assail the young assembly. True, the word of God increased, multitudes were converted, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. But the Grecians, or Hellenists (Jews of Greek origin), murmured against the Hebrews (natives of Judaea), because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. This led to the appointment of **seven deacons.** (Acts 6) From their names here given it would appear that the seven chosen were "Grecians" - all from the side of the murmurers. Thus the Spirit of God ruled in grace. Stephen was one of the number; and in his case the word of the apostle was exemplified: Those who "have used the office of deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." He was full of faith and power, and did great wonders and miracles among the people. The energy of the Holy Spirit was especially manifested in Stephen.

There were different synagogues in Jerusalem appropriated to the different races of Jews. It was the synagogue of the Libertines, Cyrenians, etc., that opposed Stephen. But "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." Then followed that which has usually been the case with the confessors of Jesus in all ages: unable to answer him, they accuse him before the council. False witnesses are suborned, who swear that they had heard him speak "blasphemous words against Moses, and against God," and that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy this place, and change the customs delivered to them by Moses. The case was now before the Sanhedrim - the trial commences. But what must his judges have thought when they saw his face radiant, as the face of an angel?

We have the noble **address of Stephen** to the heads of the nation before us. To them it was convincing, perplexing, overwhelming. Doubtless, it was the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the Jews, from the mouth of Stephen; and all the more humbling to the proud Jews to hear their doom from the lips of a Hellenist. But the Spirit of God, when unhindered by man's arrangements, works by whomsoever *He* will.

Stephen recapitulates in bold language the chief points in their national history. He refers especially to the history of Joseph and of Moses. The former their fathers sold to the Gentiles, the latter they despised as a ruler and a judge. He also charges them with always resisting the Holy Ghost - with always disobeying the law, and now with having been the betrayers and murderers of the Just *One.* Here Christ's faithful witness was interrupted. He was not allowed to finish his address: - a picture, too true, of the treatment of martyrs from that day even until now. The murmurs, the indignation, the fury of the Sanhedrim, were beyond control. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. " But in place of pursuing his discourse, he turns in ecstasy of heart to the Lord, and fixes his eyes on heaven - the home and centre of gathering for all His people.

"I see," said Stephen, "the heavens opened." He is full of the Holy Ghost as he looks on high, and he sees the Son of man standing there ready to receive his spirit. "Such, then," as another has said, "is the position of the true believer - heavenly upon the earth - in presence of the world that rejected Christ, the murderous world. The believer, alive in death, sees by the power of the Holy Ghost into heaven, and the Son of man at the right hand of God. Stephen does not say, 'Jesus.' The Spirit characterises Him as 'the Son of man.' Precious testimony to man! It is not to the glory that he testifies, but to the Son of man in the glory, heaven being open to him.... As to the object of faith and the position of the believer, this scene is definitively characteristic."

"Foremost and nearest to His throne
By perfect robes of triumph known
And likest Him in look and tone,
The holy Stephen kneels,
With steadfast gaze, as when the sky
Flew open to his fainting eye,
Which like a fading lamp flashed high,
Seeing what death conceals.
"He, though he seem on earth to move
Must glide in air like gentle dove,
From yon unclouded depths above
Must draw his purer breath:
Till men behold his angel face
All radiant with celestial grace,
Martyr all o'er, and meet to trace
The lines of Jesus' death."

We have now gone over, with some care, **the first section of the church's history.** And we have been the more careful, as church histories in general commence at a later period. Most of them begin where scripture ends, at least as to details. None that we have yet seen refer to Matthew 16, and few attempt a critical examination of the Acts of the Apostles, which, after all, is the only part of her history which commands our faith, and has an absolute claim upon our obedience.

In chapter 8 we find the Holy Ghost in Samaria working by Philip. He has, as it were, left Jerusalem. This marks a distinct epoch in the history of the church; and especially in her connection with Jerusalem. We leave, for the present, the enraged and persecuting Jews, and follow the path of the Spirit to the city of Samaria. But we must glance for a moment at what some have called the *third persecution.*

03 Persecuted and Scattered

Chapter 3

The Disciples Persecuted and Scattered

After the death of Stephen a great persecution broke out. (Acts 8) The Jewish leaders appear to have gained a victory over the disciples, and they determined to pursue their apparent triumph with the utmost violence. But God, who is above all, and who knows how to restrain the rising passions of men, overruled their opposition for the accomplishment of His own will.

Man had not yet learnt the truth of the proverb, that "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." In the case of the first and the noblest of martyrs, the proverb was fully verified. But all these eighteen hundred years, men have been slow to learn, or believe, this plain historical fact. Persecution, generally speaking, has advanced the cause which it sought to repress. This will be found true in the main, under every form of opposition and persecution. Resistance, decision, and firmness are created by such treatment. True, timid minds may be driven to apostasy for a time by persecution; but how often have such, with the deepest repentance, and in order to regain their former position, endured with cheerfulness the keenest sufferings, and displayed in their last moments the greatest fortitude! But persecution, in one form or another, is to be expected by the followers of Jesus. They are exhorted to take up their cross *daily* and follow Him. It tests the sincerity of our faith, the purity of our motives, the strength of our affection for Christ, and the measure of our confidence in Him.

Those who are not true in heart for Christ will be sure to fall away in a time of sharp persecution. But love can *endure* for its object, when it can do nothing else. We see this *perfectly* in the blessed Lord Himself. He *endured* the cross - that was of God: He *despised* the shame - that was of man. It was amidst the shame and sufferings of the cross that the full strength of His love appeared, and that He triumphed over everything. Nothing could turn His love aside from its object; it was stronger than death. In this, as in all things, He has left us an example, that we should walk in His steps. May we ever be found following hard after Him!

From the history of the church in the Acts we learn, that the effect of the martyrdom of Stephen was the immediate spread of the truth, which his persecutors were seeking to hinder. The impressions produced by such a witness, and such a death, must have been overwhelming to his enemies, and convincing to the unprejudiced and the thoughtful. The last resort of human cruelty is death: but, wonderful to say Christian faith, in its first trial, was proved to be stronger than death, and that in its most frightful form. This the enemy witnessed, and would ever after remember. Stephen was on the *Rock,* and the gates of hell could not prevail against Him.

The whole church at Jerusalem, on this occasion, were scattered abroad; but they went everywhere preaching the word. Like the cloud that flies before the wind, bearing its refreshing rain to thirsty lands, so the disciples were driven from Jerusalem by the storm of persecution, bearing the living waters to thirsty souls in distant lands. "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." Some historians have thought that the fact of the apostles remaining in Jerusalem when the disciples fled, proves their greater firmness and faithfulness in the cause of Christ, but we are disposed to judge differently, and to consider it *failure* rather than *faithfulness.* The Lord's commission to them was, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And they had been told before, "When they persecute you in one city, flee into another." As far as scripture history informs us, the commission was never carried out by the twelve. Nevertheless, God was mighty in Paul towards the Gentiles, and in Peter towards the Jews.

The Holy Spirit now leaves Jerusalem as to outward manifest power - most solemn truth! But that guilty city preferred the patronage of Rome to the resurrection-power of their own Messiah. "What do we?" said the Jews, "for this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation." They rejected the Messiah in His humiliation, and now they reject the testimony of the Holy Ghost to His exaltation. Their iniquity was full, and wrath was coming on them to the uttermost. But, for the present, our happier place, in tracing the history of the church, is to follow the Holy Spirit on His way to Samaria. His path is the *silver line* of saving grace to precious souls.

The Triumphs of the Gospel in Samaria

Philip, the deacon, evidently next to Stephen in zeal and energy, goes down to Samaria. The Holy Spirit works with him. In the wisdom of the Lord's ways, despised Samaria is the first place, outside of Judaea, where the Gospel was preached by His chosen witnesses. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. And there was great joy in that city." A great many believed and were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon Magus, the sorcerer, owned the presence of a power far above his own, and bowed to the force and current of the Spirit's work in others, though the truth had not penetrated his own heart or conscience. But as we have now travelled to another part of the country, this may be the fitting place to say a word as to its history.

The **Holy Land,** interesting beyond all other nations of the earth, both morally and historically, is in size very small. "It is but a strip of country, about the size of Wales, less than 140 miles in length, and barely 40 in average breadth."* The northern portion is Galilee; the centre, Samaria; the south, Judaea. But though physically so small, it has been the theatre of the most momentous events in the world's history. There the Saviour was born, lived and was crucified - and there He was buried and rose again. And there too, His apostles and martyrs lived, testified and suffered; and there the first gospel sermon was preached, and there the first church was planted.

{**Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.*}

The land originally occupied by Israel, lay between the ancient empires of Assyria and Egypt. Hence the frequent reference in the Old Testament to "the king of the North," and the "king of the South." Owing to this position, it was often the battle field of these mighty empires, and we know it will yet be the scene of their last and deadly conflict. (Dan. 11) So superstitious have men been about the Holy Land, that it has been the object of national ambition, and the occasion of religious wars, almost ever since the days of the apostles. Who could estimate the blood that has been shed, and the treasure that has been wasted, on these sacred plains? - and all, we may add, under the fair name of religious zeal, or rather, under the banners of the cross and the crescent. Thither the pilgrims in every age have travelled, that they might worship at the holy sepulchre, and fulfil their vow. It has also been the great attraction for travellers of all characters and of all nations and the great emporium for miracle-working relics. The Christian, the historian, and the antiquarian have searched it diligently, and made known their discoveries. Ever since the days of Abraham, it has been the most interesting and attractive spot on the earth's surface. And to the student of prophecy, its future history is even more interesting than its past. He knows that the day is coming, when the whole land shall be peopled by the twelve tribes of Israel, and filled with the glory and majesty of their Messiah. Then shall they be owned as the metropolitan people of the earth. We now return to Samaria, with its new life and joy.

The Samaritans through God's blessing readily believed the Gospel, as preached by Philip. The effects of the truth, thus received in simplicity, were immediate and of the most blessed character. "There was great joy in that city," and many were baptized. Such must ever be the effects of the Gospel, when believed, unless there be some hindrance in connection with ourselves. Where there is genuine simplicity of faith, there must be genuine peace and joy, and happy obedience. The power of the Gospel, over a people who had for ages resisted the claims of Judaism, was thus displayed. What the law could not do, in this respect, the Gospel accomplished. "Samaria was a 'conquest,'" as one has said, "which all the energy of Judaism had never been able to make. It was a new and splendid triumph of the Gospel. The spiritual subjugation of the world appertained to the church."

Jerusalem and Samaria United by the Gospel

The bitter jealousy that existed between Jews and Samaritans had long been proverbial; hence we read, "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." But now, in connection with the Gospel of peace, this root of bitterness disappears. Nevertheless in the wisdom of God's ways, the Samaritans must wait for the highest blessing of the Gospel, until the Jewish believers - the apostles from the church at Jerusalem lay their hands on them, and offer up prayer for them. Nothing can be more deeply interesting than this fact, when we take into consideration the religious rivalry that had been so long manifested by both. Had not Samaria received this timely lesson of humility, she might have been disposed, once more, to maintain her proud independency of Jerusalem. But the Lord would not have it so. The Samaritans had believed, rejoiced, and were baptized, but they had not received the Holy Ghost. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Identification is the great idea of the laying on of hands, and *unity is* the consequence of the gift of the Holy Ghost. These are immense facts in connection with the progress of the church. Samaria is thus brought into happy association with her ancient rival, and made one with the church at Jerusalem. There is no thought in God's mind of the one assembly being independent of the other. Had they been each blessed separately and independently, their rivalry might have been greater than ever. But it was to be no longer: "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem," but one Head in heaven, one body on earth, one Spirit, one redeemed family worshipping God in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."*

{*See Lecture 6 on Acts 2, 8, 10, 19. *Lectures on the New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.* By W. Kelly.}

For the origin of **the mixed people and worship of Samaria,** see 2 Kings 17. They were but half Jews, though they boasted of their relation to Jacob. They received the five books of Moses as sacred, but undervalued the rest of the Bible. They were circumcised, kept the law after a sort, and were expecting a Messiah to come. The personal visit of the blessed Lord to Samaria is of the deepest and most touching interest. (John 4) The well at which He rested, it is said, "lay in a valley between the two famous mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, on which the law was read. On the latter height stood the rival temple of the Samaritans, which had so long afflicted the more zealous Jews by its daring opposition to the one chosen sanctuary on Mount Moriah."

The Ethiopian Eunuch Receives the Gospel

Philip is now called to leave his happy and interesting work at Samaria, and go down to Gaza - a wilderness - and preach the gospel there to a single person. Surely there is in this fact a lesson for the evangelist of the deepest importance, and one that must not be passed over without a brief notice.

The preacher, in such a scene of awakening and conversion as there was at Samaria, necessarily becomes greatly interested in the work. God is setting His seal on the ministry of the word, and sanctioning the meetings with His presence. The work of the Lord prospers. The evangelist is surrounded with respect and affection, and his children in the faith naturally look up to him for further light and instruction as to their path. How can he leave such a field of labour? many will inquire, Would it be right to leave it? Only, we reply, if the Lord called His servant to do so, as He did in the case of Philip. But how is one to know *now,* seeing that angels and the Spirit do not speak to him as they did to Philip? Though not spoken to in this way, he ought to look for and expect divine guidance. Faith must be his guide. Circumstances are unsafe as a guide; they may rebuke and correct us in our path, but the eye of God must be our guide. "I will guide thee with Mine eye" is the promise, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go." (Ps. 32)

The Lord only knows what is best for His servant and for His work. The evangelist in such a scene would be in danger of feeling his own personal importance. Hence the value, if not the necessity, of changing the place of service.

"Arise," said the angel of the Lord to Philip, "and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went; and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." (Act 8:26-29)

The immediate and unquestioning obedience of Philip at this time is beautiful. He raises no question as to the difference between Samaria and Gaza - between leaving a wide field of labour, and going away to a desert place, to speak to *one person* about salvation. But the Spirit of God was with Philip. And the one desire of the evangelist should ever be to follow the leading of the Spirit. From the want of spiritual discernment a preacher may remain in a place after the Spirit has ceased to work in it, and so labour in vain.

God, in His providence, takes care of His servant; He sends an angel to direct him as to the road he is to take. But when it is a question of the gospel and dealing with souls, the Spirit takes the direction. "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." We know of nothing, in the whole history of the church, more interesting than this scene on the way to Gaza. The angel and the Spirit of God accompany the evangelist: the former representing the providence of God in marking out the very road he is to take; the latter representing spiritual power in direct dealing with souls. As it was then, so is it now; though we are more in the habit of thinking of the guidance of the Spirit, than of the direction of providence May we trust God for everything! He changes not!

The gospel now finds its way, in the person of **the queen's treasurer,** to the centre of Abyssinia. The eunuch believes, is baptized, and goes on his way rejoicing. What he sought for in vain in Jerusalem, and had taken a long journey to seek there, he finds in the desert. Beautiful instance of the grace of the gospel! The lost sheep is found in the wilderness, and living waters spring up in the desert. He is also a beautiful instance of an anxious soul. When alone and unemployed, he reads the prophet Isaiah. He muses on the prophecy of the suffering, unresisting, Lamb of God. But the moment of light and deliverance had come. Philip explains the prophet: the eunuch is taught of God - he believes: immediately desires baptism, and returns to his home, filled with the new joys of salvation. Would he be silent there as to what he had found? Certainly not; a man of such character and influence would have many opportunities of spreading the truth. But as both scripture and history are silent, as to the results of his mission, we venture not further.

The Spirit is still seen in company with Philip and carries him far away. He is found at Azotus, and evangelizes all the cities unto Caesarea.

But a new era in the church's history begins to dawn. A new workman enters the scene, and the most remarkable in many ways that ever served the Lord and His church.

The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

No event in the progress of the church so deeply, or so blessedly, affects her after history, as the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. From being the chief of sinners, he became the chief of saints - from being the most violent opposer of Christ, he became the most zealous defender of the faith - as a hater and persecutor of the name of Jesus on the earth, he was "chief;" all others, compared with him, were subordinate. (Acts 9; 1 Timothy 1)

It is quite evident, from what he says of himself, that he believed Judaism to be not only divine, but God's perpetual and unchangeable religion to man. It would be difficult to account for the strength of his Jewish prejudices on any other principle. Therefore all attempts to set aside the Jews' religion, and to introduce another, he considered to be of the enemy, and to be strenuously opposed. He had heard the noble speech of Stephen - he had witnessed his triumphant death; but his subsequent persecution of the Christians showed that the moral glory of that scene had made no serious impression on his mind. He was blinded by zeal; but zeal for Judaism now was zeal against the Lord. At this very time he was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord."

Hearing that some of the persecuted saints had found a shelter in Damascus, an ancient city of Syria, he made up his mind to go there, and bring them back to Jerusalem as criminals. For this purpose he received letters from the high priest and the estate of the elders, that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem to be punished. (Acts 22, 26) He thus became the very apostle of Jewish malice against the disciples of Jesus; ignorantly, no doubt, but he made himself their willing missionary.

With his mind wrought up to the most violent pitch of persecuting zeal, he sets forth on his memorable journey. Unshaken in his ardent attachment to the religion of Moses, and determined to punish the converts to Christianity, as apostates from the faith of their ancestors, he approaches Damascus. But there, in the full energy of his mad career, the Lord Jesus stops him. A light from heaven, above the light of the sun, shines around him, and overwhelms him in its dazzling brightness. He falls to the earth - broken in will, subdued in mind, humbled in spirit, and altogether changed. His heart is now subject to the voice that speaks to him; he owns its power and authority. Reasoning, extenuation, self-justification, have no place in the presence of the Lord.

A voice from the excellent glory had said unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, **Who art Thou, Lord?** And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Thus the Lord Jesus, though in heaven, declares Himself to be still identified with His disciples on the earth. The oneness of the church with Christ, its Head in heaven, the germ of the blessed truth of the "one body," is folded up in these few words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me?* .... I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." To be at war with the saints is to be at war with the Lord Himself. Blessed truth for the believer, but how solemn for the persecutor!

The vision Saul had seen, and the terrible discovery he had made, completely engross him. He is blind for three days, and can neither eat nor drink. Thus he enters Damascus, blind, broken, humbled, beneath the solemn judgment of the Lord! How different from what he had intended! He now joins himself to the company which he had resolved to exterminate. Nevertheless he enters in by the door, and humbly takes his place with the disciples of the Lord. Ananias, a godly disciple, is sent to comfort him. He receives his sight, he is filled with the Holy Ghost, he is baptized, he receives meat and is strengthened.

It is the thought of some, that the Lord gives in the conversion of Saul, not only a sample of His long-suffering, as in every sinner that is saved, but as a sign of **the future restoration of Israel.** Paul tells us himself, that he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief; and this is the very ground of mercy for Israel in the latter day. As our Lord Himself prayed for them: - "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Peter also, says, "And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Act 3:17)

But as the apostleship of Paul differs in many respects from that of the twelve, it will be necessary to notice it briefly. Unless this difference is understood, the true character of the present dispensation will be but feebly apprehended.

The Apostleship of Paul

The LAW and the PROPHETS were until JOHN; after John the LORD Himself, in His own Person, offers the kingdom to Israel, but "His own received Him not." They crucified the Prince of life, but God raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand in heavenly places. We have next THE TWELVE APOSTLES. They are endued with the Holy Ghost, and bear witness to the resurrection of Christ. But the testimony of the twelve is despised, the Holy Ghost is resisted, Stephen is martyred, the final offer of mercy is rejected, and now the Lord's dealings with Israel as a people close for a season. The scenes of Shiloh are enacted over again, Ichabod is written on Jerusalem, and a new witness is called out, as in the days of Samuel.

THE GREAT APOSTLE of the Gentiles now comes before us. He is as one born out of due time and out of due place. His apostleship had nothing to do with Jerusalem, or with the twelve. It was outside of both. His call was extraordinary and direct from the Lord in heaven. He is privileged to bring out the new thing, the heavenly character of the church - that Christ and the church are one, and that heaven is their common home. (Eph. 2) So long as God was dealing with Israel these blessed truths were kept a secret in His own mind. "Unto me," says Paul, "who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ." (Eph. 3)

There could be no doubt, from the *character of the apostle's call,* as to its divine authority. "Not of men, neither by man," as he says in his Epistle to the Galatians, "but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead." That is, it was "not of men," as to its source, not of any *synod* of official men. "Neither by man" was it, as to the medium through which his commission came. He was not only a saint, but an apostle, by calling: and that call was by Jesus Christ, and God the Father Who raised Him from the dead. In some respects his apostleship was even of a higher order than that of the twelve. *They* had been called by Jesus when on the earth; *he* had been called by the *risen* and *glorified* Christ in heaven. And, his call being thus from heaven, he wanted neither the sanction nor the recognition of the other apostles. "But when it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus." (Gal 1:15; Gal 1:17)

The **manner of Saul's call** to be an apostle is worthy of special note, as it struck at the root of Jewish pride, and may also be viewed as the deathblow to the vain notion of apostolic succession. The apostles, whom the Lord had chosen and appointed when He was on the earth, were neither the source nor the channel, in any way, of Saul's appointment. They did not cast lots for him, as they did in the case of Matthias. *Then* they were scarcely off Jewish ground, which may account for their deciding by lot. It was an ancient form in Israel of discovering the divine will in such matters. But these emphatic words, "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ," completely exclude the intervention of man in every shape and way. Apostolic succession is set aside. We are *saints by calling and servants by calling.* And that call must come from heaven. Paul stands before us as the true pattern for all preachers of the gospel, and for all ministers of the word. Nothing can be more simple than the ground he takes as a preacher, great apostle though he was. "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written I believed, and therefore have I spoken; *we also believe, and therefore speak.* (2Co 4:13)

Immediately after he was baptized and strengthened, he began to confess his faith in the Lord Jesus, and to preach in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. This is a new thing. Peter preached that He had been exalted to the right hand of God - that He had been made both Lord and Christ, but Paul preaches the higher doctrine of His personal glory - "that He is the Son of God." In Matthew 16, Christ is revealed by the Father to the disciples, as "the Son of the living God." But now He is revealed, not only *to* Paul, but in Paul. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me," he says. But who is sufficient to speak of the privileges and blessings of those to whom the Son of God is thus revealed? The dignity and security of the church rest on this blessed truth; and also the gospel of the glory, which was especially entrusted to Paul, and which he calls "my gospel."

"On the Son thus revealed within," as one has sweetly said "hangs everything that is peculiar to the calling and glory of the church - her holy prerogatives - acceptance in the Beloved with forgiveness of sins through His blood - entrance into the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so as to have made known to us the mystery of the will of God - future inheritance in and with Him in whom all things in heaven and earth are to be gathered - and the present seal and earnest of this inheritance is the Holy Ghost. This bright roll of privileges is inscribed by the apostle, thus - 'spiritual blessings in the heavenlies;' and so they are; blessings through the Spirit flowing from and linking us with Him who is the Lord in the heavens."* (Eph 1:3-14)

{*See fuller details on this subject, by J.G.B., *Christian Witness,* vol. 4, page 221; and by W.K., *Lectures on Galatians,* chap. 1.}

But **the doctrine of the church -** this mystery of love, and grace, and privilege - was not revealed until Paul declared it. The Lord had spoken of it as that which the presence of the Comforter was to effect, saying, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." And again, when He said to the disciples after the resurrection, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God." Of this "bright roll" of blessing Paul was especially and characteristically the apostle.

We must now leave the history of Saul for a little, and turn to Peter, who occupies the field until Saul commences his public ministry in Acts 13.

04 Missionaries of the Cross

Chapter 4

The Missionaries of the Cross

In place of going over consecutively the remaining chapters of **the Acts,** we think it may be more interesting and equally instructive to our readers, to consider them in connection with the history of the apostles, especially with the history of the two *great* apostles. The book of the Acts is almost entirely occupied with **the acts of Peter and of Paul,** though of course under the guidance of the Holy Ghost: the one, as the great apostle of the Jews; the other, as the great apostle of the Gentiles. But we would also embrace the present opportunity, briefly to notice the first personally chosen companions and missionaries of our blessed Lord-the twelve apostles.

But before attempting an outline of these interesting lives it may be well to state the object we have in view in doing so We are stepping a little out of the usual course. In none of the Church Histories that we know are the lives of the apostles presented in a regular form; and we think it strange that the great founders of the church should have no place in its history. We have also noticed with some surprise that most of the histories close with the commencement of the Reformation. Surely this is the brightest day in her history-at least since the days of **Constantine**-and the one above all others in which the Spirit of God wrought mightily; and thus ought to be the most special part of her history.

At the same time, with regard to the apostles, we have to bear in mind, that beyond the sacred narrative, there is very little known that can be relied upon. The traditional and the scriptural, the certain and the uncertain, are almost helplessly blended together in the writings of the Fathers. Every distinct ray of historical light we greatly value, but it is only to the scriptures that we can turn with certainty. Still, the few scattered notices which we have there, of some of the apostles, with what may be gathered elsewhere, when brought together may give the reader a view of the person and individuality of the apostle, which he never had before. Others, of note, besides the apostles, will come before us in connection with them, especially with Paul; so that our readers will have, in a convenient form, a brief outline of nearly all the noble preachers, teachers, confessors, and martyrs of the Lord Jesus spoken of in the New Testament.

The Twelve Apostles

were **Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John** (sons of Zebedee), **Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James** (the son of Alphaeus), **Thaddeus, Simon Zelotes, and Matthias,** who was chosen in place of Judas Iscariot. See Matthew 10; Luke 6, Mark 3, and Acts 1.

Paul was also an apostle by the Lord's direct call, and that in the highest sense, as we have seen. There were others who were called apostles, but soon were more especially the apostles of the churches. The twelve and Paul were pre-eminently the apostles of the Lord. Compare 2Co 8:23, Php 2:25; Rom 16:7.

The official name, **"apostle,"** signifies one "sent forth." "These twelve Jesus *sent forth."* This name was given to the twelve by the Lord Himself. "He called unto Him His disciples; and of them He chose twelve, whom also He called apostles." A personal acquaintance with the whole ministerial course of the Lord, was the original and a necessary qualification of an apostle. This was stated by Peter before the election of a successor to the traitor Judas. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of the resurrection." By this close personal intercourse with the Lord, they were particularly suited to be the witnesses of His earthly path. He describes them Himself as "they which have continued with Me in My temptations." (Luk 22:28)

The number twelve, we believe, distinctly marks their relation to the twelve tribes of Israel. The fancies of **the Fathers,** as to the meaning of the *number* here chosen, show how little their minds were governed by the immediate context. St. Augustine "thinks our Lord herein had respect to the four quarters of the world, which were to be called by the preaching of the gospel, and which, being multiplied by three, as denoting the Trinity, make twelve." From not seeing the distinction between Israel and the church, there is much confusion in such writers.

The number twelve in scripture we understand to mean *administrative completeness in man.* Hence the twelve tribes, and the twelve apostles, and the promise to the latter, that they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mat 19:28) But here, in plainest terms, the Lord limits the mission of the twelve to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They were not even to visit the Samaritans, nor to go in the way of the Gentiles. **The mission was strictly Jewish.** "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. " Surely nothing could possibly be plainer. The calling out of the church is not here referred to. This took place after, when another and an extraordinary apostle was chosen, with a special view to the Gentiles. *Then* the twelve would have their own place in the church, but Paul was its divinely called and qualified minister.

The general notion that the twelve were altogether illiterate, we cannot agree with. The expression **"unlearned and ignorant men,"** as used by the council in Act 4:13, we understand as simply denoting persons in private stations of life, who had not been taught in the rabbinical learning and traditions of the Jews. Our term "laymen" would convey the same idea; that is, men of ordinary education, as contrasted with those who have been specially trained in the schools of the learned; or men not in "holy orders." Thus Peter and John may have been thoroughly acquainted with the holy scriptures, and with the history of their country and people and yet be considered by the council as "unlearned and ignorant men." James and John at least had all the advantages of a godly and devoted mother's training, which has often done great things for the church of God.

We will now glance briefly at the twelve, and first in order is the apostle

Peter. There can be no doubt that Peter held the first place among the twelve. The Lord gave him this position. He is first named in every list of the apostles. This precedence we know, did not arise from his having known the Lord first for he was neither first nor last in this respect. Andrew, and probably John, knew the Lord before Peter. Let us here note with deepest interest, the first meeting of those friends who were to be united for ever. See Joh 1:29-51.

John the Baptist bears testimony to Jesus as the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. Two of John's disciples leave him and go with Jesus. "One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, *We have found the Messias,* which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus." This was Peter's first introduction to the Lord-to one who was to be the source of his happiness for ever. And how significant their first interview! "And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." Naturally impulsive, quick in seizing an object, but too ready to relinquish it by the force of another impression, he has in the Lord's grace firmness given him; though every now and then his natural character shines out.

The first thing that brings Peter into great prominence is his noble confession of Christ, as **the Son of the living God.** (Matt. 16) The Lord then honoured him with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and gave him the chief place among his brethren. But this part of Peter's history, with some of the early chapters of the Acts, we have already considered; therefore we will only refer to what has not been touched upon.

The fourth chapter of the Acts we have not alluded to; though we are disposed to think that it presents the brightest day in the apostle's history, as the baptism of Cornelius presents the crowning day in his ministry. As there is often displayed in the great apostle a mixture of strength and weakness of excellencies and defects, it is deeply interesting to trace his path through the first storms which assailed the infant church. But we must not forget that the grand secret of the boldness, wisdom, and power of the apostles, was not owing to their natural character, but to **the presence of the Holy Ghost.** He was *with* them and *in* them, and working by them. **The Holy Ghost was the strength of their testimony.**

Notice in particular the blessed effects of His presence in *four* distinct aspects. 1. In the **courage** displayed by Peter and the others. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the Head of the comer. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The great and solemn question between God and the rulers of Israel is here *formally stated.* Nothing can be plainer. The testimony of God is no longer with the rulers of the temple, but with the apostles of the exalted Messiah.

2. In His presence **with** the disciples as an assembly. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." This verse clearly teaches what has been so often said, as to the Spirit being *with* the disciples and *in* them. The place was *shaken* where they were assembled together; this proves His presence *with* them. But they were also *filled* with the Holy Ghost-so filled, we believe, that for the time being, there was no room for the flesh to act.

3. In **great power** as to service. "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." Readiness and energy now characterize the apostles.

4. In whole-hearted **devotedness.** "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet." In chapter two the rich gave to the poor themselves: a thing which can scarcely be done without adding importance to the giver. But in chapter four the rich laid their money at the apostles' feet. This fact we would accept as a sure sign of increased humility, and of greater devotedness.

It is also in this full and instructive chapter that we have the famous answer of Peter and John to the council. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." From that day until now, the true confessors of the name of Jesus have found in these words a suitable answer to their inquisitors and oppressors. What a difference, we may exclaim, between the man who sat by the fire in the hall of the high priest, and **the man who takes the lead in Acts 4**-between the man who fell before the assault of a maid, and the man who makes a nation tremble with his appeals! But how is the difference to be accounted for? some may ask. The presence and power of an ungrieved, unquenched Holy Spirit explains it fully. And the weakness or power of many in our day is to be accounted for on the same principle. The Spirit of God alone is power in the Christian. May we know the blessedness of living, walking working, in the saving and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit! "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph 4:30)

We are now come to the last section in the sacred narrative of the history of Peter. From verse 32 of chapter 9 to verse 18 of chapter 11 we have an account of his preaching and working miracles. There we see him once more in full apostolic authority, and the Holy Ghost working with him. His mission at this time was greatly blessed, both in the towns of Israel, and at Caesarea. The whole **town of Lydda** and the **district of Saron** appear to have been awakened. The miracles which Peter wrought, and the gospel which he preached, were used of God for the conversion of many. Thus we read, "And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron turned to the Lord." The blessing was general. "Turning to the Lord" is the scriptural idea of conversion. And at Joppa also, through the raising of Dorcas, there was a great stir and great blessing. "And it was known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord."

In chapter 10-which we have already considered-the Gentiles are brought into the church. And now, Peter having finished his mission in these quarters, he returns to Jerusalem. After the account of his deliverance from the power of Herod in chapter 12, we have no continuous history of the apostle of the circumcision.

As **Herod Agrippa,** the Idumean king, comes so prominently before us here, it may be well to notice the part he takes. He professed great zeal for the law of Moses, and maintained a certain respect towards its outward observance. He was therefore ready with a pretended pious zeal to side with the Jews against the disciples of Christ. This was his policy. He was a type of the adversary king.

It was **about A.D. 44,** that Herod sought to ingratiate himself with his Jewish subjects, by persecuting the unoffending Christians. Not that there was any love between Herod and the Jews, for they hated each other heartily; but here they united, as both hating the heavenly testimony. Herod killed James with the sword and cast Peter into prison. It was his wicked intention to keep him there till after the passover, and then, when a great many Jews from all parts would be in Jerusalem, to make a public spectacle of his execution. But God preserved and delivered His servant in answer to the prayers of the saints. They have weapons of warfare which the governments of this world know nothing of. God allowed James to seal his testimony with his blood; but Peter He preserved for further testimony on the earth. Thus our God rules over all. He is the Governor among the nations, whatever the pride and will of man may be. Power belongeth unto Him. Feeble indeed is the power of every enemy when He interferes. Herod, being baffled and confounded by the manifestations of a power which he could not understand, condemns the keepers of the prison to death, and leaves Jerusalem. But he little thought that his own death was to precede that of his prisoners.

At **Caesarea,** the Gentile seat of his authority, he ordered a splendid festival in honour of the Emperor Claudius. Multitudes, we are informed, of the highest rank flocked from all quarters. On the second morning of the festivities the king appeared in a silver robe of great splendour, which glittered with the rays of the sun, so as to dazzle the eyes of the whole assembly, and excite general admiration. When making an oration to the people from his throne, some of his flatterers raised a shout, "It is the voice of a god!" In place of repressing this impious adulation, which spread through the theatre, Herod accepted it. But a sense of **God's judgment** at that very moment pierced the heart of the king. In tones of deep melancholy he said, "Your god will soon suffer the common lot of mortality." In the forcible language of scripture, it is said, "And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." He was then seized with violent internal pains, and carried from the theatre to his palace. There he lingered five days, and died in the greatest agony, and in the most humiliating and loathsome state of body.

The Herodian Line of Kings

As it may not be out of place here, or uninteresting to our readers, we would notice for a moment the **Herodian** *line of kings.* They frequently come before us, both in the life of our Lord, and in the early history of the church. We have associated in our minds, from early youth, the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem and Herod, king of Judaea; though it is somewhat remarkable that Josephus, the principal historian of Herod, takes no notice of this event. It is generally thought, that the murder of a few children, in an obscure village, compared with Herod's other deeds of blood, was too unimportant in the eyes of Josephus to be recorded. But not so in the mind of God: both the deceit and cruelty of the treacherous heart of the king are recorded in the sacred narrative. The eye of God watched over the "Child born" unto Israel-the only source of hope for all nations. The cruel design of Herod was thus defeated.

Herod the Great, the first Idumean king over Israel, received the kingdom from the senate of Rome through the influence of Mark Antony. This took place about thirty-five years before the birth of Christ, and about thirty-seven before his own death. These Idumeans were a branch of the ancient Edomites, who, while the Jews were in the Babylonish captivity, and their land lay desolate, took possession of as much of the southern part of it, as contained what had been the whole inheritance of the tribe of Simeon, and also half of that which had been the inheritance of the tribe of Judah; and there they dwelt ever after. In course of time, the Idumeans were conquered by John Hyrcanus, and brought over to Judaism. After their conversion, they received circumcision, submitted to the Jewish laws, and became incorporated with the Jewish nation. In this way they became Jews, though not of the ancient stock of Israel. This happened about one hundred and twenty-nine years before Christ. They were bold, crafty, and cruel as princes: they had great political foresight, courted the favour of Rome, and cared only for the establishment of their own dynasty. But, as God would have it, with the destruction of Jerusalem, the Idumean dynasty passed away, and even the very name of Herod seems to have perished from among the nations.

Besides **the slaughter of the children in Bethlehem,** which took place shortly before Herod's death, he had deeply imbrued his hands in the blood of his own family, and in the blood of many noble persons of the Asmonean line. His cruel jealousy towards that heroic family never slumbered. But one of his last acts was to sign the death warrant of his own son. When dying under the signal judgment of God, like his grandson, Herod Agrippa, he raised himself up in his bed gave the mandate for **the execution of Antipater,** named **Archelaus** as his successor to the throne, fell back, and expired.

Thus, alas! have monarchs often died, dispensing death on the one hand, and kingdoms on the other. But, what then? In the naked reality of their own moral condition they must stand before the tribunal of God. The purple can no longer shield them. Inflexible righteousness rules on that throne. Judged according to the deeds done in the body, they must be banished beyond the *"gulf"* which God's judgment has *"fixed"* for ever. But, oh! there to remember, in torment every moment of their past history - the privileges they have abused, the opportunities they have lost, and all the evil they have done. May the Lord save every soul that glances at these pages, from the awful weight of these words - *remember - tormented - fixed.* They describe and characterise the future state of impenitent souls. (Luke 16)

The sect of the Herodians may have been the partisans of Herod, and chiefly political in their character, their main object being the maintenance of the national independence of the Jews, in the face of Roman power and ambition. They may have thought to use Herod for the accomplishing of this end. In the Gospel history they are represented as acting *craftily* towards the blessed Lord, and in concert with the Pharisees. (Mat 22:15-16; Mar 12:13-14)

But we must now return to the history of our apostle.

In Acts 15 after an absence of about five years, **Peter again appears;** but during that time we know nothing of his abode or of his work. He takes an active part in the assembly at Jerusalem, and seems to have retained his original place among the apostles and elders.

Peter at Antioch

Soon after this, as we learn from Galatians 2, he paid a visit to Antioch. But notwithstanding the decision of the apostles and church at Jerusalem, a characteristic weakness of Peter's betrays him into an act of dissimulation. It is one thing to settle a question in principle, it is quite another to carry it out in practice. Peter had actually stated in the assembly before them all that the gospel which Paul had preached, by the revelation given to him, was no less a blessing to the Jew than to the Gentile. And while *alone* at Antioch, he acted on this principle, walking in the liberty of the heavenly truth and eating with the Gentiles. But when certain Jewish-minded Christians came down from James, he no longer dared to use this liberty: "He withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation." "What a poor thing is man!" exclaims one. "And we are weak in proportion to our importance before men, when we are nothing, we can do all things, as far as human opinion is concerned.... Paul, energetic and faithful, through grace, alone remains upright; and he rebukes Peter before them all."

From this time, **A.D. 49 or 50,** his name does not again appear in the Acts of the Apostles; and we have no certain knowledge of the sphere of his labours. But, as he inscribes his first Epistle to the Hebrew Christians, "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," he is supposed to have laboured in these countries. His second Epistle is of a much later date, and must have been written shortly before his death. This we learn from what he says in the first chapter: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." (See Joh 21:18-19)

The exact date of **Peter's visit to Rome** has been a subject of great controversy between Catholic and Protestant writers in all ages. But it may now be considered as a settled point, that he did not visit that city till near the end of his life. The date of his martyrdom is also uncertain. Most probably it took place about A.D. 67 or 68, and about the seventieth year of his age. **The burning of Rome by Nero** is dated by Tacitus about the month of July, 64. The persecution against the Christians broke out soon after; and it was under this persecution that our apostle was honoured with the crown of martyrdom.

He was **sentenced to be crucified,** as the most severe and shameful death. But when he looked on the cross, he entreated the favour of the officers that he might not be crucified in the ordinary way, but that he might suffer with his head downwards: affirming that he was unworthy to suffer in the same posture as his blessed Lord and Master had done before him. His request being granted, he was crucified with his head downwards. Whether this be a fact or a mere legend, it well agrees with the fervent temperament and the deep humility of the great apostle.*

{*See Cave's *Lives of the Apostles;* Burton's *Ecclesiastical History;* Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible.*}

In following the catalogue already given, we next notice the apostle-

Andrew. The sacred historian has been very full and copious in describing the acts of Peter, but very sparing in his accounts of his brother **Andrew.** He was brought up with Peter to his father's trade, and continued at his occupation until he was called by the Lord to become a "fisher of men."

Andrew, like other young men of Galilee, had become a disciple of John the Baptist. But on hearing his master a second time speak of Jesus as the Lamb of God, he left John to follow Jesus. He was, immediately after this, the means of bringing his brother Peter to his new Master. So far, he has the honour of being the first of the apostles who pointed to Christ. (John 1) He comes before us in the sixth and in the twelfth of John, and in the thirteenth of Mark, but, beyond these few scattered notices, scripture relates nothing concerning him. His name does not appear in the acts of the Apostles, except in the first chapter.

Conjecture and tradition have said many things about him but it is only of fairly established facts that we would speak. He is said to have preached in Scythia, and to have travelled over Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, and to have **suffered martyrdom at Patrae in Achaia.** His cross, it is said, was formed of two pieces of wood crossing each other in the middle, in the form of the letter **X**, hence usually known by the name of St. Andrew's cross. He died praying and exhorting the people to constancy and perseverance in the faith. The year in which he suffered is uncertain.

From the two brothers, Peter and Andrew, we now proceed to the two brothers, **James and John.** The four had also been partners in business. And first in order we notice

James. Zebedee and his two sons, James and John, were following their usual occupation on the sea of Galilee, when Jesus passed that way. Seeing the two brothers, "He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him." Peter and Andrew were also there. It was on this occasion that the Lord desired Peter to launch out into deeper water, and try another cast for fish. Peter inclines to reason: they had been very unsuccessful the previous night. Nevertheless, at the Lord's word, the net was let down. "And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake." Astonished and overwhelmed at this draught, Peter beckoned to his partners to come and help in landing the fish caught.

Full conviction was now wrought in the minds of those four young men, that Jesus was the true Messiah. They may have had doubts before, they have none now. At the call of Jesus they leave all, and become, once and for ever, His disciples. Henceforward they were to become "fishers of men." In every list we have of the apostles, these four noble men are placed first; they stand at the head of the twelve throughout. (Mat 4:17-20; Mar 1:16-20; Luk 5:1-11)

This is the call of James to the *discipleship;* about a year after this he is called to the *apostleship* with his eleven brethren. (Matt. 10, Mark 3; Luke 6; Acts 1)

Peter, James and John, and **occasionally Andrew,** were always and most intimate companions of the blessed Lord. The *first three* only were admitted to the raising of Jairus' daughter. (Mark 5; Luke 8) The same three apostles were alone permitted to be present at the transfiguration. (Matt. 17, Mark 9, Luke 9) It was the same three that witnessed His agony in Gethsemane. (Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22) But the four, Peter, James, John and Andrew, are joined together when they ask the Lord privately about the destruction of the temple. (Mark 13)

Like the change in Peter's name, or the addition to it, the sons of Zebedee are surnamed *Boanerges,* or **"the sons of thunder."** Great boldness and faithfulness may have singled out James to Herod, as the first to be seized and silenced. It is not a little remarkable that "the son of thunder" and the "rock-man" are the first to be apprehended. But James has the honour to be the first of the apostles that received the crown of martyrdom, A.D. 44. Peter was rescued by a miracle.

A mother's jealousy and her sons' ambition lead Salome to ask for very distinguished places in the kingdom for her two sons. The Lord allowed the petition to pass with a very mild reproof, but told the brothers that they should drink of His cup, and be baptized with His baptism. James was early called upon to realise this prediction. After the ascension he is seen in company with the other apostles in Acts 1. Then he disappears from the sacred narrative until his apprehension and death in **Acts 12.** And there we are simply told, in the brief language of the inspired historian, that Herod the king killed James the brother of John with the sword

Clement of Alexandria relates a tradition concerning **James's martyrdom,** which is not an unlikely thing to have occurred. As he was led forth to the place of execution the soldier or officer that had guarded him to the tribunal, or rather his accuser, was so moved by the courage and bold confession of James at the time of his trial, that he repented of what he had done, and came and fell down at the apostle's feet, and begged forgiveness for what he had said against him. James, after a little surprise at the thing, raised him up embraced and kissed him; and said, "Peace, my son, peace be to thee, and the pardon of thy faults." Whereupon, before all, he publicly professed himself to be a Christian, and so both were beheaded at the same time. Thus fell James, the apostolic proto-martyr, cheerfully taking that cup which he had long since told his Lord that he was ready to drink of.*

{*See Cave's *Life of St. James the Great.*}

John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the younger brother of James. Though his father was a fisherman, it appears from the Gospel narrative that they were in good circumstances. Some of the ancients speak of the family as wealthy, and even as nobly connected. But these traditions are not reconcilable with the facts of scripture. We read however, of their "hired servants," and they may have owned more vessels than one. And Salome we doubt not was one of those honoured women who ministered to the Lord of her substance. And John had a house of his own (Luk 8:3; Joh 19:27) We may safely infer from these facts; that their position was considerably above poverty. As many have gone to extremes in speaking of the apostles as *poor* and *illiterate,* we think it well to notice the few hints of scripture on these subjects.

Of the character of Zebedee we know nothing. He made no objection to his sons leaving him at the call of the Messiah. But we hear no more of him afterwards. We frequently find the mother in company with her sons, but no mention of the father. The probability is that he died soon after the call of his sons.

The evangelist Mark, in enumerating the twelve apostles (Mar 3:17), when he mentions James and John, says that our Lord "surnamed them **Boanerges,** which is, **Sons of Thunder**." What our Lord particularly intended to convey in this title, is not easily determined. Conjectures there have been many. Some suppose that it was because these two brothers were of a more furious and resolute disposition, and of a more fierce and fiery temper than the rest of the apostles. But we see no ground for such a conjecture in the Gospel history. Doubtless, on one or two occasions their zeal was intemperate. but that was before they understood the spirit of their calling. More probably our Lord so surnamed them, as prophetic of their burning zeal in openly and boldly proclaiming the great truths of the gospel, after they became fully acquainted with them. Certain we are, that John in company with Peter, in the early chapters of the Acts, displayed a courage that feared no threatenings, and was daunted by no opposition.

John is supposed to have been the youngest of all the apostles, and, judging from his writings he appears to have been possessed of a disposition singularly affectionate, mild, and amiable. He was characterised as **"the disciple whom Jesus loved."** On various occasions he was admitted to free and intimate intercourse with the Lord. (John 13)

"What distinguished John," says **Neander,** "was the union of the most opposite qualities, as we have often observed in great instruments of the advancement of the kingdom of God - the union of a disposition inclined to silent and deep meditation, with an ardent zeal, though not impelling to great and diversified activity in the outward world; not a passionate zeal, such as we suppose filled the breast of Paul before his conversion. But there was also a love, not soft and yielding, but one seizing with all its might, and firmly retaining the object to which it was directed - vigorously repelling whatever would disgrace this object, or attempt to wrest it from its possession; and this was his leading characteristic."

As the history of John is so intimately connected with the histories of Peter and James, which we have already gone over, we may now be very brief. These three names are seldom separated in the Gospel history. But there is one scene in which John stands alone, and which ought to be noted. He was the only apostle who followed Jesus to the place of His crucifixion. And there he was specially honoured with the regard and confidence of his Master. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman. behold thy Son! then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." (Joh 19:26-27)

After the ascension of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, John became one of the chief apostles of the circumcision. But his ministry goes down to the end of the first century. **With his death the apostolic age naturally closes.**

There is a widely spread and generally received tradition that John remained in Judaea till after the death of the virgin Mary. The date of this event is uncertain. But soon after he proceeded to Asia Minor. Here he planted and watched over several churches in different cities, but made **Ephesus** his centre. Thence he was banished to the **Isle of Patmos** towards the close of **Domitian's reign.** There he wrote the Revelation. (Rev 1:9) On his liberation from exile, by the accession of Nerva to the imperial throne, John returned to Ephesus, where he wrote his Gospel and Epistles. He died about A.D. 100, in the third year of the emperor Trajan, and about one hundred years of age.*

{*See Horne's *Introduction to the New Testament.*}

From the many **traditions about John** himself, we select only one, which we think the most interesting, and the most likely to be true. As one who was unwearied in his love and care for the souls of men, he was deeply grieved by the apostasy of a young man in whom he had taken a special interest. When revisiting the place where he left him, he heard that he had joined a band of robbers and had become their captain. His love for him was so great that he determined to find him out. He hastened to the retreat of the robbers suffered himself to be seized, and begged to be taken into their captain's presence. When he saw the venerable appearance of the aged apostle, his conscience was awakened. The recollection of earlier days was more than he could stand, and he fled in consternation from his presence. But John, full of paternal love, hastened after him. He entreated him to repent and return to the church, and encouraged him by the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins in the name of the Lord Jesus. His marvellous affection for the young man and his deep concern for his soul, completely overcame him. He repented, returned, was restored, and afterwards became a worthy member of the christian community. May we seek to do likewise in restoring backsliders!

We now come to what we may call the second group of four apostles; and, just as Peter heads the first group, the second is headed by the apostle

Philip. In the first three Gospels he is placed in this order. He is mentioned as being of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. (Joh 1:44) It is more than probable that he was among the Galileans of that district who flocked to hear the preaching of John the Baptist. Though no part of Palestine was spoken of in such terms of reproach as Galilee, it was from these despised but simple, earnest, and devoted Galileans that our Lord chose His apostles. "Search and look," said the Pharisees, "for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." But sweeping statements, generally speaking, are untrue. "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" is a sample of their character.

Nothing is said in the Gospel history of Philip's parents or occupation. Most likely he was **a fisherman,** the general trade of that place. From the similarity of language used by Philip and Andrew, and their being repeatedly mentioned together, we may conclude that our apostle, and the sons of Jonas and Zebedee, were intimate friends, and that they were all looking and waiting for the expected Messiah. But in the whole circle of our Lord's disciples Philip has the honour of being first called. The *first three* had come to Christ, and conversed with Him before Philip, but afterwards they returned to their occupation, and were not called to follow the Lord for about a year after. But Philip was called at once. "The day following," we read, "Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him **Follow me."** These words, so full of meaning and rich blessing to the soul, "Follow me," (we believe) were first said to Philip. When the twelve were specially set apart for their office, he was numbered among them.

Immediately after his call, he **finds Nathanael** and leads him to Jesus. It is evident, from the glad surprise which breathes in his information, that they had spoken together of these things before. His heart was now well assured of their truth; hence the joy expressed in these words, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." There is **an evident earnest-heartedness** about Philip, though little is said of him in the Gospels. Our last interview with him, like the first, is deeply interesting. Having heard the Lord repeatedly refer to His Father in John 12, 13, & 14, He manifested a strong desire to know more of the Father. The pathetic words of our Lord about His Father appear to have made a deep impression on His heart; and little wonder. "Father, save Me from this hour"; "Father, glorify Thy name"; "In My Father's house are many mansions, " are sayings which, we doubt not, sank deep in all the disciples' hearts. But there is a beautiful simplicity about Philip, though lacking in intelligence. "Philip saith unto Him, Lord **show us the Father,** and it sufficeth us." There is evident reproof, if not reproach, in the Lord's reply to Philip. "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? **he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;** and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very works' sake." There had been the revelation of the Father in His own Person, and He ought to have known Him. He had now been a long time with His disciples, and they ought to have seen that He was in the Father, and the Father in Him, and thus have known where He was going, for He was going to the Father. They had both the *"words"* and the *"works"* of the Son, to convince them that the Father dwelt in Him. They had heard His words, they had seen His works, they had witnessed His character; and these things were fitted and intended to bring the Father before them. His own Person was the answer to every question. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He was the way - the only way to the Father. He was the truth; the truth as to every one and everything, as they are, is only known by Him. He is the life - "that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." But it is only by the teaching and power of the Spirit that He who is "the way, the truth, and the life," is known and enjoyed. And there must be subjection of heart to Christ, if we would know the teaching of the Spirit.

After this deeply interesting and instructive conversation with the Lord, all is uncertain as to Philip's history - his name disappears from the Gospel narrative. He has his own place in the catalogue, **Act 1:13.** Tradition has so frequently confounded Philip the evangelist with Philip the apostle, that all is uncertain. No doubt his remaining years were spent in devoted service to his Lord and Saviour, but where it is difficult to say. Some think that Upper Asia was the scene of his early labours, and that in the latter period of his life he came to Hierapolis in Phrygia, where he suffered **a cruel martyrdom.**

Bartholomew. It has been very generally believed both by ancients and moderns, that the history of Bartholomew lies concealed under another name. That he was one of the twelve apostles is perfectly clear from the Gospel narrative, though nothing more is said of him than the bare mention of his name. In the first three Gospels Philip and Bartholomew are mentioned together; in John's Gospel, it is Philip and Nathanael. This circumstance has given rise to a very common conjecture, that these are but different names for the same person. Nothing was more common than this among the Jews. For example, Simon Peter is called "Bar-jona," which simply means - the son of Jona. "Bar-timeus" again, means the son of Timeus; and "Bar-tholomew" is a name of the same class. These are merely *relative,* not *proper,* names. From this custom being so general among the Jews, it is often extremely difficult to *identify* persons in the Gospel history.

Assuming, then, **that Nathanael of John is the Bartholomew of the synoptical Gospels,** we proceed with what we know of his history. Like the rest of the apostles, he was a Galilean; he was "of Cana in Galilee." We have seen in a former paper, that he was first conducted by Philip to Christ. On his approach, he was greeted by the Lord with the most honourable distinction, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." He was, no doubt, a man of true simplicity and integrity of character; and one that "waited for redemption in Israel." Surprised at our Lord's most gracious salutation, and wondering how He could know him at first sight, "Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the figtree, I saw thee." Solemn, yet blessed thought! he stood before One - a man - in this world, who knew the secrets of his heart and ways. Nathanael was now fully convinced of the absolute deity of the Messiah, and owns Him in His higher glory as "the Son of God" as well as "the king of Israel."

The character of **Nathanael and his call** are considered by many as **typical of the remnant of Israel** without guile in the latter day. The allusion to the fig-tree - the well-known symbol of Israel - confirms this view of the passage; and so does his beautiful testimony, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." The spared remnant, seen and known by the Lord, will thus confess their faith in Him, as the prophets most fully show. And all those who thus own the Messiah shall see His universal glory as the Son of man according to Psalm 8. That coming day of widespread glory is anticipated by our Lord in His concluding remarks to Nathanael: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Then will the heavens and the earth be joined together, as if by Jacob's ladder. But we must now return to the direct history of our apostle.

The most distinct and conclusive passage as to his apostleship is John 21. There we find him in company with the other apostles, to whom our Lord appeared at the Sea of Tiberias after His resurrection. "There were together Simon Peter and Thomas called Didymus, and *Nathanael of Cana in Galilee,* and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples," who probably were Andrew and Philip.

There is a generally received tradition, that Bartholomew travelled **as far as India preaching the gospel -** probably to that part of India which lies nearest to Asia. After travelling in different places, seeking to spread Christianity, he at last, reached **Albanople in Armenia the Great,** a place overgrown with idolatry. There he was arrested in the midst of his labours by the governor of the place, and **condemned to be crucified.** The date is not certainly known.

Matthew - called also Levi, the son of Alpheus; but not the same person, we believe, as Alpheus the father of James. (Mat 10:3; Mar 2:14; Luk 5:27-29) Though a Roman officer, he was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," and probably a Galilean, but of what city or tribe we are not informed. Before his call to follow the Messiah, he was a publican, or tax-gatherer, under the Romans. He seems to have been stationed at **Capernaum,** a maritime town on the Sea of Galilee. He was what we should call a **custom-house officer.** It was in this capacity that Jesus found him. When He passed by, He saw him "sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him." But before proceeding with the history of Matthew, we would say a few words on the character of his occupation, as it is so frequently mentioned in the New Testament, and is really a generic term.

Publicans, properly so called, were persons who farmed the Roman taxes or revenue. They were, usually, persons of wealth and credit. It was considered among the Romans an honourable position, and generally conferred on Roman knights. Sabinus (it is said, father of the Emperor Vespasian), was the publican of the Asiatic provinces. They employed under them inferior officers, and these, generally, were natives of the provinces in which the taxes were collected; to this class Matthew no doubt belonged.

These petty officers were everywhere notorious for their fraudulent exactions; but to the Jews they were especially odious. The Jews looked upon themselves as a freeborn people and that they had this privilege direct from God Himself. "We be Abraham's seed," was their boast, "and were never in bondage to any man." Consequently, **the Roman tax gatherers** were the visible proofs of their slavery, and of the degraded state of their nation. This was the chain that galled them, and betrayed them into many acts of rebellion against the Romans. Hence it was that publicans were abhorred by the Jews. They looked upon them as traitors and apostates, and as the ready tools of the oppressor. Besides, they were most arbitrary and unjust in their taxations; and having the law on their side, they could enforce payment. It was in their power to examine each case of goods exported or imported, and to assess the alleged value in the most vexatious way. We may gather, from what John said to them, that they overcharged whenever they had an opportunity. "And He said unto them Exact no more than that which is appointed you." (Luk 3:13) See also the case of **Zaccheus.** (Luk 19:9)

Surely these things were more than enough to bring the whole class into the greatest detestation everywhere. But we will confine ourselves to what we learn of them in the New Testament. The spirit of truth never exaggerates. There we find them classed with *sinners* (Mat 9:11; Mat 11:19); with *harlots* (Mat 21:31-32), with *heathen.* (Mat 18:17) As a class, they were regarded as outside, not only from the privileges of the sanctuary, but from the privileges of civil society. And yet, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, their ranks furnished some of the earliest disciples both of John and of our Lord. They had less hypocrisy than those who were esteemed better; they had no conventional morality, and they had no false religion to unlearn. These things may be fairly argued from the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. (Luke 18) Conventional goodness is a great hindrance to the soul's salvation. It is difficult for such to take the place of a lost, ruined sinner, that grace may have a free course and do her blessed, saving, gracious work. He who would be justified of God, must take the publican's place, and offer up **the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."** We now return to the history of our apostle.

With great readiness Matthew obeyed the call of Jesus. His lucrative situation was at once given up; and his conversion, so thorough and manifest, was accompanied with much blessing to others. There was a great awakening and interest among his own class. "And Levi made a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and others that sat down with them." A feast is the symbol of joy and rejoicing - the immediate effect of a hearty surrender to Christ. It is worthy of note that in his own Gospel he gives his well-known name, but neither of the other evangelists speaks of "Matthew the publican." Along with the others he was chosen one of the twelve. From that time he continued with the Lord like the rest of the apostles. Blessed privilege! - "a familiar attendant on His person, a spectator of His public and private life, a hearer of His sayings and discourses, a beholder of His miracles, a witness of His resurrection and ascension to glory." This he does not testify, though he saw it. Matthew was with the other apostles on the day of Pentecost and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. How long he continued in Judaea after that event, we are not informed. **His Gospel is supposed to be the first that was written,** and has a special reference to Israel.

Ethiopia is generally assigned as the scene of his apostolic labours. There, some say, by preaching and miracles, he mightily triumphed over error and idolatry, was the means of the conversion of many, appointed spiritual guides and pastors to confirm and build them up, and to bring others over to the faith; and there finished his course. But the sources of information on these points cannot be trusted.

Thomas. The apostle Thomas was duly called by our Lord to the apostleship, and he is duly mentioned in the various apostolic lists. Of his birthplace or parents we are not informed in scripture; but tradition says he was born at Antioch. All that we know of him with certainty is related by John. But though our knowledge of Thomas be thus limited, there is no *character* among the apostles more distinctly marked than his. In fact, his name has become, both in the church and in the world, a synonym for doubting and unbelieving. It is said of a famous artist, when asked to produce a portrait of the apostle Thomas, that he placed a *rule* in his hand for the due measuring of evidence and argument. **His mind was thoughtful, meditative, slow to believe.** He looked at all the difficulties of a question and inclined to take the dark side of things. But we will glance for a moment at the portrait which the pen of inspiration has drawn of him in the three following passages.

1. In **John 11** his true character distinctly appears. He evidently viewed the proposed journey of our Lord into Judaea with the darkest forebodings. "Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go that we may die with Him." In place of believing that Lazarus would be raised from the dead, he feared that both the Lord and His disciples would meet their own death in Judaea. He could see nothing arising from such a journey but complete disaster. Nevertheless, he does not seek to hinder the Lord from going, like the other disciples. This too is characteristic. He had deep affection for the Lord, and such was his devotedness that, though the journey should cost all of them their lives, he was willing to go.

2. The second time referred to was **after the Last Supper. [John 14.]** Our Lord had been speaking of going away, and of the home He would prepare for them in heaven, and that He would come again and receive them unto Himself, so that where He was they should be also. "And whither I GO YE KNOW," He added, "and the way ye know." But to our apostle's mind these beautiful promises only awaken dark thoughts of the unseen, unknown, future. "Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Evidently he was eager to go, and earnest in his inquiries, but he wanted to be sure of the way before taking the first step. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." So long as the eye is fixed on Christ, we cannot make a false step. It is the single eye that receives the light of heaven, which sheds its radiance over the whole path.

3. The third time was **after the resurrection. [John 20.]** He was absent when the Lord appeared the first time to the disciples. When they told him that they had seen the Lord, he obstinately refused to believe what they said. From what he says, we may fairly gather, that he had seen the Lord on the cross, and that the overwhelming sight had produced a deep impression on his mind. "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." The following Lord's day, when the disciples were assembled, Jesus appeared, and stood in the midst of them - His own place as the centre of the assembly. He again saluted them in the same words of peace, "Peace be unto you." But He at once turned to Thomas, as if he had been the main object of His appearing that day. "Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." The effect on Thomas was immediate: all his doubts were removed, and in true orthodox faith he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Some have thought that the faith of Thomas in this instance rises far above all the other disciples, and that nothing higher in testimony ever dropped from apostolic lips. This opinion, though a common one, cannot be founded on the general context. Christ, in reply to Thomas, pronounces those *more* blessed who saw not, and yet believed. It can scarcely be called even *Christian* faith, as our Lord evidently hints. Christian faith is believing in Him whom we have not seen - walking by faith, not by sight.

Thomas, we have no doubt, **represents the slow, unbelieving mind of the Jews in the last days, who will believe when they see.** [**Zech. 12**.] He was not present at the first gathering of the saints after the resurrection. The reason why we are not told. But who can estimate the blessing that may be lost because of absence from the sanctioned meetings of the saints? He missed the blessed revelations of Christ as to relationship, "My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God." His faith is not connected with the position of sonship. "He has not the communications of the efficacy of the Lord's work," as one has said, "and of the relationship with His Father into which Jesus brings His own, the church. He has peace, perhaps, but he has missed all the revelation of the church's position. How many souls - saved souls, even are there in these two conditions!"

The future apostolic labours of Thomas, and the end of his life, are so filled with traditions or legends, that we know nothing certainly. Some say he laboured in **India** and some in **Persia.** His martyrdom, it is said, was occasioned by a lance, and is still commemorated by the Latin church on December 21, by the Greek church on October 6, and by the Indians on July 1.

James - the son of Alpheus. The identification of the Jameses, the Marys, and the Lord's brethren, has long been a difficult point with critics. This would not be the place even to refer to their theories and arguments. But after looking at different sides of the question, we still believe that our apostle is the James who was a principal man in the church at Jerusalem - who is the author of **"The General Epistle of James" -** who is also called the Lord's brother and surnamed "the just," and "the less," probably because he was low in stature. Identification of persons is extremely difficult in such histories, from the habit, so common among the Jews, of calling near relations, brothers and sisters, and from nearly all of them having two or more names.

In the four lists of the apostles James holds the same place. He heads the third class. They appear to be in fours. Peter heads the first, Philip the second, and James the third. Very little is known of James until after the resurrection. From what Paul says in 1Co 15:7, it is evident that the Lord, before His ascension, honoured James with a personal interview. This was before the day of Pentecost, and may have been for the special encouragement, guidance, and strengthening of the apostle. We will now notice the principal passages, from which we gain our knowledge of James.

In the first chapter of the Acts we find him, with the others, waiting for the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost. After this we lose sight of him, until he is visited by Paul (Gal 1:18-19), which would be about the year A.D. 39. Now we find him equal with Peter as an apostle. He was at this time the overseer of the church at Jerusalem, and on a level with the very chiefest apostles. The place he held in Peter's estimation appears from the fact, that when he was delivered from prison, he desires that information of his escape may be sent to "James, and to the brethren." (Act 12:17)

In A.D. 50 we find him in the **apostolic council,** where he seems to deliver the judgment of the assembly. "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God." (Acts 15) None of the other apostles speak in this manner. It would appear that he had risen greatly in apostolic position and authority. About the year 51, when Paul paid another visit to Jerusalem, he recognises James as one of the "pillars" of the church, and places his name before both Cephas and John. (Gal 2:9) Again about the year 58, Paul paid a special visit to James in the presence of all the elders. "And the day following Paul went in with us to James; and all the elders were present." (Act 21:18) It is easily seen from these few notices, that James was held in the very highest esteem by the other apostles and that he filled a most important position in the church at Jerusalem. His attachment to Judaism was deep and earnest and his advancement in Christianity appears to have been slow and gradual. He was a perfect contrast to Paul, Peter forms a link between them.

The martyrdom of James is placed at about 62, close upon thirty years after Pentecost. The testimony of antiquity is universal, as to his distinguished piety and sanctity. His humility, too, appears great: though he was the Lord's brother, or near relation, he styles himself the servant of Jesus Christ, and does not so much as give himself the title of an apostle. For the reputation of his holy and righteous life, he was universally styled, "James the Just." And as he conformed to Jewish customs with a measure of regularity he was by no means so offensive in the eyes of his unbelieving countrymen, as the apostle of the Gentiles. But notwithstanding the high opinion that was entertained of his character, his life was prematurely ended by martyrdom.

For an account of the life, character, and death of James we are chiefly indebted to Hegesippus, a Christian of Jewish origin, who lived in the middle of the second century. He is generally received as a credible historian. His narrative of the martyrdom of James is given fully, and in his own words, in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible." We can only give it in substance.

As many of the rulers and people of the Jews became believers in Jesus, through the labours of James, the scribes and Pharisees were greatly stirred up against him. The whole of the people, they said, will believe in Christ. Therefore they came together to James, and said, "We pray thee stop the people, for they have gone astray after Jesus as though He were the Christ. We pray thee to persuade all that come to the Passover concerning Jesus. Persuade the people not to go astray about Jesus; for the whole people, and all of us, give heed unto thee. Stand, therefore, on a pinnacle of the temple that thou mayest be visible, and that thy words may be heard by all the people; for all the tribes and even the Gentiles are come together for the Passover." But in place of saying what he was told, he proclaimed with a loud voice in the ears of all the people that Jesus was the true Messiah, that he firmly believed in Him, that Jesus was now in heaven at God's right hand, and that He would come again in power and great glory. Many were convinced through the preaching of James and gave glory to God, crying, "Hosannah to the Son of David."

When the scribes and Pharisees heard this, they said to each other, "We have done wrong in bringing forward such a witness to Jesus; let us go up and throw him down, that the people may be terrified and not believe in Him." And they cried out, saying, Even **James the Just** has gone astray, and they threw him down. But as he was not killed with the fall, they began to stone him. Then one of them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he pressed the clothes, and brought it down on the head of James. Thus the apostle died, and, like the proto-martyr Stephen, he died praying for them in a kneeling posture. It was almost immediately after this that Vespasian commenced the siege of Jerusalem, and the Roman army turned the whole scene into desolation, blood, and ruin.

Simon Zelotes - also called "Simon the Canaanite." He seems to be a different person from Simon the brother of James. We have no account of him in the Gospel history. He is duly named in the Gospels and in the Acts, and then disappears from the sacred page.

It is generally supposed that, before his call to be an apostle, he belonged to a sect among the Jews called **"The Zealots."** They were conspicuous for their fierce advocacy of the Mosaic ritual. They looked upon themselves as the successors of Phinehas, who, in zeal for the honour of God, slew Zimri and Cozbi. (Num. 25) In pretending to follow the zeal of the priest of old, they assumed to themselves the right of putting to death a blasphemer, an adulterer, or any notorious offender, without the ordinary formalities of the law. They maintained that God had made an everlasting covenant with Phinehas, and with his seed after him, "because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for Israel." These high sounding claims and pretensions deceived both rulers and people for a time. Besides, their fury and zeal for the law of Moses, and for the deliverance of the people from the Roman yoke, gave them favour in the eyes of all the nation. But, as must ever be the case under similar circumstances, their zeal soon degenerated into all manner of licentiousness and wild extravagance. They became the pests of every class of society.

Under a pretended zeal for the honour of God, they charged whom they would with being guilty of blasphemy or of some other grievous sin, and immediately slew them and seized their property. Josephus tells us that they failed not to accuse some of the "prime nobility," and when they had succeeded in turning everything into confusion, they meantime "fished in the troubled waters." He bewails them as the great plagues of the nation. Attempts were made at different times to suppress the society, but it does not appear that they were ever much reduced until, with the unbelieving nation, they were swept away in the fatal siege.

Simon is frequently styled "Simon the Zealot." and is supposed to have belonged to this troublesome faction. There may have been true and sincere men among them, but good and bad alike passed under the odious name of "Zealots." Nothing is certainly known of the future labours of our apostle. Some say that, after travelling for a while in the East, he turned to the West, and penetrated as far as Britain where he preached, wrought miracles, endured many trials, and at last suffered martyrdom.

Judas - the brother of James. This apostle is also called Jude, Thaddeus, and Lebbeus. These different names have different shades of meaning, but the examination of such niceties comes not within the range of our "Short Papers." Judas was the son of Alpheus, and one of our Lord's kindred as we read in Mat 13:55, "Is not His mother called Mary and His brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?"

When, or how, he was called to the apostleship we are not informed; and there is scarcely any mention of him in the New Testament, except in the different catalogues of the twelve apostles. His name only occurs once in the Gospel narrative, and that is when he asks the following question "Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (Joh 14:22) It is quite evident from this question, that he was still entertaining, like his fellow-disciples, the idea of a temporal kingdom, or the manifestation of Christ's power on the earth, such as the world could perceive. But they understood not yet the dignity of their own Messiah. They were strangers to the greatness of His power, the glory of His Person, and the spirituality of His kingdom. His subjects are delivered, not only from this present evil world, but from the power of Satan, and from the realm of death and the grave: "Who *hath* delivered us from the power of darkness, and *hath* translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." (Col 1:13) The answer of Christ to the question of Judas is all-important. He speaks of the blessings of obedience. The truly obedient disciple shall surely know the sweetness of fellowship with the Father and the Son, in the light and power of the Holy Ghost. It is not here a question of the love of God in sovereign grace to a sinner, but of the Father's dealings with His children. Therefore it is in the path of obedience that the manifestation of the Father's love and the love of Christ are found. (See verses 23-26)

But we must bear in mind, when remarking on the questions or sayings of the apostles, that the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. The thoughts, feelings, and expectations of the apostles, after that event were altogether changed. Hence we find our apostle, like his brother James, styling himself, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." He neither calls himself an apostle, nor the Lord's brother. This was true humility, and founded on a true sense of the altered relations between them and the exalted Lord. On the day of Pentecost it was proclaimed, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Nothing is certainly known of the later history of our apostle. Some say that he first preached in Judaea and Galilee, then through Samaria into Idumea, and to the cities of Arabia. But towards the end of his course Persia was the field of his labours, and the scene of his martyrdom.

From 1Co 9:5 it may be fairly inferred that he was **one of the married apostles.** "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"

There is a tradition about two of his grandsons, which is both interesting and apparently true. It has been handed down by Eusebius from Hegesippus, a converted Jew. Domitian, the Emperor, having heard that there were some of the line of David, and kindred of Christ still alive, moved with jealousy, ordered them to be seized and brought to Rome. Two grandsons of Jude were brought before him. They frankly confessed that they were of the line of David, and kindred of Christ. He asked them about their possessions and estates. They told him they had but a few acres of land, out of the fruits of which they paid him tribute and maintained themselves. Their hands were examined and were found rough and callous with labour. He then inquired of them concerning the kingdom of Christ, and when and where it would come. To this they replied, that it was a heavenly and spiritual, not a temporal kingdom; and that it would not be manifested till the end of the world. The Emperor, being satisfied that they were poor men and harmless, dismissed them unbound, and ceased from his general persecution of the church. When they returned to Palestine, they were received by the church with great affection, as being nearly allied to the Lord, and as having nobly confessed His name- His kingdom, power, and glory.

Matthias - the apostle elected to fill the place of the traitor Judas. He was not an apostle of the first election - immediately called and chosen by the Lord Himself. It is more than probable that he was one of the seventy disciples, and had been a constant attendant upon the Lord Jesus during the whole course of His ministry. This was a necessary qualification, as declared by Peter, of one who was to be a witness of the resurrection. So far as we know, the name of **Matthias** occurs in no other place in the New Testament.

According to some ancient traditions, he preached the gospel and suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia; others believe that it was rather in Cappadocia. Thus the great founders of the church were allowed to pass away from earth to heaven without a reliable pen to chronicle their labours - their last days - their last sayings, or even the resting-place of the body. But all are chronicled in heaven, and will be held in everlasting remembrance. How marvellous are the ways of God, and how unlike they are to the ways of men!

The manner of this **apostle's election was by lot -** an ancient Jewish custom. The lots were put into the urn, Matthias' name was drawn out, and thereby he was the divinely chosen apostle. "And they appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen.... And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." The solemn mode of casting lots was regarded as a way of referring the decision to God. "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat." "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." (Lev 16:8; Pro 16:33) The apostles, it will be remembered, had not yet received the gift of the Holy Ghost. The lot was never repeated after the day of Pentecost.

05 The Apostle Paul

Chapter 5

The Apostle Paul

Having briefly sketched the lives of the *twelve* apostles, we naturally come to what may be called the *thirteenth* - the Apostle **Paul.**

In chapter three* we have spoken of the "conversion," and of the "apostleship" of Paul. We will now endeavour to trace his wonderful path, and note some of the prominent features of his labours. But, first of all, we would gather up what we know of him

{*See pages 43, 45}

Before His Conversion.

It is very evident, from the few hints that we have in the sacred narrative of the early life of Paul, that he was formed in a remarkable manner by the whole course of his education for what he was to become, and for what he was to accomplish. This was of God, who watched over the development of that wonderful mind and heart, from the earliest period. (Gal 1:16) Then he was known as "Saul of Tarsus" - this being his Jewish name - the name given him by his Jewish parents. Paul was his Gentile name; but we will speak of him as "Saul" until he is named "Paul" by the sacred historian.

Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia, and, as Paul says, "no mean city." It was renowned as a place of commerce, and as a seat of literature. The tutors of both Augustus and Tiberius were men of Tarsus. But it will be chiefly famous to all time as the birthplace and early residence of the great apostle.

But, though born in a Gentile city, he was "an **Hebrew of the Hebrews."** His father was of the tribe of Benjamin, and of the sect of the Pharisees, but settled at Tarsus. By some means he had acquired the Roman franchise, as his son could say to the chief captain, "But I was free-born." At Tarsus he learned the trade of tent-making. It was a wholesome custom among the Jews, to teach their sons some trade, though there might be little prospect of their depending upon it for their living.

When Paul made his defence before his countrymen, (Acts 22) he tells them that though born in Tarsus, he had been brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." History speaks of Gamaliel as one of the most eminent of the doctors of the law; and from the scriptures we learn that he was moderate in his opinions, and possessed of much worldly wisdom. But the persecuting zeal of the pupil soon appears in strong contrast with the master's counsels for toleration.

At the time of Stephen's martyrdom, Saul is spoken of as yet a young man, but as consenting to Stephen's death, and as keeping the clothes of them that stoned him. His conversion is supposed to have taken place about two years after the crucifixion; but the *exact* date is unknown.

From Acts 9 we learn that he made no delay, after his conversion, in confessing his faith in Christ to those that were around him. "Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue, that He is *the Son of God."* This new testimony is specially worthy of notice. Peter had proclaimed Him as the exalted Lord and Christ; Paul proclaims Him in His higher and personal glory, as *the Son of God.* But the time for his public ministry had not yet come he had many things to learn, and, led of the Spirit, he retires into Arabia, remains there for three years, and returns to Damascus. (Gal 1:17)

Strengthened and confirmed in the faith during his retirement, he preaches with increased boldness, proving that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The Jews, his unrelenting enemies henceforward, are stirred up against him. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. But the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. (2Co 11:32-33) He then found his way to Jerusalem, and through the friendly testimony of Barnabas he found his place among the disciples. Wonderful, blessed triumph of sovereign grace!

Saul's First Visit to Jerusalem

About A.D. 39

The apostle is now at Jerusalem - the holy city of his fathers - the metropolis of the Jews' religion, and the acknowledged centre of Christianity. But how changed his own position since he started on his memorable journey to Damascus!

We may here pause for a moment, and notice in passing the hoary city of Damascus. It is intimately connected with the conversion, ministry, and history of our apostle. Besides, it is conspicuous all through scripture.

Damascus is supposed to be the oldest city in the world. According to Josephus(Ant. 1. 6, 4)it was founded by *Uz,* the son of Aram, and grandson of Shem. It is first mentioned in scripture in connection with Abraham, whose steward was a native of the place: "The steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus." (Gen 15:2) It is thus a connecting link between the patriarchal age and modern times. Its beauty and richness have been proverbial for full four thousand years. The kings of Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome have conquered it, and it has prospered under every dynasty, and outlived them all; but it owes its chief lustre and its everlasting memorial to the name of the Apostle Paul.*

{*See Porter's *Five Years in Damascus,* for the latest and best account of the city and its environs.}

We now return to Jerusalem. After spending fifteen days with Peter and James, and reasoning with the Grecians, the brethren "brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." (Act 9:30-31) For the moment the adversary is silenced. Peace reigns, through the goodness of God. Persecution has accomplished the purposes of His grace. The two great elements of blessing - the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost - prevail in all the assemblies. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they are edified, and their numbers greatly increase.

While Saul was at Tarsus, his native place, the good work of the Lord was making great progress at Antioch. Among those that were scattered abroad through the persecution which arose about Stephen, there were "men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord." (Act 11:19-21) A new order of things commences here. Up to this time, the gospel had been preached to "none but unto the Jews only." When the report of this blessed work of God among the Gentiles reached Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent by the church on a special mission to Antioch. "When he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

As the work increased, Barnabas - no doubt, feeling the need of help - thought of Saul; and, led of the Lord, he departed at once in search of him. Having found him, he brought him to Antioch; and there they laboured together for a "whole year," both in the assemblies of believers, and among the people. Barnabas still takes the lead. Hence we read of "Barnabas and Saul." Afterwards the order changes and we read of "Paul and Barnabas."

An opportunity soon occurred for the young converts at Antioch to show their affection for their brethren at Jerusalem. A prophet, "named Agabus, signified by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt at Judaea, which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

Saul's Second Visit to Jerusalem

About A.D. 44

Charged with this service Barnabas and Saul go up to Jerusalem. As yet, Jerusalem is owned as the centre of the work though now rapidly extending to the Gentiles. But union is preserved, and the link with the metropolis is strengthened by means of the collection now sent. Nevertheless a new centre, a new commission, a new character of power, in connection with the history of the church, now come before us. Barnabas and Saul, having fulfilled their ministry, return again to Antioch, bringing with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Acts 13 opens up before us an entirely new order of things in connection with apostolic work, and we shall do well to mark the mighty change. The great fact here to be noted is the place that the Holy Ghost takes in calling out and sending forth Barnabas and Saul. It is no longer Christ upon earth by His personal authority sending forth apostles, but *the Holy Ghost.* "Separate me," He says, "Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them .... So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." Not, of course, that there could be any change as to the authority or power of either the Lord or the Spirit, but their mode of action was now changed. The Holy Ghost on earth, in connection with a glorified Christ in heaven, now becomes the source and power of the work that opens before us, and which is committed to Barnabas and Saul. Hence we now come to

Saul's First Missionary Journey

About A.D. 48

And here, further remark, before setting out with the apostles on their journey, how changed everything is. They start, observe, not from the old centre, Jerusalem, but from Antioch, a city of the Gentiles. This is significant. Jerusalem and the twelve have lost position as to outward authority, and power. The Holy Ghost calls Barnabas and Saul to the work, fits them for it, and sends them forth, without the jurisdiction of the twelve.

It will not be expected that, in papers of such a brief character, we can notice the many incidents in Paul's journeys. The reader will find them in the Acts and in the Epistles. We purpose merely to trace their outline, and to give prominence to certain landmarks, by which the reader will be able to trace for himself the various journeyings of the greatest apostle - the greatest missionary - the greatest labourer that ever lived, the blessed Lord excepted. But in the first place, we would notice his companions and their starting-point.

Barnabas has been for some time the close companion of Saul. He was a Levite of the island of Cyprus. He had been early called to follow Christ, and "having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet." Comparing his liberality with the fine testimony which the Holy Ghost renders to him, he stands before us as a lovely and an exquisite character. And, from his early attachment to Saul, and from his heartiness in introducing him to the other apostles, we judge that he was more frank and larger-hearted than those who had been trained in the narrowness of Judaism; but, he lacked in service the thoroughness and determination of his companion Saul.

John Mark was nearly related to Barnabas - "his sister's son." (Col 4:10) His mother was a certain Mary who dwelt at Jerusalem, and whose house seems to have been a meeting place for the apostles and first Christians. When Peter was delivered from prison, he went straight to "the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark." (Acts 12) It is supposed that on this occasion he was converted through Peter's means, for he afterwards speaks of him as "Marcus my son." (1Pe 5:13)

From these notices we learn, that he was neither an apostle nor one of the seventy - that he had not companied with the blessed Lord during His public ministry. But we may suppose he was anxious to work for Christ, and so joined Barnabas and Saul, though it afterwards appeared that his faith was not equal to the hardships of a missionary life. "Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem." (Act 13:13) Mark is supposed to have written his Gospel about A.D. 63.

Antioch, the ancient capital of the Seleucidae, was founded by Seleucus Nicator about B.C. 300. It was a city only second to Jerusalem in the early history of the church. What Jerusalem had hitherto been to the Jews, Antioch now became to the Gentiles. It was a central point. From this time it occupied a most important place in the propagation of Christianity among the heathen. Here the first Gentile church was planted. (Act 11:20-21) Here the disciples of Christ were first called Christians. (Act 11:26) And here our apostle commenced his public ministerial work.

We now return to the mission.

Barnabas and Saul, with John Mark as their ministering attendant, are thus sent forth by the Holy Ghost. The Jews in virtue of their connection with the promises, have the gospel first preached to them; but the conversion of Sergius Paulus marks, in a special manner, the beginning of the work amongst the Gentiles. It also marks a *crisis* in the history of the apostle. Here his name is changed from *Saul* to *Paul* and now - save in Jerusalem (Act 15:12-22) - it is no longer "Barnabas and Saul," but "Paul and his company." He takes the lead; the others are only those who are with Paul. But the scene has also a typical character.

The Pro-consul was evidently a thoughtful, prudent man and felt the need of his soul. He sends for Barnabas and Saul and desires to hear the word of God. But **Elymas the sorcerer** withstands them. He knew well that, if the governor received the truth that Paul preached, he would lose his influence at court. He therefore seeks to turn away the deputy from the faith. But Paul, in the conscious dignity and power of the Holy Ghost, "set his eyes on him," and, in words of the most withering indignation, rebuked him in the presence of the governor. "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season .... Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." The mighty power of God accompanies the word of His servant, and the sentence pronounced is executed at the moment. The deputy is overwhelmed with the moral glory of the scene, and submits to the gospel.

"I do not doubt," says one, "that in this wretched Barjesus we see a picture of the Jews at the present time smitten with blindness for a season, because jealous of the influence of the gospel. In order to fill up the measure of their iniquity, they withstood its being preached to the Gentiles Their condition is judged; their history given in the mission of Paul. Opposed to grace and seeking to destroy its effect upon the Gentiles - they have been smitten with blindness; nevertheless, only for a season."*

{ Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. 4, page 53, 54 [Second Edition, January 1950]}*

During this first mission among the Gentiles, a great and blessed work was done. Compare Acts 13 & 14. Many places were visited, churches were planted, elders were appointed, the hostility of the Jews manifested, and the energy of the Holy Ghost displayed in the power and progress of the truth. At Lystra, Christianity was confronted, for the first time, with paganism; but in every place the gospel triumphs, and the various gifts of Paul as a workman, most blessedly appear. In addressing either the Jews who knew the scriptures, or ignorant barbarians, or cultivated Greeks, or enraged mobs, he proves himself to be a chosen vessel divinely fitted for his great work.

Antioch in Pisidia deserves a special notice from what took place in the synagogue. Though there is a strong resemblance in Paul's discourse to those of Peter and of Stephen in the earlier chapters of the Acts, yet we discover certain touches strictly Pauline in their character. His conciliatory style of address, the way he introduces Christ, and his bold proclamation of justification by faith alone, may be considered as typical of his after addresses and Epistles. None of the sacred writers speaks of justification by faith as Paul does. His closing appeal has been a favourite gospel text with all preachers in all ages. In a few words he states the blessedness of all who receive Christ, and the awful doom of those who reject Him; thereby proving that there can be no middle or neutral ground, when Christ is in question. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (Act 13:38-41)

Their mission being fulfilled, they return to Antioch in Syria. When the disciples heard what the Lord had done, and that the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles, they could only praise and bless His holy name. We must now turn for a moment to Jerusalem.

The effect of Paul's first mission on the disciples at Jerusalem led to a great crisis in the history of the church. The jealousy of the pharisaic mind was so aroused, that a division between Jerusalem and Antioch was threatened at that early period of the church's history. But God ruled in grace, and the matter as to Antioch was happily settled. But the bigotry of the believing Jews was unquenchable. In the church at Jerusalem they still connected with Christianity the requirements of the law, and these requirements they sought to impose on the believing Gentiles.

Some of the more strictly Jewish-minded Christians came down to Antioch, and assured the Gentiles that, unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, and kept the law, they could not be saved. Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them; but as it was too weighty a question to be settled by the apostolic authority of Paul, or by a resolution of the church at Antioch, it was agreed that a deputation should go up to Jerusalem, and lay the matter before the twelve apostles and the elders there The choice naturally fell on Paul and Barnabas, as they had been the most active in the propagation of Christianity among the Gentiles.

And now we come to

Paul's Third Visit to Jerusalem

About A.D. 50.

When they arrived at Jerusalem, they found the same thing, not only in the minds of a few restless brethren, but in the very bosom of the church. The source of the trouble was there, not among unbelieving Jews, but among those who professed the name of Jesus. "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed saying, That it was needful to circumcise them [the Gentiles], and to command them to keep the law of Moses." This plain statement brought the whole question fairly before the assembly, and their important deliberations commenced. Chapter 15 contains the account of what took place and how the question was settled The apostles, elders, and the whole body of the church at Jerusalem were not only present with one accord, but took part in the discussion. The apostles neither assumed nor exercised exclusive power in the matter. It is usually called "The first Council of the Church;" but it may also be called the last council of the church which could say, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us."

Many, according to modern notions of "essentials, and non-essentials," will no doubt say, that the mere ceremony of circumcising or not circumcising a child was rather unimportant. But not so, according to the mind of God. It was a *vital* question. It affected the very foundations of Christianity, the deep principles of grace, and the whole question of man's relations with God. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is a commentary on the history of this question.

There was no rite or ceremony that the converted Jew was so unwilling to give up as **circumcision.** It was the sign and seal of his own relationship with Jehovah, and of the hereditary blessings of the covenant to his children. It has been the opinion of some in all ages, that "infant baptism" was introduced by the church to meet this strong Jewish prejudice But had it been so intended by the Lord, the council at Jerusalem was the very place to announce it. It would have fully met the difficulty, and settled the question before them, and restored peace and unity between the two parent churches. But none of the apostles or others allude to it.

Before leaving this important and suggestive part of our apostle's history, it may be well just to notice certain facts which he brings out in Galatians 2, but which are not mentioned in the Acts. It was on this occasion that Paul went up by **revelation,** and took Titus with him. In the Acts we have the outward history of Paul yielding to the motives, desires, and objects of men; in the Epistle we have something deeper - that which governed the apostle's heart. But God knows how to combine these outward circumstances and the inward guidance of the Spirit. Christian liberty or legal bondage was the question at issue: whether the law of Moses - in particular the rite of circumcision - ought to be imposed upon the Gentile converts. Paul, led of God, goes up to Jerusalem, and takes Titus with him. In the face of the twelve apostles, and of the whole church, he brings in Titus who was a Greek, and who had not been circumcised. This was a bold step - to introduce a Gentile, and uncircumcised, into the very centre of a bigoted Judaism! But the apostle went up by revelation. He had positive communications from God on the subject. It was the divine way of deciding the question, once and for ever, between himself and the Judaizing Christians. This step was needful, as he says, "Because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

The apostle, then, having attained his main object, and having communicated his gospel to them at Jerusalem, leaves, with Barnabas, and returns to the Gentile Christians at Antioch. The two delegates, Judas and Silas, bearing the decrees of the council, accompany them. When the multitude of the disciples came together and heard the epistle read, they rejoiced and were comforted.

Thus closed the first apostolic council, and the first apostolic controversy. And, from what we learn of these matters in the Acts, we might conclude that the division between the Jewish and Gentile Christians had been completely healed by the decision of the assembly; but we know from the Epistles, that the opposition of the Judaizing party, against the liberty of Gentile Christians, never even slumbered. It soon broke out afresh, and Paul had constantly to meet it and to contend against it.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

About A.D. 51.

After Paul and Barnabas had spent some time with the church at Antioch, another missionary journey was proposed. "Let us go again," said Paul, "and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." (Chapter 15: 36-41)

With a journey so important, so full of trials, and so requiring courage and steadfastness - before the mind of our apostle - he could not trust Mark as a companion; he could not easily excuse one whose home attachments rendered him unfaithful in the Lord's service. Paul himself gave up all personal considerations and feelings when the work of Christ was concerned, and he wished others to do the same. Natural affection on this occasion may have betrayed Barnabas into again pressing his nephew into the service; but a severe earnestness characterised Paul. The ties of natural relationship and human attachments had still great influence over the mild christian character of Barnabas. This is evident from his conduct at Antioch on the occasion of Peter's weak compliance with the Judaizers from Jerusalem. (Gal. 2) The spread of the gospel in the hostile world was too sacred in Paul's eyes to admit of experiments. Mark had preferred Jerusalem to the work, but Silas preferred the work to Jerusalem. This decided Paul as to his choice; though, no doubt, he was guided by the Spirit.

Barnabas takes Mark his **kinsman,** and sails to Cyprus his **native country.** And here we part with Barnabas, that beloved saint and precious servant of Christ! His name is not again mentioned in the Acts. These words "kinsman" and "native country" must be left to speak for themselves to the heart of every disciple who reads these pages. Were we *meditating* on this painful scene, in place of giving a mere outline of a great history, we might say much on the subject; but we leave it with two happy reflections. 1. That it was overruled for blessing to the heathen, the waters of life now flow in two streams in place of one. This, however, is God's goodness, and gives no sanction to the divisions of Christians. 2. That Paul afterwards speaks of Barnabas with entire affection; and desires that Mark should come to him, having found him profitable for the ministry. (1Co 9:6; 2Ti 4:11) We have no doubt that Paul's faithfulness was made a blessing to them both. But the honey of human affections can never be accepted on the altar of God.

Having been recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God, they start on their journey. All is beautifully simple. No parade is made by their friends in seeing them off, and no great promises are made by them, as to what they were determined to do. "Let us go again and visit our brethren," are the few, simple, unpretending words, which lead to Paul's second and great missionary journey. But the master was thinking of His servants and providing for them. They had not to go far before finding a new companion in Timotheus of Lystra; and one who was to supply the void caused by the difference with Barnabas. If Paul lost the fellowship of Barnabas as a friend and brother, he found in Timothy, as his own son in the faith, a sympathy and a fellowship which only closed with the apostle's life. "Him would Paul have to go forth with him," but before they go, Paul "circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters, for they knew all that his father was a Greek." Paul, on this occasion, stoops to the prejudice of the Jews, and circumcises Timothy to set it aside.

Timotheus, or Timothy, was the son of one of those mixed marriages, which have ever been strongly condemned both in the Old and in the New Testament. His father was a Gentile, but his name is never mentioned; his mother was a pious Jewess. From the absence of any reference to the father, either in the Acts or in the Epistles, it has been supposed that he may have died soon after the child was born. **Timothy** was evidently left in infancy to the sole care of his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, who taught him from a child to know the Holy Scriptures. And from the many allusions in Paul's Epistles to the tenderness, the sensitiveness, and the tears of his beloved son in the faith, we may believe that he retained through life the early impressions of that gentle, loving, holy, household. Paul's wonderful love for Timothy, and his tender recollections of his home at Lystra, and his early training there, have dictated some of the most touching passages in the writings of the great apostle. When an old man - in prison, in want, and martyrdom before him - he writes, "To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice: and I am persuaded that in thee also." (2Ti 1:2-5) He urges, and repeats his urgent invitation to Timothy to come and see him. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me" - "to come before winter." We may be permitted to believe, that a son so tenderly loved was allowed to arrive in time to soothe the last hours of his father in Christ, to receive his last counsel and blessing, and to witness him finish his course with joy.

Silas, or Silvanus, first comes before us as a teacher in the church at Jerusalem; and probably he was both a Hellenist and a Roman citizen like Paul himself. (Act 16:37) He was appointed as a delegate to accompany Paul and Barnabas on their return to Antioch with the decrees of the council. But as many details both in the life of Timothy and of Silas will naturally come before us in tracing the path of the apostle, we need say nothing more of either at present. We will now proceed with the journey.

Paul and Silas, with their new companion, go through the cities, enjoining them to keep the decrees ordained by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. The decrees were left with the churches, so that the Jews had the decision of Jerusalem itself, that the law was not binding on the Gentiles. After visiting and confirming the churches already planted in Syria and Cilicia, they proceeded to Phrygia and Galatia They travelled "throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia." Here we pause for a moment and wonder as we transcribe such words as these, "throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia." Phrygia and Galatia were not towns merely, but provinces, or large districts of country. And yet the sacred historian only uses these few words in recording the great work done there. How different is the condensed energy of the Spirit, from the inflated style of man! We learn from Neander's history, that in Phrygia alone, in the sixth century, there were sixty-two towns. And it would appear that Paul and those who were with him had gone through all then existing.

The same remarks as to labour would apply to Galatia. And we learn from Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, that at this very time he was suffering in body. "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first." But the power of his preaching so strikingly contrasted with the infirmity of his flesh, that the Galatians were moved even to extravagance in sympathy and generous feeling. "And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an *angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.* Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me." (Gal 4:13-15) We learn from history that the Galatians were Celtic in their origin, impulsive and changeable in their character.* The whole Epistle is a sorrowful illustration of their instability, and of the sad effects of the Judaizing element amongst them. "I marvel," says Paul, "that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." But to return to the history in the Acts.

{*See Smith's *Student's New Testament History.*}

The character and effects of Paul's ministry, as related in chapters 16-20 are truly marvellous. They must ever stand alone on the page of all history. Every servant of Christ, and especially the preacher should study them most carefully and read them frequently. "The vessel of the Spirit," as one has beautifully said, "shines with a heavenly light throughout the whole work of the gospel; he condescends at Jerusalem, thunders in Galatia when souls are being perverted, leads the apostles to decide for the liberty of the Gentiles, and uses all liberty himself to be as a Jew to the Jews, and as without law to those who had no law, as not under law, but always subject to Christ. He was also 'void of offence.' Nothing within hindered his communion with God, whence he drew his strength to be faithful among men. He could say, and none but he, 'Be ye imitators of me as I am of Christ.' Thus also he could say, 'I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.'"*

*{*Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. 4.}*

The way of the Spirit with the apostle in these chapters is also remarkable. He alone directs him in his wonderful course, and sustains him amidst many trials and opposing circumstances. For example, He forbids Paul to preach the word in Asia - He will not suffer him to go into Bithynia, but directs him by a vision of the night to go into Macedonia. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis. And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony." (Chapter Act 16:9-12)

Paul Carries the Gospel into Europe

This marks a distinct epoch in the history of the church the history of Paul, and the progress of Christianity. Paul and his companions now carry the gospel into Europe. And here we may be forgiven if we rest for a moment and recall the many interesting historical associations of Macedonian conquerors and conquests, and to dwell a little on the plain of Philippi, famous also in Roman history. Here the great struggle between the republic and the empire was terminated. To commemorate that event, Augustus founded a colony at Philippi. This was the first city at which Paul arrived on his entrance into Europe. It is called "the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony." **A Roman colony,** we are told, was *characteristically* a miniature resemblance of Rome; and Philippi was more fit than any other in the empire to be considered the representative of Imperial Rome.

To many of our young and inquiring readers, this short digression, we feel sure, will not be uninteresting. Besides, a knowledge of such histories is useful to the student of prophecy, as they are the fulfilment of Daniel's visions especially of chapter 7. The city of Philippi was itself the monument of the rising power of Greece, that was to crush the declining power of Persia. Alexander the Great, son of Philip, was the conqueror of the great king Darius; when the "Leopard" of Greece overcame the "Bear of Persia.*

{*See *Notes on the Book of Daniel*, by W. K.}

In looking back from the time that Paul sailed **from Asia to Europe,** nearly four hundred years had passed away since Alexander sailed from Europe to Asia. But how different their motives and their objects - their conflicts and their victories! The enthusiasm of Alexander was aroused by the recollection of his great ancestors, and by his determination to overthrow the great dynasties of the East; but, though unconsciously and unintentionally, he was accomplishing the purposes of God. Paul had girded on his armour for another purpose, and to win greater and more enduring victories. He was sent forth by the Holy Spirit, not only to subdue the West, but to bring the whole world into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Christianity is not for one nation or one people only, but for man universally; even as Paul himself expresses it in Colossians 1, "For every creature which is under heaven." This is the mission of the gospel, and this is its sphere.

But there is another thing we must notice here before proceeding with Paul's journey.

Luke, the "beloved physician," historian, and evangelist appears to have joined Paul at this particular time. From verse 10 he writes in the first person plural: *"We* endeavoured to go into Macedonia." It is supposed that he was a Gentile by birth and converted at Antioch. He seems to have remained the faithful companion of the apostle till the close of his labours and his afflictions. (2Ti 4:11)

The Effect of Paul's Preaching at Philippi

The number of Jews at Philippi appears to have been small, as there was no synagogue in the place. But the apostle, as usual, goes first to them, even when it is only a few women come together by the river side. (Acts 16) Paul, preaches to them, **Lydia** is converted, the door is opened, and others also believe. It was in this unpretending place, and to those few pious women, that the gospel was first preached in Europe and the first household baptized.* But its quiet beginnings, and its peaceful triumphs, were soon to be disturbed by the malice of Satan and the covetousness of man. The gospel was not to be advanced in the midst of heathenism with ease and comfort, but with great opposition and suffering.

{*The action of the Spirit as to the *family* seems to have obtained remarkably among the Gentiles; among the Jews, as far as I know, we do not hear of it. We have found, already, districts among the Jews, as also among the Samaritans, which were powerfully impressed (to say the least) by the gospel: but among the Gentiles, families seem particularly visited by divine grace, as recorded by the Spirit. Take for example Cornelius, the jailer, Stephanus; indeed you find it over and over again. This is exceedingly encouraging- especially to us.-*Introductory Lectures to the Acts of the Apostles,* etc., by W.K.}

As the apostle and his companion were going to the oratory, or place of prayer, a **damsel** possessed of an evil spirit followed them, and cried, saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." At first, Paul took no notice of her. He went on with his own blessed work of preaching Christ, and winning souls for Him. But the poor possessed slave persisted in following them, and in uttering the same exclamation. It was a malicious attempt of the enemy to hinder the work of God by bearing a testimony to the ministers of the word. It will be observed that she does not bear testimony to "Jesus," or to the "Lord," but to His "servants," and to "the most high God." But Paul did not want a testimony to himself, nor a testimony from an evil spirit, and he, "being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

As the damsel could no longer practise her arts of soothsaying, her masters saw themselves deprived of the gains which they had hitherto derived from that source. Enraged at the loss of their property, and moving the multitude to side with them, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the magistrates. As they were well aware that they had no real charge to bring against them, they raised the old cry of "troubling the peace" - that they were attempting to introduce Jewish practices into the Roman colony, and to teach customs which were contrary to the Roman laws. And, as it has often been since, the clamour of the multitude was accepted in the place of evidence, examination, and deliberation. The magistrates, without further inquiry, commanded them to be publicly scourged and cast into prison. And thus it was; these blessed servants of God, wounded, bleeding, and faint, were handed over to a cruel jailer to keep them safely, and he added to their sufferings by making their feet fast in the stocks. But in place of Paul and Silas being depressed by their bodily sufferings and the gloomy walls of a prison, they *rejoiced* that they were counted worthy to suffer shame and pain for the sake of Christ; and in place of the silence of midnight being broken with the sighs and groans of the prisoners, they "prayed and sang praises to God: and the prisoners heard them."

If Satan is not without resources to carry on his evil work, God is not without resources to carry on His good work. He now makes use of all that has happened to direct the progress of the work of the gospel, and to accomplish the purposes of His love. **The jailer** is to be converted, the church is to be gathered out, and a witness set up for the Lord Jesus Christ, in the very stronghold of heathenism. At midnight while Paul and Silas were singing, and the prisoners listening to the unusual sound, there was a great earthquake. God enters the scene in majesty and grace. He utters His voice and the earth trembles: the prison walls are shaken, the doors fly open, and every man's fetters fall off. And now what are chains and prisons? - what are Roman legions? what is the whole power of the enemy? God's voice is heard in the storm: but the violence of the tempest is succeeded by the still small voice of the gospel and the peace of heaven.

Awakened in a moment by the earthquake, the jailer's first thoughts were of his prisoners. Alarmed at seeing the prison doors open, and supposing that the prisoners were fled, he drew his sword and would have killed himself. "But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." These words of love broke the jailer's heart. The calm serenity of Paul and Silas - their refusing to avail themselves of the opportunity to escape - their tender concern for him - all combined to make them appear in the eyes of the astonished jailer, as beings of a higher order. He laid aside his sword, called for a light, sprang into the prison; and, trembling, fell down at the apostle's feet. His conscience was now reached, his heart was broken, and there was something like the violence of an earthquake agitating his whole soul. He takes the place of a lost sinner, and cries "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" He does not say, like the lawyer in Luke 10, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" It was no question with the jailer of *doing* something for *life,* but of salvation for the lost. The lawyer, like many others, did not know himself as a lost sinner, therefore he does not speak about salvation.

In reply to the most important inquiry that human lips can ever make, "What must I do to be saved?" the apostle directs the mind of the jailer to Christ - "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." God gave the blessing, and the whole house believed, rejoiced, and were baptized. And now all is changed; the jailer takes the prisoners into his own house - his cruelty is changed into love, sympathy, and hospitality. In the same hour of the night he washed their stripes - set meat before them - rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. What an eventful night! What a change in a few hours! and what a joyful morning dawned on that happy house! The Lord be praised!

Like Darius of old, **the magistrates** appear to have been disturbed during the night. The news of the earthquake might have reached them, or that Paul and Silas were Romans. But as soon as it was day, they sent word to the jailer to "let those men go." He immediately made known the order to Paul and Silas, and wished them to depart in peace. But Paul refused to accept his liberty without some public acknowledgement of the wrong he had suffered. He also now made known the fact that he and Silas were Roman citizens. The famous words of Cicero had passed into a proverb, and had immense weight everywhere: "To bind a Roman citizen is an outrage, to scourge him is a crime." The magistrates had evidently violated the Roman laws; but Paul only demanded that, as they had been publicly treated as guilty, the magistrates should come and publicly declare that they were innocent. This they readily did, seeing what wrong they had done. "And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city." The apostles readily complied with the magistrates' request, left the prison, and openly entered the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.*

{*See evangelistic papers on the leading characters of this chapter, *Things New and Old,* vol. 12, page 29-97.}

We would only further add before leaving this memorable chapter that it is very pleasant to find, in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, the proofs of an attachment which bound them together, and which continued from "the first day" even until Paul's imprisonment at Rome. His affection for his beloved Philippians was wonderful. He addressed them as - "my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." And he acknowledges, with no small joy, their unwearied fellowship with him in the gospel, and the many practical proofs of their loving care and tender sympathy for himself. As early as his residence at Thessalonica they thought of his need. "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity." (Php 4:15-19)

Paul at Thessalonica and Berea

Paul and Silas now directed their course to **Thessalonica.** Timothy and Luke appear to have remained behind in Philippi for a short time. Having passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and Silas arrived at Thessalonica, Here they found a synagogue. It was a commercial town of great importance, where many Jews resided. "Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures." The hearts of many were touched by his preaching; and a great multitude of devout Greeks, and women of high station, believed. But Paul's old enemy again appears. "The Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also, whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus." These verses may suffice to give us the *character* of the universal enmity of the Jews against the gospel and against Paul its chief minister.

The apostle had evidently preached to the Thessalonians the truth respecting the exaltation of Christ, and His coming again in glory: "Saying that there is another king, one Jesus." Hence the constant allusion to the *coming* of the Lord," and to "the *day* of the Lord," in Paul's Epistles to that church. From what Paul says in his first Epistle we learn that his labours were most abundant and greatly owned and blessed of the Lord to many souls. 1Th 1:9-10; 1Th 2:10-11.

The apostle now proceeded to **Berea.** Here the Jews were more noble. They examined what they heard by the word of God. There was great blessing here also. Many believed, but the Jews, like hunters after their prey, hastened from Thessalonica to Berea, and raised a tumult which forced Paul to leave the place almost immediately. Accompanied by some of the Berean converts, he directed his course to Athens. Silas and Timotheus were left behind.

Paul's Visit to Athens

The appearance of the apostle in **Athens** is an event in his history of great importance. It was, in some respects, the capital of the world, and the seat of Grecian culture and philosophy; but it was also the central point of superstition and idolatry.

It is very interesting to observe, that the apostle was in no haste to enter upon his work here. He allowed time for reflection. Deep thoughts, and how to weigh up everything in the presence of God, and in the light of the death and resurrection of Christ, filled his mind. It was his first intention to wait for the arrival of Silas and Timotheus. He had sent back a message to Berea, that they were to come to him with all speed. But when he saw himself surrounded with temples, and altars, and statues, and idolatrous worship, he could keep silence no longer. As usual, he begins with the Jews, but also disputes daily with the philosophers in the market place, Christianity and paganism thus openly confront each other, and, be it observed, the apostle of Christianity was *alone in Athens;* but the place swarmed with the apostles of paganism, and so numerous were the objects of worship, that a satirist observed, "It is easier to find a god than a man in Athens.

Some scornfully derided what they heard, others listened and wished to hear more. "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection." Thus we learn what Paul in his daily conversation had been pressing on the attention of the people, and the different classes of philosophers. It was **"Jesus, and the resurrection."** These words had made the greatest impression, and remained the most distinctly in their minds. What a new thing, and what a blessed reality for souls! The *Person* of *Christ;* not a theory: the *fact* of the resurrection, not a gloomy uncertainty as to the future. The minister of Christ lays bare to the learned Athenians their fearful condition in the sight of the true God. Nevertheless, they sought to have a fuller and more deliberate exposition of these mysterious subjects, and they brought Paul unto Areopagus.

This place, we are told, was the most convenient and appropriate for a public address. The most solemn court of justice had sat from time immemorial on the hill of Areopagus. The judges sat in the open air, upon seats hewn out in the rock. On this spot many solemn questions had been discussed, and many solemn cases decided: beginning with the legendary trial of Mars, which gave to the place the name of **"Mars' hill."**

It was in this scene that Paul addressed the multitude. There is no moment in the apostle's history, or in the history of the first planting of Christianity more deeply interesting or better known than this. Inspired by feelings for the honour of God, and filled with the knowledge of man's condition in the light of the cross, what must he have felt as he stood on Mars' hill? Wherever he turned his eyes, the signs of idolatry in its thousand forms rose up before him. He might have been betrayed, under the circumstances, into speaking strongly; but he mastered his feelings, and refrained from intemperate language. Considering the fervency of his spirit, and the greatness of his zeal for truth it was a remarkable instance of self-denial and self-command. But his Lord and Master was with him, though to the human eye he stood alone before the Athenians, and the many foreigners who flocked to that university of the world.

For wisdom, prudence, sound reasoning, and consummate skill, Paul's address stands alone in the annals of mankind He did not begin by attacking their false gods, or by denouncing their religion as a Satanic delusion, and the object of his utter detestation. Zeal without knowledge would have done so, and been pleased with its own faithfulness. But in the address before us we have an example of the best way of approaching the minds and hearts of ignorant and prejudiced persons in every age. May the Lord give wisdom to all His servants to follow it!

His opening words are both winning and reproving. "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." He thus begins by acknowledging that they had religious feelings, but that they were wrongly directed and then speaks of himself as one who was ready to lead them to the knowledge of the true God. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." He wisely selects for his text, the inscription, **"To the unknown God."** This gives him an opportunity to commence at the lowest step in the ladder of truth. He speaks of the oneness of God the Creator, and the relationship of man to Him. But he soon leaves the argument against idolatry, and proceeds to preach the gospel. And yet he is careful not to introduce the *name* of Jesus in his public address. He had done so fully in his more private ministrations: but, being now surrounded by the disciples and admirers of such names as Socrates, Plato, Zeno and Epicurus, he sacredly guards the holy name of Jesus from the risk of a comparison with such. He well knew that the name of the lowly Jesus of Nazareth was "to the Greeks foolishness." Nevertheless it is easily seen that towards the close of his address, the attention of the whole audience is concentrated on the *man Christ Jesus,* though His name is not mentioned in the whole speech. Thus he proceeds: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Here the patience of his audience failed - his discourse was interrupted. But the last impression left on their minds was one of eternal weight and importance The inspired apostle addressed himself to the *consciences* not to the intellectual curiosity, of the philosophers. The mention of the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment of the world, with such commanding power and authority, could not fail to trouble these proud and self-indulgent men. The essential principle, or the highest aim of the Epicurean philosopher, was to *gratify himself;* that of the Stoic, was a *proud indifference* to good and evil, pleasure and pain.

Need we wonder then, that this remarkable assembly should have broken up, amidst the scornful derision of some, and the icy indifference of others? But, in spite of all, Christianity had gained its first and noble victory over idolatry, and, whatever may have been the immediate results of Paul's speech, we know it has been blessed to many ever since and that it shall yet bring forth much fruit in many souls and continue to bear fruit to the glory of God for ever and for ever.

Paul now departs from among them. He does not appear to have been driven away by any tumult or persecution. The blessed Lord gave him to taste His own joy, and the joy of angels over penitent sinners; "Among the which was **Dionysius** the Areopagite, and a woman named **Damaris,** and others with them." But in the military city of Philippi, and the mercantile cities of Thessalonica and Corinth, the number of conversions seems to have been much greater than in the highly educated and polished city of Athens. This is deeply humbling to the pride of man, and to the boasted powers of the human mind. One Epistle was written to the Philippians, two to the Thessalonians, and two to the Corinthians: but we possess no letter written by Paul to the Athenians, and we do not read that he ever again visited Athens.

Paul's Visit to Corinth

The connection of Corinth with the history, teaching, and writings of our apostle is almost as intimate and important as either Jerusalem or Antioch. It may be considered as his European centre. Here God had "much people;" and here Paul "continued a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." It was also when at Corinth that he wrote his first apostolic letters - **The two Epistles to the Thessalonians.**

Corinth, the Roman capital of Greece, was a large mercantile city, in immediate connection with Rome and the west of the Mediterranean, with Thessalonica and Ephesus on the Aegean, with Antioch and Alexandria in the East. Thus by means of its two noted harbours, it received the ships of both Eastern and Western Seas.*

{*For full and minute geographical details, see *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul,* by Conybeare and Howson. We may also state here, that we follow them chiefly as to dates. It is the latest, the most comprehensive, and probably the best history of the great Apostle.}

Paul appears to have travelled alone to Corinth. If Timotheus came to him when at Athens (1Th 3:1), he was sent back again to Thessalonica; which place, as we shall soon see was much on the apostle's heart at this time. Soon after his arrival he unexpectedly found two friends and fellow labourers in Aquila and his wife Priscilla. At this particular time there must have been a greater number of Jews in Corinth than usual; "because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome." The Lord thus used the banishment of Aquila and Priscilla to provide a lodging for His lonely servant. They were of his own country - of his own trade - of his own heart and spirit. And being "of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought, for by their occupation they were **tent makers."** (Acts 18)

Most gracious, and marvellous too, are the ways of the Lord with His servant. In a city of wealth and commerce surrounded by native Greeks, Roman colonists, and Jews from all quarters, he quietly works at his own trade that he may be burdensome to none of them. Here we have at any rate one example of the deepest and loftiest spirituality combined with diligent labour in the common things of this life. What an example! and what a lesson! His daily toil was no hindrance to his communion with God. None ever knew so well, or felt so deeply, the value of the gospel he carried with him: the issues of life and death were bound up with it, and yet he could give himself up to ordinary labour. But this he did, as really as preaching, for the Lord and for His saints. He frequently refers to this in his Epistles, and speaks of it as one of his privileges. "And in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia." (2Co 11:9-10.*)

{*As some have made too much of this passage, and others too little, it may be well to note what we believe to be its true meaning. The apostle's resolution not to be burdensome to the saints, as here so strongly expressed, applies chiefly, if not exclusively, to the Corinthian church. An important principle was involved, but it was *a special.* not a *general* principle with the apostle. He acknowledges communications from other churches in the most grateful manner possible. (Phil. 4) And in writing to the Corinthians afterwards, he says, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service. And when I was present with you, *and wanted,* I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied."

The apostle, no doubt, had the best of reasons for thus refusing fellowship with the church at Corinth. We know there were "false apostles" and many enemies there; and that many grave and serious disorders had been allowed amongst them, which he strongly rebuked and sought to correct. Under these circumstances, lest his motives might be misconstrued, the apostle would rather work with his hands than receive support from the church at Corinth. And, "Wherefore?" he asks, "Because I love you not? God knoweth. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them that desire occasion." 2Co 9:1-15.}

There is another thing connected with this feature of the apostle's course which adds great interest to it. It is generally believed that he wrote his two epistles to the Thessalonians about this time, and some think the Epistle to the Galatians also. These are still before us as the true witnesses of his nearness to God and communion with Him, while he "laboured working with his own hands." But the sabbath of rest comes, the workshop is closed, and Paul goes to the synagogue. This was his habit. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." But while Paul was thus employed, week-day and sabbath-day, Silas and Timotheus arrived from Macedonia. It is evident that they brought some assistance with them, which would meet the apostle's need at the time, and relieve him from such constant labour with his hands.

The coming of **Silas and Timotheus** seems to have encouraged and strengthened the apostle. His zeal and energy in the gospel are evidently increased. He "was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ;" but they opposed his doctrine and blasphemed. This leads Paul to take his course with great boldness and decision. He shakes his raiment, in token of being pure from their blood, and declares that now he turns to the Gentiles. In all this he was led of God, and acted according to His mind. So long as it was possible, he preached in the synagogue; but when he could no longer go there, he was compelled to use the most convenient place he could find. At Ephesus, he preached in the school of one Tyrannus: at Rome, he "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house;' and here, in Corinth, a **proselyte,** named Justus, opened his house to the rejected apostle.

At this particular crisis in the apostle's history, he was favoured with another special revelation from the Lord Himself, "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision. Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. But again his unrelenting enemies are astir. The great success of the gospel among the heathen excited the rage of the Jews against Paul; and they sought to use the coming of Gallio, a new governor, to accomplish their wicked intentions.

Gallio was the brother of Seneca the philosopher, and, like him, given to much learning. He was wise, fair, and tolerant as a governor, though *contemptuous* in his treatment of sacred things. But the Lord, who was with His servant as He had said, used the unbelieving indifference of Gallio to defeat the malicious designs of the Jews, and to turn their false accusations against themselves. As they were frustrated in their evil purposes, the apostle had greater liberty and less annoyance, in carrying on the work of the gospel. Its blessed fruits were soon manifest throughout the whole province of Achaia. (1Th 1:8-9)

Paul's Passing Visit to Ephesus

The time had now come when Paul thought it right to leave Corinth and revisit Jerusalem. He had a great desire to be at the coming feast. But before his departure, he took a solemn farewell of the young assembly, promising (the Lord willing) to return.

Accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, he leaves Corinth in peace. But when at the harbour before sailing, a ceremony was performed which has given rise to much discussion. Paul, being under a vow, **shaves his head at Cenchrea**. In his own mind, and as led by the Spirit, we feel sure that he was far above and beyond a religion of feasts and vows, but he stooped in grace to the customs of his nation. To the Jew he becomes a Jew. Their constant opposition to his doctrine, and their violent persecution of himself, never weakened his affections for his beloved people: surely this was of God. While he sought in the energy of the Spirit to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, he never forgot, in faithfulness to the word of God, to preach to the Jews first. He thus stands before us, as the bright expression of God's grace to the Gentiles, and of his lingering affections towards the Jews.

The missionary band land at Ephesus. Paul goes to the synagogue and reasons with the Jews. They seem inclined to hear him, but he has a strong desire to go up to Jerusalem and keep the approaching feast. So he "bade them farewell saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem; but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus."

Paul's Fourth Visit to Jerusalem

We are not supplied with any information by the sacred historian of what occurred in Jerusalem on this occasion. We are merely told that when Paul had "gone up and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch." But his intense desire to pay this visit may assure us of its great importance. He may have felt that the time had come when the Jewish Christians, assembled at the feast, should hear a full account of the reception of the gospel among the Gentiles. Roman colonies and Greek capitals had been visited, and a great work of God had been accomplished. All this would be perfectly natural and right, but we need not seek to remove the veil which the Holy Ghost has drawn over this visit.

Paul goes down from Jerusalem to Antioch, visiting all the assemblies he had first formed; and thus, as it were, binds his work together - Antioch and Jerusalem. So far as we know, Paul's visit to Antioch was his last. We have already seen how new centres of Christian life had been established by him in the Greek cities of the Aegean. The course of the gospel is further and further towards the West, and the inspired part of the apostle's biography, after a short period of deep interest in Judea, finally centres in Rome.

The Return of Paul to Antioch

After a journey which had extended over the space of three or four years, our apostle returns to Antioch. He had travelled over a wide circuit, and disseminated Christianity in many flourishing and populous cities, and almost entirely by his own exertions. If the reader would keep up his interest in Paul's history, he must mark distinctly and keep clearly before him the great epochs in Paul's life, and the main points in his different journeys. But before starting with Paul on his *third* missionary journey, it may be well to notice another great preacher of the gospel, who suddenly comes before us just at this time, and whose name, next to that of the apostle, is perhaps the most important in the early history of the church.

Apollos was a Jew by birth-a native of Alexandria. He was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures: . . . but knowing only the baptism of John." He was devoted, earnest, and upright, publicly confessing and preaching that which he knew, and the power of the Holy Ghost was manifested in him. It does not appear that he had received any appointment, ordination, or sanction of any kind, from either the twelve or Paul. But the Lord who is above all had called him, and was acting in him and by him. We thus see, in the case of Apollos, the manifestation of the power and liberty of the Holy Spirit, without human intervention. It is well to note this. The idea of an exclusive clericalism is the practical denial of the liberty of the Spirit to act by whom He will. But though burning with zeal and a powerful speaker, Apollos knew only what John had taught his disciples. This the Lord knew, and provided teachers for him. Among those who were listening to his earnest appeals, two of Paul's well-instructed disciples were led to take a special interest in him. And though he was both learned and eloquent, he was humble enough to be instructed by **Aquila and Priscilla.** They invited him to their house, and, no doubt in a lowly spirit, "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." How simple! how natural! and how beautiful! All is of the Lord. He ordered that Aquila and Priscilla should be left at Ephesus - that Apollos should come and stir up the people at Ephesus before the arrival of Paul; and, after being instructed, that he should go on to Corinth, and help on the good work there, which Paul had begun. Apollos watered what Paul had planted, and God gave abundant increase. Such are the blessed ways of the Lord in His thoughtful love and tender care of all His servants, and of all His assemblies.

06 Paul's Third Journey

Chapter 6

Paul's Third Missionary Journey A.D. 54

Having "spent some time" in Antioch, Paul leaves that Gentile centre, and commences another missionary journey. Nothing is said of his companions on this occasion. He "went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order strengthening all the disciples;" and also giving directions for the collection on behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem. (1Co 16:1-2) In a short time he reached the centre of the work in Asia.

Ephesus. At this time it was the greatest city in Asia Minor, and the capital of the province. Owing to its central position, it was the common meeting-place of various characters and classes of men. By this time Apollos had departed to Corinth, but the remaining twelve of John's disciples were still in Ephesus. Paul speaks to them about their state or position. We must give a passing notice of what occurred.

John's baptism required repentance but not separation from the Jewish synagogue. The gospel teaches that Christianity is founded on death and resurrection. Christian baptism is the significant and expressive symbol of these truths. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." (Col 2:12) As these men were entirely unacquainted with the foundation truths of Christianity, we suppose they had never mingled with Christians. The apostle, no doubt, explained to them the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. They believed the truth and received Christian baptism. Then Paul, in his apostolic capacity, laid his hands on them; and they were sealed with the Holy Ghost, and "spake with tongues and prophesied."

Immediately after the mention of this important occurrence, our attention is directed to the apostle's labours in the synagogue. During three months he preached Christ boldly there, reasoning and endeavouring to convince his hearers of all "the things concerning the kingdom of God." The hearts of some "were hardened," while others repented and believed; but as many of the Jews took the place of adversaries, and "spake evil of that way before the multitude," Paul acts in the most definite way. He "separated the disciples" from the Jewish synagogue, and formed them into a distinct assembly, and met with them "daily in the school of one Tyrannus." This is a deeply interesting and instructive action of the apostle, but he acts in the consciousness of the power and truth of God. The church in Ephesus is now perfectly distinct from both Jews and Gentiles. Here we see what the apostle elsewhere refers to in his exhortation, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." (1Co 10:32) Where this important distinction is not seen, there must be great confusion of thought as to both the word and ways of God.

The apostle now appears before us as the instrument of the power of God in a remarkable and striking way. He communicates the Holy Ghost to the twelve disciples of John, and he separates the disciples of Jesus and formally founds the church in Ephesus. His testimony to the Lord Jesus is heard in all Asia, both by Jews and Greeks; special miracles are wrought by his hands, diseases departing from many if they but touch the border of his garment. The power of the enemy disappears before the power that is in Paul, and the name of Jesus is glorified. The evil spirits acknowledge his power, and put his enemies to shame and loss; the consciences of the heathen are reached, and the enemy's dominion over them is gone. Fear falls on many who "used curious arts," and they burn their books of magic, the cost of which amounts to nearly two thousand pounds in English money. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (See Act 19:1-20) Thus the power of the Lord was displayed in the person and mission of Paul, and his apostolate established beyond a question.

The apostle had now spent about three years of incessant labour in Ephesus. And he says himself when addressing the elders at Miletus, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." It is also supposed by some, that during this time he paid a short visit and wrote his **First Epistle to the Corinthians.**

The Tumult at Ephesus

A great and blessed work had now been accomplished by the mighty energy of God's Spirit, through the instrumentality of His chosen servant Paul. The gospel had been planted in the capital of Asia, and it had spread throughout the whole province. The apostle now felt as if his work had been done there, and he longs to go to Rome, the capital of the West and the metropolis of the world. Greece and Macedonia had already received the gospel, but there was yet Rome. "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome." (Act 19:21)

But while Paul was thus making arrangements for another Journey, the enemy was planning a fresh attack. His resources were not yet exhausted. Demetrius excites the thoughtless multitude against the Christians. A great tumult is raised, the passions of men being stirred up against the instruments of the testimony of God. The workmen of Demetrius raise the cry, not only that their craft is in danger but that the temple of the great goddess Diana is in danger of being despised. When the multitude heard these things, they were filled with wrath, and cried, saying, **"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"** The whole city was now filled with confusion; but Paul was mercifully preserved - by his brethren, and by some of the chief rulers in Asia, who were his friends - from showing himself in the theatre

The Jews evidently began to fear, that the persecution might be turned against themselves, for the majority of the people knew not for what purpose they had come together. They therefore put forth a certain Alexander, probably with the intention of shifting the blame from themselves upon the Christians; but the moment the heathen discovered that he was a Jew, their fury was increased: the rallying cry was again raised, and for two whole hours the people shouted "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Fortunately for all parties, the town clerk was a man of great tact and admirable policy. He flattered, calmed, soothed, and dismissed the assembly. But to faith it was God using the persuasive eloquence of a heathen official to protect His servant and His many children there.

The far-famed temple of Diana was reckoned by the ancients as one of the wonders of the world; the sun, it was said, saw nothing in his course more magnificent than Diana's temple. It was constructed of the purest marble, and was two hundred and twenty years in building. But with the spread of Christianity it sank into decay, and scarcely anything of it now remains to show us even where it stood. The trade of Demetrius was to make small models in silver of the shrine of the goddess. These were set up in houses, kept as memorials, and carried about on journeys. But as the introduction of Christianity necessarily affected the sale of these models, the heathen artisans were instigated by Demetrius to raise a popular cry in favour of Diana and against the Christians.

Paul's Departure from Ephesus for Macedonia

Acts 20. After the cessation of the tumult, the danger being over and the rioters dispersed, Paul sends for the disciples, embraces them, and departs for Macedonia. Two of the Ephesian brethren, Tychicus and Trophimus, seem to have accompanied him, and to have remained faithful to him through all his afflictions. They are frequently mentioned, and have a place in the last chapter of his last epistle, 2 Timothy 4.

The sacred historian is exceedingly brief in his record of Paul's proceedings at this time. All the information which he gives us is compressed in the following words: - "He departed to go into Macedonia: and when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months." It is generally supposed that these few words embrace a period of nine or ten months - from the early summer of A.D. 57 to the spring of A.D. 58. But this lack of information is happily supplied by the apostle's letters. Those that were written on this journey supply us with many historical details, and, what is more and better, they give us from his own pen a living picture of the deep and painful exercises of mind and heart, through which he was then passing.

It appears that Paul had arranged to meet **Titus at Troas,** who was to bring him tidings direct from Corinth of the state of things there. But week after week passed, and Titus came not. We know something of the workings of that great mind and heart at this time, from what he says himself: "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. (2Co 2:12-13) His personal anxiety, however, did not hinder him from going on with the great work of the gospel. This is evident from verses 14-17.

At length the long-expected Titus arrived in Macedonia probably at Philippi. And now Paul's mind is relieved and his heart is comforted. Titus brings him better tidings from Corinth than he had expected to hear. The reaction is manifest: he is filled with praise; "Great is my boldness of speech toward you," he says; "great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh, had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus." (2Co 7:4-6)

Soon after this, Paul writes his **Second Epistle to the Corinthians;** which we find addressed not to them only, but to all the churches in all Achaia. They may have all been more or less affected by the condition of things at Corinth. Titus is again the apostle's willing servant, not only as the bearer of his second letter to the church at Corinth, but as taking a special interest in the collections then making for the poor. Paul not only gives Titus strict charges about the collections, but writes two chapters on the subject (chaps. 8 and 9), though it was more deacons' than apostles' work. But, as he had said in answer to the suggestion of James, Cephas, and John, that he should remember the poor - "The *same,*" he replied, *"which I was also forward to do."*

The space which the apostle devotes to subjects connected with collections for the poor is remarkable, and deserves our careful consideration. It may be that some of us have overlooked this fact and suffered loss in our own souls thereby. Notice, for example, what he says of one church. We have good reason to believe that the *Philippians* from the very beginning *cared* for the apostle - they pressed him to accept their contributions for his support, from his first visit to Thessalonica, down to his imprisonment in Rome, besides their liberality to others. (2Co 8:1-4) But some may imagine from this, that they were a wealthy church. Just the opposite. Paul tells us "How that, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." It was out of their deep poverty that they gave so liberally.

What the Philippians are in the Epistles, the poor widow is in the Gospels - two mites were her all. She could have given one and kept one; but she had an undivided heart, and she gave both. She, too, gave out of her poverty; and, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the whole world, these things shall be told as a memorial of their liberality.

After Paul had sent off Titus and his associates with the Epistle, he remained himself in "those parts" of Greece doing the work of an evangelist. His mind, however, was set on paying the Corinthians a personal visit; but he allowed time for his letter to produce its own effects under the blessing of God. One of the objects of the apostle was to prepare the way for his personal ministry among them. It is generally thought that it was during this period of delay that he fully preached the gospel of Christ round about unto Illyricum. (Rom 15:19) It is probable that he reached Corinth in winter, according to his expressed intention. "It may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you." (l Cor 16: 6) There he abode three months.

All are agreed, we may say, that it was during these winter months, that he wrote his great **Epistle to the Romans.** Some say, that he also wrote his **Epistle to the Galatians** at the same time. But there is great diversity of opinion amongst the chronologists on this point. From the absence of names and salutations, such as we have in the Epistle to the Romans, it is difficult to ascertain its date. But if it was not written at this particular time, we must place it earlier, not later. The apostle was surprised at their early departure from the truth. "I marvel," he says, "that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." His great disappointment is manifest in the warmth of spirit in which he writes this Epistle.

But we must return to the *history* of our apostle: the *niceties* of chronology we cannot enter upon in our "short papers." But after comparing the latest authorities, we give what seem to us the most reliable dates.

Paul Leaves Corinth

The apostle's work was now done at Corinth, and he prepares to leave it. His mind was bent upon going to Rome; but there was this mission of charity on his heart, to which he must attend first. We are favoured with his own words on these different points. "But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you, Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come unto you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." (Rom 15:23-26) The array of names in Act 20:4; Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, and Trophimus, are supposed to be brethren with the collections which had been made at the different places named. Instead of sailing straight to Syria, he goes round by Macedonia, because of the Jews who were lying in wait for him. His companions tarried for him at Troas. There he spent a Lord's day, and even a whole week, in order to see the brethren.

We must notice briefly what took place at this stage of his journey. Two things, all important to the Christian, are connected with it - the Lord's day, and the Lord's supper. The historian, who was with Paul at this time, enters with unusual minuteness on the details of that day.

It is evident from this incidental notice, that it was the established custom of the early Christians to come together on **"the first day of the week"** for the understood purpose of "breaking bread." We have here the *main object* and the *ordinary time* of their coming together. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." (See also 1Co 16:2; Joh 20:19, Rev 1:10) Even the apostle's discoursing, precious as it was, is spoken of as a secondary thing. The remembrance of the Lord's love in dying for us, and all that into which He has brought us as risen again, was, and is, the first thing. If there be an opportunity for so ministering the word, as to gather up the thoughts and affections of the worshippers to Christ, it is well to embrace it; but the breaking of bread ought to be the first consideration, and the main object of the assembly. The celebration of the Lord's supper on this occasion was after sunset. In early times, it was observed in some places before daylight; in others, after sunset. But here the disciples were not obliged to meet in secret. "There were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together." And Paul continued his speech until midnight, ready to depart on the morrow. It was an extraordinary occasion, and Paul avails himself of the opportunity to speak to them all night. The time had not come, as some one has said, when the warm earnest utterances of the heart were measured by the minute - when the burning agony of the preacher over lost souls was timed by the icy coldness of the mere professor, or the careless indifference of the worldly Christian. Eutychus, a young man, overcome with sleep "fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead." This has been viewed by some as a *penalty for inattention,* but a miracle was wrought; the young man was raised from a state of death by the power and goodness of God through His servant Paul, and the friends were not a little comforted.

Paul at Miletus

The most important stage of this journey is Miletus though the different places they pass or call at are carefully noted by the sacred historian. Paul, being filled with the Spirit, gives directions for the journey. His companions willingly obey him, not as a master, but as one who directs in the humility of love and in the wisdom of God. He arranges not to go to Ephesus, though that was a central place, for he had purposed in his heart to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. But as the vessel was to be detained some time at Miletus, he sends for **the elders of the church at Ephesus** to meet him The distance between the two places is said to be about thirty miles, so that two or three days would be required to go and come, but they had sufficient time for their meeting before the ship sailed. Thus the Lord thinks of His servants and makes everything work together for their good and His own glory.

Paul's farewell address to the elders of Ephesus is characteristic and representative. It demands our most careful study. It sets before us the deep and touching affection of the apostle, the position of the church at that time, and the work of the gospel among the nations. He exhorts them with unusual earnestness and tenderness; he felt he was addressing them for the last time; he reminds them of his labours among them in "serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears." He warns them against false teachers and heresies - the grievous wolves who would enter in among them, and the men of themselves that would arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship."

As this testimony of Paul's is of the highest importance, and marks a distinct epoch in the history of the church, besides shedding divine light on all ecclesiastical systems, we give the thoughts of another on its wide and comprehensive bearing.

"The church was consolidated over a pretty large extent of country, and the church, in divers places at least, had taken the form of a regular institution. Elders were established and recognised. The apostle could send for them to come to him. His authority also was acknowledged on their part. He speaks of his ministry as a past thing - solemn thought! .... Thus, what the Holy Ghost here sets before us is, that now, when the detail of his work among the Gentiles to plant the gospel is related as one entire scene among Jews and Gentiles, he bids adieu to the work; in order to leave those whom he had gathered together, in a new position, and, in a certain sense, to themselves. It is a discourse which marks the cessation of one phase of the church - that of apostolic labours - and the entrance into another; its responsibility to stand fast now that these labours had ceased; the service of the elders, whom 'the Holy Ghost had made overseers,' and, at the same time, the dangers and difficulties that would attend the cessation of apostolic labour, and complicate the work of the elders, on whom the responsibility would now more especially devolve.

"The first remark that flows from the consideration of this discourse is, that *apostolic succession is entirely denied by it.* Owing to the absence of the apostle, various difficulties would arise, and there would be no one in his place to meet or to prevent these difficulties. *Successor, therefore, he had none.* In the second place, the fact appears that this energy, which bridled the spirit of evil, once away, devouring wolves from without, and teachers of perverse things from within, would lift up their heads and attack the simplicity and the happiness of the church; which would be harassed by the efforts of Satan, without possessing apostolic energy to withstand them. In the third place, that which was principally to be done for the hindrance of evil was to feed the flock; and to watch, whether over themselves or over the flock, for that purpose. He then commends them - neither to Timothy nor to a bishop, but in a way that sets aside all official resources to God and to the word of His grace. *This is where he left the church.* The free labours of the apostle of the Gentiles were ended. Solemn and affecting thought! He had been the instrument chosen of God to communicate to the world His counsels respecting the church and to establish in the mind of the world this precious object of His affections, united to Christ at His right hand. What would become of it down here?"*

{* *The Present Testimony,* vol. 8, p. 405-407.}

Acts 21. With a fair wind, Paul and his companions sailed out from Miletus, while the sorrowing elders of Ephesus prepared for their journey homewards. With a straight course they sailed to Coos, Rhodes, and thence to Patara and Tyre. From what took place there - so similar to the scene at Miletus - it is evident that Paul soon found his way to the heart of the disciples. Though he had been only one week at Tyre, and previously unacquainted with the Christians there he had gained their affections. "And they all brought us on our way," says Luke, "with wives and children, till we were out of the city, and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed." It seems too, as if a spirit of prophecy had been poured out on these affectionate Tyrians, for they warned the apostle against going up to Jerusalem. After waiting there seven days, they came to Ptolemais, where they abode one day. At Caesarea, they lodged in the house of **Philip the evangelist,** which was one of the seven. He is already well known to us, but it is not a little interesting to meet him again, after an interval of more than twenty years. Now he has four daughters, virgins, who prophesy. Here **Agabus** the prophet predicted Paul's imprisonment, and besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. All the disciples said the same thing, and entreated him with tears not to go. But however much Paul's tender and sensitive heart must have been moved by the tears and the entreaties of his friends and of his own children in the faith, he suffered nothing to alter his resolution or move him from his purpose. He felt bound in spirit to go, and ready to leave all consequences with the will of the Lord.

We now come to

Paul's Fifth Visit to Jerusalem

A.D. 58.

The apostle and his companions were gladly welcomed on their arrival at Jerusalem. "When we were come to Jerusalem," Luke observes, "the brethren received us gladly." The day following, Paul and his company visited James, at whose house the elders were present. Paul, as chief speaker declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. But though they were greatly interested, and praised the Lord for the good news, they evidently felt uneasy. They at once called Paul's attention to the fact, that a great number of Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah were zealous observers of the law of Moses and were strongly prejudiced against himself.

How to satisfy the prejudices of these Jewish Christians was now the important question between Paul and the elders. Multitudes of Jews, both converted and unconverted, they knew would come together when they heard of Paul's arrival. They had long believed the most serious and weighty charges against him - "that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs." What was now to be done? The elders proposed that Paul should publicly show himself obedient to the law. This was the painful and perplexing position of the apostle of the Gentiles. What can he now do? Will the messenger of the gospel of the glory - the minister of the heavenly calling stoop to the rules of Nazarite vows? This is the solemn and serious question. If he refuses compliance with their wish, the lurking suspicion of the Jews will be confirmed; if he acts according to their desires, he must humble himself - forget for the moment his high calling, yield to the ignorance, prejudice, and pride of the Judaizers. But what else can he do? He is in the very centre of a bigoted Judaism, and if mistaken, he honestly desires to win over the church at Jerusalem to a purer and loftier Christianity.

Many have been very free in their criticisms on the apostle's course at this time. But though it is our privilege humbly to examine all that the sacred historian has written some, we fear, have ventured too far in saying hard things of the apostle. We may reverently inquire, how far the will and the affections of Paul influenced him on this occasion, apart from the warnings of the Spirit through his brethren; but surely it becomes us to keep within the limits of what the Holy Spirit Himself has said. Let us now carefully view the outward facts which led the apostle to this eventful epoch in his life.

Rome had been long on his mind. He had a great desire to preach the gospel there. This was right - this was according to God - this was not of self: he was the apostle of the Gentiles. God had been working there most blessedly without Paul or Peter, for as yet no apostle had visited Rome. Paul had been privileged to write an epistle to the Romans, and in that letter he expresses the most earnest desire to see them, and to labour among them. "For I long to see you," he says, "that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." This was his state of mind and the object which he had before him; which *we* also must keep in view when studying this part of his history. Compare Rom 1:7-15; Rom 15:15-33.

The End of Paul's Free Labours

We have now come to the important question, and to the point on which Paul's future history turns. Will he go straight west to Rome, or will he go round by way of Jerusalem? All depends on this. Jerusalem was also on his heart. But if Christ had sent him far hence to the Gentiles, could the Spirit, on Christ's part, lead him to Jerusalem? It was just here, we believe, that the great apostle was permitted to follow the desires of his own heart, which desires were right and beautiful in themselves, but not according to the mind of God at the time. He loved his nation dearly, and especially the poor saints at Jerusalem; and, having been greatly misrepresented there, he wished to prove his love for the poor of his people by bringing to them in person the offerings of the Gentiles. "When therefore," he says, "I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain." Surely, some will say, this was loving and praiseworthy! Yes, but on one side only, and that side alas! was the side of nature, not of the Spirit. "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days; who *said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem."* This seems plain enough; but Paul inclined for the moment to the side of his affections "for the poor of the flock" in Jerusalem. Could there have been, we ask, a more pardonable mistake? Impossible! It was his love to the poor, and the pleasure of carrying to them the offerings of the Gentiles, that led him to go round by Jerusalem on his way to Rome. Nevertheless, it was a mistake, and a mistake which cost Paul his liberty. His free labours end here. He allowed the flesh its liberty, and God allowed the Gentiles to bind it with a chain. This was the Master's expression of truest love to His servant. Paul was too precious in His sight to be allowed to pass without His righteous dealings at such a time; and he was also made to prove, that neither Jerusalem nor Rome could be the metropolis of Christianity. Christ the Head of the church was in heaven, and there only could the metropolis of Christianity be. Jerusalem *persecuted* the apostle, Rome *imprisoned* and *martyred* him. Nevertheless the Lord was with His servant for his own good, the advancement of the truth, the blessing of the church, and the glory of His own great name.

Here may we be permitted to offer one reflection. On how many histories, since Paul's fifth visit to Jerusalem, has this solemn scene been engraved! How many saints have been bound with chains of different kinds, but who can say for what, or why? All of us would have said - unless enlightened by the Spirit - that the apostle could not have been actuated by a more worthy motive in going round by Jerusalem on his way to Rome. But the Lord had not told him to do so. All hinges on this. How needful then to see, at every stage of our journey, that we have the word of God for our faith, the service of Christ for our motive, and the Holy Spirit for our guide. We will now return to the history of events.

We left Paul sitting with the elders in the house of James. They had suggested to him a mode of conciliating the Jewish believers, and of refuting the accusations of his enemies. Disloyalty to his nation and to the religion of his fathers was the chief charge brought against him. But under the surface of outward events, and especially having the light of the epistles shed upon them, we discover the root of the whole matter in the enmity of the human heart against the grace of God. In order to understand this, we must notice that **Paul's ministry was twofold.** 1. His mission was to preach the gospel "to every creature which is under heaven" - it not only went far beyond the limits of Judaism, but it was in perfect contrast with that system. 2. He was also the minister of the church of God, and preached its exalted position, and its blessed privileges, as united with Christ the glorified Man in heaven. These blessed truths, it will be seen lift the soul of the believer far above the religion of the flesh, be it ever so painstaking - ever so abounding in rites and ceremonies. Vows fasts, feasts, offerings, purifications, traditions, and philosophy, are all shut out as nothing worth before God, and opposed to the very nature of Christianity. This exasperated the religious Jew with his traditions, and the uncircumcised Greek with his philosophy; and the two united to persecute the true witness-bearer of this twofold testimony. And so it has been ever since. The religious man with his ordinances, and the merely natural man with his philosophy, by a natural process, readily unite in opposing the witness of a heavenly Christianity. See Colossians 1 & 2.

If Paul had preached circumcision, the offence of the cross would have ceased; for this would have given them a place, and the opportunity of being something and doing something, and even of taking part with God in His religion. This was Judaism, and this gave the Jew his pre-eminence. But the gospel of the grace of God addresses man as already lost - as "dead" in trespasses and sins" - and has no more respect to the Jew than to the Gentile. Like the sun in the firmament, it shines for all. No nation, kindred, tongue, or people, is excluded from its heavenly rays. "Preach the gospel to every creature which is under heaven" is the divine commission and the wide sphere of the evangelist; to teach those who believe this gospel their completeness in Christ is the privilege and duty of every minister of the New Testament.

Having thus cleared the ground as to the motives, objects, and position of the great apostle, we will now briefly trace the remainder of his eventful life. The time has come when he is to be brought before kings and rulers, and even before Caesar himself, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Paul in the Temple

In accordance with the proposal of James and the elders Paul now proceeds to the temple with "the four men which had a vow." Thus we read: "Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." On the completion of the **Nazarite's vow** the law required that certain offerings should be presented in the temple. These offerings involved considerable expense, as we may see from Numbers 6; and it was considered an act of great merit and piety for a rich brother to provide these offerings for a poor brother, and thereby enable him to complete his vow. Paul was not rich, but he had a large and tender heart, and he generously undertook to pay the charges of the four poor Nazarites. Such readiness on Paul's part to please some and help others, ought to have pacified and conciliated the Jews, and probably it would, had there only been present such as were associated with James; but it had the opposite effect with the inveterate zealots: they were only more incensed against him. The celebration of the feast had attracted multitudes to the holy city, so that the temple was thronged with worshippers from every land.

Among these foreign Jews were some from Asia, probably some of Paul's old antagonists from Ephesus, who were glad of an opportunity to be revenged on him who had formerly defeated them. Towards the end of the seven days wherein the sacrifices were to be offered, these Asiatic Jews saw Paul in the temple, and immediately fell upon him, "crying out Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.... And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut." The whole city being now in an uproar, the crowd rushed furiously to the point of attack; the multitude were excited to madness and but for their sacred care not to shed blood in the holy place, Paul would have been instantly torn to pieces. Their object now was to hurry him outside the sacred enclosure. But before their murderous plans were executed, help from the Lord arrived, and they were unexpectedly interrupted.

The sentries at the gates no doubt communicated at once to the Roman garrison, situated over against the temple, that there was a tumult in the court. The chief captain, **Claudius Lysias,** immediately ran to the spot in person, taking soldiers and centurions with him. When the Jews saw the chief captain and the Roman soldiers approaching, they left off beating Paul. The governor, perceiving that he was the occasion of all this excitement, promptly secured him, and bound him with two chains, or chained him by each hand to a soldier. See Act 12:6.

This being done, Lysias proceeded to make inquiry as to the real cause of the disturbance, but, as no certain information could be obtained from the ignorant and excited crowd, he ordered Paul to be carried into the castle. The disappointed mob now made a tremendous rush after their victim. They saw him taken out of their hands, and so violently did they press upon the soldiers, that Paul was borne in their arms up the stairs of the castle; meanwhile deafening shouts arose from the enraged multitude below, as they had done nearly thirty years before, "Away with him, away with him."

At this moment of overwhelming interest, the apostle preserved great presence of mine, and perfectly controlled the agitation of his feelings. He acts prudently without any compromise of truth. Just as they had reached the entrance to the castle, Paul most courteously addressed himself to the chief captain, and said, "May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people." Marvellous to say, this request was granted. Paul had already gained the respect of the Roman governor, if not great influence over his mind. But the hand of the Lord was in it; He was watching over His servant. Paul had thrown himself into the hands of his enemies by seeking to please the believing Jews; but God was with him, and knew how to deliver him out of their power, and to use him for the glory of His own great name. (Act 21:26-40)

Paul's Speech on the Stairs of the Castle

To the chief captain he had spoken in Greek; to the Jews he speaks in Hebrew. These little attentions and considerations are the beautiful blendings of love and wisdom, and ought to serve as a lesson for us. He was always ready to win, by "becoming all things to all men, that he might gain the more." We see the marvellous effects of his influence over the infuriated mob, as well as over the commanding officer. The moment he spoke to them, the whole scene was changed. He calmed the tumultuous sea of human passion by the sound of their sacred language. It fell like oil on the troubled waters, and there was immediately "a great silence." We have his noble defence, addressed to his brethren and fathers, given at length in Act 22:1-21.

It will be observed in reading the address, that his countrymen listened with great attention, while he spoke to them of his early life, his persecution of the church, his mission to Damascus, his miraculous conversion, his vision in the temple, and his interview with Ananias, but the moment he mentioned **his mission to the Gentiles,** an outburst of unbounded indignation arose from the crowded area below, and silenced the speaker. They could not endure the thought of God's grace to the Gentiles. That hated name stung them to fury. Their national pride rebelled against the thought of uncircumcised heathen being made equal to the children of Abraham. They cried down with scornful contempt every argument, human or divine, that could have influenced their minds. In vain did the apostle lay great stress on what had taken place between himself and the devout Ananias. Every appeal was in vain, so long as the Gentiles were to be thus owned. A scene of the wildest confusion now followed. They cast off their outer garments, threw dust into the air, and "lifted up their voices, and said Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live."

The chief captain, seeing the frantic violence of the people and not understanding what it meant, was thrown into new perplexity. He saw the results of a speech in the Hebrew tongue - which he probably did not understand - and, naturally concluding that his prisoner must be guilty of some enormous crime, he ordered him to be bound and scourged to make him confess his guilt. But this proceeding was instantly arrested by Paul making known the fact that he was a Roman citizen.

The soldiers who were engaged in binding him withdrew in alarm, and warned the governor as to what he was doing. Lysias came at once, "and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born." Lysias was now in a difficulty, he had violated a Roman law. To expose a citizen to such indignity was treason against the majesty of the Roman people. But the only way of saving Paul's life was by keeping him in custody; and he happily thought of another and a milder way of ascertaining the nature of his prisoner's offence.

Paul Before the Sanhedrim

On the following day he "commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them." The policy of Lysias here is interesting. He is active in suppressing the tumult; he protects a Roman citizen; he shows deference to the religion and customs of the Jews. This blending of policy and courtesy in the haughty Roman, under such circumstances, is worthy of a moment's reflection; but we pass on.

Paul addresses the council with dignity and gravity; but with an evident expression of *conscious integrity.* "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." This unflinching sense of uprightness so enraged Ananias, the high priest, that he commanded those who stood near to strike him on the mouth. This arbitrary violation of the law on the part of the chief of the council so roused the apostle's feelings, that he fearlessly exclaimed, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" It is evident that the high priest was not so clothed as to be recognised; therefore Paul excuses himself by his ignorance of the fact, and quotes the formal prohibition of the law: "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

The apostle soon perceived, we are told, that the council was divided into two parties, the **Sadducees and the Pharisees,** and therefore he cried out, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." This declaration, whether so intended or not, had the effect of dividing the assembly, and setting the one party against the other. And so fierce did their dissensions become, that some of the Pharisees actually took Paul's side, saying, "We find no evil in this man. but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." The judgment hall immediately became the scene of the most violent contention, and the presence of Claudius Lysias was absolutely necessary. Paul is once more lodged in the castle.

So passed this eventful morning in the history of our apostle. In the evening, when alone, can we wonder if his heart was prone to sink within him? From what had taken place, and from the gloomy appearance of everything around him, the apostle never stood in greater need of the consolation and strength which the Master's presence always gives. But who knew this so well, or could feel so deeply for the lonely prisoner as the Master Himself? And so He appears in richest grace to comfort and cheer the heart of His servant. It was *divinely timed* comfort. The Lord stood by him, as He had done at Corinth, and as He afterwards did on his voyage to Rome, "and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." (Act 18:9-10; Act 23:11; Act 27:23-24) A conspiracy of more than forty men **to assassinate Paul** having been discovered, and all their wicked schemes confounded, Claudius Lysias immediately summoned his centurions and soldiers, and gave strict orders to have Paul conveyed safely to Caesarea. The details of this matter are related by Luke with singular fulness. (Act 23:12-25)

Paul Appears Before Felix

As some of our readers may have observed, the *character* of God's dealings with His servant somewhat changes here. It may be well to pause for a moment, and reverently inquire into the apparent causes of this change. And, as many have freely given their opinions on this difficult point, we will here quote a few lines from one who seems to give the mind of the Spirit.

"I believe, then, that the hand of God was in this journey of Paul's; that in His sovereign wisdom He willed that His servant should undertake it, and also have blessing in it: but that the means employed to lead him into it according to that sovereign wisdom, was the apostle's human affection for the people who were his kinsmen after the flesh; and that he was not led into it by the Holy Ghost acting on the part of Christ in the assembly. This attachment to his people, this human affection, met with that among the people which put it in its place. Humanly speaking, it was an amiable feeling; but it was not the power of the Holy Ghost founded on the death and resurrection of Christ. Here, there was no longer Jew nor Gentile .... Paul's affection was good in itself, but as a spring of action it did not come up to the height of the work of the Spirit, who, on Christ's part, had sent him afar from Jerusalem to the Gentiles in order to reveal the assembly as His body united to Him in heaven.

"He was the messenger of the heavenly glory, which brought out the doctrine of the assembly composed of Jews and Gentiles, united without distinction in the one body of Christ, thus blotting out Judaism; but his love for his nation carried him, I repeat, into the very centre of hostile Judaism-Judaism enraged against the spiritual equality

"Nevertheless, the hand of God was doubtless in it. Paul individually, found his level.

"That which Paul said raises a tumult, and the chief captain takes him from among them. God has all things at His disposal. A nephew of Paul's, never mentioned elsewhere, hears of an ambush laid for him and warns him of it. Paul sends him to the chief captain, who expedites the departure of Paul under a guard to Caesarea. God watched over him, but all is on the level of human and providential ways. There is not the angel as in Peter's case, nor the earthquake as at Philippi. We *are sensibly on different ground."**

{**Synopsis of the Books of the Bible,* vol. 4, 90 -101.}

The accusers of Paul were not long in finding their way to Caesarea. "And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul." (Act 24:1) In a short speech, full of flattery and insinuating art, Tertullus accuses Paul of sedition, heresy, and the profanation of the temple.

Felix then signified to Paul that he had an opportunity of answering for himself. And now, we may say, the apostle of the Gentiles is once more in his right place. However humiliating his circumstances, he is still God's messenger to the Gentiles, and God is with His beloved servant. The Jews were silent, and Paul, in his usual straightforward manner, met the charges.

Felix, it appears, knew a good deal about these things, and it is evident that a strong impression was made on his mind. Many years before this, Christianity had found its way into the Roman army at Caesarea (Acts 10), so that he probably knew something about it, and was convinced of the truth of Paul's statements, but he trifled with his convictions, and with his prisoner. He "deferred" further inquiry for the present, making some excuse about the coming of Lysias. Meanwhile however, he gave orders, that Paul should be treated with kindness and consideration, and that his friends should be allowed free access to him.

Not many days after this, Felix entered the audience chamber with his wife Drusilla, and sent for Paul. They were evidently curious to hear him discourse "concerning the faith of Christ." But Paul was not the one to gratify the curiosity of a Roman libertine, and a profligate Jewish princess. The faithful apostle, in preaching Christ, spoke plainly and boldly to the conscience of his hearers. He had now an opportunity in his bonds which he could otherwise scarcely have obtained. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, **Felix trembled."** And little wonder. If we are to believe the historians of his own day, Josephus and Tacitus, a more unprincipled or dissolute couple never sat before a preacher. But, though conscience-stricken, Felix remained impenitent. Fearful condition! "Go thy way," said he, "for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." But that convenient season never came, though he frequently saw the apostle afterwards, and, we doubt not, gave him to understand that a bribe would procure his release. Little did the Roman governor think that his venal justice was to be recorded in the book of God, and handed down to all succeeding generations. His character is represented as mean, cruel, and dissolute; that in the indulgence of all kinds of wickedness he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave. "But after two years, Porcius Festus came into Felix' room; and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound."

Paul Appears Before Festus and Agrippa

Immediately after the arrival of Festus in the province he visited Jerusalem. There the leading Jews seized the opportunity to demand Paul's return. Their plea, doubtless, was that he should be tried again before the Sanhedrim, but their real purpose was to kill him on the way. Festus refused their petition. He invited them, however, to go down with him to Caesarea and accuse him there. The trial took place and resembles that before Felix. It is quite evident that Festus saw clearly enough, that Paul's real offence was connected with the religious opinions of the Jews, and that he had committed no offence against the law, but at the same time being desirous to ingratiate himself with the Jews, he asks Paul whether he would go to Jerusalem to be tried there. This was little better than a proposal to sacrifice him to Jewish hatred. Paul, being well aware of this, at once appealed to the Emperor - **"I appeal unto Caesar."**

Festus was no doubt surprised at the dignity and independence of his prisoner. But it was his privilege as a Roman citizen, to have his cause transferred to the supreme tribunal of the Emperor at Rome. "Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go."

So far as the eye of man can see, this was Paul's only resource under the circumstances. But the hand and purpose of the Lord were in it. Paul must bear witness for Christ and the truth in Rome also. Jerusalem had rejected the testimony to the Gentiles; Rome too must have its share in rejecting the same testimony, and in becoming the prison of the witness. But in all this Paul is highly favoured of the Lord. His position resembles that of his blessed Master, when He was given up to the Gentiles by the hatred of the Jews, only the Lord was perfect in it all, and He was in His true place before God. He came to the Jews - this was His mission: Paul was delivered *from* the Jews - such was the difference. Christ gave Himself up, as we read, "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." Part of Paul's commission runs thus: - "Delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee." But Paul *returned* to "the people" in the energy of his human affections, after he had been placed outside of them in the energy of the Holy Ghost. (Act 26:17) Jesus had taken him out from both Jew and Gentile, to exercise a ministry that united the two in one body in Christ. As Paul himself says, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh." In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek.

We now resume the history of the great apostle.

Paul Appears Before Agrippa and Bernice

It happened about this time that Agrippa, king of the Jews, and his sister Bernice, came to pay a complimentary visit to Festus. And as Festus knew not how to state Paul's case to the Emperor, he took the opportunity of consulting Agrippa who was better informed than himself on the points in question. The Jewish prince, who must have known something of Christianity, and had no doubt heard of Paul himself, expressed a desire to hear him speak. Festus readily acceded to the request. "Tomorrow," said he, "thou shalt hear him."

The apostle is now to have the privilege of bearing the name of Jesus before the most dignified assembly he has ever addressed. Jewish kings, Roman governors, military officers, and the chief men of Caesarea assembled "with great pomp" to hear the prisoner give an account of himself to Agrippa. It was no mean audience, and it is perfectly clear that they regarded the prisoner as no mean person. Festus, having acknowledged the difficulty in which he found himself, referred the matter to the better knowledge of the Jewish king. Agrippa courteously signified to Paul that he was permitted to speak for himself. We have now come to **one of the most interesting moments** in the whole history of our apostle.

The dignity of his manner before his judges, though he stretched out a hand that was chained to a soldier, must have deeply impressed his audience. The depth of his humiliation only manifested more strikingly the moral elevation of his soul. He thought neither of his chain nor of his person. Perfectly happy in Christ, and burning with love to those around him, self and circumstances were completely forgotten. With a dignified deference to the position of those who surrounded him, he rose, in the honest declarations of a good conscience, infinitely above them all. He addresses himself to the conscience of his audience, with the boldness and uprightness of a man accustomed to walk with God, and to act for Him. The character and conduct of the governors are thrown into painful contrast with the character and conduct of the apostle, and show us what the world is when unmasked by the Holy Ghost.

"I pass over in silence," says one, "the worldly egotism which betrays itself in Lysias and Festus, by the assumption of all sorts of good qualities and good conduct - the mixture of awakened conscience and the absence of principle in the governors - the desire to please the Jews for their own importance, or to facilitate their government of a rebellious people. The position of Agrippa and all the details of the history have a remarkable stamp of truth, and present the various characters in so living a style that we seem to be in the scene described; we see the persons moving in it. This, moreover, strikingly characterises the writings of Luke."

Chapter 26. Paul addresses king Agrippa as one well versed in the customs and questions prevailing amongst the Jews; and he so relates his miraculous conversion and his subsequent career as to act on the conscience of the king. By the clear and straight-forward narrative of the apostle, he was not far from being convinced; his conscience was awakened; but the world and his own passions stood in the way. Festus ridiculed. To him it was nothing more than wild enthusiasm- a rhapsody. He interrupted the apostle abruptly, and "said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." The apostle's reply was dignified and self-possessed, but intensely earnest and, with great wisdom and discernment, he appeals at last to Agrippa. "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner."

Then turning to the Jewish king, who sat beside Festus, he made this direct and solemn appeal to him

"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

For the moment, the king was carried away by the power of Paul's address, and by the sharpened sting of his appeals. Then Paul made his reply - a reply which stands alone. It is characterised by godly zeal, christian courtesy, burning love for souls, and great personal joy in the Lord.

"And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

With the expression of this noble wish, the conference closed. The meeting was dissolved. Agrippa had no desire to hear more. The appeals had been too pointed, too personal yet so mingled with dignity, affection, and solicitude, that he was overcome. Then "the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them." After a brief consultation, Festus, Agrippa, and their companions came to the conclusion that Paul was guilty of nothing worthy of death or even imprisonment. "This man," said Agrippa, "might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

This was the Lord's care of His beloved servant. He would have his innocence proved and acknowledged by his judges, and fully established before the world. This being accomplished, the king and his companions resume their places in the world and its gaieties, and Paul returns to his prison. But never was his heart more happy or more filled with the spirit of his Master than at that moment.

Paul's Voyage to Rome

A.D. 60

Acts 27. The time was now come for Paul's journey to Rome. No formal trial of the apostle had yet taken place. And, no doubt, wearied with the unrelenting opposition of the Jews - with two years' imprisonment at Caesarea - with repeated examinations before the governors and Agrippa, he had claimed a trial before the imperial court. **Luke, the historian of the Acts,** and **Aristarchus of Thessalonica,** were favoured to accompany him. Paul was committed to the charge of a centurion named **Julius,** of the imperial band; an officer, who, upon all occasions, treated the apostle with the greatest kindness and consideration.

It was then "determined" that Paul should be sent along with "certain other prisoners," **by sea to Italy.** "And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched," says Luke, "meaning to sail by the coast of Asia. And the next day we touched at **Sidon.** And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself." Loosing from Sidon they were forced to sail under the lee of **Cyprus,** because the winds were contrary, and come to **Myra,** a city of Lycia. Here the centurion had his prisoners transferred to a ship of **Alexandria** on her voyage to Italy. In this vessel, after leaving Myra, "they sailed slowly many days," the weather being unfavourable from the first. But running to the leeward of **Crete,** they safely reached **"the Fair Havens."**

Winter was now near, and it became a serious question what course should be taken - whether they should remain at Fair Havens for the winter, or seek some better harbour.

Here we must pause for a moment and notice the wonderful position of our apostle in this serious consultation. As before Festus and Agrippa, he appears before the captain, the owner, the centurion, and the whole crew, as having the mind of God. He counsels, directs, and acts, as if he were really the master of the vessel, in place of being a prisoner in the custody of soldiers. He advised that they should remain where they were. He-warned them that they would meet with violent weather if they ventured out to the open sea that much injury would be done to the ship and cargo, and much risk of the lives of those on board. But the master and the owner of the ship, who had the greatest interest in her, were guided by circumstances and not by faith; they were willing to run the risk of seeking a more commodious harbour to winter in, and the centurion naturally deferred to their judgment. All were against the judgment of the man of faith - the man of God - the man who was speaking and acting for God. Even the circumstances in the scene around them seemed to favour the opinion of the sailors rather than that of the apostle. But nothing can falsify the judgment of faith. It must be true in spite of every circumstance.

It was therefore resolved by the majority that they should leave Fair Havens, and sail to **Port Phenice** as a more secure winter harbour. The wind changed just at this moment. Everything seemed to favour the sailors. **"The south wind: blew softly;"** so sanguine were they, Luke tells us, that they supposed their purpose was already accomplished. (Ver. 13) They accordingly weighed anchor and with a soft breeze from the south, the vessel, with her "two hundred threescore and sixteen souls" on board, left the port of Fair Havens. But scarcely had she rounded Cape Matala, a distance of only four or five miles, when a violent wind from the shore caught the vessel, and tossed her in such a manner that it was no longer possible for the helmsman to make her keep her course. And as Luke observes, "We let her drive," that is, they were compelled to let her run before the wind.

But our chief concern here is with Paul as the man of faith. What must have been the thoughts and feelings now of his fellow-passengers? They had trusted to the wind, and they must now reap the whirlwind. The solemn counsels and warnings of faith had been rejected. Many, alas! heedless of the warning here recorded, and under the flattering wind of favourable circumstances, have launched on the great voyage of life, utterly regardless of the voice of faith. But like the fawning wind that betrayed the vessel from the harbour, all soon changed into a furious tempest on the troubled sea of life.

The Storm in the Sea of Adria

The Term "**Euroclydon**" given to this tempestuous wind indicates, we are told, a storm of the utmost violence. It was accompanied by the agitation and whirling motion of the clouds, and by great commotion in the sea, raising it in columns of spray. The sacred historian now proceeds to give an accurate account of what was done with the vessel in these perilous circumstances. Having run to the leeward of **Clauda,** they may have escaped for a little the violence of the tempest. This would give them an opportunity to make every preparation for weathering the storm.

The day after they left Clauda - the violence of the storm continuing - they began to lighten the ship by throwing overboard whatever could be spared. All hands seem to have been at work. "And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship and the third day *we* cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."

"His race performed, the sacred lamp of day

Now dipt in western clouds his parting ray;

His languid fires, half lost in ambient haze,

Refract along the dusk a crimson blaze:

Till deep emerged the sinking orb descends,

And cheerless night o'er heaven her reign extends

Sad evening's hour, how different from the past!

No flaming pomp, no blushing glories cast

No ray of friendly light is seen around;

The moon and stars in hopeless shade are drown'd."

Nothing could be more dreadful to ancient mariners than the continued over-clouded sky, as they were accustomed to be guided by their observation of the heavenly bodies. It was at this moment of perplexity and despair that the apostle "stood forth" and raised his voice amidst the storm. And from his word of sympathy we learn, that all their other sufferings were aggravated by the difficulty of preparing food. "But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before **Caesar:** and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island." (Verses 21-26)

The Shipwreck

The shipwreck was not far distant. "When the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in **Adria** about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; and sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms." Fourteen days and nights this heavy gale continued without abatement, during which time their sufferings must have been great beyond description.

At the close of the fourteenth day, **"about midnight,"** the sailors heard a sound which indicated that they were nearing land. The sound, no doubt, was the roar of the breakers on the unknown shore. No time was to be lost; so they immediately cast four anchors out of the stern, and anxiously wished for day. Here a natural but ungenerous attempt was made by the sailors to save their own lives. They lowered the boat with the professed purpose of laying out anchors from the bow, but intending to desert the sinking ship. Paul, seeing this, and knowing their real design, immediately "said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off." Thus the divine counsel of the apostle was the means of saving all on board. "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." It is no longer the ship's captain or the ship's crew that are looked to for wisdom and safety. Every eye is turned to **Paul the prisoner -** the man of faith - the man who believes and acts according to the revelation of God. Circumstances often mislead when looked to for direction; the word of God is our only sure guide, whether in fair or in foul weather.

During the anxious interval which remained till the dawn of day, Paul had an opportunity of lifting up his voice to God, and for the encouragement of the whole company. What a scene of intensified interest it must have been! The night dark and stormy - the shattered vessel in danger of going down at her anchors, or of being dashed to pieces on the rocky shore. But there was one on board who was perfectly happy amidst it all. The state of the ship - the shallow water the alarming sound of the breakers, had no terror for him. He was happy in the Lord, and in full communion with His very thoughts and purposes. Such is the Christian's place in the midst of every storm, though comparatively few rise to it; faith only can reach it. This was **Paul's last exhortation** to the ship's company.

"And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat." (Verses 33-36)

Their only hope now was to run the ship on shore and so escape to land. Though ignorant of the coast, "they discovered a certain creek with a shore," or, a smooth beach; and determined to run the ship aground there. So they cast away the anchors, unloosed the rudder bands, hoisted the mainsail to the wind, and made for the shore. The ship thus driven, her bow stuck fast in the beach and remained unmoved, but the stern was broken to pieces by the violence of the waves.

Paul's ship has now reached the shore; and once more the man of faith is the means of saving the lives of all the prisoners. The centurion greatly influenced by the words of Paul, and anxious at least for his safety, prevents the soldiers from killing the prisoners, and gave orders that those who could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and get to land; and that the rest should follow on such boards or broken pieces of the ship as were available. "And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land." Their deliverance was as complete as Paul had predicted it would be.

Paul at Melita - Now Malta

Acts 28. The inhabitants of the island received the shipwrecked strangers with no small kindness, and immediately lighted a fire to warm them. The sacred historian gives us a living picture of the whole scene. We see the persons described moving in it: the apostle gathering sticks for the fire - the viper fastening on his hand - the barbarians thinking him first a murderer, and then a god from the sting being harmless. **Publius,** the chief man of the island, lodged them courteously three days, and his father, who lay sick of a fever, was healed by Paul laying his hands on him and praying for him. The apostle was enabled to work many miracles during his stay on the island; and the whole company, for his sake, were loaded with many honours. We see God is with His beloved servant, and he exercises his accustomed power among the inhabitants. As the concluding part of Paul's journey to Rome is so prosperous, that scarcely any incident in it is recorded, we will only notice it briefly.

After a three months' stay in Malta, the soldiers and their prisoners left in a ship of Alexandria for Italy. They touched at **Syracuse,** where they tarried three days: and at **Rhegium,** from which place they had a fair wind to **Puteoli.** Here they "found brethren," and while they were spending a few days with them, enjoying the ministry of brotherly love, the news of the apostle's arrival reached Rome. The Christians at once sent forth some of their number, who met Paul and his friends at **Appii Forum** and the **Three Taverns.** A beautiful instance and illustration of the fellowship of saints. What must have been the feelings of our apostle on this first introduction to the Christians from the **church at Rome!** His long cherished desire was at last accomplished; his heart was filled with praise; "He thanked God," as Luke says, "and took courage."

Paul's Arrival at Rome

Along the **Appian Road** most probably, Paul and his company travelled to Rome. On their arrival, "the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard:* but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him." Though he was not released from the constant annoyance of being chained to a soldier, every indulgence compatible with his position was allowed him.

{*The wise and humane BURRUS was prefect of the praetorian guard when Julius arrived with his prisoners. He was a virtuous Roman and ever treated Paul with the greatest consideration and kindness.-Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Biography*.}

Paul was now privileged "to preach the gospel to them that were at Rome also;" and proceeded without delay to act upon his divine rule - "to the Jew first." He sends for the chief of the Jews and explains to them his true position. He assures them that he had committed no offence against his nation, or the customs of the fathers, but that he was brought to Rome to answer certain charges made against him by the Jews in Palestine: and so unfounded were the charges, that even the Roman Governor was ready to set him free, but the Jews opposed his liberty. In fact it was, as he said, "for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." His only crime has been his firm faith in the promises of God to Israel through the Messiah.

The **Roman Jews,** in reply, assured Paul that no report to his prejudice had reached Rome, and that they desired to hear from himself a statement of his faith; adding, that the Christians were everywhere spoken against. A day was therefore fixed for a meeting at his own private lodgings. At the appointed time many came, "to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening." But the Jews at Rome, as at Antioch and Jerusalem, were slow of heart to believe. "And some believed the things which were spoken and some believed not." But how earnestly and unweariedly he laboured to win their hearts for Christ! From morning till evening he not only preached Christ, but sought to persuade them concerning Him. He sought, we may be sure, to persuade them concerning His Godhead and manhood - His perfect sacrifice - His resurrection, ascension, and glory. What a lesson and what a subject for the preacher in all ages! Persuading men concerning Jesus from morning till evening.

The condition of the Jews is now set before us for the last time. **The judgment pronounced by** Esaias was about to fall on them in all its withering power - a judgment under which they lie to this day - a judgment which shall continue until God interposes to give them repentance, and to deliver them by His grace to the glory of His own name. But in the meantime, "the salvation of God is sent **to the Gentiles,** and they will hear it," and, as we know, blessed be His name, they have heard it, we ourselves being witnesses of it.*

{*See Introductory Lectures to the Acts, by W. Kelly.}

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

These are the **last words of the Acts.** The scene on which the curtain falls is most suggestive - the opposition of Jewish unbelief to the things which concerned their souls' salvation, suggestive alas! of what soon befell them. And here, too, ends the history of this precious servant of God, so far as it has been directly revealed. The voice of the Spirit of truth on this subject becomes silent. Our further knowledge of Paul's subsequent history must be gathered almost exclusively from **his later Epistles;** and from these we learn more than mere history: they give us a blessed insight into the feelings conflicts, affections, and sympathies of the great apostle, and of the condition of the church of God generally, down to the period of his martyrdom.

The Book of the Acts Transitional

But here we must pause and contemplate for a moment our apostle as a prisoner in the imperial city. The gospel had now been preached from Jerusalem to Rome. Great changes had taken place in the dispensational ways of God. The book of the Acts is *transitional* in its character. The Jews, we see, are now set aside, or rather they have set themselves aside by their rejection of that which God was setting up. The counsels of His grace towards them, no doubt, abide for ever sure; but in the meantime *they* are cast off and others come in and take the place of blessed relationship with God. Paul was a witness of God's grace to Israel; he was himself an Israelite, but also chosen of God to introduce something entirely new - the Church, the body of Christ, "Whereof I was made a minister .... that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." (Eph 3:7-9) This new thing set aside all distinction between Jew and Gentile, as sinners and in the *oneness* of this body. The hostility of the Jews to these truths never abated, as we have fully seen, and the results of this enmity we have also seen. The Jews disappear from the scene entirely; and the church becomes the vessel of God's testimony on the earth, and His habitation by the Spirit. (Eph 2:22) Individual Jews, of course, who believe in Jesus are blessed in connection with a heavenly Christ and the *"one body;"* but Israel for a time is left without God, and without present communication with Him. The Epistles to the Romans and to the Ephesians fully set forth this doctrine (especially Romans chapters 9, 10, 11). We now return to

Paul's Occupation During His Imprisonment

Though a prisoner, he was allowed the freest intercourse with his friends, and he was then surrounded by many of his oldest and most faithful companions. From the Epistles we learn that Luke, Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras, Aristarchus, and others, were with the apostle at this time. Still, we must remember that he was, as a prisoner, chained to a soldier and exposed to the rude control of such. Owing to the long delay of his trial, he was in this condition for two years; during which time he preached the gospel and opened up the scriptures to the congregations which came to hear him; and wrote several epistles to churches in distant places.

Having fully and faithfully discharged the duty which he owed to the Jews, the favoured people of God, he addressed himself to the Gentiles, though not, of course, to the exclusion of the Jews. His door was open from morning till night to all who would come and hear the great truths of Christianity. And in some respects he never had a better opportunity, for as he was under the protection of the Romans, the Jews were not allowed to molest him.

The effects of Paul's preaching through the Lord's blessing, were soon manifest. The Roman guards, the household of Caesar, and "all other places" were blessed through his means. "I would ye should understand, brethren," he writes to the Philippians, "that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel, so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace [or, **Caesar's court,** see margin], and in all other places." And again, the apostle says, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." (Php 1:12-13; Php 4:22) The blessing appears to have been first manifested in the praetorium, or amongst the praetorian guards. "My bonds in Christ are manifest in *all Caesar's* court" - the quarters of the guards and household troops. The gospel of the glory which Paul preached was heard by the whole camp. Even the kind prefect Burrhus, with his intimate friend Seneca, Nero's tutor, may have heard the gospel of the grace of God. Paul's courteous manners, and great abilities, both natural and acquired, were well fitted to attract both the statesman and the philosopher. His being there two whole years gave them many opportunities.

With nearly the whole of the guards, we may say, he must have been personally acquainted. With every change of guard the door for the gospel opened wider and wider. Being constantly chained to one of the soldiers as his keeper, and having the guard duly relieved, he thus became acquainted with many, and with what love and earnestness and burning eloquence, he must have spoken to them of Jesus and of their need of Him! But we must wait till the morning of the first resurrection to see the results of Paul's preaching there. the day will declare it, and God shall have all the glory.

The apostle gives us also to know that the gospel had penetrated into the palace itself. There were saints in Caesar's household. Christianity was planted within the imperial walls; "and in **all other places."** Yes, in "all other places," says the sacred historian. Not only was Paul thus labouring within the imperial precincts, but his companions whom he styles his "fellow-labourers," were no doubt preaching the gospel in "all other places," in and around the imperial city; so that the success of the gospel must be ascribed to the efforts of others, as well as to the unwearied exertions of the great apostle in his captivity.

The Runaway Slave, Onesimus

But of all the converts whom the Lord gave to the apostle in his bonds, none of them seems to have so entirely won his heart as the poor runaway slave, Onesimus. Beautiful picture of the strength, the humility, and the tenderness of divine love in the heart, which works by the Spirit, and sweetly shines in all the details of individual life! The apostle's success in the imperial palace weakens not his interest in a young disciple from the lowest condition of society. No portion of the community were more depraved than the slaves; but what must have been the associates of a fugitive slave in that profligate city? Yet from these lowest depths Onesimus is drawn forth by the unseen hand of eternal love. He crosses the path of the apostle, hears him preach the gospel, is converted, devotes himself at once to the Lord and to His service, and finds in Paul a friend and brother, as well as a leader and teacher. And now shine forth the virtues and the value of Christianity; and the sweetest applications of the grace of God to a poor, friendless, destitute, fugitive slave.

What is Christianity? we may inquire, and whence its origin, in the view of such a new thing in Rome - in the world? Was it at the feet of Gamaliel that Paul so learnt to love? No, my reader, but at the feet of Jesus. Would to God that the eloquent historian of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" had entered into this scene, and learnt to value, in place of scornfully ridiculing, divine Christianity! If we think for a moment of the apostle's labours at this time - of his age - of his infirmities - of his circumstances (to say nothing of the lofty subjects, and the immense foundation truths, that were then occupying his mind); we may well admire the grace that could enter into every detail of the relationships of master and slave, and that with such delicate consideration of every claim. The letter he sent with Onesimus to his injured master Philemon, is surely the most touching ever written. Looking at it simply as such, we are at a loss whether most to admire the warmth and earnestness of his affections, the delicacy and justness of his thoughts, or the sublime dignity which pervades the whole epistle.

We now refer for a moment to the

Epistles that were Written During His Imprisonment

There can be no reasonable doubt, that **The Epistles** to **Philemon,** to the **Colossians,** to **The Ephesians,** and to the **Philippians** were written towards the latter part of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. He refers to his "bonds" in them all, and repeatedly to the expectation of his release. (Compare Phm 1:22; Col 4:18; Eph 3:1; Eph 4:1; Eph 6:20; Php 1:7; Php 1:25; Php 2:24; Php 4:22) Besides he must have been long enough at Rome for the news of his imprisonment to have reached his affectionate Philippians, and for them to have sent him relief.

The first three are supposed to have been written some time before that to the Philippians. An immediate issue of his cause is more distinctly spoken of in his Epistle to them. "Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." (Php 2:23-24) The first three may have been written about the spring of A.D. 62, and sent by Tychicus and Onesimus; the last, in the autumn and sent by Epaphroditus.

The Epistle to the **Hebrews** is also supposed by some to have been written about the same time, and every just consideration leads to the conclusion that Paul was the writer. The expression at the close of the epistle, "they of Italy salute you," seems decisive as to where the writer was when he wrote it. And the following passages seem decisive as to the time: "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty: with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you." Compare this with what Paul wrote to the Philippians - "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you .... so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." We can scarcely doubt that these passages were written by the same pen about the same time, and that they refer to the same intended movements. But we do not press this point. One thing, however, is evident - that the epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as the temple was standing, and the temple worship going on undisturbed. Compare Heb 8:4; Heb 9:25; Heb 10:11; Heb 13:10-13.

Paul's Acquittal and Release

After fully four years' imprisonment, partly in Judea and partly at Rome, the apostle is once more at liberty. But we have no particulars as to the character of his trial, or the ground of his acquittal. The sacred historian tells us that he dwelt two whole years in his own hired house; but he does not say what followed at the close of that period. Was it followed by the apostle's condemnation and death, or by his acquittal and liberation? This is the question, and the only certain answer to this question must be gathered chiefly from the **Pastoral Epistles.** The First to Timothy and that to Titus appear to have been written about the same time; and the Second to Timothy somewhat later.

It is now admitted, we believe, by nearly all who are competent to decide on such a question, that Paul was acquitted, and that he spent some years in travelling, at perfect liberty, before he was again imprisoned and condemned. And though it is difficult to trace the footsteps of the apostle during that period, still we may draw certain conclusions from his letters without encroaching on the domain of conjecture. Most likely he travelled rapidly and visited many places. During the lengthened period of his imprisonment, much mischief had been done by his enemies in the churches which he had been the means of planting. They required his presence, his counsel, and his encouragement. And from what we know of his energy and zeal, we are well assured that no labour would be spared in visiting them.

Paul's Departure from Italy

1. When writing to the Romans, before his imprisonment, Paul expressed his intention of passing through Rome into **Spain.** "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain," he says, "I will come to you." Again, "When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into *Spain."* (Rom 15:24; Rom 15:28) Some have thought that he did go to Spain immediately after his release. The principal evidence adduced in favour of this hypothesis is supplied by Clement, a fellow-labourer, mentioned in Php 4:3, said to be afterwards Bishop of Rome. The writer speaks of Paul as having preached the gospel in *the east and in the west:* - that he instructed *the whole world* (meaning, no doubt, the Roman Empire); and that he had gone to *the extremity of the west,* meaning *Spain.* As Clement was Paul's own disciple and fellow-labourer, his testimony is worthy of our respect; still it is not scripture, and therefore not in itself conclusive.

2. From Paul's more recent letters, he seems to have **altered his plans,** and to have given up the idea of going to *Spain,* at least for a time. This we gather chiefly from the Epistles to Philemon and to the Philippians. To the former he writes, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." (Ver. 22) He here gives Philemon to expect that he *may soon* be with him in person. To the Philippians he writes, and speaking of Timothy he adds, "Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." Again, "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state." (Php 2:19; Php 2:23-24) The intended movements of the apostle and his beloved Timothy seem quite clear from these passages. It was evidently the purpose of the apostle to dispatch Timothy to Philippi as soon as the trial was over, and to remain in Italy himself until Timothy returned with the report of their state.

3. It may reasonably be expected that Paul fulfilled the intention which he so lately expressed, and that he visited the churches in **Asia Minor,** some of which as yet had not seen his face in the flesh. Having accomplished the objects of his mission to Asia Minor, some have thought that then he may have undertaken his long-meditated journey into *Spain;* but of this we have no reliable information, and mere conjecture is of no value.

4. Another theory is, that he went straight from Italy to Judea, and thence to Antioch, Asia Minor, and Greece. This scheme is founded chiefly on Heb 13:23-24. "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.... They of Italy salute you." It is also supposed that, while he was waiting at Puteoli for embarkation, immediately on the return of Timothy, tidings reached the apostle that a great persecution had broken out against the Christians in Jerusalem. This sad intelligence so filled the heart of Paul with sorrow, that he wrote at once his famous letter to them - **The Epistle To The Hebrews.** Shortly after this Timothy arrived, and Paul and his companions sailed from Judea.*

{*For particulars of the persecution referred to, see Josephus, Ant. 20, 9, 1.}

The Places Visited by Paul During His Liberty

Having stated these different theories for the reader's examination we will now notice the places mentioned in the Epistles as visited by Paul.

1. At some time after leaving Rome, Paul and his companions must have visited **Asia Minor and Greece.** "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." (1Ti 1:3) Feeling, it may be, somewhat anxious about his son Timothy, and the weight of the responsibilities of his position at Ephesus, he sends him a letter of encouragement, comfort, and authority from Macedonia - **The First Epistle To Timothy.**

2. Some time after this, Paul visited the **island of Crete** in company with Titus, and left him there. He also very soon after sent him a letter of instruction and authority, **The Epistle To Titus.** Timothy and Titus may be considered as delegates or representatives of the apostle. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Tit 1:5.

3. Paul was intending to spend the winter at a place called **Nicopolis.** "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis; for I have determined there to winter." (Tit 3:12)

4. He visited **Troas, Corinth, and Miletum.** "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.... Erastus abode at Corinth; but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." (2Ti 4:13; 2Ti 4:20)

Paul's Second Imprisonment at Rome

It is supposed by some that the apostle was arrested at Nicopolis (where he intended to spend the winter) and thence carried a prisoner to Rome. By others it is supposed that, after wintering at Nicopolis, and visiting the places above mentioned, he returned to Rome in a state of personal liberty, but was arrested during the Neronian persecution and thrown into prison.

The precise charge now made against the apostle, and for which he was arrested, we have no means of ascertaining. It may have been simply on the charge of being a Christian. The **general persecution** against the Christians was now raging with the utmost severity. It was no longer about certain questions of the law, and under the mild and humane prefect Burrhus; but he was now treated as an evil-doer - as a common criminal: "wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer even unto bonds" - and very different from the bonds of his first imprisonment, when he dwelt in his own hired house.

Alexander - of Ephesus, we believe - had evidently something to do with his arrest. He was either one of his accusers, or, at least, a witness against him. "Alexander the coppersmith," he writes to Timothy, "did me much evil" ["exhibited much evil-mindedness towards me."] Ten years before this, he had stood forward as the open antagonist of the apostle in Ephesus. (Acts 19) He may now have sought his revenge by laying information against the apostle before the prefect. That it was the same Alexander of Ephesus seems clear from the charge to Timothy; "of whom be thou ware also." (2Ti 4:14-15)

During the apostle's first and lengthened imprisonment, he was surrounded by many of his oldest and most valued companions, whom he styles "fellow-labourers and fellow-prisoners." By means of these, his messengers, though chained to a single spot himself, he kept up a constant intercourse with his friends throughout the empire, and with Gentile churches which had not seen his face in the flesh. But his **second imprisonment** was a perfect contrast to all this. He had parted from all his ordinary companions. Erastus abode at Corinth; Trophimus had been left at Miletum sick, Titus had gone to Dalmatia; Crescens to Galatia, Tychicus had been dispatched to Ephesus; and the lukewarm Demas had forsaken him, "having loved this present world."

The apostle was now almost entirely alone. "Only Luke is with me," he says. But the Lord thought of His deserted and solitary servant. A bright beam, as from the fountain of love shines amidst the darkness and dreariness of his prison There was one faithful amidst the general defection, and one who was not ashamed of the apostle's chain. How peculiarly sweet and refreshing to the heart of the apostle must the ministry of **Onesiphorus** have been at this time! It can never be forgotten. Onesiphorus and his house - which Paul links with himself - shall be held in everlasting remembrance, and shall reap the fruit of his courage and devotedness to the apostle for ever and for ever. "I was in prison, and ye came unto me." (Mat 25:31-46)

Concerning the circumstances of Paul's trial we have no certain information. Most probably in the spring of A.D. 66 or 67 Nero took his seat on the tribunal, surrounded by his jurors, and the imperial guard; and Paul was brought into the court. We have reason to believe that the large space was filled with a promiscuous multitude of Jews and Gentiles. The apostle stood once more before the world. He had again the opportunity of proclaiming to all nations that for which he had been made a prisoner - "That all the Gentiles might hear." Emperors and senators, princes and nobles, and all the great ones of the earth, must hear the glorious gospel of the grace of God. All that the enemy had done becomes a testimony to the name of Jesus. Those who were otherwise inaccessible hear the gospel preached with power from on high.

Fain would we dwell on this wonderful scene for a few moments. Never before had there been such a witness, and such a testimony, in Nero's judgment-hall. The wisdom of God in turning all the efforts of the enemy into such a testimony is most profound; while His love and grace in the gospel shine ineffable and alike to all classes. The apostle himself commands our devout admiration. Though at this moment his heart was broken by the unfaithfulness of the church, he stood forth strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Though he had been forsaken by men, the Lord stood by him and strengthened him. He boldly confronted his enemies, pleading in his own cause and the cause of the gospel. He had an opportunity to speak of Jesus, of His death and resurrection, so that the heathen multitude might hear the gospel. His age, his infirmities, his venerable form, his fettered arm, would all tend to deepen the impression of his manly and straightforward eloquence. But, happily, we have an account from his own pen of the first hearing of his defence. He writes thus to Timotheus immediately after: "At my first answer [when I was heard in my defence] no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that all the Gentiles might hear:* and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." (2Ti 4:16-17)

"Look now, and see Christ's chosen saint

In triumph wear his Christ-like chain;

No fear lest he should swerve or faint:

His life is Christ, his death is gain."

The Martyrdom of Paul

Although we have no record of the second stage of his trial, we have reason to believe that it soon followed the first, and that it ended in his condemnation and death. But **The Second Epistle To Timothy** is the divine record of what was passing in his deeply exercised mind at this solemn moment. His deep concern for the truth and church of God; his pathetic tenderness for the saints, and especially for his beloved son Timothy; his triumphant hope in the immediate prospect of martyrdom, can only be told in his own words. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 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, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2Ti 4:6-8)

The tribunal of Nero here fades from his sight. Death in its most violent form has no terror for him. Christ in glory is the object of his eye and of his heart - the source of his joy and of his strength. His work was finished; and the toils of his love were ended. Though a prisoner and poor - though aged and rejected - he was rich in God, he possessed Christ, and in Him all things. The Jesus whom he had seen in glory at the commencement of his course, and who had brought him into all the trials and labours of the gospel, was now his possession and his crown. The unrighteous tribunal of Nero, and the blood-stained sword of the executioner, were to Paul but as the messengers of peace, who had come to close his long and weary path, and to introduce him into the presence of Jesus in glory. The time was now come for the Jesus that loved him to take him to Himself. He had fought the good fight of the gospel to the end; he had finished his course, it only remained for him to be crowned, when the Lord, the righteous Judge, appears in glory.

"In all things more than conquerors

Through Him that loved us-

We know that neither death nor life

Nor angels, rulers, powers,

Nor present things, nor things to come

Nor even height, nor depth

Nor any other creature-thing

Above, below, around

Can part us from the love of God

In Jesus Christ our Lord."

We have the concurrent testimony of antiquity that Paul suffered martyrdom during the Neronian persecution, and most probably in A.D. 67. **As a Roman citizen, he was beheaded** in place of being scourged and crucified or exposed to the frightful tortures then invented for the Christians. Like his Master he suffered "without the gate." There is a spot on the Ostian Road, about two miles beyond the city walls, where it is supposed his martyrdom took place. There the last act of human cruelty was executed, and the great apostle was *"absent from the body, and present with the Lord."* His fervent and happy spirit was released from his feeble and suffering body; and the long cherished desire of his heart was fulfilled - "to *depart and to be* **with Christ** *which is* **far better."**

Chronological Table of Paul's Life

About A.D.

36.-Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9).

36-39.-At Damascus-preaches in the synagogue-goes into Arabia-returns to Damascus-flight from Damascus. His **First Visit** to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion. Thence to Tarsus (Act 9:23-26; Gal 1:18).

39, 40.-Rest of the Jewish Churches (Act 9:31).

40-43.-Paul preaches the Gospel in Syria and Cilicia (Gal 1:21). A period of uncertain length. During this time he probably undergoes the chief part of the perils and sufferings which he recounts to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11). He is brought from Tarsus to Antioch by Barnabas; and stays there a year before the famine (Act 11:26).

44.-Paul's **Second Visit** to Jerusalem, with the collection (Act 11:30).

45.-Paul returns to Antioch (Act 12:25).

46-49.-Paul's **First Missionary Journey** with Barnabas-goes to Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and back through the same places to Antioch. They remain a long time in Antioch. Dissension and disputation about circumcision (Acts 13; 14; 15: 1, 2).

50.-Paul's **Third Visit** to Jerusalem with Barnabas, fourteen years after his conversion (Gal 2:1). They attend the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15). Return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, with Judas and Silas (Act 15:32-35).

51.-Paul's **Second Missionary Journey** with Silas and Timothy. He goes from Antioch to Syria, Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Phrygia, Galatia, Troas. Luke joins the apostolic band (Act 16:10).

52.-Entrance of the Gospel into Europe (Act 16:11-13). Paul visits Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth. Spends a year and six months at Corinth (Act 18:11). First Epistle to the Thessalonians written.

53.-Second Epistle to the Thessalonians written. Paul leaves Corinth and sails to Ephesus (Act 18:18-19).

54.-Paul's **Fourth Visit** to Jerusalem at the feast. Returns to Antioch.

54-56.-Paul's **Third Missionary Journey.** He departs from Antioch-visits Galatia, Phrygia and reaches Ephesus, where he stays two years and three months. Here Paul separates the disciples from the Jewish synagogue (Act 19:8; Act 19:10). Epistle to the Galatians written.

57.-(*Spring*) First Epistle to the Corinthians written. The tumult at Ephesus-Paul leaves for Macedonia (Act 19:23; Act 20:1). [*Autumn.*] Second Epistle to the Corinthians written (2Co 1:82:13; 2Co 1:14; 2Co 7:5; 2Co 8:1; 2Co 9:1). Paul visits Illyricum-goes to Corinth-winters there (Rom 15:19; 1Co 16:6).

58.-[*Spring.*] The Epistle to the Romans written (Rom 15:25-28; Rom 16:21-23; Act 20:4). Paul leaves Corinth-passes through Macedonia-sails from Philippi-preaches at Troas-addresses the elders at Miletus-visits Tyre and Caesarea (Acts 20; Act 21:1-14).

58-60.-Paul's **Fifth Visit** to Jerusalem before Pentecost. He is arrested in the Temple-brought before Ananias and the Sanhedrim-sent by Lysias to Caesarea, where he is kept in bonds two years.

60.-Paul heard by Felix and Festus. He appeals unto Caesar-preaches before Agrippa Bernice, and the men of Caesarea. [*Autumn*]. Paul sails for Italy. [*Winter.*] Shipwrecked at Malta (Acts 27).

61.-[*Spring.*] Arrives at Rome-dwells two years in his own hired house.

62.-[*Spring.*] Epistles to Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians written. [*Autumn.*] Epistle to the Philippians written.

63.-[*Spring.*] Paul acquitted and released. Epistle to the Hebrews written. Paul takes another journey, intending to visit Asia Minor and Greece (Phm 1:22; Php 2:24).

64.-Visits Crete and leaves Titus there-exhorts Timothy to abide at Ephesus. First Epistle to Timothy written. Epistle to Titus written.

64-67.-Intends to winter at Nicopolis (Tit 3:12). Visits Troas, Corinth, Miletum (2Ti 4:13-20). Paul arrested and sent to Rome. Deserted and solitary-having only Luke, of his old associates, with him. Second Epistle to Timothy written, probably not long before his death. These journeys and events are generally supposed to cover a period of about three years.

67.-Paul's martyrdom.

07 The Burning of Rome

Chapter 7

The Burning of Rome

As our two great apostles **Peter** and **Paul** suffered martyrdom during the **First** imperial persecution, it may be interesting to many of our readers to know something of the particulars which led to this cruel edict.

But here, however reluctantly, we must turn from the sure word of God to the uncertain writings of men. We pass, just at this point, from the firm and solid ground of inspiration to the insecure footing of Roman historians and ecclesiastical history. Nevertheless, *all* historians, both ancient and modern, pagan and Christian, are agreed as to the main facts of the burning of Rome, and the persecution of the Christians.

In the month of July A.D. 64 a great fire broke out in the Circus, which continued to spread until it laid in ruins all the ancient grandeur of the imperial city. The flames extended with great rapidity, and Rome being a city of long narrow streets, and of hills and valleys, the fire gathered force from the winds, and soon became a general conflagration. In a short time the whole city seemed wrapped in one sheet of burning flame.

Tacitus, a Roman historian of that day, and considered one of the most accurate of his time, tells us: - "Of the fourteen quarters into which Rome was divided four only were left entire, three were reduced to ashes, and the remaining seven presented nothing better than a heap of shattered houses half in ruins." The fire raged furiously for six days and seven nights. Palaces, temples, monuments, the mansions of the rich, and the dwellings of the poor perished in this fatal fire. But these were nothing compared with the sufferings of the inhabitants. The infirmities of age, the weakness of the young, the helplessness of the sick, the wild screams and lamentations of women, added to the miseries of this dreadful scene. Some endeavoured to provide for themselves, others to save their friends, but no place of safety could be found. Which way to turn, or what way to do, no one could tell; the fire raged on every side, so that numbers fell prostrate in the street, embraced a voluntary death, and perished in the flames.

The important question, as to how the fire originated, was now discussed everywhere. That the city was set on fire by incendiaries, and by the orders of Nero himself, nearly all believed. It was certain that a number of men were seen extending instead of extinguishing the flames; and they boldly affirmed that they had authority for doing so. It was also generally reported that, while Rome was in a blaze, the inhuman monster Nero stood on a tower where he could watch its progress, and amused himself by singing the fall of Troy to his favourite guitar.

Many of our readers will no doubt wonder what object he could have in burning down the greater part of Rome? His object we believe was that he might rebuild the city on a scale of greater magnificence, and call it by his own name. And this he attempted immediately in the grandest way. But everything he did failed to restore him to popular favour, or remove the infamous charge of having set the city on fire. And when all hope was gone of propitiating either the people or the gods, he fell upon the plan of shifting the imputation from himself to others. He knew enough of the unpopularity of the Christians, both with the Jews and the heathen, to fix on them as his sin-bearers. A rumour was soon spread that the incendiaries had been discovered, and that the Christians were the criminals. Numbers were immediately arrested that they might be brought to condign punishment, and satisfy the popular indignation. And now we arrive at

The First Persecution under the Emperors

But here we may pause for a moment, and contemplate the progress of Christianity, and the state of the **church in Rome** at this time. At a very early period, and without the aid of any apostle, Christianity had found its way to Rome. It was no doubt first carried thither by some who had been converted under Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost. Amongst his hearers we have expressly mentioned "strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes." And Paul, in his Epistle to that church, thanks God that their "faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." And in his salutations he speaks of "Andronicus and Junia," his kinsmen and fellow-prisoners, who were chief men among the apostles and whose conversion was of an earlier date than his own. But great wonders had been wrought by the gospel in the course of thirty years. Christians had become a marked, a separate, a peculiar people. They were now known as perfectly distinct from the Jews, and bitterly disclaimed by them.

The labours of Paul and his companions, during the two years of his imprisonment, were no doubt blessed of the Lord to the conversion of great numbers. So that the Christians were by this time no secret or inconsiderable community, but were known to embrace in their numbers both Jews and Gentiles of all ranks and conditions, from the imperial household to the runaway slave. But their present suffering, as we have seen, was not for their Christianity. They were really sacrificed by Nero to appease the popular fury of the people, and to reconcile their offended deities.

This was the **first legal persecution** of the Christians; and in some of its features it stands alone in the annals of human barbarity. Inventive cruelty sought out new ways of torture to satiate the blood-thirsty Nero - the most ruthless Emperor that ever reigned. The gentle, peaceful, unoffending followers of the Lord Jesus were sewn in the skins of wild beasts, and torn by dogs; others were wrapped in a kind of dress smeared with wax, with pitch, and other combustible matter, with a stake under the chin to keep them upright, and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights in the public gardens of popular amusements. Nero lent his own gardens for these exhibitions, and gave entertainments for the people. He took an active part in the games himself; sometimes mingling with the crowd on foot, and sometimes viewing the awful spectacle from his chariot. But, accustomed as these people were to public executions and gladiatorial shows, they were moved to pity by the unexampled cruelties inflicted on the Christians. They began to see that the Christians suffered, not for the public good, but to gratify the cruelty of a monster. But fearful as their death was, it was soon over, and to them, no doubt, the happiest moment of their existence. Long, long before the lights were quenched in Nero's garden, the martyrs had found their home and rest above - in the blooming garden of God's eternal delights. This precious truth we learn from what the Saviour said to the penitent thief on the cross - "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23)

Although historians are not agreed either as to the extent or the duration of this terrible persecution, there is too good reason to believe that it spread **throughout the empire,** and lasted till the end of the tyrant's life. He died by his own hand in utter wretchedness and despair, in A.D. 68, about four years after the burning of Rome, and one year after the martyrdom of **Peter and Paul**. Towards the end of his reign the Christians were required, under the heaviest penalties, even that of death, to offer sacrifices to the emperor and to the heathen gods. While such edicts were in force the persecution must have continued.

After the death of Nero the persecution ceased, and the followers of Jesus enjoyed comparative peace until the reign of Domitian, an emperor little behind Nero in wickedness. But meanwhile we must turn aside for a moment and notice the accomplishment of the Lord's most solemn warnings, in

The Downfall of Jerusalem

A.D. 70

The dispersion of the Jews, and the total destruction of their city and temple, are the next events of consideration in the remainder of the first century, though, strictly speaking, that fearful catastrophe is no part of church history; it belongs to the history of the Jews. But as it was a literal fulfilment of the Saviour's prophecy, and immediately affected those who were Christians, it deserves a place in our history.

The disciples, before the death and resurrection of Christ were strongly Jewish in all their thoughts and associations. They connected the Messiah and the temple together. Their thought was that He should deliver them from the power of the Romans, and that all the prophecies about the land, the tribes, the city and the temple would be accomplished. But the Jews rejected the Messiah Himself, and, consequently, all their own hopes and promises in Him. Most significant and weighty are the opening words of Matthew 24, "And Jesus went out and departed from the temple." It was now empty indeed in the sight of God. All that gave it value to Him was gone. "Behold *your* house is left unto you desolate." It was now ripe for destruction.

"And his disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple." They were still occupied with the outward greatness and glory of these things. "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you *There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shali not be thrown down."* These words were literally accomplished by the Romans about forty years after they were spoken, and in the very way that the Lord predicted. "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." (Luk 19:43-44)

After the Romans had experienced many disappointments and defeats in attempting to make a breach in the walls, through **the desperate resistance of** the insurgent Jews, even until little hope was left of taking the city, Titus summoned a council of war. Three plans were discussed: to storm the city immediately, to repair the works and rebuild the engines; or to blockade and starve the city to surrender. The last was preferred, and the whole army was set to work "to cast a trench" around the city. But the siege was long and difficult. It lasted from the spring till September. And during all that time, the most unexampled miseries of every kind were experienced by the besieged. But at last the end came, when both the city and the temple were in the hands of the Romans. Titus was anxious to save the magnificent temple and its treasures. But, contrary to his orders, a soldier, mounting on the shoulders of one of his comrades threw a blazing brand into a small gilded door in the outer building or porch. The flames sprang up at once. Titus, observing this, rushed to the spot with the utmost speed; he shouted, he made signs to his soldiers to quench the fire; but his voice was drowned, and his signs unnoticed in the fearful confusion. The splendour of the interior filled him with wonder. And as the flames had not yet reached the holy place, he made a last effort to save it, and exhorted the soldiers to stay the conflagration; but it was too late. Blazing brands were flying in all directions, and the fierce excitement of battle, with the insatiable hope of plunder had reached its highest pitch. Titus little knew that a greater than he had said, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." The word of the Lord, not the commands of Titus, must be obeyed. The whole was thoroughly levelled, and razed to the foundations, according to the word of the Lord.

For nearly every particular of this terrible siege, we are indebted to **Josephus,** who was in the Roman camp, and near the person of Titus at the time. He acted as interpreter when terms were talked of between Titus and the insurgents. The walls and bulwarks of Zion seemed impregnable to the Roman, and he felt most anxious to come to terms of peace; but the Jews rejected every proposal, and the Romans at length triumphed. On entering the city, Josephus tells us, Titus was struck with wonder at its strength, indeed when he contemplated the solid altitude of the towers, the magnitude of the several stones, and the accuracy of their joinings, and saw how great was their breadth, how vast their height, "Surely," he exclaimed, "we fought with God on our side; and God it was who brought the Jews down from these bulwarks, for what could human hands or engines avail against these towers?" Such were the confessions of the heathen general. It certainly was the most terrible siege that the whole history of the world records.

The accounts given by Josephus of the sufferings of the Jews during the siege are too awful to be transferred to our pages. The numbers that perished under Vespasian in the country, and under Titus in the city, from A.D. 67-70, by famine, internal factions, and the Roman sword, were one million three hundred and fifty thousand four hundred and sixty, besides one hundred thousand sold into slavery.* Such alas! alas! were the awful consequences of disbelieving and disregarding the solemn, earnest, and affectionate entreaties of their own Messiah. Need we wonder at the Redeemer's tears, shed over the infatuated city? And need we wonder at the preacher's tears now, as he appeals to infatuated sinners, in view of coming and eternal judgments? Surely the wonder is that so few tears are shed over thoughtless, careless, perishing sinners. Oh, for hearts to feel as the Saviour felt and eyes to weep like His!

{*See Dean Milman's *History of the Jews, vol. 2,* book 16, page 380.}

The Christians, with whom we have more especially to do, remembering the Lord's warning, left Jerusalem in a body before the siege was formed. They journeyed to Pella, a village beyond the Jordan, where they remained till Hadrian permitted them to return to the ruins of their ancient city. And this brings us to **The Close of the First Century.**

During the milder reigns of **Vespasian** and his son **Titus** the number of Christians must have increased exceedingly. This we learn, not from any direct account that we have of their prosperity, but from incidental circumstances that prove it, and which we shall meet with immediately.

The Cruel Reign of Domitian

Domitian, the younger brother of Titus, ascended the throne in A.D. 81. But he was of a temper totally different from his father and brother. *They* tolerated the Christians *he* persecuted them. His character was cowardly, suspicious and cruel. He raised a persecution against the Christians because of some vague and superstitious fear that he entertained of the appearance of a person born in Judea of the family of David, who was to obtain the empire of the world. But neither did he spare Romans of the most illustrious birth and station who had embraced Christianity. Some were martyred on the spot, others were banished to be martyred in their exile. His own niece, Domitilla, and his cousin Flavius Clemens, to whom she had been given in marriage were the victims of his cruelty for having embraced the gospel of Christ. Thus we see that Christianity, by the power of God, in spite of armies and emperors, fire and sword, was spreading, not only amongst the middle and lower, but also amongst the higher classes.

"Domitian," says Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, "having exercised his cruelty against many, and unjustly slain no small number of noble and illustrious men at Rome, and having, without cause, punished vast numbers of honourable men with exile and the confiscation of their property, at length established himself as the successor of Nero in his hatred and hostility to God." He also followed Nero in deifying himself. He commanded his own statue to be worshipped as a god, revived the law of treason, and put in fearful force its terrible provisions: under these circumstances, surrounded as he was with spies and informers what must this *second* persecution of the Christians have been!*

{*See Roman History, *Encyclopedia Britannica,* vol. 19, page 406.}

But the end of this weak, vain, and despicable tyrant drew near. He was in the habit of writing on a roll the names of those persons whom he designed to put to death, keeping it carefully in his own possession. And in order to throw such off their guard, he treated them with the most flattering attention. But this fatal roll was one day taken from under a cushion on which he was reclining asleep, by a child who was playing in the apartment, and who carried it to the Empress. She was struck with astonishment and alarm at finding her own name on the dark list, together with the names of others apparently high in his favour. To such the Empress communicated the knowledge of their danger, and notwithstanding all the precaution that cowardice and cunning could suggest, he was dispatched by two officers of his own household.

The Short but Peaceful Reign of Nerva

On the very day of Domitian's death, Nerva was chosen by the Senate to be Emperor, September 18th, A.D. 96. He was a man of blameless reputation. The character of his reign was most favourable to the peace and prosperity of the church of God. The Christians who had been banished by Domitian were recalled, and recovered their confiscated property. The Apostle John returned from his banishment in the isle of Patmos, and resumed his place of service among the churches in Asia. He survived till the reign of Trajan, when, at the advanced age of about 100 years, he fell asleep in Jesus.

Nerva commenced his reign by redressing grievances, repealing iniquitous statutes, enacting good laws, and dispensing favours with great liberality. But feeling unequal to the duties of his position, he adopted Trajan as his colleague and successor to the empire, and died in 98.

The Condition of Christians During the Reign of Trajan

A.D. 98-117

As the outward history of the church was then affected by the will of one man, it will therefore be necessary to notice, however briefly, the disposition or ruling passion of the reigning prince. Thus it was that the condition of the Christians everywhere depended to a great extent, on him who was master of the Roman world, and in a certain sense of the whole world. Still, God was and is over all.

Trajan was an emperor of great renown. Perhaps none more so ever sat on the throne of the Caesars. The Roman *earth* or world, it is said, reached its widest limits by his victories. He caused the terror of the Roman arms and the Roman discipline to be felt on the frontier as none before him had done. He was thus a great general and a military sovereign; and being possessed of a large and vigorous mind he was an able ruler, and Rome flourished under his sway. But in the history of the church his character appears in a less favourable light. He had a confirmed prejudice against Christianity, and sanctioned the persecution of Christians. Some say that he meditated the extinction of the name. This is the deepest stain which rests on the memory of Trajan.

But Christianity, in spite of Roman emperors, and Roman prisons, and Roman executions, pursued its silent steady course. In little more than seventy years after the death of Christ, it had made such rapid progress in some places as to threaten the downfall of paganism. The heathen temples were deserted, the worship of the gods was neglected, and victims for sacrifices were rarely purchased. This naturally raised a popular cry against Christianity, such as we had at Ephesus: "This our craft is in danger to be set at nought, and the temple of the great goddess Diana to be despised." Those whose livelihood depended on the worship of the heathen deities, laid many and grievous complaints against the Christians before the governors. This was especially so in the Asiatic provinces where Christianity was most prevalent.

About the year 110 many Christians were thus brought before the tribunal of **Pliny the younger,** the governor of Bithynia and Pontus. But Pliny, being naturally a wise, candid, and humane man, took pains to inform himself of the principles and practices of the Christians. And when he found that many of them were put to death who could not be convicted of any public crime, he was greatly embarrassed. He had not taken any part in such matters before, and no settled law on the subject then existed. The edicts of Nero had been repealed by the Senate, and those of Domitian by his successor, Nerva. Under these circumstances, Pliny applied for advice to his master, the Emperor Trajan. The letters which then passed between them, being justly considered as the most valuable record of the history of the church during that period, deserve a place in our "Short Papers." But we can only transcribe a portion of Pliny's celebrated epistle, and chiefly those parts which refer to the character of Christians, and the extension of Christianity.

C. Pliny to Trajan Emperor

"Health. - It is my usual custom, sire, to refer all things, of which I harbour any doubt, to you. For who can better direct my judgment in its hesitation, or instruct my understanding in its ignorance? I never had the fortune to be present at any examination of Christians before I came into this province. I am therefore at a loss to determine what is the usual object either of inquiry or of punishment, and to what length either of them is to be carried.... In the meantime this has been my method with respect to those who were brought before me as Christians. I asked them whether they were Christians: if they pleaded guilty, I interrogated them - a second and a third time - with a menace of capital punishment. In case of obstinate perseverance, I ordered them to be executed.... An anonymous 'Libel' was published, containing the names of many who denied that they were, or had been, Christians, and invoked the gods, as I prescribed, and prayed to your image, with incense and wine, and moreover reviled Christ none of which things I am told a real Christian can ever be compelled to do. So I thought proper to dismiss them.... The whole of the crime or error of the Christians lay in this - they were accustomed on a certain day to meet before daylight, and to sing among themselves a hymn to Christ, as a god, and to bind themselves by an oath not to commit any wickedness; not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then to come together again to a harmless meal, of which they partook in common without any disorder; but this last practice they have ceased to attend to since the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I prohibited assemblies.

"After this account, I judged it the more necessary to examine, and that by torture, two females who were said to be deaconesses, but I have discovered nothing except a bad and excessive superstition. Suspending, therefore, all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice. The number of the accused is so great as to call for serious consultation. Many persons are informed against, of every age and rank, and of both sexes; and many more will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country: nevertheless, it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the *temples which were almost forsaken* begin to be more frequented; and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims likewise are everywhere bought up, whereas for a time there were few purchasers. Whence it is easy to imagine what numbers of them might be reclaimed if pardon were granted to those who repent."

Trajan to Pliny

"You have done perfectly right, my dear Pliny, in the inquiry which you have made concerning Christians. For truly no one general rule can be laid down which will apply itself to all cases. These people must not be sought after: if they are brought before you and convicted, let them be capitally punished; yet with this restriction, that if any one renounce Christianity, and evidence his sincerity by supplicating our gods, however suspected he may be for the past, let him on his repentance obtain pardon. But anonymous libels in no case ought to be attended to: for it is a very dangerous precedent, and perfectly incongruous with the maxims of our age."

The clear and unsuspected testimony of these two letters awakens thoughts and feelings of the deepest interest in the Christian's mind of today. The First Epistle of St. Peter was addressed to the fathers of these holy sufferers, and possibly to some of themselves then alive; and it is not unlikely that Peter laboured amongst them personally. Thus were they taught and encouraged beforehand to give to the Roman governor "a reason for the hope that was in them with meekness and fear." Indeed the whole of the first Epistle seems divinely fitted to strengthen these unoffending Christians against the unjust and unreasonable course of Pliny. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." Peter contemplates in his epistle the family of faith as on a journey through the wilderness, and God as the supreme Governor ruling over all - believers and unbelievers. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." With such a scene before us, and such witnesses, making allowance for the position of Trajan and Pliny as heathen statesmen, it may be well to inquire at this early stage of our history, What was and is

The Real Cause of Persecution

Although different reasons may be given by different persons and governments for persecuting Christians, yet we believe that the real cause is the heart's enmity against Christ and His truth, as seen in the godly lives of His people. Besides, their light makes manifest the darkness around, and exposes and reproves the inconsistencies of false professors, and the godless lives of the wicked. The enemy, taking occasion by these things, stirs up the cruel passions of those in power to quench the light by persecuting the light-bearer. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light." Such has been the experience of all Christians, in all ages, both in times of peace and in times of trouble. There is no exemption from persecution, secretly or openly, if we live according to the Spirit and truth of Christ. Amongst the last words that the great apostle wrote were these: "Yea, and *all* that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2Ti 3:12)

These divine truths, given for the instruction and guidance of the church in all ages, were strikingly illustrated in the case of Pliny and the Christians of Bithynia. He is spoken of by all historians as one of the most enlightened, virtuous, and accomplished men of antiquity. He was also possessed of great wealth, and he had the reputation of being most liberal and benevolent in private life. Why then, it may be asked, as a Roman statesman and governor, did he become such a persecutor of the Christians? This question he answers in his own letter. It was simply for their faith in Christ - nothing else. It had been proved to him, both by friends and foes that the Christians were guilty of no evil, either morally, socially, or politically. Having thrice asked the question, *"Are you Christians?"* if they stedfastly affirmed that they were, he condemned them to death. The only pretext which he gave to cover the injustice of his conduct as a governor, was the fact that the Christians were obstinate professors of a religion not established by the laws of the empire.

Many, from private malice and other reasons, were at this time *anonymously* accused of being Christians, who were not really so. These were tested by being called upon to deny the faith, offer incense to the gods, worship the image of the emperor, and revile Christ. All who complied with these terms were dismissed. *But none of those things,* Pliny is made to witness, *can those who are true Christians ever be compelled to do.* He next had recourse to the brutal custom of examining innocent persons by torture. Two females, noted servants of the church, were thus examined. But, instead of the expected disclosures as to the rumoured seditious and licentious character of their meetings, nothing unfavourable to the christian community could be tortured out of them. The governor could detect nothing by every means he tried, except what he calls "a perverse and extravagant superstition."

It must also be borne in mind, both to the credit and also to the deeper guilt of Pliny, that he did not proceed against the Christians from mere popular prejudice - unlike his friend Tacitus, who allowed himself to be carried away by prevailing rumours, and without further inquiry, to write against Christianity in the most unreasonable and disgraceful manner. But Pliny considered it his duty to enter into a careful investigation of the whole matter before giving his judgment. How then can we account for such a man, apparently desirous of acting impartially, persecuting to death a blameless people? To answer this question, we must inquire into the outward, or ostensible causes of persecution.

The Ostensible Causes of Persecution

The Romans professed to tolerate all religions, from which the commonwealth had nothing to fear. This was their boasted liberality. Even the Jews were allowed to live according to their own laws. What was it then, we may well ask, that could have caused all their severity to the Christians? Had the commonwealth anything to fear from them? Had it anything to fear from those whose lives were blameless, whose doctrines were the pure truth of heaven, and whose religion was conducive to the people's welfare, both publicly and privately?

The following may be considered as some of the unavoidable causes of persecution, looking at both sides of the question:

1. Christianity, unlike all other religions that preceded it, was *aggressive* in its character. Judaism was exclusive; the religion of one nation; Christianity was proclaimed as the religion of mankind or the whole world. This was an entirely new thing on the earth. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," was the Lord's command to the disciples. They were to go forth and make war with error, in every form and in all its workings. The conquest to be made was the heart for Christ. "The weapons of our warfare," says the apostle, "are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2Co 10:4-5) In this war of aggression with existing institutions, and with the corrupt habits of the heathen, the disciples of Jesus had little to expect but resistance, persecution, and suffering.

2. The pagan religion, which Christianity was rapidly undermining and destined to overthrow, was an **institution of the State.** It was so closely interwoven with the entire civil and social systems, that to attack the religion was to be brought into conflict with both the civil and the social. And this was exactly what took place. Had the primitive church been as accommodating to the world as Christendom is now, much persecution might have been avoided. But the time had not come for such lax accommodation. The gospel which the Christians then preached, and the purity of doctrine and life which they maintained, shook to the very foundation the old and deeply rooted religion of the State.

3. The Christians naturally withdrew themselves from the pagans. They became a **separate and distinct people.** They could not but condemn and abhor *polytheism,* as utterly opposed to the one living and true God, and to the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ; This gave the Romans the idea that Christians were unfriendly to the human race, seeing they condemned all religions but their own. Hence they were called "Atheists," because they did not believe in the heathen deities, and derided the heathen worship.

4. **Simplicity and humility** characterised the Christians' worship. They peaceably came together before sunrise or after sunset, to avoid giving offence. They sang hymns to Christ as to God, they broke bread in remembrance of His love in dying for them, they edified one another and pledged themselves to a life of holiness. But they had no fine temples, no statues, no order of priests, and no victims to offer in sacrifice. The contrast between their worship and that of all others in the empire became most manifest. The heathen, in their ignorance, concluded that the Christians had no religion at all, and that their secret meetings were for the worst of purposes. The world *now,* as *then,* would say of those who worship God in spirit and in truth, that "these people have **no religion at all."** Christian worship, in true simplicity, without the aid of temples and priests, rites and ceremonies, is not much better understood now by professing Christendom than it was then by pagan Rome. Still it is true "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (Joh 4:24)

5. By the progress of Christianity the **temporal interests** of a great number of persons were seriously affected. This was a fruitful and bitter source of persecution. A countless throng of priests, image-makers, dealers, soothsayers, augurs, and artisans, found good livings in connection with the worship of so many deities.

6. All these, seeing their craft in danger, rose up in united strength against the Christians, and sought by every means to arrest the progress of Christianity. They invented and disseminated the vilest calumnies against everything christian. The cunning priests and the artful soothsayers easily persuaded the vulgar, and the public mind in general, that all the calamities, wars, tempests, and diseases that afflicted mankind, were sent upon them by the angry gods, because the Christians who despised their authority were everywhere tolerated.*

{*See Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History,* vol. 1, page 67. Cave's *Primitive Christianity;* early chapters.}

Many other things might be mentioned, but these were everywhere the daily causes of the christians' sufferings, both publicly and privately. Of the truth of this a moment's reflection will convince every reader. But faith could see the Lord's hand and hear His voice in it all: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: . . . they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for

My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles....Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10)

This much having been said as to the great opposition which the early church had to contend against, it will be necessary to glance for a moment at the real cause of causes and means of

The Rapid Progress of Christianity

Doubtless the causes and the means were divine. They proved themselves to be so. The Spirit of God, who descended in power on the day of Pentecost, and who had taken up His abode in the church and in the individual Christian, is the true source of all success in preaching the gospel, in the conversion of souls, and in testimony for Christ against evil. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." Besides, the Lord has promised to be with His people at all times. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Zec 4:6-7; Mat 28:18-20) But our object at present is to look at things historically, and not merely according to the assurance of faith.

1. One great cause of the rapid spread of Christianity is its **perfect adaptation to man in every age,** in every country, and in every condition. It addresses all as *lost,* and supposes a like want in all. Thus it suits the Jew and the Gentile, the king and the subject, the priest and the people, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the learned and the ignorant, the moral and the profligate. It is God's religion for the *heart,* and there asserts His sovereignty, and His only. It announces itself as the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It proposes to raise man from the deepest depths of degradation to the loftiest heights of eternal glory. Who can estimate, in spite of every prejudice, the effect of the proclamation of such a gospel to miserable and benighted heathen? Thousands, millions, tired of a worthless and worn-out religion, responded to its heavenly voice gathered around the name of Jesus, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and were ready to suffer for His sake. Love ruled in the new religion, hatred in the old.

2. **Its sanction and maintenance of all earthly relations,** according to God, were other reasons for the acceptance of the gospel among the heathen. Each one was exhorted to remain in these relationships, and seek to glorify God therein. The blessings of Christianity to wives, children and servants, are unspeakable. Their love, happiness, and comfort were an astonishment to the heathen, and a new thing amongst them. Yet all was natural and orderly. A Christian, who is said to have lived about this time - the early part of the second century - thus describes his contemporaries: "The Christians are not separated from other men by earthly abode, by language, or by customs. They dwell nowhere in cities by themselves, they do not use a different language, or affect a singular mode of life. They dwell in the cities of the Greeks, and of the barbarians, each where his lot has been cast: and while they conform to the usages of the country, in respect to dress, food, and other things pertaining to the outward life, they yet show a peculiarity of conduct wonderful and striking to all. They obey the existing laws, and conquer the laws by their own living."*

{*Neander's *Church History,* vol. 1, p. 95.}

3. The **blameless lives of the Christians,** the divine purity of their doctrines, their patient, cheerful endurance of sufferings worse than death, as well as death itself, their disregard for all the objects of ordinary ambition, their boldness in the faith at the risk of life, credit and property, were chief means in the rapid spread of Christianity. "For who," says Tertullian, "that beholds these things, is not impelled to inquire into the cause? And who, when he has inquired, does not embrace Christianity, and when he has embraced it, does not himself wish to suffer for it?"

These few particulars will enable the reader to form a more definite judgment as to what it was that tended on the one hand to hinder, and on the other to further the progress of the gospel of Christ. Nothing can be more interesting to the christian mind than the study of this great and glorious work. The Lord's workmen, for the most part, were plain unlettered men; they were poor, friendless and destitute of all human aid; and yet, in a short time, they persuaded a great part of mankind to abandon the religion of their ancestors, and to embrace a new religion which is opposed to the natural dispositions of men, the pleasures of the world, and the established customs of ages. Who could question the *inward power* of Christianity with such *outward facts* before them? Surely it was the Spirit of God who clothed with power the words of these early preachers! Surely their force on the minds of men was divine. A complete change was produced: they were born again - created anew in Christ Jesus.

In less than **a hundred years from the day of Pentecost** the gospel had penetrated into most of the provinces of the Roman empire, and was widely diffused in many of them. In our brief outline of the life of St. Paul, and in the chronological table of his missions, we have traced the first planting of many churches, and the propagation of the truth in many quarters. In large central cities, such as Antioch in Syria, Ephesus in Asia, and Corinth in Greece, we have seen Christianity well established, and spreading its rich blessings among the surrounding towns and villages.

We also learn from ecclesiastical antiquity, that what these cities were to Syria, Asia, and Greece, Carthage was to Africa. When Scapula, the president of Carthage, threatened the Christians with severe and cruel treatment, Tertullian, in one of his pointed appeals, bids him bethink himself. "What wilt thou do," he says, "with so many thousands of men and women of every age and dignity as will freely offer themselves? What fires, what swords, wilt thou stand in need of! What is Carthage itself likely to suffer if decimated by thee: when every one there shall find his near kindred and neighbours, and shall see there matrons, and men perhaps of thine own rank and order, and the most principal persons, and either the kindred or friends of those who are thy nearest friends? Spare then, therefore, for thy sake, if not for ours. "*

{**Cave's Primitive Christianity,* p. 20.}

We now resume the narrative of events, and the next in order to be related is

The Martyrdom of Ignatius

There is no fact in early church history more sacredly preserved than the martyrdom of Ignatius the bishop of Antioch; and there is no narrative more celebrated than his journey, as a prisoner in chains, from Antioch to Rome.

According to the general opinion of historians, the Emperor Trajan when on his way to the Parthian war in the year 107, visited Antioch. From what cause it is difficult to say, but it appears that the Christians were threatened with persecution by his orders. Ignatius, therefore, being concerned for the church in Antioch, desired to be introduced to Trajan's presence. His great object was to prevent, if possible, the threatened persecution. With this end in view, he set forth to the Emperor the true character and condition of the Christians, and offered himself to suffer in their stead.

The details of this remarkable interview are given in many church histories, but there is such an air of suspicion about them that we forbear inserting them. It ended, however, in the condemnation of Ignatius. He was sentenced by the Emperor to be carried to Rome, and thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people. He welcomed the severe sentence, and gladly submitted to be bound, believing it was for his faith in Christ and as a sacrifice for the saints.

Ignatius was now committed to the charge of ten soldiers, who appear to have disregarded his age and to have treated him with great harshness. He had been bishop of Antioch for nearly forty years, and so must have been an old man. But they hurried him over a long journey, both by sea and land, in order to reach Rome before the games were ended. He arrived on the last day of the festival, and was carried at once to the amphitheatre, where he suffered according to his sentence in the sight of the assembled spectators. And thus the weary pilgrim found rest from the fatigues of his long journey in the blessed repose of the paradise of God.

It has been asked, Why was Ignatius taken all the way **from Antioch to Rome** to suffer martyrdom? The answer can only be conjecture. It may have been with the intention of striking fear into other Christians, by the spectacle of one so eminent, and so well-known, brought in chains to a dreadful and degrading death. But if this was the Emperor's expectation he was entirely disappointed. It had just the opposite effect. The report of his sentence and of his intended route spread far and wide, and deputations from the surrounding churches were sent to meet him at convenient points. He was thus cheered and greeted with the warmest congratulations of his brethren; and they, in return, were delighted to see the venerable bishop and to receive his parting blessing. Many of the saints would be encouraged to brave, if not desire, a martyr's death and a martyr's crown. Among the number who met him by the way was Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who, like Ignatius, had been a disciple of St. John, and was destined to be a martyr for the gospel. But besides these personal interviews, he is said to have written seven letters on this journey, which have been preserved in the providence of God and handed down to us. Great interest has ever been, and still is attached to these letters.

The Writings of the Fathers and Scripture

But however worthy of all honour Ignatius may be as a holy man of God, and as a noble martyr for Christ, we must ever remember that his letters are not the word of God. They may interest and instruct us, but they cannot command our faith. This can only stand on the solid ground of the word of God, never on the infirm ground of tradition. "Scripture stands alone," as one has said, "in majestic isolation, preeminent in instruction, and separated by unapproachable excellence from everything written by the apostolic fathers: so that those who follow close to the apostles have left us writings which are more for our warning than our edification." At the same time these early christian writers have every claim to the respect and veneration with which antiquity invests them. They were the contemporaries of the apostles, they enjoyed the privilege of hearing their instruction they shared with them the labours of the gospel, and freely conversed with them from day to day. Paul speaks of a Clement - a so-called apostolic father - as his "fellow-labourer, whose name is in the book of life;" and what he says of Timothy may have been at least partly true of many others, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience persecutions, and afflictions." (Php 4:3; 2Ti 3:10-11)

From those who were so highly privileged we should naturally expect **sound apostolic doctrine -** a faithful repetition of the truths and instructions which were delivered to them by the inspired apostles. But such alas! is not the case. Ignatius was one of the earliest of the apostolic fathers. He became bishop of Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, about the year 70. He was a disciple of the apostle John, and survived him only about seven years. Surely from such a one we might have expected a close resemblance to the apostle's teaching but it is not so. The definite and absolute statements of scripture, as coming direct from God to the soul, are widely different from the writings of Ignatius and of all the Fathers Our only safe and sure guide is the word of God. How seasonable then is that word in the First Epistle of John "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." (1Jn 2:24) This passage evidently refers more especially to the *person* of Christ, and consequently to the scriptures of the New Testament, in which we have the display of the Father in the Son and made known to us by the Holy Spirit. In Paul's Epistles, we have more fully revealed the counsels of God concerning the *church Israel, and the Gentiles, so* that we must go further back than *"the Fathers"* to find a true ground of faith; we must go back to that which existed from **"The Beginning."** Nothing has direct divine authority for the believer, but that which was from "the beginning." This alone secures our continuing "in the Son and in the Father."

The Epistles of Ignatius have been long esteemed by Episcopalians as the chief authority for the system of the English church; and this must be our excuse for referring so fully to this "Father." Nearly all their arguments in favour of episcopacy are founded on his letters. So strongly does he press submission to the episcopal authority, and so highly does he extol it, that some have been induced to question their genuineness altogether, and others have supposed that they must have been largely interpolated to serve the prelatical interest. But with the controversy on these points we have nothing to do in our "Short Papers."*

{*See *The Genuine Epistles of Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Barnabas,* by Ab. Wake, 6th ed. Bagster.}

We will now resume our history from the death of Trajan in the year 117, and briefly glance at the condition of the church during

The Reigns of Hadrian and the Antonines

From A.D. 117 to 180

Although it would be unjust to class Hadrian and the first Antonine with the systematic persecutors of the church nevertheless Christians were often exposed to the most violent sufferings and death during their dominion. The cruel custom of ascribing all public calamities to the Christians, and of calling for their blood as an atonement to the offended deities, still continued, and was generally yielded to by the local governors, and unchecked by the indifferent emperors. But under the reign of the second Antonine, **Marcus Aurelius,** the evil spirit of persecution greatly increased. It was no longer confined to the outbursts of popular fury, but was encouraged by the highest authorities. The slender protection which the ambiguous edicts of Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus afforded the Christians was withdrawn, and the excited passions of the idolatrous pagans were unrestrained by the government. It is most interesting to the student of scripture history to see how this could take place under the reign of a prince who was distinguished for learning, philosophy, and general mildness of character.

The past sixty years of comparative peace had opened a wide field for the propagation of the gospel. During that period it made rapid progress in many ways. Christian congregations increased in numbers, influence, and wealth throughout every quarter of the Roman dominions. Many of the rich, being filled with divine love, distributed their substance to the poor, travelled into regions which as yet had not heard the sound of the gospel, and, having planted Christianity, passed on to other countries. The Holy Spirit could not thus work without awakening the jealousy and stirring up all the enmity of the supporters of the national religion. Aurelius saw with an evil eye the superior power of Christianity over men's minds compared with his own heathen philosophy. He then became an intolerant persecutor, and encouraged the provincial authorities to crush what he considered a contumacious spirit of resistance to his authority. But the gospel of the grace of God was far beyond the reach of Aurelius, and neither his sword nor his lions could arrest its triumphant career. In spite of the bloody persecutions which he excited or sanctioned, Christianity was propagated throughout the known world.

But here we must pause for a little, and look around us. There is something deeper far in the change of government towards the church than the merely historical eye can discern. We believe that we are now come to

The Close of the First Period and the Opening of the Second

The Ephesian condition of the church, looking at it in this light, may be said to have ended with the death of Antoninus Pius, in the year 161; and the Smyrnean condition to have commenced with the reign of Marcus Aurelius. The persecution in Asia broke out with great violence in the year 167, under the new edicts of this Emperor; and Smyrna especially suffered greatly: the justly esteemed Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, suffered martyrdom at this time. But in order to prove the view we have taken, it will be necessary to glance briefly at the addresses to the churches of Ephesus and Smyrna. And first,

The Address to the Church of Ephesus

Rev 2:1-7

The grand object of the church in this world was to be "the pillar and ground of the truth." It was set up to be a light-bearer for God. It is thus symbolised by a "golden candlestick" - a vessel which bears the light. It ought to have been a true witness of what God had manifested in Jesus on the earth, and of what He is now when Christ is in heaven. We further learn from this address, that the church, as a vessel of testimony in this world, is threatened with being set aside unless its first estate is maintained. But alas! it fails, as the creature always does. The angels, Adam, Israel, and the church kept not their first estate. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee," saith the Lord, "because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly; and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

There was still, however, much that He could praise, and He does praise all that He can. As an assembly, they had patience, they had laboured and not fainted they could not bear "evil men," or those who were seeking the highest place in the church. Nevertheless He feels the departure from Himself. "Thou hast left thy first love." He speaks as one disappointed. They had ceased to delight in His love to them and hence their own love to Him declined. "First love" is the happy fruit of our appreciation of the Lord's love to us. "Outward testimony might go on," as one has said, "but that is not what the Lord most values, though value it He does, so far as it is simple, genuine, and faithful. Still He cannot but prize most of all hearts devoted to Himself, the fruit of His own personal, self-sacrificing, perfect love. He has a spouse upon earth, whom He desires to see with no object but Himself, and kept pure for Him from the world and its ways God has called us for this: not only for salvation, and for a witness to Himself in godliness, though this is most true and important, but beyond all for Christ - a bride for His Son! Surely this should be our first and last, and constant and dearest thought; for we are affianced to Christ, and He at least has proved the fulness and faithfulness of His love to us! But what of ours!"*

{**Lectures on the Revelation,* by W.K.}

It was this state of things in Ephesus, and in the church at large, that called for the intervention of the Lord in faithful discipline. The church, as planted by Paul, had already fallen from its first estate. "All seek their own," he says, "not the things of Jesus Christ's," And again, "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me." Hence the tribulation spoken of in the address to the church in Smyrna. Though the Lord is full of grace and love in all His ways towards His fallen and failing church, still He is righteous withal, and must judge evil. He is not seen in these addresses as the Head in heaven of the one body, nor as the Bridegroom of His church, but in His judicial character, walking in the midst of the candlesticks, having the attributes of a judge. See chapter 1.

It will be observed by the reader, that there is a measured distance and reserve in the style of His address to the church at Ephesus. This is in keeping with the place He takes in the midst of the golden candlesticks. He writes to the *angel* of the church, not to "the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus," as in the Epistle by Paul.

There have been many disputes about "who is meant by the angel." He was a person we believe, so identified morally with the assembly, that he represented it, and characterised it. The Lord addresses the angel, not the church immediately. "The angel," therefore, gives the idea of representation. For example, in the Old Testament we have the angel of Jehovah, the angel of the covenant, and in the New we have the angels of the little children, and so of Peter in Acts 12, they said, "It is his angel."

We will now briefly glance at

The Address to the Church at Smyrna

Rev 2:8-11

Our interest in the history of the church is greatly increased when we see that the Lord has distinctly marked its successive epochs. The outward condition of the church down to the death of the first Antonine - so far as it can be ascertained from the most authentic histories - answers in a remarkable way to what we learn from scripture, and especially from the address to Ephesus. There was outward consistency and zeal; they were unwearied. It is also evident that there was charity, purity, devotedness, holy courage, even to the greatest readiness to suffer in every way for the Lord's sake. At the same time it is clear, from both scripture and history, that false doctrine was making its way, and that many were manifesting a most unworthy zeal for official pre-eminence in the church. That forgetfulness of self, and that care for Christ and His glory, which are the firstfruits of His grace, were gone. Historically we now come to the Smyrnean period. For the convenience of the reader we will give the address entire.

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Here the Lord meets the declension by sore tribulation. Milder means had not answered the end. This is no uncommon case though *they* may have thought that some strange thing had happened to them. But all their afflictions were known to the Lord, measured by Him, and ever under His control. "Ye shall have tribulation *ten days."* The period of their sufferings is exactly specified. And He speaks to them as one that had known the depths of tribulation Himself. "These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive." He had gone through the deepest sorrow, and through death itself - He had died for them, and was alive again. They had this blessed One to flee to in all their trials. And as He looks on, and walks in the midst of His suffering ones, He says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Thus He holds in His hand the martyr's crown, ready to place it on the head of His faithful overcomer.

We will now turn to our history, and mark its resemblance to the above Epistle.

The Second Period of the Church's History

Commenced About A.D. 167

The reign of **Aurelius** is marked, under the providence of God, by many and great public calamities. We see the hand of the Lord in faithful love chastening His own redeemed and beloved people, but His anger was kindled against their enemies. The eastern army, under Verus, returning from the Parthian war, brought with it to Rome the infliction of a pestilential disease which was then raging in Asia, and which soon spread its ravages through almost the whole of the Roman empire. There was also a great inundation of the Tiber, which laid a large part of the city under water, and swept away immense quantities of grain from the fields and public storehouses. These disasters were naturally followed by a famine, which consumed great numbers.

Such events could not fail to increase the hostility of the heathen against the Christians. They ascribed all their troubles to the wrath of the gods, which the new religion was supposed to have provoked. Thus it was that the persecution of the Christians in the Roman empire began with the populace. The outcry against them rose up from the people to the governors. **"Throw the Christians to the lions!"** "Throw the Christians to the lions!" was the general outcry: and the names of the most prominent in the community were demanded with the same uncontrollable hostility. A weak or superstitious magistrate would tremble before the voice of the people, and lend himself as the instrument of their will.

But we will now take a nearer view, under the guidance of the various histories that are before us, of the manner of these persecutions, and of the behavior of the Christians under them.

The Persecution in Asia

A.D. 167

In Asia Minor the persecution broke out with great violence, such as had never been before. Christianity was now treated as a direct **crime against the State.** This changed the face of everything. Contrary to the rescript of Trajan, and the conduct of still milder emperors, Hadrian and Antonine, the Christians were to be sought for as common criminals. They were torn from their homes by the violence of the people, and subjected to the severest tortures. If they obstinately refused to sacrifice to the gods, they were condemned. The wild beast, the cross, the stake, and the axe were the cruel forms of death that met the Lord's faithful ones everywhere.

The prudent and **dignified Melito,** bishop of Sardis, was so moved by these unheard-of-barbarities, that he appeared before the emperor as the Christians' advocate. His address throws much light both on the law and on the conduct of the public authorities. It is as follows: - "The race of God's worshippers in this country are persecuted, as they never were before, by new edicts; for the shameless sycophants, greedy of the possessions of others - since they are furnished by these edicts with an opportunity of so doing - plunder their innocent victims day and night. And let it be right if it is done by your command, since a just emperor will never resolve on any unjust measure, and we will cheerfully bear the honourable lot of such a death. Yet we would submit this single petition, that you would inform yourself respecting the people who excite the contention, and impartially decide whether they deserve punishment and death, or deliverance and peace. But if this resolve, and this new edict - an edict which ought not so to be issued even against hostile barbarians - comes from yourself, we pray you the more not to leave us exposed to such public robbery."*

{*Neander's *Ecclesiastical History,* vol. 1, p. 142.}

There is, we fear, no ground to believe that this noble appeal brought any direct relief to the Christians. The character and ways of Aurelius have perplexed the historians. He was a philosopher of the sect of the Stoics, but naturally humane, benevolent, gentle and pious, even childlike in his disposition, some say, from the influence of his mother's training; yet he was an implacable persecutor of the Christians for nearly twenty years. And the perplexity is increased when we look to Asia, for the proconsul at this time was not personally opposed to the Christians. Still he yielded to the popular fury and the demands of the law. But faith sees beyond the emperors, governors, and people; it sees the prince of darkness ruling these wicked men, and the Lord Jesus overruling all. "I know thy works and tribulation.... Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer... Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.... He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Aurelius, with all his philosophy, was an utter stranger to the sweetness and power of that Name which alone can meet and satisfy the longings of the human heart. All the speculations and boastings of philosophy have never done this. Hence the enmity of the human heart to the gospel. Self-sufficiency, which leads to pride and self-importance, is the principal part of the Stoic's religion. With these views there could be no humility, no sense of sin, and no idea of a Saviour. And the more earnest he was in his own religion, the more bitter and vehement would he be against Christianity.

In a **circular-letter** addressed by the church of Smyrna to other christian churches, we have a detailed account of the sufferings of the faithful unto death. "They made it evident to us all " says the church, "that in the midst of those sufferings they were absent from the body, or rather, that the Lord stood by them, and walked in the midst of them, and staying themselves on the grace of Christ, they bid defiance to the torments of the world." Some, with a strange momentary enthusiasm, rushed in self-confidence to the tribunal, declared themselves to be Christians; but when the magistrate pressed them, wrought upon their fears, showed them the wild beasts they yielded and offered incense to the gods. "We therefore,' adds the church, "praise not those who voluntarily surrendered themselves, for so are we not taught in the gospel." Nothing less than the presence of the Lord Jesus could strengthen the soul to endure with tranquillity and composure the most agonising torments, and the most frightful deaths. But thousands did bear with meekness cheerfulness, and even with joyfulness, the utmost that the power of darkness and the fourth beast of Daniel could do. The pagan bystanders were often moved to pity by their sufferings, but never could understand their calmness of mind, love to their enemies, and willingness to die.

We will now conclude this general account of the persecution in Asia, and notice particularly the two most eminent persons who suffered death at this time; namely, Justin and Polycarp.

The Martyrdom of Justin, Surnamed Martyr

Justin was born at Neapolis, in Samaria, of Gentile parents. He carefully studied in his youth the different philosophical sects; but not finding the satisfaction which his heart longed for, he was induced to hear the gospel. In it he found, through God's blessing, a perfect rest for his soul, and every desire of his heart fully met. He became an earnest Christian, and a celebrated writer in defence of Christianity.

Early in the reign of Aurelius, **Justin was a marked man.** Information was laid against him by one Crescens. He was apprehended with six of his companions, and all were brought before the prefect. They were asked to sacrifice to the gods. "No man," replied Justin, "whose understanding is sound, will desert true religion for the sake of error and impiety." "Unless you comply," said the prefect, "you shall be tormented without mercy." "We desire nothing more sincerely," he replied, "than to endure tortures for our Lord Jesus Christ." The rest assented, and said, "We are Christians, and cannot sacrifice to idols." The governor then pronounced sentence - "As to those who refuse to sacrifice to the gods, and to obey the imperial edicts, let them be first scourged, and then beheaded, according to the laws." The martyrs rejoiced, and blessed God, and being led back to prison, were scourged, and afterwards beheaded. This took place at Rome about the year 165. Thus slept in Jesus one of the early Fathers, and earned the glorious title, "Martyr," which usually accompanies his name. His writings have been carefully examined by many, and great importance is attached to them.

Lines on the Martyrdom of a Roman Centurion

"Give the Christian to the lion!'
Wildly cry the Roman throng
"Yes, to Africs tawny lion!'
Shout the warriors bold and strong.
Let the hungry lion tear him!'
Echoed glad the laughing crowd;
"Fling him - fling him to the lion!'
Shrieked the noble matron loud.

"Give the Christian to the lion!'
Spake in accents grave and slow,
From their curule seats of honour,
Senators in goodly row.
Then from flight to flight, redouble
Shout, and cheer, and laughter peal
Till the giant Coliseum
Neath the tumult seemed to reel;

And the clamours of the people
Through the Arch of Titus roll,
All adown the Roman forum,
To the towering Capitol,
Then a pause - but hush, and listen
Whence that wild and savage yell;
Tis the lion of Sahara,
Raging in his grated cell!

Fierce with famine and with fetter,
Shaketh he his tawny mane!
For his living prey impatient,
Struggling gainst his bar and chain.
But a voice is stealing faintly
From the next cell, chill and dim;
Tis the death-doomed Christian chanting
Soft and low his dying hymn;

With uplifted hands he prayeth
For the men that ask his blood!
With a holy faith he pleadeth
For that shouting multitude.
They are waiting! Lift the grating
Comes he forth, serene to die:
With a radiance around his forehead,
And a lustre in his eye.

Never! when midst Roman legions,
With the helmet on his brow
Pressd he to the front of battle
With a firmer step than now.
Lift the grating! He is waiting.
Let the savage lion come!
He can only rend a passage
For the soul to reach her home!

The Martyrdom of Polycarp

The behavior of the venerable bishop of Smyrna, in view of his martyrdom, was most christian and noble in its bearing. He was prepared and ready for his persecutors, without being rash or imprudent, as some at times, through excitement, had been. When he heard the shouts of the people demanding his death, it was his intention to remain quietly in the city, and await the issue which God might ordain for him. But, by the entreaties of the church, he suffered himself to be persuaded to take refuge in a neighbouring village. Here he spent the time, with a few friends, occupied, night and day, in praying for all the churches throughout the world. But his pursuers soon discovered his retreat. When told that the public officers were at the door, he invited them in, ordered meat and drink to be set before them, and requested that they would indulge him with one hour of quiet prayer. But the fulness of his heart carried him through two hours. His devotions, age, and appearance greatly affected the pagans. He must have been over ninety years of age.

The time being now come, he was conveyed to the city. The proconsul does not appear to have been personally hostile to the Christians. He evidently felt for the aged Polycarp, and did what he could to save him. He urged him to swear by the genius of the emperor, and give proof of his penitence. But Polycarp was calm and firm, with his eyes uplifted to heaven. The proconsul again urged him, saying, **"Revile Christ, and I will release thee."** The old man now replied "Six and eighty years have I served Him, and He has done me nothing but good; and how could I revile Him, my Lord and Saviour?" The governor finding that both promises and threatenings were in vain, he caused it to be proclaimed by the herald in the circus, "Polycarp has declared himself to be a Christian." The heathen populace, with an infuriated shout, replied, "This is the teacher of atheism, the father of the Christians, the enemy of our gods, by whom so many have been turned away from offering sacrifices." The governor having yielded to the demands of the people, that Polycarp should die at the stake, Jews and pagans hastened together to bring wood for that purpose. As they were about to fasten him with nails to the stake of the pile, he said, "Leave me thus: He who has strengthened me to encounter the flames, will also enable me to stand firm at the stake." Before the fire was lighted he prayed, "Lord, Almighty God, Father of Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received from Thee the knowledge of Thyself; God of angels, and of the whole creation, of the human race, and of the just that live in Thy presence, I praise Thee that Thou hast judged me worthy of this day and of this hour, to take part in the number of Thy witnesses, in the cup of Thy Christ."

The fire was now kindled, but the flames played around the body, forming the appearance of a sail filled with wind. The superstitious Romans, fearing that the fire would not consume him, plunged a spear into his side: and Polycarp was crowned with victory.

These are but short extracts from the accounts that have been handed down to us of the martyrdom of the revered and venerable bishop. The martyrologies are full of particulars. But the Lord greatly blessed the Christlike way in which he suffered for the good of the church. The rage of the people cooled down, as if satisfied with revenge; and their thirst for blood seemed quenched for the time. The proconsul, too, being wearied with such slaughter, absolutely refused to have any more Christians brought before his tribunal. How manifest is the hand of the Lord in this wonderful and sudden change! He had limited the days of their tribulation before they were cast into the furnace, and now they are accomplished: and no power on earth or in hell can prolong them another hour. They had been faithful unto death, and received the crown of life.

The Persecutions in France

A.D. 177

We will now turn to the scene of the *second persecution* under this emperor's reign. It took place in France, and exactly *ten years* after the persecution in Asia. There may have been other persecutions during these ten years, but, so far as we know, there are no authentic records of any till 177. The source from which we derive our knowledge of the details of this latter persecution is a circular letter from the churches of Lyons and Vienne to the churches in Asia. Whether there be any allusion to these ten historical years in the words of the Lord to the church at Smyrna, we cannot say. Scripture does not say there is. Comparing the history with the epistle, the thought is likely to be suggested. "Ye shall have tribulation ten days. " In other parts of this mystical book, a day being taken for a year, so it may be in the Epistle to Smyrna. History gives us the beginning and the end as to time, and the east and west as to breadth of scene. But we will now look at some of the details, in which the resemblance may be more manifest.

Imprisonment was one of the main features of their sufferings. Many died from the suffocating air of the noisome dungeons. In this respect it differed from the persecution in Asia. The popular excitement rose even higher than at Smyrna. The Christians were insulted and abused whenever they appeared abroad, and even plundered in their own houses. As this popular fury burst forth during the absence of the governor, many were thrown into prison by the inferior magistrates to await his return. But the spirit of persecution on this occasion, though it sprang from the populace, was not confined to them. The governor, on his arrival, seems to have been infected with the fanaticism of the lower classes. To his dishonour as a magistrate, he began the examination of the prisoners with tortures. And the testimony of slaves, contrary to an ancient law in Rome, was not only received against their masters but wrung from them by the severest sufferings. Consequently they were ready to say what they were required, to escape the whip and the rack. Having proved, as they said, that the Christians practised the most unnatural and worst of crimes in their meetings, they now believed that it was right to indulge themselves in every cruelty. No kindred, no condition, no age, nor sex was spared.

Vettius, a young man of birth and rank, and of great charity and fervency of spirit, on hearing that such charges were laid against his brethren, felt constrained to present himself before the governor as a witness of their innocence. He demanded a hearing; but the governor refused to listen and only asked him if he too was a Christian? When he distinctly affirmed that he was, the governor ordered him to be thrown into prison with the rest. He afterwards received the crown of martyrdom.

The aged bishop, **Pothinus,** now over ninety years of age, and probably the one who had brought the gospel to Lyons from Asia, was of course good prey for the lion of hell. He was afflicted with asthma and could scarcely breathe, but notwithstanding he must be seized and dragged before the authorities. "Who is the God of the Christians?" asked the governor. The old man quietly told him that he could only come to the knowledge of the true God by showing a right spirit. Those who surrounded the tribunal strove with each other in giving vent to their rage against the venerable bishop. He was ordered to prison, and after receiving many blows on his way thither, he was cast in among the rest, and in two days fell asleep in Jesus, in the arms of his suffering flock.

What a weight of comfort and encouragement the words of the blessed Lord must have been to these holy sufferers! "Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer" had been addressed to the church in Smyrna, and probably carried to the French churches in Lyons and Vienne by Pothinus. They were experiencing an exact fulfilment of this solemn and prophetic warning: "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried." They knew who was the great enemy - the great persecutor - though emperors, governors, and mobs might be his instruments. But the Lord was with His beloved suffering ones. He not only sustained and comforted them, but He brought out, in the most blessed way, the power of His own presence in the feeblest forms of humanity. This was, we venture to say, a new thing on the earth. The superiority of the Christians to all the inflictions of tortures, and to all the terrors of death utterly astonished the multitude, stung to the quick their tormentors, and wounded the stoic pride of the Emperor. What could be done with a people who prayed for their persecutors, and manifested the composure and tranquillity of heaven, in the midst of the fires and wild beasts of the amphitheatre? Take one example of what we affirm - an example worthy of all praise, in all time and in all eternity - divine power displayed in human weakness.

Blandina, a female slave, was distinguished above the rest of the martyrs for the variety of tortures she endured. Her mistress, who also suffered martyrdom, feared lest the faith of her servant might give way under such trials. But it was not so, the Lord be praised! Firm as a rock, but peaceful and unpretending, she endured the most excruciating sufferings. Her tormentors urged her to deny Christ and confess that the private meetings of the Christians were only for their wicked practices, and they would cease their tortures. But, no! her only reply was, "I am a Christian, and there is no wickedness amongst us." The scourge, the rack, the heated iron chair, and the wild beasts, had lost their terror for her. Her heart was fixed on Christ, and He kept her in spirit near to Himself. Her character was fully formed, not by her social condition, of course - that was the most debased in those times - but by her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, through the power of the indwelling Holy Ghost.

Day after day she was brought forth as a public spectacle of suffering. Being a female and a slave, the heathen expected to force her to a denial of Christ, and to a confession that the Christians were guilty of the crimes reported against them. But it was all in vain. "I am a Christian, and there is no wickedness amongst us," was her quiet but unvarying reply. Her constancy wearied out the inventive cruelty of her tormentors. They were astonished that she lived through the fearful succession of her sufferings. But in her greatest agonies she found strength and relief in looking to Jesus and witnessing for Him. "Blandina was endued with so much fortitude," says the letter from the church at Lyons, written seventeen hundred years ago, "that those who successively tortured her from morning to night were quite worn out with fatigue, and owned themselves conquered and exhausted of their whole apparatus of tortures, and amazed to see her still breathing whilst her body was torn and laid open."*

{*For full details, see *Milner's Church History,* vol. 1, p. 194.}

Before narrating the closing scene of her sufferings, we would notice what appears to us to be the secret of her great strength and constancy. Doubtless the Lord was sustaining her in a remarkable way as a witness for Him, and as a testimony to all ages of the power of Christianity over the human mind, compared with all the religions that then were or ever had been on the earth. Still, we would say particularly, that her *humility and godly fear* were the sure indications of her power against the enemy, and of her unfaltering fidelity to Christ. She was thus working out her own salvation - deliverance from the difficulties of the way - by a deep sense of her own conscious weakness, indicated by "fear and trembling. "

When on her way back from the amphitheatre to the prison, in company with her fellow-sufferers, they were surrounded by their sorrowing friends when they had an opportunity, and in their sympathy and love addressed them as "martyrs for Christ." But this they instantly checked; saying, "We are not worthy of such an honour. The struggle is not over; and the dignified name of Martyr properly belongs to Him only who is the true and faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, the Prince of life, or, at least, only to those whose testimony Christ has sealed by their constancy to the end. We are but poor humble confessors." With tears they besought their brethren to pray for them that they might be firm and true to the end. Thus their weakness was their strength, for it led them to lean on the mighty One. And so it always is, and ever has been, in small as well as in great trials. But a fresh sorrow awaited them on their return to the prison. They found some who had given way through natural fear, and had denied that they were Christians. But they had gained nothing thereby, Satan had not let them off. Under a charge of other crimes they were kept in prison. With these weak ones Blandina and the others prayed with many tears, that they might be restored and strengthened. The Lord answered their prayers; so that, when brought up again for further examination, they stedfastly confessed their faith in Christ, and thus passed sentence of death on themselves, and received the crown of martyrdom.

Nobler names, as men would say, than Blandina's had passed off the bloody scene; and honoured names too that had witnessed with great fortitude, such as Vettius, Pothinus, Sanctus, Naturus, and Attalius; but the last day of her trial was come, and the last pain she was ever to feel, and the last tear she was ever to shed. She was brought up for her final examination with a youth of fifteen, named Ponticus. They were ordered to swear by the gods; they firmly refused, but were calm and unmoved. The multitude were incensed at their magnanimous patience. The whole round of barbarities was inflicted. Ponticus, though animated and strengthened by the prayers of his sister in Christ, soon sank under the tortures, and fell asleep in Jesus.

And now came the noble and blessed Blandina, as the church styles her. Like a mother who was needed to comfort and encourage her children, she was kept to the last day of the games. She had sent her children on before, and was now longing to follow after them. They had joined the noble army of martyrs above, and were resting with Jesus, as weary warriors rest, in the peaceful paradise of God. After she had endured stripes, she was seated in a hot iron chair, then she was enclosed in a net and thrown to a bull; and having been tossed some time by the animal, a soldier plunged a spear into her side. No doubt she was dead long before the spear reached her, but in this she was honoured to be like her Lord and Master. Bright indeed will be the crown, amidst the many crowns in heaven, of the constant, humble, patient, enduring Blandina.

But the fierce and savage rage of the heathen, instigated by Satan, had not yet reached its height. They began a **new war with the dead bodies** of the saints. Their blood had not satiated them. They must have their ashes. Hence the mutilated bodies of the martyrs were collected and burned, and thrown into the river Rhone, with the fire that consumed them, lest a particle should be left to pollute the land. But rage, however fierce, will finally expend itself: and nature however savage, will become weary of bloodshed, and so many Christians survived this terrible persecution.

We have thus gone, more than usual, into details in speaking of the persecutions under Marcus Aurelius. So far they are a fulfilment, we believe, of the solemn and prophetic warnings of the address to Smyrna; and also, in a remarkable manner, of the Lord's promised grace. The sufferers were filled and animated by His own Spirit. "Even their persecutors," says Neander, "were never mentioned by them with resentment; but they prayed that God would forgive those who had subjected them to such cruel sufferings. They left a legacy to their brethren, not of strife and war, but of peace and joy, unanimity and love."

Thou art home at last, each waymark past,

Thou hast sped to the goal before me;

And oh, my tears fall thick and fast

Like the hopes that had blossomed o'er thee.

My lips refuse to say, Farewell,

For our life-link nought can sever;

Thou'rt early gone with Christ to dwell,

Where we both shall be for ever.

The Power of Prayer

In tracing the *silver line* of God's grace in His beloved people, we have now to notice a report which was widely spread among the Christians after the beginning of the third century. It occurred towards the close of the reign of Aurelius, and led him, it is said, to change the course of his policy towards the Christians. In one of his campaigns against the Germans and Sarmatians he was thrown into a situation of extreme peril. The burning sun shone full in the faces of his soldiers; they were hemmed in by the barbarians they were exhausted by wounds and fatigue, and parched with thirst: while, at the same time, the enemy was preparing to attack them. In this extremity the twelfth legion, said to be composed of Christians, stepped forward and knelt down in prayer, suddenly the sky was overspread with clouds, and the rain began to fall heavily. The Roman soldiers took off their helmets to catch the refreshing drops; but the shower speedily increased to a storm of hail, accompanied with thunder and lightning, which so alarmed the barbarians that the Romans gained an easy victory.

The Emperor, so struck with such a miraculous answer to prayer, acknowledged the interposition of the God of the Christians, conferred honours on the legion, and issued an edict in favour of their religion. After this, if not before, they were called **"the thundering legion."** Historians, from Eusebius down, have noticed this remarkable occurrence.

But, like a tale that is often told, many things have been added to it. There is good reason to believe, however, that a providential answer in favour of the Romans was given to prayer. This much seems quite evident. And to faith there is nothing incredible in such an event; though some of the circumstances related are questionable. For example, a Roman legion at that time would probably number five thousand men: while there may have been a great many Christians in the twelfth, which was a distinguished legion, yet it would be hard to believe that they were all Christians.

On their return from the war, they no doubt related to their brethren the merciful intervention of God in answer to prayer, which the church would record and spread amongst the Christians to His praise and glory. But the facts are even more fully confirmed by the Romans. They also believed that the deliverance came from heaven, but in answer to the prayers of the Emperor to the gods. Hence the event was commemorated, after their usual manner, on columns, medals, and paintings. On these the Emperor is represented as stretching forth his hands in supplication; the army as catching the rain in their helmets; and Jupiter as launching forth his bolts on the barbarians, who lie slain on the ground.

A few years after this remarkable event Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher and the persecutor, died. Great changes quickly followed. The glory of the empire, and the effort to maintain the dignity of the old Roman religion, expired with himself, but Christianity made great and rapid advancement. Men of ability and learning were raised up about this time, who boldly and powerfully advocated its claims with their pens. These are called *Apologists.* **Tertullian,** an African, who is said to have been born in A.D. 160, may be considered as the ablest and the most perfect type of this class.

The more enlightened of the heathen now began to feel that, if their religion was to withstand the aggressive power of the gospel, it must be defended and reformed. Hence the controversy commenced; and one *Celsus,* an Epicurean philosopher, said to have been born in the same year as Tertullian, stood forth as the leader on the controversial side of paganism. From about this period - the closing years of the second century - church records become more interesting, because more definite and reliable. But before proceeding farther with the general history, it may be well to retrace our steps and glance briefly at the *internal* history of the church from the beginning. We shall thus see how some of the things which are still observed, and with which we are familiar, were first introduced.

08 Internal History of the Church

Chapter 8

The Internal History of the Church

Here we step once more on sure ground. We have the privilege and satisfaction of appealing to the sacred writings. Before the canon of scripture was closed, many of the errors, both in doctrine and practice, which have since troubled and rent in pieces the professing church, were allowed to spring up. These were, in the wisdom and grace of God, detected and exposed by the inspired apostles. If we keep this in mind, we shall not be surprised to meet with many things in the internal history of the church entirely contrary to scripture. Neither need we have any difficulty in withstanding them. We have been armed by the apostles. The love of office and pre-eminence in the church was manifested at an early period, and many observances of mere official invention were added. The "grain of mustard seed" became a great tree - the symbol of political power on the earth: this was and is the outward aspect of Christendom; but inwardly the *leaven* did its evil work, "till the whole was leavened."

Those who have carefully studied Matthew 13 with other passages in the Acts and the Epistles relating to the profession of the name of Christ, should have a very correct idea of both the early and later history of the church. It embraces the entire period, from the sowing of the seed by the Son of man, until the harvest, though under the similitude of the kingdom of heaven. This is a great relief to the mind, and prepares us for many a dark and distressing scene, wickedly perpetrated under the fair name and cloak of Christianity. We will now turn to some of these passages.

1. Our blessed Lord, in the parable of the wheat and tares, predicts what would take place. "The kingdom of heaven," He says, "is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." In course of time the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit. This was the rapid spread of Christianity in the earth. But we also read "then appeared the tares also." These were false professors of Christ's name. The Lord Jesus sowed good seed. Satan, through the carelessness and infirmity of man, sowed tares. But what was to be done with them? Were they to be rooted out of the kingdom? The Lord says, No; "lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest," that is, till the end of the age or dispensation when the Lord comes in judgment.

But here, some may inquire, Does the Lord mean that the wheat and the tares are to grow together in the church? Certainly not. They were not to be rooted out of the field, but to be put out of the church when manifested as wicked persons. The church and the kingdom are quite distinct though the one may be said to be in the other. The *field* is the world, not the church. The limits of the kingdom stretch far beyond the limits of the true church of God. Christ builds the church; men have to do with extending the proportions of Christendom. If the expression, "the kingdom of heaven," meant the same as "the church of God," there ought to be no discipline at all. Whereas the apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, expressly says, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." But he was not to be put out of the kingdom, for that could only be done by taking away his life. The wheat and the tares are to grow together in the field until the harvest. Then the Lord Himself, in His providence will deal with the tares. They shall be bound in bundles and cast into the fire. Nothing can be plainer than the Lord's teaching in this parable. The tares are to be put away from the Lord's table, but not rooted out of the field. The church was not to use worldly punishments in dealing with ecclesiastical offenders. But alas! the very thing which the Lord is here guarding His disciples against came to pass, as the long list of martyrs so painfully shows. Pains and penalties were brought in as discipline, and the refractory were handed over to the civil power to be punished with fire and sword.

2. In Acts 20 we read that "grievous wolves" would make their appearance in the church after the departure of the apostle. In Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians - supposed to be his first inspired Epistles - he tells them that the mystery of iniquity was already at work, and that other evil things would follow. In writing to the Philippians he tells them, weeping, that many walk as "the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Many were calling themselves Christians, but minding earthly things. Such a state of things could not escape the spiritual eye of him whose *one* object was Christ in glory and practical conformity to His ways when on earth. In his Second Epistle to Timothy - probably the last he ever wrote he compares Christendom to "a great house," in which are all manner of vessels, "some to honour and some to dishonour." This is a picture of the outward universal church. Nevertheless, the Christian cannot leave it, and individual responsibility can never cease. But he is to clear himself from all that is contrary to the name of the Lord. The directions are most plain and precious for the spiritually minded in all ages. The Christian must have no association with that which is untrue. Such is the meaning of purging himself from the vessels to dishonour. He is to clear himself from all that is not to the Lord's honour. John and the other apostles speak of the same things, and give the same divine directions, but we need not here pursue them farther. Enough has been pointed out to prepare the reader for what we must meet with in that which calls itself *Christian.*

The Immediate Followers of the Apostles

Here an important question arises, and one that has been often asked, At what time, and by what means, did *clericalism* - the whole system of clergy - gain so firm a footing in the professing church? To answer this question fully would be to write in detail the internal history of the church. Its constitution and character were wholly changed by the introduction of the clerical system. But its growth and organization was gradual. Arguments were drawn from the Old Testament, and, in a short time, Christianity was recast in the mould of Judaism. The distinction between bishops and presbyters, between a priestly order and the common priesthood of all believers, and the multiplication of church offices, followed rapidly as consequences. But however difficult it may be now to trace the inroads of clericalism, the *synagogue* was its model.

We learn from the whole of the New Testament that *Judaism* was the unwearied and unrelenting enemy of Christianity in every point of view. It laboured incessantly, on the one hand to introduce its rites and ceremonies and on the other to persecute unto the death all who were faithful to Christ and to the true principles of the church of God. This we see especially from the Acts and the Epistles. But when the extraordinary gifts in the church ceased, and when the noble defenders of the faith, in the persons of the inspired apostles, passed away, we may easily imagine how Judaism would prevail. Besides, the early churches were chiefly composed of converts from the Jewish synagogue, who long retained their Jewish prejudices.

Clericalism, then, we firmly believe sprang from **Judaism.** From the days of the apostles until now the root of the whole fabric and dominion of clericalism is there. Philosophy and heterodoxy, no doubt, did much to corrupt the church and lead her to join hands with the world: but the order of the clergy and all that belongs to it must be founded on the Jews' religion. It is more than probable, however, that many may have been persuaded then, as many have been since, that Christianity is a continuation of Judaism, in place of being its perfect contrast. The Judaizing teachers boldly affirmed that Christianity was merely a graft on Judaism. But throughout the epistles we everywhere learn that the one was earthly and the other heavenly; that the one belonged to the old, and the other to the new creation; that the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

We will now return to the immediate followers of the apostles.

The Apostolic Fathers, as they are called, such as Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Barnabas, were the immediate followers of the inspired apostles. They had listened to their instructions, laboured with them in the gospel, and probably had been familiarly acquainted with them. But, notwithstanding the high privileges which they enjoyed as scholars of the apostles, they very soon departed from the doctrines which had been committed to them, especially as to church government. They seem to have completely forgotten - judging from the Epistles which bear their names - the great New Testament truth of the Holy Spirit's presence in the assembly. Surely both John and Paul speak much of the presence, indwelling, sovereign rule, and authority of the Holy Spirit in the church. John 13-16; Act 2:1, 1Co 12:14, Ephesians 1-4 give plain directions and instructions on this fundamental truth of the church of God. Had this truth been maintained according to the apostle's exhortation "Endeavouring to keep" - not to make - "the unity of the Spirit," clericalism could never have found a place in Christendom.

The new teachers of the church seem also to have forgotten the beautiful simplicity of the divine order in the church. There were only two orders of office-bearers - elders and deacons. The one was appointed to attend to the temporal, the other to the spiritual need of the assembly of the saints. Elder, or bishop, simply means overseer, one who takes a spiritual oversight. He may have been "apt to teach," or he may not; he was not an ordained teacher, but an ordained overseer. And as for the institutions of divine appointment, we only find in the New Testament, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Nothing could be more simple, more plain, or more easily understood, as to all the directions given for faith and practice, but there was no room left for the exaltation and glory of man in the church of God. The Holy Ghost had come down to take the lead in the assembly, according to the word of the Lord, and the promise of the Father; and no Christian, however gifted, believing this, could take the place of leader, and thus practically displace the Holy Spirit. But, from the moment that this truth was lost sight of, men began to contend for place and power, and of course the Holy Spirit had no longer His right place in the assembly.

Scarcely had the voice of inspiration become silent in the church, than we hear the voice of the new teachers crying loudly and earnestly for the highest honours being paid to the bishop, and a supreme place being given to him. Not a word about the Spirit's place as sovereign ruler in the church of God. This is evident from the Epistles of Ignatius, said to have been written A.D. 107. Many great names, we are aware, have questioned their authenticity; and many great names contend that they have been satisfactorily proved to be genuine. The proofs on either side lie outside of our line. The Church of England has long accepted them as genuine, and considers them as the basis, and as the triumphant vindication, of the antiquity of episcopacy. The following are a few specimens of his admonitions to the churches.

Ignatius, in the course of his journey from Antioch to Rome,* wrote seven Epistles. One to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrneans, and one to his friend Polycarp. Being written on the eve of his martyrdom, and with great earnestness and vehemence, and having been the disciple and friend of St. John, and at that time bishop of Antioch, probably the most renowned in Christendom, his Epistles must have produced a great impression on the churches; besides the way to office, authority, and power has always a great charm for vain human nature.

{*See Journey and Martyrdom of Ignatius, p. 246.}

In writing to the church at Ephesus he says, "Let us take heed, brethren, that we set not ourselves against the bishop, that we may be subject to God.... It is therefore evident that we ought to look upon the bishop even as we do upon the Lord Himself." In his Epistle to the Magnesians he says, "I exhort you that ye study to do all things in a divine concord; your bishops presiding in the place of God; your presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles; and your deacons, most dear to me, being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ." We find the same strain in his letter to the Trallians: "Whereas ye are subject to your bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live, not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ who died for us.... Guard yourselves against such persons; and that you will do if you are not puffed up: but continue inseparable from Jesus Christ our God, and from your bishop, and from the commands of the apostles." Passing over several of his letters to the churches, we only give one more specimen from his Epistle to the Philadelphians: "I cried whilst I was among you, I spake with a loud voice, Attend to the bishop, and to the presbytery, and to the deacons. Now some supposed that I spake this as foreseeing the division that should come among you. But He is my witness for whose sake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing from any man; but the Spirit spake, saying on this wise: Do nothing without the bishop; keep your bodies as the temples of God: love unity; flee divisions, be the followers of Christ, as He was of His Father."*

{*The above extracts are taken from *Wake's Translation.* See also "A Full and Faithful Analysis of the Writings of Ignatius, Clement, Polycarp, and Hermas." *The Inquirer,* vol. 2, p. 317.}

In the last quotation it is very evident that the venerable father wishes to add to his theories the weight of inspiration. But, however extravagant and unaccountable this idea may be, we must give him credit for believing what he says. That he was a devout Christian, and full of religious zeal, no one can doubt, but that he greatly deceived himself in this and in other matters there can be as little doubt. The leading idea in all his letters is the perfect submission of the people to their rulers, or of the laity to their clergy. He was, no doubt, anxious for the welfare of the church, and fearing the effect of the "divisions" which he refers to, he probably thought that a strong government, in the hands of rulers, would be the best means of preserving it from the inroads of error. "Give diligence," he says, "to be established in the doctrine of our Lord and the apostles, together with your most worthy bishop, and the well-woven spiritual crown of your presbytery, and your godly deacons. Be subject to your bishop and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father, according to the flesh; and as the apostles to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Spirit; that so there may be a union among you both in body and in spirit." Thus **the mitre** was placed on the head of the highest dignitary, and henceforth became the object of ecclesiastical ambition, and not infrequently of the most unseemly contention, with all their demoralizing consequences.

Clericalism, Ministry, and Individual Responsibility

It is assumed that these Epistles were written only a few years after the death of St. John, and that the writer must have been intimately acquainted with his mind, and was only carrying out his views. Hence it is said, that episcopacy is coeval with Christianity. But it matters comparatively little by whom they were written, or the precise time, they are not scripture, and the reader must judge of their character by the word of God, and of their influence by the history of the church. The mind of the Lord, concerning His church, and the responsibility of His people, must be learnt from His own word, and not from the writings of any Father, however early or esteemed. And here, it may be well, before leaving this point, to place before our readers a few portions of the word, which they will do well to compare with the above extracts. They refer to christian ministry and individual responsibility. Thus learn the mighty difference between ministry and office; or, between being esteemed for your work's sake, not merely *office' sake*.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, from verse 45 of chapter 24 to verse 31 of chapter 25, we have three parables, in which the Lord addresses the disciples as to their conduct during His absence.

1. The subject of the first is the responsibility of ministry within the house - in the church. "Whose house are we." Thus we read, "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods." Real ministry is of the Lord and of Him alone. This is what we have to note in view of what took place on the very threshold of Christianity. And He makes much of faithfulness or unfaithfulness in His house. His people are near and dear to His heart. Those who have been humble and faithful during His absence will be made rulers over all His goods when He returns. The true minister of Christ has to do directly with Himself. He is the hireling of no man, or of any particular body of men. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Failure in ministry is also spoken of and dealt with by the Lord Himself.

"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." This is the other and sad side of the picture. The character of ministry is greatly affected by holding or rejecting the truth of the Lord's coming. In place of devoted service to the household, with his heart set on the master's approval on his return, there is assumption, tyranny, and worldliness. The doom of such, when the Lord comes, will be worse than that of the world. He shall "appoint him his portion with the hypocrites" - Judas' place - where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Such are the fearful consequences of forgetfulness of the Lord's return. But this is more than a mere doctrinal mistake, or a difference of opinion about the coming of the Lord. It was "in *his heart,"* his will was concerned in it. He wished in his heart that his Lord would stay away, as His coming would spoil all his schemes, and bring to a close all his worldly greatness. Is not this too true a picture of what has happened? and what a solemn lesson for those who take to themselves a place of service in the church! The mere appointment of the sovereign, or the choice of the people, will not be enough in that day, unless they have also been the chosen of the Lord and faithful in His house.

2. In the second parable, professing Christians, during the Lord's absence, are represented as virgins who went out to meet the Bridegroom and light Him to His house. This was the attitude of the early Christians. They came out from the world, and from Judaism, to go forth and meet the Bridegroom. But we know what happened. He tarries: they all slumbered and slept. "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." From the first till the beginning of the present century, we hear very little about the coming of the Lord. Now and then, here and there, a feeble voice may be heard on the subject; but not until the early part of the present century did the midnight cry go forth. Now we have many tracts and volumes on the subject, and many are preaching it in nearly all lands under heaven. The midnight is past, the morning cometh.

The revival of the truth of the Lord's coming marks a distinct epoch in the history of the church. And, like all revivals, it was the work of the Holy Spirit, and that by instruments of His own choosing, and by means which He saw fitting. And how like the Lord's long-suffering, that in this great movement there should be time given between the cry and the arrival of the Bridegroom to prove the condition of each. Five of the ten virgins had no oil in their lamps - no Christ, no Holy Spirit dwelling in them. They had only the outward lamp of profession. How awfully solemn the thought, if we look at Christendom from this point of view! Five of every ten are *unreal,* and against them the door will be shut for ever. How this thought should move to earnestness and energy in evangelising! May we wisely improve the time thus graciously given between the going forth of the midnight cry, and the coming of the Bridegroom.

3. In the first parable, it is ministry *inside the house,* in the third, it is ministry *outside the house* - evangelising. In the second parable, it is the personal expectation of the Lord's coming, with the possession of that which is requisite to go in with Him to the marriage supper of the King's son.

"The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." Here the Lord is represented as leaving this world and going back to heaven; and while He is gone there, His servants are to trade with the talents committed to them. "Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two." Here we have the true principle and the true character of christian ministry. The Lord Himself called the servants, and gave them the talents, and the servant is responsible to the Lord Himself for the fulfilment of his calling. The exercise of gift, whether *inside* or *outside* the house, although subject to the directions of the word and always to be exercised in love and for blessing, is in no wise dependent on the will of sovereign, priest, or people, but on Christ only, the true Head of the church. It is a grave and solemn thing for any one to interfere with Christ's claims on the service of His servant. To touch this is to set aside responsibility to Christ, and to overthrow the fundamental principle of Christian ministry.

Priesthood was the distinguishing characteristic of the Jewish dispensation; *ministry,* according to God, is characteristic of the Christian period. Hence the utter failure of the professing church, when it sought to imitate Judaism in so many ways, both in its priesthood and its ritualism. If a priestly order, with rites and ceremonies, be still necessary, the efficacy of the work of Christ is called in question. In fact, though not in words, it strikes at the root of Christianity. But all is settled by the word of God. "But this man, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.... Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." (see Heb 10:1-25)

Ministry, then, is a subject of the highest dignity and the deepest interest. It testifies to the work, the victory, and the glory of Jesus, that the lost may be saved. It is the activity of God's love going out to an alien and ruined world, and earnestly beseeching souls to be reconciled to Him. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, *and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."* (2Co 5:19-21) Jewish priesthood maintained the people in their relations with God: christian ministry is God in grace by His servants delivering souls from sin and ruin, and bringing them near to Himself, as happy worshippers in the most holy place.

To return to our parable, there is one thing specially to be noticed here, as showing the Lord's sovereignty and wisdom in connection with ministry. He gave differently to each, and to each according to his ability. Each one had a natural capacity which fitted him for the service in which he was employed, and gifts bestowed according to the measure of the gift of Christ for its fulfilment. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." (Eph. 4) The servant must have certain natural qualifications for his work, besides the power of the Spirit of God. If the Lord calls a man to preach the gospel, there will be a natural ability for it. Then the Lord may create in his heart by the Holy Spirit a real love for souls, which is the best gift of the evangelist. Then he ought to stir up and exercise his gift according to his ability, for the blessing of souls and the glory of God. May we remember that we are responsible for these two things - the gift graciously bestowed, and the ability in which the gift is to be exercised. When the Lord comes to reckon with His servants, it will not be enough to say, I was never educated for, or appointed to, the ministry. The question will be, Did I wait on the Lord to be used by Him according to what He had fitted me for? or did I hide my talent in the earth? Faithfulness or unfaithfulness to Him will be the only thing in question.

That which distinguished the faithful from the unfaithful servant was *confidence* in their master. The unfaithful servant knew not the Lord: he acted from fear, not from love, and so hid his one talent in the earth. The faithful knew the Lord, trusted Him, and served from love, and was rewarded. Love is the only true spring of service for Christ, either in the church or in the outside world. May we never be found making excuses for ourselves, like the "wicked and slothful" servant, but be ever reckoning on the love, grace, truth, and power of our blessed Saviour and Lord.

The Effect of the New Order of Clergy

It may be only fair to suppose that those good men, by whose means a new order of things was brought into the church, and the free ministry of the Holy Spirit in the members of the body excluded, had the welfare of the church at heart. It is evident that Ignatius, by this arrangement, hoped to avoid "divisions." But, however good our motives may be, it is the height of human folly - if not worse - to interfere with, or seek to change, the order of God. This was Eve's mistake, and we all know the consequences too well. It was also the original sin of the church, from which it has suffered these eighteen hundred years.

The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven is the only power of ministry but the Lord must be left free to choose and employ His own servants. Human arrangements and appointments necessarily interfere with the liberty of the Spirit. They quench the Holy Spirit: He only knows where the ability is, and where, when, and how to dispense the gifts. Speaking of the church as it was in the days of the apostles, it is said, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He [the Holy Ghost] will." And again, we read, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," or for the profit of all. (1 Cor. 12) Here all is in divine hands. The Holy Spirit dispenses the gift. It is to be exercised in acknowledgement of the Lordship of Christ; and God gives efficacy to the ministry. What a ministry - Spirit, Lord, and God - its source, power and character! How great, how sad, the change to king, prelate, or people! Is not this apostasy? But while we object to mere human appointment to office, qualified or not qualified, we would contend most earnestly for the ministry of the word to both saints and sinners.

The church alas! soon found that to hinder ministry, as it is set before us in the word of God, and to introduce a new order of things, did not hinder divisions, heresies, and false teachers springing up. True, the flesh, in the most real and gifted Christian, may manifest itself; but when the Spirit of God is acting in power, and the authority of the word owned, the remedy is at hand: the evil will be judged in humility and faithfulness to Christ. From this time - the beginning of the second century, and before it - the church was greatly disturbed by heresies; and as time rolled on, things never grew better, but always worse.

Irenaeus, a Christian of great celebrity, who succeeded Pothinus as bishop of Lyons, A.D. 177, has left us much information on the subject of the early heresies. He is supposed to have written about the year 183. His great book *"against heresies"* is said to contain a defence of the holy catholic faith, and an examination and refutation of the false doctrines advocated by the principal heretics.*

{* *Irenaeus against Heresies.* Clarke, Edinburgh.}

The Origin of the Distinction Between Clergy and Laity

Christianity at the beginning had no *separate priestly order.* Its *first* converts went everywhere preaching the Lord Jesus. They were the *first* to spread abroad the glad tidings of salvation, even before the apostles themselves had left Jerusalem. (Act 8:4) In course of time, when converts were found sufficient in any place to form an assembly, they came together in the name of the Lord on the first day of the week to break bread, and to edify one another in love. (Act 20:7) When the opportunity came for an apostle to visit such gatherings, he chose elders to take the oversight of the little flock; deacons were chosen by the assembly. This was the entire constitution of the first churches. If the Lord raised up an evangelist, and souls were converted, they were baptised unto the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This was, of course, outside the assembly, and not a church act. After due examination by the spiritual as to the genuineness of the evangelist's work, the assembly being satisfied, they were received into communion.

It will be seen, from this brief sketch of the divine order of the churches, that there was no distinction such as "the clergy," and "the laity." All stood on the same ground as to priesthood, worship and nearness to God. As the apostles Peter and John say, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And thus could the whole assembly sing, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." The only priesthood, then, in the church of God is the common **priesthood of all believers.** The humblest menial in the palace of the archbishop, if washed in the blood of Christ, is whiter than snow, and fitted to enter the most holy place, and worship within the veil.

There is no outer court worship now. The separation of a privileged class - a sacerdotal order - is unknown in the New Testament. The distinction between *clergy* and *laity* was suggested by Judaism, and human invention soon made it great; but it was episcopal ordination that established the distinction, and widened the separation. The bishop gradually assumed the title of Pontiff. The presbyters, and at length the deacons, became, as well as the bishops, a sacred order. The place of mediation and of greater nearness to God was assumed by the priestly caste, and also of authority over the laity. In place of God speaking direct to the heart and conscience by His own word, and the heart and conscience brought direct into the presence of God, it was priesthood coming in between them. Thus the word of God was lost sight of, and faith stood in the opinions of men. The blessed Lord Jesus, as the Great High Priest of His people, and as the one Mediator between God and men, was thus practically displaced and set aside.*

{*One of the highest authorities as to episcopal order is of opinion that the distinction between the clergy and the laity is derived from the Old Testament: that as the high priest had his office assigned him, and the priests also their proper station, and the Levites their peculiar service; so laymen in like manner were under the obligations proper to laymen. He also states that the common priesthood of all believers is taught in the New Testament, but that the Fathers from the earliest times formed the church on the Jewish system.-*gingham on the Antiquity of the Christian Church,* vol. 1, p. 42.}

Thus alas! we see in the church what has been true of man from Adam downwards. Everything that has been entrusted to man has failed. From the time that the responsibility of maintaining the church as the pillar and ground of the truth fell into man's hands, there has been nothing but failure. The word of God, however, remains the same, and its authority can never fail, blessed be His name. One of the main objects of these "Short Papers" is to recall the reader's attention to the principles and order of the church, as taught in the New Testament. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." That is, we must worship and serve Him according to the truth, and under the guidance and unction of the Holy Spirit, if we would glorify His name, and worship and serve Him acceptably.

Almost all ecclesiastical writers affirm *that neither the Lord Himself nor His apostles gave any distinct precepts as to the order and government of the church - that such things were left to the wisdom and prudence of her office-bearers, and the character of the times.* By this assumption the widest range was given to the human will. We know the consequences. Man sought his own glory. The simplicity of the New Testament, the lowly path of the Lord and His apostles, the zeal and self-denial of a Paul all were overlooked, and worldly greatness soon became the object and ambition of the clergy. A brief sketch of the bishop's office will set these things in a clear light, and, we doubt not, will greatly interest our readers.

What was a Bishop in Early Times?

The humblest peasant is familiar with the grandeur and worldly greatness of a bishop, but he may not know how a minister of Christ, and a successor of the humble fishermen of Galilee, came to such dignity. In the days of the apostles and for more than a hundred years after, the office of a bishop was a laborious but "good work." He had the charge of a single church, which might ordinarily be contained in a private house. He was not then as a "lord over God's heritage," but in reality its minister and servant, instructing the people, and attending on the sick and poor in person. The presbyters, no doubt, assisted in the management of the general affairs of the church, and also the deacons; but the bishop had the chief part of the service. He had no authority, however, to decree or sanction anything without the approval of the presbytery and people. There was no thought then of "inferior clergy" under him. And at that time the churches had no revenues, except the voluntary contributions of the people, which, moderate as they doubtless were, would leave a very small emolument for the bishop after the poor and needy were attended to.

But in those early times office-bearers in the church continued, in all probability, to carry on their former trades and occupations, supporting themselves and their families in the same manner as before. "A bishop," says Paul, "must be given to hospitality." And this he could not have been, had he depended for his income on the earnings of the poor. It was not until about the year 245 that the clergy received a salary, and were forbidden to follow their worldly employments; but towards the close of the second century circumstances arose in the history of the church, which greatly affected the original humility and simplicity of its overseers, and which tended to the corruption of the priestly order. "This change began," says Waddington, "towards the end of the second century; and it is certain that at this period we find the first complaints of the incipient corruption of the clergy." From the moment that the interests of the ministers became at all distinguished from the interests of Christianity, many and great changes for the worse may be considered to have begun. We will notice some of these circumstances; and first,

The Origin of Dioceses

The bishops who lived in cities, were either by their own preaching, or by the preaching of others - presbyters, deacons, or people - the means of gathering new churches in the neighbouring towns and villages. These young assemblies, very naturally, continued under the care and protection of the city churches by whose means they had received the gospel, and were formed into churches. Ecclesiastical provinces were thus gradually formed, which the Greeks afterwards denominated **dioceses.** The city bishops claimed the privilege of appointing office-bearers to these rural churches; and the persons to whom they committed their instruction and care were called *district bishops.* These formed a new class, coming in between the bishops and the presbyters, being considered inferior to the former, and superior to the latter. Thus were distinctions and divisions created, and offices multiplied.

The Origin of the Metropolitan Bishop

Churches thus constituted and regulated rapidly increased throughout the empire. In the management of their internal affairs every church was essentially distinct from every other, though walking in spiritual fellowship with all others, and considered as part of the one church of God. But, as the number of believers increased, and churches were extended, diversities in doctrine and discipline sprang up, which could not always be settled in the individual assemblies. This gave rise to councils, or synods. These were composed chiefly of those who took part in the ministry. But when the deputies of the churches were thus assembled, it was soon discovered that the **control of a president** was required. Unless the sovereign action of the Holy Spirit in the church be owned and submitted to, there must be anarchy without a president. The bishop of the capital of the province was usually appointed to preside, under the lofty title of the *Metropolitan.* On his return home it was hard to lay aside these occasional honours, so he very soon claimed the personal and permanent dignity of the *Metropolitan.*

The bishops and presbyters, until about this time, were generally viewed as equal in rank, or the same thing, the terms being used synonymously; but now the former considered themselves as invested with supreme power in the guidance of the church, and were determined to maintain themselves in this authority. The presbyters refused to concede to them this new and self-assumed dignity, and sought to maintain their own independence. Hence arose the great controversy between the presbyterian and the episcopalian systems, which has continued until this day, and of which we may speak more particularly hereafter. Enough has been said to show the reader the beginning of many things which still live before us in the professing church. In the consecrated order of clergy he will find the germ out of which sprang at length the whole mediaeval priesthood, the sin of simony, the laws of celibacy, and the fearful corruptions of the dark ages.*

{*For full details, see Neander, vol. 1, p. 259; Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 91; Bingham, vol. 1.}

Having thus glanced at what was going on inside the church from the beginning, and especially amongst her rulers, we will now resume the general history from the death of Marcus Aurelius.

09 The Accession Of Constantine

Chapter 9

From Commodus Till The Accession Of Constantine

A.D. 180-313

Christianity under the successors of Aurelius enjoyed a season of comparative repose and tranquillity. The depravity of **Commodus** was overruled to subserve the interests of the Christians after their long sufferings under his father, and the brief reign of many of the emperors left them no leisure to war against the aggressions of Christianity. "During little more than a century," says Milman, "from the accession of Commodus to that of Diocletian, more than twenty emperors flitted like shadows along the tragic scene of the imperial palace. The empire of the world became the prize af bold adventure, or the precarious gift of a lawless soldiery. A long line of military adventurers, often strangers to the name, to the race, to the language of Rome - Africans, Pyreans, Arabs and Goths - seized the quickly shifting sceptre of the world. The change of sovereign was almost always a change of dynasty, or, by some strange fatality, every attempt to re-establish a hereditary succession was thwarted by the vices or imbecility of the second generation."

Thus the Christians had about a hundred years of comparative rest and peace. There were, no doubt, many cases of persecution and martyrdom during that period, but such cases were more the result of personal hostility in some individual than from any systematic policy pursued by the government against Christianity. The first and commanding object of each succeeding emperor was to secure his contested throne. They had no time to devote to the suppression of Christianity, or to the social and religious changes within the empire. Thus the great Head of the church - who is also "head over all things to the church" - made the weakness and insecurity of the throne the indirect means of the strength and prosperity of the church.

But although the reign of Commodus was generally favourable to the progress of Christianity, there was one remarkable instance of persecution which we must note.

Apollonius, a Roman senator, renowned for learning and philosophy, was a sincere Christian. Many of the nobility of Rome, with their whole families, embraced Christianity about this time. The dignity of the Roman senate felt itself lowered by such innovations. This led, it is supposed, to the accusation of Apollonius before the magistrate. His accuser, under an old and unrepealed law of Antoninus Pius, which enacted grievous punishments against the accusers of Christians, was sentenced to death and executed. The magistrate asked the prisoner, Apollonius, to give an account of his faith before the senate and the court. He complied, and boldly confessed his faith in Christ; in consequence of which, by a decree of the senate, he was beheaded. It is said by some to be the only trial recorded in history where both the accused and the accuser suffered judicially. But the Lord's hand was in it, and high above both the accuser and the magistrate, Perennius, who condemned them both. From this period many families of distinction and opulence in Rome professed Christianity, and sometimes we meet with Christians in the imperial family.

After a reign of about twelve years the unworthy son of Aurelius died from the effects of a poisoned cup of wine.

Pertinax, immediately upon the death of Commodus, was elected by the senate to the throne; but after a brief reign of sixty-six days, he was killed in an insurrection. A civil war followed, and Septimius Severus ultimately obtained the sovereign power in Rome.

Christianity under the Reign of Severus

A.D. 194-210

In the early part of the reign of Severus he was rather favourable to the Christians. A christian slave, named Proculus, was the means of restoring the Emperor to health, by anointing him with oil. This remarkable cure - no doubt in answer to prayer - gave the Christians great favour in the eyes of Severus. Proculus received an honourable position in the imperial family, and a christian nurse and a christian tutor were engaged to form the character of the young prince. He also protected from the popular indignation men and women of the highest rank in Rome - senators, their wives and families - who had embraced Christianity. But alas! all this favour towards the Christians was merely the result of local circumstances. The laws remained the same, and violent persecutions broke out against them in particular provinces.

Persecutions under Severus

A.D. 202

It was not till about the tenth year of his reign that the native ferocity of his dark and relentless mind was manifested against the Christians. In 202, after his return from the East, where he had gained great victories, and no doubt lifted up with pride, he put forth his hand, and impiously dared to arrest the progress of Christianity - the chariot of the gospel. He passed a law, which forbade, under severe penalties, that any of his subjects should become either Jews or Christians. This law, as a matter of course, kindled a severe persecution against young converts and Christians in general. It stimulated their enemies to all kinds of violence. Large sums of money were extorted from timid Christians by some of the venal governors as the price of peace. This practice, though yielded to by some for the sake of life and liberty, was strongly denounced by others. It was considered by the more zealous as degrading to Christianity, and an ignominious barter of the hopes and glories of martyrdom. Still the persecution does not appear to have been general. It left its deepest traces in Egypt and Africa.

At Alexandria, Leonides, father of the famous Origen, suffered martyrdom. Young people at schools, who were receiving a christian education, were subjected to severe tortures and some of their teachers were seized and burned. The young Origen distinguished himself at this time by his active and fearless labours in the now almost deserted schools. He longed to follow in his father's footsteps, and rather sought than shunned the crown of martyrdom. But it was in Africa a place we only think of now as a dark, miserable, and thinly peopled desert - that the *silver line* of God's marvellous grace was most distinctly marked in the heavenly patience and fortitude of the holy sufferers. We must indulge our readers with a few brief details.

The Persecution in Africa

Historians say that in no part of the Roman Empire had Christianity taken more deep and permanent root than in the province of Africa. Then it was crowded with rich and populous cities. The African type of Christianity was entirely different from what has been called the Egyptian. The former was earnest and impassioned, the latter dreamy and speculative through the evil influence of **Platonism.** Tertullian belongs to this period, and is a true type of the difference we have referred to; but more of this farther on. We will now notice some of the African martyrs.

Perpetua and Her Companions

Amongst others who were apprehended and martyred in Africa during this persecution, **Perpetua and her companions,** in all histories, hold a distinguished place. The history of their martyrdom not only bears throughout the stamp of circumstantial truth, but abounds with the most exquisite touches of natural feeling and affection. Here we see the beautiful combination of the tenderest feelings and the strongest affections, which Christianity recognises in all their rights, and makes even more profound and tender, but yet causes all to be sacrificed on the altar of entire devotedness to Him who died entirely devoted to us. "Who loved me," as appropriating faith says, "and gave Himself for me." (Gal 2:20)

At Carthage, in the year 202, **three young men,** Revocatus, Saturnius, and Secundulus, and two young women, Perpetua and Felicitas, were arrested, all of them being still catechumens, or candidates for baptism and communion. Perpetua was of a good family, wealthy and noble, of liberal education, and honourably married. She was about twenty-two years of age, and was a mother, with her child at the breast. Her whole family seem to have been Christians except her aged father who was still a pagan. Nothing is said of her husband. Her father was passionately fond of her, and greatly dreaded the disgrace that her sufferings for Christ would bring on his family. So that she had not only death in its most frightful form to struggle with, but every sacred tie of nature.

When she was first brought before her persecutors, her aged father came and urged her to recant and say she was not a Christian. "Father," she calmly replied, pointing to a vessel that lay on the ground, "can I call this vessel anything else than what it is?" "No," he replied. "Neither can I say to you anything else than that I am a Christian." A few days after this the young Christians were baptized. Though they were under guard, they were not yet committed to prison. But shortly after this, they were thrown into the dungeon. "Then," she says, "I was tempted, I was terrified, for I had never been in such darkness before. Oh what a dreadful day! The excessive heat occasioned by the number of persons, the rough treatment of the soldiers, and, finally, anxiety for my child, made me miserable." The deacons, however, succeeded in purchasing for the christian prisoners a better apartment, where they were separated from the common criminals. Such advantages could usually be purchased from the venal overseers of prisons. Perpetua was now cheered by having her child brought to her. She placed it at her breast, and exclaimed, "Now, this prison has become a palace to me!"

After a few days there was a rumour that the prisoners were to be examined. The father hastened to his daughter in great distress of mind. "My daughter," he said, "pity my grey hairs, pity thy father, if I am still worthy to be called thy father. If I have brought thee up to this bloom of thy age, if I have preferred thee above all thy brothers, expose me not to such shame among men. Look upon thy child - thy son who, if thou diest, cannot long survive thee. Let thy lofty spirit give way, lest thou plunge us all into ruin. For if thou diest thus, not one of us will ever have courage again to speak a free word." Whilst saying this, he kissed her hands, threw himself at her feet, entreating her with terms of endearment, and many tears. But, though greatly moved and pained by the sight of her father, and his strong and tender affection for her, she was calm and firm, and felt chiefly concerned for the good of his soul. "My father's grey hairs," she said, "pained me, when I considered that he alone of my family would not rejoice in my martyrdom." "What shall happen," she said to him, "when I come before the tribunal depends on the will of God; for we stand not in our own strength, but only by the power of God."

On the arrival of the decisive hour - **the last day of their trial -** an immense multitude was assembled. The aged father again appeared, that he might for the last time try his utmost to overcome the resolution of his daughter. On this occasion he brought her infant son in his arms, and stood before her. What a moment! what a spectacle! Her aged father, his grey hairs, her tender infant; to say nothing of his agonising importunities: what an appeal to a daughter - to a young mother's heart! "Have pity on thy father's grey hairs," said the governor, "have pity on thy helpless child, offer sacrifice for the welfare of the Emperor." Thus she stood before the tribunal, before the assembled multitude, before the admiring myriads of heaven, before the frowning hosts of hell. But Perpetua was calm and firm. Like Abraham of old the father of the faithful, her eye was not now on her son but on the God of resurrection. Having commended her child to her mother and her brother, she answered the governor, and said, "That I cannot do." "Art thou a Christian?" he asked. "Yes," she replied, "I am a Christian." Her fate was now decided. They were all condemned to serve as a cruel sport for the people and the soldiers, in a fight with wild beasts, on the anniversary of young Geta's birthday. They returned to their dungeon, rejoicing that they were thus enabled to witness and suffer for Jesus' sake. The jailer, Pudas, was converted by means of the tranquil behavior of his prisoners

When led forth into the amphitheatre, the martyrs were observed to have a peaceful and joyful appearance. According to a custom which prevailed in Carthage, the men should have been clothed in scarlet like the priests of Saturn, and the women in yellow as the priestesses of Ceres, but the prisoners protested against such a proceeding. "We have come here," they said, "of our own choice, that we may not suffer our freedom to be taken from us; we have given up our lives that we may not be forced to such abominations." The pagans acknowledged the justice of their demand, and yielded. After taking leave of each other with the **mutual kiss of christian love,** in the certain hope of soon meeting again, as "absent from the body and present with the Lord," they came forward to the scene of death in their simple attire. The voice of praise to God was heard by the spectators. Perpetua was singing a psalm. The men were exposed to lions, bears, and leopards; the women were tossed by a furious cow. But all were speedily released from their sufferings by the sword of the gladiator, and entered into the joy of their Lord.

The interesting narrative, which is here abridged, and said to have been written by Perpetua's own hand, breathes such an air of truth and reality as to have commanded the respect and confidence of all ages. But our main object in writing it for our readers is to present to them a living picture, in which many of the finest features of christian faith are beautifully blended with the warmest and tenderest christian feelings, and that we may learn, not to be complainers, but to endure all things for Christ's sake, that so His grace may shine, our faith triumph, and God be glorified.

A few years after these events, Severus turned his attention to **Britain,** where the Romans had been losing ground. The Emperor, being at the head of a very powerful army, drove back the independent natives of Caledonia, and regained the country south of the wall of Antoninus, but lost so many troops in the successive battles which he was obliged to fight, that he did not think proper to push his conquests beyond that boundary. Feeling at length his end approaching, he retired to York, where he soon expired, in the eighteenth year of his reign, A.D. 211.

The Altered Position of Christianity

After the death of Septimius Severus - except during the short reign of **Maximin -** the church enjoyed a season of comparative peace till the reign of Decius, A.D. 249. But during the favourable reign of Alexander Severus, a considerable change took place in the relation of Christianity to society. He was through life under the influence of his mother, Mammaea, who is described by Eusebius as "a woman distinguished for her piety and religion." She sent for Origen, of whose fame she had heard much, and learnt from him something of the doctrines of the gospel. She was afterwards favourable to the Christians, but there is not much evidence that she was one herself.

Alexander was of a religious disposition. He had many Christians in his household; and bishops were admitted even at the court in a recognised official character. He frequently used the words of our Saviour, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luk 6:31) He had them inscribed on the walls of his palace and on other public buildings. But all religions were nearly the same to him, and on this principle he gave Christianity a place in his eclectic system.

The First Public Buildings for Christian Assemblies

An important point in the history of the church, and one that proves its altered position in the Roman Empire, now comes before us for the first time. It was during the reign of this excellent prince that public buildings were first erected for the assemblies of Christians. A little circumstance connected with a piece of land in Rome shows the true spirit of the Emperor and the growing power and influence of Christians. This piece of land, which had been considered as a common, was selected by a congregation as a site for a church; but the Company of Victuallers contended that they had a prior claim. The case was judged by the Emperor. He awarded the land to the Christians, on the ground that it was better to devote it to the worship of God in any form than apply it to a profane and unworthy use.

Public buildings - **christian churches,** so-called - now begun to rise in different parts of the empire, and to possess endowments in land. The heathen had never been able to understand why the Christians had neither temples nor altars. Their religious assemblies, up till this time, had been held in private. Even the Jew had his public synagogue, but where the Christians met was indicated by no separate and distinguished building. The private house, the catacombs, the cemetery of their dead, contained their peaceful congregations. Their privacy, which had often been in those troublous times their security, was now passing away. On the other hand, it must also be observed that their secrecy was often used against them. We have seen from the first, that the pagans could not understand a religion without a temple and were easily persuaded that these private and mysterious meetings, which seemed to shun the light of day, were only for the worst of purposes.

The outward condition of Christianity was now changed wonderfully changed - but alas! not in favour of spiritual health and growth, as we shall soon see. There were now well-known edifices in which the Christians met, and the doors of which they could throw wide open to all mankind. Christianity was now recognised as one of the various forms of worship which the government did not prohibit. But the toleration of the Christians during this period rested only on the favourable disposition of Alexander. No change was made in the laws of the empire in favour of Christians, so that their time of peace was brought to a close by his death. A conspiracy was formed against him by the demoralised soldiery, who could not endure the discipline which he sought to restore; and the youthful Emperor was slain in his tent, in the twenty-ninth year of his age and the thirteenth of his reign.

The Lord's Dealings with the Clergy

Scarcely had the new churches been built, and the bishops received at court, when the hand of the Lord was turned against them. It happened in this way.

Maximin, a rude Thracian peasant, raised himself to the imperial throne. He had been the chief instigator, if not the actual murderer of the virtuous Alexander. He began his reign by seizing and putting to death all the friends of the late Emperor. Those who had been *his* friends he reckoned as his own enemies. He ordered the bishops, and particularly those who had been the intimate friends of Alexander, to be put to death. His vengeance fell more or less on all classes of Christians, but chiefly on the clergy. It was not, however, for their Christianity that they suffered on this occasion, for Maximin was utterly regardless of all religions, but because of the position they had reached in the world. What can be more sorrowful than this reflection?

About the same time destructive **earthquakes** in several provinces rekindled the popular hatred against the Christians in general. The fury of the people under such an emperor was unrestrained, and, encouraged by hostile governors, they burnt the newly-built churches and persecuted the Christians. But happily the reign of the savage was of short duration. He became intolerable to mankind. The army mutinied and slew him in the third year of his reign and a more favourable season for the Christians returned.

The reign of **Gordian,** A.D. 238-244, and that of **Philip,** A.D. 244-249, were friendly to the church. But we have repeatedly found that a government favourable to the Christians was immediately followed by another which oppressed them. It was particularly the case at this time. Under the smiles and patronage of Philip the Arabian the church enjoyed great outward prosperity, but she was on the eve of a persecution more terrible and more general than any she had yet passed through.

One of the causes which may have contributed to this was the absence of the Christians from the national ceremonies which commemorated the **thousandth year of Rome,** A.D. 247. The secular games were celebrated with unexampled magnificence by Philip, but as he was favourable to the Christians, they escaped the fury of the pagan priests and populace. The Christians were now a recognised body in the State, and however carefully they might avoid mingling in the political factions or the popular festivities of the empire, they were considered the enemies of its prosperity and the cause of all its calamities. We now come to a complete change of government - a government that afflicts the whole church of God.

The General Persecution under Decius

Decius, in the year 249, conquered Philip and placed himself on the throne. His reign is remarkable in church history for the first *general* persecution. The new Emperor was unfavourable to Christianity and zealously devoted to the pagan religion. He resolved to attempt the complete extermination of the former, and to restore the latter to its ancient glory. One of the first measures of his reign was to issue edicts to the governors, to enforce the ancient laws against the Christians. They were commanded, on pain of forfeiting their own lives, to exterminate all Christians utterly, or bring them back by pains and tortures to the religion of their fathers.

From the time of Trajan there had been an imperial order to the effect, that *the Christians were not to be sought for;* and there was also a law against private accusations being brought against them, especially by their own servants, as we have seen in the case of Apollonius, and these laws had been usually observed by the enemies of the church, but now they were wholly neglected. The authorities sought out the Christians, the accusers ran no risk, and popular clamour was admitted in place of formal evidence. During the two succeeding years a great multitude of Christians in all the Roman provinces were banished, imprisoned, or tortured to death by various kinds of punishments and sufferings. This persecution was more cruel and terrible than any that preceded it. But the most painful part of those heart-rending scenes was the enfeebled state of the Christians themselves the sad effect of worldly ease and prosperity.

The Effects of Worldliness in the Church

The student of church history now meets with the manifest and appalling effect of the world in the church. It is a most sorrowful sight, but it ought to be a profitable lesson to the christian reader. What then was, is now, and ever must be. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, is not now less sensitive to the foul and withering breath of the world than He was then.

What the enemy could not do by bloody edicts and cruel tyrants, he accomplished by the friendship of the world. This is an **old stratagem of Satan.** The wily serpent proved more dangerous than the roaring lion. By means of the favour of great men, and especially of emperors, he threw the clergy off their guard, led them to join hands with the world, and deceived them by his flatteries. The Christians could now erect temples as well as the heathen, and their bishops were received at the imperial court on equal terms with the idolatrous priests. This unhallowed intercourse with the world sapped the very foundations of their Christianity. This became painfully manifest when the violent storm of persecution succeeded the long calm of their worldly prosperity.

In many parts of the empire the Christians had enjoyed undisturbed peace for a period of thirty years. This had told unfavourably on the church as a whole. With many it was not now the faith of an ardent conviction, such as we had in the first and second centuries, but of truth instilled into the mind by means of christian education - just what prevails in the present day to an alarming extent. A persecution breaking out with great violence, after so many years of tranquillity, could not fail to prove a sifting process for the churches. The atmosphere of Christianity had become corrupted. Cyprian in the West, and Origen in the East, speak of the secular spirit which had crept in - of the pride, the luxury the covetousness of the clergy - of the careless and irreligious lives of the people.

"If," says **Cyprian,** bishop of Carthage, "the cause of the disease is understood, the cure of the affected part is already found. The Lord would prove His people; and because the divinely-prescribed regimen of life had become disturbed in the long season of peace, a divine judgment was sent to reestablish our fallen, and, I might almost say, slumbering faith. Our sins deserve more, but our gracious Lord has so ordered it that all which has occurred seems rather like a trial than a persecution. Forgetting what believers did in the times of the apostles, and what they should always be doing Christians laboured with insatiable desire to increase their earthly possessions. Many of the bishops who, by precept and example, should have guided others, neglected their divine calling, to engage in the management of worldly concerns." Such being the condition of things in many of the churches, we need not wonder at what took place.

The Emperor ordered rigorous search to be made for all suspected of refusing compliance with the national worship. Christians were required to conform to the ceremonies of the pagan religion. In case they declined, threats, and afterwards tortures, were to be employed to compel submission. If they remained firm, the punishment of death was to be inflicted especially on the bishops, whom Decius hated most bitterly. The custom was, wherever the dreadful edict was carried into execution, to appoint a day when all the Christians in the place were to present themselves before the magistrate, renounce their religion, and offer incense at the idol's altar. Many, before the dreadful day arrived, had fled into voluntary banishment. The goods of such were confiscated and themselves forbidden to return, under penalty of death. Those who remained firm, after repeated tortures, were cast into prison, when the additional sufferings of hunger and thirst were employed to overcome their resolution. Many who were less firm and faithful were let off without sacrificing, by purchasing themselves, or allowing their friends to purchase, a certificate from the magistrate. But this unworthy practice was condemned by the church as a tacit abjuration.

Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in describing the effect of this terrible decree, says, "that many citizens of repute complied with the edict. Some were impelled by their fears, and some were forced by their friends. Many stood pale and trembling, neither ready to submit to the idolatrous ceremony, nor prepared to resist even unto death. Others endured their tortures to a certain point, but finally gave in." Such were some of the painful and disgraceful effects of the general relaxation through tampering with this present evil world. Still it would ill become us, who live in a time of great civil and religious liberty, to say hard things of the weakness of those who lived in such sanguinary times. Rather let us feel the disgrace as our own, and pray that we may be kept from yielding to the attractions of the world in every form. But all was not defective, thank the Lord. Let us look for a moment at the bright side.

The Power of Faith and Christian Devotedness

The same Dionysius tells us that many were as pillars of the Lord, who through Him were made strong, and became wonderful witnesses of His grace. Among these he mentions a boy of fifteen, **Dioscurus** by name, who answered in the wisest manner all questions, and displayed such constancy under torture, that he commanded the admiration of the governor himself, who dismissed him, in the hope that riper years would lead him to see his error. A woman, who had been brought to the altar by her husband, was forced to offer incense by some one holding her hand; but she exclaimed, "I did it not: it was you that did it;" and she was thereupon condemned to exile. In the dungeon at Carthage the Christians were exposed to heat, hunger, and thirst, in order to force them to comply with the decree; but although they saw death by starvation staring them in the face, they continued stedfast in their confession of Christ. And from the prison in Rome, where certain confessors had been confined for about a year, the following noble confession was sent to Cyprian: "What more glorious and blessed lot can, by God's grace fall to man than, amidst tortures and the fear of death itself, to confess God the Lord - than, with lacerated bodies and a spirit departing but yet free, to confess Christ, the Son of God - than to become fellow-sufferers with Christ in the name of Christ? If we have not yet shed our blood, we are ready to shed it. Pray then, beloved Cyprian, that the Lord would daily confirm and strengthen each one of us, more and more, with the power of His might; and that He, as the best of leaders, would finally conduct His soldiers, whom He has disciplined and proved in the dangerous camp, to the field of battle which is before us, armed with those divine weapons which never can be conquered."

Among the victims of this terrible persecution were Fabian, bishop of Rome, Babylas of Antioch, and Alexander of Jerusalem. Cyprian, Origen, Gregory, Dionysius, and other eminent men, were exposed to cruel tortures and exile, but escaped with their lives. The hatred of the Emperor was particularly directed against the bishops. But in the Lord's mercy the reign of Decius was a short one, he was killed in battle with the Goths, about the end of 251.*

{* See Neander, vol. 1, p. 177; Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 217; Milner, vol. 1, p. 332.}

The Martyrdom of Cyprian under Valerian

As the name of Cyprian must be familiar to all our readers and a name most famous in connection with the government and discipline of the church, it may be well to notice particularly the serene fortitude of this Father in the prospect of martyrdom.

He was born at Carthage about the year 200; but he was not converted till about 246. Though in mature age, he possessed all the freshness and ardour of youth. He had been distinguished as a teacher of rhetoric, he was now distinguished as an earnest devoted Christian. He was early promoted to the offices of deacon and presbyter, and in 248 he was elected bishop by the general desire of the people. His labours were interrupted by the persecution under Decius; but his life was preserved till the year 258. On the morning of the 13th of September, an officer with soldiers was sent by the proconsul to bring him into his presence. Cyprian then knew his end was near. With a ready mind and a cheerful countenance he went without delay. His trial was postponed for a day. The intelligence of his apprehension drew together the whole city. His own people lay all night in front of the officer's house with whom he was lodged.

In the morning he was led to the proconsul's palace surrounded by a great multitude of people and a strong guard of soldiers. After a short delay the proconsul appeared. "Art thou Thascius Cyprian, the bishop of so many impious men?" said the proconsul. "I am," answered Cyprian. "The most sacred Emperor commands thee to sacrifice." "I do not sacrifice," he replied. "Consider well," rejoined the proconsul. "Execute thy orders," answered Cyprian, "the case admits of no consideration."

The governor consulted with his council, and then delivered his sentence. "Thascius Cyprian, thou hast lived long in thy impiety, and assembled around thee many men involved in the same wicked conspiracy. Thou hast shown thyself an enemy alike to the gods and to the laws of the empire; the pious and sacred emperors have in vain endeavoured to recall thee to the worship of thy ancestors. Since then thou hast been the chief author and leader of these guilty practices, thou shalt be an example to those whom thou hast deluded to thy unlawful assemblies. Thou must expiate thy crime with thy blood." "God be praised!" answered Cyprian, and the crowd of his brethren exclaimed "Let us too be martyred with him." The bishop was carried into a neighbouring field and beheaded. It was remarkable that but a few days afterwards the proconsul died. And the Emperor Valerian, the following year, was defeated and taken prisoner by the Persians, who treated him with great and contemptuous cruelty - a calamity and disgrace without example in the annals of Rome.

The miserable death of many of the persecutors made a great impression on the public mind, and forced on many the conviction that the enemies of Christianity were the enemies of heaven. For about forty years after this outrage, the peace and prosperity of the church were not seriously interrupted; so that we may pass over these years for the present, and come to the final contest between paganism and Christianity.

The General State of Christianity

Before attempting a brief account of the persecution under Diocletian, it may be well to review the history and condition of the church as the final struggle drew near. But in order to form a correct judgment of the progress and state of Christianity at the end of three hundred years, we must consider the power of the enemies with which it had to contend.

1. **Judaism.** We have seen at some length, and especially in the life of St. Paul, that *Judaism* was the first great enemy of Christianity. It had to contend from its infancy with the strong prejudices of the believing, and with the bitter malice of the unbelieving, Jews. In its native region, and wherever it travelled, it was pursued by its unrelenting foe. And after the death of the apostles the church suffered much from yielding to Jewish pressure, and ultimately remodelling Christianity on the system of Judaism. The new wine was put into old bottles.

2. **Orientalism.** Towards the close of the first and the beginning of the second century, Christianity had to wend its way through the many and conflicting elements of eastern philosophy. Its first conflict was with *Simon Magus,* as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Though a Samaritan by birth, he is supposed to have studied the various religions of the East at Alexandria. On returning to his native country he advanced very high pretensions to superior knowledge and power; and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." From this notice of Simon we may learn what influence such men had over the minds of the ignorant and the superstitious, and also what a dreadful power of Satan the early church had to contend with in these evil workers. He assumed not merely the lofty title of "the great power of God," but that he combined in himself the other perfections of Deity. He is spoken of by writers generally as the head and father of the whole host of impostors and heretics.

After being so openly and shamefully defeated by Peter he is said to have left Samaria, and travelled through various countries, choosing especially those which the gospel had not reached. From this time he introduced the name of Christ into his system, and thus endeavoured to confound the gospel with his blasphemies, and confuse the minds of the people. As to his miracle and magic working, his marvellous theories about his own descent from heaven, and other emanations, we say nothing, only that they proved, especially in the East, a mighty hindrance to the progress of the gospel.

The successors of Simon, such as Cerinthus and Valentinus so systematised his theories as to become the founders of that form of **gnosticism** with which the church had to contend in the second century. The name implies *pretensions to some superior knowledge.* It is generally thought that St. Paul refers to this meaning of the word when warning his son Timothy against "science," or *knowledge,* "falsely so called."

Although it would be out of place in these "Short Papers" to attempt anything like an outline of this wide-spread **orientalism or gnosticism,** yet we must give our readers some idea of what it was. It proved for a time the most formidable opponent of Christianity. But as the facts and doctrines of the gospel prevailed, gnosticism declined.

Under the head of the gnostics may be included all those in the first ages of the church who incorporated into their philosophical systems the most obvious and suitable doctrines of both Judaism and Christianity. Thus gnosticism became a mixture of oriental philosophy, Judaism, and Christianity. By means of this Satanic confusion the beautiful simplicity of the gospel was destroyed, and for a long time, in many places, its real character was obscured. It was a deep-laid plan and a mighty effort of the enemy, not only to corrupt, but to undermine and subvert, the **gospel** altogether. No sooner had Christianity appeared than the gnostics began to adopt into their systems some of its sublimest doctrines. Judaism was deeply tinged with it before the christian era, probably from the captivity.

But gnosticism, we must remember, was not a corruption of Christianity, though the whole school of gnostics are called *heretics* by ecclesiastical writers. As to its origin, we must go back to the many religions of the East, such as Chaldean, Persian, Egyptian, and others. In our own day such philosophers would be viewed as infidels and utter aliens from the gospel of Christ; but in early times the title *heretic* was given to all who in any way whatever introduced the name of Christ into their philosophical systems. Hence it has been said, "If Mahomet had appeared in the second century, Justin Martyr or Irenaeus would have spoken of him as a heretic." At the same time we must own that the principles of the Greek philosophy, especially the Platonic, forced their way at a very early period into the church, corrupted the pure stream of truth, and threatened for a time to change the design and the effects of the gospel upon mankind.

Origen, who was born at Alexandria - the cradle of gnosticism - about the year 185, was the Father who gave form and completeness to the Alexandrian method of interpreting scripture. He distinguished in it a threefold sense - the literal, the moral, and the mystical - answering respectively to the body soul, and spirit in man. The literal sense, he held, might be understood by any attentive reader; the moral required higher intelligence; the mystical was only to be apprehended through the grace of the Holy Spirit, which was to be obtained by prayer.

It was the great object of this eminent teacher to harmonise Christianity with philosophy, this was the leaven of the Alexandrian school. He sought to gather up the fragments of truth scattered throughout other systems, and unite them in a christian scheme, so as to present the gospel in a form that would not offend the prejudices, but insure the conversion, of Jews, gnostics, and of cultivated heathen. These principles of interpretation, and this combination of Christianity with philosophy, led Origen and his followers into many grave and serious errors, both practical and doctrinal. He was a devoted, earnest, zealous Christian himself, and truly loved the Lord Jesus, but the tendency of his principles has been, from that day to this, to weaken faith in the definite character of truth, if not to pervert it altogether by means of spiritualizing and allegorising, which his system taught and allowed.

The Malignity of Matter was a first principle in all the sects of the gnostics, it pervaded all the religious systems of the East. This led to the wildest theories as to the formation and character of the material universe, and all corporeal substances. Thus it was, that persons believing their bodies to be intrinsically evil recommended abstinence and severe bodily mortifications, in order that the mind or spirit which was viewed as pure and divine, might enjoy greater liberty, and be able the better to contemplate heavenly things. Without saying more on this subject - which we do not much enjoy - the reader will see that the celibacy of the clergy in later years, and the whole system of asceticism and monasticism, had their origin, not in the scriptures, but in oriental philosophy.*

{*For minute details of the different sects, see *Dictionary of Christian Churches and Sects,* by Marsden. Robertson, vol. 1. 94. Neander, vol. 2, 387. Milman, vol. 2, 80. Mosheim, vol. 1,117.}

Paganism. Not only had the church to contend with Judaism and Orientalism, it also suffered from the outward hostility of *Paganism.* These were the three formidable powers of Satan with which he assailed the church during the first three hundred years of her history. In carrying out her Lord's high commission - "Teach all nations" .... "preach the gospel to every creature" - she had these enemies to face and overcome. But these could not have hindered her course, had she only walked in separation from the world and remained true and faithful to her heavenly and exalted Saviour. But alas! alas! what Judaism, Orientalism, and Paganism could not do, the allurements of the world accomplished. And this leads us to a close survey of the condition of the church when the great persecution broke out.

A Survey of the Condition of the Church

A.D. 303

Diocletian ascended the throne in 284. In 286 he associated with himself Maximian, as Augustus, and in 292 Galerius and Constantius were added to the number of the princes with the inferior title of Caesar. Thus, when the fourth century began, the Roman empire had four sovereigns. Two bore the title of Augustus; and two, the title of Caesar. Diocletian, though superstitious, indulged no hatred towards Christians. Constantius, the father of Constantine the Great was friendly to them. At first the face of christian affairs looked tolerably bright and happy, but the pagan priests were angry, and plotting mischief against the Christians. They saw in the wide-spreading triumphs of Christianity their own downfall. For fully fifty years the church had been very little disturbed by the secular power. During this period Christians had attained an unexampled degree of prosperity; but it was only outward: they had deeply declined from the purity and simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

Churches had arisen in most of the cities of the empire, and with some display of architectural splendour. Vestments and sacred vessels of silver and gold began to be used. Converts flocked in from all ranks of society; even the wife of the Emperor, and his daughter Valeria, married to Galerius, appear to have been among the number. Christians held high offices in the state, and in the imperial household. They occupied positions of distinction, and even of supreme authority, in the provinces and in the army. But alas! this long period of outward prosperity had produced its usual consequences. Faith and love decayed; pride and ambition crept in. Priestly domination began to exercise its usurped powers, and the bishop to assume the language and the authority of the vicegerent of God. Jealousies and dissensions distracted the peaceful communities, and disputes sometimes proceeded to open violence. The peace of fifty years had corrupted the whole Christian atmosphere: the lightning of Diocletian's rage was permitted of God to refine and purify it.

Such is the melancholy confession of the Christians themselves, who, according to the spirit of the times, considered the dangers and the afflictions to which they were exposed in the light of divine judgments.*

{*Milman, vol. 2. 261.}

The Acts of Diocletian and the Close of the Smyrnean Period

Already the church has passed through nine systematic persecutions. The first was under Nero, then Domitian Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Severus, Maximin, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian. And now the fearful moment has arrived when she must undergo the **Tenth,** according to the prophetic word of the Lord: "Ye shall have tribulation Ten days." And it is not a little remarkable that not only should there be exactly ten government persecutions, but that the last should have continued exactly Ten years. And, as we saw at an earlier part of the Smyrnean period, exactly Ten years elapsed from the beginning of the persecution, under Aurelius, in the East, till its close in the West. The christian student may trace other features of resemblance: we would rather suggest such features than press their acceptance upon others, though we surely believe they are foreshadowed in the Epistle to Smyrna.

The reign of **Diocletian** is one of great historical importance. First, it was rendered conspicuous by the introduction of a new system of imperial government. He virtually removed the capital from ancient Rome to Nicomedia, which he made the seat of his residence. There he maintained a court of eastern splendour, to which he invited men of learning and philosophy. But the philosophers who frequented his court, being all animated with extreme hatred against Christianity, used their influence with the Emperor to exterminate a religion too pure to suit their polluted minds. This led to the last and greatest persecution of the Christians. It is only with the latter we have to do. And as all histories of this period are gathered chiefly from the records of Eusebius and Lactantius, who wrote at this time, and witnessed many executions, we can do little more than select and transcribe from what has been already written, consulting the various authors already named.

The pagan priests and philosophers above referred to, not succeeding well in their artifices with Diocletian to make war against the Christians, made use of the other Emperor, Galerius, his son-in-law, to accomplish their purpose. This cruel man, impelled partly by his own inclination, partly by his mother, a most superstitious pagan, and partly by the priests, gave his father-in-law no rest until he had gained his point.

During the winter of the year 302-303 **Galerius** paid a visit to Diocletian at Nicomedia. His great object was to excite the old Emperor against the Christians. Diocletian for a time withstood his importunity. He was averse, from whatever motive, to the sanguinary measures proposed by his partner. But the mother of Galerius, the implacable enemy of the Christians, employed all her influence over her son to inflame his mind to immediate and active hostilities. Diocletian at length gave way, and a persecution was agreed to. but the lives of the Christians were to be spared. Previously to this, Galerius had taken care to remove from the army all who refused to sacrifice. Some were discharged, and some were sentenced to death.

The First Edict

About the 24th of February the first edict was issued. It ordained that all who refused to sacrifice should lose their offices, their property, their rank, and civil privileges; that slaves persisting in the profession of the gospel should be excluded from the hope of liberty, that Christians of all ranks should be destroyed, that religious meetings should be suppressed, and that the scriptures should be burnt. The attempt to **exterminate the scriptures** was a new feature in this persecution, and, no doubt, was suggested by the philosophers who frequented the palace. They were well aware that their own writings would have but little hold on the public mind if the scriptures and other sacred books were circulated. Immediately these measures were resolved upon the church of Nicomedia was attacked, the sacred books were burnt, and the building entirely demolished in a few hours. Throughout the empire the churches of the Christians were to be levelled to the ground, and the sacred books were to be delivered to the imperial officers. Many Christians who refused to give up the scriptures were put to death, while those who gave them up to be burnt were considered by the church as traitors to Christ, and afterwards caused great trouble in the exercise of discipline towards them.*

{*It may interest the reader to know that no MSS of the New Testament are extant older than the middle of the fourth century. One fact which accounts for this in great measure is the destruction of the christian writings, the scriptures especially, in the reign of Diocletian during the earlier part of that century. Under Constantine it is known that special efforts were made to have correct copies made, of which the celebrated critic Tischendorf believes the Sinai MS to be one.}

No sooner had this cruel edict been affixed in the accustomed place than a Christian of noble rank tore it down. His indignation at injustice so flagrant hurried him into an act of inconsiderate zeal - into a violation of that precept of the gospel which enjoins respect towards all in authority. Welcome was the occasion thus furnished to condemn a Christian of high station to death. He was burnt alive at a slow fire, and bore his sufferings with a dignified composure which astonished and mortified his executioners. The persecution was now begun. The first step against the Christians having been taken, the second did not linger.

Not long after the publication of the edict, a fire broke out in the palace of Nicomedia, which spread almost to the chamber of the Emperor. The origin of the fire appears to be unknown, but of course, the guilt was charged on the Christians. Diocletian believed it. He was alarmed and incensed. Multitudes were thrown into prison, without discrimination of those who were or were not liable to suspicion, the most cruel tortures were resorted to for the purpose of extorting a confession; but in vain. Many were burnt to death, beheaded and drowned. About fourteen days after, a second fire broke out in the palace. It now became evident that it was the work of an incendiary. The heathen again accused the Christians, and loudly cried for vengeance, but as no proof could ever be found that the Christians had any hand in any way with these fatal conflagrations, a strong, and, we believe, truthful suspicion rested on the Emperor Galerius himself. His great object from the first was to incriminate the Christians, and alarm Diocletian by his own more violent measures. As if fully aware of the effect of these events on the dark, timid, and superstitious mind of the old Emperor, he immediately left Nicomedia, pretending that he could not consider his person safe within the city.

But the end was gained, and that to the utmost extent which even Galerius or his pagan mother could have desired. Diocletian, now thoroughly aroused, raged ferociously against all sorts of men and women who bore the christian name. He compelled his wife Prisca, and his daughter Valeria, to offer sacrifice. Officers of the household, of the highest rank and nobility, and all the inmates of the palace, were exposed to the most cruel tortures, by the order, and even in the presence, of Diocletian himself. The names of some of his ministers of state have been handed down who preferred the riches of Christ to all the grandeur of his palace. One of the chamberlains was brought before the Emperor and was tortured with great severity, because he refused to sacrifice. As if to make an example of him to the others, a mixture of salt and vinegar was poured on his open wounds, but it was all to no purpose. He confessed his faith in Christ as the only Saviour, and would own no other God. He was then gradually burnt to death. Dorotheus, Gorgonius, and Andreas, eunuchs who served in the palace were put to death. Anthimus, the bishop of Nicomedia, was beheaded. Many were executed, many were burnt alive, but it became tedious to destroy men singly, and large fires were made to burn many together, others were rowed into the midst of the lake, and thrown into the water with stones fastened to their necks.

From **Nicomedia,** the centre of the persecution, the imperial orders were despatched, requiring the cooperation of the other emperors in the restoration of the dignity of the ancient religion, and the entire suppression of Christianity. Thus the persecution raged throughout the whole Roman world, excepting Gaul. There the mild Constantius ruled, and, though he made a show of concurring in the measure of his colleagues, by the demolition of the churches, he abstained from all violence against the persons of the Christians. Though not himself a decided Christian, he was naturally humane, and evidently a friend to Christianity and its professors. He presided over the government of Gaul, Britain, and Spain. But the fierce temper of Maximian, and the savage cruelty of Galerius, only awaited the signal to carry into affect the orders from Nicomedia. And now the three monsters raged, in the full force of the civil power against the defenceless and inoffending followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

"Grace begun shall end in glory;

Jesus, He the victory won

In His own triumphant story

Is the record of our own."

The Second Edict

Not long after the first edict had been carried into execution throughout the empire, rumours of insurrections in Armenia and Syria, regions densely peopled with Christians, reached the Emperor's ears. These troubles were falsely attributed to the Christians, and afforded a pretext for a second edict. It was intimated that the clergy, as leaders of the Christians, were particularly liable to suspicion on this occasion, and the edict directed that all of the clerical order should be seized and thrown into prison. Thus in a short time prisons were filled with bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

The Third Edict

A third edict was immediately issued prohibiting the liberation of any of the clergy, unless they consented to offer sacrifice. They were declared enemies of the State; and wherever a hostile prefect chose to exercise his boundless authority, they were crowded into prisons intended only for the basest criminals. The edict provided that such of the prisoners as were willing to offer sacrifice to the gods should be set free, and that the rest should be compelled by tortures and punishments. Great multitudes of the most devout godly, and venerable in the church, either suffered capitally or were sent to the mines. The Emperor vainly thought, that if the bishops and teachers were once overcome, the churches would soon follow their example. But finding that the most humiliating defeat was the result of his measures, he was goaded on by the united influence of Galerius, the philosophers, and the pagan priesthood, to issue another and a still more rigorous edict.

The Fourth Edict

By a fourth edict the orders which applied only to the clergy were now to be extended to the whole body of Christians. The magistrates were directed to make free use of torture for forcing *all* Christians - men, women, and children - into the worship of the gods. Diocletian and his colleagues were now committed to the desperate but unequal contest. The powers of darkness - the whole Roman empire - stood, *armed,* determined, pledged, to the defence of ancient polytheism, and to the **complete extermination of the christian name.** To retreat would be the confession of weakness, to be successful the adversary must be exterminated; as to victory there could be none, for the Christians made no resistance, Historically, it was the final and fearful struggle between paganism and Christianity; the contest was now at its height, and drawing to a crisis.

Public proclamation was made through the streets of the cities, that men, women, and children, were all to repair to the temples of the gods. All must undergo the fiery ordeal - sacrifice or die. Every individual was summoned by name from lists previously made out. At the city gates all were subjected to rigid examination, and such as were found to be Christians were immediately secured

Details of the sufferings and martyrdoms that followed would fill volumes. As edict followed edict, in rapid succession and in wrathful severity, the spirit of martyrdom revived; it rose higher and higher, until men and women, in place of being seized and dragged to the funeral piles, leaped into the burning flames, as if ascending to heaven in a chariot of fire. Whole families were put to various kinds of death; some by fire, others by water, after enduring severe tortures, some perished by famine, others by crucifixion, and some were fastened with their heads downwards, and preserved alive, that they might die a lingering death. In some places as many as ten, twenty, sixty, and even a hundred men and women, with their little ones, were martyred by various torments in one day.*

{*For the names and particulars of many of the sufferers, see Milner, vol. 1, pp. 473-506.}

In almost every part of the Roman world such scenes of pitiless barbarity continued with more or less severity for the long period of ten years. Constantius alone, of all the emperors, contrived to shelter the Christians in the west, especially in Gaul, where he resided. But in all other places they were given up to all sorts of cruelties and injuries without the liberty to appeal to the authorities, and without the smallest protection from the State. Free leave was given to the heathen populace to practise all sorts of excesses against the Christians. Under these circumstances the reader may easily imagine what they were constantly exposed to both in their persons and estates. Each one felt sure of never being called to account for any violence he might be guilty of towards the Christians. But the sufferings of the men, however great, seemed little compared with those of the women. The fear of exposure and violence was more dreaded than mere death.

Take one example. **"A certain holy and devout female,"** says Eusebius, "admirable for her virtue, and illustrious above all in Antioch for her wealth, family, and reputation had educated her two daughters - now in the bloom of life noted for their beauty - in the principles of piety. Their concealment was traced, and they were caught in the toils of the soldiery. The mother, being at a loss for herself and her daughters, knowing what was before them, suggested that it was better to die, betaking themselves to the aid of Christ, than fall into the hands of the brutal soldiers. After this, all agreeing to the same thing, and having requested the guards for a little time, they cast themselves into the flowing river to escape a greater evil." Although this act cannot be fully justified, it must be judged with many considerations. They were driven to despair. And sure we are that the Lord knows how to forgive all that is wrong in the action, and to give us full credit for all that is right in our motives.

For a moment the persecutors vainly imagined that they would triumph over the downfall of Christianity. Pillars were raised, and **medals were struck,** to the honour of Diocletian and Galerius, for having extinguished the christian superstition, and for restoring the worship of the gods. But He who sits in heaven was at that very moment overruling the very wrath of these men for the complete deliverance and triumph of His people, and the acknowledged defeat and downfall of their enemies. They could martyr Christians, demolish churches, and burn books; but the living springs of Christianity were beyond their reach.

The Hand of the Lord in Judgment

Great and important changes began to take place in the sovereignty of the empire. But the Head of the church watched over everything. He had limited and defined the period of her sufferings, and neither the hosts of hell, nor the legions of Rome, could extend these one hour. The enemies of the Christians were smitten with the direst calamities. God appeared to be making requisition for blood. Galerius, the real author of the persecution, in the eighteenth year of his reign and the eighth of the persecution, lay expiring of a most loathsome malady. Like Herod Agrippa and Philip II of Spain, he was "eaten of worms." Physicians were sought for oracles were consulted, but all in vain, the remedies applied only aggravated the virulence of the disease. The whole palace was so infected from the nature of his affliction, that he was deserted by all his friends. The agonies which he suffered forced from him the cry for mercy, and also an earnest request to the Christians to intercede for the suffering Emperor in their supplications to their God.

From his dying bed he issued an edict, which, while it condescended to apologise for the past severities against the Christians, under the specious plea of regard for the public welfare and unity of the state, admitted to the fullest extent the total failure of the severe measures for the suppression of Christianity; and provided for the free and public exercise of the christian religion. A few days after the promulgation of the edict Galerius expired. For about six months the merciful orders of this edict were acted upon, and great numbers were liberated from the prisons and the mines; but, alas! bearing the marks of bodily torture only short of death. This brief cessation of the persecution showed at once its fearful character and alarming extent.

But **Maximin,** who succeeded Galerius in the government of Asia, sought to revive the pagan religion in all its original splendour, and the suppression of Christianity, with renewed and relentless cruelty. He commanded that all the officers of his government, from the highest to the lowest both in the civil and military service that all free men and women, all slaves, and even little children, should sacrifice and even partake of what was offered at heathen altars. All vegetables and provisions in the market were to be sprinkled with the water or the wine which had been used in the sacrifices, that the Christians might thus be forced into contact with idolatrous offerings.

New tortures were invented, and fresh streams of christian blood flowed in all the provinces of the Roman empire, with the exception of Gaul. But the hand of the Lord was again laid heavily both on the empire and on the Emperor. Every kind of calamity prevailed. Tyranny, war, pestilence, and famine depopulated the Asiatic provinces. Throughout the dominions of Maximin the summer rains did not fall; a famine desolated the whole East, many opulent families were reduced to beggary, and others sold their children as slaves. The famine produced its usual accompaniment pestilence. Boils broke out all over the bodies of those who were seized with the malady, but especially about the eyes, so that multitudes became helplessly and incurably blind. All hearts failed, and all who were able fled from the infected houses; so that myriads were left to perish in a state of absolute desertion. The Christians, moved by the love of God in their hearts, now came forward to do the kind offices of humanity and mercy. They attended the living, and decently buried the dead. Fear fell upon all mankind. The heathen concluded their calamities to be the vengeance of heaven for persecuting its favoured people.

Maximin was alarmed, and endeavoured, when too late, to retrace his steps. He issued an edict, avowing the principles of toleration, and commanding the suspension of all violent measures against the Christians, and recommending only mild and persuasive means to win back these apostates to the religion of their forefathers. Having been defeated in battle by Licinius, he turned his rage against the pagan priests. He charged them with having deceived him with false hopes of victory over Licinius, and of universal empire in the East, and now revenged his disappointment by a promiscuous massacre of all the pagan priests within his power. His last imperial act was the promulgation of another edict still more favourable to the Christians, in which he proclaimed an unrestricted liberty of conscience, and restored the confiscated property of their churches. But death came and closed the dark catalogue of his crimes, and the dark line of persecuting emperors, who died of the most excruciating torments, and under the visible hand of divine judgment. Many names, of great celebrity both for station and character, are among the martyrs of this period, and many thousands, unknown and unnoticed on earth but whose record is on high, and whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Thus closed the most memorable of all the attacks of the powers of darkness on the christian church, and thus closed the last hope of paganism to maintain itself by the authority of the government. The account of the most violent, most varied, most prolonged, and most systematic attempt to exterminate the gospel ever known, well deserves the space we have given to it, so that we offer no apology for its length. We have seen the arm of the Lord lifted up in a gracious but solemn manner to chastise and purify His church, to demonstrate the imperishable truth of Christianity, and to cover with everlasting shame and confusion her daring but impotent foes. Like Moses, we may exclaim, "Behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." Thus we see why the bush was not burned, or Israel in Egypt not consumed, or the church in this world not exterminated: God was in the midst of the bush He is in the midst of His church - it is the habitation of God through the Spirit. Besides, Christ hath plainly said, referring to Himself in His risen power and glory, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Ex. 3; Matt. 16)

10 Constantine

Chapter 10

Constantine

The reign of **Constantine the Great** forms a most important epoch in the history of the church. Both his father Constantius and his mother Helena were religiously inclined, and always favourable to the Christians. Some years of Constantine's youth were spent at the court of Diocletian and Galerius in the character of a hostage. He witnessed the publication of the persecuting edict at **Nicomedia in 303,** and the horrors which followed. Having effected his escape, he joined his father in Britain. In 306 Constantius died at York. He had nominated as his successor his son Constantine, who was accordingly saluted **Augustus** by the army. He continued and extended the toleration which his father had bestowed on the Christians.

There were now **six pretenders** to the sovereignty of the empire - Galerius, Licinius, Maximian, Maxentius, Maximin and Constantine. A scene of contention followed, scarcely paralleled in the annals of Rome. Among these rivals, Constantine possessed a decided superiority in prudence and abilities, both military and political. In the year 312 Constantine entered Rome victorious. In 313 a new edict was issued, by which the persecuting edicts of Diocletian were repealed, the Christians encouraged, their teachers honoured, and the professors of Christianity advanced to places of trust and influence in the state. This great change in the history of the church introduces us to

The Pergamos Period A.D. 313-606

The Epistle to the church in Pergamos exactly describes, we believe, the state of things in Constantine's time. But we will quote the address entire for the convenience of our readers, and then compare it: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein **Antipas** was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold **the doctrine of Balaam,** who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold **the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes,** which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." (Rev 2:12-17)

In Ephesus we see the first point of departure, leaving their "first love" - the heart slipping away from Christ, and from the enjoyment of His love. In **Smyrna** the Lord allowed the saints to be cast into the furnace, that the progress of declension might be stayed. They were persecuted by the heathen. By means of these trials Christianity revived, the gold was purified, the saints held fast the name and the faith of Christ. Thus was Satan defeated; and the Lord so ruled that the emperors, one after the other, in the most humiliating and mortifying circumstances, publicly confessed their defeat. But in Pergamos the enemy changes his tactics. In place of persecution from without, there is seduction from within. Under Diocletian he was **the roaring lion,** under Constantine he is **the deceiving serpent.** Pergamos is the scene of Satan's flattering power; he is within the church. **Nicolaitanism** is the corruption of grace - the flesh acting in the church of God. In Smyrna he is outside as an adversary, in Pergamos he is inside as a seducer. This was exactly what took place under Constantine.

Historically, it was when the violence of persecution had spent itself - when men had grown weary of their own rage, and when they saw that their efforts were to no purpose that the sufferers ceased to care for the things of the world, and became more devoted to Christianity; while even the numbers of the Christians seemed to increase; Satan tries another and an old artifice, once so successful against Israel. (Num. 25) When he could not obtain the Lord's permission to curse His people Israel, he allured them to their ruin, by unlawful alliances with the daughters of Moab. As a false prophet he was now in the church at Pergamos, seducing the saints into unlawful alliance with the world - the place of his throne and authority. The world ceases to persecute; great advantages are held out to Christians by the civil establishment of Christianity; Constantine professes to be converted, and ascribes his triumphs to the virtues of the cross. The snare alas! is successful, the church is flattered by his patronage, shakes hands with the world, and sinks into its position **- "even where Satan's seat is."** All was now lost **as to her** corporate and proper testimony, and **the way to popery laid open.** Every worldly advantage was no doubt gained; but alas! alas! it was at the cost of the honour and glory of her heavenly Lord and Saviour.

The church, we must remember, is an *outcalling* (Act 15:14) - called out from Jew and Gentile to witness that she was not of this world, but of heaven - that she is united to a glorified Christ, and not of this world, even as *He is* not of this world. So He says Himself, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (John 17)

The Christian's mission is on the same principle and of the same character as was Christ's. "As My Father hath sent Me," He says, *"even so send I you."* They were sent, as it were, from heaven to the world by the blessed Lord, to do His will, to care for His glory, and to return home when their work was done. Thus the Christian should be the *heavenly* witness of the truth of God, especially of such truths as man's total ruin, and God's love in Christ to a perishing world; and thereby should seek to gather souls out of the world, that they may be saved from the wrath to come. But when we lose sight of our high calling, and associate with the world as if we belonged to it, we become false witnesses; we do the world a great injury, and Christ a great dishonour. This, we shall see by-and-by, was what the church did as to her *corporate* position and action. Doubtless there were many cases of individual faithfulness in the midst of the general declension. The Lord Himself speaks of His faithful **Antipas** who was martyred. Heaven takes special notice of individual faithfulness, and remembers the faithful by name.

But the eye and the heart of the Lord had followed His poor faithless church to where she had fallen. "I know thy works," He says, "and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." What solemn words are these, and from the lips of her dishonoured Lord! Nothing was hidden from His eye. I *know,* He says; I have seen what has happened. But what alas! had now taken place? Why, the church as a body had accepted the Emperor's terms, was now **united to the State,** and was dwelling in the world. This was Babylon spiritually - committing fornication with the kings of the earth. But He who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks judges her action and her condition. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges." He takes the place of one who was armed with the divine sword - with the all-searching, piercing, power of the word of God. The sword is the symbol of that by which questions are settled; whether it be the carnal sword of the nations of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

It has been often said, that there is always a marked and instructive connection between the way in which Christ presents Himself, and the state of the church which He is addressing. This is most true in the present address. The word of God evidently had lost its right place in the assembly of His saints; it was no longer the supreme authority in divine things. But the Lord Jesus takes care to show that it had not lost its power, or place, or authority in His hands. "Repent " He says, "or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth." He does not say, observe, I will fight against *thee* but against *them. As* exercising discipline in the church the Lord acts with discrimination and with mercy. The public position of the church was now a false one. There was open association with the prince of this world, in place of faithfulness to Christ, the Prince of heaven. But he that had an ear to hear what the Spirit said unto the church, had secret fellowship with Him who sustains the faithful soul with the hidden manna. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of **the hidden manna,** and will give him **a white stone,** and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The general defection would, no doubt isolate the faithful few - a remnant. To them the promise is given.

The manna, as we learn from John 6, represents Christ Himself, as He came down from heaven to give life to our souls. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." As the lowly One who took the place of humiliation in this world, He is our provision for the daily walk through the wilderness. The manna was to be gathered daily, fresh from the dewdrops every morning. The *"hidden* manna" refers to **the golden pot of manna** that was laid up in the ark as a memorial before the Lord. It is the blessed remembrance of Christ who was the humbled, suffering Man in this world, and who is the eternal delight of God, and of the faithful in heaven. Not only has the true-hearted saint communion with Christ as exalted on high, but with Him as the once humbled Jesus here below. But this cannot be if we are listening to the flatteries and accepting the favours of the world. Our only strength against the spirit of the world is walking with a rejected Christ, and feeding on Him as our portion even now. Our high privilege is to eat, not of the manna only, but of the *"hidden manna."* But who can speak of the blessedness of such communion, or of the loss of those who slip away in heart from Christ, and settle down in worldliness?

The "white stone" is a secret mark of the Lord's special favour. As the promise is given in the address to Pergamos it may mean the expression of Christ's approval of the way the **"overcomers"** witnessed and suffered for Him, when so many were led away by the seductions of Satan. It gives the general idea of a secret pledge of entire approbation. But it is difficult to explain. The heart may enter into its blessedness and yet feel unable to describe it. Happy they who so know it for themselves. There are joys which are common to all, but there is a joy, a special joy, which will be our own peculiar joy in Christ, and that for ever. This will be true of all. "And in the stone **a new name written,** which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." What an unknown source of calm repose, sweet peace, true contentment, and divine strength, we find in the "white stone," and in the "new name," written by His own hand. Others may misunderstand us, many may think us wrong, but He knows all, and the heart can afford to be quiet, whatever may be passing around. At the same time we must judge everything by the word of God - the sharp sword with two edges - even as we ourselves are judged.

"There on the hidden bread

Of Christ - once humbled here -

God's treasured store - for ever fed,

His love my soul shall cheer.

Called by that secret name

Of undisclosed delight

Blest answer to reproach and shame -

Graved on the stone of white."

Having thus briefly glanced at the Epistle to Pergamos, we shall be better able to understand the mind of the Lord as to the conduct of Christians under the reign of Constantine. The professing church and the world had joined hands, and were now enjoying themselves together. As the world could not rise to the high level of the church, she must fall to the low level of the world. This was exactly what took place. Nevertheless the fair form of Christianity was maintained, and there were doubtless many who held fast the faith and the name of Jesus. We now return to the conversion and history of Constantine the Great.

The Conversion of Constantine

A.D. 312

The great event in the religious history of Constantine took place in 312. He was marching from France to Italy against **Maxentius.** The approaching contest was one of immense moment. It was likely either to be his ruin or to raise him to the highest pinnacle of power. He was in deep thought. It was known that Maxentius was making great preparations for the struggle, by enlarging his army, and by scrupulously attending to all the customary ceremonies of paganism. He consulted with great pains the heathen oracles, and relied for success on the agency of supernatural powers.

Constantine, though a wise and virtuous heathen, was a heathen still. He knew what he had to give battle to; and while considering to what god he should betake himself for protection and success, he thought on the ways of his father **the Emperor of the West.** He remembered that he prayed to the God of the Christians and had always been prosperous, while the emperors who persecuted the Christians had been visited with divine justice. He resolved therefore to forsake the service of idols, and to ask the aid of the one true God in heaven. He prayed that God would make Himself known to him, and that He would make him victorious over Maxentius, notwithstanding all his magical arts and superstitious rites.

While engaged in such thoughts, Constantine imagined that he saw, soon after mid-day, some extraordinary appearance in the heavens. It assumed the sign of a glittering cross and above it the inscription, **"By This Conquer."** The Emperor and the whole army, who were witnesses of this wonderful sight, stood awestruck. But while the Emperor was gravely meditating on what the vision could signify night came on, and he fell asleep. He dreamed that the Saviour appeared to him, bearing in His hand the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and directed him to cause a banner to be made after the same pattern, and to use it as his standard in war, assuring him that while he did so he would be victorious. Constantine, on awakening, described what had been shown to him while asleep, and resolved to adopt the sign of the cross as his imperial standard.

The Banner of the Cross

According to **Eusebius,** the workers in gold and precious stones were immediately sent for, and received their orders from the lips of Constantine. Eusebius had seen the standard and gives a long account of it. As the greatest interest has been thrown around this relic of antiquity by all ecclesiastical writers, we will give our readers a brief but minute sketch of it.

The shaft, or perpendicular beam, was long, and overlaid with gold. On its top was a crown, composed of gold and precious stones, with the engraving of the sacred symbol of the cross and the first letters of the Saviour's name, or the Greek letter X intersected with the letter P.* Just under this crown was a likeness of the Emperor in gold, and below that a cross-piece of wood, from which hung a square flag of purple cloth, embroidered and covered with precious stones. It was called the **Labarum.** This resplendent standard was borne at the head of the imperial armies, and guarded by fifty chosen men, who were supposed to be invulnerable from its virtues.

{*(Christos), Christ.}

Constantine now sent for christian teachers, of whom he inquired concerning the God that appeared to him, and the import of the symbol of the cross. This gave them an opportunity of directing his mind to the word of God, and of instructing him in the knowledge of Jesus and of His death on the cross. From that time the Emperor declared himself a convert to Christianity. The superstitious hopes and confidence of Constantine and his army were now raised to the highest pitch. The decisive battle was fought at **the Milvian bridge.** Constantine gained a signal victory over his enemy, though his troops did not number one-fourth of the troops of Maxentius.

The Edict of Constantine and Licinius

A.D. 313

The victorious Emperor paid a short visit to Rome. Amongst other things which he did, he caused to be erected in the forum a statue of himself, holding in his right hand a standard in the shape of a cross, with the following inscription: "By this salutary sign, the true symbol of valour, I freed your city from the yoke of the tyrant." Maxentius was found in the Tiber the morning after the battle. The Emperor evidently felt that he was indebted to the God of the Christians and to the sacred symbol of the cross for his victories. And this, we dare say, was the extent of his Christianity at that time. As a *man* he had not felt his need of it, if ever he did, as a warrior he embraced it earnestly. Afterwards, as a statesman, he owned and valued Christianity; but God only knows whether as a lost sinner he ever embraced the Saviour. It is difficult for princes to be Christians.

Constantine now proceeded towards **Illyricum** to meet **Licinius,** with whom he had formed a secret alliance before going to meet Maxentius. The two emperors met at **Milan,** where their alliance was ratified by the marriage of Licinius to Constantine's daughter. It was during this quiet moment that Constantine prevailed upon Licinius to consent to the repeal of the persecuting edicts of Diocletian, and the issuing of a new edict of complete toleration. This being agreed upon, a public edict, in the joint names of Constantine and Licinius, was issued at **Milan, A.D. 313,** in favour of the Christians, and may be considered as the great charter of their liberties. Full and unlimited toleration was granted to them; their churches and property were restored without compensation; and, outwardly, Christianity flourished.

But peace between the emperors, which seemed to be established on a firm foundation, was soon interrupted. Jealousy, love of power, and ambition for absolute sovereignty in the Roman empire, would not allow them to remain long in peace. A war broke out in the year 314, but Licinius was defeated with heavy losses, both in men and territory. A peace was again concluded, which lasted about nine years. Another war became unavoidable, and once more it assumed the form of a religious strife between the rival emperors Licinius attached the pagan priesthood to his cause, and persecuted the Christians. Many of the bishops he put to death, knowing they were special favourites at the court of his rival. Both parties now made preparations for a contest the issue of which should be final. Licinius, before proceeding to war, sacrificed to the gods, and extolled them in a public oration. Constantine, on the other hand, relied upon the God whose symbol accompanied his army. The two hostile armies met. The battle was fierce, obstinate, and sanguinary. Licinius was no mean rival, but the commanding genius, activity, and courage of Constantine prevailed. The victory was complete. Licinius survived his defeat only about a year. He died, or rather was privately killed, in 326. Constantine had now reached the height of his ambition. He was sole master - absolute sovereign of the Roman empire, and continued so until his death in 337. For a description of the political and military career of this great prince we must refer the reader to civil history; we will briefly glance at his religious course.

The Religious History of Constantine

All that we know of the religion of Constantine up to the period of his conversion, so-called, would imply that he was outwardly, if not zealously, a pagan. Eusebius himself admits that he was at this time in doubt which religion he would embrace. Policy, superstition, hypocrisy, divine inspiration, have been in turn assigned as the sole or the predominant influence, which decided his future religious history. But it would surely be unjust to suppose that his profession of Christianity, and his public declarations in its favour, amounted to nothing more than deliberate and intentional hypocrisy. Both his religious and ecclesiastical course admit of a far higher and more natural explanation. Neither could we believe that there was anything approaching to divine inspiration, either in his midday vision or in his midnight dream. There may have been some unusual appearance about the sun or in the clouds, which imagination converted into a miraculous sign of the cross; and the other appearance may have been the exaggeration of a dream from his highly excited state: but the whole story may now be considered as a fable, full of flattery to the great Emperor, and very gratifying to his great admirer and panegyrist, Eusebius. Few will now be found to give it a place among the authentic records of history.

Policy and superstition, we have no doubt, had a great deal to do with the change that was wrought in the mind of Constantine. From his youth he had witnessed the persecution of the Christians and must have observed a vitality in their religion which rose above the power of their persecutors, and survived the downfall of all other systems. He had seen one emperor after another, who had been the open enemies of Christianity, die the most fearful death. His father only - of all the emperors - the protector of Christianity during the long persecution, had gone down to an honoured and peaceful grave. Facts so striking could not fail to influence the superstitious mind of Constantine. Besides, he might appreciate with political sagacity the *moral* influence of Christianity, its tendency to enforce peaceful obedience to civil government; and the immense hold which it obviously had on the mind of something like the one-half of his empire.

The Emperor's motives, however, are no part of our history, and need not occupy us longer. But, in order to have this most important period or great turning-point in church history clearly before our minds, it may be well to look at the state of the church as he found it in 313, and as he left it in 337.

The Church as Constantine Found Her

Up to this time the church had been perfectly free and independent of the state. She had a divine constitution direct from heaven - and outside the world. She made her way, not by state patronage, but by divine power, against every hostile influence. In place of receiving support from the civil government, she had been persecuted from the first as a foreign foe, as an obstinate and pestilent superstition. **Ten times** the devil had been permitted to stir up against her the whole Roman world, which ten times had to confess weakness and defeat. Had she kept in mind the day of her espousals, and the love of Him who says, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church," she never would have accepted the protection of Constantine at the cost of her fidelity to Christ. But the church as a whole was now much mixed up with the world, and far away from her first love.

We have already seen, that since the days of the apostles there had been a growing love of the world, and of outward display. This tendency, so natural to us all, the Lord in love checked by allowing Satan to persecute. But in place of the church accepting the trial as chastening from the hand of the Lord, and owning her worldliness, she grew weary of the place and path of rejection, and thinking she might still please and serve the Lord, and walk in the sunshine of the world. This Satanic delusion was accomplished by Constantine, though he knew not what he was doing. "Whatever the motives of his conversion," says Milman, "Constantine, no doubt, adopted a wise and judicious policy, in securing the alliance, rather than continuing the strife, with an adversary which divided the wealth, the intellect, if not the property and the population of the empire."

The Union of the Church and State

In the month of March 313, the banns of the unholy alliance between the Church and the State were published at Milan. The celebrated edict of that date conferred on the Christians the fullest toleration, and led the way to the legal establishment of Christianity, and to its ascendancy over all other religions. This was publicly displayed on the new imperial standard **- the Labarum.** Besides the initials of Christ,* and the symbol of His cross, there was also an image of the Emperor in gold. These signs, or mottoes, were intended as objects of worship for both heathen and christian soldiers and to animate them to enthusiasm in the day of battle. Thus he who is called the great christian Emperor **publicly united Christianity to idolatry.**

{*The letters usually employed to represent the Saviour's name are, LH.S., which mean *Jesu Hominum Salvator*-Jesus the Saviour of men.}

But if we have read the mind of Constantine aright, we should have no hesitation in saying, that at this time he was a heathen in heart, and a Christian only from military motives. It was only as a superstitious soldier that he had embraced Christianity. At that moment he was ready to welcome the assistance of any tutelar divinity in his struggles for universal empire. We can see no trace of Christianity, far less any trace of the zeal of a new convert: but we can easily trace the old superstition of heathenism in the new dress of Christianity. Were it not for such considerations, the Labarum would have been the display of the most daring dishonour to the blessed Lord. But it was done in ignorance. He was also anxious to meet the mind of his heathen soldiers and subjects, and to dissipate their fears as to the safety of their old religion.

The earlier edicts of Constantine, though in their effects favourable to Christianity, were given in such cautions terms as not to interfere with the rights and liberties of paganism. But the Christians gradually grew in his favour, and his acts of kindness and liberality spoke louder than edicts. He not only restored to them the civil and religious rights of which they had been deprived, the churches and estates which had been publicly confiscated in the Diocletian persecution; but enabled them, by his own munificent gifts, to build many new places for their assemblies. He showed great favour to the bishops and had them constantly about him in the palace, on his journeys, and in his wars. He also showed his great respect for the Christians, by committing the education of is son **Crispus** to the celebrated **Lactantius, a Christian.** But with all this royal patronage he assumed a supremacy over the affairs of the church. He appeared in the synods of the bishops without his guards, mingled in their debates, and controlled the settlement of religious questions. From this time forward **the term Catholic** was invariably applied, in all official documents, to the church.

Constantine as Head of the Church and High Priest of the Heathen

After the total defeat of Licinius already referred to, the whole Roman world was reunited under the sceptre of Constantine. In his proclamation issued to his new subjects in the East, he declares himself to be the instrument of God for spreading the true faith, and that God had given him the victory over all the powers of darkness, in order that His own worship by his means might be universally established. "Freedom," he says, in a letter to Eusebius, "being once more restored, and, by the providence of the great God and my own ministry, that dragon driven from the ministration of the State, I trust that the divine power has become manifest to all, and that they, who through fear or unbelief have fallen into many crimes, will come to the knowledge of the true God, and to the right and true ordering of their lives." Constantine now took his place more openly to the whole world as the head of the church; but at the same time retained the office of the **Pontifex Maximus -** the high priest of the heathen; this he never gave up, and he died head of the church and high priest of the heathen.

This unholy alliance, or unhallowed mixture of which we have spoken, and which is referred to and mourned over in the address to Pergamos, meets us at every step in the history of this great historical prince. But having given some explanation of the address, we must leave the reader to compare the truth and the history in a godly way. What a mercy to have such a guide in studying this remarkable period in the history of the church!

Among the first acts of the now sole Emperor of the world was **the repeal of all the edicts of Licinius against the Christians.** He released all prisoners from the dungeon or the mine, or the servile and humiliating occupation to which they had been contemptuously condemned. All who had been deprived of their rank in the army or in the civil service he restored, and restitution was made for the property of which they had been despoiled. He issued an edict addressed to all his subjects, advising them to embrace the gospel, but pressed none; he wished it to be a matter of conviction. He endeavoured, however, to render it attractive by bestowing places and honours on proselytes of the higher classes and donations on the poor- a course which, as Eusebius acknowledges, produced a great amount of hypocrisy and pretended conversion. He ordered that churches should be everywhere built, of a size sufficient to accommodate the whole population. He forbade the erection of statues of the gods, and would not allow his own statue to be set up in the temples. All state sacrifices were forbidden, and in many ways he exerted himself for the elevation of Christianity and the suppression of heathenism.

The Effects of Royal Favour

We now come to the consideration of that which has been the great historical problem to men of all creeds, nations and passions; namely, whether the State which seeks to advance Christianity by the worldly means at its command, or the earthly power which opposes it by legal violence, does the greater injury to the church and people of God on the earth? Much may be said, we admit, as to the great blessing of impartial toleration, and of the great advantages to society of the legal suppression of all wicked customs; but court favour has always been ruinous to the true prosperity of the church of God. It is a great mercy to be unmolested, but it is a greater mercy to be unpatronised by princes. The true character of Christians is that of **strangers and pilgrims** in this world. The possession of Christ, and of Christ in heaven has changed everything on earth to Christians. They belong to heaven, they are strangers on earth. They are the servants of Christ *in* the world, though not *of* it. **Heaven is their home;** here they have no continuing city. What has the church to expect from a world that crucified her Lord? or rather, what would she accept from it? Her true portion here is suffering and rejection; as the apostle says, "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." The Lord may spare His people, but if trial should come, we are not to think that some strange thing has happened to us. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." (Rom 8:36; Joh 16:33)

The Witness of History

But even from history, we think it can be proved that it was better for Christianity when Christians were suffering at the stake for Christ, than when they were feasted in kings' palaces and covered with royal favours. By way of illustrating our question, we will give our readers a page from the history of the great persecution under Diocletian, and one from the brightest days of Constantine; and we will quote both from Milman, late Dean of St. Paul's, who will not be suspected of unfairness to the clergy. We speak of the faithful only. It is well-known that in the later persecutions, when the assemblies of Christians had greatly increased, many proved unfaithful in the day of trial, though these were comparatively few, and many of them afterwards repented.

"The persecution had now lasted for six or seven years (309), but in no part of the world did Christianity betray any signs of decay. It was far too deeply rooted in the minds of men, far too extensively promulgated, far too vigorously organized, not to endure this violent but unavailing shock. If its public worship was suspended, the believers met in secret, or cherished in the unassailable privacy of the heart, the inalienable rights of conscience. But of course the persecution fell most heavily upon the most eminent of the body. Those who resisted to death were animated by the presence of multitudes, who, if they dared not applaud, could scarcely conceal their admiration. Women crowded to kiss the hems of the martyrs' garments, and their scattered ashes, or unburied bones, were stolen away by the devout zeal of their flocks."

Under the edict issued from the dying bed of Galerius the persecution ceased, and the Christians were permitted the free and public exercise of their religion. This breathing-time lasted only a few months. But how grand the sight which followed, and what a testimony to the truth and power of Christianity! The Dean goes on to say:

"The cessation of the persecution showed at once its extent. The prison doors were thrown open, the mines rendered up their condemned labourers, everywhere long trains of Christians were seen hastening to the ruins of their churches, and visiting the places sanctified by their former devotions. The public roads, the streets, and market places of the towns were crowded with long processions singing psalms of thanksgiving for their deliverance. Those who had maintained their faith under these severe trials received the affectionate congratulations of their brethren; those who had failed in the hour of affliction hastened to confess their failure and seek for re-admission into the now joyous fold."

We now turn to the altered state of things under Constantine, about **twenty years after the death of Galerius.** Mark the mighty change in the position of the clergy.

"The bishops appeared as regular attendants upon the court, the internal dissensions of Christianity became affairs of state. The prelate ruled, not now so much by his admitted superiority in christian virtue, as by the inalienable authority of his office. He opened or closed the door of the church, which was tantamount to an admission to or an exclusion from everlasting bliss, he uttered the sentences of excommunication, which cast back the trembling delinquent amongst the lost and perishing heathen. He had his throne in the most distinguished part of the christian temple, and though yet acting in the presence and in the name of his college of presbyters, yet he was the acknowledged head of a large community, over whose eternal destiny he held a vague but not therefore less imposing and awful dominion."*

{**History of Christianity,* vol. 2, p. 283-308. Neander, vol. 3, p. 41. *Life of Constantine,* by Eusebius.}

Intellectual and philosophical questions took the place of the truth of the gospel, and mere outward religion for faith love, and heavenly-mindedness. A crucified Saviour, true conversion, justification by faith alone, separation from the world, were subjects never known by Constantine, and probably never introduced in his presence. "The connection of the physical and moral world had become general topics; they were, for the first time, the primary truths of a popular religion, and naturally could not withdraw themselves from the alliance with popular passions. Mankind, even within the sphere of Christianity, retrograded to the sterner Jewish character; and in its spirit, as well as its language, the Old Testament began to dominate over the gospel of Christ."

The True Character of the Church Disappears

However agreeable to mere nature the sunshine of the imperial favour might be, it was destructive of the true character of the individual Christian and of the church corporately. All testimony to a rejected Christ on earth, and an exalted Christ in heaven was gone. It was the world baptised, in place of believers only as dead and risen with Christ - as having died in His death, and risen again in His resurrection. The word of God is plain: - "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." (Col 2:12) Baptism is here used as the sign both of death and resurrection. But to whom was that solemn and sacred ordinance now administered? Again, we repeat, To the Roman world. Faith in Christ, the forgiveness of sins acceptance in the Beloved, were not looked for by the obsequious clergy.

The profession of Christianity being now the sure way to wealth and honours, all ranks and classes applied for baptism. At the **Easter** and **Pentecostal festivals,** thousands, all clothed in the white garments of the neophyte, crowded round the different churches, waiting to be baptised. The numbers were so great, and the whole scene so striking, that many thought these conspicuous neophytes must be the innumerable multitude spoken of in the Revelation, who stood before the Lamb, clothed with white robes. According to some writers, as many as twelve thousand men, beside women and children, were baptised in one year in Rome, and a white garment, with twenty pieces of gold, was promised by the Emperor to every new convert of the poorer classes. Under these circumstances, and by these venal means, the downfall of heathenism was accomplished, and Christianity seated on the throne of the Roman world.

The Baptism and Death of Constantine

The baptism of Constantine has given rise to almost as much speculation as his conversion. Notwithstanding the great zeal he displayed in favour of Christianity, he delayed his baptism, and consequently his reception into the church, till the approach of death. Many motives, both political and personal, have been suggested by different writers as reasons for this delay; but the real one, we fear, was *personal.* Superstition had by this time taught men to connect the forgiveness of sins with the rite of baptism. Under this dreadful delusion Constantine seems to have delayed his baptism until he could no longer enjoy his imperial honours, and indulge his passions in the pleasures of the world. It is impossible to conceive of any papal indulgence more ruinous to the soul, more dishonouring to Christianity, or more dangerous to every moral virtue. It was a licence for such as Constantine to pursue the great objects of his ambition through the darkest paths of blood and cruelty, as it placed in his hands the means of an easy forgiveness, when convenient to himself. But on the other hand we think it was a great mercy of the Lord, that one, whose private and domestic life, as well as his public career, was so stained with blood, should not have made a public profession of Christianity by receiving baptism and the Lord's supper. Let us hope that he really repented on his deathbed.

The bishops, whom he summoned in his last illness to the palace of **Nicomedia,** heard his confession, were satisfied and gave him their blessing. Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia baptised him! He now professed for the first time, that if God spared his life, he would join the assembly of His people, and that, having worn the white garment of the neophyte, he would never again wear the purple of the emperor. But these resolutions were too late in coming: he died shortly after his baptism, in the year 337.*

{* Eusebius's *Life of Constantine,* p. 147.}

Helena, the Emperor's mother, deserves a passing notice. She embraced the religion professed by her son. Her devotion, piety, and munificence were great. She travelled from place to place; visited the scenes which had been hallowed by the chief events of scripture history; ordered the temple of Venus to be demolished, which Hadrian had built on the site of the holy sepulchre, and gave directions for a church to be built on the spot, which should exceed all others in splendour. She died A.D. 328.

We have now seen, alas! too plainly, the sorrowful truth of the Lord's words, that the church was dwelling where Satan's seat is. Constantine left it there. He found it imprisoned in mines, dungeons, and catacombs, and shut out from the light of heaven; he left it on the throne of the world. But the picture is not yet complete, we must notice other features in the history, answering to the likeness in the Epistle.

The reign of Constantine was marked, not only by the church being taken out of her right place, through the deceptions of Satan, but by the bitter fruits of that degrading change. The seeds of error, corruption, and dissension sprang up rapidly, and now came publicly before the tribunals of the world, and in some instances before the pagan world.

The Donatistic and Arian Controversies

Two great controversies - the Donatistic and the **Arian** had their beginning in this reign: the former, arising in the West, from a disputed appointment to the episcopal dignity at Carthage: the latter, of Eastern origin, and involving the very foundations of Christianity. The latter was a question of **doctrine,** the former of **practice.** Both were now corrupted in their very springs and essence, and may have been represented by the false prophet and the Nicolaitanes; but more as to this afterwards. We will now briefly notice the two schisms, as they throw light on the nature and results of the union of church and State. The Emperor took part in the councils of the bishops as head of the church.

On the death of **Mensurius, bishop of Carthage,** a council of neighbouring bishops was called to appoint his successor. The council was small - through the management of Botrus and Celesius, two presbyters who aspired to the office - but **Caecilian,** the deacon who was much loved by the congregation, was elected bishop. The two disappointed persons protested against the election. Mensurius died when absent from Carthage on a journey; but before leaving home he had entrusted some plate and other property of the church to certain elders of the congregation, and had left an inventory in the hands of a pious female. This was now delivered to Caecilian, as he of course demanded the articles from the elders, but they were unwilling to deliver them up, as they had supposed no one would ever inquire for them, the old bishop being dead. They now joined the party of Botrus and Celesius, in opposition to the new bishop. The schism was also supported by the influence of **Lucilla,** a rich lady whom Caecilian had formerly offended by a faithful reproof; and the whole province assumed the right of interference.

Donatus, bishop of Cosae Nigrae, placed himself at the head of the Carthaginian faction. **Secundus,** primate of Numidia, at the summons of Donatus, appeared in Carthage at the head of seventy bishops. This self-installed council cited Caecilian before them, alleging that he ought not to have been consecrated except in their presence and by the primate of Numidia; and inasmuch as he had been consecrated by a bishop who was a **Traditor,*** the council declared his election void. Caecilian refused to acknowledge the authority of the council; but they proceeded to elect **Majorinus** to the see, declared to be vacant by the excommunication of Caecilian. But, unfortunately for the credit of the bishops, Majorinus was a member of Lucilla's household who, to support the election, gave large sums of money, which the bishops divided among themselves. A decided schism was now formed, and many persons who before stood aloof from Caecilian, returned to his communion.

{*"A name of infamy given to those who, to save their lives in the persecution, had delivered the scriptures or goods of the church to the persecuting powers." Milner, vol. 1, p. 513.}

Some reports of these discords reached the ears of Constantine. He had just become master of the West; and had sent a large sum of money for the relief of the African churches. They had suffered greatly during the late persecutions. But as the **Donatists** were considered *sectaries,* or *dissenters* from the true Catholic church, he ordered that the gifts and privileges conferred on the Christians by the late edicts should be confined to those in communion with Caecilian. This led the Donatists to petition the Emperor, desiring that their cause might be examined by the bishops of Gaul, from whom it was supposed that impartiality might be expected. Here for the first time we have an application to the civil power, to appoint a Commission of Ecclesiastical Judges.

Constantine agreed: a council was held at Rome in 313, consisting of about twenty bishops. The decision was in favour of Caecilian, who thereupon proposed terms of reconciliation and reunion; but the Donatists disdained all compromise. They prayed the Emperor for another hearing declaring that a synod of twenty bishops was insufficient to overrule the sentence of seventy who had condemned Caecilian. On this representation Constantine summoned another council. The number of bishops present was very large, from Africa, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, but especially from Gaul. This was the greatest ecclesiastical assembly which had yet been seen. They met at Arles, in 314. Caecilian was again acquitted, and several canons were passed with a view to the African dissensions.

In the meantime Majorinus died, and a second Donatus was appointed his successor. He was surnamed by his followers "the Great," for the sake of distinction from the first Donatus. He is described as learned, eloquent, of great ability, and as possessing the energy and fiery zeal of the African temperament. The sectaries, as they were called, now assumed the name of *the Donatists,* and took their *character* as well as their name from their chief.

Constantine as Arbiter of Ecclesiastical Differences

The Emperor was again entreated to take up their cause, and on this occasion to take the matter entirely into his own hands, to which he agreed, though offended by their obstinacy. He heard the case at Milan in the year 316; where he gave sentence in accordance with the councils of Rome and Arles. He also issued edicts against them, which he afterwards repealed, from seeing the dangerous consequences of violent measures. But Donatism soon became a fierce, widespread, and intolerant schism in the church. As early as 330 they had so increased that a synod was attended by two hundred and seventy bishops, in some periods of their history they numbered about four hundred. They proved a great affliction to the provinces of Africa for above three hundred years - indeed down to the time of **the Mahometan invasion.**

Reflections on the First Great Schism in the Church

As this was the first schism that divided the church, we have thought it well to give a few details. The reader may learn some needed lessons from this memorable division. It began with an incident so inconsiderable in itself that it scarcely deserves a place in history. There was no question of bad doctrine or of immorality, but only of a disputed election to **the see of Carthage.** A little right feeling; a little self-denial, a true desire for the peace, unity, and harmony of the church; and above all, a proper care for the Lord's glory, would have prevented hundreds of years of inward sorrow and outward disgrace to the church of God. But pride, avarice, and ambition - sad fruits of the flesh - were allowed to do their fearful work. The reader will also see, from the place that the Emperor had in the councils of the church, how soon her position and character were utterly changed. How strange it must have appeared to Constantine that, immediately on his adopting the cross as his standard, an appeal should be made from an episcopal decision on ecclesiastical matters to his own tribunal! This proved the condition of the clergy. But mark the consequences which such an appeal involves; if the party against whom the sentence of the civil power is given refuse to yield, they become transgressors against the laws. And so it was in this case.

The Donatists were henceforth treated as offenders against the imperial laws; they were deprived of their churches many of them suffered banishment and confiscation. Even the punishment of death was enacted against them, although it does not appear that this law was enforced in any case during the reign of Constantine. Strong measures, however were resorted to by the State, with the view of compelling the Donatists to reunite with the Catholics, but, as is usual in such cases, and as experience has taught ever since, the force that was used to compel them only served to develop the wild spirit of the faction that already existed in the germ. Aroused by persecution, stimulated by the discourses of their bishops, and especially by Donatus who was the head and soul of his party, they were hurried on to every species of fanaticism and violence.

Constantine, taught by experience, at length found that although he could give the church protection, he could not give her peace; and issued an edict, granting to the Donatists full liberty to act according to their own convictions, declaring that this was a matter which belonged to the judgment of God. *

{*Neander, vol. 3, p. 244; Robertson, vol. 1, p. 175; Milman, vol. 2, p. 364.}

The Arian Controversy

Scarcely had the outward peace of the church been secured by the edict of Milan, when it was distracted by internal dissensions. Shortly after the breaking out of the Donatist schism in the province of Africa, the *Arian controversy* which had its origin in the East, extended to every part of the world. We have already spoken of these angry contentions as the bitter fruit of the unscriptural union of the church with the State. Not that they necessarily sprang from that union, but from Constantine becoming the avowed and ostensible head of the church, and presiding in her solemn assemblies, questions of doctrine and practice produced an agitation throughout the whole church, and not the church only, but they exercised a powerful political influence on the affairs of the world. This was unavoidable from the new position of the church. The empire being now christian, at least in principle, such questions were of world-wide interest and importance. Hence the Arian controversy was the *first* that rent asunder the whole body of Christians, and arrayed in almost every part of the world the hostile parties in implacable opposition.

Heresies, similar in nature to that of Arius, had appeared in the church before her connection with the State; but their influence seldom extended beyond the region and period of their birth. After some noisy debates and angry words were discharged, the heresy fell into dishonour, and was soon almost forgotten. But it was widely different with the Arian controversy. Constantine, who sat upon the throne of the world, and assumed to be the sole head of the church, interposed his authority, in order to prescribe and define the precise tenets of the religion he had established. The word of God, the will of Christ, the place of the Spirit, the heavenly relations of the church, were all lost sight of, or rather had never been seen, by the Emperor. He had probably heard something of the numerous opinions by which the Christians were divided; but he saw, at the same time, that they were a community who had continued to advance in vigour and magnitude; that they were really united in the midst of heresies, and strong under the iron hand of oppression. But he could not see, neither could he understand, that then, spite of her failure, she was looking to the Lord and leaning on Him only in the world. Every other hand was against her, and was led on by the craft and power of the enemy. But, professedly, she was going up through the wilderness leaning on her Beloved, and no weapon formed against her could prosper.

The Emperor, being entirely ignorant of the heavenly relation of the church, may have thought that as he could give her complete protection from outward oppression, he could also by his presence and power give her peace and rest from inward dissensions. But he little knew that the latter was not only far beyond his reach, but that the very security, worldly ease, and indulgence, which he so liberally granted to the clergy, were the sure means of fomenting discords, and of inflaming the passions of the disputants. And so it turned out, he was continually assailed by the complaints and mutual accusations of his new friends.

The Beginning of Arianism

Arianism was the natural growth of the Gnostic opinions; and Alexandria the hotbed of metaphysical questions and subtle distinctions, its birthplace. Paul of Samosata, and Sabellius of Libya, in the third century, taught similar false doctrines to Arius in the fourth. The Gnostic sects in their different varieties, and the *Manichean,* which was the Persian religion with a mixture of Christianity, may be considered rather as rival religions, than as christian factions nevertheless they did their evil work among Christians as to the doctrine of the Trinity. Nearly all of these heresies as they are usually called, had fallen under the royal displeasure, and their followers subjected to penal regulations. The *Montanists, Paulites, Novatians, Marcionites,* and *Valentinians* were amongst the proscribed and persecuted sects. But there was another, a deeper, a darker, and a much more influential heresy than had yet arisen, about to burst forth and that from the very bosom of the so-called holy Catholic church. It happened in this way.

Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria in a meeting of his presbyters, appears to have expressed himself rather freely on the subject of the Trinity; when *Arius,* one of the presbyters, questioned the truth of Alexander's positions, on the ground that they were allied to the Sabellian errors, which had been condemned by the church. This disputation led Arius to state his own views of the Trinity, which were substantially the denial of the Saviour's Godhead - that He was, in fact, only the first and noblest of those created beings whom God the Father formed out of nothing - that, though immeasurably superior in power and in glory to the highest created beings, He is inferior in both to the Father. He also held, that though inferior to the Father in nature and in dignity, He is the image of the Father, and the vicegerent of the divine power by whom He made the worlds. What his views were of the Holy Spirit are not so plainly stated.*

{*The blasphemous doctrine of Arius was an offshoot of Gnosticism, perhaps the least offensive in appearance, but directly and inevitably destructive of the personal glory of the Son as God, and hence overthrowing the basis of redemption. Modem Unitarianism denies the Lord Jesus to be more than man, and thus even His supernatural birth of the Virgin Mary; though Socinus asserted the singular modification of such an exaltation after His resurrection as constituted Him an adequate object of divine worship. Arius seemed to approach the truth on the side of His pre-existence before He came into the world, owned that He the Son of God, made the universe but manifested that He was Himself created, though the very first and highest of creatures. It was not the Sabellian denial of distinct personality, but the refusal to the Son, and of course to the Spirit, of true, proper, essential, and eternal Deity.

Not only is Arianism fundamentally inconsistent with the place given to the Son from first to last throughout scripture, as well as with the infinite work of reconciliation and new creation, for which the old creation furnished but the occasion, but it is distinctly refuted beforehand by many passages of holy writ. A few of these it may be well here to cite. Him who, when born of woman, was named Jesus, the Spirit of God declares (Joh 1:1-3) to be in the beginning the Word who was with God and was God. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Impossible to conceive a stronger testimony to His uncreated subsistence, to His distinct personality when He was with God before creation, and to His divine nature. He is here spoken of as the Word, the correlate of which is not the Father, but God (and thus leaving room for the Holy Spirit); but, lest His own consubstantiality should be overlooked He is carefully and at once declared to be God.* Go back beyond time and the creature, as far as one may in thought, "in the beginning was the Word." The language is most precise; He was in the beginning with God, not *eyevero,* "He was" in the sense of coming into being or caused to be, but *nv,* "He was" in His own absolute being. All things *eyevero,* "came into being," through Him. He was the Creator so completely that St. John adds, "and without Him not one thing came into being which is come into being." On the other hand, when the incarnation is stated in verse 14, the language is, The Word was made flesh, not *nv* but *eyevero.* Further, when come among men, He is described as "the only-begotten Son 'who is' [*o wv,* not merely who *was*] in the bosom of the Father"-language unintelligible and misleading, unless to show that His manhood in no way detracted from His Deity, and that the infinite nearness of the Son with the Father ever subsists.

{{*The absence of the article here is necessarily due to the fact that *meos* is the predicate of *o Aoyos,* in no way to an inferior sense of His Godhead, which would contradict the context itself. Indeed, if the article had been inserted, it would be the grossest heterodoxy, because its effect would be to deny that the Father and the Spirit are God by excluding all but the Word from Godhead.}}

Again, Rom 9:5 is a rich and precise expression of Christ's underivative and supreme Godhead equally with the Father and the Spirit. Christ came, "who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." The efforts of heterodox critics bear witness to the all-importance of the truth, which they vainly essay to shake by **unnatural efforts** which betray the dissatisfaction of their authors. There is no such emphatic predication of supreme Deity in the Bible: not, of course, that the Father and the Holy Spirit are not co-equal, but because the humiliation of the Son is incarnation and the death of the cross made it fitting that the fullest assertion of divine supremacy should be used of Him.

Next, the apostle says of Christ, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and By Him all things consist *[subsist]."* (Col 1:15-17) The reveries of the Gnostics are here anticipatively cut off; for Christ is shown to have been chief of all creation *because* He was Creator, and this of the highest invisible beings as well as of the visible: all things are said to have been created for Him as well as by Him; and as He is before all, so all subsist together in virtue of Him.

The only other passage I need now refer to is Hebrews 1, where the apostle illustrates the fulness of Christ's Person among other Old Testament scriptures by Psalms 45 and 102. In the former He is addressed as God and anointed as man; in the latter He is owned as Jehovah, the Creator, after He is heard pouring out His affliction as the rejected Messiah to Jehovah.

It is impossible then to accept the Bible without rejecting Arianism as a heinous libel against Christ and the truth; for it is not more certain that He became a man than that He was God before creation Himself the Creator, the Son, and Jehovah.-

From unpublished MSS of W.K.}

Alexander, indignant at the objections of Arius to himself, and because of his opinions, accused him of blasphemy. "The impious Arius," he exclaimed, "the forerunner of Antichrist had dared to utter his blasphemies against the divine Redeemer." He was judged by two councils assembled at Alexandria, and cast out of the church. He retired into Palestine, but in nowise discouraged by the disgrace. Many sympathised with him, among whom were the two prelates named Eusebius: one of Caesarea, the ecclesiastical historian, the other, bishop of Nicomedia, a man of immense influence. Arius kept up a lively correspondence with his friends, veiling his more offensive opinions; and Alexander issued warnings against him, and refused all the intercessions of his friends to have him restored. But Arius was a crafty antagonist. He is described in history as tall and graceful in person; calm, pale, and subdued in countenance; of popular address, and an acute reasoner; of strict and blameless life, and agreeable manners; but that, under a humble and mortified exterior, he concealed the strongest feelings of vanity and ambition. The adversary had skilfully selected his instrument. The apparent possession of so many virtues fitted him for the enemy's purpose. Without these fair appearances he would have had no power to deceive.

Constantine's First Impression of the Controversy

The dissension soon became so violent, that it was judged necessary to appeal to the Emperor. He at first considered the whole question as utterly trifling and unimportant. He wrote a letter to Alexander and Arius jointly, in which he reproves them for contending about idle questions and imaginary differences, and recommends them to suppress all unhallowed feelings of animosity, and to live in peace and unity.* It is more than probable that the Emperor had not thought of the serious nature of the dispute, or he could not have spoken of it as trifling and unimportant: but if the letter was drawn up by Hosius, bishop of Cordova, as is generally believed, he could not plead ignorance of its character; and must have framed the document according to the expressed feelings of Constantine, rather than according to his own judgment. The letter has been highly extolled by many as a model of wisdom and moderation, and, had the matter been of no graver importance than fixing the time for the Easter festival, it might have deserved that praise; but the Godhead and the glory of Christ were in question, and consequently the salvation of the soul.

{*See the Letter in Eusebius's *Life of Constantine,* 2. 64-72.}

Hosius was sent to Egypt as the imperial commissioner, to whom the settlement of the affair was committed. But he found that the dissensions occasioned by the controversy had become so serious, that both parties refused to listen to the admonitions of the bishop, though accompanied with the authority of the sovereign.

11 The Council of Nice

Chapter 11

The Council of Nice

Constantine was now obliged to look more closely into the nature of the dispute. He began to understand that the question was not one of trifling, but of the highest and most essential, importance; and resolved to convoke an assembly of bishops, in order to establish the true doctrine, and to allay for ever, as he vainly hoped, this propensity to hostile disputation. Everything necessary for their journey was provided at the public charge, as if it had been an affair of State.

In the month of June, A.D. 325, the first general council of the church assembled at Nice in Bithynia. About three hundred and eighteen bishops were present, besides a very large number of priests and deacons. "The flower of the ministers of God," as Eusebius says, "from all the churches which abound in Europe, Africa and Asia, now met together." The spectacle was altogether new, and surely to none more so than to the bishops themselves. Not many years had elapsed since they had been marked as the objects of the most cruel persecution. They had been chosen on account of their eminence, as the peculiar victims of the exterminating policy of the government. Many of them bore in their bodies the marks of their sufferings for Christ. They had known what it was to be driven into exile; to work in the mines; to be exposed to every kind of humiliation and insult; but now all was changed, so changed, that they could scarcely believe that it was a reality and not a vision. The palace gates were thrown open to them, and the Emperor of the world acted as moderator of the assembly.

Nothing could so confirm and declare to the world the sad fall of the church, and her subjection to the State, as the place which the Emperor had in these councils. He did not arrive at Nice till the 3rd of July. On the following day the bishops assembled in the hall of the palace, which had been prepared for the purpose. We learn from Eusebius, that the assembly sat in profound silence, while the great officers of State and other dignified persons entered the hall, and awaited in trembling expectation the appearance of the Emperor. Constantine at length entered; he was splendidly attired: the eyes of the bishops were dazzled by the gold and precious stones upon his raiment. The whole assembly rose to do him honour. He advanced to a golden seat prepared for him, and there stood, in respectful deference to the spiritual dignitaries, till he was requested to sit down. After a hymn of praise was sung, he delivered an exhortation on the importance of peace and union. The council sat for rather more than two months, and Constantine seems to have been present during the greater part of the sittings, listening with patience, and conversing freely with the different prelates.

The Nicene Creed

The celebrated confession of faith usually called **"The Nicene Creed,"** was the result of the long and solemn deliberations of the assembly. They decided against the Arian opinions, and firmly maintained the doctrines of the holy Trinity, of the true Godhead of Christ, and of His oneness with the Father in power and glory. Arius himself was brought before the council, and questioned as to his faith and doctrine; he did not hesitate to repeat, as his belief, the false doctrines which had destroyed the peace of the church. The bishops, when he was advancing his blasphemies, with one accord stopped their ears, and cried out that such impious opinions were worthy of anathema together with their author. St. Athanasius, although at the time but a deacon, drew the attention of the whole council by his zeal in defence of the true faith, and by his penetration in unravelling and laying open the artifices of the heretics. But more of the noble Athanasius by-and-by.

This famous creed was subscribed by all the bishops present, with the exception of a few Arians. The decision of the council having been laid before Constantine, he at once recognised in the unanimous consent of the council the work of God, and received it with reverence, declaring that all those persons should be banished who refused to submit to it. The Arians, hearing this, through fear subscribed the faith laid down by the council. They thus laid themselves open to the charge of being dishonest men. Two bishops only Secundus and Theonas, both Egyptians, continued to adhere to Arius; and they were banished with him to Illyria. Eusebius of Nicomedia, and Theognis of Nice, were condemned about three months later, and sentenced by the Emperor to banishment. Severe penalties were now denounced against the followers of Arius: all his books were sentenced to be burnt; and it was even made a capital offence to conceal any of his writings. Their labours being completed, the bishops dispersed to their respective provinces. Besides the solemn declaration of their opinion of the doctrine in question, they finally set at rest the question respecting the celebration of Easter;* and settled some other matters which were brought before them.

{*The Eastern churches from an early period observed the festival of Easter in commemoration of the crucifixion of Christ, which answered to the Jewish Passover, on the fourteenth day of the month. This may have arisen from the fact that in the East there were many Jewish converts. The Western churches observed the festival in commemoration of the resurrection. This difference as to the day gave rise to a long and fierce controversy. But after much contention between the Eastern and Western churches, it was ordained by the council of Nice to be observed in commemoration of the resurrection throughout the whole of Christendom. Thus, Easterday is the Sunday following the fourteenth day of the paschal moon which happens upon or next after the 21st of March: so that, if the said fourteenth day be a Sunday, it is not that Sunday but the next. It may be any Sunday of the five weeks which commence with March 22nd and end with April 25th.}

Constantine Changes His Mind

As the Emperor had no independent judgment of his own in ecclesiastical matters, and certainly no spiritual discernment into these doctrinal controversies, the continuance of his favour could not be relied upon. In little more than two years his mind was completely changed. But these two years were eventful in the domestic history of Constantine, in what was much more serious than a change of mind as to Arianism. The same year that he convened the council of Nice, he gave private orders for the execution of Crispus, his eldest son, and for the suffocation of his wife, Fausta, in a hot bath, who had been married to him for about twenty years. History can find no better reasons for these deeds of darkness than a mean and an unworthy jealousy. The wisdom and bravery of Crispus, in the final overthrow of Licinius, is said to have excited his father's jealousy, and this was probably fomented by Fausta, who was his stepmother. Knowing that he was bitterly reproached for his cruelty to his own son, he ordered the death of Fausta in his remorse and misery. As we have expressed a very decided judgment against the unhallowed nature of the church's connection with the State, we have said this much of the private life of the Emperor, so that the reader may judge as to the fitness, or rather, the unfitness, of one so polluted with blood, to sit as president in a christian council. From that day to this the state church has been exposed to the same defilement, in the person either of the sovereign or the royal commissioner.

Constantia, the widow of Licinius, and sister of Constantine, possessed great influence with her brother. She sympathised with the Arians, and was under their influence. On her deathbed in 327, she succeeded in convincing her brother that injustice had been done to Arius, and prevailed on him to invite Arius to his court. He did so, and Arius appeared

presenting to the Emperor a confession of his faith. He expressed in a general way his belief in the doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and besought the Emperor to put a stop to idle speculations, so that schism might be healed, and all, united in one, might pray for the peaceable reign of the Emperor, and for his whole family. By his plausible confession, and his fair speeches, he gained his point. Constantine expressed himself satisfied, and Arius and his followers, in turn, stood high in the imperial favour. The banished ones were recalled. A breath of court air changed the outward aspect of the whole church. The Arian party had now full possession of the Emperor's weighty influence, and they hastened to use it.

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria

In the council of Nice Athanasius had borne a distinguished part; his zeal and abilities designated him at once as the head of the orthodox party, and as the most powerful antagonist of the Arians. On the death of Alexander, in the year 326, he was elevated to the see of Alexandria by the universal voice of his brethren. He was then only thirty years of age, and knowing something of the dangers as well as the honours of the office, he would have preferred a less responsible position; but he yielded to the earnest desires of an affectionate congregation. He held the see for nearly half a century. His long life was devoted to the service of the Lord and His truth. He continued stedfast in the faith and inflexible in his purpose, according to the noble stand which he made in the council of Nice, down to his latest hour. The divinity of Christ was to him no mere speculative opinion, but the source and strength of his whole christian life. And nowhere else is it to be found by any one; as the apostle assures us. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1Jn 5:11-12) This life dwells in the onlybegotten Son of the Father. He is "the eternal life." And this life, to the praise of the glory of God's grace, is given to all who believe in the true Christ of God. In receiving Christ, we receive eternal life, and become the sons of God - heirs of God - and joint heirs with Christ. This life is not the property of any mere creature, however exalted. The holy angels have a most blessed and an unceasing existence by the power of God; but the Christian has eternal life through faith in Christ, by the grace of God. Nothing could be more fatal to the well-being of the human soul than the doctrine of Arius. But to return to our history.

While the advancement of Athanasius to the see of Alexandria gave great joy and hope to his friends, it filled his enemies with the bitterest resentment. They now saw the great leader of the Catholics* the bishop of that church from which Arius had been expelled; and that he was supported by the affections of his people and by a hundred bishops who owned allegiance to the great see of Alexandria. They knew his power and indefatigable zeal in defence of the decrees of the Nicene Council, and might well judge, that if his influence had been so great when in a private capacity, what might now be expected when he was placed in so eminent a station? Wherefore, they laid their plans and united their powers to overthrow him.

{*The term *Catholic Church, as* given by Constantine, simply means the *established church.*}

Athanasius Contests the Authority of Constantine

Eusebius, of Nicomedia, first resorted to apparently friendly measures with Athanasius, for the purpose of inducing him to re-admit Arius to the fellowship of the church; but, failing completely in this, he influenced the Emperor to command him. An imperial mandate was issued to receive Arius and all his friends who were willing to connect themselves once more with the catholic church; and informing him that, unless he did so, he should be deposed from his station, and sent into exile. Athanasius, however, was not to be intimidated by imperial edicts, but firmly replied, that he could not acknowledge persons who had been condemned by a decree of the whole church. "Constantine now found to his astonishment," says Milman, "that an imperial edict - which would have been obeyed in trembling submission from one end of the Roman empire to the other, even if he had enacted a complete political revolution, or endangered the property and privileges of thousands - was received with deliberate and steady disregard by a single christian bishop. During two reigns, Athanasius contested the authority of the Emperor."* He endured persecution, calumny, exile; his life was frequently endangered in defence of the one great and fundamental truth - the Godhead of the blessed Lord, he confronted martyrdom, not for the broad distinction between Christianity and heathenism, but for that one central doctrine of the christian faith.

{**History of Christianity,* vol. 2. p. 540.}

A succession of complaints against Athanasius was carried to the Emperor by the Arian, or more properly the Eusebian, party. But it would be outside our purpose to go into details: still we must trace the *silver line* a little farther in this noble and faithful witness.

The most weighty charge was, that Athanasius had sent a sum of money to a person in Egypt, to aid him in the prosecution of a design of conspiracy against the Emperor. He was ordered to appear and answer the charge. The prelate obeyed and stood before him. But the personal appearance of Athanasius, a man of remarkable power over the minds of others, seems for the moment to have overawed the soul of Constantine. The frivolous and groundless accusations were triumphantly refuted by Athanasius, before a tribunal of his enemies, and the unblemished virtue of his character undeniably established. And such was the effect of the presence of Athanasius on the Emperor, that he styled him a man of God and considered his enemies to be the authors of the disturbances and divisions, but this impression was of short duration, as he continued to be governed by the Eusebian party.

The Council of Tyre

In 334 Athanasius was summoned to appear before a council at Caesarea. He refused on the ground that the tribunal was composed of his enemies. In the following year he was cited before another council to be held at **Tyre** by imperial authority; which he attended. Upwards of a hundred bishops were present; a lay commission of the Emperor directed their proceedings. A multitude of charges were brought against the undaunted prelate; but the darkest, and the only one we will notice, was the twofold crime of *magic* and *murder.* It was said that he had killed Arsenius, a Miletian bishop - had cut off one of his hands, and had used it for magical purposes; the hand was produced. But Athanasius was prepared for the charge. The God of truth was with him. He calmly asked whether those present were acquainted with Arsenius? He had been well known to many. A man was suddenly brought into the court, with his whole person folded in his mantle. Athanasius first uncovered the head. He was at once recognised as the murdered Arsenius. His hands were next uncovered; and on examination he was proved to be Arsenius, alive, unmutilated. The Arian party had done their utmost to conceal Arsenius, but the Lord was with His guiltless servant, and the friends of Athanasius succeeded in discovering him. The malice of the unprincipled Arians was again exposed, and the innocence of Athanasius triumphantly vindicated.

But the implacable enemies of the bishop were yet fruitful in their accusations against him. Once more he was commanded to appear in Constantinople, and to answer for himself in the imperial presence.

The old charges on this occasion were dropped, but a new one was skilfully chosen, with the view of arousing the jealousy of the Emperor. They asserted that Athanasius had threatened to stop the sailing of the vessels laden with corn from the port of Alexandria to Constantinople. By this means a famine would be produced in the new capital. This touched the pride of the Emperor; and whether from belief of the charge, or from a wish to remove so influential a person he banished him to Treves in Gaul. The injustice of the sentence is unquestionable.

The Death of Arius

Neither Constantine nor Arius long survived the exile of Athanasius. Arius subscribed an orthodox creed; Constantine accepted his confession. He sent for Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, and told him that Arius must be received into communion on the following day, which was Sunday. Alexander, who had almost completed a hundred years, was greatly distressed by the Emperor's orders. He entered the church, and prayed earnestly that the Lord would prevent such a profanation. On the evening of the same day Arius was talking lightly, and in a triumphant tone, of the ceremonies appointed for the morrow. But the Lord had ordered otherwise; He had heard the prayer of His aged servant; and that night the great heresiarch died. His end is related with circumstances which recall to mind that of the traitor Judas. What effect the event had on Constantine we are not informed; but he died soon after in his sixty-fourth year.*

{*See Robertson's *Church Nistory,* vol. 1, p. 199; Cave's *Lives of the Fathers,* vol. 2, p. 145.}

Reflections on the Great Events in Constantine's Reign

Before proceeding farther with our general history, we shall do well to pause for a moment, and consider the bearings of the great changes which have taken place, both in the position of the church and the world, during the reign of Constantine the Great. It would not be too much to say, that the church has passed through the most important crisis of her history; and that the downfall of idolatry may be considered as the most important event in the whole history of the world. From a period shortly after the flood, idolatry had prevailed among the nations of the earth, and Satan, by his craft, had been the object of worship. But the whole system of idolatry was doomed throughout the Roman earth, if not finally overthrown, by Constantine; it had, at any rate, received its deadly wound.

The church, doubtless, lost much by her **union with the State.** She no longer existed as a separate community, and was no longer governed exclusively by the will of Christ. She had surrendered her independence, lost her heavenly character, and become inseparably identified with the passions and interests of the ruling power. All this was sad in the extreme, and the fruit of her own unbelief. But, on the other hand, the world gained immensely by the change. This must not be overlooked in our lamentations over the failure of the church. The standard of the cross was now raised all over the empire; Christ was publicly proclaimed as the only Saviour of mankind; and the holy scriptures acknowledged to be the word of God, the only safe and certain guide to eternal blessedness. The professing church was no doubt in a low unspiritual state, before she was connected with the civil power, so that she may have thought more of her own ease than of her mission of blessing to others; nevertheless, God could work by means of these new opportunities, and hasten the disappearance from the face of the Roman world of the fearful abominations of idolatry.

The general legislation of Constantine bears evidence of the silent under-working of Christian principles; and the effect of these humane laws would be felt far beyond the immediate circle of the christian community. He enacted laws for the better observance of Sunday; against the sale of infants for slaves, which was common among the heathen; and also against child-stealing for the purpose of selling them, with many other laws, both of a social and moral character, which are given in the histories already noted. But the one grand all-influential event of his reign was the casting down of the idols, and the lifting up of Christ. The Ethiopians and Iberians are said to have been converted to Christianity during his reign.

The Sons of Constantine

A.D. 337-361

Constantine the Great was succeeded by his three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. They had been educated in the faith of the gospel, and had been named Caesars by their father, and on his death they divided the empire among them. Constantine obtained Gaul, Spain, and Britain, Constantius, the Asiatic provinces, with the capital, Constantinople, and Constans held Italy and Africa. The beginning of the new reign was characterised - as was usual in those times - by killing the relatives who might one day prove rivals to the throne; but along with the old and usual political jealousies and hostilities, a new element now appears - that of religious controversy.

The eldest son, Constantine, was favourable to the catholics, and signalised the commencement of his reign by recalling Athanasius, and replacing him in his see at Alexandria. But in 340 Constantine was killed in an invasion of Italy; and Constans took possession of his brother's dominions, and thus became the sovereign of two-thirds of the empire. He was favourable to the decisions of the Nicene Council, and adhered with firmness to the cause of Athanasius. Constantius, his Empress, and court, were partial to Arianism. And thus the religious war began between the two brothers - between the East and the West and was carried on without either justice or humanity, to say nothing of the peaceful spirit of Christianity. Constantius, like his father, interfered much in the affairs of the church; he pretended to be a theologian, and throughout his reign the empire was incessantly agitated by religious controversy. The councils became so frequent, that the public posting establishments were constantly employed by the continual travelling of the bishops; on both sides councils were assembled to oppose councils. But as the principal events of the period, as well as the *silver line* of God's grace, are connected with Athanasius, we will return to his history.

The History of Athanasius

After a banishment of two years and four months Athanasius was restored to his diocese by the younger Constantine, where he was received with a joyful welcome by his flock. But the death of that prince exposed Athanasius to a second persecution. Constantius, who is described as a vain but weak man, soon became the secret accomplice of the Eusebians. In the end of 340, or beginning of 341, a council met at Antioch for the dedication of a splendid church which had been founded by Constantine the elder. The number of bishops is said to have been about ninety-seven, of whom forty were Eusebians. Amongst the number of canons which were passed, it was decided, and with some appearance of equity, that a bishop deposed by a synod should not resume his episcopal functions till he had been absolved by the judgment of another synod equal in authority. This law was evidently passed with a special reference to the case of Athanasius; and the council pronounced, or rather confirmed, his degradation. Gregory, a Cappadocian, a man of a violent character, was appointed to the see, and Philagrius, the prefect of Egypt, was instructed to support the new primate with the civil and military powers of the province. Athanasius being the favourite of the people, they refused to have a bishop thrust upon them by the Emperor: scenes of disorder, outrage, and profanation followed. "Violence was found necessary to support iniquity," says Milner, "and an Arian prince was obliged to tread in the steps of his pagan predecessors, to support what he called the church."

Athanasius, oppressed by the Asiatic prelates, withdrew from Alexandria, and passed three years in Rome. The Roman pontiff, Julius, with a synod of fifty Italian bishops, pronounced him innocent, and confirmed to him the communion of the church. No fewer than five creeds had been drawn up by the Eastern bishops in assemblies convened at Antioch between 341 and 345, with the view of concealing their real opinions; but not one of them was admitted to be free from an Arian element, though the more offensive positions of Arianism were professedly condemned. The two Emperors, Constantius and Constans, now became anxious to heal the breach which existed between the Eastern and the Western churches, and accordingly they summoned a council to meet at Sardica, in Illyria, A.D. 347, to decide the disputed points. Ninety-four bishops of the West, twenty-one of the East, having assembled, and duly considered the matter on both sides, decided in favour of Athanasius: the orthodox party restoring the persecuted primate of Alexandria, and condemning all who opposed him as the enemies of the truth. In the meantime the intruder, Gregory, died, and Athanasius,, on his return to Alexandria, after an exile of eight years, was received with universal rejoicing. "The entrance of the archbishop into his capital," says one, "was a triumphal procession: absence and persecution had endeared him to the Alexandrians; and his fame was diffused from Ethiopia to Britain over the whole extent of the Christian world."

After the death of **Constans,** the friend and protector of Athanasius, in 350, the cowardly Constantius felt that the time was now come to avenge his private injuries against Athanasius, who had no longer Constans to defend him. But how to accomplish his object was the difficulty. Had he decreed the death of the most eminent citizen, the cruel order would have been executed without any hesitation; but the condemnation and death of a popular bishop must be brought about with caution, delay, and some appearance of justice. The Arians set to work; they renewed their machinations; more councils were convened.

The Councils of Arles and Milan

In the year 353 a synod was held at **Arles,** and in 355 another met at **Milan.** Upwards of three hundred bishops were present at the latter. The sessions of the council were held in the palace, Constantius and his guards being present. The condemnation of Athanasius was artfully represented as the only measure which could restore the peace and union of the catholic church. But the friends of the primate were true to their leader and the cause of truth. They assured the Emperor, in the most manly and christian spirit, that neither the hope of his favour, nor the fear of his displeasure, would prevail on them to join in the condemnation of an absent, an innocent, an honoured servant of Christ. The contest was long and obstinate; the interest excited was intense, and the eyes of the whole empire became fixed on a single bishop. But the Arian Emperor was impatient, and before the council of Milan was dissolved, the archbishop of Alexandria had been solemnly condemned and deposed. A general persecution was directed against all who favoured him, and also for the purpose of enforcing conformity to the Emperor's opinion. And so sharp did this persecution become, that the orthodox party raised the cry, that the days of Nero and of Decius had returned. Athanasius himself found a refuge in the deserts of Egypt.

The Death and Successors of Constantius

In the year 361 Constantius, the patron of the Arians, died. Like his father, he delayed his baptism till a short time before his death. The prosperous days of the Arians were now ended.

Julian, commonly called the Apostate, succeeded to the throne, and probably to show his utter indifference to the theological question in dispute, he ordered the restoration of the bishops whom Constantius had banished. After a brief reign of twenty-two months, and a vain attempt to revive heathenism, he died suddenly of a wound in the breast from a Persian arrow.

Jovian, who immediately succeeded Julian to the throne professed Christianity. He is the first of the Roman Emperors who gave anything like clear evidence that he really loved the truth as it is in Jesus. He seems to have been a sincere Christian before he came to the throne, as he told the apostate Julian that he would rather quit the service than his religion; nevertheless Julian valued him, and kept him near his person until his death. The army declared itself Christian; the Labarum, which had been thrown aside during the reign of Julian, was again displayed at its head. Jovian however, had learnt from the preceding times that religion could not be advanced by outward force. Hence he allowed full toleration to his pagan subjects; and, with respect to the divisions among Christians, he declared that he would molest no one on account of religion, but would love all who studied the peace and welfare of the church of God. Athanasius, on hearing of the death of Julian, returned to Alexandria, to the agreeable surprise and joy of his people. Jovian wrote to Athanasius, confirming him in his office, and inviting him to his court. The bishop complied; the Emperor desired instruction and advice; by personal intercourse he gained an influence over Jovian which his enemies in vain attempted to disturb. But the reign of this christian prince lasted only about eight months. He was found dead in his bed, on February 17th, 364, having been suffocated, as was supposed, by charcoal.

Valentinian and Valens. Jovian was succeeded by two brothers - Valentinian and Valens; the former governed in the West, the latter in the East. In the affairs of the church Valentinian is said to have followed the plan of Jovian. He declined all interference in questions of doctrines, but adhered firmly to the Nicene faith. As a soldier and a statesman he was possessed of many great abilities. Both brothers are said to have exposed themselves to danger by the profession of Christianity in the reign of Julian; but Valens was afterwards won over to Arianism by his wife, who persuaded him to receive baptism from the Arian bishop of Constantinople. It is said that the bishop exacted of him an oath to persecute the catholics. Be this as it may, it is certain that soon after his baptism he manifested great zeal in favour of the Arians, and bitterly persecuted the ecclesiastics for their adherence to the Nicene faith, and the exercise of their influence on its behalf.

Under the edict of Valens, A.D. 367, Athanasius was once more attacked by the Arians - the enemies of christian piety; Tatian, governor of Alexandria, attempted to drive him out of the city; but the feeling of the people was so strong in favour of the venerable bishop, that he dared not for some time to execute his orders. In the meantime, Athanasius, knowing what was near at hand, quietly retired, and remained for four months concealed in his father's sepulchre. This was the fourth time he had fled from Alexandria. Valens, however, from the dread he seems to have had of the people, recalled him, and permitted him, without any further hindrance, to prosecute his pastoral labours, until A.D. 373, when he was summoned from his work on earth to his rest in heaven. Valens perished in a battle with the Goths in the year 378, after having reigned fourteen years.

What Service Did Athanasius Render to the Church?

We are disposed to believe that, under the blessing of God, he was the means of preserving the church from the Arian heresy, which threatened to extinguish from Christianity both the name and the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. The enemy aimed at nothing short of a Christless system, which might ere long issue in an utter abandonment of Christianity. But the Nicene council was used of God to overthrow his wicked devices. The assertion of the Godhead of Christ and of the Holy Ghost as equal with God the Father, was greatly blessed of God then, and has been from that day even until now. Though the church had been unfaithful, and drifted into the world, "even where Satan's seat is," the Lord in mercy raised up a great testimony to His holy name, and to the faith of His saints. Historians, both civil and ecclesiastical, bear the most honourable testimony to the ability, activity, constancy, self-denial, and unwearied zeal of Athanasius in the defence of the great doctrine of the holy Trinity. "Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith," are words that refer, we doubt not, to the faithfulness of Athanasius and his friends, as also to the faithful in other times.

The *overcomers* spoken of in the address were also there, without doubt; but it is not permitted of the Lord that they should be seen or recorded by the historian. They were God's hidden ones who were nourished on the hidden manna. They will have a place of great nearness to the Lord in the glory. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." (Rev 2:17)

Christianity under the Reign of Gratian

Valentinian was succeeded by his son, **Gratian,** in 375. He was then only sixteen years of age. He admitted as a nominal colleague his half-brother, the younger Valentinian; and soon after he chose Theodosius as an active colleague, on whom he bestowed the sovereignty of the East. Gratian had been educated in the Christian faith, and gave evidence of being a true believer. He was the first of the Roman Emperors who refused the title and robe of high priest of the ancient religion. How could a Christian, he said, be the high priest of idolatry? It is an abomination to the Lord. Thus we see in the early piety of this young prince the blessed effects of the testimony of the faithful. What a new and strange thing in me; a pious prince to ascend the throne of Rothe Caesars at the age of sixteen! But he was humble as well as pious.

Being conscious of his own ignorance in divine things, he wrote to Ambrose, bishop of Milan, to visit him. "Come," he said, "that you may teach the doctrines of salvation to one who truly believes, not that we may study for contention but that the revelation of God may dwell more intimately in my heart." Ambrose answered him in an ecstasy of satisfaction: "Most christian prince," he says, "modesty, not want of affection, has hitherto prevented me from waiting upon you. If, however, I was not with you personally, I have been present with my prayers, in which consists still more the duty of a pastor."

The young Emperor was generally popular; but his attachment to the orthodox clergy, the time he spent in their company, the influence they gained over him (especially Ambrose) exposed him to the contempt of the more warlike part of his subjects. The frontiers were sorely pressed at this time by the barbarians, but Gratian was unable to undertake the conduct of a war against them. Maximus, taking advantage of the disaffection of the army, raised the standard of revolt. Gratian, seeing the turn things had taken, fled, with about three hundred horse, but was overpowered and killed at Lyons in the year 383. Maximus, the usurper and assassin placed himself on the throne of the West. He was afterwards overthrown and slain by Theodosius, and the younger Valentinian placed upon the throne of his father.

Theodosius, Surnamed The Great

The measure of our interest in the history of the Roman Emperors must be proportionate to their acknowledgement of the truth, and their treatment of Christians. Did we not seek to discern God's hand in their government, it would be wearisome and profitless, at this distant period, to examine what remains of them. But to see God's hand, and to hear His voice, and to trace the *silver line* of His grace, throughout those rude times, keeps us in company with Himself, and our experience is increased. But almost everything depends, as to service to God, or blessing to ourselves, in the motive or object with which we study the history of the church, and that which effects is. According to this principle of estimation, **Theodosius** claims an earnest and careful study. He was God's minister, as well as the Roman Emperor, was used of Him to subdue Arianism in the East, and to abolish the worship of idols throughout the Roman world. Idolatry is the boldest sin of man, and can never be exceeded until "that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2Th 2:3-4) The full expression of this blasphemy is still future, and will be the signal for immediate judgment, and the dawn of the millennial day.

But the zeal of Theodosius was not merely negative. He supported Christianity, according to his light, more vigorously than any of his~predecessors. He completed what Constantine commenced, and far surpassed him in christian zeal and earnestness. Soon after his baptism he assembled a council, which met at Constantinople on May 2nd, 381. The principal objects for which this council was convoked were the following: - To give greater fulness and definiteness to the Nicene creed; to condemn heresies, such as those of the Arians, Eunomians, Eudoxians, Sabellians, Apollinarians, and others; and to take measures for the union of the church.

The Barbaric Invaders

Most of our readers, even the youngest have heard of **"The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"** - the fourth great world-empire spoken of by the prophet Daniel, and by St. John in the Apocalypse. It had been on the decline for some time, and was rapidly approaching its fall, when Theodosius was called to the throne. The frontiers were menaced on all sides by the barbarians, who dwelt immediately outside the Roman earth. "On the shores of each of the great rivers which bounded the empire," says Dean Milman, "appeared a host of menacing invaders. The Persians, the Armenians, the Iberians, were prepared to pass the Euphrates or the eastern frontier; the Danube had already afforded a passage to the Goths; behind them were the Huns, in still more formidable and multiplying swarms; the Franks and the rest of the German nations were crowding to the Rhine." This frightful array of barbaric invasion will show the reader at a glance the then position of the fourth empire; and that it is as easy for God to break in pieces the iron, as the brass, the silver, or the gold.

Within the limits of the Roman earth idolatry still existed, and its worship was undisturbed. Its thousands of temples, in all their ancient grandeur and imposing ceremony, covered the land. Scarcely could the Christian turn anywhere without seeing a temple and inhaling the incense offered to idols. Christianity had only been raised to an equal toleration. Arianism and semi-Arianism, in their many forms, greatly prevailed. In Constantinople and the East they were supreme. Other heresies abounded. Such was the state of things, both within and without the empire, on the accession of Theodosius. But for the details of his civil history, we must refer the reader to the authors already noted. We would only add, that he was used of God in arresting for a time the progress of invasion; in demolishing the images and some of the temples of heathen worship; in abolishing idolatry; in suppressing superstition, in causing the decisions of the Nicene council to prevail everywhere; and in giving triumph and predominance to the profession of Christianity.

The Religious History of Theodosius

We will now glance at some of the leading events in the history of the great Theodosius. In the circumstances of these events will be found the best commentary on the life of the Emperor, the power of the priesthood, and the character of the times.

Theodosius was a spaniard. Christianity, at an early period, had been established in the Peninsula. It was famous for its firm adherence to the Athanasian doctrines throughout the Trinitarian controversy. Hosius, a Spanish bishop was president of the Nicene council. Towards the end of the first year of his reign, Theodosius was admonished by a serious illness not to delay his baptism, as the practice then was. He sent for the bishop of Thessalonica and was at once baptised. Some say that he was the first of the Emperors baptised in the full name of the holy Trinity. His admission to the church was immediately followed by an edict which proclaimed his own faith, and prescribed the religion of his subjects. "It is our pleasure that all the nations that are governed by our clemency and moderation, should stedfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by St. Peter to the Romans.... According to the discipline of the apostles, and the doctrine of the gospel, let us believe the sole deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty, and a pious Trinity.... Beside the condemnation of divine justice they must expect to suffer the severe penalties which our authority, guided by heavenly wisdom, shall think proper to inflict upon them."

Such was the stern and uncompromising orthodoxy of Theodosius. Still, however mistaken, he believed it was his duty so to rule as a christian Emperor, and the bishops that he consulted were more inclined to increase than to soften its severity. On one occasion his sense of justice determined him to order some Christians to rebuild at their own expense a Jewish synagogue, which, in a tumult, had been pulled down. But the vigorous bishop of Milan interfered and prevailed on him to set aside the sentence, on the ground that it was not right for Christians to build a Jewish synagogue Herein the bishop evidently failed in a matter of common justice. He was less righteous than his imperial master.

The Failings and Virtues of Theodosius

The most prominent defect in the character of Theodosius was a proneness to violent anger; yet he could be softened down and moved to be most merciful after great provocation if properly appealed to. We have a remarkable instance of this in his forgiving the **people of Antioch.** It happened in this way:

In the year 387 the inhabitants became impatient on account of a tax which the Emperor had imposed upon them and, as they were haughtily treated by the rulers, to whom they had respectfully applied for relief, a great tumult arose in the city. The statues of the imperial family were thrown down and treated with contempt. But, a company of soldiers immediately appearing, the sedition was suppressed. The governor of the province, according to the duty of his office dispatched a faithful narrative of the whole transaction to the Emperor. But as eight hundred miles lay between Antioch and Constantinople, weeks must elapse before an answer could be received. This gave the Antiochians leisure to reflect on the nature and consequences of their crime. They were greatly and constantly agitated with hopes and fears, as may be well supposed. They knew their crime was a serious one, but they had confessed it to Flavian their bishop, and to other influential persons, with every assurance of genuine repentance. At length, twenty-four days after the sedition, the imperial commissioners arrived, bearing the will of the Emperor, and the sentence of Antioch. The following imperial mandate will show the reader how much depended on the will or temper of a single man in those times.

Antioch, the metropolis of the East, was degraded from the rank of a city; stripped of its lands, its privileges, and its revenues, it was subjected, under the humiliating denomination of a village, to the jurisdiction of Laodicea. The baths, the circus, and the theatres were shut, and, that every source of plenty and pleasure might at the same time be intercepted, the distribution of corn was abolished. The commissioners then proceeded to inquire into the guilt of individuals. The noblest and most wealthy of the citizens of Antioch appeared before them in chains; the examination was assisted by the use of torture, and their sentence was pronounced, or suspended, according to the judgment of these extraordinary magistrates. The houses of the criminals were exposed to sale, their wives and children were suddenly reduced from affluence and luxury to the most abject distress; and a bloody execution was expected to close the horrors of the day which the eloquent Chrysostom has represented as a lively image of the final judgment of the world. But God, who has the hearts of all men in His hand, and in the remembrance of what Antioch had been in the early days of the church, moved the ministers of Theodosius to pity. They are said to have shed tears over the calamities of the people; and they listened with reverence to the pressing entreaties of the monks and hermits, who descended in swarms from the mountains. The execution of the sentence was suspended, and it was agreed that one of the commissioners should remain at Antioch, while the other returned with all possible speed to Constantinople.

The exasperated rage of Theodosius had cooled down. The deputies of the distressed people obtained a favourable audience. The hand of the Lord was in it: He had heard their cry. Grace triumphed in Theodosius. A free and general pardon was granted to the city and citizens of Antioch; the prison doors were thrown open; and senators, who despaired of their lives, recovered the possession of their houses and estates; and the capital of the East was restored to the enjoyment of her ancient dignity and splendour. Theodosius condescended to praise and reward the bishop of Antioch and others who had generously interceded for their distressed brethren; and confessed, that if the exercise of justice is the most important duty, the indulgence of mercy is the most exquisite pleasure, of a sovereign.*

{*Milman's *History of Christianity, vol. 3, p.* 140; Robertson's *History of the Church,* vol. 1, p. 242; Milner's *Church History,* vol. 2, p. 28.}

The Sin and Repentance of Theodosius

The history of the tumult and massacre at Thessalonica, in 390, graves yet deeper lines in the character of Theodosius. In studying this period of his life, we are reminded of David the king of Israel. In this sorrowful affair the enemy gained a great advantage over the christian Emperor; but God overruled it for the deeper blessing of his soul.

Botheric, commander in chief of the district, and several of his principal officers, were killed by the populace on the occasion of a chariot-race. A favourite charioteer had been thrown into prison for a notorious crime, and, consequently was absent on the day of the games. The populace unreasonably demanded his liberty; Botheric refused, and thus the tumult was raised and the dreadful consequences followed. The news exasperated the Emperor, and he ordered the sword to be let loose upon them. Ambrose interceded, and Theodosius promised to pardon the Thessalonians. His military advisers, however, artfully insisted on the heinous character of the crime, and procured an order to punish the offenders; which was carefully kept secret from the bishop The soldiers attacked the people indiscriminately when assembled in the circus, and thousands were slain, to avenge the death of their officers.

The mind of Ambrose was filled with horror and anguish on hearing of this massacre. As the servant of God he rises to the place of separation from evil, even in his imperial master. He retired into the country to indulge his grief, and to avoid the presence of the Emperor. But he wrote a letter to him, in which he set before him, in the most solemn manner his fearful guilt; and assuring him that he could not be allowed to enter the church of Milan until satisfied of the genuineness of his repentance. The Emperor, by this time was deeply affected by the reproaches of his own conscience and by those of his spiritual father. He bitterly bewailed the consequences of his rash fury in substituting barbarity for justice; and proceeded to perform his devotions in the church of Milan. But Ambrose met him at the porch, and, laying hold of his robe, desired him to withdraw as a man stained with innocent blood. The Emperor assured Ambrose of his contrition; but he was told that private regrets were insufficient to expiate public offences. The Emperor referred to David, a man after God's own heart. "You have imitated him in his crime, imitate him in his repentance," was the reply of the undaunted bishop.

The Emperor submitted to the priest. For eight months he remained in penitential seclusion; laying aside all his imperial ornaments, until at the Christmas season he presented himself before the archbishop, and humbly entreated re-admission into the church. "I weep," said he, "that the temple of God, and consequently heaven, is shut from me, which is open to slaves and beggars." Ambrose was firm, and required some practical fruit of his repentance He demanded that in future the execution of capital punishment should be deferred until thirty days after the sentence, in order that the ill effects of intemperate anger might be prevented. The Emperor readily agreed, and was then allowed to enter the church. The scene which followed was overwhelming. The Emperor, pulling off his imperial robes, prayed prostrate on the pavement. "My soul cleaveth to the dust," he cried; "quicken thou me according to Thy word." The people wept and prayed with him, being moved with his grief and humiliation.

Ambrose mentions in his funeral oration, that from the time of the Emperor's deep anguish he never passed a day without recalling to mind the crime into which he had been betrayed by his great failing - an infirmity of temper.

Reflections on the Discipline of Ambrose, and the Penance of Theodosius

There are few events in the annals of the church more deeply interesting than the penance of the great Theodosius, and the rigorous conditions of restoration demanded by Ambrose. Stripped of the superstition and formalities peculiar to the times, we have a case before us of the most genuine and salutary discipline. We must not suppose for a moment, that the behavior of Theodosius was the result of weakness or pusillanimity, but of a true fear of God; a real feeling of his guilt, a tender conscience, an acknowledgement of the claims of God, to whom all worldly greatness is subject.

Ambrose was neither haughty nor hypocritical, as we find many of the pontiffs became in later times. He cherished a strong affection for the Emperor, and a sincere concern for his soul, but he acted towards him from a solemn sense of his duty. He had a great idea no doubt, of the dignity with which his office invested him; and he felt himself bound to use it in behalf of justice and humanity, and in controlling the power of earthly sovereignty: a character of power, most certainly, never granted by God to a christian minister, and which often proved in after ages to be a most dangerous power, as the priest who holds in his hands the king's conscience may inflame or moderate his sanguinary passions. In the case of Ambrose it was pure christian influence. He appeared, though somewhat out of character, as the vindicator of outraged humanity, and as exercising a judicial authority over the meanest and the mightiest of mankind. But it is always disastrous to interfere with God's order, even when the best of objects seems to be thereby gained.

About four months after his victory over Eugenius, and the chastisement of the assassins of Valentinian, Theodosius the Great died at Milan, in the year 395, not exceeding fifty years of age; the last Emperor who maintained the dignity of the Roman name. Ambrose did not long survive his imperial friend. He died at Milan on Easter-eve, 397. He deepened and strengthened the foundations of ecclesiastical power which was to influence Christianity in all future ages. Basail, the two Gregories, and Chrysostom flourished about this time.

12 Internal History of the Church

Chapter 12

The Internal History of the Church

The century, which closes with the death of the great Theodosius and Ambrose, has been full of the deepest interest to the christian reader. Events, the most momentous - affecting the majesty and glory of God, and the well-being of mankind - have transpired. From 303 till 313, the church passed through her most trying ordeal under Diocletian. Ten years she was in a fiery furnace; but in place of being consumed, as her enemies vainly imagined, she seemed to increase in numbers as well as in purity and power. Satan was permitted to do his utmost against her; and he so moved and stirred up the heathen population, that in all parts of the empire they arose in arms; first, to defend their ancient polytheism, and, secondly, to root out Christianity, by persecuting the Christians, and destroying their sacred books. Thus the century commenced with the great and final struggle between paganism and Christianity, and closed with the total ruin of the former, and the complete triumph of the latter. The contest ended with the fourth century, and victory has rested with Christianity ever since.

Such has been the external history of the church, and the accomplishment, so far, of the word of the Lord in the Epistles to Smyrna and Pergamos. But there are other things which most reasonably demand a little of our attention before entering on the fifth century; and no part of the wide field which lies before us seems to have a stronger claim than the sphere and influence of the great prelates of the East and the West. It must also have occurred to our readers from the necessary allusions to baptism, that the observance of that rite had an immense place in the minds of those early Christians. They believed that the waters of baptism purified the soul completely. We have thought, then, of combining the two - of giving a brief history of baptism from the writings of the Fathers; which will, at the same time, give us an opportunity of seeing what views they held, not only on baptism, but on the fundamental truths of the gospel.

Ecclesiastical Variations of Baptism

In the New Testament there is perfect *uniformity,* both as to precept and example, on the subject of baptism; but in our own day, and ever since the beginning of the third century, we find in the professing church endless variations both as to theory and practice on this important subject. Those not acquainted with ecclesiastical history naturally inquire, When, and by what means, did such differences arise in the church?

As it has been our plan all through these "Short Papers" to find out the *beginnings* of great questions which have affected the peace and prosperity of the church, we will endeavor, very briefly, to point out the beginning and early history of ecclesiastical baptisms. We use the term *ecclesiastical,* as distinguished from *scriptural.* Nothing is of divine authority, either in theory or practice, that was introduced after the days of the inspired apostles. So that nothing can be **christian baptism** that *varies* from the institution of Christ and the practice of His apostles. To bring in alterations is to change the thing itself, and make it not the same, but another baptism; hence we find in history there were baptisms many.

As the early history of these variations, and not controversy, is our object, we will avoid giving any opinion on the long agitated question. For more than sixteen hundred years the controversy has been maintained with great determination, and by able men on both sides. No controversy in the history of the church has been of such continuance, or conducted with such confidence of victory by both parties. As there is no *express mention* of infant baptism in scripture, the baptists think that their position is beyond question: and the paedobaptists as firmly believe that it may be inferred from several well-known passages that infant baptism was practised in the days of the apostles. There has not been so much controversy as to the *mode* of baptism. The Greeks Latins, Franks, and Germans, appear to have baptised by immersion. "Baptism is a Greek word," says Luther, "and in Latin it may be rendered *mersio,* immersion; .... and though among the greater part of us this practice has fallen into disuse, nevertheless they that are baptised ought to be entirely immersed, and forthwith lifted out of the water, and this the etymology of the word indicates, as also in the German language." Neander's testimony is to the same effect: "Baptism was originally administered by immersion; and many of the comparisons of St. Paul allude to this form of its administration. The immersion is a symbol of death, of being buried with Christ; the coming forth from the water is a symbol of resurrection with Christ; and both, taken together, represent the second birth, the death of the old man, and a resurrection to a new life."* Cave, Tillotson, Waddington, etc., speak of the mode of baptism in a similar way. And as all these testimonies are from paedobaptists, we may dismiss this part of the subject as fairly proved in church history; nevertheless faith can only stand on the word of God. We follow not the Fathers, but Christ.

*{*The Inquirer, 1839, p. 232.}*

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, is the first of the Fathers that alludes to infant baptism. He died about the year 200, so that his writings are placed towards the close of the second century. The apostolic fathers never mention it. By this time superstition, to a great extent, had taken the place of faith, so that the reader must be prepared to hear some extravagant notions advanced by some of the great doctors; yet many of them, we doubt not, were true earnest Christians. "Christ came to save all persons by Himself," says Irenaeus, "all, I mean, who by Him are regenerated - baptized - unto God: infants and little ones, children and youths, and elder persons. Therefore He went through the several ages: for infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants: to little ones He was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age: and also giving to them an example of godliness, justice, and dutifulness: to youths He was a youth," etc. Baptism was thus taught to be a complete lustration of the soul for all ages and conditions of mankind. But the controversy soon resolved itself into the one question - infant or adult. Regeneration, born again, baptism, are used as interchangeable terms, and as meaning the same thing, in the writings of the Fathers.*

{*See Dr. Wall's *History of Infant Baptism.* We quote from his translation of the Fathers. Having received the thanks of the clergy of the lower house of Convocation, and the honour of D.D. from the University of Oxford, for his great work in defence of infant baptism, we may rely on his quotations as, in the main, correct, and as the most favourable to his object.}

Here we have the *origin, so* far as ecclesiastical antiquity informs us, of infant baptism. The passage is somewhat obscure and extremely fanciful; but it is the first trace we have of the yet unsettled question, and probably the root of all its variations ecclesiastically viewed. The effect of such teaching on superstitious minds was immense. Anxious parents hastened to have their delicate infants baptised lest they should die under the curse of original sin, and the man of the world delayed his baptism until the near approach of death to avoid any subsequent stain, and that he might emerge from the waters of regeneration to the realms of pure and unmingled blessedness. The example and reputation of Constantine led many thus to delay their baptism, though the clergy testified against the practice.

Tertullian. The testimony of this Father would prove that infants were baptised in his day - he died about 240 - but that he was not favourable to the practice: as he says, "But they whose duty it is to administer baptism are to know that it must not be given rashly .... Therefore according to every man's condition and disposition, and also their age, the delaying of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of little children. For what need is there that the godfathers should be brought into danger? because they either fail of their promises by death, or they may be mistaken by a child's proving of wicked disposition."

Origen, in discoursing on the sin of our nature, alludes to baptism as the appointed means for its removal. "Infants are baptised," he says, "for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? or when have they sinned? or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to that sense that we mentioned even now: none is free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth? And it is for that reason, because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptised."

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, about the year 253, received a letter from one Fidus, a country bishop, inquiring whether an infant, before it was eight days old, might be baptised if need required. The answer proves, not only that infant baptism was then practised, but the necessity of it in their minds because of its efficacy. Cyprian, with sixty-six bishops in council, says, "As to the case of infants, whereas you judge that they must not be baptised within two or three days after they are born; and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptised and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born: we were all in our assembly of the contrary opinion. For as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind, but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born. For whereas our Lord in His gospel says, 'the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them,' so far as lies in us, no soul, if possible, is to be lost," etc.

Gregory Nazianzen, bishop of Constantinople, was a Father of great note about the year 380. He was the means of destroying the power of Arianism in the Eastern capital, where it had been maintained in great strength for nearly forty years. He had to encounter much opposition and even persecution at first; but by degrees his eloquence, the practical and serious tone of his teaching, and the influence of his godly life, began to tell, and gained him a firm footing, though he never liked the imperial style of the capital.

Dr. Wall quotes largely from Gregory on baptism; our extracts will be brief. Like the rest of the Fathers, he is wild on this subject. "What say you to those that are as yet infants, and are not in capacity to be sensible of either the grace or the lack of it? Shall we baptise them too? Yes, by all means, if any danger make it requisite. For it is better that they be sanctified without their own sense of it, than that they should die unsealed and uninitiated. And a ground of this to us is circumcision, which was given on the eighth day and was a typical seal, and was practised on those that had no use of reason." Against the practice of delaying baptism till a death-bed he speaks strongly and earnestly, comparing the service to the washing of a corpse, rather than to christian baptism.

Basil, bishop of Caesarea, is constantly associated with the two Gregories. Gregory of Nyssa was his brother, the other his chief friend. Cappadocia gave birth to the three Fathers. Basil was faithful to the Athanasian creed during its days of depression and adversity, but did not live to behold its final triumph. He died about 379. He was a great admirer and a true example of monastic Christianity. He embraced the ascetic faith, abandoned his property and practised such severe austerities as to injure his health. He fled into the desert, his fame collected, as it were, a city around him, he built a monastery, and monasteries sprang up on every side

His views of baptism are similar to those of his friend Gregory, he urges the necessity of it from the same superstitious feeling that they all had. "If Israel had not passed through the sea," he says, "they had not got rid of Pharaoh: and unless thou pass through the waters of baptism, thou shalt not be delivered from the cruel tyranny of the devil," etc. This he would apply to all ages, and enforce it by the words of the Lord to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Ambrose, bishop of Milan, like all the Fathers we have yet met with, is thoroughly mistaken as to the meaning of Joh 3:5 : "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "You see," he says "that Christ excepts no person, not an infant, not even one that is hindered by unavoidable accident."

John, *surnamed* **Chrysostom,** which means the *golden-mouthed,* he obtained this name from his smooth, flowing eloquence. He was such a favourite of the people, that they used to say, "We had rather the sun should not shine, than that John should not preach." He was evidently in favour of infant baptism, though it is not clear that he believed in original sin. "For this cause we baptise infants also," he says, "though they are not defiled with sin, that there may be super-added to them *saintship, righteousness, adoption inheritance, a brotherhood with Christ and to be made members with Him."* It would be difficult to say more as to the alleged benefits of baptism than what we have here enumerated. But extravagant as the whole sentence may seem, it has been the text of the paedobaptists from that day to this. Most of our readers are familiar with these words, "Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." These words are taken, not from scripture, but from Chrysostom.

Dr. Wall is anxious to make it appear, that this great doctor was not unsound as to original sin. He suggests that the meaning of his words may be, "they are not defiled with their *own actual sins."* But Chrysostom does not say with *their own,* but that they are not defiled with sin. And surely every child is defiled, as saith the Psalmist, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." In vain do we look for soundness on many of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity among the Fathers; to say nothing of what they all overlooked, such as the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly, the heavenly calling, and the heavenly relations of the church, the difference between the house of God and the body of Christ, and the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Tit 2:11-15)

Reflections on the History of Infant Baptism

Enough, we believe, for our present purpose, has been said on the subject of infant baptism. The reader has before him the testimony of the most trustworthy witnesses for the first two hundred years of its history. The practice seems to have taken its rise, and derived all its wondrous influence, from a misinterpretation of Joh 3:5 : "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It was argued from this passage that baptism was necessary to salvation and all the blessings of grace. The efficacy of the blood of Christ, the purifying power of the word of God, and the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit, were all attributed to the due observance of external baptism. And need we wonder at the place it has held in the professing church these sixteen hundred years, or at its mighty influence on all classes and all ages? though many do not hold baptismal regeneration.

The ancient Christians, Dr. Wall affirms, without the exception of one man, teach that these words of the Saviour refer to baptism. Calvin, he believes, was the first man that ever objected to this interpretation, or that refused to accept it as teaching the necessity of baptism to salvation. Supposing these statements to be correct, they prove, that the great ecclesiastical fabric that arose out of baptism was founded on a misinterpretation. The church of Rome, Lutherans, Greeks, and Anglicans, continue to follow the Fathers in this misapplication of the truth. "Shall that," says Hooker, referring to Calvin's new interpretation of Joh 3:5, "which hath always received this and no other construction be now disguised with the toy of novelty? God will have baptism embraced, not only as a sign or token of what we receive, but also as an instrument or means whereby we receive grace." Bishop Burnet also observes speaking of the ancient times: "The words of our Saviour to Nicodemus were expounded so as to import the absolute necessity of baptism in order to salvation. These words 'the kingdom of God,' being taken to mean eternal glory, that expression of our Saviour's was understood to import this that no man could be saved unless he were baptized," etc.* Calvin taught, that the benefits of baptism were limited to the children of the elect, and thus introduced the idea of hereditary Christianity. The Presbyterians follow Calvin; and, as a consequence of his teaching, circumcision becomes both the warrant and the rule of infant baptism. But some of our readers may be anxious to know what we believe to be the true interpretation of Joh 3:5, seeing that so much is built upon it.

{*Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity,* book 5. 59, 60. Burnet on *the Articles,* Art. 27.}

What is the Teaching of Joh 3:5?

The expression "born of water," we believe, in no way means baptism. The new birth is the Saviour's theme; without which no man can see or *enter* into the kingdom of God. It was not yet come visibly - "not with observation" - but it was there among them, as God's new sphere of power and blessing. Flesh cannot even perceive this kingdom. Christ had not come to teach and improve the flesh, as Nicodemus seemed to think; but that man might be partaker of a divine nature which is imparted by the Spirit. No mere external rite admits to the kingdom. There must be a new nature or life suited to the new order of things. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then the Lord shows Nicodemus the only way of entering into the kingdom. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Water is here used as the symbol of the cleansing and purifying power of the *word* of God; as in Peter, "seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." Here, the truth is spoken of as the instrument, and the Spirit as the agent, in the new birth as he goes on to say, "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *word of God.*" Two things are necessary - the word and the Spirit. (1Pe 1:22-23)

The passage obviously means the application of the word of God in the power of the Spirit - operating in the heart, conscience, thoughts, and actions; and thereby bringing in a new life from God, in which we have His mind, and His thoughts about the kingdom. The following passages will make it still plainer. "Of his own *will* begat He us with *the word of truth."* (Jam 1:18) "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of *water by* the word." (Eph 5:26) "Now ye are clean through the *word* which I have spoken unto you." (Joh 15:3) Here we have the moral cleansing or purifying of the soul, by the application of the word through the Spirit which judges all things, and which works in us new thoughts and affections, suitable to the presence and glory of God.

As a question of *interpretation,* then, we see no allusion to baptism in Joh 3:5 : baptism may set forth that which is conveyed by it, but baptism itself conveys nothing. On the other hand - according to the inspired commentaries in the Epistles - baptism is the sign of death, not of giving life, as the Fathers uniformly affirm. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." (Rom. 6; Col. 2; 1 Pet. 3) Besides it is perfectly plain that Nicodemus could not possibly have known anything of proper christian baptism, as it was not instituted by our Lord till after He arose from the dead.

Modern Paedobaptists

The church of Rome and all who follow the Fathers confess that the origin of their practice is tradition. But there are many in our day, as there have been since the Reformation,* who hold infant baptism from the writings of the New Testament. The following are the principal passages they refer to: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." .... "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." .... "For the promise is unto you, and to your children." .... "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And many draw their arguments chiefly from the baptism of households, and from the Abrahamic covenant: Mark 10; 1 Cor. 7; Acts 2; Eph. 6; Acts 16; Gen. 17.

{*Then, by the Reformers, and afterwards by the Puritans, an effort was made to find scripture for what the church of Rome had held as tradition; the Protestants went to the Bible for everything, the Catholics to the Fathers.}

Anti-Paedobaptists, or *"the Baptists,"* as they call themselves, simply affirm, that in all the allusions to baptism in the writings of the apostles, it is uniformly coupled with faith in the gospel; and that such expressions as *"buried with Him* by baptism," and *"planted together* in the likeness of His death," etc., must mean, that the person so baptised has part with Christ by faith. And, further, that as baptism is an ordinance of Christ, it must of necessity be celebrated exactly as He appointed. Nothing, it is said, but *direct scripture* ought to be the foundation of our faith and practice in divine things. And since to the very being of baptism a subject to whom it must be administered is necessary, and a mode of administering, without which it would only be a notion in the human mind, these things therefore, are as necessary as baptism itself. And hence it follows that the true subjects, which are professed believers only, and the true mode, which is immersion only, are necessary to true christian baptism.*

{*Gale's *Reflections on Wall's History,* vol. 3, p. 84.}

The Origin of Infant Communion

When superstition in general takes the place of faith, and human notions the place of God's word, where will even serious and enlightened men not be carried! Augustine strongly advocated the practice of **infant communion.** But it followed infant baptism as a necessary consequence. The Fathers affirmed that the grace of God bestowed upon the subjects of baptism was given without measure, and without any limitation as to age, therefore, they reasoned, that the Lord's supper might consistently be administered to all who had been baptised, whether infants or adults. The custom prevailed for many ages; it is still observed by the Greek church; but we refrain from details. In general, the inward spiritual meaning and true design of the Lord's supper were greatly lost sight of; and the most superstitious reverence was expressed for the external symbols of the ordinance.

The Position and Character of the Clergy

In studying the internal history of the church during the fourth century, innumerable things crowd for a brief notice: but we can only refer to those which characterise the period. The altered position of the clergy is an important one, and will account for many changes that were introduced by them. From the time of Constantine the members of the **christian ministry** attained a new social position with certain secular advantages. This led great numbers to join the sacred order from the most unworthy motives. Hence the sorrowful influence of this unhallowed mixture on the whole professing church. We constantly meet with it in the pride, arrogance luxury, and assumed dignity of the whole clerical order. Thus, it is said that Martin of Tours, when at the court of Maximus, allowed the *Empress* to wait on him at table, and that when the *Emperor* had desired him to drink before him, and expected to receive the cup back after the bishop had drunk, Martin passed it to his own chaplain, as being higher in honour than any earthly potentate. This circumstance shows us where the clergy now were, what they thought of themselves and of spiritual dignity in opposition to secular rank. The church had now become like "a great house," wherein "are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour." And such it has been ever since, and such it will be to the end; but the path of the faithful is plain. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, [the vessels to dishonour,] he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2Ti 2:20-21)

The Origin and Growth of Monasticism

Before we approach the period of "the Church of Thyatira," it may be well to notice the rise and growth of the early ascetic tendencies. The influence of **monasticism** was indeed great during the dark ages, and throughout the Western churches. Let us trace it to its source. It is well to know the beginning of things, especially of important and influential things.

During the violence of the Decian persecution, about the year 251, many Christians fled into voluntary exile. Among these was a young man named **Paul** of Alexandria, who took up his abode in the desert of Thebais, or Upper Egypt. By degrees he became attached to the mode of life he had adopted from necessity; and is celebrated as the first christian hermit, though without fame or influence at the time. Not so with his immediate and great successor.

Antony, who is regarded as the father of monasticism, was born at Coma, in Upper Egypt, about the year 251. In boyhood and youth, it is said, he was thoughtful, serious, and of a retiring disposition. He cared little for worldly learning but desired earnestly the knowledge of divine things. Before reaching the age of nineteen, he lost his parents, and came into possession of considerable property. One day while in church, it so happened that the gospel concerning the rich young man was read before the assembly. Antony considered the words of the Saviour as addressed from heaven to himself. "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me." (Luk 18:22) He forthwith made over his land to the inhabitants of his village, turned the rest of his estates into money, and gave all to the poor, except a small portion which he reserved for the maintenance of his only sister. On another occasion he was deeply impressed with the words of the Lord, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow" (Mat 6:25-34), and taking these words in a literal sense, he parted with the remainder of his property, placed his sister with a society of pious virgins, that he might be free from all cares about earthly things and embraced a life of rigid asceticism.

Antony is said to have visited Paul the hermit, and all the most famous ascetics he could hear of, endeavouring to learn from each his distinguishing virtue, and to combine all their graces in his own practice. He shut himself up in a tomb, where he lived ten years. By excessive fastings, exhaustion, and an over-excited imagination, he fancied himself beset by evil spirits, with whom he had many and severe conflicts. Antony became famous. Many visited the unnatural place of his abode in the hope of seeing him, or of hearing the noise of his conflicts with the powers of darkness. But he left his tomb, and dwelt in a ruined castle near the Red Sea for other twenty years. He increased his mortifications with the view of overcoming the evil spirits, but the same temptations and conflicts followed him.

Strange as it may seem, this remarkable and deluded man had a true heart for Christ, and a tender heart for his people. The persecution under Maximus (311) drew him from his cell to the public scenes in Alexandria. His appearance produced a great effect. He attended on the sufferers, exhorting them to unwavering confidence in their confession of Christ, and manifested great love to the confessors in the prisons and in the mines. He exposed himself in every way to danger, yet no one ventured to touch him. A kind of inviolable sanctity was supposed to surround these unearthly, ghostly-looking men. When the fury of the persecution was past, he escaped to a new place of solitude in the side of a lofty mountain. Here he cultivated a small piece of ground; multitudes flocked to him; great numbers imitated him. Mourners came to him to be comforted, the perplexed to be advised, and enemies to be reconciled. Miracles were ascribed to him, his influence was boundless.

In the year 352, when he was a hundred years old, he appeared a second time in Alexandria. This was to counteract the spread of Arianism, and defend with all his influence the true orthodox faith. His appearance produced a great sensation, multitudes thronged to see the monk - the man of God, as he was called - and hear him preach, and many pagans were converted to Christianity by his means. Antony and his monks were steady and powerful supporters of the Nicene creed. He lived to the age of a hundred and five, and died only a few days before Athanasius found a refuge among the monks of the desert in 356.

The Virtues and Failures of Antony

Antony was evidently sincere and honest, though utterly mistaken and misled by the craft and power of Satan In place of acting upon the Saviour's commission to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," or following His example who went about doing good, he thought to attain to a more elevated spirituality by withdrawing from mankind, and devoting himself to austerity of life, and to uninterrupted communion with heaven. He was a Christian, but utterly ignorant of the nature and object of Christianity. Holiness in the flesh was his one grand object; though the apostle had said, "In me - that is, in my flesh - dwelleth no good thing." Therefore all was failure, utter failure; as it ever must be, if we think there is any good thing in human nature, or try to become better in ourselves. In place of sanctifying his nature by fastings and idleness, he found that every evil passion was excited to greater activity.

"Hence, in his solitude," says Neander, "he had to endure many conflicts with sense, which in some active vocation demanding the exertion of all his powers, might perhaps have been avoided. The temptations he had to battle with were so much the more numerous and powerful, as he was given to idle self-occupation, as he busied himself in fighting down the impure images that were constantly coming in from the abyss of corruption within his heart, instead of forgetting himself in worthier employments, or in looking away to the everlasting source of purity and holiness. At a later period, Antony, with a conviction grounded on long years of experience, acknowledged this, and said to his monks, 'Let us not busy our imaginations in painting spectres of evil spirits; let us not trouble our minds as if we were lost. Let us rather be comforted and cheerful at all times, as those who have been redeemed; and let us be mindful that the Lord is with us who has conquered them and made them nothing. Let us ever remember that, if the Lord is with us, the enemy can do us no harm. The spirits of evil appear different to us, according to the different moods of mind in which they find us.... But if they find us joyful in the Lord, occupied in the contemplation of future blessedness and of the things of the Lord, reflecting that everything is in the Lord's hand, and that no evil spirit can do any harm to the Christian, they turn away in confusion from the soul which they see preserved by such good thoughts.'"*

{*General Church History, vol. 3, p. 310. See also History of the Church by James Craigie Robertson, vol. 1, p. 295.}

It is perfectly plain from these counsels to his monks, that Antony was not only a sincere Christian, but that he had a good knowledge of the Lord and of redemption, though so completely turned aside by a deceived heart. We are never safe unless moving on the direct lines of the truth of God. The system which this man introduced in his false dreams of perfection in the flesh, became, in process of time, the very hot-bed of profligacy and vice. And thus it continued for more than a thousand years. It was not until the sixteenth century, that the divine light of the blessed Reformation, bursting upon a scene of dense moral darkness, revealed the deep-seated corruption and the flagrant enormities of the different monastic orders. The monks at that time, like swarms of locusts, covered all Europe; they proclaimed everywhere, as history informs us, the obedience due to holy mother church, the reverence due to the saints, and more especially to the Virgin Mary, the efficacy of relics, the torments of purgatory, and the blessed advantages arising from Indulgences. But as the monks lost their popularity and influence at the Reformation, a new order was necessary to fill their place and do their evil work: and such was found in the Society of Jesus founded by Ignatius Loyola - the **Jesuits.** But we must take another glance at the early history of monasticism.

The First Society of Ascetics

The earliest form in which the ascetic spirit developed itself in the christian church was not in the formation of societies or communities, as we find in later times, but in the seclusion of single individuals. They believed, however mistaken, that they had a special call to strive after a higher christian life; and in order to attain this eminent holiness, they imposed upon themselves the most severe restraints. They retired to desert places, that they might give themselves up to close meditation on divine things, and that their minds might be entirely abstracted from all natural objects, and from whatever delights the senses. Both men and women supposed that they must emaciate their bodies with watchings, fasting, toil, and self-torture. As the poor body was considered an oppressive load and hindrance to their spiritual aspirations, they vied with each other in the extent to which they could carry their self-mortifications. They existed on the coarsest and most unwholesome diet: they sometimes abstained from food and sleep till nature was almost wholly exhausted. The contagion of this new device of Satan spread far and wide. The mysterious recluse was regarded as necessarily invested with peculiar sanctity. The hermit's cell was visited by the noble, the learned, the devout - all desirous to pay homage to the holy man of God; and thus spiritual pride was engendered by the flattery of the world. From this time the monastic life was held in such esteem, that many adopted it as a highly honourable employment; and afterwards formed themselves into communities, or monastic institutions.

Pachomius, who was, like Antony, a native of Thebais was converted to Christianity in the early part of the fourth century. After practising austerities for some time, he was told by an angel in his dreams, that he had made sufficient progress in the monastic life, and must now become a teacher of others. Pachomius then founded a society on an island of the Nile. Thus began ascetics to live in an association. The institution soon extended, so that before the founder's death it embraced eight monasteries, with three thousand monks; and in the beginning of the following century the number of monks was no less than fifty thousand. They lived in cells each of which contained three. They were under engagements of absolute obedience to the commands of the *Abbot,* or *father.* They wore a peculiar dress, the chief article of which was a goat-skin, in imitation of Elijah, who, with John the Baptist, was regarded as exemplifying the monastic condition. They were never to undress; they slept with their clothes on, and in chairs so constructed as to keep them almost in a standing posture. They prayed many times a day fasted on the fourth and sixth days of the week, and communicated on the Sabbath and on the Lord's day. Their meals were eaten in silence, and with their hoods drawn over their faces, so that no one could see his neighbour. They employed themselves in agriculture and various forms of industry, and had all things in common, in imitation of the first Christians after the day of Pentecost.* Pachomius founded similar societies for women.

{*Robertson, vol. 1, p. 296; Neander, vol. 3, p. 317; Gardner's *Faiths of the World,* vol. 2, p. 473.}

The Monasteries and the Roman Pontiff

Until nearly the close of the fifth century, the monasteries were placed under the superintendence of the bishops, the monks were regarded as simply laymen, and had no claim to be ranked among the sacerdotal order. Circumstances, however, in course of time, led the monks to assume a clerical character. Many of them were occupied in the work of reading and expounding the scriptures, and all of them were supposed to be engaged in the cultivation of the higher spiritual life; so that they were in great favour with the multitude, especially as they began to exercise their clerical functions beyond the confines of their establishments. Jealousies soon sprung up between the bishops and the abbots: the result was, that the abbots, to deliver themselves from dependence upon their spiritual rivals, made application to be taken under the protection of the Pope at Rome. The proposal was gladly accepted, and very quickly all the monasteries, great and small, abbeys, priories, and nunneries, were subjected to the authority of the See of Rome. This was an immense step towards the pontifical power of Rome.

The Pope could now establish in almost every quarter a kind of spiritual police, who acted as spies on the bishops as well as on the secular authorities. This event is carefully to be noted, if we would watch the ways and means of the rising power, and ultimate supremacy, of the Roman Pontiff.

The monastic system soon spread far beyond the borders of Egypt: and all the great teachers of the age, both in the East and in the West, advocated the cause of celibacy and monasticism. **St. Jerome**, in particular, the most learned man of his day is regarded as the connecting link between the two great divisions of the church - the Greek and the Roman, or the Eastern and the Western. He was the means of powerfully forwarding the cause of celibacy and monasticism, especially among females. Many Roman ladies of rank became nuns through his influence. **Ambrose** so extolled virginity in his sermons, that the mothers of Milan restrained their daughters from attending his ministry, but crowds of virgins from other quarters flocked to him for consecration. **Basil** introduced monastic life into Pontus and Cappadocia; **Martin,** into Gaul, **Augustine,** into Africa; and **Chrysostom** was prevented by the wisdom of his mother from retiring in his youth to a remote hermitage in Syria.

Before leaving this subject it may be well, once for all, to notice the rise and establishment of nunneries.

The Origin of Female Recluses

From an early period of the history of the church we read of devout virgins, who professed religious chastity, and dedicated themselves to the service of Christ. Their duties and devotions were self-imposed, so that they might preserve their domestic relations or enter without scandal into the state of marriage. But the origin of communities of female recluses is attributed to Pachomius, the great founder of the regular monastic systems. Before his death, which took place about the middle of the fourth century, no fewer than twenty-seven thousand females in Egypt alone had adopted the monastic life. The rules which he formed for the convents of nuns were similar to those which bound the monks. "They lived from common funds, used a common dormitory, a table, and wardrobe. The same religious services were prescribed, habitual temperance and occasional fasting were enjoyed with the same severity. Manual labour was no less rigidly enforced; but instead of the agricultural toil imposed upon their 'brethren,' to them were committed the easier tasks of the needle or the distaff. By duties so numerous, by occupations admitting so great variety, they beguiled the tediousness of the day, and the dulness of monastic seclusion."*

{*Waddington, vol. 2, p. 252.}

It is certain that many such establishments were founded during the fourth century, and that they were propagated throughout Egypt, Syria, Pontus, and Greece, and that gradually they penetrated into every province where the name of Christ was known, and even until now they abound in all Roman Catholic countries, and form a strange and incongruous appendage to the church.

The Ceremony of Taking the Vow

The cruel and merciless spirit of popery is painfully felt even by her own members, at the consecration of a nun. It is unnatural, unscriptural, an outrage on every feeling of our humanity, ruinous both to soul and body, and could only be submitted to through the blinding power of Satan. What a mercy to be far away from her unaccountable influence and fatal delusions! The following description of the ceremonial of a novice taking the vows, is from the pen of an eye-witness of the scene as it took place in Rome; slightly abridged.

"By particular favour we had been furnished with billets for the best seats, and, after waiting about half-an-hour, two footmen in rich liveries made way for the young countess who entered the crowded church in full dress, her dark hair blazing with diamonds. Supported by her mother she advanced to the altar. The officiating priest was Vicario, the discourse from the pulpit was pronounced by a Dominican monk, who addressed her as the affianced spouse of Christ - a saint on earth, one who had renounced the vanities of the world for a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

"The sermon ended, the lovely victim herself, kneeling before the altar at the feet of the cardinal, solemnly abjured the world whose pleasures and affections she seemed so well calculated to enjoy, and pronounced those vows which severed her from them for ever. As her voice softly chanted those fatal words, I believe there was scarcely an eye in the whole of that vast church unmoistened with tears. The diamonds that sparkled in her hair were taken off, and her long and beautiful tresses fell luxuriantly down her shoulders.

"The grate that was to entomb her was opened. The abbess and her black train of nuns appeared. Their choral voices chanted a strain of welcome. It said, or seemed to say, 'sister spirit, come away!' She renounced her name and title adopted a new appellation, received the solemn benediction of the cardinal, and the last embraces of her weeping friends and passed into that bourne from whence she was never to return. A panel behind the other now opened, and she appeared at the grate again. Here she was despoiled of her ornaments and her splendid attire, her beautiful hair was mercilessly severed from her head by the fatal shears of the sisters, enough to make the whole congregation shudder. As she was shorn of her natural covering, the sisters hastened to invest her with the sober robes of the nun, the white coif and the noviciate veil.

"Throughout the whole ceremony she showed great calmness and firmness, and it was not till all was over that her eyes were moistened with tears of natural emotion. She afterwards appeared at the little postern gate of the convent to receive the sympathy and praise and congratulations of all her friends and acquaintances, nay, even of strangers, all of whom are expected to pay their compliments to the new spouse of heaven."*

{*Gardner's *Faiths of the World.*}

The description now given refers to the profession of a nun on the taking of the *white veil,* a step which forms the commencement of the noviciate or year of trial, and is not irrevocable. The ceremony of taking the *black veil* at the end of the year is still more solemn and dreadful, but when it has been gone through, she is a recluse for life, and can only be released from her vow by death. In the eye of Roman law, both civil and ecclesiastical, the step she has taken is beyond recall. Imprisonment, torture, death temporal and eternal are held out as the punishments of disobedience. And who can tell, outside the convent walls, what refined and prolonged cruelties may be practised inside? The power is despotic; there is no appeal; until the deceiver and the deceived, the persecutor and the helpless victim, stand side by side before the righteous tribunal of God.

Reflections on the Principles of Asceticism

It is truly sorrowful to reflect on the many and serious mistakes, or rather positive errors, of the great doctors, or early fathers as they are usually called. We know of nothing more grave and solemn than the fact, that they greatly misled the people then, and that by their writings they have been misleading the professing church ever since. Who can estimate the evil consequences of such teaching for the last fourteen hundred years at least? The misinterpretation or the misapplication of the word of God is evidently the rule with these leaders, to teach sound doctrine, the exception. And still they are the boast and the alleged authority of a large portion of Christendom even until now.

On the subject of **asceticism,** any one having an ordinary acquaintance with scripture may see their ignorance of the mind of God, and their perversion of His word. We are exhorted, for example, to "mortify the *deeds* of the body," but never to mortify the body itself. The body is the Lord's, and to be cared for. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that your bodies are the members of Christ?" True, they are to be kept *under* and brought into *subjection,* but that is the wisest way of caring for the body. (Rom 8:13, 1Co 6:15; 1Co 9:27) Again, the apostle says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," and then he states what these are: "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." These are the *deeds* of the body which we are to mortify - to put to death practically; and this on the ground that the flesh was put to death on the cross. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," not, observe *are* crucifying it, or *ought* to crucify it, but *have* crucified it. God has put it out of His sight by the cross, and we are to keep it out of sight by self-judgment. The *body,* on the contrary, has in the New Testament a most important place as the temple of the Holy Ghost, but the tendency of asceticism is to starve the body, and feed the flesh. "Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." (Col 2:23)

The Fathers seem to have overlooked that asceticism was the offspring of heathen philosophy, and not in any way of divine Christianity, but they never fairly looked into scripture for the mind of God on these subjects. The total ruin of man in the flesh not being understood by them, they vainly thought it might be improved, and were thus led astray in ways innumerable; especially as to the work of Christ, God's judgment of the flesh, the true principle of worship, and the whole path of Christian service.

Having now seen the foundation laid of the great monastic system, which was to exert so powerful an influence in connection with Christianity, literature, and civilisation, throughout the dark ages, we may leave it for the present, and return to our general history.

Arcadius and Honorius,

A.D. 395

Theodosius the Great left two sons, **Arcadius,** aged eighteen years, and Honorius, who was only eleven. The elder succeeded to the sovereignty of the East, the younger to that of the West. Nothing can be more striking than the condition of the Roman world at this moment, or more fitted to excite our compassion: two Emperors of such weakness as to be incapable of conducting the administration of public affairs, and the whole empire in a state of danger and alarm from the Gothic invaders. The hand of the Lord is manifestly here. Where is now the genius, the glory, and the power of Rome? They expired with Theodosius. At a moment when the empire required the prudence, the martial skill, and the talents of a Constantine, it was professedly governed by two imbecile princes. But its days were numbered in the providence of God, it was fast passing away

The fiercest storm that had ever assailed the empire was now ready to burst upon it in its hour of weakness. The able general, Stilicho, the only hope of Rome, was assassinated soon after the death of Theodosius, and all Italy lay within the grasp of the barbarians. The Goths had yielded to the arms and especially to the policy of Theodosius, but it needed only the news of his death to arouse them to revolt and revenge. The famous **Alaric,** the crafty and able leader of the Goths, only waited for a favourable opportunity to carry out a scheme of greater magnitude and daring than had entered into the mind of any of Rome's enemies since the time of Hannibal. He was, we doubt not, the minister of God's righteous judgments on a people so deeply stained with the blood of His saints, besides having crucified the Lord of glory, and slain His apostles. Details we must leave to the civil historian of Rome's decline and fall: but we may briefly say, that Alaric was now followed, not only by the Goths, but by tribes of almost every name and race. The fury of the desert was now to be poured out on the mistress and corrupter of the world. He led his forces into Greece without opposition; he devastated its fruitful land, and plundered Athens, Corinth, Argos, and Sparta; and that which was impiously called "the eternal city," he besieged and sacked. For six days she was given up to remorseless slaughter and universal pillage. Thus fell the guilty, the devoted, city by the judgment of God: no hand held out to help: no man lamenting her fate. The richest provinces of Europe too, Italy, Gaul, and Spain, were laid waste by the immediate successors of Alaric, especially **Attila,** and new kingdoms set up by the barbarians. Thus the history of *the fourth great world-empire closes about A.D. 478, and in the twelve hundred and twenty-ninth year from the foundation of Rome.*

Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, a prince alike excellent in the arts of war and of government, restored an age of peace and prosperity, swept away all vestiges of the imperial government, and formed Italy into a kingdom.*

{**Encyclop. Brit.* vol. 19, p. 420. White's *Eighteen Christian Centuries,* p. 94.}

Reflections on the Calamities of Rome

The christian reader may here find it profitable to pause for a moment and contemplate the overthrow of the Western empire, and the division of its territory amongst the various hordes of the barbarians. It is our privilege and for our edification in all this, to see the fulfilment and harmony of scripture, the overruling providence of God, and the accomplishment of His purposes. We can also afford to drop the tear of compassion over the miseries of our deluded fellowmen. This would be nothing more than the tender compassion of Him who wept over the devoted city Jerusalem. It is our duty to study history by the sure light of scripture; not scripture - as some have attempted - by the uncertain light of history. Thus we may be happy in the presence of God with the page of history open before us, and our faith strengthened by the mighty contrast between the kingdom of God and all earthly glory. "Wherefore," says the apostle, "we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (Heb 12:28) The superiority of Christianity to the most powerful of Pagan institutions was now manifest to all. When the overwhelming judgments of God fell upon Italy, and broke in pieces the iron rule of the empire, the church suffered no harm. It was rather shielded, and the means of shielding others, than exposed to danger. Like the ark which rose above the dark waters of the deluge, the church was preserved from the fury of the invader. There was no instance of the barbarians embracing the old religion of Greece and Rome, they either adhered to the superstitions of their ancestors, or adopted some form of Christianity. There is no sure footing for the sinner amidst the convulsions of earth, the rise and fall of empires, but the Rock of Ages the risen and exalted Christ of God. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Psa 2:12) The Lord provided for the safety of His people by the previous conversion of those who subverted the empire.

The Conversion of the Barbarians

It is always interesting and edifying to trace the hand of the Lord in turning the wrath of man to His own praise, and in bringing the greatest good to His own people out of that which appears to be their heaviest calamity. In the reign of Gallienus, about 268, a great number of Roman provincials had been led away into captivity by the Gothic bands; many of these captives were Christians, and several belonged to the ecclesiastical order. They were dispersed by their masters as slaves in the villages; but as missionaries by the Lord. They preached the gospel to the **barbarous** people, and numbers were converted. Their increase and order may be inferred from the fact that they were represented at the Nicene council by a bishop, named Theophilus.

Ulphilas, who is commonly called "the Apostle of the Goths," has deserved the grateful remembrance of posterity but especially of Christians. About the middle of the fourth century, he invented an alphabet and translated the scriptures into the Gothic language, with the exception of the books of Samuel and Kings, lest their warlike contents should be found too congenial to the ferocity of the barbarians. At first they appear to have been simple and orthodox in their faith, but afterwards became deeply tinged with Arianism, especially after the Arian ministers, who were ejected from their churches by Theodosius, had laboured diligently among them.

Alaric and his Goths were professed Christians; they directed their wrath against the heathen temples, but greatly reverenced the churches. This was the great mercy of God to His people; numbers of whom fled to the churches, where they found a sanctuary. The earnest faith and the indefatigable zeal of Ulphilas, together with his blameless life, had gained the love and confidence of the people. They received in faith the doctrines of the gospel, which he preached and practised: so that the first invaders of the empire had previously learnt in their own land to profess or at least to respect, the religion of the vanquished. And herein we see the truth, or rather the fulfilment of the Apostle's words in his Epistle to the Romans: "The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek;" and again, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise." The learned citizens of the Roman empire, and the rude inhabitants of Scythia and Germany, were alike brought under the saving power of the gospel.

The Conversion of Clovis

As the conversion of Clovis is said to have been the most important in the fifth century, we must give a few particulars of the event - important, we mean as to its consequences, both immediate and remote, on the history of Europe, and so far of the church.

The Franks, a people of Germany, had settled in the north of France, near Cambray; a most religious part of the country, rendered famous by the shrine of Saint Martin of Tours, and by the legendary virtues of other saints. Clovis was a pagan, but Clotilda, his wife, had embraced the Catholic faith. She had long urged him to become a Christian but he was slow to believe. At length, however, when engaged in battle with the Alemanni, and finding himself in danger, he thought of Clotilda's God, and prayed to Him; declaring that his old gods had failed him, and vowing to become a Christian if he should gain the victory. The tide of battle turned; his enemies were defeated; and true to his vow, at Christmas, 496, Clovis was baptised at Rheims by the bishop, Remigius. Three thousand warriors followed his example, declaring their readiness to be of the same religion as their king.

Here we have another Constantine. Clovis found the profession of Christianity most favourable to his political interests, but it produced no change for the better in his life. His object was conquest, his ambition was boundless, his deeds were daring and cruel. From being only a Frankish chief with a small territory, he became the founder of the great French monarchy. And from his confession of the Catholic faith, and his alliance with the Roman Pontiff, he was acknowledged champion of Catholicism, and declared to be the only orthodox sovereign in the West: all the others were Arians. Alaric who conquered Rome, Genseric who conquered Africa, Theodoric the Great who became king of Italy, and many of the Lombard kings, were Arians. Hence the kings of France derive from Clovis the title of "eldest Son of the Church."

To the student of prophecy it is interesting to see, that by this time at least five or six barbarian kings were in possession of the Roman provinces, and ruled over what had been the Latin empire. But this had passed away. It had died as an empire, and must remain in the place of death until resuscitated, according to the word of the Lord, in the latter day. (Rev. 13, 17)

Before concluding the Pergamos period, we find it will be necessary to notice, however briefly, three things - the internal state of the church, the Pelagian and Nestorian controversies.

Rites and Ceremonies

The more general adoption of Christianity, as will easily be imagined, was followed by an increase of splendour in all that concerned the worship of God, so-called. Churches were built and adorned with greater cost; the officiating clergy were attired in richer dresses, the music became more elaborate, and many new ceremonies were introduced. And these usages were then justified on the same ground that we find the high church party justifying the extraordinary rites and ceremonies of the present day.* It was intended to recommend the gospel to the heathen by ceremonies which might surpass those of their old religion. Multitudes were drawn into the church then, as they are now, without any sufficient understanding of their new position, and with minds still possessed of heathen notions, and corrupted by heathen morality. Even in the earliest days of Christianity we find irregularities in the church at Corinth through the unforgotten practices of the heathen. The burning of candles in daylight, incense, images, processions, lustrations, and innumerable other things, were introduced in the fourth and fifth centuries. For, as Mosheim observes, "While the good-will of the Emperors aimed to advance the christian religion, the indiscreet piety of the bishops obscured its true nature and oppressed its energies, by the multiplication of rites and ceremonies. "**

{*See *The Church and the World,* 1866.}

{***Eccles. Hist.* vol. 1, p. 366, Murdock and Soames. Robertson vol. 1, p. 316.}

The Degenerating Influence of Ritualism

The tendency of all ecclesiastical ritualism is to produce a spirit of superstition to the subversion of faith, of mere formality to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and of resting in our own good works to the rejection of the finished work of Christ. The word of God is thus practically set aside, the Holy Spirit grieved, and the heart laid open to the inroads of Satan. When faith is in lively exercise, the word of God strictly followed, and the promised guidance of the Comforter relied upon, the soul is strong and vigorous in the divine life, and the suggestions of the enemy unheeded. Satan is a keen observer of the different states of the believer's soul and of the professing church. He knows when he will be successful in his attempts against the individual believer or the church; he waits his- time - he watches his opportunity. When he sees the mind taking a wrong direction, he soothes, flatters, stimulates. Solemn thought for us all!

The Pelagian Heresy

The condition of the church in the beginning of the fifth century gave the adversary an opportunity to bring in a new heresy, which introduced a fresh controversy that has continued with more or less violence from that day even until now. This was *Pelagianism.* The great heresy, Arianism which had hitherto agitated the church, originated in the East and related to the Godhead of Christ, one was now to arise in the West, which had for its subject the nature of man after the fall and his relations to God. The last misrepresented the lost sinner; the first, the divine Saviour.

Pelagius is said to have been a monk of the great monastery of Bangor, in Wales, and probably the first Briton who distinguished himself as a theologian. His real name was Morgan. His follower, **Celestius,** is supposed to have been a native of Ireland. Augustine speaks of him as younger than Pelagius - bolder and less crafty. These two companions in error visited Rome, where they became intimate with many persons of ascetic and saintly reputation, and disseminated their opinions with caution and in privacy; but after the siege in the year 410 they passed into Africa, where they more openly advanced their opinions.

It does not appear that Pelagius was animated by any desire to form a new doctrinal system, but rather to oppose what he considered moral indolence, and a worldly spirit among his brethren. Hence he maintained that man possessed inherent power for doing the will of God, and for reaching the highest degree of holiness. In this way his theological views were to a great extent formed and determined. But utterly false as they are, they were only consistent with his rigid asceticism, and its native fruit. As scripture undeniably refers all good in man to the grace of God, Pelagius too, in a sense of his own, acknowledges this; but his ideas of divine grace were really nothing more than outward means to call forth man's efforts: a work of heavenly grace in the heart, and the operations of the Holy Spirit he did not think were needed. This led him to teach that the sin of our first parents had injured no one but themselves, that man is now born as innocent as Adam was when God created him, and possessed of the same moral power and purity. These doctrines, and such as are connected with them, especially the idea of man's free will - "an unbiassed power of choosing between good and evil," Pelagius and his colleague, Celestius, secretly disseminated in Rome, Sicily, Africa, and Palestine; but, excepting in the East, the novel opinions were generally condemned. There, John, bishop of Jerusalem, who considered the doctrines of Pelagius as agreeing with the opinions of Origen, to which John was attached, patronised Pelagius, allowing him to profess his sentiments freely, and to gather disciples.*

{*"The fundamental error of the monk Pelagius was the denial of our total corruption by sin derived from Adam, and met only by the death and resurrection of the second Man, the last Adam. Hence he asserted liberty as now true of all men, not merely in the sense of exemption from external restraint, but of freedom within the nature as to good and evil, denying thus in the race internal bondage to sin. So he appears to have seen little more in grace, even in its christian application, than pardon for this or that offence, not the impartation to the believer of a new nature, in virtue of which he does not practice sin, because he is born of God. Thus no room was left in the Pelagian scheme for man being lost now on the one side, or for the believer being saved now on the other. In fact the race was conceived to be in an innocence like the primeval state of Adam till each sinned and thus fell under guilt and its consequences. The Pelagians denied the imputation of Adam's sin, seeing no more than the influence of a bad example. As the moral ruin of man was thus enfeebled and the relation of the head lost, so on the other hand under grace were reckoned all the natural endowments of the human family, as well as the supernatural. Hence conscience law, and gospel were regarded as different methods as well as advancing stages of righteousness, in every case the means and operations of grace being effectual only according to the measure of the tendencies of the will. Again, the redemption of Christ became thus, if not an amelioration, certainly an exaltation and transfiguration of humanity. Christ Himself was but the highest pattern of righteousness, some before Him having perfectly kept the moral law, and others since being stimulated by His work, love, and example to the evangelical counsels of moral perfection beyond law."-W.K.}

Augustine and Divine Grace

Augustine the famous bishop of Hippo, the great evangelic light of the West, and the most influential of all the Latin christian writers, began about this time to assail with his pen the doctrines of Pelagius and Celestius; and to him chiefly is due, as God's instrument, the credit of checking the growth of this sect at that time. By a remarkable conversion, and by deep exercise of soul, he had been trained under the Lord's discipline for this great work. Thus did the all-wise God secretly raise up a testimony in opposition to Pelagius, and by means of his heresy, bring out more scriptural views of the gospel of grace than had been taught since the days of the apostles, and also fuller views of christian truth, holiness and humility. The Western churches, led on by Augustine continued perseveringly to assail the false doctrines with councils, books, and letters. The Gauls, the Britons, and even the Palestinians, by their councils, and the Emperors by their laws and penalties, so far crushed the controversy in its commencement; but the fundamental principles of Pelagianism in many forms and degrees remain to the present time. Rather, however, than pursue the history of this heresy, we will briefly refer to what the scriptures teach on the two main points of the subject.

Reflections on the Condition of Man and the Grace of God

If mere human reason be allowed in this controversy, it must be interminable; but if the authority of the word of God be owned, it is soon settled. That there is something good in fallen human nature, and that man, as such, has power to choose what is good and reject what is evil, lies at the root of Pelagianism in its numerous forms. The total ruin of man is denied, and all ideas of divine grace that appear inconsistent with man's free will are excluded from their system. But what saith the scripture? A single line of God's word satisfies the man of faith. And this ought to be the only argument of the teacher, the evangelist, and the private Christian. We must always take the ground of faith against all adversaries.

In Genesis 6 God gives His estimate of fallen human nature. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." God could find nothing in man but evil, and evil without cessation. Again, in the same chapter, we read, "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Not some flesh, observe, but *all* flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. Here we have God's judgment of corrupt nature; but at the same time, He reveals His sovereign grace to meet the condition of man as thus judged. God provides an ark of salvation, and then sends forth the free invitation, - "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." The cross is the standing witness, and the grand expression, of the great truths shadowed forth by the ark. There we have in a way, as nowhere else, God's judgment of human nature with all its evil; and at the same time, the revelation of His love and grace in all their fulness and saving power.*

{*For details see Notes *on the Book of Genesis,* p. 81.}

But all scripture is consistent with Genesis 6 and the cross of Christ. Take, for example, Romans 5 and Ephesians 2. In the former we are said to be "without strength," but in the latter, that we are "dead," dead in trespasses and sins. The apostle, in an earlier part of his Epistle to the Romans, most carefully proves the ruin of man and the righteousness of God; here we have His love displayed in the great fact of the death of Christ for us. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." But why say the "due *time"?* Because man had been fully proved to be not only *"ungodly,"* but "without strength" to do one good thing Godward, or move one step in that direction. Under the law God showed man the way, appointed means, and gave him a long trial; but he was powerless to come out of his sad condition as a sinner. How humbling, but how wholesome, the truth of God! It is good to know our lost condition. How different from the false theology, and the proud philosophy of men! But on God's part, blessed be His name, man's state (so demonstrated) was just the opportunity for the manifestation of His saving grace; and for such Jesus died. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Now man has to do either with God's judgment in unbelief, or with His salvation by faith. There is no middle path. The fullest proof of our lost condition and of God's gracious love is, "that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:6-10)

In Ephesians 2 it is not merely a question of man's moral disease, but of his *death. "You* hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." In Romans man is viewed as powerless, godless, a sinner, and an enemy; here, as morally dead: and this is the worst kind of death, for it is the very spring of the most active wickedness. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." What a blow to man's boasted *unbiassed power* of choosing between good and evil! Here, on the contrary, he is viewed as under the government of demons - as the slave of Satan. Man will much more readily admit that he is godless than that he is powerless. He will boast of having his own opinion - of being independent and quite able to judge and choose for himself in spiritual things.

It was one of the favourite dogmas of Pelagius, if not the foundation of his system "That as man has ability to sin, so has he also not only ability to discern what is good, but likewise power to desire it and to perform it. And this is the freedom of the will, which is so essential to man that he cannot lose it." We refer to this false notion, simply because it so cleaves to the natural mind, and is most difficult to get rid of even after we are converted, being always a great hindrance to the work of God's grace in the soul. Since man is dead in his sins, God and His own work must be everything. Of course there is great variety amongst men naturally, when they are "fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind." Some are benevolent and moral, some living in gross and open wickedness, and some may be gratifying a kind and feeling heart: but from what motive? To do the will of God? Certainly not! God is not in all their thoughts. They are energized by the spirit of Satan, and driven by him according to the course of this world. "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Luk 16:13)

How is Man Responsible?

But where, it may be asked, and in what way does man's responsibility come in? Surely man is responsible to own that God is true, and to accept as just, however humiliating, His Judgment of his nature and character. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." Take up the dark picture which God has drawn of man, and say, That is myself, that is what I have done and what I am. Salvation is by faith; not by willing, choosing, doing, but by believing. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.... And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (Joh 3:16-19)

Who can fail to see that a responsibility is created by this display of divine goodness in Christ, and that of the most obvious, solemn, and weighty character? So much so indeed that the evidence is decisive and final, and the unbeliever judged before God. It is not a question, observe, of their not finding forgiveness, but of their preferring darkness to light that they may continue in sin. This is what God lays to their charge, and could there be a more just or reasonable ground of condemnation? Impossible. May it be the happy lot of all who read these pages to bow to the humiliating sentence of scripture upon our nature, and to take the ground of lost sinners in the sight of God. So shall an all-merciful and gracious God meet us in the greatness of His love, and bless us with all that is due to Christ as the Saviour of mankind.

The Nestorians

As the sect, called Nestorians, occupies an important place in church history, we must briefly notice its formation. They are sometimes called **Syrians,** their founder being a Syrian. They are numerous, we believe in Syria at the present time but they have not received from the Turkish government that protection to which they are entitled, and hence they have been exposed to frequent assaults from the predatory tribes. Thousands of the **Nestorians** in the mountains of Kurdistan, including men, women, and children, were massacred in 1843, and their villages utterly destroyed, by the Kurdish tribes. Since the year 1834 an interesting mission has been established among them by the American Board of Foreign Missions. The character and proceedings of the mission are highly spoken of. Dr. Grant, one of the missionaries, who resided among the Nestorians for a considerable time, and had studied their manners and customs with the greatest minuteness and care, published a treatise with the view of proving that this interesting class of people are the descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. But his conclusions, like others on the same subject, may well be doubted.*

{*See Gardner's *Faiths of the World,* vol. 2, p. 531.}

Nestorius, a Syrian monk, became a presbyter of the church at Antioch. He was esteemed and celebrated on account of the rigid austerity of his life, and the impressive fervour of his preaching. He attracted large and attentive audiences, and soon became a great favourite with the people. In the year 428 he was consecrated patriarch of Constantinople. But the discipline of the cloister had ill-prepared him for so important a position in public life. No sooner was he promoted to this elevation than he began to display an intemperate zeal against the various descriptions of heretics, which partook more of the bigotry of the monk than of the gentle forbearing spirit of genuine Christianity. In his inaugural discourse, addressing the Emperor, Theodosius the younger, he gave utterance to these violent expressions, "Give me a country purged of all heretics, and in exchange for it I will give you heaven. Help me to subdue the heretics, and I will help you to subdue the Persians." But it was not long till Nestorius himself was also accused of heresy.

The new bishop soon followed up his declaration of war against the heretics by deeds of violence and persecution. He excited tumults among the people: the Arians were attacked, their meeting-house burnt down, and other sects were persecuted. Such proceedings, however, soon raised up against Nestorius, even amongst the orthodox, a numerous host of enemies, who sought and soon accomplished his downfall. It happened in this way.

Anastasius and Mariolatry

Anastasius, a presbyter who had accompanied Nestorius from Antioch, and was his intimate friend, attacked, in a public discourse, the use of the expression, *Mother of God,* as applied to the Virgin Mary. The term thus violently opposed had on its side the authority of ancient usage, and many names of great weight with the people. Nestorius approved the discourse, supported his friend, and in several addresses explained and defended his attack. Many were pleased with these discourses, and many were stirred up against Nestorius and his friend: the excitement at Constantinople was immense, but the cry of *heresy, heresy,* arose, and the flames of a great and painful controversy were kindled.

The Difference Between Nestorius and His Opponents

Never was there a doctrinal strife in which the contending parties approximated so closely. Both subscribed, both appealed to, the Nicene creed: both believed in the absolute Godhead and the perfect manhood of the Lord Jesus; but it was inferred by the enemies of Nestorius, especially by *Cyril,* that he was unsound as to the *incarnation* from his objecting to the term, "mother of God." The meaning or import of the disputed term, as used by the doctors in the preceding century, was not to imply that the Virgin communicated the divine nature to the Saviour, but to affirm the union of Godhead and manhood in one Person - that "the child born, the son given," was God *incarnate.* It was attributed to Nestorius, that he maintained the mere humanity of the Redeemer, and that the Spirit only dwelt in Him after He became a man, as of old in the prophets. But Nestorius, as long as he lived, professed himself utterly opposed to such sentiments. Nor does it appear that such sentiments were ever directly made by him, but only inferred by his adversaries from his rejection of the epithet, *Mother of God,* and from some incautious and ambiguous terms which he used in his public discourses on the subject.

Cyril and Orthodoxy

Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, in the controversy which had thus arisen, appears as the great champion of orthodoxy. But all historians agree in giving him a most unchristianlike imperious, character. He is accused of being moved with jealousy because of the increasing power and authority of the bishop of Constantinople; and of being restless, arrogant and unscrupulous in his ways. He was also as violent against the heretics, as Nestorius. He persecuted the Novatianists, and expelled the Jews from Alexandria. An honest and pious zeal may have animated these great prelates, but they utterly failed in uniting with their zeal Christian prudence and moderation, and too readily allied with it the worst passions of human nature.

Cyril was first drawn into the controversy by finding that copies of Nestorius' sermons had been circulated among his monks in Egypt, and that they had abandoned the term Mother of God. He at once blamed both the monks and Nestorius, and denounced the novelty as heretical All parties were soon excited, and angry words were used by all parties which need not now be repeated. Suffice it to say, that when Nestorius found that Cyril had skilfully managed to secure the influence of Celestine, bishop of Rome, and that he was beset with other difficulties, he appealed to a general council. As some of his opponents had already petitioned for such an assembly, it was agreed to, and the Emperor Theodosius issued orders for the meeting of one at Ephesus in the year 431, which is called the **Third General Council.** They met in June. Cyril, in virtue of the dignity of his see, presided. Matters went against Nestorius. He was condemned as guilty of blasphemy, deprived of the episcopal dignity, cut off from all part in the priesthood, and sent into banishment, in which he closed his days about the year 450.

About two hundred bishops signed the sentence against Nestorius, still it remains a question with most historians whether he was really guilty of holding the errors for which he was condemned. But all are agreed that he was rash and intemperate in his language, vain of his own eloquence, disregarded the writings of the earlier Fathers, and was apt to see heresy in everything that differed from the dogmatic phraseology which he had been accustomed to in his youth. But it is difficult to determine which was the principal cause of this great contest, *Cyril* or *Nestorius.**

{*Landon's Manual of Councils, p. 225; Neander, vol. 4, p. 141; Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 468.}

The Close of the Pergamos Period

The council of Ephesus was far from putting an end to these disgraceful contentions; in place of restoring harmony to the church, it rather increased her troubles. John, bishop of Antioch, and other Eastern prelates, judged Cyril and his friends to have acted most unfairly and with unbecoming haste in the matter of Nestorius: hence arose a new controversy, and out of this sprang a new heresy - *Eutychianism* which greatly troubled the Eastern churches for about twenty years.

Eutyches, abbot of a convent at Constantinople, in the eagerness of his opposition to Nestorianism, ran into the opposite extreme. He was accused of unsoundness on the doctrines of the incarnation, and denounced as a heretic. This led to another council which was held at Chalcedon in the year 451, and is called, **The Fourth General Council.** But the details of these local contests fall not within the limits of our "Short Papers." Our plan is to give the reader a distinct outline, in the smallest space possible; and only to present a few details in cases where the name of the person has become a synonym for the opinions he taught; such as Arius, Pelagius, etc., or when the events, such as the great persecutions, have a claim on the sympathy of the church throughout all ages.

In carrying out these purposes, it will now be necessary to turn our attention more especially to the growing power and the lofty pretensions of the church of Rome. In **Leo the Great** we may see the passing away of the Pergamos period, and the approach of the papal monarchy. But before venturing on these troubled waters, we shall do well to study our divine chart - God's prophetic history of the church during that dark and often stormy period.

13 Epistle to Thyatira

Chapter 13

The Epistle to the Church in Thyatira

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you. according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Rev 2:18-29)

It requires but little spiritual discernment, we think, and a very moderate acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, to see the popery of the middle ages foreshadowed in this epistle. We saw in Ephesus the decline of first love, in Smyrna persecution from the Roman power, in Pergamos Balaam seducing the church and uniting her to the world; but things are even worse in **Thyatira.** Here we have the sad but natural consequences of this unhallowed union. How could it be otherwise, when all who merely submitted to the outward rite of baptism were regarded as born of God? The door was thus thrown open for the spoiler and the corrupter to enter the sacred enclosure of the church of God. All testimony was now gone as to her heavenly character and her place of separation from the world. She had falsified the word of the Lord which says of His disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." True, in appearance, Christianity had gained a victory. The cross was now arrayed in gold and precious stones; but this was the glory of the world, not of a crucified Christ. It was the world really that gained the victory, and the humiliation of the church was completed.

The Lord only could estimate the fearful consequences of such a state of things. His eye saw the corruption, the idolatries, and the persecutions of the so-called dark ages, of which the church in Thyatira was a remarkable foreshadowing. We will now glance briefly at the contents of the epistle.

1. The *titles* of the Lord are first to be noticed. They are full of the most suited instruction for the faithful few, when the general body of Christians are identified with this world. He introduces Himself as the Son of God, who has eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet like unto fine brass. When Peter confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, He immediately added, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And now, in anticipation of all that was coming, He recalls the thoughts of His people to that immutable foundation on which the church is built. He also assumes the attributes of divine judgment. *Fire is* the symbol of *penetrating* judgment *eyes* like unto a flame of fire, of *all-searching* judgment; and feet like *burnished brass,* of *impending* judgment.

Here then we have, in the character which the blessed Lord takes, the assurance of the perfect security of the faithful remnant, and the assertion of the unfailing judgment of the false prophetess, and her numerous brood of corrupt children - children of her seduction and corruption. **Jezebel** was not only a prophetess but a mother: she not only seduced God's people by her false doctrines, slaying many of them also; but a large class of the worst of men derived their existence from her corruption. This is painfully manifest all through the dark ages - the Jezebel-state of the church. She established herself *within* the church as in her own house, and published to all the world that she was infallible and to be implicitly obeyed in all matters of faith. To acquiesce in this blasphemous assumption was unfaithfulness to Christ; to oppose it was suffering and death.

2. As the **pretensions of Rome** waxed louder and louder and the darkness grew thicker and thicker, many of the saints of God became more and more devoted to Christ and His claims. *What is due to Christ* must ever be the watchword of the Christian, not what is due to those in high stations. There seems to have been a spiritual energy displayed at this time which rises above all that had been seen since the days of the apostles. This is grace - the marvellous grace of God to His real saints in a most trying time. It is the *silver line* of His own love which is so precious in His sight. We may not always be able to trace it in ecclesiastical history, but there it is, and there it shines to the eye and the heart of God in the midst of abounding iniquity. This is to be noted, and always to be remembered, as most encouraging to the Christian when placed in circumstances of trial. Hear what the Lord Himself says

"I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." Here we have love, faith, and hope, in lively exercise, the three great foundation principles of sound practical Christianity; and the last works to be more than the first. We have not met with such a faithful testimony, or such a measure of devotedness, since the early days of the church in Thessalonica. It may be, however, that the surrounding wickedness made their faithfulness all the more precious to the heart of the Lord, and led Him to praise them more. But no heart that beats true to Himself in an evil day is unknown, unnoticed, or unrewarded.

3. But though the Lord loves to praise what He can in His people, and notice the good things before He speaks of the evil things, He is also quick-sighted in detecting their failures. They were in danger of tampering with the false doctrine and with the false religious system of Jezebel; so He says,

"I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." (Ver. 20) Notwithstanding the faithfulness of many earnest souls in Thyatira (or, in the mediaeval church), there was the public allowance of the spirit of evil: "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel." This was the dark shade on the *silver line:* sometimes the latter seems completely obscured. But the Lord did not fail, as of old, to raise up suited witnesses for Himself. Just as there were saints in Caesar's household, an Obadiah in the house of Ahab, and a faithful remnant in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, so the Lord was never left without a faithful witness all through the middle ages. Nevertheless there was an allowance of evil in the general state of things, which grieved the heart of the Lord and brought down His judgments.

"The woman," it may be well to observe, is used as a symbol of the *general state;* "the man," it is said, is a symbol of *responsible activity.* Balaam and Jezebel are symbolic names - a prophet and prophetess. The former acted as a seducer among the saints: the latter established herself within the professing church, and pretended to have absolute authority there. This was going much farther than even the wickedness of Balaam. But we all know what Jezebel was when she sat as queen in Israel. Her name has come down to us as swathed in cruelties and blood. She hated and persecuted the witnesses of God; she encouraged and patronised the idolatrous priests and prophets of Baal; she added violence to corruption: all was ruin and confusion. And this is the name which the Lord has chosen to symbolise the general state of the professing church during the middle ages. In Thyatira He, whose eyes were as a flame of fire, could see the germ of that which was to bear such evil fruit in after days, and so warns His people to hold fast that which they have already, even Himself. "I will put upon you none other burden; but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come." As the Jezebel-state continues to the end and can never get right, the Lord now directs the faith of the remnant to His own return - "Till I come." The bright hope of His coming is thus presented as a comfort to the heart in the midst of the general ruin; and His saints are relieved by the Lord Himself from vain attempts to set either the church or the world right. Most merciful deliverance! But poor human nature cannot understand this, and so tries, and tries again, to mend matters both in church and state.

4. We have evidently three classes of persons spoken of in this epistle. (1) The children of Jezebel - those who owe their christian name and place to her corrupt system. Unsparing judgment will overtake all such. Space had been given for repentance, but they repented not; therefore the full judgment of God falls upon them. "I will kill her children with death." (2) Those who are not her children, but make no stand against her; they are easy-going. This alas! is a large class in our own day. It characterises the public state of Christendom. Without conscience before God, they are content to float smoothly down the stream, in fellowship with some religious system, most agreeable to their own minds. As to whether it is agreeable to God's mind, they have never inquired. Still they are His children. The judgment of such is "great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds." (3) The faithful remnant, the "overcomers." They are here addressed as "the rest" or remnant; they will have power over the nations in association with Christ when He comes to reign. In the meantime they have this sweet and precious promise: "And I will give him the morning star." This is conscious association with Himself even now. The mediaeval church was especially guilty of two things: she arrogantly and wickedly sought to possess supreme power over the nations; and she persecuted the faithful remnant of the saints, such as the Waldenses and others. But the saints, once so persecuted, shall yet possess the kingdom, and reign with Christ a thousand years; and the whole system of Jezebel shall be utterly and for ever rejected: "Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

5. There is only one other thing to notice in this sketch of the public state of Christendom since the commencement of the papal system. The exhortation to "hear" is placed *after* the special promise. This marks out the remnant as distinct and separate from the general body. In the first three churches the warning word - "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" - comes before the promise; but in the four concluding churches we have the promise before the call to hear. The obvious meaning of this change is deeply solemn. In the first three the call to hear is addressed to the whole assembly, but in the last four only to the remnant. It would seem that none are expected to hear but the overcomers. The general professing body seem both blind and deaf through the power of Satan and the pollutions of Jezebel; fearful condition! We must also bear in mind, that the four states as represented by the last four churches run on to the end or to the coming of the Lord. May He keep us from all that savours of Jezebel, that we may duly appreciate our oneness with Himself, and His promised blessings to the "overcomers. "

Having now briefly examined the divinely drawn picture of the Jezebel-state of the church during the dark ages, we turn to the ample but dreary records of its history.

The Commencement of the Papal Period

It is generally admitted that this period begins with the pontificate of **Gregory the Great,** 590, and ends with the Reformation in the early part of the sixteenth century. But before entering on the general history, we will endeavour to answer a question which has been asked, and which, we doubt not, is on the minds of many: When, and by what means, did the power fall into the hands of the Roman pontiffs, which led to their supremacy and despotism during the middle ages? The question is an interesting one, but to answer it fully would lead us beyond our limits. We can only point out a few facts in the chain of events which laid the foundation of the great power and sovereignty of the See of Rome.

From the time of the famous edict of Milan in 313 the history of the church changes in its character. She then passed from a condition of distress and persecution to the summit of worldly prosperity and honour: other questions besides those of Christianity were henceforth involved in her history. Having entered into an alliance with the State, her future path was necessarily formed by her new relations. She could no longer act simply in the name of the Lord Jesus, and according to His holy word. But complete amalgamation there could never be. The one was from heaven, and the other of this world. They are, in nature, opposed to each other. Either the church aspired to be the mistress of the State, or the State encroached on the province of the church and disregarded her inherent rights. This was exactly what took place. Soon after the death of Constantine the struggle between these two great powers, the church and the State, for the government of the world, commenced; and, in order to ensure success in this warfare, the Roman pontiffs had recourse to ways and means which we will not characterise here, as they will come before us in due course.

Before Constantine transferred the seat of empire to **Byzantium** and built Constantinople, Rome was the acknowledged metropolis, and her bishop the primate. But when Constantinople became the imperial city, her bishop was raised to the rank of patriarch, and soon began to lay claim to the dignity of the Roman pontiffs. This was the commencement of the **Greek church** as a separate communion, and of the long contest between the East and the West. There were now four patriarchs, according to the plan of the Emperor, Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria. The rank of the bishop was governed by the superiority of the city in which he presided; and as Constantinople was now the capital of the world, her bishops would yield to none in honour and magnificence. The others were jealous, Rome complained, the strife began, the breach widened; but Rome never rested until she had gained the ascendancy over her feeble and less ambitious rival.

The Advantages of Rome

The court of Constantinople, although it may have encouraged the hopes and ambition of the bishops, affected to govern the church with despotic power, and to decide on religious controversies of the gravest kind. But in the West it was not so. The Roman pontiffs from this period showed the independent and aggressive spirit of popery which rose to such heights in after ages. The bishops of the East were thus placed at a disadvantage in consequence of their dependence on the court and of their quarrels with the emperors. Besides, the presence and grandeur of the Eastern sovereign kept the dignity of the bishop in a very secondary place. In Rome there were none left to dispute the rank or style of the pontiff.

The withdrawal of the emperors from Rome, as the royal residence, was thus favourable to the development of the ecclesiastical power there; for, though deserted by her rulers, she was still venerated as the real capital of the world. Hence Rome possessed many advantages as the seat of the supreme bishop. But that which chiefly pushed on and consolidated the power of the Roman See was the growing belief, all over Christendom, that St. Peter was its founder. The Roman bishops denied that their precedence originated in the imperial greatness of the city, but in their lineal descent from St. Peter. This dogma was generally received about the commencement of the fifth century.

By such arguments the church of Rome established her right to govern the universal church. She maintained that Peter was primate amongst the apostles, and that his primacy is inherited by the bishops of Rome. But it may be well to notice here, the twofold aspect of Romanism - ecclesiastical and political. In both characters she claimed supremacy. Ecclesiastically she maintained, 1, that the bishop of Rome is the infallible judge in all questions of doctrine; 2, that he has the inherent right to supreme government in assembling general councils, and presiding over them: 3, that the right of making ecclesiastical appointments belongs to him; 4, that separation from the communion of the church of Rome involves the guilt of schism. Politically she claimed, she aspired to, and gained preeminence and power over all European society as well as all European governments. We shall see abundant proof of these particulars in the course of her well-defined history, which we will now go on with.

It was not till after the first council of Nice that the supremacy of the Romish bishops was generally allowed. The early bishops of Rome are scarcely known in ecclesiastical history. The accession of Innocent I., in the year 402, gave force and definition to this new tenet of the Latin church. Till this time there had been no legal recognition of the supremacy of Rome, though she was considered the principal church in the West, and had been frequently appealed to by the other great bishops for a spiritual judgment in matters of dispute. When the Greek church fell into Arianism, the Latin adhered firmly to the Nicene creed, which raised her much in the opinion of all the West. "Upon the mind of Innocent," says Milman, "appears first to have dawned the vast conception of Rome's universal ecclesiastical supremacy; dim as yet and shadowy, but full and comprehensive in its outline."

Leo The First, Surnamed The Great

We may proceed without interruption from the name of Innocent to that of Leo, who ascended the chair of St. Peter in the year 440, and occupied it for one-and-twenty years. He was remarkable for his political skill, theological learning, and great ecclesiastical energy. He maintained with the haughtiness of the Roman, and with the zeal of the churchman, that all the pretensions and all the practices of his church were matters of unbroken apostolic succession. But withal he seems to have been sound in the faith as to salvation, and zealously opposed to all heretics. The Eastern churches had lost the respect of Christendom, from their long and disgraceful controversies. Power, not subtleties, was the ambition of Rome. Leo condemned the whole race of heretics from Arius to Eutyches; but more especially the Manichaean heresy.

By his great exertions and extraordinary genius he raised the claims of the Roman bishop, as the representative of St. Peter, to a height before unknown. "The apostle," he says, "was called Petra, the rock, by which denomination he is constituted the foundation.... In his chair dwelleth the ever living, the super-abounding, authority. Let the brethren therefore acknowledge that he is the primate of all bishops, and that Christ, who denieth His gifts to none, yet giveth unto none except through him."*

{*Greenwood's *Cathedra Petri,* vol. 1, p. 348.}

Making due allowance for the character of the times and for official and inherited opinions, we believe Leo was sincere in his convictions, and probably a Christian. At heart he cared for God's people, and more than once, by his prayers and political sagacity, saved Rome from the barbarians. When Attila, the most terrible of the foreign conquerors, with his countless hosts, was hovering over Italy, ready to fall upon the defenceless capital, Leo went forth to the "Destroyer" in the name of the Lord, and as the spiritual head of Rome, and so earnestly did he pray for his people, that the wild passions of the Hun were soothed, and, to the astonishment of all, he agreed to terms by which the city was saved from havoc and slaughter. But Leo's main object through life, and that which he fully accomplished, was to lay the groundwork of the great spiritual monarchy of Rome. During his pontificate he had the greatest name in the empire, if not in all Christendom. He died in the year 461.

The Emperor Justinian

The name of Justinian is so famous in history, and so connected with legislation both civil and ecclesiastical, that it would be unfair to our readers to pass it without a notice though not immediately of the Latin church. He belonged to the East, and rather hindered the rise of the West.

In the year 527 Justinian ascended the throne of Constantinople, and occupied it for nearly forty years. The political and military affairs of the empire he committed to his ministers and generals, and devoted his own time to those things which he thought more important. He spent much of his time in theological studies, and in the regulation of the religious affairs of his subjects, such as prescribing what the priests and the people should believe and practise. He was fond of mixing in controversy and of acting as a lawgiver in religious matters. His own faith - or rather, slavish superstition - was distinguished by the most rigid orthodoxy, and a large portion of his long reign was spent in the extinction of heresy. But this led to many instances of persecution, both public and private.

In the mean time Justinian saw a new field opening for his energies in another direction, and immediately turned his attention to it. After the death of **Theodoric the Great** in 526 the affairs of Italy fell into a very confused condition, and the new conquerors were far from being firmly seated on their thrones. Rousing the national hostility of the Romans against the barbarians, the imperial army was united and determined;, and led by the able generals **Belisarius** and **Narses,** the conquests of Italy and Africa were achieved in a very short space of time. At the sight of the well-known eagles the soldiers of the barbarians refused to fight, and the nations threw off the supremacy of the Ostrogoths. The imperial generals now prosecuted an exterminating war. It is reckoned that during the reign of Justinian Africa lost five millions of inhabitants. Arianism was extinguished in that region; and in Italy the numbers who perished by war, by famine, or in other ways, is supposed to have exceeded the whole of its present population. The sufferings of these countries, during the revolutions of this period, were greater than they had ever endured in either earlier or later times. So that both the secular events of Justinian's reign and his own legislative labours had an important, but most unfortunate bearing on the history of Christianity.

After erecting the church of St. Sophia, and twenty-five other churches in Constantinople, and publishing a new edition of his code, he died A.D. 565.*

{*Milman, vol. 1, p. 350; J.C. Robertson, vol. 1, p. 473; Milner, vol. 2, p. 336.}

We now pass on to the third great founder of the papal edifice.

Gregory The First, Surnamed The Great

A.D. 590

We have now come to the close of the sixth century of Christianity. At this period the early history of the church ends, and the mediaeval begins. The pontificate of Gregory may be regarded as the line that separates the two periods. A great change takes place. The Eastern churches decline and receive but little notice; while the churches of the West especially that of Rome, largely engage the attention of the historian. And as Gregory may be considered the *representative man* of this transitional period, we will endeavour to place him fairly before the reader.

Gregory was born at Rome about the year 540, his family being of senatorial rank, and himself the great-grandson of a pope named Felix, so that in his descent he blended both civil and ecclesiastical dignity. By the death of his father he became possessed of great wealth, which he at once devoted to religious uses. He founded and endowed seven monasteries; six in Sicily, and the other, which was dedicated to St. Andrew, in his family mansion at Rome. His costly robes jewels, and furniture, he reduced to money, and lavished it on the poor. About the age of thirty-five he gave up his civil appointments, took up his abode in the Roman monastery and entered on a strictly ascetic life. Although it was his own convent, he began with the lowest monastic duties. His whole time was spent in prayer, reading, writing, and the most self-denying exercises. The fame of his abstinence and charity spread far and wide. In course of time he became abbot of his monastery; and, on the death of the pope Pelagius, he was chosen by the senate, the clergy, and the people, to fill the vacant chair. He refused, and endeavoured by various means to escape the honours and difficulties of the papacy; but he was forcibly ordained, by the love of the people, as the supreme bishop.

Drawn from the quiet of a cloister and from his peaceful meditations there, Gregory now saw himself involved in the management of the most various and perplexing affairs of both Church and State. But he was evidently fitted for the great and arduous work which lay before him. We will notice first

The Fervent Charity of Gregory

The character of Gregory was distinguished by the fervour of his almsgiving. Though raised to the papal throne, he lived in a simple and monastic style. His palace was surrounded by the suffering poor, as his monastery had been, and relief was distributed with a liberal hand. Nor was he content to exercise his almsgiving alone, he powerfully exhorted his episcopal brethren to abound in the same. "Let not the bishop think," he said, "that reading and preaching alone suffice, or studiously to maintain himself in retirement, while the hand that enriches is closed. But let his hand be bountiful; let him make advances to those who are in necessity; let him consider the wants of others as his own; for without these qualities the name of bishop is a vain and empty title."

The wealth of the Roman See enabled him to exercise extensive charities. As administrator of the papal funds, Gregory has the reputation of being just, humane, and most laborious. But his biographers are so voluminous in their accounts of his good works that it is bewildering to attempt a brief sketch. However, as we can esteem him as a believer in Christ, notwithstanding the false position he was in, and his consequent blindness as to the true character of the church, we delight to dwell a little on his memory, and also to trace the *silver line* of God's grace in spite of the unhallowed mixture of secular and sacred things.

On the first Monday of every month he distributed large quantities of provisions to all classes. The sick and infirm were superintended by persons appointed to inspect every street. Before sitting down to his own meal, a portion was separated and sent to the hungry at his door. The names ages, and dwellings of those receiving papal relief filled a large volume. So severe was the charity of Gregory, that one day, on hearing of the death of a poor man from starvation he condemned himself to a hard penance for the guilt of neglect as steward of the divine bounty. But his active benevolence was not confined to the city of Rome; it was almost world-wide. He entered into all questions affecting the welfare of all classes, and prescribed minute regulations for all, lest the poor should be exposed to the oppression of the rich, or the weak to the strong. But this will more fully appear as we notice

The Ecclesiastical and Temporal Position of Gregory

The pastoral care of the church was evidently the main object and delight of Gregory's heart. This he believed to be his work, and fain would he have devoted himself entirely to it; for according to the superstitious credulity of the times, he had the deepest conviction that the care and government of the whole church belonged to him as the successor of St. Peter; and also, that he was bound to uphold the special dignity of the See of Rome. But he was compelled, from the disturbed state of Italy, and for the safety of his people - his dear flock - to undertake many troublesome kinds of business, altogether foreign to his spiritual calling. The Lombard* invaders were at that moment the terror of the Italians. The Goths had been to a great degree civilised and Romanised; but these new invaders were remorseless and pitiless barbarians; though, strange to say, they were the avowed champions of Arianism. And the imperial power instead of protecting its Italian subjects, acted only as a hindrance to their exerting themselves for their own defence. War, famine, and pestilence, had so wasted and depopulated the country, that all hearts failed, and all turned to the bishop as the only man for the emergency of the times; so firmly was the opinion of his integrity and ability established among men.

{*The Lombards were a German tribe from Brandenburg. According to the popular belief, they had been invited into Italy by Justinian to serve against the Goths. Their chief, Alboin, established a kingdom which lasted from 568 to 774. The last king, Desiderius, was dethroned by Charlemagne. As we shall meet them again in connection with our history, we give this notice of their origin.- Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates.*}

Thus we see that *temporal power,* in the first instance, was forced upon the Pope. It does not appear that he sought the position - a position so eagerly grasped by many of his successors; but rather that he entered with reluctance upon duties so little in accordance with the great object of his life. He unwillingly threw off the quiet contemplative life of the monk, and entered into the affairs of state as a duty to God and to his country. The direction of the political interests of Rome devolved for the most part upon Gregory. He was guardian of the city, and the protector of the population in Italy against the Lombards. All history bears witness to his great ability, his incessant activity, and the multiplicity of his occupations as the virtual sovereign of Rome.

But however unconscious Gregory may have been of what the effects would be of his great reputation, it nevertheless contributed much to the ecclesiastical and secular domination of Rome. The pre-eminence in his case, however sorrowful for a Christian, was disinterested and beneficially exerted; but not so with his successors. The infallibility of the Pope, spiritual tyranny, persecution for a difference of opinion, idolatry, the doctrine of the merit of works, purgatory and masses for the relief of the dead, which became the discriminating marks of the papacy, had not, as yet, a settled establishment at Rome; but, we may say, they were all in sight.

We must not, however, pursue this subject farther at present; we turn to one more interesting, and more congenial to our minds.

The Missionary Zeal of Gregory

Notwithstanding the depression of the church, and of all classes of society, through the inroads of the barbarians, the blessed Lord was watching over the spread of the gospel in other countries. And surely it was of His great mercy, that the hosts of invaders which poured down on the provinces of the empire were soon converted to Christianity. They may have had very little understanding of their new religion, but it greatly softened their ferocity, and mitigated the sufferings of the vanquished. **Gregory** was most zealous in his endeavours to extend the knowledge of the gospel, and to bring over the barbarous nations to the Catholic faith. But his favourite scheme, and that which had been long on his heart, was the evangelisation of the Anglo-Saxons.

The beautiful story of the incident which first directed Gregory's mind to the conversion of **Britain,** is too pleasing, not to find a place in our "Short Papers." In the early days of his monastic life, at least before his elevation to the papacy, his attention was arrested one day by seeing some beautiful fair-haired boys exposed for sale in the market-place. The following conversation is said to have taken place. He inquired from what country they came. "From the island of Britain," was the reply. "Are the inhabitants of that island Christians or Pagans?" "They are still Pagans." "Alas!" said he, "that the prince of darkness should possess forms of such loveliness! That such beauty of countenance should want that better beauty of the soul." He then asked by what name they were called. "Angles," was the reply. Playing on the words, he said, "Truly they are *Angels!* From what province?" "From that of Deira" - Northumberland. "Surely they must be rescued *de ira"* - from the wrath of God, and called to the mercy of Christ. "What is the name of their king?" "Ella," was the answer. "Yea," said Gregory, "Alleluia must be sung in the dominions of that king."

"To be the first missionary to this beautiful people," says Milman, "and to win the remote and barbarous island, like a christian Caesar, to the realm of Christ, became the holy ambition of Gregory. He extorted the unwilling consent of the Pope; he had actually set forth and travelled three days' journey, when he was overtaken by messengers sent to recall him. All Rome had risen in pious mutiny and compelled the Pope to revoke his permission."* But although he was thus prevented from executing this mission in person, he never lost sight of his noble object. From this time he was not allowed to return to his monastery. He was forced to embark in public affairs, first as a deacon, then as supreme pontiff. But all this was *compulsory* dignity to Gregory. His heart was set on the salvation of the fair-haired youths of England and he would a thousand times rather have undertaken a journey to our island, with all its hardships and unknown dangers, than be crowned with the honours of the papacy. But such was the character of his mind, that he pursued with unwearied attention and devotion any scheme of piety which he had once planned. Hence it was that, after he was raised to the papal chair, he was enabled to furnish and send forth a band of forty missionaries to the shores of Britain. But before speaking of the character and results of this mission, it will be interesting to glance briefly at the history of the church in the British Isles from the beginning.

{**Latin Christianity,* vol. 1, p. 434.}

The First Planting of the Cross in Britain

Far back in the early days of apostolic simplicity, the cross of Christ, we believe, was planted in our island. There is fair historical evidence for believing that "Claudia," mentioned by Paul in his Second Epistle to Timothy, was the daughter of a British king, who married a distinguished Roman named "Pudens." This circumstance will not seem unlikely if we bear in mind that, during the whole period of the Roman dominion in this country, there must have been many opportunities for the spread of Christianity, and that these would be readily embraced by those who loved the Lord Jesus and the souls of men. Besides, it was the custom at that time for the British kings and nobles to send their sons to Rome for education; and this practice, it is said, prevailed to such an extent, that a mansion was established expressly for them, and a tax of one penny was levied on every house in England for its support.*

{*For details, see *Life of Paul* by Conybeare and Howson, and *English Monasticism* by Travers Hill.}

Another witness for the early planting of Christianity in this country is the testimony of the Fathers. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, who wrote in the second century, affirm, that in every country known to the Romans there were professors of Christianity - from those who rode in chariots, or were houseless, there was no race of men amongst whom there were not prayers offered in the name of a crucified Jesus. We have also the testimony of later Fathers. The historic chain seems to be carried down by the mention of British bishops as having attended several of the general councils in the fourth century; and their orthodoxy throughout the Arian controversy has been attested by the weighty evidence of Athanasius and Hilary. It is also worthy of note that Constantine - who had spent some time with his father in Britain - when writing to the churches of the Empire about a dispute concerning Easter, quoted the British church as an example of orthodoxy. The Pelagian heresy, it is said, was introduced into Britain by one Agricola in the year 429, and found much acceptance; but in a conference at St. Albans the heretical teachers were defeated by the orthodox clergy.*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 1, p. 450.}

The Ancient British Church

Although the British church had acquired such credit for orthodoxy, we have very little reliable information as to its rise and progress, or as to the means by which this was effected. There are many traditions, but they are scarcely worth repeating, and are unsuitable for a brief history. There is ample evidence, however, that in the early part of the fourth century, and at least two hundred years before the arrival of the Italian monks, the British church had a complete organisation, with its bishops and metropolitans.

According to the testimony of both ancient and modern historians, the doctrines and the ritual of the old church were of the simplest character compared with the Greek or Roman, though a long way from the simplicity of the New Testament. They taught the oneness of the Godhead; the Trinity, the divine and human nature of Christ, redemption through His death, and the eternity of future rewards and punishments. They regarded the Lord's supper as a symbol, not a miracle; they took the bread and wine as our Lord commanded these should be taken - in remembrance of Him and they did not refuse the wine to the laity. Their hierarchy consisted of bishops and priests, with other ministers, and that a particular service was employed at their ordination. Marriage was usual among the clergy. There were also monasteries with monks living in them, sworn to poverty, chastity, and obedience to their abbot. That churches were built in honour of martyrs, each church had many altars; and the service, which was performed in the Latin tongue, was chanted by the priests. Disputes were finally settled by provincial synods, held twice a year, beyond which, on matters of discipline, there was no appeal. So that we see the doctrines of the old church were characterised by a true apostolic simplicity, and as an institution it was free and unfettered.*

{*See *English Monasticism by* Travers Hill, p. 141, the works of Gildas; *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* by Bede *The Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain* by Jeremy Collier, vol. 1.}

It is matter of unfeigned thankfulness that the early church of our own country has left so fair a name behind her compared with the superstitions and corruptions of the East and the West. But, alas! her existence as a separate establishment was not of long duration. She scarcely survived the middle of the seventh century. Her calamities were brought on by three successive steps, and these outside of her own jurisdiction - the withdrawal of the Roman troops from Britain; the Saxon Conquest; and the Augustinian Mission. We will now briefly glance at each step, and its effects.

We have seen something of the decline and approaching fall of the Roman Empire. In consequence of the heavy calamities which befell the city and provinces of Rome, the troops were gradually withdrawn from this island for the protection of the seat of dominion. And the Romans, finding that they could no longer spare the forces necessary for a military establishment in Britain, took their final departure from our island towards the middle of the fifty century, and about four hundred and seventy-five years after **Julius Caesar** first landed on its shores. The government then fell into the hands of a number of petty princes, who, of course, quarrelled. Civil wars, national weakness, and demoralization soon followed, with their usual judgments.

The withdrawal of the Roman troops necessarily exposed the country to the inroads of invaders, especially the **Picts and Scots.** The British chiefs, unable to resist these audacious robbers and spoilers, appealed in their distress to Rome. "The barbarians," they said, "break through our walls, like wolves into a sheep-fold, retire with their booty and return every succeeding year." But however much the Romans might pity their old friends, they were now unable to help them. Disappointed of aid from Rome, and despairing of their ability to defend themselves against the desolating tribes of the North, the Britons turned to the Saxons for help.*

{**Encyclopedia Britannica,* vol. 5, p. 301.}

The Arrival of the Saxons in England

About the middle of the fifth century the Saxon ships reached the British coast, and under their leaders, Hengist and Horsa, a few hundred fierce and desperate warriors disembarked. These famous leaders immediately took the field at the head of their followers, and completely defeated the Picts and Scots. But the remedy proved worse than the disease. One great evil was averted, but another and a greater followed. The **Saxons,** finding the country they had been hired to defend possessed a more genial climate than their own, and eager to exchange the bleak shores of the North for the rich fields of Britain, invited fresh bodies of their countrymen to join them; and thus, from being the defenders, they became the conquerors and masters of the ill-fated Britons. The Angles and other tribes poured in on the country; and although the British did not yield without a severe struggle, the Saxon power prevailed, and reduced the natives to entire submission, or drove them to seek shelter in the mountains of Wales, Cornwall, and Cumberland. Many emigrated, and some settled in Armorica, now Brittany, in the north-west of France.

But the Saxons and Angles were not only wild warriors, they were savage merciless pagans. They exterminated Christianity wherever they conquered. According to the **"venerable Bede,"** the bishops and their people were indiscriminately slaughtered with fire and sword, and there was no one to bury the victims of such cruelty. Public and private buildings were alike destroyed, priests were everywhere murdered at the altar; some who had fled to the mountains were seized, and slain by heaps, others, worn out with hunger, surrendered themselves, embracing perpetual slavery for the sake of life; some made for regions beyond the sea, and some led a life of poverty among mountains, forests, and lofty rocks.

Britain, after this event, relapsed into a state of obscure barbarism, was withdrawn from the view of the civilised world, and was sunk down to the depths of misery and cruelty; and yet these are the very people whom the Lord had laid on the heart of Gregory to win over to Himself by the gospel of peace. How could a few poor monks, without fleet or army, we may well exclaim, venture on such a shore, far less hope to gain the hearts and subdue the lives of such savages to the faith and practice of the gospel of peace? It is the same gospel that triumphed over Judaism, Orientalism, and Heathenism, and by the same divine power, was soon to triumph over the fierce barbarism of the Anglo-Saxons. How weak and foolish is the infidelity that questions its divine origin, power, and destiny! We will now watch the progress of the mission.

The Mission of Augustine to England

In the year 596, and about 150 years after the arrival of the Saxons in Britain, Gregory's famous mission left Italy for our island. A company of forty missionary monks, under the direction of Augustine, were sent to preach the gospel to the benighted Anglo-Saxons. But hearing of the savage character and habits of the people, and being ignorant of their language, they became seriously discouraged, and were afraid to proceed. Augustine was sent back by the others to entreat Gregory to discharge them from the service. But he was not the man to abandon a mission of that kind. He had not done it in haste, it was the result of much prayer and deliberation. He therefore exhorted and encouraged them to go forward, trusting in the living God, and in the hope of seeing the fruit of their labours in eternity. He gave them letters of introduction to bishops and princes, and secured for them all the assistance in his power. Thus animated they pursued their journey, and, travelling by way of France, they arrived in Britain.

The forty-one missionaries, having landed on the Isle of Thanet, announced to Ethelbert, king of Kent, their arrival from Rome, and their errand with glad tidings of great joy to himself and all his people. Circumstances greatly favoured this remarkable mission. Bertha, the queen (daughter of Clotaire the First, king of the Franks), was a Christian. Her father stipulated in her marriage settlement that she was to be allowed the free profession of Christianity, in which she had been educated. A bishop attended her court, several of her household were Christians, and divine service was conducted after the Romish form. The Lord in this instance made use of a woman, as He often did, for the propagation the gospel among the heathen. These favourably contrast with the Jezebel class of women, and preserve *the silver line* of God's grace in these dark ages. Bertha was of the house of Clovis and Clotilda.

Ethelbert, influenced by his queen, received the missionaries kindly. Augustine and his retinue were allowed to proceed to Canterbury, the residence of the king. He consented to an interview, but in the open air for fear of magic. The monks approached the royal party in the most imposing manner. One of their number, bearing a large silver cross with the figure of the Saviour, led the procession the others followed, chanting their Latin hymns. On reaching the oak appointed for the place of conference, permission was given to preach the gospel to the prince and his attendants. The king was then informed that they had come with good tidings, even eternal life to those that received them, and the enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven for ever. The king was favourably impressed, and gave them a mansion in the royal city of Canterbury, and liberty to preach the gospel to his court and his people. They then marched to the city, singing in concert the litany; "We pray thee, O Lord, in all Thy mercy, that Thine anger and Thy fury may be removed from this city, and from Thy holy house, because we have sinned. Alleluia."

By these preparatory steps the missionaries' way was now plain and easy. The approval of the monarch inspired his subjects with confidence, and opened their hearts to the teachers. Converts, such as they were, multiplied rapidly. On the Christmas-day of the year 597 no fewer, it is said, than ten thousand heathen were gathered into the fold of the Catholic church by baptism. Ethelbert also submitted to baptism, and Christianity, in the Romish form, became the established religion of his kingdom. This was Rome's first footing in England. She now determined on subduing the British church to the papacy, and establishing her authority in Great Britain, as she had done in France. She set to work in this way.

Romish Hierarchy Formed in England

Gregory, on hearing of the great success of Augustine, sent him more **missionaries,** who carried with them a number of books, including the Gospels, with church plate, vestments, relics, and the pallium which was to invest Augustine as Archbishop of Canterbury. He also directed him to consecrate twelve bishops in his province; and, if he should see it advantageous to the propagation of the faith, to establish another metropolitan at York, who should then have authority to nominate twelve other bishops for the northern districts of the island. Such were the rudiments of the English church, and such the excessive eagerness of Gregory for ecclesiastical supremacy, that he settled a plan of government for places before they had been visited by the evangelist.

"In the ecclesiastical view of the case," says Greenwood, "the Anglo-Saxon church was the genuine daughter of Rome. But, beyond the limits of that establishment, no right of parentage can be assigned to her within the British islands. A numerous christian population still existed in the northern and western districts, whose traditions gave no countenance to the Roman claim of maternity. The ritual and discipline of the British, Welsh and Irish churches differed in many points from those of Rome and the Latins generally. They celebrated the Easter festival in conformity with the practice of the Oriental churches; and in the form of their tonsure, as well as in that of the baptismal rite, they followed the same model: differences which of themselves seem sufficient to preclude all probability of a purely Latin pedigree."*

{**Cathedra Petri,* book 3, p. 215.}

Augustine, now at the head of a hierarchy composed of twelve bishops, immediately made the bold attempt to bring the ancient British church under the Roman jurisdiction. Through the influence of Ethelbert he obtained a conference with some of the British bishops at a place which from that time was called Augustine's oak, on the Severn. There the Roman and the British clergy met for the first time; and Augustine's first and imperious demand was, "Acknowledge the authority of the bishop of Rome." "We desire to love all men," they meekly replied, "and whatever we do for you, we will do for him also whom you call the Pope." Surprised and indignant at their refusal, Augustine exhorted them to adopt the **Roman** usages as to the celebration of Easter, the tonsure, and the administration of baptism, that a uniformity of discipline and worship might be established in the island. This they positively refused to do. Having received Christianity at first not from Rome but from the East, and never having acknowledged the Roman church as their mother, they looked upon themselves as independent of the See of Rome. A second and a third council were held, but with no better results. Augustine was plainly told that the British church would acknowledge no man as supreme in the Lord's vineyard. The archbishop demanded, argued, censured, wrought miracles; but all to no purpose - the Britons were firm. At last he was plainly told that they could not submit either to the haughtiness of the Romans, or to the tyranny of the Saxons. Aroused to wrathful indignation at their quiet firmness, the angry priest exclaimed, "If you will not receive brethren who bring you peace, you shall receive enemies who bring you war. If you will not unite with us in showing the Saxons the way of life, you shall receive from them the stroke of death." The haughty archbishop withdrew, and is supposed to have died soon after (A.D. 605), but his ill-omened prophecy was accomplished soon after his decease.

Edelfrid, one of the Anglo-Saxon kings, still a pagan, collected a numerous army, and advanced towards Bangor, the centre of **British Christianity.** The monks fled in great alarm. About twelve hundred and fifty of them met in a retired spot, where they agreed to continue together in prayer and fasting. Edelfrid drew nearer, and happening to see a number of unarmed men, inquired who they were. On being told that they were the monks of Bangor, who had come to pray for the success of their countrymen, "Then," he cried, "although they have no weapons, they are fighting against us;" and he ordered his soldiers to fall upon the praying monks. About twelve hundred, it is said, were slain, and only fifty escaped by flight. Thus did the dominion of Rome commence in England, which continued for nearly a thousand years.

Whether Augustine had really anything to do with the murder of the monks, it seems hard and is difficult to say. Those who take a strong Protestant view of the case plainly affirm that his last days were occupied in making arrangements for the accomplishment of his own threatening. Others, who take an opposite view, deny that there is any evidence that he influenced the pagans to the dreadful tragedy. But, be that as it may, a dark suspicion must ever rest on the policy of Rome. Augustine's own revengeful words, and her whole history, confirm the suspicion. Such was the nature of the intolerant Jezebel - when argument failed, she appealed to the sword. Henceforth Romanism was characterised by arrogance and blood. The ancient church of Britain, which was limited to the mountainous districts of Wales, gradually diminished and died away.*

{*Gardner, vol. 1, p. 391.}

Reflections on the Mission of Augustine and the Character of Gregory

Augustine is spoken of by some historians as a devout Christian, and his missionary enterprise as one of the greatest in the annals of the church. But, without wishing to detract in the least degree from the greatness of the man or his mission, we must not forget that scripture is the only true standard of character and works. There we learn that the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And certainly the great churchman did not manifest towards his brethren, the British Christians, the grace of love, peace, or conciliation; on the contrary, he was proud, imperious, haughty, and vain-glorious.

These serious defects in his character were not unknown to Gregory, as he says, in a letter addressed to himself: "I know that God has performed, through you, great miracles among that people, but let us remember that when the disciples said with joy to their divine Master, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name,' He answered them, 'Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." While God thus employs your agency without, remember, my dear brother, to judge yourself secretly within, and to know well what you are. If you have offended God in word or deed, preserve those offences in your thoughts to repress the vainglory of your heart, and consider that the gift of miracles is not granted to you for yourself, but for those whose salvation you are labouring to procure." In another letter he cautioned him against "vanity and personal pomp;" and reminded him "that the pallium of his dignity was only to be worn in the service of the church, and not to be brought into competition with royal purple on state occasions."

He was most unsuited for a mission which required patience, and a tender consideration of others. The British church had existed for centuries, her bishops had taken part in great ecclesiastical councils and signed their decrees. The names of London, York, and Lincoln are found in the records of the Council of Arles (A.D. 314), so that we cannot but respect in the Britons their desire to adhere to the liturgy transmitted from their ancestors, and to resist the foreign assumption of the spiritual supremacy of Rome. Augustine utterly failed to profit by the lessons of humility which he received from his great master, and has less claim upon our esteem and admiration.

The great prelate, like his great missionary, did not long survive the spiritual conquest of England. Worn out at length by his great labours and infirmities, he died in the year 604, assuring his friends that the expectation of death was his only consolation, and requesting them to pray for his deliverance from bodily sufferings.

The conduct of Gregory, during the thirteen years and six months that he was bishop of Rome, displays a zeal and a sincerity which have scarcely been equalled in the history of the Roman church. He was laborious and self-denying in what he believed to be the service of God, and in his duty to the church and to all mankind. The collection of his letters, nearly eight hundred and fifty in number, bears ample testimony to his ability and activity in all the affairs of men, and in every sphere of life. "From treating with patriarchs kings, or emperors on the highest concerns of Church and State, he passes to direct the management of a farm, or the relief of some distressed petitioner in some distant dependence of his See. He appears as a pope, as a sovereign as a bishop, as a landlord. He takes measures for the defence of his country, the conversion of the heathen, the repression and reconciliation of schismatics," etc.*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 2, p. 4.}

But notwithstanding the varied excellencies of Gregory, he was deeply infected with the principles and **spirit of the age** in which he lived. The spirit of Jezebel was evidently at work, though yet in its youth. We look in vain for anything like christian simplicity in the church of God at this time. The piety of Gregory himself we cannot doubt; but, as an ecclesiastic, what was he? Poisoned to the heart's core by the gross delusion of the universal claims of the chair of St. Peter, he could brook no rival, as we see in his determined and bitter opposition to the pretensions of **John,** bishop of Constantinople; and, what was darker still, we see the same spirit in his triumphing over the murder of the Emperor **Maurice** and his family by the cruel and treacherous Phocas merely because he suspected Maurice of what he called heresy. It appears that Maurice countenanced what Gregory thought the *usurpation* of John in assuming the title of *universal bishop.* But even to sanction such a claim was no small crime in the mind of a Roman pontiff. And so it was with Gregory. When the intelligence of the bloody tragedy reached him, he rejoiced; it appeared to him in the light of a providential dispensation for the deliverance of the church from her enemies. The very well-springs of charity seem to have been dried up in the hearts of all who ever sat on a papal throne, towards all ecclesiastical rivals. Justice candour, humanity, and every right feeling of Christianity must yield to the dominant claims of the false church. Even Gregory bowed before, and was fearfully corrupted by, *"that woman Jezebel."*

The Superstition and Idolatry of Gregory

Ambition, mingled with humility; and superstition, mingled with faith, characterised the great pontiff. This strange mixture and confusion was no doubt the result of his false position. It is difficult to understand how a man of such sound sense could be so debased by superstition as to believe in the working of miracles by means of relics, and to have recourse to such things for the confirmation of the truth of scripture. But the sad truth is, that he was blinded by the one great absorbing object, the interests of the church of Rome, in place of being devoted to the interests of Christ. Paul could say, "One thing I do;" another said, "One thing I know." First, we must *know* that we are pardoned and accepted; then, to do the things that please Christ is the high and heavenly calling of the Christian. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death .... But this *one thing I do,* forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil 3) Such was, and ever ought to have been, the spirit and breathings of Christianity. But what do we find at the close of the sixth century? What was the *one thing* Gregory had in view? Clearly not the claims of a heavenly Christ, and conformity to Him in His resurrection, sufferings, and death. We may safely affirm, that the one great object of his public life was to establish beyond dispute *the universal bishopric of Rome.* And to this end, in place of leading souls to delight in the *ways* of Christ, as well as in Himself, which Paul ever did, he sought to advance the claims of the Romish See by *idolatry* and *corruption.* Neither was the spirit of *persecution* altogether absent.

Monasticism, under the patronage of Gregory, especially according to the stricter rules of *Benedict,* was greatly revived and widely extended. The doctrine of purgatory, respect for relics, the worship of images, the idolatry of saints and martyrs, the merit of pilgrimages to holy places, were either taught or sanctioned by Gregory, as connected with his ecclesiastical system; all which we must own to be the unmistakable features of the activity of Balaam and the corruption of Jezebel.

But we are now in the *seventh century.* The dark ages are at hand, and dark indeed they are. The papacy begins to assume a definite form. And as we have reached in our history the close of one age of Christianity and the commencement of another, we may profitably pause for a moment and take a general survey of the progress of the gospel in different countries.

14 Christianity over Europe

Chapter 14

The Spread of Christianity over Europe

The ecclesiastical system which the Italian monks introduced into England rapidly spread, and ultimately triumphed. In about a hundred years after the arrival of Augustine, it was professed and believed throughout Anglo-Saxon Britain. The English church, thus founded on the Roman model, could not fail to hold a position especially dependent on Rome. This union at an early period was promoted and strengthened by English monks, nuns, bishops, nobles, and princes, making frequent pilgrimages to the grave of St. Peter at Rome. In no country were the Roman missionaries more successful than among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors though they were considered the fiercest of the Teutonic race The British clergy, though still adhering to their old ways; and disposed to resist foreign assumption, were compelled to seclude themselves in the extremities of the land. Romanism now prevailed all over England.

Scotland and Ireland appear to have been blessed with Christianity about the same time as Britain. By means of soldiers, sailors, missionaries, and persecuted Christians from the south, the gospel was preached and many believed. But, as the early religious history of these countries is so overlaid with legends, we will only refer to names and events that are well authenticated.

The First Preachers of Christianity in Ireland

Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, is supposed to have been born about the year 372 on the banks of the Clyde. *Kilpatrick* is said to have taken its name from him. His parents were earnest Christians; his father was a deacon, and his grandfather was a presbyter. His mother, who sought to instil into his heart the doctrines of Christianity, was sister to the celebrated Martin, archbishop of Tours. But the young Succath for such was his original name - was not seriously inclined. Some time after, his parents left Scotland and settled in Brittany. At the age of sixteen, when Succath and his two sisters were playing on the sea-shore, some Irish pirates, commanded by O'Neal, carried them all three off to their boats and sold them as captives in Ireland. For six years he was employed in keeping cattle.

During the period of his slavery he endured many and great hardships. But his sin had found him out. He became serious and thoughtful. When about the age of fifteen he had committed some great sin which now pressed heavily on his conscience both night and day. He prayed often, and wept much; indeed such was the inward fervour of his soul, that he became insensible to the cold, the rain, and other inconveniences to which he was exposed. He now thought of home, of his mother's tender words and earnest prayers; and God graciously used the remembrance of the gospel to the blessing of his soul. He was born again. "I was sixteen years old," he says, "and knew not the true God; but in that strange land the Lord opened my unbelieving eyes, and, although late, I called my sins to mind, and was converted with my whole heart to the Lord my God, who regarded my low estate, had pity on my youth and ignorance, and consoled me as a father consoles his children. The love of God increased more and more in me, with faith and the fear of His name. The Spirit urged me to such a degree that I poured forth as many as a hundred prayers in one day. And during the night, in the forests and on the mountains when I kept my flock, the rain and snow and frost and sufferings which I endured excited me to seek after God. At that time I felt not the indifference which now I feel; the Spirit fermented my heart."*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 5, p. 25.}

If these words can be relied upon as flowing from the lips of Succath, they present a much purer testimony to the truth of the gospel than we ever find in the church of Rome. They present an exercised soul in close quarters with God Himself. The forms and priesthood of Romanism destroy this beautiful, personal, direct communion with God and with His Christ through the grace and power of the Holy Ghost. But such, no doubt, was the Christianity of these British Isles before it was corrupted by the papal emissaries.

In the course of time Succath gained his liberty, and after travelling much and preaching he returned to his family. But he soon felt an irresistible desire to return to Ireland and preach the gospel to the pagans, among whom he had found the Saviour. In vain did his parents and friends seek to detain him. He broke through all hindrances, and with a heart full of christian zeal departed for Ireland. He was now over forty years of age, and, according to some writers, had been ordained a presbyter, and was now consecrated bishop of the Irish. After this he is known as Saint Patrick. He devoted the remainder of his life to the Irish, and laboured among them with great effect, though amidst many difficulties and dangers. The conversion of Ireland is ascribed to his means. The year of his death is uncertain.

The Missionary Zeal of Ireland

The blessed fruits of St. Patrick's labours were abundantly manifested in after years. Ireland at this time is described as a kind of elysium of peace and piety; and its fame for pure scriptural teaching rose so high, that it received the honourable appellation of **"the Isle of Saints."** The labours of the Irish clergy, however, were not confined to their own country. Naturally fond of travelling or wandering, and being energised by a love for souls, numbers left their native country, as missionary bands, under the leadership of a loved and devoted abbot. The monasteries, it is generally said, were so filled with pious monks at this time, that there was not sufficient room in their own country for the employment of their zeal, so that they felt it was their duty to exercise their activity in other lands. Thus we see a broad *silver line* of God's grace in that rude people, more distinctly marked than in any other part of Christendom. The Lord's name be praised. But let us take an example to see its working.

The Mission of Columba

Columba, a pious man, of royal descent, and full of good works, became deeply impressed with the importance of carrying the gospel to other lands. He thought of Scotland, and determined to visit the country of the famous **Succath.** Having communicated his intention to some of his fellowChristians, who thoroughly entered into his scheme, the mission was agreed upon. About the year 565 Columba, accompanied by twelve companions, sailed from the shores of Ireland in an open boat of wicker-work, covered with skins, and, after experiencing much tossing in their rude little vessel, the noble missionary band reached the Western Isles - a cluster of islands off the west coast of Scotland, called the Hebrides. They landed near the barren rock of Mull, to the south of the basaltic caverns of Staffa, and fixed their abode on a small island, afterwards known as Iona, or Icolmkill. There he founded his monastery, afterwards so famous in the history of the church. Tradition has preserved a point on the coast at which they landed by an artificial mound, faintly resembling an inverted boat, fashioned after the pattern of the currach, in which the pious monks navigated the sea.*

{*For interesting details, see *"The Church History of Scotland from the commencement of the Christian era to the present time*" by the Rev. John Cunningham, minister of Crieff. A. and C. Black Edinburgh. 1859.}

A goodly number of Christians, it is thought, had already found a refuge on that barren rock. At that time it must have been almost completely isolated from the abodes of men. The waters of the Hebrides are so tempestuous that navigation in open boats must have been extremely dangerous. The name Iona signifies "the Island of Waves." Besides its cross tides, its currents, and its headlands, the heavy swell of the Atlantic rolls in upon its shores. Of the *monks* of Iona we shall speak by-and-by; but we have not yet done with Ireland.

Columbanus, another monk of great sanctity, appears to have left his cell about sixty years after Columba. He was born in Leinster, and trained in the great monastery of Bangor on the coast of Ulster. A society of three thousand monks, under the government of its founder, Comgal, were fostered in this convent. And the church in Ireland was still free; it had not yet been enslaved by the church of Rome. They were simple and earnest in their Christianity compared with the lifeless forms and the priestly element of the papacy. Neither did the religious houses of that period resemble the popish convents of later times. Still they had travelled far away from the simplicity of apostolic Christianity.

The word of God was not their only guide. Christianity had not existed in the world six hundred years without contracting many corruptions. It had passed through many events of very great importance in the history of the church. Gnosticism, Monasticism, Arianism, and Pelagianism, were giant evils in those early days; but Monasticism was the popular institution at the close of the sixth century.

The Characteristics of a Monk Superior

A proficient in the mystic piety of that day was believed to work miracles, utter prophecies, and enjoy divine visions. He was surrounded with such a fearful sanctity, that none dared to touch the man of God. He emerged from his miserable cell as from another world, himself and his garments covered with dust and ashes; he boldly rebuked the vices of kings, confronted the most cruel of tyrants, threatened the overthrow of dynasties,` and assumed the lofty tone of superiority over all secular dignities.

Such was **Columbanus.** With a colony of monks he sailed from Ireland about the year 590. He had intended to preach the gospel beyond the Frankish dominions; but he landed in Gaul. The fame of his piety reached the ears of Guntram, king of Burgundy, who invited him to settle in that country. Declining the king's offer, the abbot requested permission to retire into some unapproachable wilderness. He established himself in the Vosges. For a time the missionaries had to endure great hardships. They had often for days no other food than wild herbs, the bark of trees, and probably fish from the stream. But by degrees they made a favourable impression on the people of the neighbourhood. All classes looked on them with reverence. Provisions were sent to them, especially by those who were desirous of profiting by the prayers of these holy men. The supply was described as miraculous. The piety and wonder-working powers of the abbot soon gathered numbers around him. Monasteries arose in different places, and votaries flocked in to fill them.

Columbanus presided as abbot over all these institutions. His rule was probably that of the Irish Bangor. Although his delight was ever to wander in the wild woods, or to dwell for days in his lonely cave, he still exercised strict superintendence over all the monasteries which he had formed. Work, diet, reading, time for prayer, and the adjustment of punishment, were all ruled by himself. He at length fell into disputes with his neighbours as to the time of keeping Easter. He wrote on the subj ect to Pope Gregory and to Boniface, and placed the church of Jerusalem above that of Rome, as being the place of the Lord's resurrection. He laboured also in Metz, Switzerland, and Italy; after founding many monasteries, he died in Rome A.D. 610.

The most celebrated follower of the great abbot was his countryman St. **Gall,** who had accompanied him in all his fortunes, but being ill when his master passed through Italy, he could not follow him, and was left in Helvetia. He afterwards preached to the people in their own language, founded the famous monastery which bears his name, and is honoured as the apostle of Switzerland. He died about the year 627. From the time of St. Patrick until the middle of the twelfth century the church in Ireland continued to assert its independence of Rome, and to maintain its position as an active living branch of the church, not owning any earthly head.* We will now turn to Scotland.

{*Gardner's *Faiths of the World,* vol. 1, p. 150.}

The First Preachers of Christianity in Scotland

About a hundred and fifty years before the famous Columba landed on the isle of Iona, **St. Ninian,** "a most holy man of the British nation," as Bede calls him, preached the gospel in the southern districts of Scotland. This missionary like almost all the saints of early times, is declared to have been of royal blood. He received his education at Rome studied under the famous Martin of Tours, and, returning to Scotland, fixed his principal residence in Galloway.

If his biographers can be trusted, we are to believe that he went everywhere preaching the word, and that the naked savages listened, wondered, and were converted. "He hastened about the work to which he had been sent by the Spirit, under the command of Christ, and being received in his country, there was a great concourse and running together of the people, much joy in all, wonderful devotion the praise of Christ everywhere resounded; some took him for a prophet. Presently the strenuous husbandman entered the field of his Lord, began to root up those things which were badly planted, to disperse those badly collected, and destroy those badly built." Thousands, it is said, were baptised and joined the army of the faithful.

He began to build a church of stone on the shores of the Solway, but, before it was finished, he received intelligence of the death of his friend and patron St. Martin, and piously dedicated the church to his honour. This is said to have been the **first stone building** erected in Scotland, and, from its white and glittering appearance compared with the log and mud cabins hitherto used, it attracted great attention. It was called in Saxon, *whithern,* or *whithorn,* from its appearance and so it is till the present day.*

{*Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 52.}

We know nothing of the immediate successors of St Ninian: down to the mission of Columba the history of Chris tianity in Scotland is little known. Doubtless the Lord would keep alive the fire which He had kindled, and preserve and spread the truth of the gospel which had been received by so many. Among the **Picts,** south of the **Grampians, Ninian** appears to have laboured chiefly and successfully, but with the celebrated Columba begins the most interesting period in the ancient ecclesiastical annals of Scotland.

We have already seen Columba and his colony of monks settling down in Iona. There he built his monastery, such as it was. And so famous did the college of Iona become, that it was considered for many years, nay, for centuries, the light of the Western world. Men, eminent for learning and piety, were sent forth to found bishoprics and universities in every quarter of Europe. For thirty-four years Columba lived and laboured on that solitary rock. Occasionally he visited the mainland, doing the work of an evangelist among the barbarous **Scots and Picts,** planting churches, and exercising an immense influence over all classes; but his great object was training men for the work of the gospel at home and abroad. A close and friendly connection would, no doubt, be maintained between the North of Ireland and the West of Scotland; indeed, at that time they were considered as identical and were known by the general appellation of Scots.

The Iona Missionaries

About the close of the sixth, or the beginning of the seventh century, missionaries began to issue from the cloisters of Iona, carrying the light of Christianity not merely to the different parts of Scotland, but to England and the continent. Augustine and his Italian monks landed in Kent a little before the famous Aidan from Iona and his monks entered Northumberland. Thus was Saxon England invaded by christian missionaries at its two extremities.

Oswald, then king of Northumbria, was a Christian. He had been converted, baptised, and received into the communion of the Scottish Church when a youth and an exile in that country. On recovering the throne of his ancestors he naturally desired that his people should be brought to the knowledge of the Saviour. At his request the elders of Iona sent him a missionary band, headed by the pious and faithful Aidan. The king assigned them the island of **Lindisfarne** for their residence. Here Aidan established the system of Iona; and the community lived according to monastic rule. Numbers gathered to the new monastery both from Scotland and Ireland. The king himself zealously assisted in spreading the gospel: sometimes in preaching, and sometimes acting as an interpreter, having learnt Celtic during his exile. Bede, though strongly Roman in his affections, bears hearty testimony to the virtues of these Northern clergy - 'Their zeal, their gentleness, their humility and simplicity, their earnest study of scripture, their freedom from all selfishness and avarice, their honest boldness in dealing with the great, their tenderness and charity towards the poor, their strict and self-denying life."*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 2, p. 62.}

The work of conversion appears to have prospered in the hands of both Augustine and Aidan. The Italian monks extended their teaching and influence over the south and south-west of the kingdom, while the Scottish monks spread the truth of a clearer and simpler gospel over the northern, eastern, and midland provinces. At one time the sees of York, Durham, Lichfield and London, were filled by Scotchmen. Thus Rome and Iona met on English ground, a collision was inevitable; who would be master? Augustine, who had been consecrated primate of England by the pope, required the Celtic monks to conform to the Roman discipline: this they stedfastly refused to do, and defended with great firmness their own discipline and the rules of Iona. Serious disputes now arose. Rome could submit to no rival she was determined to hold England in her grasp.

After the death of the pious and generous Oswald, the throne was filled by his brother **Oswy,** who also had been converted to Christianity and baptised in Scotland during his captivity. But his princess adhered to the customs of Rome, and the family followed the mother. A strong influence was thus brought to bear against the Scottish monks; and wearied with the continual taunts and the unscrupulous conduct of the pontiff's agents, both sacred and secular, the unyielding presbyters determined to leave England and return to Iona. By far the largest and most important part of the country had been converted to Christianity by means of their labours; but the triumph of Rome at the Whitby conference in 664, through the subtlety of the priest Wilfred, so discouraged them that they quietly withdrew from the field after occupation of about thirty years. "However holy thy Columba may have been," said the crafty Wilfred, "wilt thou prefer him to the prince of the apostles, to whom Christ said, *Thou art Peter, and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven?"* **King Oswy** was present, and professed obedience to St. Peter, Lest, he said, when I appear at the gate of heaven, there should be no one to open it to me. The people soon followed their prince, and in a short time all England became subservient to Rome. But neither arguments, intimidation, nor derision, had any effect on the presbyters of the North. They refused to acknowledge that they owed any allegiance to the bishop of Rome. Scotland was still free. How to enslave her was now the great question with the Romanists. The priests, as usual, set to work with the princes. It was accomplished in this way: -

The Clerical Tonsure

Amongst the many subjects of dispute between the **Celtic** and **Italian** missionaries, the true day for the celebration of Easter, and the true form of the clerical tonsure, excited the fiercest controversies, stirred up the strongest passions, and ultimately led to the fall of the Church in Scotland, and the triumph of the priests of Rome. But, having already spoken of the Easter question in connection with the council of Nice, we will only now notice the dispute about the tonsure.

It must appear strange to our youthful protestant readers, who may never have seen a catholic priest with his hat off, that the shaving of his crown was of more weight in his ordination than either his learning or his piety. And the mere form in which it was shaven was considered of such importance that it was made a test of orthodoxy. The Scottish monks followed the churches of the East both in the observance of Easter and in the form of the tonsure. They shaved the fore part of the head from ear to ear in the form of a crescent. The Easterns claimed John and Polycarp as their example and authority. The Italians professed to be greatly shocked by such barbarity, and called it the tonsure of **Simon Magus.** The Roman clergy used the circular form. This was done by making bald a small round spot on the very crown of the head, and enlarging the spot as the ecclesiastic advanced in holy orders. The tonsure was made requisite as a preparation for orders about the fifth or sixth century.

Augustine and his successors in the see of Canterbury, following the writings of the most ancient and venerable Fathers, affirmed that the tonsure was first introduced by the prince of the apostles, in honour of the crown of thorns which was pressed upon the head of the Redeemer; and that the instrument devised by the impiety of the Jews for the ignominy and torture of Christ may be worn by His apostles as their ornament and glory. For more than a century the controversy raged with great fierceness. So far did matters proceed, that a man was or was not a heretic according as he made bare the crown or the fore part of his head. Rome was filled with anger; human means appeared insufficient to conquer a miserable band of presbyters in a remote corner of the island. They refused to bend before her. What was to be done? As always, finding herself unable to accomplish her object by the priest, she had recourse to court favourites, nobles, and princes. Naitam, king of the Picts, was made to believe, that by submitting to the pope he would be equal to Clovis and Clotaire. Flattered by such greatness of future glory, he recommended all the clergy of his kingdom to receive the **tonsure of St. Peter.** Then without delay he sent agents and letters into every province, and caused all the monasteries and monks to receive the circular tonsure according to the Roman fashion. Some refused. The elders of the rock held out for a time; but the orders of the king, the example of the clergy, and the weakness of some amongst themselves led the way to the downfall of Iona and all Scotland. About the beginning of the eighth century the razor was introduced, they received the Latin tonsure, they became serfs of Rome, and continued so until the period of the Reformation.*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 5, p. 77. Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 90.}

Who were The Culdees?

The Culdees, as their name imports, were a kind of religious recluses, who lived in retired places. The christian community of Iona was called *Culdees.* And this is probably the reason why that isolated spot was fixed upon by Columba as the seat of his monastery. Though utterly free from the corruptions of the great monasteries on the continent, the life and institutions of Columba were strictly monastic. And from fragments gathered up it appears pretty certain, that "they gloried in their miracles, paid respect to relics, performed penances, fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays, had something very like to auricular confession, absolution, and masses for the dead; but it is certain they never submitted to the decrees of the papacy in regard to celibacy." Many of the Culdees were married men. St. Patrick was the son of a deacon and the grandson of a priest.*

{*Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 94.}

But though these good and holy men were so far infected by the superstition of the times; the remoteness of their situation, the simplicity of their manners, and the poverty of their country must have greatly preserved them from Roman influences, and from the prevalent vices of more opulent monasteries. We would rather think of it as a seminary, in which men were trained for the work of the ministry. In after years the monks were frequently disturbed, and sometimes slaughtered by pirates. In the twelfth century Iona passed into the possession of Roman monks. "Its pure and primitive faith," says Cunningham, "had departed; its renown for piety and learning was gone; but the memory of these survived, and it was now regarded with greater superstitious reverence than ever. Long before this it had been made the burial-place of royalty, numerous pilgrimages were made to it, and now kings and chiefs began to enrich it with donations of tithes and lands. The walls which are now crumbling were then reared; and the voyager beholds these venerable ecclesiastical remains rising from a bare moor in the midst of a wide ocean, with feelings akin to those with which he regards the temples of Thebes standing half buried amid the sands of the desert."

We will now take our leave for a while of the British Isles. The first planting of the cross in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the ultimate triumph of Rome in these countries are events of the deepest interest in themselves; but as happeeing in our own country they are entitled to our special attention. From this time little outward change takes place in the history of the church, though there may have been many internal struggles from the numerous abuses and the audacious demands of Rome.

The Spread of Christianity in Germany and Parts Adjacent

It is more than probable that the cross had been planted, at an early period, in the heart of the German forests, as well as in those cities and districts which were in subjection to the Roman Empire. The names of several bishops from Germany are found in the lists of the councils of Rome and Arles held under the authority of Constantine in the years 313, 314. But it was not till the close of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, that it was widely spread and firmly rooted. The Britons, Scots, and Irish were honoured of God as the principal instruments in this great and blessed work. The ardent Columbanus, whose mission we have already noticed, was the leader of the earliest band who went to the help of the heathen on the continent of Europe. He first crossed over into France, then passed the Rhine, and laboured for the conversion of the Swabians, Bavarians, Franks, and other nations of Germany. **St. Kilian,** a Scotchman, and a most devoted evangelist, followed him. He is regarded as the apostle of Franconia, and honoured as a martyr for his christian faithfulness about the year 692. *Willibrord,* an English missionary with eleven of his countrymen, crossed over to Holland to labour among the **Frieslanders;** but like other Anglo-Saxons of the period, he was warmly devoted to the Roman See. He was ordained bishop of Witteburg by the pope; his associates spread the gospel through Westphalia and the neighbouring countries.

But the man who brought the nations of Germany like a flock of sheep under the shepherd of Rome, was the famous **Winfrid.** He was born at Crediton in Devonshire, of a noble and wealthy family, about the year 680. He entered a monastery in Exeter at the age of seven, and was afterwards removed to Nursling in Hampshire. Here he became famous for his ability as a preacher, and as an expositor of scripture. He felt called of God in early life to go abroad as a missionary to the heathen. He sailed to Frisia in the year 716. His labours were long and abundant. Three times he visited Rome and received great honours from the pope. Under the title of **St. Boniface,** and as the apostle of Germany, he died as a martyr at the age of sixty-five. But though he was a most successful missionary, a man of great strength of character, of great learning, and of saintly life, he was the sworn vassal of the pope, and sought rather the advancement of the church of Rome than the extension of the gospel of Christ.*

{*For particulars see Hardwicke's *Middle Ages;* J.C. Robertson, vol. 2, p. 95.}

The Great Papal Scheme of Aggrandisement

The diffusion of Christianity in this century far exceeded its former bounds both in the Eastern and Western countries. We have seen something of its triumphs in the West. In the East the Nestorians are said to have laboured with incredible industry and perseverance to propagate the truth of the gospel in Persia, Syria, India, and among the barbarous and savage nations inhabiting the deserts and the remotest shores of **Asia.** In particular, the vast empire of China was illumined by their zeal and industry with the light of Christianity. During several succeeding centuries, the patriarch of the Nestorians sent out a bishop to preside over the churches then in China. These interesting people reject image worship, auricular confession, the doctrine of purgatory, and many other corrupt doctrines of the Roman and Greek churches.

The Eastern or Greek church appears to have been hindered by internal dissensions from caring much for the spread of Christianity among the heathen. In the West all was activity, but alas! not for the spread of the gospel, or the **conversion of souls.***

{*Mosheim, vol. 2, p. 29.}

The Transitional Period of the Papacy

We now return to Rome. Her importance and influence as a centre, claim our closest attention for a little. The spiritual dominions of the pope were now extended far and wide. From all parts of the empire bishops, princes, and people looked to Rome as the parent of their faith, and the highest authority in Christendom. But, though thus exalted to the highest spiritual sovereignty, the supreme pontiff, in his relation to the eastern empire, was still a subject. This was unbearable to the pride and ambition of Rome. The mighty struggle for political life and power now commenced. It lasted during the whole course of the seventh and eighth centuries. This was the period of transition from a state of subordination to the civil power to that of political self-existence. How this could be accomplished was now the great problem which the Vatican had to solve. But the spiritual dominion could not be maintained without secular power.

The **Lombards -** the nearest and most dreaded neighbours of the popes - and the Greek empire were the two great obstacles in the way of the pope's temporal sovereignty. The downfall of the western empire, and the absence of any truly national government, left the Roman people to look to the bishop as their natural chief. He was thus invested with a special political influence, distinct from his ecclesiastical character. The invasions of the Lombards, as we have already seen, and the feebleness of the Greeks, contributed to the increase of political power in the hands of the pontiffs. But this was only accidental, or the necessity of unforeseen emergencies. The Roman states were still governed by an officer of the eastern empire and the pope himself, if he offended the Emperor, was liable to be seized and thrown into prison, as was actually the case with Pope St. Martin in the year 653, who died in exile the following year.

The One Grand Object of the Papacy

Every day it became more and more manifest, that there could be no solid peace for Rome, no sure foundation for the spiritual supremacy already achieved, but in the total overthrow both of the Greek and Lombard powers in Italy, and the appropriation of their spoils by the holy See. This was now the one grand object of the successors of St. Peter, and the battle they had to fight. But like the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite it must be possessed by fair means or foul. Jezebel plots, and the death of Naboth is accomplished. The history of the Lombard kings, and of the great Iconoclastic controversy, during the seventh and eighth centuries, throws much light on the means used to gain this end; but of these we can only say a word as we pass along, and must refer our readers to the general histories.*

{*See especially Greenwood's *Cathedra Petri.*}

"There is abundant historical ground to believe," says Greenwood, "that this object had by this time shaped itself very distinctly in the mind of the papacy: the territory of its religious enemy, the Emperor, must be definitively annexed to the patrimony of St. Peter, together with as much more extensive a territorial estate as opportunity might bring within its grasp. But there remained the ardous and apparently hopeless task of wresting these prospective acquisitions from the hands of the Lombard enemy. And, in fact, the whole course of the papal policy was thenceforward directed to the accomplishment of this single object."

Pepin and Charlemagne

A.D. 741-814

The eyes of the popes had for some time been turned to France as the quarter from which deliverance was to come. The Frankish nation had been catholic from the beginning of their Christianity; but a closer connection with Rome had been lately formed by means of St. **Boniface,** the English monk. Filled as he was with the reverence of his nation for St. Peter and his successors, he exerted all his influence among the bishops of France and Germany, to extend the authority of the Roman See. This prepared the way for the solution of the great problem now in hand.

Pepin, who was high steward or mayor of the palace to Childeric III, King of the Franks, had long exercised all the powers of the State together with all the attributes of sovereignty excepting the title; he thought that the time was now come to put an end to the pageant royalty of his master, and assume the kingly name and honours. He possessed in full measure all the qualities which the nobility and people were accustomed to respect at that period in princes. He was a gallant warrior and an experienced statesman. By a brilliant series of successes he had greatly extended the dominion of the Franks. The poor king being destitute of such abilities sank in popular favour, and was surnamed the Stupid. Pepin, however, had the wisdom to proceed cautiously at this stage of his plans. Boniface, who played an important part in this matter, was secretly dispatched to Rome to pre**pare the** pope for Pepin's message, and with instructions how to answer it. In the meantime he assembled the states of the realm to deliberate on the subject. The nobles gave it as their opinion, that first of all the pontiff should be consulted, whether it would be lawful to do what the mayor desired. Accordingly two confidential ecclesiastics were sent to Rome to propose the following question to Pope Zachary *"Whether the divine law did not permit a valiant and warlike people to dethrone an imbecile and indolent monarch, who was incapable of discharging any of the functions of royalty, and to substitute in his place one more worthy of rule, and one who had already rendered most important service to the state?"* The laconic answer of the pope already in possession of all the secrets - was prompt and favourable. *"He who lawfully possesses the royal power may also lawfully assume the royal title. "*

The pope no doubt replied as his questioners desired. Pepin now felt secure of his prize. Fortified by the approval of the highest ecclesiastical authority, and assured of the acquiescence of the people, he boldly assumed the royal title. He was crowned by Boniface, in the presence of the assembled nobles and prelates of the realm, at Soissons, A.D. 752. But the religious character of the coronation marked the growing power of the clergy. The Jewish ceremony of anointing was introduced by Boniface to sanctify the usurper; and the bishops stood around the throne as of equal rank with the armed nobles. According to the usage of the Franks, Pepin was elevated on the shield, amid the acclamations of the people, and proclaimed king of the Franks. Childeric, the last of the Merovingian kings, was stripped of royalty without opposition, shorn of his long hair, tonsured, and shut up in a monastery.

Zachary's Sanction of Pepin's Plot

The part which Boniface and his patron the pope had in this revolution, and the morality of the proceedings, have been the subjects of much controversy. Papal writers have been at some pains to exonerate the unscrupulous priests, and protestant writers to criminate them. But if we compare their conduct with the principles of the New Testament, there can be no controversy. Every right principle and feeling, both human and divine, was readily sacrificed to secure the alliance of Pepin against the Greeks and Lombards. The violation of the sacred rights of kings, the great law of hereditary succession, the rebellious ambition of a servant, the degradation of a lawful sovereign, absolving subjects from their allegiance, are here sanctioned by the papacy as right in the sight of God, provided they are the means of raising the pope to temporal sovereignty. Such was the daring wickedness and awful blasphemy of the Roman See in the middle of the eighth century. Let the student of church history note this occurrence as characteristic of the papacy, and as a precedent for its future pretensions. It is generally related as the first instance of the pope's interference with the rights of princes and the allegiance of subjects. But the successors of Zachary made ample use of the precedent in after years. They asserted that the kings of France, from this time, held their crown only by the authority of the pope, and that the papal sanction was their only legal title. Little did either Pepin or Zachary foresee the immense effects of this one negotiation on the history of the church and the world. It was the first great step towards the future kingdom of the bishop of Rome - the important link in the chain of events.

The Temporal Sovereignty of the Papacy Established

By a mutual exchange of good offices, in less than three years Pepin crossed the Alps at the head of a numerous army, overthrew the Lombards, and recovered the Italian territory which they had wrested from the Eastern empire. Justice would indeed have demanded that it should be returned to the Emperor to whom it belonged; or he might have retained it for himself. But he did neither. Mindful of his obligation to the holy See, he replied, that he had not gone to battle for the sake of any man, but for the sake of St. Peter alone, and to obtain the forgiveness of his sins. He then transferred the sovereignty over the provinces in question to the bishop of Rome. This was the foundation of the whole temporal dominion of the popes.

Astolph, king of the Lombards, having sworn to Pepin that he would restore to St. Peter the towns which he had seized, the French troops were withdrawn. But the magnificent *"donation, " so* far as the pope was concerned, was only on paper. He had not been put into actual possession of the ceded territories, neither had he the means of putting himself in possession of the royal gift. No sooner, therefore, had the Frankish king recrossed the Alps than Astolph refused to fulfil his engagements. He collected his scattered divisions, and resumed his attacks upon the scattered territories of the church. He wasted the country up to the very walls of Rome, and laid siege to the city. The pope, incensed as much at the evasive conduct of Pepin as at the perfidy of the Lombards, sent messages to his Frankish protectors in all haste by sea, for every way by land was closed by the enemy. His first letter reminded King Pepin, that he hazarded eternal condemnation if he did not complete the *donation* which he had vowed to St. Peter. A second letter followed, more pathetic, more persuasive. Still the Franks were tardy. And finally the pope wrote a third, as from St. Peter himself. The daring and assumption of this letter is so awful, that we give it entire as a specimen of the means used by the pope to terrify the barbarians into the **protection of the Holy See and the** advancement of her dominions. He considered all means justifiable for such high purposes. Thus it reads:

"I, Peter the apostle, protest, admonish, and conjure you, the most Christian kings, Pepin, Charles and Carloman, with all the hierarchy, bishops, abbots, priests and all monks; all judges, dukes, counts, and the whole people of the Franks. The mother of God likewise adjures you, and admonishes and commands you, she as well as the thrones and dominions and all the host of heaven, to save the beloved city of Rome from the detested Lombards. If ye hearken, I, Peter the apostle, promise you my protection in this life and in the next, will prepare for you the most glorious mansions in heaven, and will bestow on you the everlasting joys of paradise. Make common cause with my people of Rome, and I will grant whatever ye may pray for. I conjure you not to yield up this city to be lacerated and tormented by the Lombards, lest your own souls be lacerated and tormented in hell with the devil and his pestilential angels. Of all nations under heaven the Franks are highest in the esteem of St. Peter; to me you owe all your victories. Obey, and obey speedily; and, by my suffrage, our Lord Jesus Christ will give you in this life length of days, security, victory, in the life to come, will multiply His blessings upon you, among His saints and angels."*

{*For an able description of this important period, see Milman's *Latin Christianity,* vol. 2, p. 243.}

The Foreshadowing of the Man of Sin

Nothing could give us a more expressive idea of the fearful apostasy of the church of Rome than this letter. The one title to eternal life is obedience to the pope; the highest duty of man is the protection and enlargement of the holy See. But where is Christ? where are His claims? where is Christianity? In place of seeking to convert the barbarians and win their souls for Christ, the Lord's most holy name, and the name of the apostle are prostituted to the basest of purposes. The soldier that fights hardest for the Roman See, though destitute of every moral and religious qualification, is assured of great temporal advantages in this present life, and in the life to come the highest seat in heaven. Surely we have here the mystery of iniquity, and the foreshadowing of that man of sin, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God - even of him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders. (2Th 2:3-12)

Pepin soon had his Franks in marching order. The threatenings and promises of St. Peter's letter had the desired effect. They again invaded Italy. Astolph yielded at once to the demands of Pepin. The contested territory was abandoned. Ambassadors from the East were present at the conclusion of the treaty, and demanded the restitution of Ravenna and its territory to their master, the Emperor; but Pepin declared that his sole object in the war was to show his veneration for St. Peter; and he bestowed by the right of conquest the whole upon his successors. The representatives of the pope now passed through the land, receiving the homage of the authorities and the keys of the cities. But the territory he accepted from a foreign potentate in the form of a *donation* belonged to his acknowledged master, the Eastern Emperor. He had hired for a large sum, which he took care to make payable in heaven, a powerful stranger to rob his lawful sovereign for his own advantage, and without shame or hesitation he accepted the plunder. The French king may be dethroned and humbled by his servant, and the Greek Emperor may be robbed and defied by his priest, if the church be thereby aggrandised. Such has ever been the policy of Rome.

But the munificent donation of Pepin - who died in the year 768 - awaited the confirmation of his son, **Charlemagne.** In the year 774, when the Lombards once more threatened the Roman territories, the aid of France was implored. Charlemagne proceeded to their help. He arrived in Rome on Easter-eve. The Romans, we are told, received the king with unbounded demonstrations of joy. Thirty thousand citizens went forth to meet him; the whole body of the clergy with crosses and banners; the children of the schools, who bore branches of palm and olive, and hailed him with hymns of welcome. He dismounted, and proceeded on foot towards St. Peter's church where the pope and all the clergy were in waiting. The king devoutly kissed each step of the stairs, and, on reaching the landing kissed the Pope, and entered the building holding his right hand. He spent the eve of Easter in devout exercises and prayers. But when the king's heart was warm and tender, pope Hadrian opened the subject of a *new deed of donation* to the holy See. Charlemagne now greatly enlarged the donation which Pepin had made to the church, confirmed it by an oath, and solemnly laid the deed of gift on the apostle's tomb. After the conclusion of the Easter solemnities, he took his leave of the pontiff, and rejoined his army. His arms were victorious everywhere; nor did he pause till he had entirely and finally subverted the empire of the Lombards, and proclaimed himself *King of Italy.*

The Territorial Donation of Charlemagne

The actual extent of his donation is very difficult to ascertain. But it seems to be the general opinion of the historians, that it included not only the exarchate of Ravenna, but the dukedoms of Spoleto and Benevento, Venetia, Istria, and other territories in the north of Italy - in short, almost the whole peninsula with the island of Corsica. Every Naboth was robbed of his vineyard, and his blood shed, for the gratification of Jezebel's ambition, and for the establishment of her throne of iniquity. But mark the consummation and seal of all wickedness in the way that the pope sought to reconcile his character as **vicar** of Christ, with his new position. As all men are subject to Christ, he reasoned, so likewise are they subject to His vicar and representative on earth in all that appertains to His kingdom. But that kingdom extends over all, therefore nothing belonging to this world or its affairs can be above or beyond the jurisdiction of St. Peter's chair. Our kingdom is not of this world; it is, like that of Christ, in all, above all, over all. According to this theory, no amount of temporal dominion was to be regarded as inconsistent with the Saviour's declaration respecting the nature of His kingdom. On this impious assumption thenceforward, the popes ever acted. Hence their interference with priest and people, king and subject, land and sea, all over the world.

Charlemagne visited Rome again in 781, and a third time in 787, and on each occasion the church was enriched by gifts, bestowed, as he professed in the language of the age, "for the good of his soul." Overwhelmed with gratitude, and fully conscious of his own need of a permanent defender, the pope crowned Charlemagne on the Christmas-eve of the year 800 with the crown of the Western empire, and proclaimed him Caesar Augustus. A Frankish prince, a Teuton, was thus declared the successor of the Caesars, and wielded all the power of the Emperor of the West. "The empire of Charlemagne," says Milman, "was almost commensurate with Latin Christendom; England was the only large territory which acknowledged the ecclesiastical supremacy of Rome, not in subjection to the new Western empire."* This event forms the great epoch in the annals of Roman Christendom.

{*See Milman, vol. 2. Greenwood, vol. 2.}

We must now leave the West for a time, and turn our attention to another great religious revolution which suddenly and unexpectedly sprang up in the East - Mahometanism.

15 Mahomet

Chapter 15

Mahomet, the False Prophet of Arabia

It has been with much interest, that we have traced the steady progress and subduing power of Christianity throughout the whole of Europe, during the seventh and eighth centuries, though in its Latin or Roman dress. The name of Jesus was spread abroad, and God could use the sweet savour of that name for blessing, in spite of the rigid formularies of Rome which everywhere surrounded it. But all these conquests of the gospel, through the management of the pope and the influence of his missionaries, became the conquests of the Roman See. How far her spiritual dominion might have extended, and how great her power might have become had she met with no formidable opposition, it would be impossible to imagine. But God permitted an enemy to arise, who not only arrested the progress of Romanism on all sides but more than once made the pontiff himself tremble for his safety even in the chair of St. Peter. This was **Mahomet,** the impostor of Arabia.

The beginning of the seventh century - the time when this remarkable man appeared - was peculiarly favourable for the accomplishment of his great object. Almost the whole world was mad after idols. The prevailing religion of his own country was grossly idolatrous. There were 360 idols in the temple of Mecca, which was the precise number of days in the Arab year. Paganism with its numberless false gods, still covered a large portion of the earth; and even Christianity alas! had become extensively idolatrous both in the Greek and Roman churches. It was at this moment that Mahomet appeared before the world as a stern and austere monotheist. He felt himself called to restore the fundamental doctrine of the divine Unity to its due prominence in the religious belief of mankind. But the very ideas of incarnation, of redemption, of a Redeemer, of relationship and communion with God - the pervading influences of a holy love - have no place in the prophet's system. The yawning gulf that separates between God and the sinner is left impassable by the religion of Mahomet. But, before speaking of his system, we will briefly glance at his family and youth.

The Family and Youth of Mahomet

According to Arabian tradition, he was of the noble family of the Koreish. That tribe, the Koreishite, at the time of Mahomet's birth (which is generally placed about the year 569) was a kind of hierarchy exercising religious supremacy, and the acknowledged guardians of the Caaba, the sacred stone of Mecca, with its temple. His father died soon after his birth, and his mother when he was very young; so that he was left an orphan and destitute. Other male members of his family having died, the governorship of Mecca, and the keys of the Caaba, passed into the hands of another branch of the family. Little is known of the first twenty-five years of his life, save that he engaged in mercantile pursuits, and was so successful and honourable in his dealings that he received the title of the *Amin,* or faithful. At the age of twenty-eight he married a widow of his kindred, possessed of great wealth. Twelve years after his marriage - in his fortieth year - the prophet began to listen to the intimations of his future mission. The misfortunes of his family and how to recover its ancient dignity and power may have been at first in his mind. According to a custom which was common among his countrymen, he withdrew every year to a cave in a mountain, and spent some time in religious solitude. It was in one of these caves, according to his own account, that he received his first communication from heaven, or rather, as we believe, from the dark abyss. He was, however, gradually wrought up to a belief that he was especially called of God to be an instrument for the destruction of idolatry and for the propagation of the true faith. His oracles, which he professed to receive direct from heaven by the angel Gabriel, are preserved in **the Koran,** and regarded by the faithful as the word of God.

The Religion of Islam

The new religion thus announced was Islam - a word which means *submission* or *resignation* to the will of God. His doctrine was summed up in his own aphorism, "There is no God but the true God, and Mahomet is his prophet." The six main articles in the theoretical faith of Islam were: 1, belief in God, 2, in His angels, 3, in His scriptures; 4, in His prophets; 5 in the resurrection and day of judgment; 6, in predestination. The practical part of the prophet's creed was equally unobjectionable, according to the prevalent thoughts of religious observance at the time. It embraces four great precepts: 1, prayers and purification; 2, alms; 3, fasting; 4, the pilgrimage to Mecca, which was held to be so essential that any one who died without performing it might as well have died a Jew or a Christian.

The only really new and startling article in the religion of Islam was the divine mission of Mahomet as the apostle and prophet of God. But in these fair appearances the craft of Satan is most manifest. Such simple and elementary religious principles would do violence to none, but deceive many. History clearly proves that his opinions changed with his success, and that his violence and intolerance increased with his power, until it became a religion of the sword, of rapine, and of sensuality. "He is a gentle preacher," says Milman, "until he has unsheathed his sword." The sword once unsheathed is the remorseless argument. At one time we find the broad principle of Eastern toleration explicitly avowed: diversity of religion is ascribed to the direct ordinance, and all share in the equal favour, of God. But the Koran gradually recants all these gentler sentences, and assumes the language of insulting superiority or undisguised aversion. But, although the Koran has many points of resemblance both to Judaism and Christianity, it is thought that Mahomet was not acquainted with either the Old or the New Testament - that he rather drew his materials from **Talmudical legends, from spurious Gospels,** and other heretical writings, mixed with the old traditions of Arabia.

The first converts which Mahomet gained over to his new religion were among his friends and near relations, but the work of conversion proceeded very slowly. At the end of three years his followers only numbered fourteen. Not content with his progress, he resolved to make a public declaration of his religion. He first called upon his own family to recognise him as a prophet of God, and, having been accepted as the prophet of his family, he then aspired to be the prophet of his tribe. But his demands were refused by the Koreishites, his pretensions disbelieved, and himself and his followers persecuted.

Mahomet's Triumphant Entry into Medina

Hitherto he had endeavoured to spread his opinions by persuasion only, but the people were obstinate and superstitious, and threatened the prophet with martyrdom. He was obliged to flee from his native city Mecca, the central spot of the commerce and of the religion of Arabia, and the hoped for centre of his new spiritual empire. He fled to **Medina** where he was received as a prince. Some of its most distinguished citizens had embraced his cause; a party had been already formed in his favour. His flight, A.D. 622, is regarded as the great era in the prophet's life, and as the foundation of the Mahometan chronology. Now that he was possessed of a force, he was charged by a fresh revelation to use it for the propagation of the faith. The character of his heavenly revelations was now changed, they became fierce and sanguinary. His mouth was filled, like the prophets of **Ahab,** with a lying spirit.

In a few years, after some fighting between the rival cities and the followers of the rival religions, the strength of the prophet so increased, that in 630 he gained possession of Mecca. He cleansed the Caaba of its 360 idols, and erected it into the great sanctuary of Islam. From that time Mecca became the centre of his system; the whole population swore allegiance; all the tribes of Arabia were now under his dominion and in the profession of his religion.

Mecca the Capital of Islam

Mahomet was now lord of Mecca. The unity of God was proclaimed and his own prophetic mission from the highest pinnacle of the **Mosque.** The idols were broken to pieces. The old system of idolatry sank before the fear of his arms and the outward simplicity of his new creed. The next important step in the policy of the prophet was to secure the absolute religious unity of all Arabia. By this means the old hereditary feuds of the tribes and races disappeared, and all were turned into one united religious army against the infidels. War was now declared against all forms of unbelief, which was especially a declaration of war against Christendom, and an expressed determination to propagate Mahometanism by the power of his sword.

Mahomet is now an independent sovereign. Arabia, delivered from idols, embraces the religion of Islam. But, though the prophet is now a temporal prince and a successful warrior, he neglects not the duties of a priest. He constantly led the devotions of his followers, offered up the public prayers, and preached at the weekly festivals on the Fridays. He blasphemously assumed to be prophet, priest, and king. The mixture, the delusion, is the inspiration of hell; it is like the masterpiece of Satan, issuing from the realm of darkness. The fanaticism of his followers was urged on by the inducements of plunder, and the gratification of every evil passion. The appropriation of all female captives was recognised as one of the laws of war, and the reward held out to valour. The maxims inculcated on all the faithful were such as, "One drop of blood shed in the cause of God, or one night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months' employment in fasting and prayer. Whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion and odoriferous as musk: and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim." The war cry of the intrepid Khaled was, "Fight on, fight on and fear not! Paradise, paradise, is under the shadow of your swords! Hell with its fires is behind him who flies from battle, paradise is open to him who falls in battle." Thus animated, the Moslem armies were fired with enthusiasm; and, thirsting for the spoils of victory here and a sensual paradise hereafter, they rushed fearlessly into battle.

The foundation of the Arabian empire was now laid. Mahomet summoned, not only the petty potentates of the neighbouring kingdoms, but the two great powers of the more civilised world, the king of Persia and the Emperor of the East, to submit to his religious supremacy. Heraclius is said to have received the communication with respect, but Chosroes, the Persian, contemptuously tore the letter to pieces: the prophet, on hearing of the act, exclaimed, "It is thus that God will tear the kingdom, and reject the supplications of Chosroes." And so it happened; the kingdom of Persia was reduced in a short time by the Mahometan arms to a few scattered communities. But though the circle of Islam was widening, the centre was passing away. Having followed his eldest son to the grave with tears and sighs, the prophet made his farewell pilgrimage to Mecca, and died in the year 632, and in the sixty-fourth year of his age. It would appear that he was untouched by remorse on his death-bed; but the blood he had shed, and the multitudes he had beguiled, would follow him to the judgment-seat.

The evil mission of the false prophet was fulfilled. He had organised the most terrible confederacy the world ever saw. In the short space of ten years he planted in the East a religion which has taken root so firmly, that amid all the revolutions and changes of twelve centuries it still exercises a powerful controlling influence over the minds and consciences of more than a *hundred millions* of human beings.

The Successors of Mahomet

After the death of the prophet, war was declared against mankind by his successors, the **Caliphs.** The chief of these were, Abou Beker, the wise; Omar, the faithful; Ali, the brave; Khaled, the sword of God. These were the oldest companions and relatives of the prophet. In a few months after his death these generals were followed by the swarms of the desert, and overran the plains of Asia. The history of these wars, though deeply affecting the progress of Christianity, lies not within the sphere of our "Short Papers." But as many nations and multitudes of the Lord's people were the victims of this fearful scourge, it fairly claims a brief consideration. Many believe that the **Saracen locusts** were a partial fulfilment of Rev 9:1-12.

The persecuting heathen, such as Chosroes the infidel and defiant king of Persia, and the merely nominal professors of Christianity, were alike chastised of God by the successors of Mahomet; but the proud bishops and priests were the especial objects of their vengeance. "Destroy not fruit-tree nor fertile field in your path," said the Caliphs; "be just, and spare the feelings of the vanquished. Respect all religious persons who live in hermitages or convents, and spare their edifices. But should you meet with a class of unbelievers of a different kind, who go about with shaven crowns and belong to the synagogue of Satan, be sure you cleave their skulls, unless they embrace the true faith or render tribute." And so the mighty horde moved on with an enthusiasm which nothing could check. "Syria fell; Persia and Egypt fell; and many other countries yielded to their power." Many great cities, such as Jerusalem, Bozrah, Antioch, Damascus, Alexandria, Cyrene, and Carthage, fell into their hands. They also invaded India, assailed Europe, overran Spain, and advanced even to the banks of the Loire; but there they were defeated and driven back by Charles Martel in the year 732. We would only further notice their treatment of the vanquished in the case of Jerusalem.

In the year 637 Jerusalem fell into the hands of the **Caliph Omar,** who built a mosque on the site of the temple. The whole people of that guilty city were degraded into a marked and abject caste by the haughty conqueror. Everywhere they were to honour the Mussulmans, and give place before them. Christianity was subjected to the ignominy of toleration; the cross was no longer to be exhibited on the outside of the churches, the bells were to be silent; the Christians were to bewail their dead in secrecy; the sight of the devout Mussulman was not to be offended by the symbols of Christianity in any way; and his person was to be considered sacred, so that it was a crime in a Christian to strike a Mussulman.

Such was the condition to which the christian inhabitants of Jerusalem fell at once, and in which they remained undisturbed by any serious aggression of the Christians till the time of the crusades. Nearly the same terms, we may believe, were enforced on all the Christians in Syria. Thus did God in His holy providence deal with many nations both in the East and in the West that were thickly peopled with Jews and Christians, and doom millions to a long night of servitude under Mahometanism which continues to this day.*

{*See Milman's *Latin Christianity,* vol. 2, p. 4-52; James White's *Eighteen Christian Centuries,* p. 143.}

Reflections on Mahometanism and Romanism

Having brought down our history, both civil and ecclesiastical, to the close of the eighth century, we may pause for a moment and reflect on what we have seen, where we are, and what we have to expect. We have watched the growth of **the Roman See** in the West, and how she gained the summit of her ambition. We have also seen the rise of a great antagonistic power in the East, inferior only in the extent of its religious and social influence to Christianity itself. The first sprang up gradually in the very centre of enlightened Christendom, the latter arose suddenly in an obscure district of a savage desert. But what, it may be asked, is the moral lesson to be drawn from the character and results of these two great powers? Both have been permitted by God, and, if we rightly judge, have been permitted by Him as a divine judgment on Christendom for its apostasy, and on the heathen for their idolatry. On the one hand, the war-cry was raised against all who refused faith or tribute to the creed and to the armies of the Caliphs; on the other hand, a more merciless war-cry was raised against all who refused to believe in the Virgin and the saints, their visions and miracles, their relics and images, according to the intolerant demands of idolatrous Rome. The Eastern churches had been weakened and wasted from the days of Origen by a Platonic philosophy, in the form of a metaphysical theology, which caused continual dissension. In the West controversy had been greatly avoided: *power* was the object there. Rome had aspired, for centuries, to the dominion of Christendom - of the world. Both were judicially dealt with by God in the fiery deluge from Arabia; but **Mahometanism** remains as the mighty scourge of God in the East, and Romanism in the West.

Monothelites, Iconoclasm

While the Arabs under Abou Beker and Omar were overrunning the Greek countries, and wresting province after province from the empire, the Emperor contented himself by sending out armies to repel them, and remained in his capital for the discussion of theological questions. From the conclusion of his successful wars with Persia, religion had become almost the exclusive object of his solicitude. Two great controversies were at that moment agitating the whole of the christian world. The first of these, the so-called **Monothelite** controversy, may be described generally as a revival, under a somewhat different form, of the old Monophysite, or Eutychian, heresy. Under the general name of *Monophysites*

are comprehended the four main branches of separatists from the Eastern church, namely, the Syrian Jacobites, the Copts, the Abyssinians, and the Armenians. The originator of this numerous and powerful christian community was Eutyches, abbot of a convent of monks at Constantinople in the fifth century. The Monophysites denied the distinction of the two natures in Christ; the Monothelites, on the other hand, denied the distinction of the will, divine and human, in the blessed Lord. A well-meant but unsuccessful attempt was made by the Emperor Heraclius to reconcile the Monophysites to the Greek church. But as the sound of controversy is seldom heard among the Eastern sectaries after this period, and as a detailed account of their disputes would possess no interest to our readers, we leave them on the pages of ecclesiastical history.*

{*For full details of the different sects, see Marsden's *Dictionary of Christian Churches and Sects,* and Gardner's *Faiths of the World.*}

Iconoclasm, or the **Image-breaking** storm, claims a fuller consideration. It went to the heart of Christendom as no other controversy had ever done before; and it forms an important epoch in the history of the Roman See. Jezebel now appears in her true colours, and, from this time onward, her evil character is indelibly stamped on the papacy. The popes who then filled the chair of St. Peter openly defended and justified image-worship. This was surely the beginning of the popedom - the maturity of the God-dishonouring system. The foundations of popery were laid bare, and it was thus seen that persecution and idolatry were the two pillars on which her arrogant dominion rested.

The First Visible Object of Christian Veneration

For more than three hundred years after the first publication of the gospel there is good reason to believe, that neither images nor any other visible objects of religious reverence were admitted into the public service of the churches, or adopted into the exercises of private devotion. Probably such a thing had never been thought of by Christians before the days of Constantine; and we can only regard it as an early fruit of the union of Church and State. Up till this period the great protest of Christians was against the idolatry of the heathen: for this they suffered unto death. And it is not a little remarkable, that the Empress Helena, Constantine's mother, was the first to excite the christian mind to this degrading superstition. She is said, in her zeal for religious places, to have discovered and disinterred the wood of the **"true cross."** This was enough for the enemy's purpose. The predilection of human nature for objects of veneration was kindled; the flame spread rapidly; and the usual consequence - idolatry - followed.

Similar memorials of the Saviour, the Virgin Mary, the inspired Apostles, and the Fathers, were found. The most sacred relics that had been concealed for centuries were now discovered by visions. So great, so successful, was the delusion of the enemy, that the whole church fell into the snare. From the age of Constantine till the epoch of the Arab invasion, a veneration for images, pictures and relics gradually increased. The reverence for *relics* was more characteristic of the Western, and that for *images* of the Eastern churches; but from the time of Gregory the Great the feeling of the West became more favourable to images. In consequence of the almost total decay of literature, both among the clergy and the laity, the use of images was found to give immense power to the priesthood. Pictures, statues, and visible representations of sacred objects became the readiest mode of conveying instruction, encouraging devotion, and strengthening religious sentiments in the minds of the people. The more intellectual or enlightened of the clergy might endeavour to maintain the distinction between respect for images as a *means* and not as *objects* of worship. But the undiscriminating devotion of the vulgar utterly disregards these subtleties. The apologist may draw fine distinctions between images as objects of reverence and as objects of adoration, but there can be no doubt that with ignorant and superstitious minds the use, the reverence, the worship of images, whether in pictures or statues, invariably degenerates into idolatry.

Before the close of the sixth century idolatry was firmly established in the Eastern church, and during the seventh century it made a gradual and very general progress in the West where it had previously gained some footing. It became usual to fall down before images, to pray to them, to kiss them, to adorn them with gems and precious metals, to lay the hand on them in swearing, and even to employ them as sponsors at baptism.

Leo Attempts the Abolition of Image-Worship

About A.D. 726

The **Emperor Leo III.,** surnamed Isauricus, a prince of great abilities, had the boldness to undertake, in the face of so many difficulties, to purify the church of its detestable idols. As the writings of the unsuccessful party were carefully suppressed or destroyed, history is silent as to the Emperor's motives: but we are disposed to believe that the new creed and the success of Mahomet greatly influenced Leo. Besides, there was a very general feeling among Christians in the East, that it was the increasing idolatry of the church that had brought down upon them the chastisement of God by the Mahometan invasion. The Christians were constantly hearing from both Jews and Mahometans the odious name of idolaters. The great controversy evidently arose out of these circumstances.

Leo ascended the throne of the East in the year 717; and, after securing the empire against foreign enemies, he began to concern himself with the affairs of religion. He vainly thought that he could change and improve the religion of his subjects by his own imperial command. About the year 726 he issued an edict against the *superstitious use* of images - not their destruction. We cannot suppose that the Isaurian was actuated by the fear of the true God in this, but rather that his motives were purely selfish. Being head of the empire and still ostensibly head of the church, he no doubt thought that by his edicts he could accomplish the total and simultaneous abolition of idolatry throughout the empire, and establish an ecclesiastical autocracy. But Leo had greatly overrated his temporal power in spiritual matters. The time was past for imperial edicts to change the religion of the empire. He had yet to learn, to his deep mortification, the disdainful, insolent, haughty pride and power of the pontiffs, and the religious attachment of the people to their images.

The first edict merely interdicted the *worship* of images, and commanded them to be removed to such a height that they could not be touched or kissed. But the moment that the impious hand of the Emperor touched the idols, the excitement was immense and universal. The proscription affected all classes: learned and unlearned, priest and peasant, monk and soldier, clergyman and layman, men, women, and even children, were involved in this new agitation. The effect of the edict immediately occasioned a civil war both in the East and in the West. The monkish influence was especially strong. They set up a pretender to the throne, armed the multitude, and appeared in an ill-equipped fleet before Constantinople. But the Greek fire discomfited the disorderly assailants; the leaders were taken and put to death. Leo, provoked by the resistance which his edict had met with, issued a second and more stringent decree. He now commanded the *destruction* of all images, and the whitewashing of walls on which such things had been painted.

The Second Edict Published

Sweeping as the second edict was, the imperial officers, it is said, went even beyond their orders. The most sacred statues and pictures were everywhere ruthlessly broken, torn to pieces, or publicly committed to the flames under the eyes of the enraged worshippers. "Heedless of danger and death," says Greenwood, "men, women, and even children rushed to the defence of objects as dear to them as life itself. They attacked and slew the imperial officers engaged in the work of destruction; the latter, supported by the regular troops, retaliated with equal ferocity; and the streets of the metropolis exhibited such a scene of outrage and slaughter as can only proceed from envenomed religious passions. The leaders of the tumult were for the most part put to death on the spot; the prisons were filled to repletion; and multitudes, after suffering various corporal punishments, were transported to places of penal banishment."*

{*Greenwood's *Cathedra Petri,* vol. 3, p. 474.}

The populace was now excited to fury; even the presence of the Emperor did not overawe them. An imperial officer had orders to destroy a statue of the Saviour, which stood over the Brazen Gate of the imperial palace, and was known by the name of the Surety. This image was renowned for its miracles, and was held in great veneration by the people. Crowds of women gathered about the place and eagerly entreated the soldier to spare their favourite. But he mounted the ladder, and with his axe struck the face which they had so often gazed upon, and which, they thought, benignly looked down upon them. Heaven interfered not, as they expected; but the women seized the ladder, threw down the impious officer, and tore him to pieces. The Emperor sent an armed guard to suppress the tumult; the mob joined the women, and a frightful massacre took place. "The Surety" was taken down, and its place was filled with an inscription in which the Emperor gave vent to his enmity against images.*

{*J. C. Robertson, vol. 2, p. 83; Milman, vol. 2, p. 156.}

The execution of the imperial orders was everywhere resisted, both in the capital and the provinces; the popular enthusiasm was so great that it could only be quelled by the strongest efforts of the civil and military power. Passions were kindled on both sides which had their natural issue in the most daring rebellion and the most violent persecution.

The Pope Rejects the Edicts of Leo

The intelligence of the first assault of Leo against the images of Constantinople filled the Italians with grief and indignation; but when the orders arrived to put the fatal decrees in force within the Italian dependencies of the empire, all rose to arms from the greatest to the least. The pope refused to obey orders and defied the Emperor; and all the people swore to live and die in the defence of the pope and the holy images. But the political complication of matters at that moment made it impossible for the Emperor to enforce his edicts in the papal dominions. Gregory addressed the Emperor in the most haughty strain; the tone of his reply to the imperial manifesto breathes a spirit of the most seditious defiance. The monks, who saw their craft in danger - the superstition to which they owed their riches and influence, preached against the Emperor as an abandoned apostate. He was painted by these slaves of idolatry as one who combined in himself every heresy that had ever polluted the Christian faith and endangered the souls of men. But as exhibiting the true spirit of popery, both in the defence of their darling superstition, idolatry, and in their defiance of temporal power, we will transcribe parts of the original epistles of the second and third Gregory, leaving the reader to examine the portrait.

Pope Gregory II. says to the Emperor, "During ten pure and fortunate years, we have tasted the annual comforts of your royal letters, subscribed in purple ink with your own hand, the sacred pledges of your attachment to the orthodox creed of your fathers. How deplorable is the change! how tremendous the scandal! You now accuse the catholics of idolatry; and, by the accusation, you betray your own impiety and ignorance. To this ignorance we are compelled to adapt the grossness of our style and arguments: the first elements of holy letters are sufficient for your confusion; and, were you to enter a grammar school, and avow yourself the enemy of our worship, the simple and pious children would cast their tablets at your head."

After this disloyal and offensive salutation, the pope attempts in the usual way the defence of image-worship. He endeavours to prove to Leo the vast difference between christian images and the idols of antiquity. The latter were the fanciful representation of demons, the former are the genuine likeness of Christ, His mother, and His saints. He then appeals in justification of their worship to the decorations of the Jewish temple; the mercy-seat, the cherubim, and the various ornaments made by Bezaleel to the glory of God. Only the idols of the Gentiles, he affirms, were forbidden by the Jewish law. He denies that the catholics worship wood and stone: these are memorials only, intended to awaken pious feelings.

In speaking of his own edification from beholding the pictures and images in the churches, we have a passage of great historical interest as showing the usual subjects of these paintings. "The miraculous portrait of Christ sent to Abgarus, king of Edessa; the paintings of the Lord's miracles; the virgin mother, with the infant Jesus on her breast, surrounded by choirs of angels; the last supper; the raising of Lazarus, the miracles of giving sight to the blind; the curing the paralytic and the leper; the feeding of the multitudes in the desert; the transfiguration; the crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the sacrifice of Isaac."*

{*Milman's *Latin Christianity,* vol. 2, p. 160.}

Gregory enters at length into the common arguments in behalf of images, and reproaches the Emperor with his breach of the most solemn engagements, and then breaks out in a contemptuous tone, such as, "You demand a council: revoke your edicts, cease to destroy images; a council will not be needed. You assault us, O tyrant, with a carnal and military band: unarmed and naked, we can only implore the Christ, the prince of the heavenly host, that He will send unto you a devil for the destruction of your body and the salvation of your soul. You declare, with foolish arrogance, I will dispatch my orders to Rome, I will break in pieces the image of St. Peter; and Gregory, like his predecessor Martin, shall be transported in chains, and in exile, to the foot of the imperial throne. Would to God that I might be permitted to tread in the footsteps of the holy Martin; but may the fate of **Constans** serve as a warning to the persecutors of the church. But it is our duty to live for the edification and support of the faithful people; nor are we reduced to risk our safety on the event of a combat. Incapable as you are of defending your Roman subjects, the maritime situation of the city may perhaps expose it to your depredations; but we have only to retire to the first fortress of the Lombards, and then you may as well pursue the winds. Are you ignorant that the popes are the bond of union, the mediators of peace between the East and the West? The eyes of the nations are fixed on our humility; and they revere, as a God upon earth, the apostle St. Peter, whose image you threaten to destroy."

The conclusion of the pope's letter evidently refers to his new allies beyond the Alps. The Franks had dutifully listened to the papal recommendation of Boniface, the apostle of Germany. Secret negotiations were already begun to secure their assistance. The history and results of these we have, in a previous paper, examined. Hence the pope assured his royal correspondent, that "the remote and interior kingdoms of the West present their homage to Christ and His vicegerent: and we now prepare to visit one of their most powerful monarchs, who desires to receive from our hands the sacrament of baptism. The barbarians have submitted to the yoke of the gospel, while you alone are deaf to the voice of the Shepherd. These pious barbarians are kindled into rage, they thirst to avenge the persecutions of the East. Abandon your rash and fatal enterprise; reflect, tremble, and repent. If you persist, we are innocent of the blood that will be spilt in the contest; may it fall on your head."*

{*See Greenwood's *Cathedra Petri,* vol. 3.}

A Lying Spirit in the Mouth of Popery

After carefully reading these ancient epistles, it is impossible to believe that Gregory could have been so ignorant as to state so many things to Leo in favour of image-worship that were positively false: we are more inclined to believe that he knew them to be untrue, but counted on the ignorance of the Emperor. "You say," continued Gregory, "that we are forbidden to venerate things made by men's hands. But you are an unlettered person, and ought therefore to have inquired of your learned prelates the true meaning of the commandment. If you had not been obstinately and wilfully ignorant, you would have learned from them that your acts are in direct contradiction to the unanimous testimony of all the fathers and doctors of the church, and in particular repugnant to the authority of the six general councils." So glaringly false are these statements, that we can only wonder how any one could have had the effrontery to write them as true, especially the highest ecclesiastic in Christendom. But it proves that there has been from the beginning a lying spirit in the mouth of popery, as there was in the prophets of Baal. (1Ki 22:23) Even Greenwood says, "In none of the general councils does a word about images or image-worship occur. The statement as to the unanimous testimony of the fathers is equally at fault. Excepting in the works of Gregory the Great, I have not met with any mention of the practice of image-worship in the fathers of the first six centuries of the christian era."*

{*Greenwood, vol. 3, p. 476.}

But the lying spirit goes on to say, that the visible appearance of Christ in the flesh made such an impression on the minds of the disciples, that "no sooner had they cast their eyes upon Him than they hastened to make portraits of Him, and carried them about with them, exhibiting them to the whole world, that at the sight of them men might be converted from the worship of Satan to the service of Christ, - but so only that they should worship them, not with an absolute adoration, but only with a relative veneration." In like manner the pope assured Leo, that "pictures and images had been taken of **James,** the Lord's brother, of **Stephen,** and all other saints of note. And so having done, he dispersed them over every part of the earth, to the manifest increase of the gospel cause."

By a strange perversion or confusion of scriptural facts, the pope compares the Emperor with "the impious Uzziah who," he tells him, "sacrilegiously removed the brazen serpent, which Moses had set up, and broke it in pieces." Here we may give the pope the benefit of ignorance. He was less likely to know his Bible than the six general councils. He seems to have had some confused recollection of the story of Uzza, whom the Lord smote, because he put forth his hand to stay the ark when the oxen stumbled, and of the act of Hezekiah, who broke in pieces the brazen serpent expressly to prevent the people from paying divine homage to it. (1Ch 13:9, 2Ki 18:4) "Uzziah," he says, though it was really Hezekiah - "Uzziah truly was your brother, as self-willed, and, like you, daring to offer violence to the priests of God." It might now be asked, what would the children of our schools say to the pope who mistook the good king Hezekiah for a wicked king, and his destroying the brazen serpent for an act of impiety? As well might we expect them to throw their tablets at Gregory's, as at Leo's head. But enough has been said on this point to show the reader what has been the spirit and character of popery from its very foundation. It has ever been a barefaced, lying, idolatrous system, though countless numbers of God's saints have been in it during its darkest periods. The saving Name of Jesus has ever been maintained amidst its grossest absurdities and idolatries, and whosoever believes in that Name shall surely be saved. The finger of faith that touches but His garment's hem, though pressed through a throne of idolaters, opens the everlasting springs of all healing virtue, and the very fountain of disease is immediately dried up. And whatever the press or throne may be He will look round to see the one that touched Him by faith, and speak peace to the troubled soul. (Mar 5:25-34)

Close of Iconoclasm

Gregory did not long survive his epistles. In the following year he was succeeded by a third pope of the same name. **Gregory III.** was also zealous in the cause of images, he laboured to increase the popular veneration for them. In Rome he set the example of image-worship on the most splendid scale. A solemn council was convoked, consisting of all the bishops of the Lombard and Byzantine territories in Northern Italy to the number of ninety-three. The assembly was held in the actual presence of the sacred relics of the apostle Peter, and was attended by the whole body of the city clergy, the consuls, and a vast concourse of people; and a decree was framed, unanimously adopted and signed by all present, to the effect that, "If *any person* should hereafter, in contempt of the ancient and faithful customs of all Christians, and of the apostolic church in particular, stand forth as a destroyer, defamer, or blasphemer of the sacred images of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, and of His mother, the immaculate ever-Virgin Mary, of the blessed apostles, and all other saints, he be excluded from the body and blood of the Lord, and from the communion of the universal church."*

{**Cathedra Petri,* vol. 3, p. 480.}

Leo, indignant at the pope's audacity, arrested his messengers, and resolved to fit out a numerous fleet and army to reduce Italy into better subjection. But this Greek Armada encountered a terrible storm in the Adriatic, the fleet was disabled, and Leo was compelled to postpone his designs for enforcing the execution of his edicts against images in the Italian dependencies of the empire. He indemnified himself, however, by confiscating the papal revenues in Sicily, Calabria, and other parts of his dominions, and transferring Greece and Illyricum from the Roman patriarchate to that of Constantinople. But here, with both, the scene closes, but not the contest. Gregory and Leo both died in 741. The Emperor was succeeded by his son Constantine, whose reign extended to the unusual length of thirty-four years. Gregory was succeeded by **Zachary** a man of great ability, and deeply imbued with the spirit of popery. To the end of his reign, Constantine was unrelenting in his enmity against the worshippers of images. He is blamed for great cruelty towards the monks, but he was no doubt provoked to the last degree by their violent and fanatical behaviour.

Irene, wife to the son and heir of Constantine, an ambitious, intriguing, haughty princess, seized the government on the death of her feeble husband, in the name of her son, who was only ten years old. She dissembled for a time her designs for the restoration of images. Policy and idolatry took counsel together in her heart. She was jealous, crafty and cruel. Her history is the record of inward hatred and treachery with an outward appearance of courtesy. But we have only to do with the religious part of her reign.

The Second Council of Nicaea

Decrees were issued for a council to be held at Nicaea - a city, hallowed by the sittings of the first great council of Christendom - to decide the question of **image-worship.** The number of ecclesiastics present was about 350. Her chosen men took the lead; everything was, no doubt, pre-arranged. Among the preliminary acts of the council, it was debated to what class of heretics the Iconoclasts were to be ascribed. **Tarasius,** president of the assembly, asserted that it was worse than the worst heresy, being an absolute denial of Christ. The whole proceedings of the council were characterized by the same condemnatory tone towards the adversaries of image-worship. After assenting to the decrees of the first six councils, and to the anathemas against the heretics denounced therein, they passed - acting, as they declared, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit - the following canon:

"With the venerable and life-giving cross shall be set up the venerable and holy images, whether in colours, in mosaic work, or any other material, within the consecrated churches of God, on the sacred vessels and vestments, on the walls and on tablets, in houses and in highways. The images, that is to say, of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of the immaculate mother of God; of the honoured angels; of all saints and holy men - these images shall be treated as holy memorials, worshipped, kissed, only without that peculiar adoration which is reserved for the Invisible, Incomprehensible, God. All who shall violate this, as is asserted, immemorial tradition of the church, and endeavour, forcibly or by craft to remove any image, if ecclesiastics, are to be deposed and excommunicated; if monks or laymen, to be excommunicated."

The council was not content with this formal and solemn subscription. With one voice they broke out into a long acclamation. "We all believe, we all assert, we all subscribe. This is the faith of the apostles, this is the faith of the church, this is the faith of the orthodox, this is the faith of all the world. We who adore the Trinity worship images. Whoever do not the like, anathema upon them! Anathema on all who call images idols! Anathema on all who communicate with those who do not worship images.... Everlasting glory to the orthodox Romans, to John of Damascus! To Gregory of Rome, everlasting glory! Everlasting glory to all the preachers of truth!"

Helena and Irene

Thus ended the most critical question that had ever been raised since Christianity became the religion of the Roman world. By the seventh general council idolatry was formally and vehemently established as the worship of **the great papal system,** and anathemas were denounced against all who should dare to depart from it. Hence the merciless persecution of so-called separatists. But it is worthy of note, as according with our view of Jezebel's character, that a woman was the first mover in the worship of images, and a woman was the restorer of images when they had been cast down. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, was a blameless and devout woman, but she was used of the enemy to introduce exciting relics and sacred memorials which changed Christianity from a purely spiritual worship to that paganising form of religion which grew up with such rapidity in the succeeding centuries. The crafty Irene was again used of Satan to restore and re-establish the worship of images. From that day to this both the Greek and Latin churches have adhered to that form of worship, and maintained the sanctity of their images and pictures.

The *political* results of the Iconoclastic controversy were equally great and important. Rome now burst the bonds of her connection with the East, separating herself for ever from the Byzantine empire; and Greek Christianity from this time becomes a separate religion, and the empire a separate state. The West, receiving a great accession of power through this revolution, ultimately created its own empire, formed alliances with the Frankish kings, and placed the crown of the Western empire on the head of Charlemagne, as we have already seen.

16 Sovereign Grace

Chapter 16

The Silver Line of Sovereign Grace

The papal monarchy is now established. The court of France and the papacy are united. Rome is now dissevered from the East, and become the centre of influence over all the West. But having traced the dark lines of the apostasy of Latin Christianity from the beginning of the fourth to the beginning of the ninth century, we will now turn for a little and endeavour to trace the *silver line* of God's sovereign grace in those who separated from her communion during the same period. If Satan was active in corrupting the outward church, God was active in gathering out His own from the corrupt mass, and strengthening them as His own special witnesses. From the days of Augustine, the noble witness for His grace against Pelagianism in Western Christendom, down to the Reformation, a line of faithful witnesses may be traced who testified against the idolatry and tyranny of Rome, and preached salvation through faith in Christ Jesus without works of merit.* Besides multitudes who were nourished in private, both in convents and families, on the simple truth of the gospel, we would briefly notice some of the most prominent who form an important link in the great chain of witnesses, especially as connected with the history of the church in Europe.

{*See E.B. Elliott's *Hora Apocalyptica,* vol. 2, p. 219.}

The Nestorians and the Paulicians

The rise of the Nestorians in the fifth century and their great missionary zeal have been already mentioned. At their head stood a bishop, known by the title of *Patriarch of* Babylon. His residence was originally at Seleucia. From Persia, it is said, they carried the gospel to the North, the East, and the South. In the sixth century they preached the gospel with great success to the Huns, the Indians, the Medes, and the Elamites: on the coast of Malabar, and the isles of the ocean, great numbers were converted. Following the course of trade, the missionaries made their way from India to China, and penetrated across the deserts to its northern frontier. In 1625 a stone was discovered by the Jesuits near Singapore, which bears a long inscription, partly Syriac and partly Chinese, recording the names of missionaries who had laboured in China, and the history of Christianity in that country from the year 636-781. But the propagation of Christianity, it is thought, awakened the jealousy of the State, and, after witnessing the success of the gospel, and experiencing persecution, they probably were exterminated, or fled, about the close of the eighth century. The Nestorians were patronised by some of the Persian kings, and under the reign of the caliphs they were protected and prospered greatly. They assumed the designation of Chaldean Christians, or Assyrians, and still exist under that name.*

{*See *Faiths of the World,* vol. 2, p. 527; J.C. Robertson, vol. 2, p. 163.}

The doctrines, character, and history of the **Paulicians** have been subjects of great controversy; but they have not been allowed to speak for themselves to posterity. Their writings were carefully destroyed by the catholics, and they are known to us only through the reports of bitter enemies who brand them as heretics, and as the ancestors of the protestant reformers. On the other hand, some protestant writers accept the pedigree, and assert that they were the maintainers of a purely scriptural Christianity, which may have appeared to the papacy as heretical. This latter circumstance, from what we have already shown, will be easily believed. The most grievous corruptions, both in the doctrine and the worship of the catholic church, had been not only admitted, but enforced, long before the rise of the Paulicians. Neither the spirit nor the simplicity of the gospel remained; hence, scriptural Christianity must have appeared to the image-worshippers as a heresy.

Passing over many individual names from the time of St. Augustine, who were worthy witnesses of the truth, we will come at once and inquire into

The Origin of the Paulicians

A.D. 653

The Gnostics, who had been so numerous and powerful during the early days of Christianity, were now an obscure remnant, chiefly confined to the villages along the borders of the Euphrates. They had been driven by the all-powerful catholics from the capitals of the East and the West, and the remains of their different sects passed under the general and odious name of the **Manicheans.**

In this region, at the village of Mananalis, near Samosata, lived about the year 653 one Constantine, who is described by the Roman writers as descended from a Manichean family. Soon after the Saracens' conquest of Syria, an **Armenian** deacon, who was returning from captivity among the Saracens, became the guest of Constantine. In acknowledgement of his hospitality the deacon made him a present of a manuscript, containing the four Gospels and the fourteen Epistles of St. Paul. This was indeed a rare gift, as the scriptures were already concealed from the laity. The study of these sacred books produced a complete revolution in his religious principles, and in the whole subsequent course of his life. Some say he had been trained in Gnosticism, others, that he was a member of the Greek established church; but, however this may have been, those books now became his only study and the rule of his faith and practice.

Constantine now thought of forming a new sect, or rather, of restoring apostolic Christianity. He renounced and cast away his Manichean books, say his enemies; he abjured Manicheism, and made it a law to his followers not to read any other books whatsoever, but the Gospels and the epistles of the New Testament. This may have given their enemies a pretext for charging them with rejecting the Old Testament and the two Epistles of St. Peter. But it is more than probable that they did not possess these portions of the word of God. It is to be feared however, from their peculiar attachment and devotion to the writings and character of St. Paul, that other scriptures were neglected.

It is generally agreed that the word *Paulician is* formed from the name of the great apostle of the Gentiles. His fellow-labourers, **Silvanus, Timothy, Titus, Tychicus,** were represented by Constantine and his disciples; and their congregations, as they sprang up in different places, were called after the names of the apostolic churches. It is difficult to see, in this "innocent allegory," as it has been termed, how the catholics could have been so grievously offended with the Paulicians, or could have found a pretext for hunting them down with fire and sword. Yet so they did, as we shall presently see. Their unpardonable sin was their separation from the State church; their testimony against superstition and apostasy; their reviving the memory of a pure primitive Christianity.

Silvanus at Cibossa

Constantine, who styled himself *Silvanus,* addressed his first appeals to the inhabitants of a place called Cibossa in Armenia, whom he styled *Macedonians. "I* am Silvanus," he said "you are Macedonians." There he fixed his residence and laboured with untiring energy for nearly thirty years; he made many converts, both from the Catholic Church, and the Zoroastrian religion. At length, the sect having become sufficiently considerable to attract attention, the matter was reported to the Emperor, and an edict was issued A.D. 684 against Constantine and the Paulician congregations. The execution of the decree was entrusted to an officer of the imperial court, named Simeon. He had orders to put the teacher to death, and to distribute his followers among the clergy and in monasteries, with a view to their being reclaimed. The government, no doubt, ordered as directed by the church; as in the case of Ahab, "whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." (1Ki 21:25) But the Lord is above all, and He can make the wrath of man to praise Him.

Simeon placed Constantine - the chief object of the priests' revenge - before a large number of his companions, and commanded them to stone him. They refused, and, instead of obeying, all dropped the stones with which they were armed, excepting one young man; and Constantine was killed by a stone from the hand of that heartless youth - his own adopted son Justus. This ungrateful apostate has been extolled by the enemies of the Paulicians, as another David who with a stone slew another Goliath - the giant of heresy. But from the stoning of Constantine, as from the stoning of Stephen, a new leader was raised up in the person of his imperial murderer. Impressions were made on Simeon's mind by what he had seen and heard that he could not shake off. He entered into conversation with some of the sectaries, and the result was that he became their convert. He returned to the imperial court, but after spending three years at Constantinople in great uneasiness of mind, he fled, leaving all his property behind him, and took up his abode at Cibossa, where, under the name of *Titus,* he became the successor of Constantine Sylvanus.

About five years after the martyrdom of Constantine the same renegade Justus betrayed the Paulicians. He knew, like the traitor of old, the habits and movements of the community, and also where he would be rewarded for his treachery. He went to the bishop of Colonia, and reported the revival and spread of the so-called heresy. The bishop communicated his information to the Emperor Justinian II., and, in consequence, Simeon, and a large number of his followers were burnt to death in one large funeral pile. The cruel Justinian vainly thought to extinguish the name and memory of the Paulicians in a single conflagration, but the blood of the martyrs seemed only to multiply their numbers and strength. A succession of teachers and congregations arose from their ashes. The new sect spread over all the adjacent regions, Asia Minor, Pontus, the borders of Armenia and to the westward of the Euphrates. They bore, during many successive reigns, with christian patience, the intolerant wrath of the rulers through the instigation of the priests. But the prize for cruelty, as one observes, must doubtless be awarded to the sanguinary devotion of Theodora, who restored the images to the Oriental church.

Another Jezebel in Power

A.D. 842

After the death of the Emperor Theophilus, Theodora his widow governed as regent during the minority of her son. Her concealed attachment to idolatry was well known to the priesthood, and no sooner was Theophilus dead than she applied herself to the complete accomplishment of her great object. When the way was clear, a solemn festival was appointed for the restoration of images. "The whole clergy of Constantinople, and all who could flock in from the neighbourhood, met in and before the palace of the archbishop, and marched in procession with crosses, torches, and incense, to the church of St. Sophia. There they were met by the Empress and her infant son Michael. They made the circuit of the church, with their burning torches, paying homage to every statue and picture, which had been carefully restored, never again to be effaced till the days of later, more terrible Iconoclasts, the Ottoman Turks."*

{**Latin Christianity,* vol. 2, p. 202. }

After so triumphant a re-establishment of images, the victorious party no doubt thought the right time was come to propose and endeavour to secure another triumph; they now urged the Empress to undertake the entire suppression of the Paulicians. They had preached against images, relics, and the rotten wood of the cross. They were not fit to live. The catholics gained their object! An edict was issued under the regency of Theodora, which decreed that the Paulicians should be exterminated by fire and sword, or brought back to the Greek church. But they refused all attempts which were made to gain them, and the fiery demon of persecution was let loose among them. Her inquisitors explored the cities and mountains of the lesser Asia, and executed their commission in the most cruel manner. The numbers of the sect, and the severity of the persecution, may be judged by the multitudes who were slain by the sword, beheaded, drowned, or consumed in the flames. It is affirmed by both civil and ecclesiastical historians, that, in a short reign, *one hundred thousand* Paulicians were put to death. Was there ever a more genuine daughter of Jezebel? She had not even an Ahab to stir up to do this cruel work, but with her own hand, as it were - alas! a woman's hand - by her own decree, she slaughtered *one hundred thousand* of God's saints,* re-established the worship of idols, and nourished with royal favour the idolatrous priests of Rome.

{*We do not mean to affirm that all who were slain by Theodora as Paulicians were true Christians. We cannot judge the heart; but they professed to be and willingly died as martyrs.}

The history of Iconoclasm has been remarkable for female influence. Helena was the first to suggest and encourage veneration for relics; Irene was the restorer of image-worship when threatened with destruction; and now Theodora not only re-establishes the idolatry which her husband had endeavoured to suppress, but persecutes the true worshippers. Surely that woman Jezebel - symbol of the dominant church in the dark ages - has her antitype in these three women, especially the last two. The likeness is too striking to be questioned. But the whole system of Catholicism breathes the fearful spirit, and is characterised by the dark features of Jezebel's character. The word of the Lord cannot be broken. "There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom *Jezebel his wife stirred up."* This is the type. The antitype is, "I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest *that woman Jezebel,* which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." (1Ki 21:25; Rev 2:20-21)

Rome's Admiration of Theodora's Conduct

Nicolas I., who became pope of Rome in 858, highly commends, by letter, the conduct of the superstitious and cruel Theodora. He especially admires and approves her implicit obedience to the Roman see. "She resolved," he says, "to bring the Paulicians to the true faith, or cut them all off root and branch. Pursuant to that resolution, she sent noblemen and magistrates into the different provinces of the empire; and by them some of those unhappy wretches were crucified, some put to the sword, and some thrown into the sea and drowned." Nicolas at the same time observes, that the heretics, experiencing in her all the resolution and vigour of a man, could scarcely believe her to be a woman. Indeed the blinding power of an idolatrous superstition had changed in Theodora (as it did in our queen, "the bloody Mary") the tender and compassionate heart of a woman into that of a merciless and blood-thirsty tyrant. From the pope's own words, it is perfectly evident that the Roman See had chiefly to do with the slaughter of the Paulicians. After telling her that the heretics dreaded, and at the same time admired, her resolution and steadiness in maintaining the purity of the catholic faith, he adds, *"and why so, but because you followed the directions of the Apostolic See?"** {*Milner, vol. 2, p. 498.}

It is difficult to believe that the professed vicar of Christ, and the shepherd of His sheep, could ever have put on record such sayings. But so he was permitted, and thus they have come down to us as the true witness of the established antichristian tyranny of Rome in the ninth century.

The Paulicians Rebel Against the Government

Like certain of the Albigenses, Hussites of Bohemia, and Calvinists of France, the Paulicians of Armenia and the adjacent provinces determined on more decided resistance to their persecutors. This was their sad failure, and the sad fruit of listening to the suggestions of Satan. For nearly two hundred years they had suffered as Christians, adorning the gospel by a life of faith and patience. So far as we have the means of judging, they seem to have maintained the truth through a long course of suffering, in the noble though passive spirit of conformity to Christ. But faith and patience failed at length, and they openly rebelled against the government. It happened in this way:

Carbeas, an officer of high rank in the imperial service, on hearing that his father had been impaled by the catholic inquisitors, renounced his allegiance to the empire, and with five thousand companions, sought a refuge among the Saracens. The Caliph gladly welcomed the deserters, and gave them leave to settle within his territory. Carbeas built and fortified the city of Tephrice, which became the headquarters of the Paulicians. They naturally flocked to this new home, and sought an asylum from the imperial laws. They soon became a powerful community. Under the command of Carbeas, war was waged with the empire, and maintained with various success for more than thirty years; but as details would be more depressing than interesting, we forbear.

The Paulicians in Europe

About the middle of the eighth century Constantine, surnamed **Copronymus,** either as a favour or as a punishment transplanted a great number of Paulicians into Thrace an outpost of the empire, and there they acted as a religious mission. By this emigration their doctrines were introduced and diffused in Europe. They seem to have laboured with great success amongst the **Bulgarians.** It was in order to guard the infant church of Bulgaria, that Peter of Sicily about the year 870, addressed to the archbishop of the Bulgarians a tract warning him against the infection of the Paulicians. This document is the chief source of information as to the sect. In the tenth century the Emperor John Zimisces conducted another great migration to the valleys of Mount Haemus. Their history after this period is European. They were favoured with a free toleration in the land of their exile, which greatly softened their condition and strengthened their community. From these Bulgarian settlements their way was opened into Western Europe. Many native Bulgarians associated with them, hence the name of Bulgarians, in a course or corrupted form, is one of the appellations of hatred, which clung to the Paulicians in all quarters

As to the subsequent religious history of these interesting people historians are greatly divided. Nothing is known of them but from the writings of their enemies; therefore, in common justice, we are bound to suspend our belief of their statements. One thing however is certain: they protested against the saint and image-worship of the catholics, and the legitimacy of the priesthood by which idolatry was upheld. They also protested against many things in the doctrines, the discipline, and the assumed authority of the church of Rome. The catholic writers usually speak of them as *Manicheans* the most odious of all heretics. But there are some protestant writers, who have examined with great care all that can throw light on their history, and have come to the conclusion, that they were guiltless of the heresies imputed to them, and maintain that they were the true and faithful witnesses of Christ and His truth during a very dark period of the middle ages.*

{*For a careful inquiry and details, see Hora Apoc., vol. 2, 249-344 5th edition.}

We now turn to our general history.

The Religious Wars of Charlemagne

From about 771-814

Ecclesiastical history, so-called, from the time of Pepin, is so interwoven with the history of the Frankish kings, and the disgraceful intrigues of the popes, that we must further, though briefly, trace the course of events which have an important bearing on the character of popery and the history of the church.

The rising power of Charlemagne, the younger son of Pepin, was watched by the occupants of St. Peter's chair with the greatest possible interest, and skilfully used by them for the accomplishment of their ambitious designs. Pope Hadrian I and Leo III, both able men, filled the papal throne during the long reign of Charles; and succeeded in greatly aggrandising, through what he called his religious wars, the Roman See.

A quarrel between Desiderius, king of the Lombards, and Pope Hadrian led to a war with France, which ended in the complete overthrow of the Lombard kingdom in Italy. This was the result of the grand scheme of the papacy, and brought about by the unprincipled and treacherous policy of the pontiff. Charles was son-in-law to Desiderius; but after one year's wedlock he divorced Hermingard the Lombard's daughter, and immediately married Hildegard, a lady of a noble Swabian house. The insulted father, on receiving back his repudiated daughter, naturally sought for redress from the pope, the head of the church, of which Charles was so dutiful a son. But although the church, when it suited its own purposes, had asserted in the strongest terms the sanctity of the marriage bond, its open violation in this instance was passed quietly over; the pope refused to interfere.

Rome was reckoning on good service from the great Charles, and could not afford to risk his displeasure. Not a word was said against the conduct of the dissolute monarch. Desiderius at length resented the bitter insult of Charles and the wicked connivance of Hadrian; he appeared at the head of his troops in papal Italy; he besieged, stormed, and spread devastation everywhere, and threatened the pope in his capital.

Hadrian Sends for Charlemagne

The pope now sent messages in the utmost haste to entreat immediate help from Charles; at the same time diligently superintending in person the military preparations for the defence of the city and the security of its treasures. And, according to an old strategy of Rome, **Hadrian** sent three bishops to overawe the king and to threaten him with excommunication if he dared to violate the property of the church. The pope thus gained time; and Charles, with his usual rapidity, assembled his forces, crossed the Alps and laid siege to Pavia. During the siege, which continued several months, Charles paid a visit to the pope in great state, and was received with every honour. He was hailed by nobles, senators and citizens, as patrician of Rome and the dutiful son of the church, who had so speedily obeyed the summons of his spiritual father, and had come to deliver them from the hated and dreaded Lombards. When the holy season was over, Charles and his officers returned to the army.

Pavia at length fell. Desiderius, successor of the great and wise Luitprand, was dethroned, and took refuge in a monastery - the usual asylum of dethroned kings; his valiant son Adelchis, fled to Constantinople; and thus expired the kingdom of the Lombards, the deadly enemies of the Italians, and the great hindrance to the papal aggression. The way was now clear for the conqueror to give the pope a kingdom, not on paper merely, like his father Pepin, but in cities provinces, and revenues. And so he did, and thereby ratified the munificent gift of his father. As lord by conquest, Charlemagne presented to the successors of St. Peter, by an absolute and perpetual grant, the kingdom of Lombardy; some say, the whole of Italy. At the same time Charles claimed the royal title, and exercised a kind of sovereignty over all Italy and even over Rome itself. But the pope, being now secure in the possession of the territory, could well afford to allow all royal honours to his great benefactor.

The Sovereignty of the Roman Pontiffs

A.D. 775

The pope was now a temporal prince. The long looked-for and sighed-for day was come; the fond dream of centuries was realised. The successors of St. Peter are proclaimed **sovereign pontiffs** and the lords of the city and territories of Rome. The last link of the shadowy vassalage and subserviency to the Greek empire is broken for ever; and Rome has again become the acknowledged capital of the West.

The great Pope Hadrian at once assumes the power privileges, and language of a temporal sovereign to whom fealty is due. Murmurs from Ravenna and the East were speedily silenced; and Rome reigned supreme. The pope's language even to Charlemagne is that of an equal: "As your men," he said, "are not allowed to come to Rome without your permission and special letter, so my men must not be allowed to appear at the court of France without the same credentials from me." He claimed the same allegiance from the Italians which the subjects of Charlemagne owed to him. "The administration of justice was in the pope's name; not only the ecclesiastical dues, and the rents of estates forming part of the patrimony of St. Peter, the civil revenue likewise came into his treasury.... Hadrian, with the power, assumed the magnificence of a great potentate .... Rome, with the increase of the papal revenues, began to resume more of her ancient splendour."

The Great Epoch in the Annals of Popery

As the empire of Charlemagne is in a peculiar manner connected with the history of the church, and forms the great epoch in the annals of the Roman See, it demands a fuller consideration. Roman catholicism was just about as much indebted to that great prince, as Mahometanism was to the great Arab prophet and his successors. "The Saxon wars of Charlemagne," says Milman, "which added almost the whole of Germany to his dominions, were avowedly religious wars. If Boniface was the Christian, Charlemagne was the Mahometan, apostle of the gospel. The declared object of his invasions was the extinction of heathenism, subjection to the christian faith, or extermination. Baptism was the sign of subjugation and fealty, the Saxons accepted or threw it off according as they were in a state of submission or revolt. These wars were inevitable; they were but the continuance of the great strife waged for centuries from the barbarous North and East against the civilised South and West; only that the Roman and Christian population, now invigorated by the large infusion of Teutonic blood, instead of awaiting aggression, had become the aggressor. The tide of conquest was rolling back; the subjects of the Western kingdoms, of the Western empire, instead of waiting to see their homes overrun by hordes of fierce invaders, now boldly marched into the heart of their enemies' country, penetrated their forests, crossed their morasses, and planted their feudal courts of justice, their churches, and their monasteries, in the most remote and savage regions, up to the Elbe and the shores of the Baltic."

The Saxons were divided into three leading tribes, the Ostphalians, the Westphalians, and the Angarians. Each clan, according to old Teutonic usage, consisted of nobles, freemen, and slaves; but at times the whole nation met in a great armed convention. The Saxons scorned and detested the Romanised Franks, and the Franks held the Saxons to be barbarians and heathens. For three-and-thirty years the powerful Charles was engaged in subduing these wild Saxon hordes. "The tract of country inhabited by these tribes," says Greenwood, "comprehended the whole of the modern circle of Westphalia, and the greater portion of that of lower Saxony, extended from the Lippe to the Weser and the Elbe; bordering to the northward upon the kindred Jutes, Angles, and Danes; and to the eastward of Sclavic origin, who had gradually advanced upon the more ancient Teutonic races of Eastern Germany." But we must limit ourselves chiefly to the religious aspect of these wars; still, it is interesting at this moment to study these ancient records, as we have just witnessed the conclusion of the great war of 1870-71 between the descendants of the Franks and Germans of antiquity.

The Sword of Charlemagne or Baptism

The professed object of Charlemagne was to establish Christianity in the remote parts of Germany, but it must ever be regretted that he used such violent means to accomplish his end. Thousands were forced into the waters of baptism to escape a cruel death. The sword or baptism were the conqueror's terms. A law was enacted which denounced the penalty of death against the refusal of baptism. He could offer no terms of peace, enter into no treaty, of which baptism should not be the principal condition. Conversion or extermination was the watchword of the Franks. And though the old religion might sit loosely enough on the conscience of the Saxon, he could see nothing better in the new; for to his mind baptism was identified with slavery and Christianity with subjugation to a foreign yoke. To submit to baptism was to renounce, not only his old religion but his personal freedom.

With such anti-Christian, such inhuman, feelings the war was carried on, as we have said, for thirty-three years. At the head of his superior armies he oppressed the savage tribes, who were incapable of confederating for their common safety; nor did he ever, it is said, encounter an equal antagonist in numbers, in discipline, or in arms. But after a struggle of incalculable bloodshed, and of almost unexampled obstinacy and duration, the numbers, the discipline, and the valour of the Franks prevailed at length over the undisciplined and desultory efforts of the Saxons. "The remnant of thirty campaigns of undistinguished slaughter," says Greenwood, "and wholesale expatriation, accepted baptism, and became permanently incorporated with the empire of the Franks and Christianity. Abbeys, monasteries, and religious houses of all descriptions sprang up in every part of the conquered territory, and the new churches were supplied with ministers from the school of Boniface - a school which admitted no distinction between the law of Christ and the law of Rome."

Baptism was the only security and pledge of peace which the Franks would accept for the submission of the Saxons. And thus it was - how sad and humbling to relate! - when the conquest was complete, and the carnage over, the priests entered the field. Their office was to baptise the vanquished. Thousands of the barbarians were thus forced, at the point of the sword, into what the priests called **the regenerating waters of baptism.** But to the Saxons their baptism meant neither more nor less than the renunciation of their religion and their liberty. The consequence was, that no sooner were the armies of Charles withdrawn, than the indefatigable Saxons rose again, and burst through the encroaching limits of the empire, ravaging as they went. In their burning rage and bitter revenge they hewed down crosses, burnt churches, destroyed monasteries, slaughtered their inmates, respected neither age nor sex, until the whole country seemed wrapped in flames and deluged with blood. Such revolts, it is said, were often provoked by the insolent language, and still more by the offensive demeanour of the missionary monks, and the severe avarice with which they exacted their tithes. But such outbursts, on the part of the Saxons, were followed by a fresh invasion and a merciless slaughter by the Franks, until tribe after tribe yielded to the conquering arms of Charlemagne. On one occasion after a severe revolt Charles massacred 4,500 brave warriors in cold blood who had surrendered. This cruel and cowardly abuse of power leaves a dark, an indelible stain on his history, which no apology can ever remove. Even the sceptic historian alludes to it in a most truthful and touching way. "In a day of equal retribution," he says, "the sons of his brother Carloman, the Merovingian prince of Aquitaine, and the four thousand five hundred Saxons who were beheaded on the same spot, would have something to allege against the justice and humanity of Charlemagne. His treatment of the vanquished Saxons was an abuse of the right of conquest."

The Evil Influence Of The Pope's Missionaries

Sad as it is to reflect on the fearful slaughter of the Saxons, and the forced baptism of the helpless remnant, our sadness is infinitely increased when we find that the professed messengers of mercy were the great movers in these long and exterminating wars. In place of being the merciful missionaries of the gospel of peace, they were in reality the cruel emissaries of the papacy - of the power of darkness: Charlemagne was, no doubt, to a great extent deceived and urged on by the priests.

Under the avowed object of cementing the union between Church and State, for the temporal and spiritual benefit of mankind, and for the enduring strength of the imperial government, the artful priests saw the way opening for their own temporal greatness and the more **absolute sovereignty of Rome.** And so it happened, as all history affirms. They very soon gained a position of worldly greatness over the conquered people and their lands. An entire change takes place just at this time in the outward condition of the clergy, and indeed in society generally. Ancient history disappears, we are told, at the death of Pepin, and mediaeval life begins. A new state of society is inaugurated by his son - the last of barbaric kings and the first of feudal monarchs. But it is with ecclesiastical history we have to do, and here, again, we prefer giving a few extracts from the Dean - so often referred to - who will not be accused of unnecessary severity, but whose testimony is of the very highest integrity.

"The subjugation of the land appeared complete before Charlemagne founded successively his great religious colonies, the eight bishoprics of Minden, Seligenstadt, Verden, Bremen, Munster, Hildesheim, Osnaburg, and Paderborn. These, with many richly endowed monasteries like Hersfuld, became the separate centres from which Christianity and civilization spread in expanding circles. But though these were military as well as religious settlements, the ecclesiastics were the only foreigners. The more faithful and trustworthy Saxon chieftains, who gave the security of seemingly sincere conversion to Christianity, were raised into counts: thus the profession of Christianity was the sole test of fealty....

"Charlemagne, in Christian history, commands a more important station even than for his subjugation of Germany to the gospel, on account of his complete organization, if not foundation, of the high feudal hierarchy in a great part of Europe. Throughout the Western empire was, it may be said, constitutionally established this double aristocracy, ecclesiastical and civil. Everywhere the higher clergy and the nobles, kind so downwards through the different gradations of society, even of the same rank, and liable to many of the same duties, of equal, in some cases of co-ordinate, authority. Each district had its bishop and its count; the dioceses and the counties were mostly of the same extent.....

"Charlemagne himself was no less prodigal than weaker kings of immunities and grants of property to churches and monasteries. With his queen Hildegard, he endows the church of St. Martin, in Tours, with lands in Italy. His grants to St. Denys, to Lorch, to Fulda, to Prum, more particularly to Hersfuld, and many Italian abbeys, appear among the acts of his reign.

"Nor were these estates always obtained from the king or the nobles. The stewards of the poor were sometimes the spoilers of the poor. Even under Charlemagne there are complaints against the usurpation of property by bishops and abbots, as against counts and laymen. They compelled the poor free man to sell his property, or forced him to serve in the army, and that on permanent duty, and so to leave his land either without owner, with all the chances that he might not return, or to commit it to the custody of those who remained at home in quiet, and seized every opportunity of entering into possession. *No Naboth's vineyard escaped their watchful avarice.*

"In their fiefs the bishop or abbot exercised all the rights of a feudal chieftain.... Thus the hierarchy, now a feudal institution, parallel to and co-ordinate with the temporal feudal aristocracy, aspired to enjoy, and actually before long did enjoy the dignity, the wealth, the power, of suzerain lords. Bishops and abbots had the independence and privileges of inalienable fiefs; and at the same time began either sullenly to contest, or haughtily to refuse, those payments or acknowledgments of vassalage, which sometimes weighed heavily on other lands. During the reign of Charlemagne this theory of spiritual immunity slumbered, or rather had not quickened into life. It was boldly announced so rapid was its growth - in the strife with his son, **Louis the Pious.** It was then asserted by the hierarchy, that all property given to the church, to the poor, to the saints, to God Himself - such were the specious phrases - was given absolutely, irrevocably, with no reserve. The king might have power over the knights' fees; over those of the church he had none whatever. Such claims were impious, sacrilegious, and implied forfeiture of eternal life. The clergy and their estates belonged to another realm, to another commonwealth; they were entirely, absolutely, independent of the civil power."*

{**Latin Christianity,* vol. 2, p. 286.}

The Feudal Hierarchical System

For centuries the papal cry to each succeeding monarch had been, "Give, give; endow, endow; and the blessed Peter shall surely send you victory over your enemies, prosperity in this world, and a place near himself in heaven." This cry was in a great measure answered about the beginning of the ninth century. The above extracts will give the reader some idea of the spoils which came to the clergy from the victories of Charles in Germany. It was chiefly out of these thirty-three years of internecine war, that the great feudal hierarchical system arose. Innumerable thousands were slain to make room for the bishops and abbots - an ecclesiastical aristocracy. Up rose the princely palaces of these great ecclesiastics all over the conquered land: but their foundations were laid in cruelty, injustice, and blood.

Though more than a thousand years have passed away since the great patron of the church died, the palaces still live and are thickly planted all over Europe. But the heart sickens at the thought of the origin of these avowed palaces of peace; especially if we bear in mind the true character of the gospel, and that the ministers of Christ should ever seek to manifest the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus. The souls, not the property, of men should be their object. "We seek not *yours,* but you" should be their motto; going forth taking nothing of the Gentiles. But the example of Christ had been long forgotten. The church sank to the level and spirit of the world when she was united by Constantine to the State. This was her great fall, from which her painful inconsistency flows. The love of the world, of absolute power, of universal dominion, then took possession of her whole being. Misled by Satan, on whose throne (Rev. 2) she sits, the shameless iniquity of her course can only be accounted for on the ground of his blinding power. All means, in her sight, were justifiable which had for their object the advancement of the Roman See.

Reflections on the Lord's Care for His Own

The Lord had, no doubt, His many hidden ones, even in the darkest times, as in Thyatira: "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." One thing, and only one, was to occupy the faithful after the apostasy had set in - the ascended Saviour, the Man in the glory. And to all such the sweet promise is, "And I will give him the Morning Star." But the outward or mere professing church, as allied to the State, was corrupt to the very core, and sunk, and blinded, and hardened, in the most unflushing wickedness; for the concentration of every form of evil was to be found in the **chair of St. Peter.** Even as to the religious wars Charlemagne himself stands before as guiltless, compared with Hadrian.

We must remember that Charles was a barbaric king, though the greatest perhaps in European history with the exception of Alexander and Caesar, so that we can understand his object in seeking to unite and consolidate a great empire, but he was ignorant and superstitious as to divine things, though the religious element was strong in his mind. On this the pope acted, and led him to believe that a strong and wealthy church would make a strong and wealthy State; and that if he would please heaven and gain eternal life the harmonious union of Church and State must be the basis of all his governmental schemes. He personally loved Hadrian, readily obeyed his call, yielded to his counsels, and wept when he heard of his death; which took place on the 26th of December in the year 795, after the unusually long pontificate of twenty-three years and upwards. He might sometimes see the pope's real object under the greatest artifice, but strong in his own self-reliant power, he could allow such things to pass without those feelings of distrust and jealousy, which would have been engendered in a feebler mind. Not given to change, he made a good friend.

The Papal Forgery

But the kindness of Charlemagne only excited the cupidity and envy of the rapacious priests. Not content with their estates and tithes, they aspired to a position far above the lay-lords, and even above the monarch himself. Stimulated by past success, they now attempted by a **daring forgery** to accomplish the object of their secular ambition. A title to almost imperial power is now for the first time, after the lapse of 450 years, brought to light. By this original deed of gift it was discovered, that all which Pepin or Charlemagne had conferred on the church of Rome was only an instalment of the royal grant to the chair of St. Peter by the "pious emperor Constantine."

As our main object throughout this period of the church's history is to present the real character of the papal system, the means by which it reached its wonderful influence and power, and the secularising effects of the Church and State alliance, we copy the pope's own letter from Greenwood. The reader will, no doubt, be surprised to find that any man with the smallest pretension to respectability - far less the head of the church - could ever have fabricated such a document, and that merely to gain more territory and power. But we must remember that Thyatira was characterised by "the depths of Satan," and so has the papacy ever since she drew her first breath, and so must she be until she draws her last. Revelation 17, 18 describe both her character and her end.

"Considering," says pope Hadrian, "that in the days of the blessed pontiff **Sylvester,** that most pious Emperor did, by *his donation,* exalt and enlarge the holy catholic and apostolic church of Rome, giving unto her *supreme power over all the region of the West, so* now we beseech you, that in this our own happy day, the same holy church may sprout forth and exult, and be ever more and more lifted up, so that all people who shall hear thereof may exclaim, 'God save the king, and hear us in the day in which we call upon thee!' For behold, in those days arose Constantine, the christian Emperor, by whom God vouchsafed to give all things to His most holy church, the church of the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles. All this, and many territories besides, which divers Emperors, patricians, and other God-fearing persons, had given to the blessed Peter and the holy Roman and apostolical church of God, for the benefit of their souls and the forgiveness of their sins, lying in the parts of Tuscany, Spoletum, Beneventum, Corsica, Savona - territories which were taken and kept by the impious nations of the Lombards, cause all this to be restored to us in these your days, according to the tenor of your several deeds of gift deposited in our archives of the Lateran. To that end we have directed our envoys to exhibit those deeds to you for your satisfaction, and in virtue of them we now call upon you to command the undiminished restitution of this patrimony of St. Peter into our hands; that by your conformity therewith the holy church of God may be put into full possession and enjoyment of its entire right; so that the prince of the apostles himself may intercede before the throne of the Almighty for long life to yourself and prosperity in all your undertakings."

The Ignorance and Credulity of the Times

So deep was the ignorance and credulity of those times, that the most absurd fables were received with great reverence by all classes. The cunning priests knew how to clothe their religious frauds with the most specious piety, and to blind both king and people. According to the legend Constantine was healed of the leprosy by Pope Sylvester; and so penetrated with gratitude was the Emperor, that he resigned to the pope the free and perpetual sovereignty of Rome, Italy, and the provinces of the West; and resolved on founding a new capital for himself in the East.

The object of Hadrian in forging such a deed, and in writing such a letter, was no doubt to influence Charlemagne to imitate the alleged liberality of his great predecessor. If he merely put the popes in possession of the said donation of Constantine, he was only acting as his executor; if he aspired to be a spontaneous benefactor of the church, he must exceed the limits of the original deed of gift. But the depths of this forgery we have not yet fathomed. It went to prove that the Greek Emperors, all these centuries, had been guilty of usurpation, and robbing the patrimony of St. Peter; that the popes were justified in appropriating their territory, and in rebelling against their authority; that the gifts of Pepin and Charlemagne were nothing more than the restitution of a small portion of the just and lawful dominions originally granted to the chair of St. Peter; and that he, Charlemagne, must consider himself as debtor to God and His church, so long as a single item of the debt thus entailed upon him remained unpaid.

Such were some of the convenient effects of the document for the purposes of Hadrian at the time; but though it may have been productive of great advantages to the papacy both then and afterwards, the forgery has long since been exposed. With the revival of letters and liberty the fictitious deed was condemned, together with the **False Decretals -** the most audacious and elaborate of all pious frauds. Speaking of the Decretals, Milman observes, "They are now given up by all; not a voice is raised in their favour; the utmost that is done, by those who cannot suppress all regret at their exposure, is to palliate the guilt of the forger, to call in question or to weaken the influence which they had in their own day, and throughout the later history of Christianity."*

{*Milman, vol. 2, p. 375; Greenwood, book 6, chap. 3, p. 82.}

The Foundations and Edifice of Popery

Such, alas! alas! were the foundations of the great papal edifice. We have been at some pains to see them laid; we are not mistaken. Were we to characterize the separate foundation-stones, we might speak of them as the most extravagant pretensions, the most insulting arrogance, the most barefaced forgeries, the most openly avowed and even death defying love of idolatries, the most unscrupulous appropriation of stolen territory, the most unrelenting spirit of persecution, and, what may be said to be the topmost (as well as the foundation) stone, the most inordinate love of temporal sovereignty. But if we look inside the house, what do we find there? It is full of blasphemies, the worst kind of corruptions, and the concentration of all attractions for the flesh. (Rev 18:12-13) The very essentials of Christianity were either corrupted or rejected - such as sacrifice, ministry, and priesthood. The mass was substituted for the finished work of Christ; the dogmatic teaching of the church for the ministry of the Spirit of God, and the great ecclesiastical system of priesthood, or rather, priestcraft - for the common priesthood of all believers, yea, for that of Christ Himself.

The Lord's supper had been gradually changed from the simple remembrance of His love, and showing forth His death, to the idea of a sacrifice. Many superstitions were practised with the consecrated bread, or rather wafers. The sacrifice was supposed to avail for the dead as well as for the living; hence the practice of giving it to the dead, and burying it with them. The soul-destroying doctrine of **purgatory,** which had been sanctioned by Gregory the Great, was now spreading far and wide. It appears to have specially taken root in the English church before the ninth century. But the deception is manifest, for there is no purgatory but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son; as saith the apostle John, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Thank God, there is no limit to the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus His Son; all who have faith in that blood are *whiter than snow* - perfectly fitted for the presence of God. But the doctrine of purgatory struck at the very root of this foundation-truth, and became a powerful instrument in the hands of the priests for extorting money from the dying, and for securing large legacies to the church; but almost everything was now made subservient to these base objects. The truth of God, the work of Christ, the character of the church, the souls and bodies of men, were all readily sacrificed for the aggrandisement of the See of Rome, and for the aggrandisement of the clergy in subordination to the papal system.

The ungodly lives of those entrusted with the government of the church and the care of souls are also matters of bitter complaint with all honest historians, both then and now. But here it may be well to introduce one of good report - Mosheim - as a witness and confirmation of what we have said as to this period.

Mosheim's Summary

"In the East sinister designs, rancour, contentions, and strife were everywhere predominant. At Constantinople, or New Rome, those were elevated to the patriarchal chair who were in favour at court; and upon losing that favour, a decree of the Emperor hurled them from their elevated station. In the West the bishops hung around the courts of princes, and indulged themselves in every species of voluptuousness: while the inferior clergy and the monks were sensual, and by the grossest vices corrupted the people whom they were set to reform. The ignorance of the clergy in many places was so great, that few of them could read or write. Hence, whenever a letter was to be penned, or anything or importance was to be committed to writing, recourse was generally had to some one individual, whom common fame invested with a certain dexterity in such matters.....

"The bishops and the heads of monasteries held much real estate or landed property by feudal tenure; wherefore, when a war broke out, they were summoned personally to the camp, attended by the number of soldiers which they were bound to furnish to their sovereign. Kings and princes, moreover that they might be able to reward their servants and soldiers for their services, often seized upon consecrated property, and gave it to their dependents; in consequence, the priests and monks, before supported by it, sought relief for their necessities in committing any sort of crimes, and in contriving impostures.

"Few of those who were raised, about this time, to the highest stations in the church can be commended for their wisdom, learning, virtue, and other endowments proper for a bishop. The greater part of them, by their numerous vices, and all of them, by their arrogance and lust of power, entailed disgrace upon their memories. Between Leo IV., who died A.D. 855, and Benedict III., a woman, who concealed her sex, and assumed the name of *John,* it is said, opened her way to the pontifical throne by her learning and genius, and governed the church for a time. She is commonly called the **Papess Joanna.** During the five subsequent centuries the witnesses to this extraordinary event are without number, nor did any one, prior to the Reformation by Luther, regard the thing as either incredible, or disgraceful to the church.

"All agree that in those dark days the state of Christianity was everywhere most deplorable; not only from amazing ignorance, the parent of superstition and moral debasement, but also from other causes . . . . The sacred order, both in the East and in the West, were composed principally of men who were illiterate, stupid, ignorant of everything pertaining to religion . . . . What the Greek pontiffs were, the single example of *Theophylact* shows; who, as credible historians testify, made traffic of everything sacred, and cared for nothing but his hounds and his horses. But though the Greek patriarchs were very unworthy men, yet they possessed more dignity and virtue than the Roman pontiffs. That the history of the Roman bishops in this century is a history, not of men, but of monsters, a history of the most atrocious villanies and crimes, is acknowledged by all the best writers, those not excepted even who plead for pontifical authority

"The essence of religion was thought, both by Greeks and Latins, to consist in the worship of images, in honouring departed saints, in searching for and preserving relics and in enriching priests and monks. Scarcely an individual ventured to approach God until interest had been duly sought with images and saints. In getting relics together, and seeking after them, all the world was busy to insanity."*

{*Mosheim's *History,* vol. 3, p. 184 & 272.}

Nothing more, we think, need be said at present as to the nature - root and branch - of the papal system. In the mouth of at least three competent witnesses, all that we have said of Rome, from the beginning of the Thyatirian period, has been confirmed. And the half has not been told, especially on the subject of immorality. We could not transfer to our pages the open profligacy of the priests and monks. It is thought by some that the papacy fell to the deepest point of degradation in the ninth and tenth centuries. For many years the papal tiara was disposed of by the infamous **Theodora** and her two daughters, **Marozia** and **Theodora.** Such was their power and evil influence, by means of their licentious lives, that they placed in the chair of St. Peter whom they would - men wicked like themselves. Our pages would be defiled by an account of their open unblushing immoralities. Such has been the papal succession. Surely Jezebel was truly represented by these women, and in the influence they obtained over the popes and the city of Rome. But, alas! alas! Jezebel, with all her associations, corruptions, tyrannies, idolatries, and uses of the civil sword, has been too faithfully represented by popery from its very foundation.

17 Propagation of Christianity

Chapter 17

The Propagation of Christianity

Ninth Century

It is truly a great relief to the mind, both of writer and reader, to turn away from the dark and polluted regions of Rome, and trace for a little the *silver line* of God's saving grace in the spread of the gospel and in the devotedness of many of His servants. At the same time we must not expect much of Christ, or of what is called a clear gospel, in the testimony of the missionaries at this period. The state of Europe generally in the ninth century, compared with the nineteenth, must be considered, if our hearts would rise to God in gratitude for that day of small things.

The preference given to human writings above the scriptures was now the habit, at least wherever the influence of Rome prevailed. The Paulicians, probably, and others who were standing apart from the communion of Rome, maintained the authority of the word of God; but the Roman missionaries were instructed and bound to abide by the decisions of the fathers. The canons of councils, and the writings of the great doctors, were constantly appealed to, so that the sacred volume was completely overlooked. Long before this period the word of God had been treated as obscure, perplexed, and unfit for general reading. And so it has been considered by the Catholics from that day until now. Still, God was and is above all, and overrules all for His own glory, the spread of Christianity, and the salvation of sinners. "All that the Father giveth me," says Christ, "shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out:" on no consideration of country, period, education, or condition, will I cast out or reject. (Joh 6:37)

The Revival of Education

Although the sanguinary ambition and the dissolute life of Charlemagne forbid our thinking that he was possessed of any true christian principle, yet it is only fair to acknowledge that he was used of God for the advancement of education at home, and for the spread of Christianity abroad. Schools were erected, universities were founded, learned men were sought for in Italy, England, and Ireland, with the view of raising his subjects to a higher level of moral, religious, and intellectual attainments. Towards the close of his long reign he was surrounded in his royal residence at Aixla-Chapelle by literary men from all countries. The scholars, grammarians, and philosophers of the time were welcomed in the great Hall of Audience. But chief amongst these was our countryman, the Anglo-Saxon monk, **Alcuin,** a native of Northumbria, and tutor to the imperial family.

Alcuin was the most important, both for his learning and for the extent of his labours as a teacher among the Franks. But what is of still more importance, he seems to have had some correct thoughts of Christianity. He often remonstrated with the Emperor against the enforcement of tithes from the newly-converted Saxons, and against the compulsory and indiscriminate administration of baptism. "Instruction," he said, "should first be given on the great heads of christian doctrine and practice, and then the sacrament should follow. Baptism may be forced on men, but faith cannot. Baptism received without faith or understanding by a person capable of reason is but an unprofitable washing of the body."*

{*Robertson, vol. 2, p. 131.}

How refreshing to the spirit, and how truly thankful we are to find such plain, honest, dealing with the great Emperor. It shows us that the Lord had His witnesses at all times and in all places. Let us hope that he may have been used of the Lord for the spread of the truth and the blessing of souls in those higher circles.

The end of the great Charles was drawing nigh. Though he had surrounded himself with literature, music, and everything that could please and gratify his every taste and passion; and though, it is said, his antechambers were filled with the fallen monarchs of conquered territories, waiting to supplicate his favour, or seek restoration to their lawful dominions; he must yield to the stroke which none can turn aside. He died on the 28th of January 814, at the advanced age of seventy-two, and after a long reign of forty-three years. He appointed his son, Louis, as his successor.

Louis The Pious

There can be little doubt that Louis, surnamed the Pious, was a sincere and humble Christian. But there never was a man in such a false position as the meek and gentle Louis when the empire fell into his hands. He lived till the year 840. But his life is one of the most touching, tragical and pitiful, in the annals of kings. There was something like universal rebellion when the principles of his government were known. He was too gentle and scrupulous for his soldiers; much too pious for his clergy. Bishops were prevented from wearing sword and arms, or glittering spurs on their heels. The monks and nuns found in him a second St. Benedict. The license of his father's court speedily disappeared from the sacred precincts of his palace; but he was far too easy in the discipline of his sons. Such true piety, as may easily be imagined, was only turned into ridicule, and could not long be borne with. He was deserted by his soldiers, whose wealth arose from plundered enemies; his sons, **Pepin, Louis,** and **Lothaire,** were more than once in arms against him. The clergy, who ought to have surrounded the fallen monarch with their sympathy in the day of adversity, only took occasion to show their power by degrading him to the depths of a cloister; and, to give a fair appearance to their injustice, he was forced by the priests to confess sins of which he was entirely innocent. Siding with his rebellious son, Lothaire, a man of cruelty, yet fearing to sanction his taking the life of his father, they - the son and the priests together - determined to incapacitate the king by civil and ecclesiastical degradation for the exercise of his royal authority. He was compelled to do public penance for alleged crimes; his royal armour and his imperial apparel he was forced to lay on the altar of St. Sebastian, and to put on a dark mourning robe.*

{*For details, see Milman's *Latin Christianity,* vol. 2.}

But the pride of his nobles was insulted by this display of ecclesiastical presumption, and the nation wept at the fate of their good and gentle Emperor. A reaction was inevitable. Indignant at his treatment, the people demanded his restoration. He was taken from the monastery, re-robed and restored, but only to experience a deeper humiliation. He was at length rescued by the hand of divine mercy from the unnatural conduct of his sons, and from the pitiless persecution of the clergy, who cared only for the display and the establishment of their own power. With a crucifix pressed to his bosom, his eyes lifted up to heaven, and breathing forgiveness to his son Louis, who was then in arms against him, he departed this life, to be with Christ, which is far better. (Php 1:23)

The Conversion of the Northern Nations

The spread of the gospel towards the northern extremities of Europe, during the ninth and tenth centuries has been so fully detailed in the general histories, that we shall do little more than name the principal places, and the chief actors, in connection with the good work. But we rejoice to trace the footsteps of those self-denying missionaries, in the very heart of Satan's kingdom, where for centuries he had reigned undisturbed. We have already seen that the sword of Charlemagne had opened the way to the **Frieslanders, Saxons, Huns,** and other tribes.

In the early part of the reign of his son Louis, the gospel was introduced among the **Danes** and **Swedes.** Disputes, as to the throne of Denmark, between Harold and Godfrid, led Harold to seek protection from Louis. The pious Emperor thought this might be a convenient opportunity for the introduction of Christianity among the Danes. He therefore promised Harold assistance on condition that he would embrace Christianity himself and admit preachers of the gospel into his country. The king accepted the terms, and was baptized at Mentz, A.D. 826, together with his queen and a numerous train of attendants. Louis was sponsor for Harold, the empress for his queen, Lothaire for his son; and sponsors of suitable rank were found for the members of his train. Thus Christianized, as was thought in those days, he returned home, taking two teachers of Christianity with him. And lest Harold might not regain his kingdom, Louis assigned to him an estate in Friesland.

Ansgarius and **Auberg,** the two French monks that accompanied them, laboured with great zeal and success; but Aubert, a monk of noble birth, died in two years, amidst the toils of the missionary.

The indefatigable Ansgarius, on the death of his fellowlabourer, went over to Sweden. He was equally happy and successful in his work there. In 831 Louis rewarded his great labours by making him archbishop of Hamburg, and of all the north. He had often great opposition to encounter, but he usually disarmed his persecutors by the goodness of his intentions and the uprightness of his conduct. He lived till the year 865, and laboured chiefly among the Danes, the Cimbrians, and the Swedes.

The Sclavonians Receive the Gospel

Some efforts were made about this time for the conversion of the Russians, Hungarians, etc., but the work of the gospel seems to have made little progress in these quarters until the conquest of Bohemia by Otho, in the year 950, or rather until the marriage of Vladimir, prince of the Russians, with Anna, sister of Basil, the Greek Emperor. He embraced the faith of his queen, lived to an extreme old age, and was followed in his faith by his subjects. The conversion of the Duke of Poland is also ascribed to the influence of a Christian queen. In those days the belief of the prince became the rule of his people, both in faith and practice, and the faith of the queen generally speaking, became the rule of the king. Hence the influence of the wife for good or for evil. This we may have noticed, especially from the days of Clotilda and Clovis. "There is a strange uniformity," says Milman, "in the instruments used in the conversion of barbarous subjects. A female of rank and influence, a zealous monk, some fearful national calamity no sooner do these three agencies coincide, than the heathen land opens itself to Christianity."

Bulgaria. The introduction of Christianity among the Bulgarians has been referred to in our notice of the Paulicians. They were a barbarous and savage people. Next to the Huns, the Bulgarians were the most hateful and most terrible to the invaded Europeans. The sister of Bogoris, their king, having been taken captive by the Greeks in her childhood, had been educated at Constantinople in the christian faith. After her redemption and return home, she was greatly affected by the idolatrous habits of her brother and his people. She seems to have been an earnest Christian, but all her appeals in favour of Christianity were little heeded, till a famine and a plague ravaged Bulgaria. The king was at length persuaded to pray to the God of the Christians. The Lord, in great mercy, stayed the plague. Bogoris acknowledged the goodness and power of the Christians' God, and agreed that missionaries should be allowed to preach the gospel to his people.

Methodius and Cyril, two Greek monks, distinguished for their zeal and learning, instructed the Bulgarians in the truths and blessings of the gospel of Christ. The king was baptized, and his people gradually followed his example. One hundred and six questions it is said, were sent by the king to the pope, Nicholas I. embracing every point of ecclesiastical discipline, of ceremonial observance, and of manners. The answers are said to have been wise and discreet, and fitted to mitigate the ferocity of a savage nation.

From Bulgaria the zealous missionaries visited many of the Sclavonian tribes, and penetrated into regions of unmingled barbarism. Their dialects were as yet unwritten. But these devoted men mastered the language of the country, and preached the gospel to the people in their native tongue. This was quite a new thing in those days, but heavenly Christianity brings in her train many precious gifts. The ordinary practice of the time was to preach and teach in the ecclesiastical languages - Greek and Latin; indeed complaints were made to the pope of the novelty of worshipping in a barbarous tongue, but the scruples of the pontiff were overcome with the reasons assigned by the missionaries, nevertheless the controversy was renewed in after ages, as some foolishly thought that it was a desecration of the church services to be celebrated in a barbarous tongue. Cyril is said to have invented an alphabet, taught the rude people the use of letters, translated the liturgy and certain books of the Bible into the dialect of the Moravians. Who can tell what the effect of Cyril's work may have been down to the present day? The king of Moravia was baptized, and, as usual in those times, his subjects followed his example. The province of Dalmatia, and many others, hitherto in gross darkness, received the gospel during the ninth and tenth centuries!

The Flowing Stream of Life

How good of the Lord, the great Head of the church, to send forth into many and distant lands the living waters of the sanctuary, when Rome, the centre of Christendom, was stagnant and corrupt. At that very time, **Baronius,** the famous annalist of the Roman church, and whose partiality to the See of Rome is notorious, cries out, "How deformed, how frightful, was the face of the church of Rome! The holy See was fallen under the tyranny of two loose and disorderly women, who placed and displaced bishops as their humour led them, and (what I tremble to think and speak of) they placed their gallants on St. Peter's chair," etc. Referring to the same period, Arnold, bishop of Orleans, exclaims, "O miserable Rome! thou that didst formerly hold out so many great and glorious luminaries to our ancestors, into what prodigious darkness art thou now fallen, which will render thee infamous to all succeeding ages."*

{*As given by Du Pin, vol. 2, p. 156.}

While such was the state of Rome, the capital of the corruptress, Jezebel, the vital stream of eternal life from the exalted Saviour, was flowing freely in the extremities of the empire. Many nations and tribes and tongues had received the gospel with the many blessings it brought to them. Doubtless it was encumbered with many superstitions; but the word of God so far, and the name of Jesus, had been introduced among them; and the Spirit of God can work wonders with that most blessed name, and that most precious word. The Saviour was preached; the love of God and the work of Christ seem to have been taught with a divine unction which carried conviction to the rude barbarians. It was God's own work, and the accomplishment of His own purposes. In such a case would not Paul have said, "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice?" (Php 1:18)

England, Scotland, and Ireland

Before closing our brief notice of the doings of the Lord at this time, we will notice a few names which indicate the state of things in our own country.

Of the glory of Alfred's reign it is needless to say much. With some historians he comes up to the conception of a perfect sovereign. At any rate, we may say, he was a true christian king, and was made a blessing both to the church and the world. His successful war with the Danes; his rescuing England from a return to barbarism; his encouragement of learning and learned men; his own abundant labours; his christian faith and devotedness, are well known to all who are acquainted with English history. He succeeded his father in 871 at the age of twenty-two, and reigned thirty years. Thus the ninth century, which opened with the great days of Charlemagne, closed with the far more glorious days of Alfred, probably the most honoured name in mediaeval history.

Clement, a pious ecclesiastic of the Scotch church, appeared in the centre of Europe about the middle of the eighth century, as a preacher of evangelical doctrines. History speaks of him as a bold and fearless defender of the authority of the word of God, in opposition to Boniface, the champion of tradition and the decisions of councils. It may throw light on the condition of Christendom, and the history of the church, to view these two missionaries as the representatives of two systems; namely, the great human organization of Rome, and the remaining scriptural Christianity of Scotland.

Alarmed at the boldness of Clement, Boniface, then archbishop of the German churches, undertook to oppose him. He confronted the Scotchman with the laws of the Roman church, the decisions of various councils, and the writings of the most illustrious fathers of the Latin church. Clement replied that no laws of the church, no decisions of councils, or writings of the fathers, that were contrary to the Holy Scriptures, had any authority over Christians. Boniface then appealed to the invincible unity of the Catholic church with its pope, bishops, priests, etc., but his opponent maintained that there only, *where the Holy Spirit dwells,* can be found the spouse of Jesus Christ.

Boniface was confounded. Fair means had failed; foul must be used. Clement was condemned as a heretic by a council met at Soissons in March, 744. He was afterwards ordered to be sent to Rome under a sure guard. The further history of Clement is unknown, but it is easy to conjecture what must have been his fate.

It is said by some that Clement held strange notions as to our Lord's descent into hades, on the subject of marriage, and predestination, but little reliance is to be placed on the statements of his enemies. Boniface appeared in court as his adversary, accuser, and judge. Rather let us hope that he was a true representative of the ancient faith of his country. But we must not suppose that Clement was the only one who appears in contest with the Roman missionaries at this period of our history. From time to time we find such witnesses for the truth openly testifying against the pretensions of Rome. Certain Scotchmen, who called themselves bishops, were condemned in a council at Chalons, in the year 813. But clerical forms having taken the place of the word of God, enlightened and faithful men were condemned as heretics.

John Scot Erigena, a native of Ireland, who resided chiefly in France, and at the court of Charles the Bald, is said by Hallam to have been, in a literary and philosophical sense, the most remarkable man in the dark ages. But he was more of a philosopher than a theologian, though he wrote largely on religious subjects, and appears to have belonged to some order of the clergy. He had studied the early fathers and the Platonic philosophy, and was too much inclined to favour human reason, even in the reception of divine truth. But, according to D'Aubigne, there appears to have been real piety in his heart. "O Lord Jesus," he exclaimed, "I ask no other happiness of Thee, but to understand, unmixed with deceitful theories, the word that Thou hast inspired by Thy Holy Spirit! Show Thyself to those who seek for Thee alone." He is supposed to have died about the year 852.

The Irish divines in the eighth century held so high a character for learning, that the literary men invited by Charlemagne to his court were chiefly from Ireland. Until the time of Henry II., king of England, the church of Ireland continued to assert its independence of Rome, and to maintain its position as an active, living, branch of the church of Christ, and owning no earthly head. But from this period the original Irish church, with its high reputation, completely disappears.

The Northmen

Were it not that we believe these powerful enemies of Christianity - the Northmen, or pirates from the regions of the North - were instruments in God's hands for the punishment of the apostate church of Rome, it would not be in our way to have introduced them. But as they appear to be nothing short of the judgment of God against the overgrown worldliness of every order of the Catholic priesthood, we may give them a brief notice.

Originally they came from the shores of the Baltic, in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Probably they were a mixture of Goths, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, and Frisians. But though composed of so many different tribes, they were ali agreed as to their main object - plunder and slaughter. Their petty kings and chieftains were practised pirates, and the most daring that ever infested the seas or the shores of Western Christendom. They pushed their light boats up the rivers as far as they could go, burning, slaying, and plundering wherever they went.

"From the shores of the Baltic," says Milman, "from the Scandinavian islands, from the gulfs and lakes, their fleets sailed on, wherever the tide or the tempest might drive them. They seemed to defy, in their ill-formed barks, the wildest weather; to be able to land on the most inaccessible shores, to find their way up the narrowest creeks and shallowest rivers; nothing was secure, not even in the heart of the country, from the sudden appearance of these relentless savages." They have been called "the Arabs of the sea," but, unlike the Mahometans, they did not wage a religious war. They were ferocious heathens, and their gods, like themselves, were warriors and pirates. Plunder, not the propagation of a faith, was their object. The castle or the monastery the noble lord, the bishop, or the monk, were alike in their eyes, provided a rich booty could be obtained. The religious estates, especially in France, suffered the most. The wealth and the defenceless position of the monasteries, pointed these out as the chief objects of their attack.

A day of retribution had come. God's hand was sore upon those who called themselves His people. His wrath seemed to burn. The church had now to pay dearly for her worldly greatness and glory. It had been her ambition for centuries and Charlemagne had raised the clergy to great wealth and worldly honour. But, scarcely had they been seated in their palaces, when the tide of barbaric invasion began to desolate the empire, and lay waste the religious edifices. The richer the abbey, the more tempting the prey, and the more remorseless the sword of the barbarian. Ignorant of the different orders of clergy, they massacred indiscriminately. Fire and sword were their weapons throughout their whole career. "France was covered with bishops and monks, flying from their ruined cloisters, their burning monasteries, their desolate churches, bearing with them the precious relics of their saints, and so deepening the universal panic, and preaching despair wherever they went."

To purchase repose from the warlike Nommans, who forced their way up the Seine, and for two years besieged the city of Paris, Charles the Simple, of France, ceded the duchy of Normandy to their leader Rollo in 905. Thus the pirate of the Baltic assumed the Christian religion, became first Duke of Normandy, and one of the twelve peers of France. William, conqueror of England in 1066, was the seventh Duke of Normandy.

England, like France, was greatly harassed and desolated by the Northmen. The first descent, which was severely felt, was about the year 830. From that time these invasions were incessant. And here, as in France, they found the richest booty in the defenceless monastery. The sanctuaries were wasted with fire and sword. At length, after the victory gained by Alfred over Guthrum in 878, a large territory was ceded to the Danes in the East of England, on condition of their embracing Christianity, and living under equal laws with the native inhabitants. But the peace thus obtained was only for a time.*

{*Robertson, vol. 2, p. 360.}

The Supposed End of the World

No period in church history, or perhaps in any history, or in any country, presents a darker picture than christian Europe at the close of the tenth century. The degradation of the papacy, the corrupt state of the church within, and the number and power of her enemies without, threatened her complete overthrow. Besides the unbelieving Mahometans in the East, and the pagan Northmen in the West, a new enemy the *Hungarians* - burst unexpectedly upon Christendom. In the strong language of history, they seemed as hordes of savages, or wild beasts, let loose upon mankind. Their source was unknown, but their numbers appeared inexhaustible. Indiscriminate massacre seemed their only war law: civilization and Christianity withered before their desolating march, and all mankind were panic-stricken.

In addition to these appalling calamities, famines prevailed and brought plague and pestilence in their train. The most alarming signs were supposed to be seen in the sun and the moon. The prediction of our Lord seemed to be accomplished: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." But, though these words fitly describe the state of things then, the prophecy was far from being fulfilled; as our Lord immediately adds, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." (Luk 21:25-27)

But if ever man might be forgiven the dream of believing that the end of the world was come, it was then. The clergy preached it, and people believed it, and it rapidly spread over all Europe. It was boldly promulgated that the world would come to an end when a thousand years from the Saviour's birth were expired. From about the year 960 the panic increased, but the year 999 was looked upon as the last which any one would ever see. This general delusion, through the power of Satan, was founded on a total misunderstanding and false interpretation of the prophecy concerning the millennial reign of the saints with Christ for a thousand years. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and *shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev 20:1-7*)

The Year Of Terror

The ordinary cares and employments of this life were given up. The land was left untilled; for why plough, why sow, when no one would be left to reap? Houses were allowed to fall into decay; for why build, why repair, why trouble about property, when a few months will put an end to all terrestrial things? History was neglected; for why chronicle events, when no posterity was expected to read the records? The rich, the noble, the princes, and bishops, abandoned their friends and families, and hastened to the shores of Palestine, in the persuasion that Mount Zion would be the throne of Christ when He descended to judge the world. Large sums of money were given to churches and monasteries, as if to secure a more favourable sentence from the supreme Judge. Kings and emperors begged at monastery doors, to be admitted as brethren of the holy order; crowds of the common people slept in the porches of the holy buildings, or at least under their shadow.

But in the meantime the multitudes must be fed. The last day of the thousand years had not yet arrived. But food there was none, corn and cattle were exhausted, and no provision had been made for the future. The most frightful extremities were endured, far too revolting to be repeated here. But the day of doom drew nearer and nearer. The last evening of the thousand years arrived: a sleepless night for all Europe! Imagination must fill up the doleful picture. But in place of some extraordinary convulsion, which all were tremblingly waiting for, the night passed away as other nights had done, and in the morning the sun shed forth his beams as peacefully as ever. The amazed but now relieved multitudes began to return to their homes, repair their buildings, plough, sow, and resume their former occupations.

Thus closed the first thousand years of the church's history; the darkest day in the reign of Jezebel, and in the annals of Christendom.

18 Church-Building Spirit Revived

Chapter 18

The Church-Building Spirit Revived

The beginning of the eleventh century was marked by great activity in repairing and building churches; and, but for the many uses to which these sacred edifices were applied by the poor people, they might not be worthy of our notice. We may reasonably suppose that during the past thirty or forty years there had been little disposition to engage in such works. But when the awful night was past, and when the first day of the year 1001 shone upon the world, the hopes of all nations revived. Men's minds had reached, with the close of the tenth century, the lowest point, but from that date a manifest rise was apparent: and their first attention was given to the holy buildings, by whose virtues, as they believed, judgment had been turned away, and the favour of heaven restored.

This superstitious feeling was no doubt what led to those great architectural efforts and results which characterize this period. Many of them are now standing, to attest the greatness of the plan and the solidity of the work. "The foundations were broad and deep, the walls of immense thickness, roofs steep and high, to keep off the rain and snow . . . . Tall pillars supported the elevated vault, instead of the flat roof of former days The great square tower, which typified resistance to worldly aggression, was exchanged for the tall and graceful spire, which pointed encouragingly to heaven. "*

{*James White's *Eighteen Christian Centuries.*}

But we must not suppose that the uses and purposes of those enormous buildings were merely as places of public worship. The **village church** in mediaeval times was equal to a number of separate buildings in our own day. It was large enough to enable the greater part of the population to wander in its aisles. The cottages of the poor were then miserable hovels, without windows, into which they retired to sleep. But the vast, beautiful building consecrated by religion was the poor man's mansion, where he spent his leisure time, and where he felt as if it all belonged to himself. It was like the town-hall, the market-place, the newsroom, the school-room, and the meeting-place of friends, all in one. We, who live in the comfortable houses of the nineteenth century, can have no just idea of the uses and convenience of such buildings. But all tended, like everything else in those times, to increase the power of the clergy, and the servility of the people. Not only was the sanctuary hallowed' but the priests became glorified, in the eyes of the people, and far outshone even the dignity of kings.

The Revival of Literature

The beginning of the eleventh century was not only famous for the putting forth of great architectural skill, but also for the renewed energies of the human mind in the various departments of learning. The long, dull, unquestioning belief of ages was now to be disturbed by a free and wholesome inquiry.

The intellectual energy of Europe, it is said, was in a condition of gradual decay from the fifth to the middle of the eighth century, and though the condition of the British isles, and the labours of the **venerable Bede**, may seem to furnish some exception to the general rule, it was then that ignorance reached its widest and darkest boundaries. Bede, we may observe in passing, is spoken of as the man who most eminently deserves to be called England's teacher. He was born in the year 673, in the village of Jarrow in Northumberland; he was a monk and a priest, but a most devout, laborious, and godly man: the instruction of youth had been one of the great objects of his life, which he continued till his latest hours: he died in the midst of his beloved scholars, May 26th, 735.*

{*Neander, vol. 5, p. 197.}

The Revival of Letters by the Arabs

We now meet with a somewhat curious and unexpected phenomenon in the history of literature during these dark ages, and though it may not properly fall within the line of our church history, it is too interesting and important to overlook. The professed teachers of Christendom were at this time, as is well known, sunk in the very depths of ignorance; but we find the Saracens had risen to be the students and the teachers of the national literature of Greece. This was the remarkable state of things at the beginning of the eleventh century.

We have already seen that in the seventh century the companions and successors of Mahomet desolated the face of the earth with their arms, and darkened it by their ignorance, and the acts of barbarism ascribed to them - such as the burning of the Alexandrian library, attest their contempt for learning, and their aversion for the monuments which they destroyed. In the eighth century they seem to have settled down in the countries which they subdued, and, with the advantages of a finer climate and a richer soil, they began to study the sciences and useful knowledge. "In the ninth [century]," says Dean Waddington, "under the auspices of a wise and munificent Caliph, they applied the same ardour to the pursuit of literature which had heretofore been confined to the exercise of arms. Ample schools were founded in the principal cities of Asia, Bagdad, and Cufa, and Bassora; numerous libraries were formed with care and diligence, and men of learning and science were solicitously invited to the splendid court of Almamunis. Greece which had civilized the Roman republic, and was destined in a much later age, to enlighten the extremities of the West, was now called upon to turn the stream of her lore into the barren bosom of Asia; for Greece was still the only land possessing an original literature. Her noblest productions were now translated into the ruling language of the East, and the Arabians took pleasure in pursuing the speculations, or submitting to the rules, of her philosophy.

"The impulse thus given to the genius and industry of Asia was communicated with inconceivable rapidity along the shores of Egypt and Africa to the schools of Seville and Cordova; and the shock was not felt least sensibly by those who last received it. Henceforward the genius of learning accompanied even the arms of the Saracens. They conquered Sicily, from Sicily they invaded the southern provinces of Italy and, as if to complete the eccentric revolution of Grecian literature, the wisdom of Pythagoras was restored to the land of its origin by the descendants of an Arabian warrior. "*

{*Waddington's *History,* vol. 2, p. 44.}

The Learning of the Arabs Imported into Christendom

Pope Sylvester II., who filled the chair of St. Peter when the first morning of the eleventh century dawned upon Europe, formed the link between the wisdom and learning of the Arabians, and the ignorance and credulity of the Romans. He had studied at the Mahometan schools in the royal city of Cordova, where he had acquired much useful knowledge as to this life, which he began to teach and practise in Rome. But such was the dark superstition of the people generally, that they attributed his great acquirements to the arts of magic, and maintained that such powers could only be possessed through a compact with the evil one. For ages after Pope Sylvester was remembered with horror, lest the throne of St. Peter should have been filled by a necromancer. But as time passed on, and the darkness of the tenth century was more and more left behind, there arose a race of men who were distinguished, not merely for great philosophic attainments, but for the study of the holy scriptures, and for their devotedness to the progress of Christianity. To have learned to read, and to have attended to the meaning of words, at such a time, especially in connection with the sacred writings, were blessings to mankind. The superiority of the eleventh over the tenth century must be chiefly ascribed to the improvements and advancement in learning, as a means in the Lord's hands.

But we must say another word about Sylvester. It would be unfair to leave so great and so good a man under the dark shade of the people's prejudices. He is spoken of by enlightened and impartial history as the most eminent prelate of his age. His own name was **Gerbert.** "In learning peerless, in piety unimpeachable, was Gerbert of Ravenna," says Milman. He was the tutor, guide, and friend of Robert, the son and successor of Hugh Capet, who, by a great but silent revolution, was raised to the throne of the imbecile race of Charlemagne, in the year 987. The royal pupil seems to have profited by the instructions of Gerbert. He came to the throne of France about the year 996, and reigned till the year 1031. He was a great friend to learning, died lamented, and was surnamed the Sage. In 998 Gerbert was appointed pope by Otho III., Emperor of Germany, when he took the name of Sylvester II. He died May 12th, 1003.

Traces of the Silver Line of God's Grace

Stephen, a most pious prince of Hungary, was baptized by Adelbert, bishop of Prague, and began to reign in the year 997. He was a most zealous supporter of the gospel, schools, and missionary work. He often accompanied the preachers, and sometimes preached himself. His pious queen, **Gisla,** daughter of Henry III., greatly assisted him. He also introduced many social reforms, was kind to the poor, and endeavoured to suppress all impiety throughout his dominions. He lived to see, under the blessing of God, all Hungary become externally christian. He died in the year 1038. A change of government brought about persecution, and the pious labourers were interrupted in their good work.

Othingar, a bishop of Denmark, and **Unwan,** bishop of Hamburg, were earnest, devoted, servants of Christ, and used by Him for the spread of the truth. **John,** a Scotchman, the bishop of Mecklenburg, baptized great numbers of the Sclavonians, but the Prussians resisted all attempts to introduce the gospel among them. **Boleslaus,** king of Poland, endeavoured by force to evangelize them, but in vain. Then eighteen missionaries, under one Boniface, went to labour among the Prussians, by means of the peaceful gospel, but they were all massacred by that barbarous people. They seem to have been the last of the European nations who submitted to the yoke of Christ. Christianity had no footing in Prussia till the thirteenth century.

The reign of **Olave,** who became king of Sweden towards the end of the tenth century, and died about 1024, was famous for the propagation of the gospel in that country. The zeal of the English clergy embraced the opportunity, and many of them went over to preach the gospel in Sweden; among them was **Sigfred,** archdeacon of York, who laboured many years among the Swedes. But the zeal of Olave led him to use violent measures in the spread of Christianity, and excited a general hatred against him among the adherents of the old religion. After many struggles, and much bloodshed, the christian religion was firmly established about the end of the eleventh century. The number of churches in Sweden was increased to about eleven hundred.

The progress of the gospel in Norway had been slow from the time of Ausgar's mission; but when **Olave,** son of Harold, became king in 1015, he determined to carry on the good work with great zeal. Many missionaries were invited from England, at their head was a bishop named **Grimkil,** who drew up a code of ecclesiastical laws for Norway. But the king pursued the system - too common in those days, but always the Roman system - of enforcing Christianity by such means as confiscation and severe bodily punishments, even unto death. He often had to encounter armed resistance. At length a conference was agreed upon. The king and his missionary, Grimkil, met the heathen priest at Dalen, in 1025. Olave, it is said, spent a great part of the night in prayer The god Thor, who was represented as superior to the Christians' God, because he could be seen, was brought into the place of conference. When they met in the morning, the king pointed to the rising sun as a visible witness to his God who created it; and while the heathen were gazing on its brightness, a gigantic soldier raised his club, and broke the idol to pieces. A swarm of loathsome creatures, thus rudely disturbed, rushed forth, and, running in all directions, the men of Dalen were convinced of the vanity of the old superstition, and consented to be baptized. Olave was afterwards slain in a civil war, but it was rumoured that his blood had healed a wound in the hand of the warrior who killed him; and many other miracles were said to have been wrought by him. He was canonized, and St. Olave was chosen as the patron of Norway.

The triumphs of the gospel were especially conspicuous in **Denmark** towards the end of this century. "Look," says Adam of Bremen, who wrote in the year 1080; "Look at that **very ferocious nation of the Danes**; for a long time they have been accustomed to celebrate the praises of God. Look at that piratical people; they are now content with the fruits of their own country. Look at that horrid region, formerly altogether inaccessible on account of idolatry; they now eagerly admit the preachers of the word." History represents the Danes and the English as enjoying a kind of millennial scene at this time, through the effects of missionary labours. In mutual confidence and charity they were enjoying together the blessings of Christianity. This must have been indeed wonderful and surprising to those who had known with what savage barbarity the Danes had formerly desolated the dwellings of the English. These were the peaceful triumphs of the gospel of Christ. The preaching of the cross, attended with the energy of the Holy Spirit, is sure to effect such blessed and salutary changes in the rudest people. The gospel not only emancipates the immortal soul from the slavery and doom of sin, but it greatly ameliorates the condition of man in this life, and diffuses through the world the precepts of peace, order, and good government. These are the native effects of the gospel, but they are often marred and hindered by the natural enmity of the heart, especially by those who have the sword on their side.

Lanfranc and Anselm are names famous in church history at this time, though not so much for grace as for learning and controversy: both were archbishops of Canterbury. They had both been monks, and celebrated teachers in that humble rank. Upwards of four thousand scholars attended the prelections of Lanfranc when a monk at Caen. Anselm was of equal reputation in Normandy. Lanfranc, however has the unenviable reputation of confirming, by his great influence and learning, the dogma of transubstantiation. In the darkness of the tenth century it had made its first authoritative appearance in the church. It was attacked by **Berengar** of Tours, who used all the powers of his mind, and all the resources within his reach, to demonstrate its unsoundness. But Lanfranc defended it, and having the majority of the clergy on his side, Berengar was confuted, stripped of all his preferments, and condemned to a rigorous seclusion for the remainder of his life. *Berengarism* became a term of reproach, and was considered a heresy. Thus the mysterious dogma of the **Real Presence** was established about the middle of the eleventh century. Lanfranc died in 1089. William Rufus appointed Anselm to be his successor. He has the reputation of being a great divine, a sincere Christian, and most blameless in his life. He died in 1109, being the sixteenth year of his archbishopric, and the seventy-sixth of his age. Both Lanfranc and Anselm, we need scarcely say, were zealous supporters of the power of Rome.

Margaret, Queen of Scotland, was evidently a divine channel of God's grace in those days, notwithstanding the legality of Popery. She was the daughter of Ethelred, and sister to Edgar Atheling, the last of the Saxon line of princes. The rapacity and profaneness of the Norman princes, especially of William Rufus, led Edgar and Margaret to seek a safe retreat in Scotland. **King Malcolm Canmore** married the English princess. The most wonderful things are related of her piety, liberality, and humility. Her character was fitted to throw a lustre over a purer age. She had by Malcolm six sons and two daughters. Three of her sons reigned successively, and her daughter, Matilda, was wife to Henry I. of England, and was considered a pious Christian.

As the life and character of Margaret will give a better view or embodiment of Romish Christianity in one of its brightest examples, than we could describe, we will quote a few passages from real life. "The royal lady, who has been honoured with canonization, though very superstitious, and somewhat ostentatious in her acts of beneficence, nevertheless possessed many eminent virtues, and must be ranked among the best of our queens. She exercised unbounded influence over her brave but illiterate husband, who, though unable to read her books of devotion, was accustomed fervently to kiss them. Every morning she prepared food for nine orphans, and on her bended knees she fed them. With her own hands she ministered at table to crowds of indigent persons, who assembled to share her bounty; and nightly, before retiring to rest, she gave a still more striking proof of her humility by washing the feet of six of them. She was frequently in church, prostrate before the altar, and there, with sighs and tears and protracted prayers, she offered herself a sacrifice to the Lord. When the season of Lent came round, besides reciting particular offices, she went over the whole Psalter twice or thrice within twenty-four hours. Before repairing to public Mass, she prepared herself for the solemnity by hearing five or six private masses, and when the whole service was over, she fed twenty-four on-hangers and thus illustrated her faith by her works. It was not till these were satisfied that she retired to her own scanty meal But with all this parade of humility, there was an equal display of pride. Her dress was gorgeous, her retinue large and her coarse fare must needs be served on dishes of gold and silver, a thing unheard of in Scotland till her time.

"Fortunate in having obtained a good education, St. Margaret was particularly fond of showing her learning and knowledge of the scriptures. She often discoursed with the clergy of Scotland on questions of theology, and through her influence Lent was henceforward observed according to the Catholic institution. She did good service to religion and virtue in many ways; but the life of this good queen was shortened by the severity of her fasts. They gradually under undermined her constitution . . . . She was lying, wasted and dying, with the crucifix before her, when her son, Edgar arrived from the battle of Alnwick. 'How fares it with the King and my Edward?' said the dying mother. The young man stood silent. 'I know it all,' she cried, 'I know it all By this holy cross, by your filial affection, I adjure you, tell me the truth.' 'Your husband and your son are both slain,' said the youth. Lifting her hands and her eyes to heaven, she devoutly said, 'Praise and blessing be to thee, Almighty God that thou hast been pleased to make me endure so bitter anguish in the hour of my departure, thereby, as I trust, to purify me in some measure from the corruptions of my sins and Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, who, through the will of the Father, has enlivened the world by Thy death, oh, deliver

me!' While the words were yet upon her lips she softly expired."*

{*Cunningham's *Church History of Scotland,* vol. 1, p. 97, Milner vol. 2, p. 566; Robertson, vol. 2, p. 441.}

Reflections on the Missionary Spirit of Rome

We have seen, in tracing the good work of the gospel in different countries, the activity, energy and aggressive character of the church of Rome. And although there was a fearful amount of human tradition, and many foolish absurdities, mixed up with "the gospel of God," still the name of Jesus Christ was proclaimed, and salvation through Him though not alas through Him alone. Nevertheless God in grace could use that blessed name, and give the eye of faith to see its preciousness, amongst the rubbish of Roman superstition. The full, clear, gospel of Christ was completely lost. It was no longer Christ *only,* but Christ and a thousand other things. They were eloquent in preaching good works, but, at the same time, they obscured the faith from which all good works should spring. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else;" "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (Joh 1:29; Isa 45:22; Mat 11:28; Joh 6:37) These, and such like texts, give the idea of a gospel that brings souls to Christ Himself, by faith alone; not to Christ, and rites and ceremonies innumerable, before the soul can be saved. To be converted to Christ Himself is the best of all conversions. To rest on the unfailing efficacy of the blood of Christ is sure salvation to the soul, and perfect peace with God.

There were, no doubt, many good and earnest men in the missionary field, whose spiritual state may have been much better than their ecclesiastical one, and whom God may have used to gather precious souls to Himself. But there can be no doubt that the spirit of Rome's missionaries was more of proselytizing to the church of Rome than to the faith and obedience of Christ. Baptism, and implicit, unquestioning, subjection to the authority of the pope, was the demand made on all converts, ruler or subject. Faith in Christ was not looked for. The ambition of the Roman See was to embrace the whole world, and, as far as Europe was concerned, all public profession of Christianity which professed independence of the Roman domination was to be immediately suppressed, and utterly destroyed.

Just about this time, a monk of humble origin, but of the most extraordinary character, appeared on the scene. In him were accomplished all the fond dreams of dominion over the human mind. Till now the mission of the Papacy had never been fulfilled. But as there never had been such a Pope before, and never has been such a Pope since, we must briefly sketch his unparalleled career.

19 Pontificate of Gregory VII

Chapter 19

The Pontificate of Gregory VII

Hildebrand, a native of Tuscany, born in the early part of the eleventh century, had embraced from his boyhood the most rigid ideas of monasticism. Dissatisfied with the laxity of the Italian monks, he crossed the Alps, and entered the austere convent of Cluny, in Burgundy, then the foremost in numbers, wealth, and piety.

In the year 1049, **Bruno, bishop of Toul,** arrayed in all the splendour, and attended by the retinue, of a Pontiff elect arrived at Cluny, and demanded the hospitality and the homage of the monks. Bruno was cousin to Henry III., Emperor of Germany, and had been nominated by him to fill the vacant See of Rome. Hildebrand, the Prior of Cluny, soon acquired great influence over the mind of Bruno. He convinced him that he had made a false step in having accepted the appointment from the hands of a layman, and recommended him to lay aside the pontifical vestments which he had prematurely assumed, travel to Rome as a pilgrim, and there receive from the clergy and people that apostolical office which no layman had a right to bestow. Bruno consented. Hildebrand's lofty views of ecclesiastical dignity prevailed over the more genial mind of his new friend. He followed the advice; threw aside his robes, and taking the monk as his companion, he pursued his journey to Rome in the simple garb of a pilgrim.

The impression produced was great, and all in favour of Bruno. No sacerdotal or imperial display could have had the same power over the people. Miracles are said to have marked his way, and by his prayers swollen rivers sank within-their natural bounds. He was hailed with universal acclamations as Pope Leo the Ninth. Hildebrand was immediately rewarded for his services. He was raised to the rank of a cardinal, and received the offices of sub-deacon of Rome with other munificent preferments. From this time he was practically pope - the real director of the Papacy.

Extremes of Character

Just at this point of our history we meet, through the subtlety of Satan, the most extreme and opposite of characters. Hildebrand's one object was to subdue the outer world the self-inflicted cruelties of others were to subdue the world within themselves.

Peter Damiano, bishop of Ostia, was severely ascetic. He wore sackcloth secretly, he fasted, he watched, he prayed, and, in order to tame his passions, he could rise in the night, stand for hours in a stream until his limbs were stiff with cold, and spend the remainder of the night in visiting churches, and reciting the Psalter. The avowed object for which he so laboured was the restoration of the dignity of the priesthood, and a stricter church discipline. Such is the delusive power of the enemy within the church of Rome. But a monk, named

Dominic, was considered the great hero of this warfare against the poor unoffending body. Satan concealed from his dupe the difference between the body and the *deeds* of the body. Dominic wore next to his skin a tight iron cuirass, which he never put off, except to chastise himself. His body and his arms were confined by iron rings, his neck was loaded with heavy chains, his scanty clothes were worn to rags, his food consisted of the coarsest fare, his skin was as black as a negro's, from the effects of his discipline. His usual exercise was to recite the Psalter twice a day, while he flogged himself with both hands, at the rate of a thousand lashes to ten psalters. It was reckoned that three thousand lashes were equal to a year's penance; the whole Psalter, therefore, with this accompaniment, was equivalent to five years. In Lent, or on occasions of special penitence, the daily average rose to three psalters; he "easily"(?) got through twenty - equal to a hundred years of penance - in six days. Once, at the beginning of Lent, he begged that a penance of a thousand years might be imposed on him, and he cleared off the whole before Easter.

These flagellations were supposed to have the effect of a satisfaction for other men's sins - works of supererogation, which formed the capital for the sale of indulgences, which we shall hear of by-and-by. Death mercifully put an end to his pitiable delusions in the year 1062.

Take another example of ecclesiastical life, for Satan found something to suit every taste.

The worldly prelates were in the habit of riding forth attended with troops of soldiers, with swords and lances. They were surrounded with armed men like a heathen general. Every day royal banquets, every day parades; the table loaded with delicacies; the guests, their voluptuous favourites. Crime and licentiousness held revel in the palaces of the prelates. So great was the wickedness of Rome in the tenth century, that historians in general consent to draw a veil over it for the sake of our common humanity. Can our deluded countrymen who are hastening over to Rome, know, that within a period of a century and a half, about this time, so dreadful were the scenes of the Vatican, that "two popes were murdered, five were driven into exile four were deposed, and three resigned their hazardous dignity. Some were raised to the pontifical chair by arms, some by money, and some received the tiara from the hands of princely courtesans . . . . It would be heretical to say that the gates of hell had prevailed against the seat and centre of Catholicism; but Baronius himself might be cited to prove that they had rolled back on their infernal hinges to send forth malignant spirits, commissioned to empty on her devoted head the vials of bitterness and wrath."*

{*Sir James Stephen, *Ecclesiastical Biography,* vol. 1, p. 2; Milman, vol. 3, p. 103; Robertson, vol. 2, p. 515.}

We now turn to the immediate object of our history - the career of Hildebrand, as Gregory the Seventh, from whose lips we shall hear an account of the infallible popes very different from the above.

Gregory and Clerical Independence

The day is yet future when man, the Antichrist of 2 Thessalonians 2 energized and led on by Satan will "exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped," but surely in the life and character of Gregory, we have a dark foreshadowing of that masterpiece of the enemy. Were it not for the proof and illustration of scripture which Hildebrand's designs afford, we would willingly pass over his history. No *silver line* of grace, no love human or divine, can be traced in a single act of his public administration; but with great swelling words of the most daring blasphemy he speaks of himself as the successor of St. Peter, the follower of Jesus, and the utterance of the mouth of God. At the same time it is evident to all that he was the very incarnation of antichristian pride, arrogance, and intolerance. His language sometimes borders on the assumption of divinity, and nearly approaches the blasphemy of the man of sin.

From the time he entered Rome as the companion of Bruno till his advancement to the pontifical chair - a period of twenty-four years - he was the ruling spirit in the Vatican; but he was in no haste for preferment. With more than human sagacity he was studying the condition and relations of Church and State; he was acquiring a knowledge of man and of the affairs of all Europe; he was maturing a lofty but daring scheme of a vast *spiritual* autocracy *in the person of the Pope.* All this appeared when he ascended the throne, and assumed in his own person the responsibility of the power which he had so long directed, though in an inferior station. His avowed object from the first was the absolute freedom and independence of the clergy from imperial and all lay interference of every description, whether to nominate or to consecrate an ecclesiastic; and, on the basis of this liberty, he boldly asserted that spiritual authority was higher and more legitimate than temporal. These proud pretensions led the church of Rome, in the person of her pontiff, to usurp dominion over the western empire, and over all the kingdoms of Europe, or rather of the whole world. Nothing more is wanted to confirm these assertions than the following Dictates.

The "Dictates of Gregory"

The following are said to be some of Gregory's maxims; they will give the reader an idea of the man, and of the spirit of popery. "It is laid down that the Roman pontiff is universal bishop, that his name is the only one of the kind in the world. To him alone it belongs to depose or to reconcile bishops; and he may depose them in their absence, and without the concurrence of a Synod. He alone is entitled to frame new laws for the church - to divide, unite, or translate bishoprics. He alone may use the ensigns of empire; all princes are bound to kiss his feet, he has the right to depose emperors, and to absolve subjects from their allegiance. He holds in his hands the supreme mediation in questions of war and peace, and he only may adjudge contested successions to kingdoms - that all kingdoms were held as fiefs under St. Peter. With his leave inferiors may accuse their superiors. No council may be styled general without his command. The Roman church has never erred, and, as scripture testifies, never will err. The pope is above all judgment, and by the merits of St. Peter is undoubtedly rendered holy. The church was not to be the handmaid of princes but their mistress; if she had received from God power to bind and to loose in heaven, much more must she have a like power over earthly things. "*

{*Robertson, vol. 2, p. 567.}

But while the *sovereign domination* of the church had long been the fond dream of Hildebrand, he saw that certain reforms were necessary to the accomplishment of his object; and to these he now addressed himself in all the energy and intrepid firmness of his character.

Gregory and Reform

About the close of Gregory's first official year (March, 1074), he assembled a numerous council at Rome, for the purpose of declaring war against the two great vices of the European clergy, and the two great hindrances to his theocratic scheme, namely, *concubinage* and *simony,* or the marriage of the priests and the sale of benefices. Many who were favourable to reform thought the edict as to celibacy not only severe but unjust, because it applied equally to the most honourable marriages and the basest profligacy. It was resolved in council, without opposition: first, that priests should not marry, secondly, that those who were married should put away their wives, or renounce the priesthood; thirdly, that for the future no one should be admitted to holy orders who should not profess inviolable continence.

Many of the early fathers had endeavoured to establish the connection between celibacy and sanctity, and to persuade men that those who were wedded to the church should avoid the contamination of an earthly union. Several of the popes had also advocated celibacy; but, unless under the severest personal discipline or in the strictest monastic communities, it was little observed and probably never enforced beyond the bounds of Italy. But Gregory made his voice to be heard and feared on this subject from the Vatican to the utmost limits of Latin Christendom. He wrote letters to all archbishops and bishops, princes, potentates, and lay officers of every degree, on pain of incurring severe punishment or eternal perdition, to cast out and depose, without mercy, all married priests and deacons, and to refuse their contaminating ministrations. These despatches were full of anathemas against all who resisted his decrees; and, assuming the place of God, he says, "How shall they obtain pardon for their sins who despise him who openeth and closeth the gates of heaven *to whom he pleaseth?* Let all such beware how they call down the divine wrath upon their own heads,.... how they incur the apostolic malediction, instead of earning that grace and blessing so abundantly poured out upon them by the blessed Peter! Let them be assured that neither prince nor prelate shall escape the doom of the sinner who shall omit to drive out and expel, with inexorable rigour, all simoniacal and married priests, and all who shall listen to the call of carnal sympathy or affection, or shall from any worldly motive withhold the sword from the shedding of blood in the holy cause of God and His church, or shall stand aloof while these damning heresies are gnawing at the vitals of religion,.... shall be regarded indiscriminately as accomplices of the heretics, as counterfeits and cheats."*

{*Greenwood, *Cathedra Petri,* vol. 4, p. 331.}

Celibacy and Simony

The promulgation of this edict produced, as may well be conceived, the greatest possible agitation and distress throughout the whole of Christendom. Up to this time, right or wrong, marriage had been the rule, celibacy the exception. And the injustice of the edict made it more intolerable, for it fell as severely on the most virtuous as on the most vicious, and stigmatized them all alike as guilty of concubinage. We must leave the reader to imagine the effect of such a decree on thousands and tens of thousands of happy families; details would fill a volume. It dissolved the most honourable marriages, rent asunder what God had joined together, scattered husbands wives, and children, and gave rise to the most lamentable contentions, and spread everywhere the direst calamities; wives, especially, were driven to despair, and exposed to the bitterest grief and shame. But the more vehement the opposition, the more loud the anathemas against any delay in the plenary execution of the pontiff's commands. The disobedient were delivered over to the civil magistrates, to be persecuted, deprived of their properties, and subjected to indignities and sufferings of various kinds. Part of one of his letters said on this point, "He whom flesh and blood moveth to doubt or delay is carnal; he is condemned already; he hath no share in the work of the Lord; he is a rotten branch, a dumb dog, a cankered limb, a faithless servant, a time-server, and a hypocrite."

But as none of the sovereigns of Europe were disposed to fight for the wives of the clergy, the pope soon had the matter all his own way, and many of the lewd priests were not sorry to be delivered from the obligations of their evil ways.

Simony. The conflict arising from the twin law for the suppression of simony was more difficult to deal with; and, being protracted through many years, it involved both the **church and** state in many and great calamities.

The Simoniacal Heresy

In the eleventh century the **feudal system** is said to have arrived at maturity, and the sin of simony - or the sale of ecclesiastical benefices - to have reached its evil height. At this period history informs us that, from the Papacy down to the lowest parochial cure, every spiritual dignity had its money-price and became an object of barter or sale. Even the bishopric of Rome had been so notoriously bought and sold about this very time, that there were three contemporary popes: Benedict IX. held the Lateran; Sylvester III., the Vatican; and Gregory VI., Santa Maria. But so disgraceful were the contentions, and so fierce the actual warfare between the popes and their friends, that the Emperor Henry III. was implored by the Italians to come to Rome and examine the conflicting claims of the three pontiffs. A council was held at Sutri, about the year 1044, when the most unheard of immoralities, and the most flagrant simony, were proved against the popes before Henry. Which of the three the high church now claims as the legitimate successor of St. Peter, we know not; but there can be no doubt that they were all the lineal descendants of **Simon Magus,** who thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. Few, very few, were the true descendants of Simon Peter, who left all and followed Jesus.

The evil worked downwards, and every order of the clergy was affected, if not corrupted, by this prevailing sin. When the bishop found he had paid too much for his See, he naturally raised the price of the inferior stations in order to indemnify himself. Thus the great prelates of the church were engaged in the most degrading traffic and secularizing speculations. Nothing could be lower, and it opened the door of the church to the worst of men. Laymen, without education or religion; barbarians, without civilization, purchased holy orders, and forced themselves into the sacred ranks of the priesthood, and of course brought with them the worst wickedness of the world, and the greatest enormities of the heathen. Simony thus became the all-comprehending sin of that period, and every vice naturally sprang from it. But we will endeavour to ascertain its origin.

The Rise and Progress of Simony

So long as the church was poor, persecuted, and despised by the world, there were no purchasers for benefices. When a man lost his worldly status by becoming a Christian, and exposed himself to imprisonment and death, all trafficking in ecclesiastical preferments was unknown. But after the union of Church and State, and when the wealth of the world began to flow into the coffers of the church, there was a great temptation to enter the sacred order for the privileges and immunities which it secured. Simony thus became the inevitable consequence of the rich endowment of the greater Sees.

In the early days of episcopacy the bishop was elected by the clergy and the people of his diocese, but in process of time episcopal elections became so important, that the lay-lords, and even the sovereigns, were tempted to interfere, and ultimately to establish and claim the privilege of positive appointment. Charlemagne himself set the example of advancing his natural sons to high ecclesiastical dignities. The privilege thus usurped was soon abused. The most important charges and offices were either bestowed on favourites, or publicly sold to the highest bidder, without regard for the interests of religion, sanctity of character, or even literary qualifications.

The universal feudal practice of making presents to the sovereign, or to the liege lord, at every act of promotion, was followed by the ecclesiastics. When a bishop or abbot died, it was usual, in the first place, to report the vacancy to the court, then the ring and the crosier of the deceased prelate or abbot were placed in the hands of the temporal superior. The bishop or abbot next appointed was bound by the general custom to present a gift or acknowledgment; this necessarily led to a transaction which assumed the character of a bargain and sale. The gift or offering, which at first was accepted as honorary and voluntary, was at length exacted as a price with unscrupulous rapacity. With this was connected the famous question of *investiture.* The ring, the symbol of his mystic marriage with his diocese; the staff, the sceptre of his spiritual sway. This *investiture* conveyed the right to the temporal possessions or endowments of the benefice. It presumed not to consecrate, but permitted the consecrated person to execute his office in a certain defined sphere, and under the protection and guarantee of the civil power.

Many of the Sees were endowed with sovereign rights and royalties within their respective provinces. Bishops and abbeys had grown into principalities and governments, and to these ecclesiastical princes the largest share in the offices and councils of state had been entrusted. In the feudal system, bishops had become in every respect the equals of the secular nobles. "In every city," says Milman, "the bishop, if not the very first of men, was on a level with the first; without the city he was lord of the amplest domains. Archbishops almost equalled kings; for who would not have coveted the station and authority of a Hincmar, **Archbishop of Rheims,** rather than that of the feeble Carlovingian monarch?"*

{**Latin Christianity, vol. 3, p.* 105.}

But the superior clergy were in no respect behind the laity in the corrupt practice of selling the spiritual offices within their patronage. Bishops and abbots sold their churches, without shame or remorse, that they might repay themselves for their outlay. That which had been obtained by unworthy means was employed for unworthy ends. Such was the fearful state of things both in Church and State, and such the unhallowed motives of men for taking holy orders, when Hildebrand sent forth his famous decree against all simoniacal practices, and against the whole right of investiture by the temporal sovereign, prince, noble, or any layman.

Gregory and Investitures

A.D. 1075

The formal inauguration of a bishop or abbot by the delivery of a ring and a staff had been customary with the emperors, kings, and princes of Europe, long before the establishment of the feudal system by Charlemagne, probably from the time of Clovis. And so far, if we bear in mind the relation of the Church to the State, and the original source of the privilege, it appears fair and right, though to a spiritual mind a most incongruous combination of temporal and spiritual powers, and ruinous to both. "When the early conquerors of the West," says Dean Waddington, "conferred territorial grants upon the church, the individuals who came to the enjoyment of them were obliged to present themselves at court, to swear allegiance to the king, and to receive from his hands some symbol in proof that the temporalities were placed in their possession. The same ceremony, in fact, was imposed on the ecclesiastical as on the lay proprietor of royal fiefs, and it was called *investiture.* Afterwards, when the princes had usurped the presentation to all valuable benefices, even to those which had not been derived from royal bounty, they introduced no distinction, founded on the different sources of the revenue, but continued to subject those whom they nominated to the same rank of allegiance, and the same ceremony of investiture, with the laity."*

{**History of the Church,* vol. 2, p. 70.}

In the first fervour of conversion, the conquerors, from Constantine downwards, had been in the habit of bestowing a share of their newly-acquired property upon monasteries and churches; but the gifts of the successive dynasties were moderate, compared with the imperial house of Saxony. Under the German emperors church property accumulated rapidly, and to an enormous extent. "In the eleventh and twelfth centuries," says Greenwood, *"freeholds in perpetuity* were possessed by the churches to a very great extent. The bishops and abbots were enriched, not, as heretofore, by gifts of single plots of ground, or farms, but by grants of whole cities and towns, by cantons and counties. Thus Otho I. gave to the monastery of **Magdeburg** several boroughs, with their purlieus and the rural districts appertaining thereto. Otho II. granted three boroughs out of the imperial domain to the church of Aschaffenburg, with all the lands appurtenant. The terms of the conveyance do not appear to have differed at all from those used in secular grants of the like nature. And in practice, notwithstanding the different character and calling of the grantees, the same ideas of the nature and requirements of the grant appear to have been entertained by the spiritual as by the lay vassal. Thus bishops and abbots buckled on armour, mounted their chargers, and marched to the field, at the head of their sub-vassals and tenants, in discharge of the feudal duties incumbent upon their lands, nor could the latter be easily moved at all till led into action by their lawful chiefs.

"The great ecclesiastics, so far from objecting to these unprofessional demands, entered heartily into the sport of war, and bore themselves in the field with a degree of martial prowess which might become the bravest of the lay chivalry."*

{**Cathedra Petri,* vol. 4, p. 274.}

Such was the state of what may be called the christian constituency when Hildebrand issued his memorable edict against *lay investitures;* and such was the right or usage on the part of the crown of nominating and appointing to the greater ecclesiastical dignities and benefices. Hildebrand's scheme was to abolish entirely even the remotest claim of any interference, either for or against, on the part of the laity, in spiritual appointments, and to deprive the sovereign of the right of investiture, with which the law and custom of centuries had armed him, and which he regarded as the most precious prerogative of his crown. This was the question raised, the prize at issue, and the great battle to be fought, between the potentates of Europe and the meagre monk in the Vatican. Gregory now addressed himself to the contest, the greatest by far ever undertaken single-handed in any age.

Gregory and Henry IV

The discerning eye of the vigilant pontiff had long watched the spirit and movements of all Christendom. He was well acquainted with the moral and political life, the strength and weakness, of all nations. He may be seen in the spiritual warfare temporizing with the strong, and bending all his strength against the weak. He speaks contemptuously of the feeble king of France, and claims tribute as an ancient right. Charlemagne, he says, was the pope's collector, and bestowed Saxony on the apostle. But to the dreaded William of England and Normandy his language is courteous. The haughty Norman maintained his Teutonic independence; created bishops and abbots at his will; was absolute lord over his ecclesiastical as over his feudal liegemen.*

{**Latin Christianity,* vol. 3, p. 121.}

In Spain and the northern nations Gregory was more assumptuous and successful, but it was against the empire that he concentrated all his forces, and resolved to measure the strength of the Papacy with the whole power of Henry. If he could humble the highest and proudest of monarchs - the successor of the Caesars - the victory would tell on all other sovereigns.

The youth and inexperience of Henry, the demoralizing tendencies of his education, the revolt of the German princes, and the troubles that too often afflict a country during a minority, encouraged the daring priest in his bold designs. The decisions of the council, held in 1074, against the universal sin of simony, and the marriage of the clergy, were duly communicated to the Emperor. The crafty pope embraced the opportunity of assuming the greatest friendship for Henry. He admonished him as a father to return to the bosom of his mother, the holy Roman church, to rule the empire in a more worthy manner, to abstain from simoniacal presentations to benefices, and to render due allegiance to his spiritual superior.

The Emperor received the pope's legate courteously, commended his zeal for the reform of the church, and was altogether most submissive in his tone. But Gregory was not to be satisfied with unmeaning praise and apparent repentance. He now desired permission, as supreme arbiter of the affairs of Germany, to summon councils there, by which those accused of simony might be convicted and deposed. But neither Henry nor the bishops would grant leave to the pope's legates to assemble a council in Germany for such a purpose. The clergy dreaded his severe inquisition into their titles, and the Emperor dreaded having his own patronage curtailed. But the impatient zeal of the ambitious priest would brook no delay and submit to no opposition.

In the following year (1075) he convoked a second council at Rome, and proceeded to those measures which he had intended to accomplish by synods in Germany. At the head of his Roman clergy, men vowed to his cause by interest and pride, he determined at all hazards to strike at the root of all abuses comprehended under the odious name of simony. On this occasion he excommunicated some of the favourites of Henry; he deposed the Archbishop of Bremen, and the bishops of Strasburg, Spires, and Bamberg, besides some Lombard bishops, and five of the imperial court, whose assistance the Emperor had used in the sale of benefices. He also decreed that "whoever should confer a bishopric or an abbacy, or should receive an investiture from the hands of any layman, should be excommunicated." Henry again professed a measure of penitence, acknowledged the existence of simony, and his intentions in future to discourage it, but that he could by no means be induced to give up the power of appointing bishops and abbots, and the investiture so closely connected with that power. Gregory, on the other hand, exasperated by the king's disobedience, and by his appointing to the See of Milan and other bishoprics, without awaiting the decision of the apostolic See, sent him the most peremptory summons to appear in Rome, to answer for all his offences before the tribunal of the pope, and before a synod of ecclesiastics; if he should refuse or delay, he was at once to suffer the sentence of excommunication. The 22nd of February was the day appointed for his appearance.

"Thus the king," says Milman, "the victorious king of the Germans, was solemnly cited as a criminal, to answer undefined charges, to be amenable to laws which the judge had assumed the right of enacting, interpreting, and enforcing by the last penalties. The whole affairs of the empire were to be suspended while the king stood before the bar of his imperious arbiter; no delay was allowed; the stern and immutable alternative was humble and instant obedience or that sentence which involved deposition from the empire and eternal perdition."

The Emperor, who was a high-minded prince and of an ardent temperament, being extremely indignant at this mandate, treated it as a wanton insult, and immediately called a convention of German bishops at **Worms.** His object was to depose the pope who had thus declared war, even to the death, against himself. These prelates, after passing many censures on the conduct of Hildebrand, pronounced him unworthy of his dignity, deposed him, and appointed a meeting for the election of a new pontiff. Gregory, on receiving the sentence by the king's messengers and letters, was not the least disturbed by such empty denunciations. In a full assembly of one hundred and ten bishops, he suspended the ecclesiastics who had voted and spoken against him. He then pronounced the excommunication of the Emperor, declaring "that he had forfeited the kingdoms of Germany and Italy, and that his subjects were absolved from their oath of fealty."

The Emperor Deposed by the Pope

In the assembly Gregory thus spoke: "Now, therefore, brethren, it behoves us to draw the sword of vengeance; now must we smite the foe of God and of His church; now shall his bruised head, which lifts itself, in its haughtiness, against the foundations of the faith, and of all the churches, fall to the earth, there, according to the sentence pronounced against his pride, to go upon his belly, and eat the dust. Fear not, little flock, saith the Lord, for it is the will of your Father to grant you the kingdom. Long enough have ye borne with him; often enough have ye admonished him: let his seared conscience be made to feel!" The whole synod replied with one voice, "Let thy wisdom, most holy father, whom the divine mercy has raised up to rule the world in our days, utter such a sentence against this blasphemer, this usurper, this tyrant, this apostate, as may crush him to the earth, and make him a warning to future ages. . . . Draw the sword, pass the judgment, that the righteous may rejoice when he seeth the vengeance, and wash his hands in the blood of the ungodly."

The formal sentence followed: the audacious priest, in the most blasphemous manner, identifies himself with the divine majesty, and utters the most solemn language in the foulest hypocrisy. After affirming, with a lying tongue, that he had been reluctantly compelled to ascend the pontifical throne, he said, "In full confidence in the authority over all christian people granted by God to the delegate of St. Peter, for the honour and defence of the church, in the name of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and by the power and authority of St. Peter, I interdict King Henry, son of Henry the Emperor, who, in his unexampled pride, has risen against the church, from the government of the whole realm of Germany and Italy. I absolve all Christians from the oaths which they have sworn, or may swear, to him, and forbid all obedience to him as king . . . . Because he has held communion with the excommunicated, and despised the admonitions which, as thou knowest, I have given him for his salvation . . . . I bind him, therefore, in thy name, in the bonds of thy anathema, that all the nations may know, and may acknowledge, that thou art Peter, and that upon thee, as upon a rock, the Son of God hath built His church, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against

Before the synod was prorogued, Gregory addressed letters to "all Christians," enclosing copies of the acts of the council, and commanding all men, as they desired to be numbered among the flock of the blessed Peter, to accept and obey the orders therein contained; more especially those which related to the deposition and anathema against the king, his "false bishops, and reprobate ministers." And after exhorting the people to resist Henry, even unto blood the lying priest dared to utter, "God is herein our witness that we are not moved by any desire of *temporal advantage* or by carnal respects of any kind, in reproving wicked princes or impious priests; but that all we do is done from pure regard for our high office, and for the honour and prerogative of the apostolic See," etc.

A Great Civil War

War was now openly proclaimed; the effect of these letters thrown broadcast into a kingdom already divided and among a people already discontented and accustomed to rebellion was immense. Both Church and State were rent in pieces some taking part with the king, others with the pontiff. A civil war broke out, which raged for seventeen years, throughout the Roman empire; bishop against bishop, the people against the people; "while," says one, *"the earth drank up the blood that was shed, and the grave closed alike over those who suffered and those who inflicted the misery. "* All Germany was in a state of distraction, dissension, and all but prostration.

The dukes of Swabia, taking advantage of the general feeling against Henry, and encouraged by the pope's legates, rose in arms against the sovereign to whom they had sworn fealty, and elected Adolphus as king. In the meantime, Hildebrand himself neglected none of his own means of warfare, a warfare in which he was deeply skilled. Great swelling words of most awful import were his weapons. The "name of God; the peace of God; the commands of God; the salvation of God; the keys of the blessed Peter; closing the gates of heaven; opening the gates of hell; eternal perdition," etc., were words which struck terror into every human mind, and the manacles with which he bound his slaves.

As this great struggle went on, the pope was gathering strength, Henry was losing it and felt it ebbing fast. His heart sank within him: everything seemed blasted by the curse of St. Peter; the princes revolted; the prelates and the people renouncing their allegiance, and conspiracies arose on every side. Such was the evil influence of the pope, who now stepped forth in the full panoply of ecclesiastical, or rather of diabolical, power, to trample in the dust his own liege lord. Under all these depressing and crushing circumstances Henry came to an arrangement with the rebellious princes that the claims and wrongs of both parties should be submitted to the pope, who was invited to preside at a council to be held at Augsburg for that purpose.

Henry Sets Out for Italy

The fallen Emperor was now caught in the toils of the enemy. The policy of Gregory had been successful. Having created a revolution, and caused much bloodshed between the princes of the realm and Henry, which he artfully shifted from the ground of individual or political grievance to that of religion, he now pretended to be a peacemaker. Hence such words of base hypocrisy as, "Deal gently with Henry, and extend to him that charity which covereth a multitude of sins." We shall soon see the quality of Gregory's gentleness and charity towards Henry.

The king's cause was now desperate. Stripped of all power, even of the sign of royalty, and feeling that he had nothing to hope for from an assembly of his rebellious subjects and his avowed enemy, he resolved, as a last chance, to try and gain a personal interview with the pope, and throw himself as a penitent at his feet. With difficulty he collected from his few remaining friends sufficient money to defray his expenses to Italy. He left Spires in the depth of winter, with his wife and infant son, and one faithful attendant. But the Alps were still between them and Italy. And even nature now seemed to conspire with the pope against the fallen king. The weather was unusually severe. The Rhine and the Po were thickly frozen over, and the snow which covered the Alps was as hard and as slippery as ice. Besides, the passes were jealously watched by the Dukes of Bavaria and Carinthia, the enemies of Henry. Altogether a passage seemed impossible. But the effort must be made, however perilous. According to the agreement between Henry and the rival princes, or the states general, he must obtain absolution within a *year and a day* of the date of the papal anathema, or forfeit his crown and kingdom for ever; but if he could obtain absolution within that time, they would return to his standard and their allegiance.

The Alps must be crossed. The fatal day - the 23rd of February - was hastening on. Guides, well acquainted with the paths, were hired, something like a road was cut through the snow for the royal party. With great difficulty they reached the summit of the pass; but the descent was yet more hazardous. It looked like a vast precipice of smooth ice. But the difficulty must be overcome. The men crept down on their hands and knees, often slipping and rolling down the glassy declivities. The queen, her infant son, and female attendant, were drawn down by the guides in the skins of oxen, as in sledges. The horses were lowered by various contrivances; some, with their feet tied, were allowed to roll down; but some were killed and few of them reached the reached the bottom in a serviceable state.

Henry at Canosa

The unexpected arrival of Henry in Italy produced a great sensation. Princes and bishops assembled in great numbers, and received him with the highest honours. The Italians looked to him for a redress of their grievances. Those who had been excommunicated by Hildebrand looked eagerly for vengeance; and the Lombard nobility and the prelates hoped that he was come to depose the dreaded and detested Gregory. As he moved onwards the number of his followers gradually increased; but Henry could not pause to plunge himself into any new scheme; he could not imperil the throne of Germany; he must obtain absolution before the fatal 23rd of February.

In the meantime Gregory had set out for Germany, but the news of Henry's descent into Italy arrested his march. He was uncertain whether he had come as a humble suppliant, or at the head of a great army, and hastened to place his person in safety at **Canosa,** a strong castle in the Apennine mountains, belonging to his faithful friend and ally, the "great countess" Matilda.

Bishops and abbots who had fallen under the papal ban followed the king's example, and hastened to Canosa. With naked feet, and clothed in sackcloth, they presented themselves before the pontiff, humbly imploring pardon and absolution from the dire anathema. After a few days' penance in solitary confinement, and with scanty fare, he absolved them, on condition that, until the king should be reconciled, they were to have no intercourse with him. For Henry himself more humiliating terms were reserved.

On arriving at Canosa, the king obtained an interview with Matilda, the Marchioness Adelaide (his mother-in-law) and Hugh, abbot of Cluny, and engaged their intercession with the pope for a merciful consideration of his case. After many objections raised by the implacable pope, and pleas urged by Henry's friends, Gregory at length proposed, "that if he be truly penitent, let him place his crown, and all the ensigns of royalty, in my hands, and openly confess himself unworthy of the royal name and dignity." This demand seemed too hard, even to the ardent admirers of the pope, who entreated him "not to break the bruised reed;" and in condescension to their importunities, he promised to give the king an interview.

The Penance of the King

It was now towards the end of January; the year of grace was nearly expired; and Henry resolved to accept the pope's conditions. He was determined to do and to bear all, so that he might but disappoint the plottings of his rebellious subjects, and retain the empire.

"On a dreary winter morning," says Milman, "with the ground deep in snow, the king, the heir of a long line of emperors, was permitted to enter within the two outer of the three walls which girded the castle of Canosa. He had laid aside every mark of royalty, or of distinguished station; he was clad only in the thin white linen dress of the penitent, and there, fasting, he awaited in humble patience the pleasure of the pope. But the gates did not unclose. A second day he stood, cold, hungry, and mocked by vain hope. And yet a third day dragged on, from morning to evening, over the unsheltered head of the discrowned king. Every heart was moved, except that of the representative of Jesus Christ. Even in the presence of Gregory there were low, deep, murmurs against his unapostolic pride and inhumanity. The patience of Henry could endure no more. He took refuge in an adjacent chapel of St. Nicolas, to implore, and with tears, once again the intercession of the aged abbot of **Cluny.** Matilda was present; her womanly heart was melted; she joined with Henry in his supplications to the abbot. "Thou alone canst accomplish this," said the abbot to the countess. Henry fell on his knees, and, in a passion of grief, entreated her merciful interference. To female entreaties Gregory at length yielded an ungracious permission for the king to approach his presence. With bare feet, still in the garb of penitence, stood the king, a man of singularly tall and noble person, with a countenance accustomed to flash command and terror upon his adversaries, before the pope, a greyhaired man, of small unimposing stature, bowed with years. "*

{**Latin Christianity,* vol. 3, p. 168.}

The terms imposed on Henry were characteristic of the unfeeling, inexorable, tyrant; he acted in this matter more like a fiend incarnate than a human being. Finding that the royal penitent was brought so low, that any terms would be accepted, he forced him to drink the bitterest dregs of humiliation. We need not trouble the reader with his lengthy stipulations. Such demands had never been made or heard of before in the annals of mankind. But his one grand object was the consolidation of his own elaborated scheme of papal authority. Having placed his foot on the neck of the greatest monarch in the world, he attempted the establishment of the pontiff's right, in the face of Europe, to judge kings, dispose of kingdoms, and absolve subjects from their oath of allegiance to excommunicated kings. This gave the pope enormous power over the whole outer world. It constituted rebellion against a lawful sovereign a sacred duty to the church and to God.

The Effects of the Papal Policy

Gregory soon found that he had gone too far - that the humiliation at Canosa could never be forgotten and could never even sleep until it was revenged. Compassion as well as interest moved many princes and prelates to gather round the fallen king, now that he was released from the ban of excommunication. **Hildebrand** was generally hated because of his political tyranny, and dreaded because of his ecclesiastical censures. The revolted princes of Germany were secretly encouraged by the pope to dispute the possession of the throne with Henry, which increased his perplexity, and prevented him from turning his arms against Rome. He prayed that Henry might never prosper in war, and, in the name and with the blessing of the apostles, he bestowed the kingdom of Germany on the rebel, Rudolph, duke of Swabia. The pope even ventured to prophesy that within a year Henry would either be dead or deposed; and, as if he knew the end from the beginning, he sent a crown to the future king, with an inscription, signifying that it was the gift of Christ to St. Peter, and of St. Peter to Rudolph. But he was soon proved to be a lying prophet as well as a lying priest, and the remorseless fomenter of civil war.*

{*Robertson, vol. 2, p. 594.}

The king's strength gradually increased in spite of all the wicked and cruel plottings of Gregory. After years of the most terrible civil war and fearful bloodshed, the armies of Henry and of his rival, Rudolph, met once more on the bank of the **Ulster,** in October 1080. The engagement was long and obstinate, but the fall of Rudolph gave Henry the victory. He received his death-wound, it is said, from the lance of Godfrey, afterwards the first king of Jerusalem; a sabre-wound from another cut off his right hand. It is reported that the dying prince, looking on his dissevered hand, sorrowfully acknowledged, "With this hand I ratified my oath of fealty to my sovereign, Henry: the punishment is just, I have now lost life and kingdom." The king's adversaries being now discouraged and paralysed, he determined on turning his forces against his most formidable and irreconcilable enemy. He crossed the Alps, entered Italy, and encamped under the walls of Rome.

The city having been well provisioned, the walls strengthened, and the loyalty of the Romans secured by the wealth of Matilda, Henry was more or less engaged for three years in blockading and besieging Rome; but in the summer of 1083 he gained possession of the guilty city. Gregory took refuge in the strong castle of St. Angelo, and a few of his partisans in their fortified houses. Henry was willing to come to terms with Hildebrand, and to accept the imperial crown from his hands. But the pope would hear of nothing but unconditional submission. "Let the king resign his dignity, and submit to penance," were the only terms of Gregory. The clergy - bishops, abbots, and monks, and the laity, entreated him to have mercy on the afflicted city, and come to terms with the king.

But all attempts at negotiation were fruitless; the inflexible pope despised alike supplications and threatenings. The absolute submission of Henry, and satisfaction to the church, were the lofty demands of the imprisoned pope. But Henry was no longer the deserted, the broken-spirited, suppliant at his feet, as at Canosa.

Henry and Bertha Crowned

A.D. 1084

The Romans at length, weary of enduring the miseries of a siege, and no hope of relief from the Italian Normans, declared in favour of Henry. He was master of the greater part of the city. His first step was to place **Guibert the Archbishop of Ravenna** in the papal chair, as Clement the Third. He had been named by a synod of bishops as the future pope. Henry now received the imperial crown from Clement, with his Queen Bertha, and was saluted as Emperor by the Roman people.

The position of Gregory now seemed desperate. He was a prisoner, and might soon be given up to the vengeance of Henry. He could expect no aid from Philip of France. William of England was not disposed to embroil himself in the pope's quarrels. Matilda, Countess of Tuscany, alone could be relied on. She was the most powerful, wealthy, and zealous supporter of the interests of the church in that country. On the death of her mother and of her husband while still young and beautiful, the crafty pope persuaded her to settle all her possessions on the church of Rome; which were afterwards entitled the States of the Church. But Matilda's men and money were not sufficient for the pope's present necessity. In his great distress he entreated the help of Robert Guiscard, a great Norman warrior. He had been suspected as an accomplice of Cencius in his conspiracy against Gregory, and had been under the censure of the church for several years. But the pope was ready to release him from the ban of excommunication, and even to hold out the hope of the imperial crown if he would at once come to his aid. The great Norman accepted the pope's terms, and placed his ruthless sword at Gregory's service.

Robert Guiscard Enters Rome

A.D. 1084

In order therefore to meet the pope's wishes, receive his blessing, and overthrow his enemies, Robert collected an army of 30,000 irregular infantry, and 6000 Norman cavalry, and put them in march for Rome. It was a wild and motley host, in which were mingled adventurers of many nations: some had joined his banner to rescue the pope, and others from love of war; even the unbelieving Saracens had enlisted in great numbers. Tidings soon reached Rome that an overwhelming force was advancing to the relief of the beleaguered forts.

Henry, apprehending no danger, had sent away a great part of his troops; and as the remainder were unequal to encounter this formidable host, he prudently withdrew his forces, assuring his Roman friends that he would soon return. He retired to Civita Castellana, where he could watch the movements of all parties.

Three days after Henry had left the city, the Norman army appeared under the walls. Alas, alas, for the inhabitants of that guilty city! A darker and heavier day than she had ever passed through was at hand; and all her calamities were traceable to the revengeful, implacable spirit of her high priest. But rather than yield to the temporal power, even the blood of Rome - his own city and capital - must flow. The dominion of the papacy over the kingdoms of this world was his one grand idea; and no adversity could induce him to yield one point of his lofty pretensions. He was as inflexible in a prison as in a palace. "Let the king lay down his crown and give satisfaction to the church" were the proud and disdainful words of Hildebrand, though a prisoner, and though both the clergy and the laity were beseeching him to come to terms with Henry. But he despised alike the murmurs, the menaces, and the supplications of all. He must have known the character of those murderous hordes that were at his gates, and what the consequences would be the moment they entered. But his mind was made up, and at any cost of human bloodshed and misery he inexorably pursued his imperious designs.

The Romans were unprepared for their defence, and scarcely made a show of resistance. The gate of St. Laurence was speedily forced, and the city was at once in their power. The first act of Robert, that dutiful son of the church, was to release the pope from his long imprisonment in the **Castle of St. Angelo.** The Norman formally received the pontifical blessing. Rising from the pope's feet, thus blessed and edified-awful mockery and blasphemy! Robert let loose his ruffian bands on the unprotected flock of the so-called chief shepherd. For three days Rome was subjected to the horrors of a sack. The Normans and the infidel Saracens spread themselves over every quarter of the city. Slaughter, plunder, lust, and violence, were uncontrolled. On the third day, when the Normans were feasting and revelling in careless security, the inhabitants, driven to despair, broke out in general insurrection, rushed armed into the streets, and began a terrible carnage of their conquerors. Thus surprised, the Normans flew to arms, and immediately the whole city was one scene of wild and desperate conflict.

The Burning of Ancient Rome

"The Norman horse," says Milman, "poured into the streets, but the Romans fought at advantage, from their possession of the houses and their knowledge of the ground. They were gaining the superiority: the Normans saw their peril. The remorseless Guiscard gave the word to fire the houses. From every quarter the flames burst forth furiously: houses, palaces, convents, churches, as the night darkened, were seen in awful conflagration. The distracted inhabitants dashed wildly into the streets, no longer endeavouring to defend themselves, but to save their families. They were hewn down by hundreds. The Saracen allies of the pope, who had been the foremost in the pillage, were now the foremost in the conflagration and the massacre."*

{**History of Latin Christianity*, vol. 3, p. 197}

Gregory, it is said, exerted himself at this terrible moment, yet not, alas! to save his so-called flock from the cruelty of the Normans, but to save some of the principal churches from the general conflagration. Guiscard was at length master of the city, or rather of the ruins of Ancient Rome, but his vengeance was not yet appeased. Thousands of Romans were publicly sold as slaves, and thousands carried off as prisoners. It is supposed that neither Goth nor Vandal neither Greek nor German, ever brought such desolation on the city as this capture by the Normans. And be it carefully noted by the reader, as showing the real spirit of popery that the ferocious Guiscard was bribed by Gregory to become his ally, his deliverer, his protector, and his avenger. The miseries, massacres, and ruin of Rome were justly attributed to the obstinacy of the pope at that time, and have been ever since by all impartial writers. And no one was ever more fully persuaded of this fact than Gregory himself. He never trusted either his person or his fortunes even within the ramparts of St. Angelo after the departure of his Norman allies.

The Death of Gregory

A.D. 1085

Covered with everlasting shame, branded with eternal infamy, and dreading to hear the reproaches which must have been cast upon him as the author of the late calamities he retired from the city of St. Peter, in company with his allies, while its ruins were still smoking, its streets lying desolate, and its once numerous inhabitants slaughtered burned, or carried into captivity. Faint and broken-hearted we doubt not - from pride awfully mortified - he first rested at the monastery of Monte Casino, then proceeded to the Normans' strong castle of Salerno. He never saw Rome again.

A numerous body of ecclesiastics, devoted to the promotion of the lofty pretensions of the degraded pope, followed him to Salerno. There he held a synod, and as if unmoved and unshaken by the horrors he had caused and witnessed, he thundered out again anathemas and excommunications against Henry, the anti-pope Clement, and all their adherents. But these were his last thunderpeals. Death was approaching rapidly. The great, the inflexible asserter of the supremacy of the sacerdotal order must die like other men. He called before him his fellow-exiles, made a confession of his faith - especially as to the eucharist, having been suspected of sympathising with Berengar's views - forgave and absolved all whom he had anathematised, with the exception of the Emperor and the anti-pope. With these he charged his followers to make no peace unless on their entire submission to the church.

A fearful tempest raged, it is said, as his friends hung over the dying pope. His last memorable words were, ' I have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile." "In exile, my lord," said a bishop of congenial feelings, whose priestly pride was not rebuked by that spectacle of mortality, "thou canst not die in exile! Vicar of Christ and His apostles, thou hast received from God the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession!" The daring breath of blasphemy thus closed, as it had surrounded, the life of the great churchman. But his departed spirit was far away from the flattery of his friends to be manifested before another tribunal. There all would be judged, not according to the principles of popery, but according to the eternal truth of God as it has been revealed unto us in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" is a word of sweetest assurance to the heart; for what must that word "blessed" mean, when used by God Himself! But oh! what of those who live and die without Christ! who will at last have to say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Oh! who can fathom the depths of misery - the eternity of woe, in these two words, *"not saved!" "not saved!"* What a text for a preacher! what a warning word for a sinner! May my reader lay it to heart, before laying down this volume, and may he carefully contrast the death of the great churchman with the death of the great apostle. "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, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2Ti 4:7-8) Even a false prophet was compelled to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

The Remaining Years and Death of Henry

Having seen so much of the king in connection with the pope, we will briefly notice his end before commencing a fresh chapter.

He survived his great antagonist twenty-one years. On the 7th of August, 1106, Henry closed his long and agitated life, his eventful reign of fifty years. History is full of every incident of that great monarch's life from his early boyhood till his death, but even an outline of his political life falls not within our plan. The contrast between the affections of his people and the enmity of the church is remarkable, and tells its own tale. Branded though he had been by the pope with the mark of the beast, he was greatly loved by the people. He had many faults very common to kings, but he had a large place in the hearts of his people. "At the news of his death," says Greenwood, "their love overflowed in deep and bitter lamentations. A general cry was heard in the streets of the city of Liege; the court and the people, the widows and the orphans, the multitude of the poor and indigent of the city and country flocked to the obsequies of their sovereign, their friend, their benefactor. With uplifted voices they bewailed the loss of their father; dissolved in tears they kissed his cold hands, they embraced the inanimate limbs, and could with difficulty be persuaded to give place to the attendants in waiting to prepare the body for burial. Nor could they be persuaded to quit the tomb; but for many days relieved each other day and night to watch and pray beside the place where they had laid him."*

{**Cathedra Petri,* book 11, p. 606.}

Nothing could be more beautiful or touching than the testimony of these true mourners to the benevolence of the Emperor. But oh, how different, how sad, how sorrowful when we turn to the so-called church, the so-called representatives of the meek and lowly Jesus! The wrath of his papal adversaries seems to have been heated sevenfold when they heard of such honours being paid to the body of the excommunicated Henry. The young king, his son, Henry V., was threatened with the anathemas of heaven unless he caused the accursed remains of his father to be exhumed and deposited in some unconsecrated spot; or-inconceivable assumption and wickedness!-let the pope be applied to for a *post* mortem *absolution.* His faithful bishop Albert, who had given his sovereign decent burial in the church of St. Lambert, was compelled, as a penance for this act of gratitude and love, to disinter the body with his own hands, and have it conveyed to an unconsecrated building in an island on the Moselle. But these indignities thus heaped on the lifeless body of the late emperor produced a reaction. The young king, though he had been trained by **Pope Paschal II.** to deceive his father and openly to rebel against him, became alarmed at this spiritual terrorism, gave orders for the body to be removed to Spires, and solemnly deposited in the tomb of his ancestors. The procession was followed by nearly the whole population. The service for the dead was performed with every ceremony and honour usual on such occasions.

Bishop Gibbard, one of the fiercest of the late Emperor's persecutors, happened to be from home at this moment, but the news of what had taken place brought him back in all haste. Boiling over with indignation, he caused the body to be once more exhumed, placed in unconsecrated ground, and imposed a penance on all who had attended the procession. But the voice of affection could not be silenced by the relentlessness of the bishop. The citizens in a body attended the corpse to its new resting-place with loud lamentations. "They reminded the bishop," says Milman, "how the munificent Emperor had enriched the church of Spires; they recounted the ornaments of gold and silver and precious stones, the silken vestments, the works of art, the golden altar-table, richly wrought, a present of the eastern Emperor Alexius, which had made their cathedral the most gorgeous and famous in Germany. They loudly expressed their grief and dissatisfaction, and were hardly restrained from tumult. But they prevailed not. Yet the bier of Henry was still visited by unbought and unfeigned witnesses to his boundless charities. At length, after five years of obstinate contention, Henry was permitted to repose in the consecrated vault with his imperial ancestors."*

{*Latin Christianity, vol. 3, p. 277.}

Reflections on the Struggle Between Henry and Gregory

We have thus given a more detailed account than usual of the struggle between Gregory and Henry, in order that the reader may have before him a fair specimen of the spirit and doings of popery in the middle ages. And be it known, its spirit never changes: its doings may, according to the power and opportunities of the reigning pope. As it was, so it is, and evermore will be the same. No language can exaggerate the blasphemy, cruelty, and tyranny of the papacy; and the same spirit pervades, more or less, every member of her community. For what, it may be asked, in plain terms, was the crime of Henry which brought upon him such unrelenting persecution during his life and after his death? The reader will remember that the dispute arose about *investitures.*

The traditional right of monarchs to have a voice in the appointment of the bishops and church dignitaries in their states had been recognized for centuries. They not infrequently nominated to the See of Rome as to the other bishoprics in their dominions. Even Hildebrand himself waited patiently till his own election received the legal ratification of the Emperor. But scarcely had he been raised to the pontifical chair, when he wrote an insulting letter to the Emperor, commanding him to abstain from simony, and to renounce the right of investiture by the ring and staff. Henry, in self-defence, asserted the prerogatives which his predecessors had exercised without question, especially since the days of Charlemagne. Gregory then thundered a sentence of excommunication against him, released his subjects from their oath of fealty, and pronounced him deposed for disobedience. Popery now threw off its mask, and the world was no longer in doubt of the aims and objects of the spiritual power. But so great was the ignorance of the period that the wildest pretensions found many supporters, and so superstitious were the people, that they were made to believe that all who took up arms against the excommunicated king, were to be regarded as the champions of the faith.

This was the head and front of Henry's offence against the papacy. This was the cause of so much human bloodshed and suffering: the inexorable priest would not yield a point, the Emperor fought for his traditional rights, and thus the great struggle continued until death closed the scene.

20 The Crusades

Chapter 20

The Crusades

The enemy now changes his tactics. The pope had gained little or nothing by his long wars with the empire, and the common sense of mankind had been insulted by his unexampled insolence. Means more plausible, more deceiving, more pious, must be devised. How can the spiritual power gain complete ascendancy over the temporal? was still the one question to be solved.

The evil genius of Rome presiding in her councils suggests a *holy war* for the purpose of rescuing the sepulchre of Christ from the hands of the unbelieving Turks. Pope Urban immediately embraced the suggestion, and became its champion. The whole Vatican agreed. It was perfectly evident that by these long expeditions to Palestine, the blood of Europe must be drained, its strength exhausted, and its treasure wasted. There was no thought of seeking to convert the unbelieving to the faith of Christ - the true mission of Christianity - but of weakening the power of the temporal monarchs, that the pontiffs might reign over them. The papacy is essentially infidel. "Marriage is honourable in *all" - in all,* says the word of God. No, said Gregory, it is concubinage in the priesthood - a soul-damning sin. But the word of God stands unchanged and unchangeable. *Marriage is honourable in all* - not in some only, but *in all;* and mark, *honourable,* in all. It was instituted by God Himself who "brought the woman to the man," sanctioned by Christ, and proclaimed "honourable in all," by the Holy Spirit. "Preach the gospel to every creature" is the Saviour's commission to all who own Him as Saviour and Lord. No, says Urban, slaughter the unbelievers without mercy. This is the work which God requires at your hand. Let the tares be torn up by the roots, and cast into the fire that they may be burned up. But this was not all. The power of the nations must be reduced that the pontiff may triumph over them. Results will soon show that such were the counsels of the evil genius of popery.

The Sacred Places

From an early period pilgrimages to the Holy Land became a ruling passion with the more devout and superstitious. Jerome speaks of the crowds which from all quarters thronged the sacred places. But the supposed discovery of the real sepulchre, the disinterment of the true cross, the magnificent church built over the sepulchre by the devout Helena and her son Constantine, awakened in all classes a wild enthusiasm to visit the Holy Land. From this time (A.D. 326), the stream of pilgrimage continued to flow, and with increasing fulness, down to the period when Jerusalem was captured by the Mahometans, under the **Caliph Omar,** in 637. The pilgrims had been protected and cared for by the way; they had only to encounter the privations and perils of a long journey. But under the Mahometan government they were prevented from entering the holy city, unless they purchased the privilege by paying tribute to the Caliphs. This being agreed to, the pious soon began to flock in undiminished numbers to perform their devotions at the holy sepulchre.

About the year 1067, a new race of conquerors gained possession of Palestine, who proved to be harder masters than the Saracens. These were the Seljukians, a tribe of **Tartars,** now familiarly known as the Turks. They came originally from Tartary. They had embraced the Mahometan religion, and were more fanatic Islamites than the Arabian followers of the 'prophet.' But with the intolerant zeal of recent converts to Islam they combined the tyranny and inhumanity of barbarians. Under these new lords of Palestine, the condition of the christian inhabitants and the pilgrims was greatly altered for the worse. In place of being treated as merely tributary subjects, they were despised as slaves, and the pilgrims exposed to severe persecutions.

Peter the Hermit

The feelings of European Christians were naturally excited by the reports of the cruelties and outrages to which their brethren in the East were subjected by the infidel possessors of the Holy Land; and this gave an appearance of justice to the idea of a religious war.

In the year 1093, Peter, a native of Amiens, as a pilgrim monk, visited Jerusalem. His spirit was greatly stirred by the sight of the indignities which the Christians had to endure. The blood of the martial Frank became as fire when he saw the sufferings and degradations of his brethren. He spoke to Simeon, the patriarch of Jerusalem, on the subject of their deliverance, but the desponding Simeon deplored the hopelessness of their condition, as the Greeks, the natural protectors of Christians in Syria, were too weak to render them any assistance. Peter then promised him the help of the Latins. "I will raise the martial nations of Europe in your cause," he exclaimed, and he believed his vow was ratified in heaven. When prostrate in the temple, he heard the voice of the Lord Jesus, saying to him, "Rise, Peter, go forth to make known the tribulations of my people; the hour is come for the delivering of my servants, for the recovery of the holy places." It was a convenient habit in those days, for monks in austere solitude with an excited imagination, to believe whatever they wished, and then to have confirmed by dreams and revelations whatever they believed.

Peter now believed in his own mission, and this was a great means of others believing it. He hastened to Rome. The pope, Urban II., was infected by his fervour, and gave full sanction to his preaching the immediate deliverance of Jerusalem. The hermit having now the sanction of both heaven and the pope, he set forth on his mission. After traversing Italy, he crossed the Alps and entered France. He is described as short of stature, lean, dark complexion, but with an eye of fire. He rode on a mule with a crucifix in his hand, his head was bare, and his feet naked; his dress was a long robe girt with a rope, and a hermit's cloak of the coarsest material. He preached to high and low, in churches and on highways, and in the market places. His rude glowing eloquence was that which stirs the heart of the people, for it came from his own. He appealed to every passion; to indignation and pity, the pride of the warrior, the compassion of the Christian, the love of the brethren, the hatred of the infidel; to the foul desecration of the land which had been hallowed by the Redeemer's birth and life. "Why, " he vehemently exclaimed, "should the unbelievers be allowed any longer to retain the custody of such christian territories as the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane? Why should the unbaptized followers of Mahomet, those children of perdition, pollute with hostile feet the sacred ground which had been the witness of so many miracles, and still furnished so many relics which manifested superhuman power? Bones of martyrs, garments of saints, nails of the cross, thorns of the crown, were all lying ready to be gathered up by the faithful priesthood who would lead the expedition. Let the floors of Zion be purified with the blood of slaughtered infidels."*

{*White's *Eighteen Christian Centuries,* p. 246.}

When words and breath failed him, he wept, he groaned, he beat his breast, and held up a crucifix, as if Christ Himself were imploring them to join the army of God. The ravings of his frenzy had a prodigious effect on all classes and in all lands. Men, women, children, crowded to touch his garments; even the hairs which dropped from his mule were gathered up and treasured as relics. In a short time he returned to the pope, assuring him that everywhere his appeals had been received with enthusiasm, so that he had with difficulty restrained his hearers from at once taking arms and following him to the Holy Land. Nothing was now wanted but a plan, leaders, organization; and the pope boldly resolved to undertake this great work.

Pope Urban and the Crusades

In March 1095, a council was summoned to meet Urban at Placentia, to consult about the holy war and other important matters. Two hundred bishops, four thousand clergy, and thirty thousand laity appeared; and, as no building was large enough to contain the vast multitude, the greater sessions were held in a plain near the city. Besides the project of the holy war, the pope embraced the favourable opportunity to confirm the laws and assert the principles of Gregory. And while at Placentia the final sanction was given to the two strongest characteristics in the doctrines and in the discipline of the Roman church - namely, transubstantiation and the celibacy of the clergy.*

{*Waddington, vol. 2, p. 102.}

In November of the same year, another council was summoned to meet the pope at Clermont in Auvergne. The citations to this council were urgent, and the clergy were charged to stir up the laity in the cause of the crusade. A vast assemblage of archbishops, bishops, abbots, etc., were drawn together, the towns and neighbouring villages were filled with strangers, while numbers were obliged to lodge in tents. The session lasted ten days; the usual canons being passed in condemnation of simony, etc., Urban ventured to advance a step beyond Gregory, by forbidding not only the practice of lay investiture, but that any ecclesiastic should swear fealty to a temporal lord - a prohibition which was intended entirely to do away with all dependence of the church on the secular power. Thus we see the crafty pope taking every advantage of his extreme popularity, and when the minds of all were engrossed with the greater subject of the holy crusade. No moment could be more favourable for the advancement of the great papal object of ambition, the acknowledged supremacy over Latin Christendom; or for the elevation of Urban himself over the rival Pope Clement, and the temporal sovereigns who supported him.

At the sixth session the crusade was proposed. Urban ascended a high pulpit in the market-place, and addressed the assembled multitudes. His speech was long and exciting. He dwelt on the ancient glories of Palestine, where every foot of ground had been hallowed by the presence of the Saviour, of His Virgin Mother, and other saints. He enlarged on the present condition of the sacred territory - possessed as it was by a godless people, the children of the Egyptian handmaid; on the indignities, the outrages, the tyranny which they inflicted on Christians redeemed by Christ's blood. Nor did he forget to speak of the progressive encroachments of the Turks on Christendom. "Cast out the bondwoman and her son," he cried. "Let all the faithful arm. Go forth, and God shall be with you. Redeem your sins - your rapine, your burnings, your bloodshed - by obedience. Let the famous nation of the Franks display their valour in a cause where death is the assurance of blessedness. Count it joy to die for Christ where Christ died for you. Think not of kindred or home; you owe to God a higher love, for a Christian every place is exile, every place is home and country." There was no passion which the self-seeking pope left unstirred. But his real design and one grand object was to dispose of unruly barons and obstinate monarchs by engaging them in a distant and ruinous expedition; and, in their absence, gather up into his own hand all the threads of this great movement and consolidate the lofty schemes of his predecessor and teacher, Hildebrand.

In conclusion, the blasphemous pope offered absolution for all sins - the sins of murder, adultery, robbery, arson - and that without penance to all who would take up arms in this sacred cause. He promised eternal life to all who should suffer the glorious calamity of death in the Holy Land, or even on the way to it. The Crusader passed at once into paradise. The great battle of the Cross and the Crescent was to be decided for ever on the soil of the Holy Land. For himself, he said, he must remain at home: the care of the church detained him. Should circumstances permit, he would follow, but, like Moses, while they were slaughtering the Amalekites, he would be perpetually engaged in fervent and prevailing prayer for their success.*

{*Robertson, vol. 2, p. 630; Milman, vol. 3, p. 233; Waddington, vol. 2, p. 77.}

The pope's speech was here interrupted by an enthusiastic exclamation from the whole assemblage, "God wills it - God wills it!" words which afterwards became the war cry of the Crusaders; and the whole assembly declared itself the army of God. The contagious frenzy spread with a rapidity inconceivable. "Never, perhaps," says one, "did a single speech of man ever work such extraordinary and lasting results as that of Urban II. at the Council of Clermont." "It was the first blast of fanaticism," says another, "which shook the whole fabric of society from the extremities of the West even to the heart of Asia, for above two centuries."

Having now stated as clearly and as concisely as possible the ostensible causes of the Crusades, or rather the motives of the papacy, we need do little more than give the dates and a few particulars of each expedition.

The First Crusade

A.D. 1096

1. The festival of the Assumption, August 15th 1096, was fixed as the day on which the Crusaders should commence their march. Women urged their husbands, their brothers, and their sons to take the cross; and those who refused became marks for general contempt. Property of all kinds was sold to raise money; but as all wanted to sell and none to buy, it naturally fell to an exceedingly low price, and was bought up chiefly by the clergy; so that nearly the whole property of the country passed into their hands. Godfrey pledged his castle of Bouillon, in the Ardennes, to the bishop of Liege. The artisan sold his tools, the husbandman his implements, to raise the means of equipment. The fabulous splendour and wealth of the East were set before the imagination, already stimulated by the romantic legends of Charlemagne and his peers. Besides the religious enthusiasm which now animated all ranks, a variety of other motives were at work. For the peasant there was no opportunity to quit his depressed life, to bear arms, and forsake the service of his feudal lord. For the robber, the pirate, the outlaw, there was pardon and restoration to society; for the debtor there was escape from his obligations; and for all who took up the cross there was the assurance that death in the holy war would make them partakers in the glory and bliss of the martyrs. And so great was the excitement produced by this papal epidemic, that long before the time appointed for the commencement of the expedition, the impatience of the multitude was unable to restrain itself.

Early in the spring of 1096, Peter, the first missionary of the crusade, set out on his march for the East at the head of a wild and motley host. About sixty thousand of the populace from the confines of France and Lorraine flocked around the hermit, and pressed him to lead them to the holy sepulchre. He now assumed the character, without the abilities, of a general, and marched along the Rhine and Danube. **Walter the Penniless,** a poor but valiant soldier, followed with about fifteen thousand. A monk named Gottschalk pursued closely after Peter and Walter with about twenty thousand from the villages of Germany. A fourth swarm of about two hundred thousand of the refuse of the people, conducted by a Count Emecho, pressed upon their rear. These successive crowds now numbered fully three hundred thousand warriors of the cross, so-called. But it was soon manifest that another spirit animated them. Not one of them knew the cross, save as an outward idolatrous emblem. Old and infirm, women and children, and the lowest dregs of the idle populace, followed the camp of the Crusaders!

Nothing could be more melancholy and disastrous than the conduct and fate of these deluded swarms. Their wants and numbers soon compelled them to separate. They were without order or discipline, and most of them unprovided with either armour or money. They had no idea of the distance of Jerusalem, or of the difficulties to be encountered by the way. So ignorant were they, that, at the sight of the first city beyond the limits of their knowledge, they were ready to inquire if this was Jerusalem. In place of sobriety and order in their march, it was marked by murder, plunder, dissoluteness, and infamous habits of every kind. The inoffending Jewish inhabitants of the towns on the Moselle, the Rhine, the Maine, and the Danube, through which they marched were plundered and slaughtered as the murderers of Christ and the enemies of the cross. The population of Hungary and Bulgaria rose up against them because of their disorderly and plundering habits, and immense numbers of them were slain.

After repeated disasters and foolish adventures they reached Constantinople; but Alexius, the Greek Emperor more alarmed than gratified with his allies, had them speedily, if not treacherously, conveyed across the Bosphorus. A great battle was fought soon after, under the walls of Nicaea - the Turkish capital. The army of the Hermit was cut to pieces by Solyman, the Turkish Sultan of Iconium. Walter the Penniless was slain, with most of his followers their bones were gathered into a vast heap to warn their companions of the hopelessness of their enterprise. It is reckoned that in these ill-conducted expeditions three hundred thousand had already perished; some extend the number to half a million. Of those who had started under the guidance of Peter and his lieutenants, not more than 20,000 survived and these endeavoured to find their way back to their home but only to tell the sad fate of their companions who had died by the arrows of the Turks and Hungarians, or by want and fatigue. Hardly one of Peter's army ever reached the borders of the Holy Land. Pope Urban lived to hear of the distresses and miseries of his own evil work, but died before the capture of Jerusalem.

The Second Division of the First Crusade

In the meantime, while the poor, naked, deluded, plebeian multitude had been cut down, the aristocracy of the West had assumed the cross, encouraged each other, and were preparing to depart on the same holy mission. Of the chiefs it will be necessary to say a little, that we may have some idea how thoroughly the epidemic had affected all classes.

The most eminent was Godfrey of Bouillon, a descendant of Charles the Great. The first rank is assigned to him both in war and in counsel. He had accompanied William of Normandy, in his invasion of England; again, in the service of Henry the Fourth, he has the reputation of giving Rudolph his death-wound, which ended the civil war; and he was the first of Henry's army to mount the walls of Rome. He is represented by the chroniclers as remarkable for the depth of his piety and the mildness of his character in ordinary life; but wise in counsel, and bold as a lion in the battlefield. He was accompanied by his two brothers, Eustace and Baldwin; Hugh, brother of the King of France; the Counts Raymond of Toulouse, Robert of Flanders, and Stephen of Blois; and Robert Duke of Normandy, son of William the Conqueror. But so great and so general was the excitement, that nearly all the gallant chiefs of Europe were inspired with knightly courage and national rivalries, to distinguish themselves in this holy war.

Six hundred thousand men are supposed to have left their homes at this time, with innumerable attendants, women and servants, and workmen of all kinds. The difficulty of procuring subsistence for so many, led them to separate their forces and proceed to Constantinople by different routes. It was agreed that they should all meet there, and from thence begin their operations against the Turks. After a long and painful march, in which thousands perished, the survivors reached the Eastern capital. Alexius, though he would have been thankful for a moderate force from the West, to assist him against the Turks, who were dangerously near him, was astonished and alarmed at the approach of so many powerful chiefs and large armies. The peace of his borders had been disturbed by the thefts and unruliness of the promiscuous multitudes under **Peter the Hermit;** but he dreaded more serious consequences from the arrival of such formidable troops under Godfrey. Learning from one company that another would soon follow, he had them artfully decoyed across the Bosphorus, so that they might not be united in the neighbourhood of his capital. By this means, though not without threatened hostilities, the Crusaders had all passed into Asia before the feast of Pentecost.

The Siege of Nicaea

The zeal and the indignation of the pilgrims were greatly excited when they saw the pyramid of bones which marked the place where Walter and his companions had fallen. Nicaea was besieged, and yielded in about five weeks, but they were greatly disappointed of their expected plunder. When the Turks found that their position was no longer tenable, they secretly agreed to surrender the city to Alexius. The imperial banner was planted on the citadel, and the important conquest was guarded with jealous vigilance by the perfidious Greeks. The murmurs of the chiefs were unavailing, and after a few days' rest, they directed their march towards Phrygia.

The great battle of **Dorylium** was fought about a fortnight after the siege of Nice. Solyman rallied his Turkish hordes and pursued after what he called the western barbarians. He surprised and attacked them before they reached Dorylium. His cavalry is stated by the Christians to have numbered three hundred thousand. So fearful was the onset and so thick the poisoned arrows, that the Crusaders were overwhelmed. They were thrown into such confusion, that but for the personal valour and military conduct of Bohemond, Tancred, Robert of Normandy, and the timely help of Godfrey and Raymond, the whole army might have perished. At length the long contest was decided in favour of the Crusaders, and the camp of Solyman fell into their hands. Superstition affirmed that the victory was gained by heavenly champions, who descended to aid the Christians.

In a march of five hundred miles through Asia Minor, the army suffered severely. Hunger, thirst, the extremity of heat, the scarcity of food, the difficulty of the march, greatly thinned their ranks. Thirst was fatal to hundreds in a single day. Nearly all the horses died. And, to add to their confusion and dismay, disunion appeared among the leaders, even to open feud. But in spite of every difficulty, the great mass of the Crusaders, who survived these calamities, held on their way to Jerusalem. Baldwin, the brother of Godfrey, succeeded in getting possession of the town of Edessa, and founded the first principality of the Latins beyond the Euphrates.

The Siege of Antioch

On the 18th of October, 1097, the "warriors of the cross" laid siege to Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians, and which soon afterwards became the centre of the great apostle's missionary labours. But how changed the spirit, object, and ways, of his so-called successor - of him who assumed the blasphemous title of the vicar of Christ but at whose door the guilt and bloodshed of this, the greatest of all popular delusions, for ever rests. Jezebel may still reign both in Church and State, and friends as well as foes must be sacrificed to gain her ends and gratify her ambition. But the day is fast hastening on when requisition shall be made for blood, and judgment adjusted according to the motives as well as the actions in guilt. The testimony thanks be to God, that went out from Antioch in the first century, is as plain and true now as it was then, and of equal authority over the heart and conscience, notwithstanding the ten thousand corrupt streams which professedly flow from the same fountain. It is with the apostles' doctrine, not the tradition of the Fathers that we have to do. In all ages the Christian's creed should be, the person of Christ for the heart, the work of Christ for the conscience, and the word of God for the path.

The **siege of Antioch** lasted eight months. The miseries endured during that period were frightful. For a time the luxuries of the soil and climate were enjoyed, even to excess, but the winter set in and their enjoyment was at an end. The heavy rains flooded their camp, and the winds demolished their tents. Famine and pestilence with their many consequences prevailed. The flesh of horses, dogs, and even of their slaughtered enemies was greedily devoured. At the beginning of the siege, their horses numbered seventy thousand, at the end they only numbered two thousand, and scarcely two hundred fit for service. At length however, help came, or they must have perished to the last man. Through the treachery of a Syrian officer in the city, who had the favour of the emir, and who commanded three towers, a gate was opened. The army rushed into the devoted city, shouting the Crusaders' war-cry, "God wills it!" and Antioch was once more in the hands of the Christians. But the victory was not complete. The citadel refused to surrender, and soon after this apparent victory, an overwhelming force of Turks appeared, under Kerboga, Prince of Mosul. For five-and-twenty days the Crusaders were again on the verge of complete destruction between Kerboga and the garrison of the fortress.

When the hearts of all began to sink, and a general indifference to life prevailed, a cunning monk of the name of **Bartholomew,** presented himself at the door of the council chamber, and declared it had been revealed to him from heaven in a dream, that under the great altar of the church of St. Peter would be found the spear which pierced the Saviour on the cross. The ground was opened, but after digging to the depth of twelve feet they had not found the object of their search. In the evening, bare-footed and in the penitent's dress, Bartholomew himself descended into the pit; he soon came upon the head of a lance. The ring of steel was heard, it was the sacred weapon. At the first gleam of the holy spear the desponding Crusaders passed from despair to enthusiasm. A martial psalm was chanted by the priests and monks, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered." The gates of Antioch were thrown open, and the now fanatical warriors rushed forth, the holy spear being carried by the legate's chaplain. The charge was irresistible; the Saracens fled before the unexpected attack, leaving behind them an immense mass of spoil. **Bohemond** was proclaimed Prince of Antioch, under conditions that he would accompany them to Jerusalem.

The Siege of Jerusalem

A.D. 1099

In place of marching at once to Jerusalem, when so cheered and strengthened by victory, and their enemies over-awed, they idly spent their time, enjoying the luxuries of Syria, for nearly ten months, and, when marching orders were given the following May, only a very small part of the once mighty host remained. Three hundred thousand, it is supposed, reached Antioch, but famine, disease, and the sword, had reduced their force to little more than forty thousand. The relics of the army moved off in the month of May. As they drew nearer the object of their long and perilous journey, and recognized the sacred places, such as Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea, Lydda, Emmaus, and Bethlehem, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. But when an elevation was reached which gave them a full view of the holy city, a cry of, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! God wills it! God wills it!" burst forth. All threw themselves on their knees, and kissed the sacred ground. The scenes of gospel history filled their minds with enraptured delight. But Jerusalem was yet in the hands of the infidels, and they were unprovided with the necessary engines of assault.

The siege lasted forty days, but they were forty days of great suffering to the besiegers; especially from the fierce thirst produced by the midsummer sun of that parched country. The brook Kedron was dried up; the cisterns had been destroyed or poisoned; their provisions were exhausted; indeed, so great was their distress, they were on the point of yielding to despair. But, as on former occasions, relief was at hand. Superstition came to the rescue. Godfrey saw on the Mount of Olives a heavenly warrior waving his bright shield as a signal for another assault. With renewed military ardour they attacked the unbelievers, and, after a fierce struggle, they became masters of the holy city. Historians agree in saying, that on the 15th of July, A.D. 1099, being a Friday, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the day and hour of the Saviour's passion, Godfrey of Bouillon stood victorious on the walls of Jerusalem. He leaped into the devoted city, accompanied by Tancred, and followed by the soldiers, who filled every street with slaughter.

"The crusaders," says Robertson, "inflamed to madness by the thought of the wrongs inflicted on their brethren and by the obstinate resistance of the besieged, spared neither old man, woman, or child. Seventy thousand Mahometans were massacred; many who had received a promise of life from the leaders were slaughtered by the soldiery. The temple and Solomon's porch were filled with blood to the height of a horse's knee, and, in the general rage against the enemies of Christ, the Jews were burnt in their synagogue. Godfrey took no part in these atrocities, but immediately after the victory repaired, in the dress of a pilgrim, to the church of the holy sepulchre, to pour out his thanks for having been permitted to reach the holy city. Many followed his example, relinquishing their savage work for tears of penitence and joy, and offering at the altar the spoil which they had seized; but, by a revulsion of feelings natural to a state of high excitement, they soon returned to their savage work, and for three days Jerusalem ran with blood."*

{*Robertson's Church History, vol. 2, p. 641. White's Eighteen Christian Centuries.}

Jerusalem in the Hands of the Christians

Jerusalem, which had been under the Mahometan yoke since the conquest of Omar in 637, was again in the hands of the Christians; and eight days after this memorable event the victorious chiefs proceeded to the election of a king. By the free and unanimous voice of the army, Godfrey of Bouillon was proclaimed the most worthy champion of Christendom and king of Jerusalem. But the humble and pious pilgrim, while he accepted the place of responsibility, refused the name and ensigns of royalty. How could he be called king and wear a crown of gold, when the King of kings, his Saviour and Lord, had worn a crown of thorns? He contented himself with the humbler title of Defender and Baron of the Holy Sepulchre.

Scarcely had Godfrey been seated on his throne, when he was again summoned to the field. A large force of Saracens from Egypt were hastening to avenge the loss of Jerusalem. But again the Crusaders were victorious in what is called **the Battle of Askelon.** Their position in the Holy Land being now considered secure, most of the army prepared to return to Europe. After ascending the hill of Calvary, amidst the loud anthems of the clergy, bedewing with their tears the holy ground, bathing in the Jordan, carrying with them palm-branches from Jericho, and relics innumerable, they bent their way homewards. Among those who returned was Peter the Hermit, who spent the remainder of his days in a monastery of his own founding, at Huy, near Liege, until his death in 1115.

Three hundred knights and two thousand foot-soldiers were all that Godfrey retained for the defence of Palestine. But the infant kingdom was soon to be assailed by a new enemy, and one with whom we are too well acquainted - *a voracious priest of Rome.* In the name of the pope, he was installed Patriarch of Jerusalem, and claimed such revenues and property for the Church that the State was left poor indeed. The pious Godfrey submitted; both he and Bohemond received investiture from the priest, and thus the sceptre of Jerusalem fell into his hands, or rather was seized by the ambitious pope. Wearied with all his labours, and feeling that his great work was now done, Godfrey was little disposed to fight against the priest, and so allowed him to usurp and place of jurisdiction, both in spiritual and temporal matters. The Greek Christians were persecuted by the Latins as schismatics; and, of course, the breach was widened between the East and the West.

After establishing the French language, and laying the foundation of a code of laws, afterwards famous under the name of the "Assizes of Jerusalem," and holding his dignity for little more than a year, the brave and victorious Godfrey - the true hero of the crusade - died August 17th, A.D. 1100.

The Second Crusade

A.D. 1147

Having thus given a somewhat minute and detailed account of the first crusade, we need do little more than give the dates, with a few particulars, of the following seven. The same unreasonable, and unscriptural, but exciting causes, and the same disastrous results, are apparent in each of the expeditions. They have been styled as so many faint and unsuccessful copies of the original.

The immediate descendants of the first Crusaders are described as giving way to a life of Syrian ease and luxury, and so becoming utterly depraved and effeminate. But, on the other hand, the Mahometans, having recovered from their sudden terror and consternation, collected large forces, and harassed the Christians with perpetual wars. In 1144 **Zenghis,** prince of Mosul, made himself master of Edessa. The inhabitants were slaughtered, the city plundered, and utterly destroyed. The exultation of the Mahometans was boundless, they threatened Antioch, and the courage of the Christians began to sink. With tears they now implored the help of the christian kings and the armies of Europe. The enemies of the cross are advancing, they cried; thousands of Christians have been massacred, and not one will be left alive in the Holy Land unless help come speedily.

The Roman Pontiff, **Eugene III.,** favoured these petitions, and resolved to stir up a new crusade. The kings, princes, and people of Europe were summoned by the pope's letters to the holy war, but the *preaching* of the crusade over these countries he wisely delegated to the celebrated **St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux.** He was a man of immense influence, of saintly character, and of great reputation for working miracles. In the most glowing eloquence he pictured the sufferings of the Eastern Christians, the profanation of the holy places by the infidels, and the certain success of the armies of the Lord. Louis VII. of France, his queen, and a vast number of his nobles, took the vow, and devoted themselves to the holy war. **Conrad III.,** Emperor of Germany, after resisting for a time the appeals of St. Bernard, at length declared himself ready to obey the call to God's service. Many of the chiefs of Germany followed the Emperor's example in taking up the cross - as the phrase then was - but it was a cross without either truth or grace, the fearful delusion of Satan, and the wicked prostitution of that sacred symbol to the blinding and ruin of millions.

No sooner had these monarchs taken the vow than preparations for the expedition were urged on. Troops and supplies of every kind were collected; and in 1147 their mighty armies, composed chiefly of French, Germans, and Italians, and numbering over nine hundred thousand, moved forward in two columns towards Palestine. Proceeding, as they thought, and as Bernard had assured them, under the sanction of heaven, they expected the final blow would now be given to the power of the Mahometans, that the kingdom of Jerusalem would be firmly established, and that peace would be secured to the Latin Christians. In some respects the second crusade differed from the first. *That* was the result of popular enthusiasm, *this* was a great European movement, headed by two sovereigns, followed by their nobles, and supported by the wealth and influence of nations; but they were equally unsuccessful with the army of Peter the Hermit. They were cruelly betrayed by the treacherous Greeks, who were more afraid of the Crusaders than they were of the Mahometans. The approach of a hundred and forty thousand heavy-armed knights, with their immediate attendants, in the field, besides the light armed troops, infantry, priests and monks, women and children - in all numbering nearly a million - so alarmed the effeminate Greeks, that the Emperor sent envoys, requiring them to swear that they had no design against the empire. But their terror took the form of hostility, and as the Crusaders entered the imperial territory, difficulties thickened on every side.

The history of the second crusade in the Holy Land is more pitiful, shameful, and disastrous than the first. In 1149 Conrad and Louis led back to Europe the few soldiers that survived. What had become of all the rest? Their bones were whitening all the roads and deserts over which they had passed. A million had perished in less than two years. Loud murmurs were heard against Bernard, as the priest by whose preaching, prophecies, and miracles, it had been chiefly promoted. But the crafty abbot convinced the people that he had been quite right in all he said, and that the failure of the expedition was a fit chastisement for the sins of the Crusaders. Thus we see that the only effect of the second crusade was to drain Europe of a great portion of its wealth, and of the flower of its armies, without bettering the condition of Christians in the East.

The Third Crusade

A.D. 1189

In the year 1187 the far-famed **Saladin,** Sultan of Egypt, invaded the Holy Land at the head of a large army. His avowed object was to retake Jerusalem from the Christians. Having gained a great victory at Tiberias, he pushed forward his army to the walls of the Holy City, besieged it, and took its monarch prisoner. It was surrendered to Saladin on the 3rd of October. The cross was thrown down, relics were dispersed, the sacred places profaned, and the Mahometan worship restored. Yet the conduct of Saladin, though a conqueror and a Mahometan, was wholly free from that revengeful spirit which stained the character of the Franks under Godfrey. He spared the holy sepulchre, and allowed Christians to visit it for a certain payment. His generosity to the captives is celebrated by all writers. Thousands were set free without a ransom, and numbers received a passage to Europe at his own expense. Christians were allowed to remain in their homes on condition of paying tribute.

The news of these fresh calamities, and especially of the conquest of Jerusalem, excited the greatest indignation and alarm throughout all Christendom. Again the cry for help was heard from the Christians in the East to their brethren in the West. But at first they were dull of hearing. Only forty years had elapsed since the last expedition, and Europe had scarcely forgotten her misfortunes, or recovered from her exhaustion. But the cause was vigorously taken up by the pope, Clement III. The cardinals bound themselves never to mount on horseback "so long as the land whereon the foot of the Lord had stood should be under the feet of the enemy," and to preach the crusade as mendicants. The interest increased, though men at first hesitated to commit themselves to the enterprise. But the priest persevered, and the three greatest princes in Europe were influenced to receive the cross from the hands of the bishop; their subjects were taxed, under the name of "Saladin's Tithe," to defray the expenses of the war.

In the spring of 1189 the third crusade was commenced by **Frederick I.** of Germany, surnamed Barbarossa; **Philip Augustus** of France; and **Richard I.** of England, surnamed Coeur de Lion, or the lion-hearted prince. Barbarossa, now sixty-seven years of age, with his large army, traversed the provinces of Hungary, Bulgaria, and Greece, as the former pilgrims had done, and were again molested by the first two and betrayed by the last. Eighty-three thousand Germans crossed the Hellespont, and for a few days their march through Asia Minor was prosperous; but the guides and interpreters who were furnished by the Greeks had been bribed to deceive them, and after luring them into the desert, they disappeared. No markets could be found, horses died for want of food, and their flesh was greedily devoured by the soldiers. Still he was able to maintain discipline; and, though with greatly reduced numbers, he boldly attacked and defeated the Turks with great slaughter, while his son assaulted the city of Iconium and compelled the Sultan to surrender it. The army, refreshed with the provisions of Iconium, pressed onwards in the hope of speedily reaching the object of their expedition; but their great leader died the following year near Tarsus, and, Frederick the younger dying soon after, many of the survivors abandoned the crusade and returned to Europe. Sixty-eight thousand of the German army had perished in less than two years.

The English and the French armies reached Palestine by sea in the year 1190, and fought under the same banner. But after the reduction of Acre, Philip returned to Europe, leaving Richard to carry on the war. The valour of the "lionhearted" king has been so fully celebrated, both in English and Mahometan history, that, we need only add, he defeated Saladin at Askelon and, having concluded a peace securing certain privileges to the pilgrims in Jerusalem and along the sea-coast, he returned to England in 1194, though not without great difficulty and expense. Saladin died in 1195, while Richard was on his way home. It is reckoned that, in the expedition thus ended, more than half a million of professedly Christian warriors perished. In the siege of Acre alone, one hundred and twenty thousand Christians, and one hundred and eighty thousand Mahometans, perished. Such were the alleged holy wars of the hell-inspired councils of Rome.

The Remainder of the Crusades

A.D. 1195-1270

The fourth crusade, which was commenced in 1195 by the Emperor Henry VI., was more political than religious. It had in view, not so much the deliverance of the Holy Land, as the destruction of the Greek empire. But after some successful engagements Henry died, and the Germans resolved to return home. Pope Celestine III., who had urged on the expedition, survived the Emperor only a few months. He died A.D. 1198.

To describe the **Fifth and Sixth Crusades** would involve much repetition, but the seventh and eighth deserve a few words.

Louis XI., king of France, who is commonly known by the name of St. Louis, believed that he was raised up from a serious illness by heaven to undertake the recovery of the Holy Land. Nothing could dissuade him from performing his vow. After four years' preparation he sailed to Cyprus in 1249, accompanied by his Queen, his three brothers, and all the knights of France. After a few thrilling successes and the taking of Damietta he was defeated and taken prisoner along with two of his brothers. The Earl of Salisbury, who had accompanied him, with almost all his English followers, perished. Pestilence and famine began to do their dreadful work among the Franks; the distress increased; the fleet was destroyed; and the Saracens, in vast numbers, were hovering around them. The liberty of the king was at length purchased by a large ransom and a truce was concluded for ten years. After quietly visiting some of the sacred places, he returned to France. But amidst all the labours of government at home the pious Louis never forgot his crusading vow. He was haunted with the idea that he had been entrusted by heaven with this great mission.

At length, on the 14th of March A.D. 1270, he entered upon his *second* and the **Eighth Crusade.** He was so weak that he could neither bear his armour nor remain long on horseback. But scarcely had he landed his army on the shores of Africa, than all his sanguine visions perished. The Sultan's troops, the climate, the want of water and of food, began to produce their sad effects. His army was almost wholly destroyed, and Louis himself, with his son, John Tristan, sank and died in the month of August. The survivors returned to Europe; and thus terminated these holy wars, leaving the avowed object of the crusades as far distant as before the days of Peter the Hermit.

The Children's Crusade

A.D. 1213

Between the fifth and sixth crusades, about the year 1213, the excitement and madness of the time produced one of mere children. A shepherd boy named Stephen, near Vendome in France, professed to have been charged by the Saviour in a vision to preach the cross. He soon gathered other children around him by his wondrous revelations, and they commenced their journey, expecting to conquer the infidels by singing hymns and saying prayers. They passed through towns and villages, displaying banners and crosses, and chanting, "O Lord, help us to recover Thy true and holy cross." A similar movement originated in Germany about the same time. We are told that the numbers swelled as they went along, until about ninety thousand boys, about ten or twelve years of age, were ready to march to the Holy Land. But the whole band in a short time melted away. Many of the unfortunate children died through hunger and fatigue; others were betrayed by ship-masters, who promised to convey them to the shores of Palestine, but who are supposed to have sold them into slavery. Such was the insanity of those times, that, in place of preventing such a movement, the pope declared that the zeal manifested by the children put to shame the listlessness of their elders.*

{*Robertson, vol. 3, p. 341.}

Reflections on the Crusades

Many and varied are the opinions of historians as to the origin, character, and effects of the crusades. That they had an immense influence on the course of human affairs, especially in Europe and Asia, all are agreed. They were the means, under the overruling providence of God, of changing the whole structure of society in this and other countries. From the serf to the sovereign all experienced a great change. The social condition of the serf and the vassal was raised, the number and power of the feudal lords were diminished, and the strength of the sovereign increased. By the same means commerce was greatly improved, and the barons not a little impoverished. Many of them mortgaged their estates to wealthy citizens, which in course of time led to the establishment of the third estate in the realm - the Commons. The liberties of Europe, both civil and religious, had their rise in this class.

But the Papacy was the chief gainer by the Crusades. A vast accession of power, influence, and wealth, to the pope, the clergy, and the monastic institutions was the immediate result. And this was the one grand object of the papal policy. What Hildebrand fought for and saw in the distance, Urban seized and used with great craft and power. And this supremacy he obtained by means *apparently* good and holy, but *really* most subtle and Satanic. The theory was this: - "the Crusader was the soldier of the church, and this was his first allegiance, which released him from all other." Never was there a more sweeping, levelling, unrighteous theory proposed to mankind. But in its apparent piety lay its deep subtlety.

When Urban placed himself at the head of the armies of the faith in 1095 he assumed to be the director of their movements, the dispenser of their blessings, their infallible counsellor and lawgiver. He preached that it was not a national war of Italy, France, or Germany, against the empire of Egypt, but a holy war of Christians against the Mahometans. No Christian was to go to war with another Christian, but all were to unite in a holy alliance against the common foe - the infidels. The privileges promised to all the soldiers of Christ were great and many, as may be seen by Urban's oration. They were assured of the immediate remission of all their sins, of the paradise of God, if they fell in battle, or if they died on their way to the Holy Land; and further, as to this life, the pope declared all temporal, civil, and social obligations dissolved, by taking the cross. Thus every tie was broken that binds society together, a new principle of obedience was substituted, and the pope became the liege lord of mankind.*

{*Milman, *Latin Christianity,* vol. 3, p. 242.}

The Knights Templars and Hospitallers

We may just notice, before leaving the subject, that during these wars of the Christians with the Mahometans, three celebrated military-religious orders were founded - Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem, Knights of the Hospital and Teutonic Knights. The principal duties of these knights, according to their founders, were to afford protection and assistance to the poor, the sick, and the wounded among the pilgrims, and to provide in every way for the defence of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. They soon became extremely popular. Many of the nobility of Europe accepted the cross and professed the vow of the knights of Palestine. Superstition enriched them, and, we need scarcely add, it also corrupted them; and their wealth excited the cupidity of others. After the Christians lost possession of the Holy Land, these knights were dispersed throughout several countries. The order of the Templars was dissolved by the Council of Vienne in the fourteenth century, and that of the Teutons in the seventeenth, by the German authorities. The Hospitallers obtained from Charles V. the possession of the island of Malta, and are now known as the Knights of Malta.*

{*Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates.*}

21 Henry V. And Gregory's Successors

Chapter 21

Henry V. And Gregory's Successors

A.D. 1186-1122

Having thus given a consecutive history of the Crusades, which has led us on to the end of the thirteenth century, we must now return for a little to the point where we left off, and gather up the threads of our general history.

The long and wasting wars occasioned by the dispute between Gregory and Henry as to the right of investiture, utterly failed to bring that question to anything like a settlement. The successors of Gregory, deeply imbued with his spirit, endeavoured by every means to carry out his scheme. On the other hand, the new king Henry V. was equally determined to oppose the papal demands, and also to recover all that his crown had lost by the spiritual tyranny of the popes. He invested bishops with the ring and crosier as his ancestors had done, and compelled the prelates of Germany to consecrate them. Anathemas and excommunications without number from popes and councils were fulminated against the rebellious Emperor, but he allowed them to roll peacefully over him. Thus the contest was continued, though with less bloodshed than in Gregory's time.

The Donation Of Matilda

In the year 1115 "the Great Countess" Matilda of Tuscany died. Before her death, she had made over to the Roman See her vast possessions. The deed which she executed was entirely contrary to feudal law, but in full accordance with pontifical law. Thus a fresh subject of strife between the popes and the emperors sprang from this donation. Had the pope been allowed to take peaceable possession of her estates, he would have been like a king in Italy. But, however devoted the great woman was to the church of Rome and sincere in her gift, the deed was contrary to law and never fully took effect, although it ultimately contributed much to the temporal power of the popes. But details need not be given. The world was growing weary of the history of popes and antipopes, with factions, perjuries, and hypocrisies; of the monotony of bloodshed and devastation, which had lasted over half a century. All hearts yearned after peace, says one, and the love of battle had become extinct on both sides; the flame of civil and religious discord, which was kindled by Gregory and fanned by his successors, had been quenched in the floods of calamity. After many efforts peace was ratified between the pope's legates and the Emperor, in the year 1122, on the following conditions.

The Concordat Of Worms

The pope Calixtus, though an inflexible asserter of the papal claims, seeing the general eagerness for peace, gave instructions to his legates to convoke a general council of all the bishops and clergy of France and Germany at Mentz, for the purpose of taking into consideration the re-establishment of concord between the Holy See and the Empire. When this celebrated treaty was reduced into form and had received the golden seal of the empire, the assembly adjourned from Mentz to a spacious meadow near the city of Worms. Here unnumbered multitudes assembled to witness the exchange of the ratified copies of the treaty which was to bring back civil and religious peace to all Europe. The ceremony concluded, according to the custom of the times, with a solemn mass and *Te Deum* by the Cardinal-bishop of Ostia, during which the legate communicated with the Emperor and in the name of the Pope imparted the kiss of peace.

This treaty has been received from that day until now as the fundamental assertion of the **papal and imperial rights.** Its stipulations were these:

"The Emperor gives up to God, to St. Peter, and to the catholic church, the right of investiture by **Ring** and **Crosier;** he grants to the clergy throughout the empire the right of free election, he restores to the church of Rome, to all other churches and nobles, the possessions and feudal sovereignties which have been seized during the wars in his father's time and his own, those in his possession immediately, and he promises his influence to obtain restitution of those not in his possession. He grants peace to the pope and to all his partisans, and pledges himself to protect, whenever he shall be thereto summoned, the church of Rome in all things."

The pope granted on his part, that all elections of bishops and abbots should take place in the presence of the Emperor or his commissioners, only without bribery and violence, with an appeal in cases of contested elections to the metropolitan and provincial bishops. The bishop elect in Germany was to receive, by the touch of the sceptre, all the temporal rights, principalities, and possessions of the See, excepting those which were held immediately of the See of Rome; and faithfully discharge to the Emperor all duties incident to those principalities. In all other parts of the empire the royalties were to be granted to the bishop consecrated within six months. The pope grants peace to the Emperor and his adherents, and promises aid and assistance on all lawful occasions."*

{*Milman, vol. 3, p. 320; Greenwood, book 11, p. 673.}

So ended the contest which had wasted Germany by a civil war for fifty years, and Italy by the most disastrous invasions. And a moment's reflection, on the adjustment of the quarrel and the slight concessions on either side, will show the awful iniquity of those who prolonged the struggle. But neither Calixtus nor Henry long survived the **Concordat of Worms.** The pope died in 1124, and the Emperor in 1125.

It will not be necessary to say much more on the events of this century. The great features by which it is marked are the crusades and their results, which we have already examined. But it may be well to notice briefly two or three remarkable men that appeared at this time, whose names are familiar amongst us to this day, and whose histories conduct us to the secrets and depths of the cloister. Besides, we learn more of the general state of religion, literature, and manners, from such individual histories than from mere abstract statements.

St. **Bernard, Abbot Of Clairvaux**

The most celebrated of these men is the famous **St. Bernard.** He is considered the brightest representative of the Roman Catholic religion which the church had seen since the days of Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory. For half a century he appears before us the leading and governing head of Christendom - the oracle of all Europe. The popes are lost sight of in the brighter light of the abbot. "He is the centre," says one of his biographers, "around whom gather the great events of christian history, from whose mind flow forth the impulses which animate and guide Latin Christendom, towards whom converge the religious thoughts of men. He rules alike the monastic world, the councils of temporal sovereigns, and the intellectual developments of the age. He is believed by an admiring age to have confuted Abelard himself, and to have repressed the more dangerous doctrines of Arnold of Brescia." To those who have read his life this picture will not appear overdrawn. But as throwing light on those times we would first notice his training.

Bernard was born of noble parentage in Burgundy. His father, Tesselin, was a knight of great bravery and piety, according to the ideas of religion prevalent at that time. His mother, Alith, was likewise of high birth, and a model of devotion and charity. Bernard, their third son, was born at Fontaines, near Dijon, in 1091. From his infancy he was thoughtful and devoted to religion and study. His pious mother died while he was yet a youth, leaving six sons and one daughter. He was then left free to choose his occupation for life. What shall it be? He had no great choice; it must either be a fighting knight or a fasting and praying monk. He resolved at length to retire from the world and devote himself to the monastic state. At the age of twenty-three he entered the monastery of Citeaux.

When his family first heard of his resolution, they were much opposed. His father, Tesselin, and his two brothers, Guido and Gerard, were following the great Duke of Burgundy to his wars, as military noblemen. But such was the force of Bernard's character that he influenced his brothers one after the other, and his sister also, to take the vow; and the whole family in a short time disappeared within the walls of the convent.

St. Bernard And Monasticism

As monastic Christianity or enthusiasm, in the theory of the Roman church, was at this time the only real christian perfection, we will present the reader of the nineteenth century with a few particulars of the system, that he may be able to judge for himself of the extreme blindness of even true believers such as Bernard, and of the awful perversion of the sacred name of Christianity. Were the proofs not unquestionable, the facts could not now be believed. The renunciation of the world, solitude, asceticism, stern mortification, was preached as almost the only safe path to heaven. The supposed merits of monkery, not the finished work of Christ, was the ground of admittance by St. Peter into the realms of glory. Hence it was that the more sincere the monk, the more he inflicted on himself every kind of torture and misery. This was the deception: "The more remote from man, the nearer to God, holiness was measured by suffering all human sympathies, all social feelings, all ties of kindred all affections, were to be torn up by the roots from the groaning spirit; pain and prayer, prayer and pain, were to be the sole, stirring, unwearying occupations of a saintly life."

Surely this is the masterpiece of Satan, the deepest delusion of the counsels of hell. Let thy holy Bible be thy guide dear reader; and rest assured that all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ *are,* not only *will* be, but *are* saved, and that all who truly believe will be careful to maintain good works, in virtue of the divine nature and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Cistercian Monasteries

Stephen Harding, an Englishman, originally from Sherborne in Dorsetshire, was the abbot of the Cistercian monastery at Citeaux. He followed St. Benedict's rule, with additional severities. They had but one common meal a day, and had been twelve hours at work before they received it. They never tasted meat, fish, or eggs, and milk only rarely.

It was usual when anyone wished to become a monk at Citeaux, says Bernard's biographer, to make him wait for four days before he was taken to the chapter in presence of the assembled convent. After this he prostrated himself before the lectern, and was asked by the abbot what he wanted. He replied, "God's mercy and yours." The abbot bade him rise, and expounded to him the severity of the rule, and inquired of his intentions again; and, if he answered he wished to keep it all, the abbot said, "May God who hath begun a good work in thee Himself accomplish it." This ceremony was repeated three days, and after the third he passed from the guest-house to the cells of the novices, and then at once began the year of probation.

The following was the ordinary routine in the monastery during Bernard's year. At two in the morning the great bell was rung, and the monks immediately arose from their hard couches, and hastened along the dark cloisters in solemn silence to the church. A single small lamp, suspended from the roof, gave a glimmering light, just sufficient to show them their way through the building. After prayer, or divine service they retired, and after a brief repose rose again for matins which took them about two hours; then other services, partly regulated by the season of the year - summer or winter; but they were employed in various religious exercises till nine, when they went forth to work in the fields. *At two they dined,* at night-fall they assembled to vespers; at six or eight, according to the season, they finished the day with compline, and passed at once to the dormitory.

But however severe we may think these practices and austerities to have been, they were far from satisfying the zeal and spirit of self-mortification of Bernard. He spent his time in solitude and study. Time given to sleep he regarded as lost, and was wont to compare sleep and death, holding that sleepers may be regarded as dead among men, even as the dead are asleep before God. He diligently read the scriptures; he strove to work out his own conception of perfect and angelic religion. He had so absolutely withdrawn his senses from communion with the outer world that they seemed dead to all outward impressions: his eyes could not tell him whether his chamber was ceiled or not whether it had one window or three. Of the scanty food which he took his unconscious taste had lost all perception whether it was nauseous or wholesome. He drank oil but could not tell it from water. And yet this deluded man, though we doubt not he was already saved through grace, was doing all this for salvation; and still, as a matter of course, he was not satisfied. He spoke of himself as but in his noviciate, others might have attained, he had but begun his sanctification.

Bernard's Profession

A year has elapsed since Bernard entered Citeaux. His probation is ended; he now makes his profession. This ceremony was performed with great solemnity, and surrounded with all that could impart to it awe and majesty. The novice was called into the chapter, and, before all, made disposal of any worldly goods he might possess. His head was shorn, and his hair burnt by the sacristan in a piscine used for this purpose. Going to the steps of the presbytery, he then read the form of profession, made over at the sign of the cross and, inclining his body, approached the altar. He placed the profession on the right-hand side of it, which he kissed, again bent his body, and retired to the steps. The abbot, standing on the other side of the altar, removed from it the parchment, while the novice on his hands and knees implored pardon, repeating three times the words, "Receive me, O Lord." The whole convent answered with "Gloria Patri," and the cantor began the Psalm, "Have mercy on me, O God," which was sung through by the two choirs alternately. The novice then humbled himself at the abbot's feet, and afterwards did the same before the prior, and successively before all the brotherhood - even before the sick if there were any. Towards the end of the Psalm, the abbot, bearing his crosier, approached the novice and made him rise. A cowl was blessed and sprinkled with holy water, and the abbot removing from the novice his secular garments, replaced them with the monastic dress. The "Credo" was said, the novice had become a monk, and took his place in the choir.*

{*These accounts are chiefly taken from *The Life and Times of St Bernard* by James Catter Morrison, M.A.}

Bernard Leaves Citeaux

The arrival of Bernard, of his kindred, and his followers, at Citeaux, proved a turning-point in its history. The popularity of the small monastery was raised, and its dormitories were crowded. It soon became necessary to look out for the means of founding another. Bernard was selected by Stephen, the general of the Cistercian communities of France, as the head of the community. Twelve monks and their young abbot - representing the Lord and His apostles - were assembled in the church. Stephen placed a cross in Bernard's hands, who solemnly at the head of his small band, walked forth from Citeaux. After travelling northward for nearly ninety miles, they came to a valley in Champagne, called the Valley of Wormwood, but which now exchanged its name for that of Clairvaux - the Bright Valley. It was a barren solitude, for a time the hardships which the little community had to bear were excessive. A rude fabric to shelter them from wind, rain, heat, and cold, was raised with their own hands: - they were obliged to live on beech-leaves, nuts, roots, intermixed with coarse grain, until the Lord in mercy supplied their need from the compassion of the neighbouring peasants. Of course the supplies of money and corn were attributed to the miraculous intervention of St. Bernard, his piety, his prayers, and his prophetic visions. But the good Lord had pity and saved these poor deluded men from actual death by starvation.

William of Champeaux, bishop of Chalons, hearing that the life of Bernard was in danger from the extreme rigour of his mortifications succeeded in getting him away from Clairvaux for twelve months; and, compelling him to take proper food and rest, he saved him from a slow but certain suicide. In later years Bernard expressed disapprobation of such excess in mortification as that by which he had weakened his own body and impaired his own strength.

The Power Of Bernard's Preaching

After this period, according to his biographers, the fame and influence of Bernard spread rapidly and widely. His health had suffered so much from ascetic practices that he could no longer labour in the field with his brethren for their daily subsistence; but he laboured with his pen, and his preaching retained all its impressive solemnity and persuasive eloquence. His pale face, macerated form, and bodily weakness contrasted strangely with his powerful voice, his gushing flow of language, and the burning fervour of his pathetic appeals. When it was known that he was to preach in any given place, wives hurried away their husbands, mothers withdrew their sons, friends their friends, from the resistless power of the saintly abbot, lest they should renounce the world for the cloister. His reputation as a preacher and a writer soon spread over the whole of Christendom, and all the world began to ascribe the impression he produced to a divine power, and to endow him with the gift of working miracles.

The **"Bright Valley"** was soon beset by candidates for admission; the number of its inmates rapidly rose to seven hundred; and the number of monasteries founded by Bernard himself amounted to *one hundred and sixty.* These were scattered over France, Italy, Germany, England, Spain indeed over every country in the West. And, as might be expected, all looked back with superstitious reverence and affection to their founder. Clairvaux thus became a free and open court to which all might appeal without cost, and from which, it is said, all retired without dissatisfaction, whether justified or condemned. He knew how to address himself to persons of every class in a style most suited to their understanding, and thus exercised an immense influence over all kinds of men. His wondering disciples vied with each other in publishing abroad the wonders wrought by his hand or his prayers, until his every act became a miracle and his every word a prophecy. The Gospels contain not such countless miracles as the life of Bernard. He healed diseases by his touch, the bread which he blessed produced supernatural effects, and a blind man received his sight by standing on the same spot where the holy man had stood!

The Age Of Miracles And Visions

To those who are at all acquainted with the spirit and temper of the mediaeval age, these groundless beliefs will excite no surprise; but to those who are only familiar with our own time it must appear strange that any one was found weak enough to believe them. And were it not for their *historical* value we should not think them worth transcribing. But they show, as nothing else can, the modes of thought and the measure of man's mental development at the time and on this ground we can understand and explain why such foolish tales and absurd fictions were received as the present revelation of God. The result was, as Satan designed even in the case of true Christians, that the word of God, which is the **only standard** of faith and practice, was completely set aside and the deceivers' lies believed. Good man and talented as Bernard must have been, he was deeply imbued with the superstitious credulity of his age. He believed with others that God had performed miracles by him. But all men in the twelfth century, and for several ages, both before and after, believed in miracles, visions, revelations, and the interference of both good and evil angels with sublunary things.

The effect of the monastic system on the people generally in the dark ages must account for their readiness to believe anything a monk said, especially about good or evil, heaven or hell. The silvery peals of the convent bells were constantly reminding the warlike lord and his vassals, of the heavenly occupation of the monks, which, to their superstitious minds, must have had a great effect. And we cannot wonder. There in the lonely valley, the solitudes of nature, stood the holy monastery. The prince, the peasant, and the pauper, may knock at its gates and find a shelter within its hallowed walls. Peace is promised in this life to all who enter, and heaven hereafter. The chorus-song of vigils and matins during the night must have appealed to the religious feelings of all around, and filled them with most holy awe and reverence for the unearthly people. Hence the monastery was looked upon as the gate of heaven, and all its inmates as the servants of the Most High. It was no doubt a great mercy at that time to the poor, and to the people generally, especially during the reign of feudalism.

The Degeneracy Of The Monastic Rule

But before leaving the subject of the monasteries, having looked at them under the generalship of Bernard, it may be well to notice what they had become before his day, and what they were afterwards. Most of the old monasteries had become wealthy and suffered from the natural consequences. Some had altogether relaxed their discipline, had long renounced poverty, and disregarded their vow of obedience to the abbot or prior. They had fertilized their immediate territory; and, as though they had now but to enjoy the fruits of their toil, they sank to indolent repose, and idleness brought its ten thousand other sins. Milman speaks of monasticism as tracing the same cycle in all ages. This is so truly and so graphically described that we quote the passage entire. But we must add that he leaves out in this paragraph the fearful immoralities, dissensions, and insubordination, which were always the consequences of wealth.

"Now the wilderness, the utter solitude, the utmost poverty, the contest with the stubborn forest and unwholesome morass, the most exalted piety, the devotion which had not hours enough during the day and night for its exercise, the rule which could not be enforced too strictly, the strongly competing asceticism, the inventive self-discipline, the inexhaustible emulous ingenuity of self-torture, the boastful servility of obedience: then the fame for piety, the lavish offerings of the faithful, the grants of the repentant lord, the endowments of the remorseful king - the opulence, the power, the magnificence. The wattled hut, the rock-hewn hermitage, is now the stately cloister, the lowly church of wood, the lofty and gorgeous abbey; the wild forest of heath, the pleasant and umbrageous grove; the marsh, a domain of intermingling meadows and corn-fields; the brawling stream or mountain torrent, a succession of quiet tanks or pools, fattening innumerable fish. The superior, once a man bowed to the earth with humility, care-worn, pale, emaciated, with a coarse habit bound with a cord, with naked feet, is become an abbot on his curvetting palfrey, in rich attire, with his silver cross borne before him, travelling to take his place amid the lordliest of the realm."*

{**Latin Christianity,* vol. 3, p.330.}

A new order, a new institution, grew up under the hand of Bernard. Clairvaux was the commencement of a new era in the history of monasticism. Men of all ranks were attracted to the Cistercian order, notwithstanding the noted strictness of its discipline; and numbers of monasteries sprang up in the deserts after the pattern of Clairvaux. But all the power of Bernard could not prevent the most bitter jealousies and unseemly dissensions arising between the monks of the new and of the old orders, especially with the once celebrated monastery of Cluny, which had trained Hildebrand for the papal throne.

Bernard Leaves Clairvaux

A.D. 1130

A great **schism** in the church, caused by two unprincipled popes, was the occasion of St. Bernard being drawn, reluctantly from his peaceful seclusion, and plunged at once into the affairs of the world. But, as an example of what was a common occurrence in connection with papal elections, we will give a few particulars. The reader will see and judge for himself of papal infallibility. Alas! few of the popes were outwardly decent.

When Pope Honorius II. was dying, but before he had breathed his last, Cardinal **Peter Leonis,** a grandson of a Jewish usurer, made a bold effort to mount the chair of St. Peter. But the dying pontiff being brought to the window and shown to the people as still alive, Peter and his friends retired for the moment. Another party, determined to exclude Peter, and watching till the poor pope did die, at once proclaimed Cardinal Gregory supreme pontiff of the christian world under the name of **Innocent II.** The party of Peter at the same time went through the form of election with their pope, dressed him in the proper pontificals, and declared that he, under the title of Anacletus II., was the authentic vicar of Christ.

Rome, the scene of endless strife and warfare, was now filled with two armies of ferocious partisans. Devastation and bloodshed followed rapidly on their spiritual threats and curses. Anacletus, it is said, at the head of a mercenary band, began the attack by laying siege to the church of St. Peter. He forced his way into the sanctuary, carried off the gold crucifix, and all the treasure in gold and silver and precious stones. These riches led numbers to side with him. Besides he was rich and could afford to pay for followers. He assailed and despoiled the churches of the capital one after another. Innocent was soon convinced that Rome, in the present state of public feeling, could be no safe place for him. He determined to fly. His person was in danger. It was with great difficulty that he and his friends escaped in two galleys, and safely reached the port of Pisa. From thence they repaired to France, and were received with open arms by the communities of Cluny and Clairvaux.

Bernard zealously espoused the cause of Innocent. His zeal drew him from his den. He travelled from sovereign to sovereign, from count to count, from monastery to monastery, until he could boast that Innocent was acknowledged by the Kings of France, England, Spain, the Emperor Lothaire, the more powerful clergy, and the religious communities throughout these countries. The powerful Duke Roger of Sicily alone adhered to Anacletus, which prevented Innocent returning to Rome. But death came to the relief of all parties. Anacletus died in his impregnable fortress of St. Angelo, in January 1138, having defied all his enemies for eight years. Innocent returned to Rome in May with Bernard by his side, and was duly acknowledged as supreme pontiff.

The Great Council Of The Lateran

A.D. 1139

Innocent, now undisputed master of Rome, assembled at the Lateran a general council. Never had Rome or any other city of Christendom beheld one so numerously attended. A thousand bishops and countless ecclesiastical dignitaries were present. The speeches and the decrees image forth the Christianity of the times. The *feudal authority* of the pope was the great subject. He declared that, "Inasmuch as Rome is the metropolis of the world, from which all earthly power flows, so likewise the pontifical throne is the source of all ecclesiastical authority and dignity; and that every such office or dignity is to be received at the hands of the Roman pontiff as a fief of the Roman See, and held of him as the great *spiritual liege lord."*

As usual on such occasions, Innocent annulled all the decrees of his adversary Anacletus. *He* was consigned to the realms of Satan, and the prelates who had received schismatic consecration were degraded. They were summoned to appear before the revengeful pope. He assailed them with indignant reproaches, wrenched their crosiers out of their hands, stripped the palls from their shoulders, and took from them their episcopal rings. After this, as if to consummate the vilest hypocrisy, the "Truce of God" - a cessation of private feuds and conflicts - in its fullest extent was reenacted. But the canon which most interests us in that celebrated council was directed against a class of men, who before long will force themselves on our notice. "We expel from the church as heretics those who, under the semblance of religion, condemn the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, the baptism of infants, the priesthood," etc. This anathema, and those against whom it was hurled, are like the faint streaks of the dawn of the great struggle for religious liberty which resulted in the glorious Reformation.

The remainder of this wretched man's life was almost entirely spent in war, notwithstanding his re-enacting the "Truce of God." He actually headed, and led on an armed force against Roger of Sicily, the friend of Anacletus; but he fell as a prisoner of war into the hands of the Normans. Awestruck with their holy captive, they bowed before him obtained his blessing, and sent him home. Such was the superstition of the king, such the awful iniquity of the pope. But his life was ebbing fast, and soon he must stand before the tribunal of the Judge of all the earth. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2Co 5:10)

On the 24th of September, 1143, the pontiff breathed his last, amid the turmoil of popular revolution and strife, and **Celestine II.** reigned in his stead.

Bernard And Abelard

Before the death of Innocent, Bernard was called away from his peaceful retirement at Clairvaux, to make war against a new enemy of the church in the person of **Peter Abelard.** This new conflict arose out of the intellectual movements of the age, and marks a distinct epoch in the history of the church, of literature, of spiritual and of civil freedom. We will briefly notice what led to it.

Most of our readers are aware that the learning which had been accumulated in the Latin and Greek languages was almost entirely destroyed by the barbarians in the fifth century. What is called the literature of the ancients was almost wholly lost when the barbarous nations were established on the ruins of the Roman empire. For fully five hundred years gross ignorance prevailed. Any knowledge that remained was confined to the ecclesiastics; and they, during that period, were forbidden to study or copy secular learning. Nevertheless some of the monks, especially of the Benedictine order, collected and copied ancient manuscripts; and, says Hallam, "It is never to be forgotten that but for them the records of that very literature would have perished. If they had been less tenacious of their Latin liturgy, of the vulgate translation of scripture, and of the authority of the Fathers, it is very doubtful whether less superstition would have grown up; but we cannot hesitate to pronounce that all grammatical learning would have been laid aside. But among them, though instances of gross ignorance were exceedingly frequent, the necessity of preserving the Latin language, in which the scriptures, the canons, and other authorities of the church, and the regular liturgies were written, and in which alone the correspondence of their hierarchy could be conducted, kept flowing, in the worst seasons, a slender but living stream."*

{**Literature of Europe in the Middle Ages,* vol. 1, p. 4.}

Among these monks there must have been every variety of mind: some, no doubt, coarse, sluggish and mechanical; others, refined, active, inquiring, which could not be confined within the barriers of the established catholic doctrine, or submit to the power of the sacerdotal order. So it was; so it proved to be. The Reformer, the Protestant, sprang from the monastic order. There were many premature Luthers. In every insurrection, it has been said, whether religious or more philosophical, against the dominant dogmatic system, a monk was the leader, and there had been three or four of these insurrections before the time of Abelard. Gotschalk in the ninth century was scourged and imprisoned for his stubborn confidence in what was called *predestinarianism.* John Scot Erigena, a most learned monk from Ireland or the Scottish islands, was invited by **Hincmar,** Archbishop of Rheims, to oppose Gotschalk; but he alarmed the church no less than his antagonist, by appealing to a new power above catholic authority, human reason. He was a strong rationalist, but speculated largely in scholastic theology. Under the censure of the church he fled to England, and found a refuge, it is said, in Alfred's new university of Oxford.

The Dawn Of Light In The Dark Ages

During the latter part of eleventh century we meet with the famous names of Lanfranc, **Anselm,** and Berengar. A fresh impulse was given to intellectual activity by the labours of these and other eminent teachers. It was about this time that the old cathedral schools developed into seminaries of general learning, and these became the parents of our modern universities. This intellectual activity, following a long apathy, became so extremely attractive that thousands crowded to the lectures, and, like men long debarred from the tree of knowledge, too eagerly embraced what they heard. But it was a reaction against the dogmatic authority of the church, which taught men that it was henceforth possible to reason and inquire.

Peter Abelard was the most audacious, and by far the most popular, of all the lecturers on dialectics - professedly the science or art of discriminating truth from error by human reason. This remarkable man was born in 1079, near Nantes, in Brittany. His father, Berengar, was lord of the castle of Le Pallet, and although Peter was his eldest son, he early preferred "the conflicts of disputation to the trophies of arms," and, resigning the family inheritance of his brothers, betook himself to the life of a scholar. He was first a pupil of Rosellin, then of William archdeacon of Paris, and also of Anselm, theological lecturer of Laon. But the long and extraordinary history of this man we need not follow. It is a history of victories, crimes, and misfortunes. He was at once the representative and the victim of that scholastic theology which endangered the power and the constitution of the Roman church. He was the first instance of a man professing the science of theology without being a priest. Wherever he went, thousands of enthusiastic scholars surrounded his chair. "Crowds," says Bernard's biographer, "amounting to thousands, crossed high mountains and broad seas, and endured every inconvenience of life, to enjoy the privilege of hearing Abelard lecture." "His eloquence," says another, "was so fascinating, that the listener found himself irresistibly carried away by the stream; arid if an opponent was hardy enough to stand up against him, the acuteness of his logic was as infallible as the torrent of his oratory had been, and in every combat he carried away the prize."*

{**Life and Times of Bernard,* Morrison, p. 290; *Eighteen Christian Centuries,* White, p. 266.}

Abelard wrote, as well as lectured, on many important subjects; but he was most unsound on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. And yet in all Europe no champion of truth and orthodoxy could be found to meet in single combat this giant of heresy. Bernard of Clairvaux was at length appealed to. A letter from William, Abbot of St. Thierry, drew him from his cloister. The saint and the logician met at Sens in 1140. The King of France was present, with a great number of bishops and ecclesiastics. Abelard was surrounded with his disciples; Bernard with two or three monks. The one addressed the reason of the few, the other inflamed the hearts and passions of all classes. The one was supported by admirers; the other by worshippers. The one had been denounced as a heretic; the other had the reputation of being the most holy man of his age, above kings, prelates, and even the pope. Under such circumstances Abelard had no chance. He soon felt the power that was against him; and, before the incriminated passages were all read, he rose up and said, to the astonishment of all present, "I refuse to hear more, or answer any questions; I appeal to Rome;" and left the assembly.

It is said by some, in explanation of this unexpected conduct, that the ranks of hostile faces which he saw before him, not only quenched his enthusiasm but made him feel that his life was in danger. Hearing that a report of the council had reached Rome, and that he was condemned by the pope, he applied in his distress to the "venerable" Peter of Cluny, who, from pity for his misfortunes, gave him an asylum in his monastery, though he was opposed to his doctrines.

We may just notice in passing, that the well-known story of the sufferings of his beautiful **Eloisa** gave birth to a new idea of woman's place in society, without which no true civilization could have taken place. Up to this period the church had avowedly looked with disdain on woman, because she had been first in the transgression. But the touching story of the misfortunes of Eloisa led to the elevation of woman to her proper place in the social circle.

The fallen and broken-hearted Abelard, after spending about two years in the solitudes of Cluny, receiving many kindnesses from its charitable abbot, and satisfying his ecclesiastical judges with the humility of his repentance, ended his agitated life in the year 1142. His principles lived in many of his disciples; one deserves a special notice.

Arnold Of Brescia

Although Arnold passed as a disciple and a faithful follower of Abelard, it is evident from all we can gather that he was a man of another order. There is reason to believe that he was a sincere Christian, and possessed many of the elements of a reformer, though in an age unripe for reformation. Besides he was too political - too great an admirer of the old Roman Republic - to be used of God in laying a solid foundation for the reformation of His church. He was honoured with martyrdom, but it was more for his advocacy of civil liberty than for his preaching subjection to Christ and the word of God. Nevertheless he commands our respect and gratitude, as an early sower of the seeds of the great Reformation.

Arnold was born at Brescia in Lombardy - probably about the year 1105. At an early period in his history he separated himself from the secular clergy, embraced the monastic life, and began to preach unsparingly against the corruptions of both the clergy and the monks. He seems to have been possessed of an inward conviction that he had a divine commission to preach against the pride, luxury, and immorality of the priesthood, from the pope himself down to the lowest rank in the church; and to this mission he boldly and fearlessly devoted all his strength. Possessed, according to all accounts, of the most vigorous and awakening style of address, combined with an eloquence which was singularly copious and flowing, he mightily moved the masses wherever he preached. "His words," says Bernard, "are smoother than oil and sharper than swords." His great idea was, the complete separation of Church and State. The old papal edifice - the hierarchy, which had been rising into such vast proportions ever since the days of Constantine, and which, under Gregory VII., aspired to govern the whole world, and to bind all the nations of the earth as so many fiefs of St. Peter - he boldly maintained should be utterly demolished and swept from the face of the earth. He used as his text, what many have done since, though not knowing its spiritual import, "My kingdom is not of this world." Ministers of the gospel, he argued, should have no power but for the spiritual government of the flock of Christ, and no riches but the tithes and the free-will offerings of the faithful. The immense evils and discords that arose in the church, he affirmed, were mainly owing to the vast riches of the pontiffs, bishops, and priests.

While there was a great deal of truth in much that he said he blended, in the most painful way, his love of old Roman liberty and the lowly religion of Jesus - the rigid monk and the fierce Republican. "If poverty was of Christ," he would exclaim, "if poverty was of His apostles, if the only real living likenesses of the apostles and of Christ were the fasting, toiling, barely-clad monks, with their cheeks sunk with the famine, their eyes on the ground, how far from the apostles, how far from Christ, were those princely bishops, those lordly abbots, with their furred mantles of scarlet and purple, who ride forth on their curvetting palfreys, with their golden bits, their silver spurs, and holding their courts like kings!" Consistently with this, he also taught the people "that the temporal sovereign is the proper fountain of honour, of wealth, of power, and to that fountain should revert all the possessions of the church, the estates of the monasteries, the royalties of the popes and the bishops."*

{**Latin Christianity,* vol. 3, p. 333.}

Arnold's Preaching

To these new and dangerous doctrines the people of Brescia listened with the greatest ardour. He unfolded to them the dark pages of ecclesiastical history, over which we have just been travelling. The whole city was in a state of the greatest excitement. Nor can we wonder at the enthusiasm of the populace, when they heard that the riches of the clergy should return to the laity, and that, in future, their pastors were to be supported by the voluntary contributions of their flocks. He would be a bold preacher who dared to arouse the people to fanaticism with such appeals and proposals in the nineteenth century: what must he have been in the twelfth in the midst of darkness, ignorance and superstition? Such a man was the premature reformer of Brescia, and, being a stern monk of blameless life, unquestioned as to his orthodoxy, and having full sympathy with popular religion, his power was resistless. The great object of his efforts was the complete overthrow of sacerdotal power - the temporal supremacy of the pope. He thus dared to lay his hand on the great papal scheme of universal dominion, and for a moment it tottered to its base. The pope was driven from his throne the Republic proclaimed, the standard of liberty raised, the separation of the spiritual and temporal powers published, and the government of priests abolished. But the enthusiasm of the citizens was evanescent, without unity, and of short duration. The soil was not yet prepared for the growth of liberty. The iniquity of the anti-christian system was not yet full. Jezebel's thirst was not yet quenched with the blood of the saints of God. Millions more must perish before she receives her deadly wound. This we shall soon see.

Arnold was no longer safe in Italy. The resentment of the clergy he found to be stronger and deeper far than the favour of the populace. He escaped beyond the Alps, and ultimately found a safe and hospitable shelter in Zurich. There the forerunner of the famous Zwingle was allowed for a time to lecture, and the simple people long retained the spirit of his doctrines. But such a man must not be allowed to live anywhere. Bernard was watching his every movement. He urged the pope to extreme measures; he wrote angrily to those who gave him a shelter, warning them to beware of the fatal infection of heresy. He sharply rebuked the diocesan bishop of Zurich for protecting him. "Why," he says, "have you not long since driven Arnold away? He who consorts with the suspected becomes liable to suspicion; he who favours one under the papal excommunication contravenes the pope and even the Lord God Himself. Now therefore that you know your man, drive him from among you; or, better still, chain him down, that he may do no more mischief."

After various fortunes, such as are common to that class of men, and such as we need not here trace, Arnold returned to Rome. Here he was allowed to remain for some time because of the feebleness of the pontiff and the troubled state of the city; but when Pope Adrian ascended the throne of St. Peter, the days of Arnold were numbered.

The Martyrdom Of Arnold

A.D. 1155

The new pope was an Englishman of great ability; and the only one, it is said, that ever sat on the papal throne. He was originally a monk of St. Albans, but obliged to leave his home because of the severity of his father. After travelling for some time on the continent, and studying divinity and canon law with great ardour and success, and rising from rank to rank in ecclesiastical orders, he was at length raised to the highest order of ecclesiastical greatness by the name of **Adrian IV.** His English name was Nicolas Breakspeare.

An opportunity now presented itself to get rid of the bold reformer. The Emperor Barbarossa was on his way to receive from the hands of Adrian the imperial crown. He sent forward an embassy of three cardinals to meet the Emperor, and to request as the price of his coronation the surrender of Arnold of Brescia into his hands. To a man who thought so little of human life as Frederick, it seemed but a light thing indeed, and he compelled the friends of Arnold to deliver him up into the hands of the papal emissaries. No time was now to be lost, lest his friends should hear of it and attempt to rescue him. The church took upon itself the summary condemnation and execution of the rebel, without employing, as usual, the temporal sword. Before break of day the officer of the pope had imbrued his hands in the blood of his victim; his dead body was burned to ashes, and the remains cast into the Tiber, lest the people should collect and worship the relics of their martyred friend. The clergy triumphed in his death, but his memory lived in the minds of the Romans. "And in the ashes of Arnold's funeral pile," says Milman, "smouldered for centuries the fire, which was at length to blaze out in irresistible violence."

Bernard, the great antagonist of Abelard and of Arnold, had passed peacefully away at Clairvaux in the year 1153. The saint, the philosopher, and the reformer, are gone-gone to another world; gone to be judged, not by papal decrees, but by the throne of eternal righteousness and immaculate holiness. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the work which He finished for lost and guilty sinners, is the alone ground of pardon and acceptance in God's sight. There is no purgatory but the precious blood of His cross. But, what a mercy, that blood can make the vilest clean! "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Nothing short of the blood of Jesus can make a soul whiter than snow and fit for heaven. All other means are but a mockery, a delusion of Satan which only deepens and perpetuates the guilt of the soul. 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Salvation is by faith alone without works of law. We must be grafted into the true vine before we can bear fruit to God. Christ is the only fruit-bearer; believers are branches. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Apart from a true and living faith in Christ, there is no pardon, no salvation, no happiness, and no heaven; "but blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Psa 51:7; Psa 51:12;1Jn 1:7; 1Jn 2:6)

We now return to our history, and first we would notice -

The Meeting Between Adrian And Frederick

Were it not for a circumstance which we consider purely childish, the meeting between Adrian and Frederick might have been passed without a notice, so little does it concern the history of the church. But it concerns the history of the papacy, and we think it right to note everything which manifests its true spirit while in the Thyatiran period. Besides, the most trifling incident sometimes reveals the most deeply seated purpose, and betrays the most unyielding determination.

The ready grant of Arnold's blood had not removed from the dark mind of Adrian all suspicion as to Frederick's intentions. The negotiations, however, were at length satisfactory, and Adrian rode to the camp of Frederick. He was courteously received by some of the German nobles and conducted to the royal tent. The pope remained in his saddle, expecting the Emperor to come and hold his stirrup while he dismounted. But he waited in vain; Frederick made no advance, and the pope alighted without his assistance. This neglect of homage to the supreme pontiff was considered a great insult and indicative of hostilities. Most of the cardinals fled in alarm, but the intrepid Nicolas Breakspeare remained. Frederick pleaded ignorance of the custom; but the pope refused to be reconciled or give him the kiss of peace until he had humbled himself and gone through the ceremony. The haughty German said he must consult his nobles. A long discussion ensued. Adrian maintained that it had been the custom since the days of Constantine the Great, who held the stirrup for Pope Sylvester. This assertion was utterly false; as the first act of such homage had occurred about fifty years before by Conrad, the worthless and rebellious son of Henry IV. But that was a small matter to the papal party, if an emperor was to be humbled and the pope exalted. Alleged precedents were produced in order to prove that the practice had existed for eight hundred years; and consequently, "as the Emperor had declined the honours due to the apostles Peter and Paul, there could be no peace between the church and the empire till he had discharged that duty to the letter." Such was the blasphemous assumption of these wicked men. They urged their pretensions to the homage of mankind by representing themselves as in the place of the apostles - of Christ - of God Himself. As the evidence appeared in the pope's favour and Frederick did not mind much how it went, he allowed himself to be persuaded that the precedents were true, and that he ought to do homage to the pope. Accordingly on the following day, like a dutiful son of the church, the Emperor dismounted as Adrian approached, took his bridle in hand, and held his stirrup when he alighted. Outward amity was now restored, and the spiritual father and the obsequious son advanced towards the holy city and proceeded with the coronation.

After a reign of about four years, and, we may add, of ceaseless strife and bloodshed, Adrian died in 1159. He was preparing for the open declaration of war, and the excommunication of the Emperor, when death put an end to the conflict. So most of these men lived and so they died, at open war with the temporal power. **Frederick Barbarossa** is spoken of as the mightiest sovereign who had reigned in Europe since Charlemagne. He entered on the third Crusade, as we have seen, in 1189, and died, or was drowned, in the stream Saleph near Tarsus, in 1190.

22 Rome in England

Chapter 22

The Encroachments of Rome in England

A.D. 1162

We now approach a period in our history which must awaken a peculiar interest in the mind of the English reader. The **Anglo-Saxon** was giving place to the Anglo-Norman rule both in Church and State. The whole condition of the country was either changed or changing. But the Italian priest was far from being satisfied with the footing which he had under the reign of the Normans. The blooming vineyard of Naboth was coveted, and must be possessed by fair means or foul. England, with all its pride and wealth and power, must be reduced to a state of subserviency to the Roman See. This was her settled purpose, and necessary to the carrying out of her scheme. We will first notice the position of the antagonists, and then the nature and end of the fierce struggle.

During the reign of **Alexander III.,** an able, subtle, and vigilant pontiff, a great contest arose in England between Henry II. and Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, which drew away and absorbed the whole mind of Europe for many years. It resembled in its main features the long war between Henry IV. and Gregory VII., only, if possible, pursued with greater bitterness and obstinacy, and ending more tragically. A more violent collision between the spiritual and the temporal powers had not occurred since the days of Constantine. The personal character and the position of the leaders, no doubt, gave a world-wide interest to the conflict. But it was much more than personal: the whole question of the power of Rome in England, the prerogative of the Sovereign, and the responsibility of the subject, was involved in this new war. Henry, of true Norman blood, was determined to be the king, and to govern his subjects according to the laws and customs of the realm; Becket, a violent churchman, was equally determined to maintain, according to the infallible decrees of Rome, that the hierarchy is a separate and privileged *caste* in the community, entitled to exemption from trial by civil process, and subject only to its own jurisdiction.

The English reader of the nineteenth century may well be surprised to hear that a decree from the Vatican, sent by the pope's legate, for the purpose of changing the laws and customs of England, should be for a moment listened to, far less yielded to. But this was the way then; and the mightiest monarchs in Europe were made to bow in ignominious submission at the feet of the pontiff. But why this dreadful slavish fear of Rome? Because of the ignorance and superstition of the people generally. "The Romish system, with all its insolent pretensions, was still shrouded in a blood-red halo of superstitious reverence, which scared away thought, or quenched it in the fear of death temporal and eternal." The cunning priest could pretend to shake the keys of St. Peter in the face of his opponent, and threaten to lock him out of heaven and to lock him up in hell, if he did not obey the church. It was their avowed sanctity and their wicked perversion of scripture that gave them such power over the ignorant and superstitious.

The English Law and Custom

From the earliest period, the kings of England were acknowledged both by clergy and laity to have the fullest power in matters pertaining to the external government of the church. Whether touching the property and the endowments of the churches, or the persons of the clergy, the authority of the crown was, by law and custom of the realm, supreme. Edward, the Anglo-Saxon king, told the clergy that "they wielded the sword of St. Peter, he the sword of Constantine." And of **William the Conqueror,** his biographer says, "All affairs, ecclesiastical as well as secular, were made dependent on his pleasure." But during the twelfth century the country was gradually sinking into a state of deplorable subjection to the Roman See.

At the same time, we must not forget that, although the progress of the church was towards Rome, God in His infinite mercy over-ruled the temporal power of the clergy and the great ecclesiastical establishments of the monks for the protection and blessing of the poor in the land. He ever thinks, blessed be His name, of "the poor of the flock." By the Norman conquest of England, a foreign hierarchy as well as a foreign nobility had been introduced; but the lower offices generally were filled with Saxons, whose language and feelings were in sympathy with the native population. This gave them an immense power over the popular mind. They were looked upon as the true shepherds of their flocks, and the guides and comforters of the distressed. The Normans, whose language and feelings were still foreign, were hated as their oppressors and spoilers. The English had been sacrificed by William to supply the liberal grants of lands and places of honour, which he bestowed upon his followers, and thus the Saxons, in their turn, were compelled to become the servants or dependents of their conquerors. Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. His sin is sure to find him out. But the feeling of personal wrong was another thing, and sure to mingle in every fresh conflict between the races. This is manifest in the great struggle between the Norman king and the English primate, and may assist us in our judgment of its important results. But we must first notice that which immediately led to the dispute.

The Introduction of Canon Law into England

After repeated attempts and repeated failures, on the part of the pope, to introduce a legatine power into England, it was so far accomplished during the troubled reign of **Stephen,** A.D. 1135. This was an entirely new thing in this country, and a most daring thing on the part of Rome. But as it forms a distinct and important epoch in the history of the English church, we must carefully mark the change. And here, to ensure accuracy, we will quote a few passages from our legal historian, Thomas Greenwood, barrister-at-law, book 12, vol. 5.

"The publication and adoption of the Isidorian Decretals changed the order and distribution of the ecclesiastical powers. Every function of church management became vested in the clergy, or, which was the same thing, in the Pope of Rome as their supreme head. The authority of the state in all matters even remotely connected with the life and conversation, temporal or spiritual, of churchmen, was vehemently denounced and repelled: their possessions were pronounced sacred and inalienable; their duties subject to no censorship but that of their official superiors, their persons exempt from secular jurisdiction or punishment; all interference on the part of prince or secular person in the appointment of bishops, priests, or spiritual incumbents was declared to be of the nature of simony. Although these principles of church legislation had been in few instances fully developed in practice, they had been received without contradiction, and partially adopted by the clergy of France, Italy, and Germany. In Normandy a complete separation of the secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction had already taken place. In England, however, as yet the only canons known to clergy or laity were those enacted by the national church herself, with the assent and concurrence of the sovereign.... The exertions of the Romanizing bishops of England, subsequent to the conquest, were steadily directed to the introduction of the more important articles of the Isidorian code; more especially to the emancipation of church property and endowments from its dependence upon crown or secular ordinance, and of the persons and causes of clerks from the interference of the king's judges...."

"The earlier ordinances of **William the Conqueror** for the separation of the ecclesiastical from the lay tribunals were never carried out to the extent of exempting churchmen from responsibility to the law. But it is also true, that both the Conqueror and his successors, down to John, endeavoured to steer a middle course between canonism and prerogative. In their solicitude to stand well with the court of Rome, they often took steps which endangered the safety, but certainly never shifted the ancient basis, of the law of the land, or the rights of the crown. In the bitter quarrel between Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury and Henry I., the latter stoutly maintained his right to determine which of the two rival pretenders to the papacy the clergy of his dominions should recognize. And when Anselm, without the king's consent, insisted upon transferring his spiritual allegiance to Urban II. in preference to his rival Clement III., Henry bluntly informed him that 'he knew of no law or custom which entitled a subject, without the king's license, to set up a pope of his own over the kingdom of England; and that any man who should presume to take out of his hands the decision of that question would have as good a right to take the crown from his head!' . . . "

"The struggle between Henry and Anselm was long and obstinate. The bishop fled to Rome; the king seized the temporalities of his See. While the contest was still undecided, a papal officer appeared on the coast announcing himself as legate of the court of Rome, entrusted with a *legatine power* over *all England from the pope.* But the king held it to be a special prerogative of his crown to accept or reject at pleasure such interferences with the ordinary course of ecclesiastical government by a foreign prince; and the legate was sent away without having been admitted to the presence of the king. About fifteen years afterwards, the same pope made a second attempt to introduce a legate-extraordinary into the kingdom, but with no better success.... A third attempt of the same pontiff was equally unsuccessful. It was indeed, by this time, pretty well understood that the law and custom of England repudiated the legative commission, as an illegal interference with the ordinary course of church government, which the common law had placed under the superintendence of the sovereign."

But after the death of the wise and able Henry I., which took place in 1135, the crafty and persevering pope - **Alexander III. -** was more successful. In the reign of Stephen, a feeble monarch, a legate from Rome made his way into our island. The Anglican prelates fully understood the drift of the movement; and a synod held in London protested, in the face of the legate, against the presumption of a foreign priest in taking the presidential chair above archbishops, bishops, abbots, and the assembled nobility of the whole realm of England. The protest, however, remained without effect. A timid and time-serving spirit was creeping into the heart of the Anglican church. The prevailing ignorance of the mass of the people, the secular character of the clergy, the miserable state of the whole country, during the reign of Stephen, afforded a favourable opportunity for the systematic encroachments of the Romanizing party upon the prerogative of the crown and the liberties of the national church. The Anglo-Norman bishops at the time were barons rather than prelates, their palaces were castles, their retainers vassals in arms: almost all were wearing arms, mingling in war, and indulging in all the cruelties and exactions of war. Such were the prelates of England when Henry II. ascended the throne in 1154. The opposition of Becket to this rich and powerful king, throws a clearer light on the secular ambition of Rome than any of the conflicts we have yet recorded.

Thomas A Becket and Henry II

The birth and parentage of Becket are unknown. The obscurity of his origin was probably concealed by his biographers. But some say that he was born about the year 1119. According to Du Pin he commenced his studies in London and finished them in Paris, the best school for Norman French.

Soon after his return to England, he was strongly recommended to **Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury,** who employed him in the management of his affairs. Becket was now on the high road to preferment. Theobald, who suspected that the young king Henry was tainted with his father's opposition to the pretensions of Rome, was anxious to place near his person one who might counteract this perversity. The sagacious primate had discerned in his archdeacon, not only great abilities for business, but the elements of a lofty, a determined, and devoted churchman. Through his recommendation Becket was raised to the dignity of chancellor. "He was now the second civil power in the realm, inasmuch as his seal was necessary to countersign all royal mandates. Nor was it without great ecclesiastical influence, as in the chancellor was the appointment of all the royal chaplains, and the custody of vacant bishoprics, abbacies, and benefices." But as Thomas a Becket has come down to us in school and storybooks of English history, as a saint and a martyr, let us briefly glance at him, in the first place, as a man of the world.

Thomas A Becket as Chancellor

A.D. 1158

By the affability of his manners, the apparent pliancy of his disposition, the acuteness of his senses, and the attractions of his person, he soon gained the confidence and affections of the king. He made him his constant companion in all his amusements and pleasures; but it was in the graver affairs of government that Henry derived great advantage from the wisdom and prudence of his chancellor. His abilities, it is said, as an accomplished courtier, as a superior military leader, and as a practised statesman, were unrivalled. To the reader of the present day, an ecclesiastic, who held a number of clerical benefices, being a brave military general, sounds unaccountably strange. But such was the far-famed saint. One of his biographers remarks, "In the expedition made by King Henry to assert his right to the dominions of the Counts of Toulouse, Becket appeared at the head of seven hundred knights who did him service, and foremost in every adventurous exploit was the valiant chancellor. At a period somewhat later, he was left to reduce certain castles which held out against his master, and often distinguished himself for valour and personal prowess: he returned to Henry in Normandy at the head of twelve hundred knights and four thousand horsemen, raised and maintained at his own charge." Another observes, "Who can recount the carnage, the desolation, which he made at the head of a strong body of soldiers? He attacked castles, razed towns and cities to the ground, burned down houses and farms without a touch of pity, and never showed the slightest mercy to any one who rose in insurrection against his master's authority."*

{*Milman, vol. 3, p. 450.}

Grave and serious churchmen, even in those days, would no doubt mourn over such things in the Archdeacon of Canterbury; but the practice was too common to excite much surprise. Secular dignity, alas! had become the grand object of ambition with nearly all the clergy, so that many more would be found to admire the course of Becket, than to grieve over it. His wealth, magnificence, and power, exceeded all precedent. He was king in all but name. The world, it was said, had never seen two friends so entirely one. But like the friendship of the world, or of two selfish, ambitious, unscrupulous men, it lasted just as long as it served their interests. This we shall now see and in a way which has been seldom witnessed.

Thomas A Becket - Archbishop of Canterbury

A.D. 1162

About a year after the death of Theobald, Becket was by the King named, Archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England. Before his elevation to the throne, he had feigned to be wholly devoted to the interests of his royal master, but from the moment that his election had been made known to Alexander III., and especially after their meeting at the **Council of Tours,** his whole heart and soul became completely changed towards his sovereign. He returned from Tours to Canterbury, the professed, the inflexible, vassal of Rome, an enemy to his king and the laws of his country. Such was, and is, and ever must be, the spirit of popery. The intentions of the King to limit the growing power of the church were well known to Becket, who had presided in his privy council. But these intentions must be opposed at all costs; and thus the battle began.

The pretensions of the sacerdotal order as a separate caste of mankind, from the highest to the lowest, had become extremely perplexing to the civil government, and a great obstruction to its administration. The church demanded complete exemption from the control of secular law. It was boldly maintained, that the persons and property of the clergy should be placed beyond the reach of the ordinary tribunals, responsible only to their own superiors, and directly subject in life and property to the decrees of Rome. But lawlessness leads to violence; and the result of this papal aggression in England was a fearful increase of crime, to the imminent peril of the life and property of the subject. "For example," says our barrister, "it was proved that, since the commencement of the reign of Henry II., no fewer than a hundred murders had been committed by clerks in orders with almost absolute impunity. Rape, arson, robbery, theft, were excused or sheltered under the frock of the priest or the cowl of the monk; no penalties known to the anon law existed adequate to the repression and punishment of crimes of so deep a dye, and King Henry was at length driven to put the significant question, 'Whether the ancient laws and customs of the realm were to be observed or not.'"

The King, determined to bring these great questions to an issue, summoned a parliament at Westminster, and demanded a plain answer to his question. The answer given by the clergy to the King's question was that the ancient laws and customs of the realm ought to be observed and kept, "saying always the privileges of their order." This reply, although it had the appearance of an evasion, was really a refusal. The King, in a state of great consternation, broke up the assembly, left London, and began to deprive Becket of his power, and of the privilege and honour of educating his son. The bishops taking alarm, knowing the pride and power of Henry, entreated their primate either to withdraw or change the offensive answer. But he at first declared that if an angel from heaven should counsel such weakness, he would hold him accursed. He at length, however, yielded: some say through the influence of Pope Alexander, as Henry had threatened not to pay Peter's pence. And thus, all through the long quarrel, the pope sided with the king when he needed money, and with Becket when he could do without it.

The Constitutions of Clarendon

But, having received an answer in the affirmative from the hierarchy, the king summoned a great council of the realm to **Clarendon,** a royal palace near Salisbury, to ratify the concession. The King's object was peace. The law of the land was everywhere set at defiance by the church, the exercise of justice interrupted, and the country threatened with an internecine war. The King had the laws and customs drawn up in due legal form to be signed by the lay barons and bishops, in the hope of settling the contest between the crown and the church. Whether from fear of the King's rage, or from policy, or treachery, it is difficult to say; but the archbishop took the oath and signed the celebrated **"Constitutions of Clarendon."** He was followed by the rest of the bishops. They thus escaped out of the hands of the King and the barons. But it is perfectly plain that Becket never for a moment intended to obey the laws which he had so solemnly sealed and sworn to keep to the King's honour. He knew his remedy for the basest perjury. Not a moment was to be lost; he made known to the pope what he had reluctantly done; and within a month he received a formal condemnation of the "Constitutions," with letters "absolving him from all engagements contrary to the canons, and a mandate to all the bishops and prelates of the kingdom without scruple to break through any promises of the like nature they might have contracted."

Could perjury be more deliberate, or dissimulation more coolly perpetrated? And that by one who stood highest in the church and nearest to the person of his royal master? The heart sickens as the pen transcribes such daring unblushing wickedness. Surely there is no iniquity so great as that which cloaked itself under the name of Jesus, and of Christianity. Such revelations give us the most distressing ideas of the evil spirit of popery. The worst of crimes towards both God and man are justifiable if they further the worldly power and greatness of the church. When, and in what circumstances, we may ask, with such double dealing before us, is the real papist to be trusted? Thankful we are that we are not his judge, but God will judge mankind. "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Act 17:31)

The archbishop, who had won the confidence, and made himself familiar with every feeling of the King's heart, kept the pope fully informed of all that passed between them, so that he well knew when to humour the King and when his zealous minister. But surely this is the basest of all treachery on the part of a servant, and the most unrighteous conduct on the part of his spiritual guide. But no man can serve two masters. He must be traitor to one; and so it was in the case before us; and one of the darkest complexion on record. No sooner had the primate appended his seal to the "Constitutions of Clarendon," than Alexander had notice both of his repentance and his renunciation. "The poison was no sooner swallowed than the antidote was at his lips."*

{**Cathedra Petri,* book 12, vol. 5, p. 219. See also a full account of the whole contest in Milman's *History of Latin Christianity,* vol. 3, pp. 434-528. The former may be considered the constitutional, the latter the historical, view of the long quarrel.}

Thomas A Becket opposes the King

War was now publicly declared between the prerogative of the crown and the pretensions of the church. The same battle which was fought between Henry IV. of Germany and Gregory VII., was to be fought over again on English ground by the King and the archbishop. Becket resigned the chancellorship and returned the seals of his office. He withdrew from the pleasures of the court, the chase, the banquet, the tournament, the war, and the board of council; and became all at once an austere and mortified monk. He wore a monk's frock, a haircloth shirt, and flogged himself with an iron scourge. All his fine establishments were broken up; he fasted on bread and water, lay on the hard floor, and every night with his own hands he washed the feet of thirteen beggars. This assumed unapproachable sanctity was his strength for battle. Secular hands may not touch the holy man of God - the Lord's anointed high priest. Becket knew his man; he had studied every fold of his character.

Henry was astonished, uneasy, disappointed. He had raised his favourite minister to the still higher position of Archbishop of Canterbury, that his services might be more effectual against the Romanizing party in England. It was no question, be it observed, as to the proper legal privileges of the church of England; Henry had shown no disposition to encroach upon them. But the church had shown, through the instructions of the pope, the most resolute purpose to encroach on the liberties of the crown and the whole people of England. And the King knew no man in all his dominions so able to contend in talent and acuteness with the emissaries of Rome as his gay chancellor and boon-companion.

Now, he thought, we have one at the head of the Church, as well as the State, who will do good battle for the liberties of the crown and the people of his native land. But it was not for these worthy objects that Becket had accepted the ring and crosier. From the moment that he touched his episcopal crucifix, he was the sworn vassal to death of the Roman See, and the avowed enemy of every man and principle that opposed the interests of the chair of St. Peter. And Henry soon found that his able and pliant chancellor, "from whom he had expected support and victory, had turned against him with the most ruthless animosity, and pushed the pretensions of Rome to a pitch they had never reached before."*

{*White's *Eighteen Christian Centuries,* p. 275.}

The Perplexity of the King

It is not difficult to suppose with what feelings the proud and injured Plantagenet received the news of his primate's behavior. Besides possessing wealth and power above any monarch of his time, he was a man of great ability, decision, and activity. After various but fruitless attempts to bring the refractory priest to repentance, orders were given that he should be tried as a traitor. Becket, knowing the temper and power of Henry, reasonably concluded that his best chance of personal safety lay in immediate flight. He was received by the King of France, not as a fugitive, but as a distinguished guest worthy of all honour. The archbishop was now proclaimed a traitor; his personal friends and relations and friends were banished; and severe measures were adopted to prevent communications with his partisans in England. Becket, in retaliation, excommunicated all his opponents. And thus the storm and strife raged for seven long years; during which time, many sovereigns, popes and anti-popes, prelates and dignitaries of every kind, were mixed up with it. But into that maze of falsehood, treachery, and unrighteousness, we must not follow.

Having examined with some care the great questions of Church and State - and not without a measure of national interest - which led to this unseemly contest, we feel that our work is done. The details of these seven years would be tedious and unprofitable to read, and most painful to write. The worst passions of our fallen human nature were abundantly displayed. Besides, such disputes can have no termination unless it be in the death of the priest or the submission of the King. According to papal principles the priest can never be wrong and can never yield.

This was Becket's ground, and he inflexibly maintained it. But at last, through the intercession of the French king and the pope, he was allowed to return from his exile. The sincerity of Henry he much doubted, but his return he considered a glorious triumph over the King. He was as haughty and unyielding as ever. He demanded the immediate restitution of the estates of his See, and peremptorily refused to absolve the bishops and others whom he had excommunicated.

As from the beginning of the strife, his bearing was insulting and defiant. The conduct of Becket since his return was detailed to Henry by the bishops who implored his protection for themselves and the clergy of the realm. One of them incautiously said, "So long as Thomas lives, you will never be at peace." The King's mind was greatly troubled and sought relief. Chafed to madness by the unconquerable firmness and arrogance of Becket, the secret wish of his heart **burst** from his lips - "I am an unhappy prince: will none revenge me on a single insolent priest, who gives me so much trouble, and endeavours by every means to make void my royal authority?"

Thomas A Becket Assassinated

A.D. 1171

It is by no means certain that there was any deadly purpose in the mind of the King when he uttered these hasty words, but those around him put their own interpretation upon them. Four knights, chamberlains of the King, fierce and warlike men, resolved on the desperate service. Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Reginald Brito, disappeared from the court, then at Bayeux. Fearing the intention of the absent knights, the King despatched with all speed the Earl of Mandeville with orders to arrest the primate, and to recall the four knights. But the murderers hurried across the channel, and before the King's messengers could overtake them, the archbishop was assassinated.

The particulars of this dark deed of blood are well-known to most of our readers, and need not be dwelt upon here. But we may add, as well-authenticated history, that it does not appear that the four knights had deliberately determined on the murder of the primate without first endeavouring to obtain a promise of obedience to the King, and to absolve the bishops. Hence they entered his chamber unarmed. But their imperious demands, and his haughty defiant answers, roused the worst passions of those feudal lords, who had a strong sense of the subject's allegiance to the sovereign. They became furious, rushed out and called for their arms. The gates were closed behind them. It was some time before they could break in. Every one knew what must follow. The archbishop might have escaped but he would not; the victory was already his, it would be greater if he were martyred. The bell was toiling for vespers. He walked into the church in solemn state with his crosier carried before him. The noise of armed men was heard in the cloister; the affrighted monks fled. "Where is the traitor?" shouted one, no answer. "Where is the archbishop?" "Here I am," he answered. Again the knights demanded the absolution of the bishops, and an oath of allegiance to the King. He refused. A fierce altercation followed, which ended in blows, and the archbishop was slain at the altar. The murderers fled, first to Rome to do penance, then to Jerusalem, where, according to the pope's orders, they spent the remainder of their days in penitential austerities.

The Humiliation of Henry II

The King was greatly troubled on hearing the appalling news of the sacrilegious murder. A feeling of horror ran through Christendom, and the King was branded as an irreligious tyrant, and Becket was worshipped as a martyred saint. His death was attributed to the King's direct orders. For three days and nights the unhappy monarch shut himself up in solitude, and refused all food and comfort, till his attendants began to fear for his life. At the close of his penance he sent envoys to the pope to clear himself of all participation in the crime. Alexander was so indignant at first, that he would listen to nothing, or even permit the execrated name of the King of England to be uttered in his presence. He threatened to excommunicate the King by name, and to pronounce with the utmost solemnity an interdict on all his dominions. "Mediators, however, were always to be found," says Greenwood, "for a proper consideration at the papal court. Certain cardinals were cautiously sounded, and found not inaccessible to the arguments with which the envoys were, as usual, abundantly supplied. Thus introduced, the pope permitted himself to be propitiated." Terms of reconciliation were talked of, but the pope had now his foot on the King's neck and he was determined to have papal terms before he relieved him. His personal triumph over the headstrong King was as complete as could be desired.

Two cardinals were despatched by Alexander with legatine power to meet Henry in Normandy, inquire more fully into the whole case, and substantiate the **King's penance.** Henry swore on the Gospels that he had neither commanded nor desired the death of Becket, that he had not grieved so deeply over the death of his father or his mother; yet he confessed that words uttered in his anger against that holy man might possibly have led to his death; for which cause he was prepared to do penance as the pontiff might see fit to exact. The Holy See then demanded and Henry stipulated: "1. To maintain two hundred knights at his own cost in the Holy Land. 2. That within three years he would take the cross in person, unless released by the Holy See. 3. To abrogate the Constitutions of Clarendon, and all bad customs introduced during his reign. 4. That he would reinvest the church of Canterbury in all its rights and possessions, and pardon and restore to their estates all who had incurred his wrath in the cause of the primate. 5. That he and his son Henry the younger, would hold, preserve, and keep the crown of England faithful to Pope Alexander and his successors, and that they and their successors would not regard themselves as true kings until they - the pope and his successors - should have acknowledged them as such." Having duly sealed and attested the formal deed, the King was reconciled to the pope in the porch of the church, on May 22, 1172; but he was not yet out of the hands of the inexorable priests; his degradation was not yet complete.

The clergy preached from their pulpits, and the people were ready enough to believe, that certain family trials which befell the King about this time were the judgments of God for the persecution of His saint. The people were also led to believe that the saint had been fighting the battles of the poor against the rich- especially of the poor and oppressed Saxons against the cruel and avaricious Normans. Depressed by misfortunes, accused of complicity with the murderers, and haunted by superstitious fears, the unhappy prince was prepared to make a full atonement for his sins. Nothing short of a public humiliation, he was assured, could appease offended heaven and the martyred saint. The scenes of Canosa must be enacted over again. Such is the true spirit of the relentless priesthood of Rome. If they cannot shed the blood of their victims, they will force him to drink the bitterest dregs of humiliation.

The Penance of Henry at the Tomb of Becket

A.D. 1174

About three years after the death of Becket, the King visited his tomb at Canterbury. When he came within sight of the church where the archbishop lay buried, he alighted from his horse, and for three miles walked in the habit of a pilgrim with bare and bleeding feet along the rough road. He threw himself prostrate before the tomb of the now canonised saint. After lying in that position for a considerable time he prayed to be scourged by the monks; an operation which they were not unwilling to perform. So, from one end of the church to the other, the pride of the monks was gratified, by each one inflicting a few stripes on the back of the haughty Norman. He then passed all that day and night without any refreshment, kneeling upon the bare stones.

The triumph of the spiritual over the temporal power, in the person of the King, and well nigh over the law of the land, was complete. And thus the ambitious purposes of the papacy were better served by the death of their champion than they could have been by a prolongation of his life.

Reflections on the Close of the Great Struggle

By way of helping the reader to form a fair judgment on this long and bitter contest, we offer a few reflections. Nothing, we believe, can give the protestant reader so just an estimate of the real spirit of popery as a history of its ambitious designs, and its unscrupulous means of attaining them.

If we inquire, What was the real object of the great and tragic struggle, what answer can be given? Was it for the spiritual liberties of the church of God, that she might be privileged to worship and serve Him according to the teaching of His holy word? Had the primate or the pope in view, the civil and religious liberties of individual Christians, or the welfare of mankind at large? Or did they even raise the voice of remonstrance against the King or his court for their open and flagrant violation of the laws of God, and warn them of judgment to come? All who have taken pains to examine the details of the controversy must admit, however sorrowfully, that none of these worthy objects had any place in their thoughts. Their object was one, and only one *priestly power!* Every thing - truth, Christianity, the peace of the church, the peace of the nation, to say nothing of the glory of Christ, or the realities of eternity - all were sacrificed on the altar of the deified claims of the clergy. Becket was the representative of these claims. He demanded for the persons and property of the clergy an absolute inviolable sanctity. "From beginning to end," says Milman "it was a strife for the authority, the immunities, the possessions of the clergy. The liberty of the church was the exemption of the clergy from law; the vindication of their separate, exclusive, distinctive existence from the rest of mankind. It must be acknowledged by all, that if the King would have consented to allow the churchmen to despise all law - if he had not insisted on hanging priests guilty of homicide as freely as laymen - he might have gone on unreproved in his career of ambition; he might unrebuked have lived in direct violation of every christian precept of justice, humanity, conjugal fidelity, extorted without remonstrance of the clergy any revenue from his subjects, if he had kept his hands from the treasures of the church."

Such is the solemn and weighty judgment of a church dignitary, who will not be accused of prejudice against his own class, but whose criticisms are considered most valuable and just, as his history is in other respects most reliable.

We not only agree with all the Dean says but would add that no language, however weighty and solemn, could adequately express the depths of evil which were sheltered and propagated by the papal system. We speak not thus, be it observed, of the Catholic church, or rather of the church ecclesiastically considered as distinct from the papacy; but of the secular ambition and unscrupulous policy of the popes, especially from the time of Hildebrand. But there have been, notwithstanding, during the darkest period of her history, many dear saints of God in her communion, who knew nothing of the evil ways of the bishop of Rome and his council. This the Lord Himself intimates, in His address to Thyatira. "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan." Here we find a believing remnant connected with a system which is characterised by "the depths of Satan." (Rev 2:24)

Before taking our leave of this already long story, we would further add, that the tragic **death of Becket** was immediately and diligently improved by the disciples of his school. Biographies and memoirs of the martyr, we are informed, were multiplied and scattered abroad with surprising industry. The strong element of idolatry, which has ever been in the church of Rome, now became manifest in England. Pilgrimages to the tomb of the martyr for the remission of sins became fashionable; and the saint himself became an object of popular devotion. Pilgrims from all parts flocked to his shrine, and enriched it with the most costly gifts and offerings. A large trade was done in articles said to have been in contact with his person, and were now invested with miraculous virtue. As many as one hundred thousand pilgrims were registered on one occasion in Canterbury. Even Louis VII. of France made a pilgrimage to the wonder-working tomb, and bestowed on the shrine a jewel which was esteemed the richest in Christendom. But **Henry VIII.** dared to pillage the rich shrine, ordered the saint to be raised, his bones to be burnt, and his ashes to be thrown to the winds.

23 Church of Rome

Chapter 23

The Theology of the Church of Rome

We are now crossing the threshold of the thirteenth century. The great actors and the stirring times of the twelfth have passed away. The reflection is a solemn one. Beyond the line that separates the two states of being, it is well that we cannot pass. And were it not that the agitation of the twelfth century is really though remotely connected with the great Reformation of the sixteenth, it would possess but little interest to us in the nineteenth. But in these men and their times, we see the great currents of human thought and feeling which had their rise in the monastery, and their results in the civil and religious liberty which we now enjoy under the good providence of God.

A new generation, another class of men, now occupy the ground. The popes, the primates, the emperors, the monks the philosophers, the demagogues, with whom we had become familiar, have made room for others. But whither are they gone? Where are they now? We only ask the question that we may be led to improve our own day and our own precious opportunities - that we may not have to lament with the prophet of old, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." (Jer 8:20)

The right time has come, we believe, when the witnesses for God and His truth should have a special place in our history. They come prominently before us from the close of the twelfth century. But first of all it may be well to place before our readers certain theological definitions and usages of the Roman church at this time, for we shall find that by these the witnesses were judged, and the papacy gained its power over the lives and liberties of the saints of God.

The Seven Sacraments

In the New Testament, where all is plain and simple, we only read of two sacraments, or divine institutions, as connected with a saved people - baptism and the Lord's supper But in both the Greek and Latin churches the number had been greatly increased and variously stated by different theologians. It was no longer a question of divine revelation, but of the human imagination. Some speak of as many as **twelve sacraments;** but in the Western church the mystical number of seven was ultimately established, as corresponding with the idea of the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost. And these were - baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony.*

{*See J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, pp. 259-272.}

Thus was the snare laid for the feet of the true followers of Christ. It mattered not how sincerely a man believed and obeyed the word of God, if he disregarded the sacraments of the church and her numerous ceremonies, he exposed himself to the charge and the consequences of heresy. On the other hand, it mattered nothing though the word of God was utterly despised, if obedience to the church was professed. But for all who followed the Lord according to His word escape was impossible. The net was widely spread.

Transubstantiation

To attempt an enumeration of all the additions made to the outward observances of religion would be hopeless. Many new rites, ceremonies, usages, holidays, and festivals were added from time to time, both by the pontiffs publicly and by the priests privately. But no priestly invention ever made such way, or produced such an impression on the popular mind, as transubstantiation. The dogma nowhere occurs in the writings of either the Greek or Latin Fathers. The first trace of it is to be found in the eighth century. In the ninth, a period of great darkness, the monk Pascasius seems to have given form and definiteness to the monster superstition. In the eleventh, it was strongly opposed by Berengar of Tours, and ably defended by Anselm of Canterbury. It continued to be a subject of contention among the doctors till the fourth Lateran council, which was held in the year 1215. It was then placed among the settled doctrines of the church of Rome. By a canon of that council it was affirmed, that when the officiating priest utters the words of consecration, the sacramental elements of bread and wine are converted into the substance of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The body and blood of Christ," they say, "are contained really in the sacrament of the altar under the species of bread and wine; the bread being transubstantiated into the body of Jesus Christ, and the wine into His blood, by the power of God, through the officiating priest. The change thus effected is declared to be so perfect and complete, that the elements contain Christ whole and entire - divinity, humanity, soul, body, and blood, with all their component parts."*

{*Gardner's *Faiths of the World,* vol. 2, p. 905. See also an able essay on this subject, Edgar's *Variations of Popery, pp.* 347-388.}

From that period, the consecrated bread of the Eucharist received divine honours. Important changes also were introduced about the same time in the manner of administering the sacrament. The consecrated wine, it was said, was in danger of being profaned by the beard dipping into the chalice, from the sick not being able to swallow it, and from children being likely to spill it. So the cup was withheld from the laity and the sick; and infant communion discontinued altogether, at least by the Latins: the Greeks retained it and still practise it.

The most dreadful **superstitions** naturally followed the establishment of the doctrine of transubstantiation. At a certain part of the mass service the priest elevates the host the consecrated sacramental wafer - and at the same instant the people fall prostrate before it in worship. On some occasions, the wafer is placed in a beautiful casket, and carried in solemn procession through the streets, every individual, as it passes him, bowing the knee in token of adoration. In Spain when a priest carries the consecrated wafer to a person who is supposed to be dying, he is accompanied by a man ringing a small bell; and at the sound of the bell all who hear it are obliged to fall on their knees and remain in that posture as long as they hear its sound. The priests make the people believe that the living God, in the form of bread, resides in that casket, and may be carried from place to place. Surely this is the consummation of all iniquity, idolatry, and blasphemy; and the exposing of everything sacred to the ridicule of the profane. It was conceived and cradled in a time of great ignorance, depravity, and superstition.

Such was and is the daring wickedness of the **Popish priesthood;** such the pitiful but guilty blindness of the Romish church! Yet God has suffered it a thousand years; but a day of reckoning will come when He will judge the secrets of men's hearts, not by the standard of a Roman ritual, but by the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom 14:11-12)

Mary-Worship

The worship of the Virgin Mary originally sprang from the ascetic spirit which became so prevalent in the fourth century. Before this period, there is no trace of the worship of Mary. About the same time - the close of the fourth century - it was discovered and circulated that there were in the temple at Jerusalem virgins consecrated to God, among whom Mary grew up in vows of perpetual virginity. This new doctrine led to the veneration of Mary as the very ideal of the celibate state, and sanctioned the profession of religious chastity. Soon after this it became customary to apply to the virgin the appellation, **"Mother of God;"** which gave rise to the Nestorian controversy. But, in spite of all opposition, Mary-worship prevailed; and, in the fifth century, images and beautiful paintings of the virgin, holding the infant Jesus in her arms were placed in all the churches. Thus introduced she rapidly rose into an object of direct worship; and Mariolatry became the ruling passion of the Romish church. The daily office for Mary, and the days and festivals which had been dedicated to her honour, were confirmed by Urban II. in the Council of Clermont, A.D. 1095.

Reverence for the blessed virgin was now an established doctrine and practice in the church of Rome, and has so continued down to the present day. Romanists may affect to deny that they honour Mary with the worship due to God only, but in their books of devotion prayers to the virgin occupy a prominent place. No prayer, we believe, is in more constant use than the "Aye Maria," or **"Hail Mary,"** which, after quoting a passage from the salutation of the angel Gabriel to the virgin, adds these words, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and in the hour of death, Amen." Again, in another prayer, the virgin is thus addressed, "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin." Another runs thus, "Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! to thee we cry, poor banished sons of Eve, to thee we send up our sighs, mourning, and weeping in this valley of tears, turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us," etc. She is also called, "Ark of the Covenant," "Gate of heaven," "Morning Star," "Refuge of sinners," and many other such terms, which plainly show the idolatrous place which Mary occupies in the devotions of the Romish church.*

{*For details see "Mariolatry," Gardner's *Faiths of the World,* vol. 2, p. 372. Butler's *Lives of the Saints,* October 1-the great Roman Catholic book on this subject.}

The **Rosary,** that is, a series of prayers, and a string of beads by which they are counted - consists of fifteen decades. Each decade contains ten Ave Marias, marked by small beads, preceded by a Pater Noster, marked by a larger bead, and concluded by a Gloria Patri. The Romish Breviary also, the great universal book of devotion, of which every priest must read a portion each day in private under pain of mortal sin, uses the following strong language as to the virgin: "If the winds of temptation arise, if thou run upon the rocks of tribulation, look to the star, call upon Mary. If thou art tossed on the waves of pride, of ambition, of distraction, of envy, look to the star, call upon Mary. If anger or avarice, or the temptation of the flesh toss the bark of thy mind, look to Mary. If disturbed with the greatness of thy sins, troubled at the defilement of thy conscience, affrighted at the horrors of the judgment, thou beginnest to be swallowed up in the gulf of sadness, the abyss of despair, think upon Mary - in dangers, in difficulties, in doubts, think upon Mary, invoke Mary." So completely did the worship of Mary become the worship of Christendom, that every cathedral, almost every spacious church, had its *"Chapel of our Lady."*

It is surely more than evident from these quotations, that Mary is addressed as not only an intercessor with her Son but the first and highest object of worship. And these are calm and sober specimens compared with the wild language of a chivalrous adoration, which is to be found in hymns, psalters, and breviaries. The attributes of Godhead are assigned to her, and she is represented as the **Queen of Heaven,** and sitting between cherubim and seraphim. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was the natural result of this growing adoration of Mary. It has been re-asserted as an article of faith in the Romish church by the present pope and generally accepted.

Saint-Worship

The origin of saint-worship may be considered as coeval with that of Mary-worship, and the fruit of the same soil. Indeed it is the same thing; only Mary is raised high above all the host of saints and martyrs because of her peculiar sanctity and her great influence in heaven.

The veneration that was paid in the early ages of Christianity to those who had faithfully witnessed and suffered for Christ, no doubt led to the practice of invoking the saints, and imploring the benefit of their intercession. A pardonable affection became a superstitious veneration, and ended in a positive adoration. The step between veneration and adoration is easy and natural, though not always observable. Hence the importance of the apostle's warning, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." According to this word it would appear, that all who have not the Person of Christ before them, as the one all-governing object of the heart have an idol. The apostle has just been speaking of our wondrous place and blessing in Him; as he says, "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." Having eternal life in Him, and being identified with Him as to our position before God, surely He ought to be our one object. Any other is an idol. And the best of Christians are in danger of paying too much homage to some favourite teacher or leader. How will all this compare with John's epistle in the last great day? The Lord keep us from undue veneration for the creature, whether living or dead!

A great and influential system arose out of these small beginnings, through the subtlety of the priesthood, which ultimately brought enormous wealth to the church. **Pilgrimages** with their atonement money and free-will offerings are parts of the system. At an early period it was customary to perform religious services with peculiar sanctity at the graves of the saints and martyrs. But as the darkness thickened and the spirit of superstition increased, this was not enough. In the fourth century splendid churches were built over their once humble burial-places; and even some supposed relic of the saint was enshrined in the building erected to his honour. It was usually affirmed that the body of the miracle-working saint was buried under the high altar; and that there was a special efficacy in the intercession of such saints. This drew myriads to their shrines; some to see wonders done, others to have miracles wrought in their favour, or receive good to their souls. Pilgrimages soon became the most popular kind of worship, and as the worshippers were lavish with their oblations - their hearts being warm and tender- it was greatly encouraged by a sordid priesthood. During the sixth century an incredible number of temples arose in honour of the saints, and numerous festivals were instituted to keep up the remembrance of these holy men.

According to Milman and others, so popular did saint-worship become, that they were in danger of being overlooked because of their multiplicity, or rather, infinity. "The crowded calendar knew not what day it could assign to the new saint without clashing with, or dispossessing, an old one. The East and the West vied with each other in their fertility. But of the countless saints of the East, few comparatively were received in the West; and the East as disdainfully rejected many of the most famous, whom the West worshipped with the most earnest devotion. Still the multiplicity of the saints bears witness to the universality of the idolatry." Rivalry of church with church, of town with town, of kingdom with kingdom, of order with order, kept up a state of excitement for centuries, in order to attract the concourse of worshippers to the shrine of their patron saint. The fame of some new celebrated saint, such as St. Thomas of Canterbury, drew away, for a time, the traffic and profit from other places. Hence the necessity of creating some fresh excitement by fresh discoveries of that which would turn the tide in favour of the new shrine. Even while we write - September, 1873, most sorrowful to say, nearly a thousand pilgrims from England are on their way, not with naked feet as of old, to Paray-le-monial, in France; there to bow down before the shrine of the **"Sacred Heart,"** in honour of the blessed Mother, Margaret Mary Alacoque. This is a surprise to all, and awakens deep thoughts in many minds as to its real object in the mind of the papacy. Professedly of course it is for the good of the pilgrims' souls, the honour of the saint, and the triumph of the church. If we go as far back as the days of Origen, who was the first to inculcate saint-worship or to the shrine of Martin of Tours, which was the most popular in the fourth and fifth centuries; and come down to the present day, we have about fourteen hundred years of saint-worship and pilgrimages both in the Greek and Latin churches. No wonder that the Mahometans concluded that all Christians were idolaters.

Most of us have been familiar with the names of what may be called *universal saints,* such as the early fathers and the **patron saints of kingdoms;** but to discover on a closer search the extent of this idolatry is truly appalling. Throughout the extent of Roman Christendom there is to every country community, and individual, an intercessor with Christ, who is the One Great Intercessor between God and man. Many Catholics chose their patron saint from their birthday - the saint's day on which they were born. The saint is regarded as the peculiar protector of the individual, community, or country; so that scarcely less than divine power and divine will are assigned to the patron saints. The argument is that having been human, and still possessed of human sympathies, they are less awful, more accessible, than Christ, and may exercise their influence with Him for the benefit of the places and companions of their earthly sojourn. They are represented however as being changeable, and easily offended. Fruitful harvests, victory in war, deliverance in affliction, safety in travelling, and the like mercies, are attributed to their prayers; but, if there should be calamities, the saint is supposed to be offended, and must be appeased. More honour must be paid to his shrine, and more costly offerings must be laid upon his altar.

Relic-Worship

The history of relic-worship being similar in its character to that of saint-worship, a brief notice will be sufficient. Its origin is the same. The passion, the weakness, it may be, of our nature, for cherishing memorials of beloved ones, was used by the enemy to betray Christians into the most degrading kind of worship. If it was argued, our fondness for the memorials of human affection be so excusable, and so amiable, "how much more so of objects of holy love, the saints, the blessed Virgin, the Saviour Himself!" But however specious such reasoning may be, it is neither fair nor true. The deep delusion, the Satanic power, and the terrible wickedness of relic-worship, lies mainly in the fact, that the church of Rome maintains *that there is an inherent indefeasible power in relics to work miracles;* and as such they are used and devoutly worshipped, from the pope down to the lowest in her communion.

As early as the days of Constantine, reverence for the **relics of saints and martyrs** had assumed the more definite form of positive adoration. The Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, in her superstitious zeal to do honour to the places in Palestine which had been hallowed by the life and death of the Saviour, erected splendid churches over the supposed places of His birth, His death, and ascension. During the necessary excavations the Holy Sepulchre, it was affirmed, came to light; and in the sepulchre were found the three crosses and the tablet, with the inscription originally written by Pilate in three languages. The news of this wonderful discovery rapidly spread all over Christendom, and created great excitement. As it was doubtful to which of the crosses the tablet belonged, a miracle decided the claims of the true cross. Singularly enough, the nails of the Saviour's passion were also found in the holy sepulchre. These precious treasures, we need scarcely say, proved inexhaustible capital for the traffic in relics. Parts of the true cross were made into crucifixes for the rich, and parts were enshrined in the principal churches both in the East and the West. So rapidly did the wood of the cross vegetate, said the wits, that it soon grew into a forest.

The passion for relics, which had been increasing every century, was greatly nourished by the crusades. Many saints before unknown, and relics innumerable, were then introduced to the Christians of the West. Passing over the vast quantity of old bones of reputed saints and other smaller relics, which were brought from the East, and became an important branch of traffic, we notice two or three of the most famous. And chief amongst these was the **"holy vessel" -** a green glass cup, said to be an emerald - brought from Caesarea, and venerated as having been used at the last supper. Another relic of great fame was the **seamless coat** of our Lord said to be found at Argenteuil in 1156; and also the *holy coat,* said to have been presented by the Empress Helena to the Archbishop of Treves.

We need only further add as a practical illustration of relic-worship, that in holy week every year the pope and cardinals go in procession to St. Peter's at Rome, for the purpose of adoring the three great relics. When performing the ceremony they kneel in the nave of the church, and the relics, which are exhibited from the balcony above the statue of St. Veronica, consist of a part of the wood of the true cross, one half of the spear that pierced the Saviour's side, and the holy countenance. This latter relic is a piece of cloth on which our Lord is said to have miraculously impressed His countenance, and which was brought to Italy for the cure of the Emperor Tiberias when afflicted with leprosy. The ceremony takes place in solemn silence. Outwardly no act of worship is more profound in the Roman Catholic church. Could folly, we may ask, or absurdity, or human weakness, or Satanic power, be carried to a greater height? For men of education, and, in many cases, men of cultivation and piety, to bow down in profoundest adoration before a piece of rotten wood, a broken spear, and a painted rag, can only be accounted for on the principle of the most solemn judicial blindness. Gross darkness has long settled down on both priest and people through their deliberate concealment of the word of God and quenching the light of the Holy Spirit. And this must always be the case, more or less, whether for Catholic or for Protestant, when God and His word are disregarded, as saith the prophet, "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." (Jer 13:16)

Purgatory

Augustine, bishop of Hippo, is said to be the first who suggested the doctrine of a middle state, but his opinions are vague and uncertain. It was not formally received as a dogma of the church of Rome until the time of Gregory the Great, A.D. 600. He has the reputation of being the discoverer of the fires of purgatory. In discussing the question of the state of the soul after death, he distinctly says, "We must believe that for some slight transgressions there is a purgatorial fire before the day of judgment." But as the growth of this doctrine for hundreds of years is extremely difficult to trace, we will refer at once to the decrees of the Council of Trent, the great and undisputed authority on the subject.

"There is a purgatory," says the Council, "and the souls detained there are assisted by the suffrages of the faithful but especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the Mass. This holy council commands all bishops diligently to endeavour that the wholesome doctrine concerning purgatory, delivered unto us by venerable fathers and sacred councils, be believed, held, taught, and everywhere preached by Christ's faithful. . . . . In the fire of purgatory the souls of just men are cleansed by a temporary punishment, in order to be admitted into their eternal country, into which nothing that defileth entereth . . . . . The sacrifice of the Mass is offered for those that are deceased in Christ, not entirely purged."*

{*Paul's Council *of Trent, p.* 750. See also, for details, Milner's *End of Controversy,* Letter 43.}

Roman Catholic writers attempt to support this dreadful dogma from various passages of scripture, but chiefly from the Apocrypha and tradition. With the two latter we have nothing to do. Anything men please may be proved from such uncertain sources; but nothing can be more daring, and at the same time more futile, than their misapplication of scripture on this subject. Take two texts as an example: 1. "Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." (Mat 5:26) Here the Catholics are inconsistent with themselves; for if venal sins are forgiven in purgatory, the passage speaks of the uttermost farthing being paid. Surely we cannot speak of a debt being forgiven, and at the same time paid to the last farthing. 2. "Quickened by the Spirit, by which [clearly, 'by which Spirit'] also he went and preached unto the **spirits in prison."** (1Pe 3:18-19) This passage can have no reference to the supposed prison of purgatory, for those who are guilty of mortal sin do not go there. And, strangely inconsistent according to the Douay version of the passage, the antediluvians were "incredulous," unbelievers, guilty of mortal sin. And, as we have seen in our extracts, purgatory is only for "those that are deceased in Christ, not entirely purged." The passage also teaches that Christ did not preach in *person.* He preached by the Spirit in Noah to the antediluvians who are *now* in prison. So little to the point are the texts alleged in favour of purgatory, that thoughtful Roman Catholics endeavour to support the dogma by the authority of the church alone.

There is much vagueness with Romish writers, and even with the Council of Trent, as to **where** purgatory is, and **what** it actually is. The general opinion seems to be that it is under the earth, and adjoining to hell - that it is a middle place between heaven and hell, in which the soul passes through the fire of purification before it enters heaven.

But how material fire can purify a spirit, Catholic writers have been careful enough not to define. Those in the middle state, says the Council of Florence, A.D. 1439, are in a place of torment, "but whether it be fire, or storm, or anything else, we do not dispute." Still the general voice seems to be that it is a prison, in which the soul is detained, and tortured as well as cleansed, and that, not by mental anguish or remorse, but by a real fire, or what fire produces. And yet so varied are the opinions of their best theologians, that some have represented the torments as a sudden transition from extreme heat to extreme cold. But the vague speculations of Augustine, and the adventurous dogmas of Gregory, were soon authenticated by dreams and visions. In the dark ages there were many travellers to those subterranean regions, who inspected and reported the secrets of purgatory. Take one report as an example, and that the mildest and the least offensive we can choose.

The Region of Purgatory

"Drithelm, whose story is related by authorities no less than Bede and Bellarmine, was led on his journey by an angel in shining raiment, and proceeded in the company of his guide towards the rising sun. The travellers arrived at length in a valley of vast dimensions. This region, to the left, was covered with roasting furnaces, and, to the right, with icy cold, hail, and snow. The whole valley was filled with human souls, which a tempest seemed to toss in all directions. The unhappy spirits, unable in the one part to bear the violent heat, leaped into the shivering cold, which again drove them into the scorching flames which cannot be quenched. A numberless multitude of deformed souls were in this manner whirled about and tormented, without intermission, in the extremes of alternate heat and cold. This, according to the angelic conductor who piloted Drithelm, is the place of chastisement for such as defer confession and amendment till the hour of death. All these, however, will at the last day be admitted to heaven; while many, through alms, vigils, prayers, . and especially the Mass, will be liberated even before the general judgment."* Any one may see at a glance the intention of this vision. It is skillfully drawn up, so as to act powerfully on the fears of the serious, to increase the power of the priesthood, and to secure large legacies for the church.

{*Edgar's *Variations of Popery,* p. 455.}

And is this the place, we may ask, to which holy mother church sends her pious and penitent children? Yes, and it is only the justified that go there. Those who die under the guilt of mortal sins go straight to hell, over the gloomy gates of which is written, "There is no hope." How dreadful the thought of purgatory must always be to every devout mind! As an illustration of this, we may mention that we happen to know at this moment a young lady who has lately embraced the Catholic religion, or, as the term is, "gone over to Rome. " She is rigidly devoted to the church, fresh in her first love, but evidently winces at the thought of purgatory. "I believe I shall go there," she will say; "I hope to go; for as I cannot pretend to be good enough to go straight to heaven when I die, I must pass through purgatory, but I may not be more than five hundred years there." There is no doubt of her being a true Christian, and justified from all things, but such is the blinding power of Satan through the papal system. We can only rejoice that ere long they will be happily undeceived, according to many portions of the word of God; such as - "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." .... "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." .... "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." .... "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." .... "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." .... "Thy sins, which were many are forgiven." (Col 1:2; 2 Cor. 5; Luke 23; Phil. 1; Luk 16:22)

It is perfectly plain from these passages, and many others that might be quoted, that the same moment the soul of the believer leaves the body it is present with the Lord in the paradise of God - surely the happiest place in all heaven. What then can be the object of the Romish church so to pervert scripture - so to deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ, which is said to cleanse the believer from all sin? To answer this question, the mind must comprehend and grapple with the very depths of Satan.

The Uses Made of Purgatory

Historically, the use which has been made of this Satanic superstition by the Romish priesthood has been to act upon the fears and affections of mankind. What would the young lady referred to above, or her fond parents, not give to save her five hundred years' torment in that dreadful abode? Praying souls out of purgatory, by Masses said on their behalf, became a source of untold treasure to the church. With a rich man dying, who could not take his wealth with him and who dreaded the torments of purgatory, the priest could make his own terms. Besides, out of this superstition arose the scandalous traffic in papal indulgences to mitigate the pains of the middle passage.

But there is yet another point of wickedness connected with this dogma, which we wonder the heart of man or of Satan could ever have conceived, and that is the **priest's authority** over his victim after he is dead and buried. He makes the departing soul believe that it will still be dependent on his influence, his intervention; that he has the key of purgatory, and that his doom hangs upon the word from the priest's lips. Surely these are the depths of Satan - we tremble as we seek to penetrate them. But lies they all are; and the most fearful blasphemy for any man to say that the keys of heaven, hell, and purgatory have been entrusted to

"Fear not," said the blessed Lord to John; "I have the keys of hell [hades] and of death." He only has power and authority over the unseen world, but scripture makes all plain to faith, that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Here it is plainly taught that the believer is not only pardoned and saved, but that he is now delivered from the whole realm of darkness, and now translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The language need not be mistaken; "Who hath" - not who will, or who can - but "Who hath:" it is true now, and the truth is to be enjoyed now. There is no power but in the hands of the risen Lord, and no purgatory but His precious blood, unless it be the washing of water by the word also. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Rev 1:17-18; Col 1:13; Psa 51:7, John 13, 15; 1 John 5)

The Greek Abyssinian, and Armenian churches **reject the doctrine of purgatory** in name, but hold it substantially. Prayers and masses are said for the dead, and incense burned over the graves of the deceased.*

{*Gardner's *Faiths of the World,* p. 721. Milman, vol. 6, p. 428.}

Extreme Unction

Like every false system, popery is glaringly inconsistent with itself. Falsehood, the mother of lies, is written upon her forehead, though there may be many honest and godly hearts in her communion. How unlike the perfect unity of divine truth! Though written by so many different persons, on so many different subjects, under so many different circumstances, and in so many different places and ages of the world, yet we have a perfect whole. Who can fail to see the glories of the cross, the riches of divine grace the lost condition of the sinner, and his full salvation, ail through scripture; for example, in Abel's lamb, Noah's ark, and in the cleansing of the leper? But in passing from one sacrament to another of the Romish system we find the flattest contradictions. Thus it is with purgatory and extreme unction. If there be any truth in extreme unction, purgatory is a mere delusion. There can be no such place, and no need for such a place. The declared object, and the effect of the sacred oil according to the **Council of Trent,** is to wipe away the remains of sins. The heretic who despises it must go straight to the depths of hell. Thus it is administered.

"The priest, having entered the house, shall put over his surplice a violet-covered stole, and present the cross to the sick person, to be devoutly kissed. Prayers having been recited, and holy water sprinkled, the priest dips his thumb in the holy oil, and anoints the sick, in the form of the cross. Beginning with the sense of sight, he anoints each eye, saying, 'The Lord, through His holy unction, and His most gracious compassion, forgive thee whatever sins thou hast committed by seeing.' After this manner there are seven annointings, one for each of the five senses - eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, and the other two are the breast and feet." After many prayers and crossings and the ceremony of burning the cloth which wiped the oil off the different parts of the anointed body and the priest's thumb, the dying man or woman is pronounced in a fit state to pass with safety to the port of eternal happiness.

This sacrament is never administered while there is any expectation of recovery to health. It is called **extreme** because it is the last to be administered. By means of this so-called infallible sacrament for the dying, one would naturally expect that purgatory would receive very few subjects from the church of Rome, so that it must be peopled by Protestants who despise the priestly ointment, or by those in the Romish communion who were disqualified to receive the sacrament. But there is great variety of opinion amongst Romanists on this subject. Some think that every soul without exception, from the pope downwards, however saintly the life may have been, or however properly the last sacrament may have been administered, must pass through purgatory - that no soul can pass direct from earth to heaven. They argue that, as no man has complete control over his thoughts, foolish and even sinful thoughts may pass through his mind during the administration of extreme unction, or immediately after it; therefore the soul must pass through the realm of purgatory on its way to heaven. Of course the sin may be so small that the detention may be very short. But even a Gregory or a Bernard must be purified by the fires of purgatory. Alas for the children of Rome! we would exclaim, they must all be the slaves of the prince of purgatory before they can taste the liberty and happiness of heaven. How dreadful, how gloomy, the thoughts of death must ever be! How different from the thoughts and feelings of the great apostle, when he said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." If he lived, he lived Christ; he enjoyed the fullest and sweetest fellowship with Him: if he died, he made a gain upon that . . . . "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." Besides, the word of God is positive as to all believers in Christ Jesus - "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." (Php 1:21-23; 2Co 5:8)

The allusion in the New Testament to the ancient practice of **anointing** has given the Catholic writers great boldness in pressing the necessity of this sacrament. But they carefully overlook or conceal the fact, that scriptural anointing was for the miraculous healing of the body, and the lengthening of the days of the living. Romish unction is for the soul - a permanent sacrament for the conveyance of grace, the pardon of sin, the attainment of salvation, in the hour of death. Apostolic unction was for the recovery of health; extreme unction is the last preparation for death. "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." (Mar 6:13; Jam 5:14-15)

It is not difficult to see how superstition would use such passages for the accomplishment of its own ends; but it is perfectly plain that the original anointing was used for the recovery of health in particular persons, and continued while the gift of healing and the power of working miracles remained, which probably scarce survived the apostolic age. And extreme unction, in its present form, was unknown in the church during the first eleven centuries of her history. It was established during the reign of ignorance and priestcraft in the twelfth century, and ultimately received the stamp of the great seal of the Council of Trent.

Auricular Confession

The sacraments of the church of Rome being considered necessary to spiritual life, and at the disposal of the priesthood, necessarily gave them enormous power. But none of its many sacraments tended to increase the influence of the priests, or to enslave and lower the morality of the people more than auricular **confession.** From the Emperor to the peasant the whole heart of every man and woman belonging to the church of Rome was laid open to the priest. No act scarcely a thought, at least in the dark ages. was kept a secret from the father confessor. To conceal or disguise the truth was a sin to be punished with the most humiliating penance, or, it might be, with the pains of hell for ever. Before a power so arbitrary, so irresponsible, so dreaded who did not tremble? The priests thus became a kind of spiritual police, to whom every man was bound to inform against himself. They knew the secrets of all persons, of all families, of all governments, of all societies, and, of course how to rule and lay their plans so as to accomplish whatever they pleased. The conscience, the moral as well as the religious or spiritual being of man, were in their power. It was like the seal and consummation of all wickedness and blasphemy. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, masters and servants, were all under their secret, but real supervision and control.

The power thus gained in the confessional was exercised for the alleged good of the church - sometimes on granting delaying, or refusing absolution, as the case might be. All depended on the ends to be gained by the church: the most selfish, cruel, and unprincipled use has often been made of information thus religiously given. We refer especially to the long protracted cases of dispute and discipline, which never could be settled until the church had gained the day. Excommunication was a real thing in those days, and the pope a real antagonist. When Hildebrand thundered a sentence of excommunication against Henry, released his subjects from their oath of fealty, and pronounced him deprived of his throne, he found it a vain thing to fight against the pope though he was at that time the greatest sovereign in Europe. He was forced to yield; and in the most degraded condition, barefoot, and shivering with cold, he humbly supplicated the inexorable monk to remove the censure of the church, and reinstate him on his throne. The awful sentence of excommunication cut the offender off, whatever his rank or station, and as salvation was considered an utter impossibility beyond the pale of the Romish church, there was no hope for any one dying under this sentence. Even the body might be denied a resting-place in consecrated ground, but the soul would be the prey of demons for ever.

The Origin of the Confessional

The history of this innovation is not easily traced, neither is it necessary for our purpose. The question of private confession, and of priestly absolution, had often been discussed by the theologians, but no definite law on the subject was laid down by the church till the beginning of the thirteenth century. In the year 1215, under the pontificate of Innocent III., the practice of auricular confession was authoritatively enjoined by the fourth Council of Lateran upon the faithful of both sexes at least once a year. From that time, down to the present day, it has been considered a positive divine ordinance in the church of Rome. It is also practised in the Greek and Coptic churches.

The principal passages of scripture adduced by Romanists on this subject, are - "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." .... "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (Jam 5:16; Joh 20:23) The first of these passages evidently refers to the mutual confession of faults on the part of Christians; and the second to church discipline, but neither certainly to the secret confession of sins into the ear of a priest, with the view of receiving absolution. The duty, or privilege, of confession must be admitted by all, Protestants as well as Catholics; but the question is, to whom ought we to confess? To a priest, or to God? Numerous passages might be quoted, from both the Old and New Testaments, to prove that confession of sin is to be made to God. Take one from each. "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." .... "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (Jos 7:19; 1Jn 1:8-9)

But the **form of confession** prescribed by the Romish church to be used by every penitent at the confessional will best show us its real character. He must kneel down at the side of his confessor, and make the sign of the cross, saying, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, "I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed Mary, ever virgin, to blessed Michael the archangel, to blessed John Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter, and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, my ghostly father, that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault." At this point of the ceremony the penitent specifies his several sins in their details, without evasion or equivocation; the most indelicate or the most diabolical are poured into the ear of the priest, whatever he may be. We know what many of them have been. When the priest has satisfied himself with details, the penitent goes on - "Therefore I beseech the blessed Mary, ever virgin, the blessed Michael the archangel, blessed John Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, and you, my ghostly father, to pray to our Lord God for me. I am heartily sorry, purpose amendment for the future, and most humbly ask pardon of God, and penance and absolution of you, my ghostly father."*

{*Gardner's *Faiths of the World,* vol. 1, p. 582. Milman, vol. 6, p. 361.}

The penitent is now in the hands, and entirely at the mercy of the priest. He may prescribe the most unreasonable penance, or delay his absolution until his own evil ends are gained. But there we must leave them, and briefly notice, under the head of Roman Theology, the kindred dogma of

Indulgences

The system of papal indulgences, which gradually rose to such heights and ultimately produced such effects, demands a careful though brief notice. It has ever been the practice of the evil genius of Rome to introduce by small beginnings the greatest evils that characterize her history. Imperceptibly, the thin end of the wedge is introduced by the presiding spirit of her policy, but when fairly introduced, the whole machinery of Rome is employed to drive it home. By an apparent respect for the memory of the dead, and a proper regard for the tokens of their affection, the sin of saint and relic worship was introduced, which resulted in the most positive and confirmed idolatry. And so with the whole system of indulgences. The ecclesiastical corruption, once admitted, remained, increased, and spread from age to age until all Christendom was overrun with its wickedness, and the moral and religious sense of mankind so insulted by the infamous traffic in indulgences, that a protest was raised and the Reformation followed.

The chief feature in the new doctrine of indulgences was the discovery of a resource or treasury in the church, by the application of which sins were remitted, without the painful or humiliating process of penance, and without the observance of the sacraments. It was alleged by the deep contriver of this sweeping dogma, that there was an infinite treasure of merit in Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the other saints, which was more than sufficient for themselves. Although the Saviour Himself was said to be the source of all merit, the merits of the saints were also much spoken of, and this gave rise to the new idea of works of **supererogation.** By their works of penance, and by their undeserved sufferings in this world, they had done more than was necessary for their own salvation, and by these works of supererogation, with the superabundant merits of Christ, a treasury was formed, of which the pope possessed the keys, and which he could apply for the relief of offenders, both in this life and in purgatory. The power of the keys was thus substituted for the efficacy of the sacrament.

This is the popish theory of indulgences, but its antiscriptural character betrays its author. It is glaringly antiscriptural, as it promises remission of sins without repentance; and, even on Catholic ground, its wickedness is manifest. It supersedes the penitential exercise of the individual; it dissolves the whole discipline of the church; it offers for a sum of money the pardon of all sins committed, a license for sins to be committed; it gives a written guarantee of deliverance from the pains of purgatory, and from hell itself. It encourages the most flagrant iniquity with the profession of Christianity, indeed by this dogma morality was severed from religion. Could even papal depravity go farther? Men emboldened to let loose the reins of vice, to follow at large their own evil ways, and then purchase eternal forgiveness, without any conditions of repentance, for a piece of money! What a day of reckoning awaits the Jezebel of Rome, and all the children of her seduction! The Lord preserve His people from her seductions now!

History places the first formal indulgence issued by the church of Rome in the early part of the eleventh century, but the system was brought into its fullest operation by the crusades. Pope Urban II., at Clermont, in the year 1095, proclaimed a plenary indulgence and remission of sins for all who should share in the **holy war.** It became customary after this period to grant indulgences of lesser degrees. Absolution from a hundred years or more of purgatorial pain might be purchased from a bishop, by repairing or enlarging a church, by building a bridge, or enclosing his forest; and also for extra religious duties, such as reciting a certain number of prayers before a certain altar, pilgrimages to relics, and the like. The pope, according to the theory of the vatican, is the sovereign dispenser of the church's treasury, and this power he dispenses to bishops in their respective dioceses. The pope may grant indulgences to all Christians; the bishop's power is limited to his own diocese.

History of Indulgences

Thus the system of indulgences prevailed more and more extensively as time advanced; and although, in consequence of its glaring abuses, some of the ablest of the schoolmen did not hesitate to express their objections to the trade that was carried on in the sale of indulgences, others wrote in favour and men generally were unwilling to suffer a long course of severe penance, of unpleasant austerities, when they could obtain immediate absolution by **pecuniary payments,** or so much almsgiving to churches or churchmen. From the earliest period it was the practice of the church of Rome to impose painful works or sufferings on offenders when these were discharged or undergone with humility they were called *satisfactions;* but when the penance was shortened or entirely remitted because of some consideration in money or good works, this was called an *indulgence.* The price was regulated according to the nature of the crime and the circumstance of the purchaser.

The following curious event, as quoted by Milner from Burnet, will give the reader a better idea of the extent of this remarkable trade than anything we could say on the subject, and this happened at a time when, owing to the Reformation, the sale to a great extent, had decreased. "Burnet informs us, that the scandalous sale of pardons and indulgences had by no means so completely ceased in popish countries as is commonly taken for granted. He says, that in Spain and Portugal there is everywhere a commissary, who manages the sale with the most infamous circumstances imaginable. In Spain the King, by an agreement with the pope, has the profits. In Portugal the King and the pope go shares.

"In the year 1709 the privateers of Bristol took a gallion, in which they found five hundred bales of bulls - or printed pardons in the name of the pope - for indulgences .... and sixteen reams were in a bale, so that they reckon the whole came to three millions eight hundred and forty thousand. These bulls are imposed on the people and sold, the lowest at three ryals, a little more than twenty pence, but some were as high as about eleven pounds of our money. All are obliged to buy them against Lent. Besides the account given of this in the cruising voyage, I have a particular attestation of it by Captain Dampier."*

{*Milner, vol. 3, p. 439.}

But the reader will be better prepared for this almost incredible statement if we are spared to continue our history to the period of its occurrence. In the meantime enough has been said to give him a correct idea of the foundation, character and effects of the traffic. The sacrament of matrimony will come so fully before us in its workings, that we need not now give it a separate paper. So we shall leave for the present the painfully interesting subject of Roman theology, or alas! alas! papal Christianity, and return to our general history.*

{*For full details by Catholic writers on the sacraments, see Paul's *Council of Trent,* Donovan's *Catechism of* the Council of *Trent,* Milner's *End of Controversy;* and for rather sharp criticisms on these doctrines, see Edgar's *Variations of Popery;* as also the general histories.}

24 Innocent III. and His Times

Chapter 24

Innocent III. and His Times

A.D. 1198-1216

During the reign of this great pope the Roman See rose to its utmost height. The thirteenth century is commonly distinguished as the noon-day of **pontifical glory.** We have seen the dawn of papal assumption, or rather the first streaks of dawn, in the bold conceptions of Innocent I. and Leo the Great in the fifth century. Gregory the Great in the seventh, and Nicholas and John in the ninth centuries, did much towards laying the foundations of the great papal scheme; but it was Gregory VII. that raised the superstructure. The one grand object of this bold, ambitious, unscrupulous priest was to restore to papal Rome all that imperial Rome had lost; and thus to set the chair of St. Peter above all other thrones. But the daring pope perished in the desperate struggle. Rome was taken, as we have seen; Hildebrand was compelled to flee, and died in exile at Salerno. For more than a hundred years after his death, no pope filled the chair who could complete the work which he had begun. But in the beginning of the thirteenth century the superior genius of Gregory was surpassed by Innocent. The bold schemes which the former had planned were fully executed by the latter. No doubt the conjunction of many circumstances was favourable, and the powers of his mind were adapted to the accomplishment of his grand object, so that he fully obtained what had haunted the imagination of popes for ages - "sacerdotal supremacy, regal monarchy, and dominion over the kings of the earth." The crowned priest of Rome now moved with a masterly hand, and with unwearied application, the whole machinery of popery, that he might maintain and consolidate the absolute sovereignty of the Roman See. But here, on this summit, we must pause a little for reflection. Let us endeavour to ascertain the mind of God on this great religious system, not merely the testimony of history.

The Babylon of Revelation 17

It has been our desire from the commencement of this work, to study history from a scriptural point of view; but more especially in the light of the epistles to the seven Apocalyptic churches. The evils which were only budding then are now full-blown. In Pergamos, we have Balaam teaching "to commit fornication;" and in Thyatira, we have Jezebel introduced, who imposed idolatry by force. But these and many other evils we shall now find concentrated in the cup of the false **woman of Revelation 17.**

There can be no question, we think, as to what is meant by the symbol here used. Not only a woman, but a licentious woman, and enthroned amidst the corruptions of the seven-hilled city. "And here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Here we have a material point - that which has always characterized Rome, both in prose and poetry; as one has said, speaking of Arnold of Brescia, "In the service of freedom, his eloquence thundered over the seven hills." Every reader knows what city the historian means by this description. But the word of God is perfectly plain to "the mind that hath wisdom." Rome is clearly indicated, and her religious corruptions are symbolized by "the mother of harlots." But why, it may be asked, is she called Babylon? The term is applied *figuratively,* we believe, just as Sodom and Egypt are applied to Jerusalem. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." (Rev 11:8) Besides, the literal Babylon, the Chaldean capital, was built upon a plain - the plain of Shinar.

These points being fairly disposed of, and Rome fully identified, we accept Revelation 17, 18 as descriptive of the papacy. The character, conduct, relationships, and final judgment of this spiritual Babylon, are here set before us, not by the partial or imperfect pen of history, but by the Spirit of Truth who sees the end from the beginning. The papal system as a whole is looked at morally from God's point of view. This is an immense point gained to the man of faith. We will now briefly examine some of its more prominent features.

1. **She is seen in vision as "seated upon many waters."** This is explained by the angel in verse 15 to mean, "Peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The figure implies that this false woman, or the corrupt religious system of Rome, exercises a soul-ruining influence over all these multitudes, nations, and tongues. But God sees it all marks it all: her evil history is written in heaven.

2. **She is represented as having intercourse of the most seductive, licentious character with all classes.** "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." What a state of things for that which professedly bears the fair name of Christ! The term **"fornication,"** as here used, means, we have no doubt, the seducing power of the Romish system in drawing away the affections from Christ, who is the only true object of faith for the heart. The priest comes in between the heart and the blessed Lord; the Bible is concealed; the mind of God is unknown; the people are intoxicated with her exciting falsehoods; and worship they know not what. The whole earth is corrupted with the wine of her fornication. But her end, her fearful end, speedily draws near, "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double."

3. **She is next seen as ruling and directing the civil power.** "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns." Whether it be the resuscitated Roman empire (Rev. 13), or the different kingdoms which arose from the ruins of its imperial unity, or all governments and principalities of the earth, the woman swayed her sceptre, or rather her blood-stained sword, over them all as her divinely given domain. The purple of the Caesars was claimed by the popes, the imperial eagles were exchanged for the cross-keys, and his Holiness proclaimed a **universal monarch.** And this new mistress of the world was not so in name only. She clothed with new power her ancient name. Rome imperial never inspired such terrors by its arms, as Rome papal by her anathemas. "Christendom," as one has said, "through all its extended realms of mental and moral darkness, trembled while the pontiff fulminated excommunications. Monarchs quaked on their thrones at the terror of papal despotism, and crouched before his spiritual power like the meanest slave. The clergy considered the pope as the fountain of their subordinate authority, and the way to future promotion. The people, immersed in gross ignorance and superstition, viewed his supremacy as a terrestrial deity, who wielded the temporal and eternal destinies of man. The wealth of nations flowed into the sacred treasury, and enabled the successor of the Galilean fisherman and head of the christian commonwealth, to rival the splendour of Eastern pomp and grandeur."* The extent of her dominions too far exceeded the widest conquests of the empire. Many nations that had escaped the iron grasp of Rome imperial were held beneath the yoke of Rome papal. This we have seen in our history of the religious wars of Charlemagne. Some have reckoned them as Ireland, the north of Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Prussia, Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, Austria, Hungary, with a considerable part of Germany. These, we are told, were gathered as sheep into the fold of the shepherd of Rome by such missionaries as Boniface; but in God's account they were enslaved by the tyranny and usurpation of the great corruptress.

{**Edgar's Variations of Popery,* p. 157.}

4. **But there is more than her sitting by the many waters and sitting on the beast. She is full of idolatries and the uncleanness of her fornication.** "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication." In spite of all her outward glory - that which the world counts precious and beautiful, she is in God's sight as a licentious woman with a gorgeous cup full of all abominations. We have already seen her tenacious love of images, which is here referred to by the term "abominations."

5. **Her great, flaunting, and exclusive pretensions to the truth of God.** "And upon her forehead was a name written Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and Abominations of the Earth." This is the gravest and weightiest of Rome's sins; the awful counterfeit of Satan, and the basest of all her hypocrisies. Of the true, the heavenly mystery we thus read, "This is a great mystery," says Paul, "but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Eph 5:32) But in place of subjection to Christ and faithfulness to Him she - like an abandoned shameless woman - corrupts by her foul embrace the great ones of the earth. Nor is this all. She is a mother - the mother of harlots, she has many daughters. Every religious system in Christendom, that tends in any measure to lead souls away from Christ, to engage their affections with objects that come between the heart and the Man in the glory, is related to this great parent of spiritual iniquity.

6. **Her insatiable thirst for the blood of God's saints.** "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." This strange sight - a woman - a religious community, professing to be the true spouse of Christ, drunken with the blood of the martyrs, the saints of God, fills the mind of the apostle with great amazement. Nor need we wonder. But we shall soon have to see this strange sight, not in vision only but in unprecedented reality. Innocent III. was the man who declared war on the peasants of the south of France, and turned the sword of the notorious **Simon de Montfort** against the well-known **Albigenses** and **Waldenses,** and that under the pretence of doing the will of Christ, and acting by His authority.

From verse 7, we have the explanation which the angel gives of the vision, and the awful doom of Babylon from the hand of both man and God, down to the close of chapter 18. But as we are not interpreting, we need not pursue the solemn theme of these chapters any farther. We can now tread in the dark blood-stained footsteps of the historian in the light of holy scripture.*

{*For full details see *Lectures on the Apocalypse* by W.Kelly.}

Innocent and the Kings of the Earth

The different features or characteristics of Babylon which the Spirit of God has distinctly shown us in these chapters, and which are most hateful to Him, we shall find most fully displayed in the history of this pontiff. But both reader and writer have to watch against the spirit of Babylon creeping into our own hearts. We are not to suppose that it is confined to popery, though there it is publicly enthroned and will be publicly dealt with in judgment. Unless we are gathered around the rejected Jesus, and walking with Him in the fellowship of His sufferings and in the hope of His glories, we are in danger of being caught in the snare. Men, christian men, too often connect the present enjoyment of prosperity and pleasure in the world with the name and sanction of Christ. This is the very essence of Babylon - the unhallowed mixture of Christ and the world, of heaven and earth. He who professes faith in a rejected Christ, and yet has his heart in the world that rejected Him, is deeply imbued with the spirit of Babylon. It is like one truly espoused to the Prince of heaven, and yet listening to the flatteries and accepting the favours of the prince of this world. And do we not see, alas! everywhere, the indulgence of worldly desires with the profession of the name of the Lord? This is the inconsistency, the confusion, which is so offensive to God, and which He will judge in so awful a manner. May the Lord keep us from ever seeking to mingle the cross and the heavenly glory of Christ with this present evil world.

The spirit of popery is all for this world with the highest pretensions of being all for Christ. "I sit a queen," she says, "and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Dominion has ever been her one desire - dominion over Church and State, over sea and land, over the souls and bodies of men, with power to open and shut the gates of heaven and hell as she pleased. So thought Innocent, and so he acted as we shall now see.

Lothario de'Conti was the original name of Innocent. He was of the house of the Counts of Segni, one of the great Roman families. Under the tuition of his two uncles, the Cardinals of St. Sergius and St. Paul, the great natural abilities of Lothario gave promise of that kind of distinction which his friends and relatives most desired. He afterwards acquired great fame for learning in the schools of Rome Bologna, and Paris, but canon law was his favourite study. At the death of Celestine III. he was duly elected to the vacant chair, and consecrated February 22nd, 1198, at the early age of thirty-seven. The cardinals saluted him by the name of Innocent in testimony of his blameless life.

Innocent's Views of the Popedom

A few extracts from the inauguration sermon, and other writings of Innocent, will give the reader the best idea of popish, or Babylonish pretensions. The unmeasured assertion of his dignity, with the loudest protestations of humility, betrays the real spirit of the pope. Thus he spoke out: "Ye see what manner of servant that is whom the Lord hath set over His people; no other than the vice-gerent of Christ, the successor of St. Peter. He is the Lord's anointed; he stands in the midst between God and man; below God, above man; less than God, more than man. He judges all, he is judged by none, for it is written, 'I will judge.' But he whom the pre-eminence of dignity exalts, is lowered by his office of a servant that so humility may be exalted, and pride abased; for God is against the high-minded; and to the lowly he showeth mercy: and he who exalteth himself shall be abased." He also discovers the popedom in the Book of Genesis. "The firmament," he says, "signifies the church. As the Creator of all things hath set in the heavens two great lights, the greater to rule the day, the lesser to rule the night, so also hath He set up in the firmament of His church, two great powers: the greater to rule the souls, the lesser to rule the bodies of men. These powers are the pontifical and the royal: but the moon, as being the lesser body, borroweth all her light from the sun; she is inferior to the sun both in the quantity and quality of the light she sends forth, as also in her position and functions in the heavens. In like manner *the royal power borrows all its dignity and splendour from the pontifical, so* that the nearer it approaches the greater light, the more are its rays absorbed, and its borrowed glories eclipsed. It was moreover ordained that both these glories should have their fixed and final abode in this our land of Italy, inasmuch as in this land dwelleth, by and through the *combined primacy of the empire and the priesthood,* the entire foundation and structure of the christian faith, and with it a predominant principality over both!"*

{**Cathedra Petri,* book 13, p. 363.}

The reader will have no difficulty in gathering from these statements, though clothed in metaphor, the high pretensions of the papal scheme, as matured in the mind of this celebrated pontiff. He unmistakably affirms, that all earthly dominion is simply derived from the pope; that all kings and princes of this world are his subjects and servants; and that universal dominion is his.

Innocent and the City of Rome

Like a wise man, he commenced his great life-work by reforming his own household. Rigid simplicity was established in the place of courtly luxury. The multitude of nobles and highborn pages who lately thronged the palace were dismissed, but with handsome presents which retained them as friends, and secured their services on occasions of high ceremony. The citizens, who were clamorous for the donative with which they had been usually gratified at the commencement of every new reign, he did not forget, and thus secured the favour of the multitude. He combined with the boldness of Gregory VII. the politic caution and patience of Alexander III. He knew the Romans and how to manage them. They have the worst character of any people in history. Hear the evidence of St. Bernard in writing to the pope, "Why should I mention the people? The people is Roman. I have no shorter nor have I any clearer term to express my opinion of your parishioners. For what is so notorious to all men and ages as the wantonness and haughtiness of the Romans? A race unaccustomed to peace, habituated to tumult - a race merciless and untractable, and to this instant scorning all subjection when it has any means of existence.... Whom will you find even in the vast extent of your city who would have you for pope, unless for profit or the hope of profit? the promise of fidelity, to have the better means of injuring those who trust them? They are men too proud to obey, too ignorant to rule, faithless to superiors, insupportable to inferiors, shameless in asking, insolent in refusing; importunate to obtain favours, restless while obtaining them, ungrateful when they have obtained; grand, eloquent, and inefficient; most profuse in promise, most niggardly in performance; the smoothest flatterers, the most venomous detractors. Among such as these you are proceeding as their pastor, covered with gold and every variety of splendour. What are your sheep looking for? If I dared to use the expression, I should say that it is a pasture of demons rather than 'sheep.' "*

{*Waddington, vol. 2, p. 158.}

Such, as witnessed by the highest authority, was the character of the people whom the new shepherd of Rome had around his person, and whom he had to watch over. But his mind was not to be dismayed, even by the exhaustive style of St. Bernard; with great energy, prudence, and skill, he began his successful reign.

Next to the affairs of his own household, those of the city had his immediate attention. His first object was to abolish the last vestige of **imperial sovereignty** in Rome. This was a bold step, but he had smoothed his way by silently and skillfully distributing money throughout the thirteen quarters of the city. Hitherto the prefect of Rome had held his office under the Emperor, he was the representative of the imperial authority. But Innocent influenced him to reject the imperial and submit entirely to the papal power. He took from his hand the secular sword, the ancient emblem of his power, and substituted a silver cup in its place, as the symbol of peace and friendship. He absolved him from his oath of allegiance to the German emperors, compelled him to take a strong oath of fidelity to himself, and to receive investiture from his hands. Thus was the last link broken of the imperial power in Rome.

In like manner the new pope persuaded the senator, or representative of the legislature, to resign, in order that he might substitute another in his place, whom he bound by an oath to himself as sovereign. The judges, officers, and all the citizens were required to swear obedience to his spiritual majesty, and acknowledge the exclusive sovereignty of the Holy See.

Innocent and the Kingdom of Sicily

But the imperial city, at this moment, was surrounded by many dangerous neighbours. How to rid himself of these was now the first and important question with Innocent. The fairest provinces of central and southern Italy, even up to the gates of Rome, and the kingdom of Sicily, were under the galling yoke of fierce German adventurers. It happened in this way.

Henry VI. Emperor of Germany, surnamed the Severe, in the year 1186 married Constant, legitimate heir to the crown of Sicily, with the lordship of all the Norman provinces in southern Italy.

The evident advantage of this union to the Emperor, and the equally evident danger to the papacy, alarmed the reigning pontiff, Lucius III.; and led him to take steps to prevent the marriage, but dying suddenly, nothing was accomplished. His successor, Urban III., also failed to break the engagement and the marriage was celebrated on the 27th of January, 1186. But as usual, a pretender to the crown of Sicily was found and supported by the papacy, which led to a cruel and desolating war of several years' duration. Henry invaded the Italian territories for the avowed purpose of putting himself in possession of his wife's inheritance. The expedition was completely successful. Province after province fell into his hands, and in a short time the whole of southern Italy and the kingdom of Sicily submitted to the merciless tyrant, the treacherous husband of Constantia. Before leaving the conquered territories, says Greenwood "All the great military commands were bestowed on the most distinguished officers of his army. Castles, lands, revenues, powers of the largest and most indefinite kind, were showered upon the mob of adventurers and mercenaries, whose only object was plunder, and whose rapacity was unchecked by the remotest regard for the rights or the welfare of those whom they were appointed to govern."

Philip, Henry's brother, **duke of Swabia,** was entrusted with the government of central Italy, including the estates of the Countess Matilda, and the duchy of Tuscany. Markwald, a knight of Alsace, the Emperor's favourite, was made duke of Ravenna and Romagna. Conrad of Lutzenburg a Swabian knight, as duke of Spoleto, possessed that city and its domain. Thus were the pontifical states enclosed by a hostile chain of fortresses on all sides. Communication with the outer world was well nigh cut off. But the master-hand that was required to direct and control the different garrisons was suddenly withdrawn.

Henry died at Messina on the 28th of September, 1197 rather more than three months before the accession of Innocent.*

{**Cathedra Petri,* book 13, chapter 1, p. 339.}

We have thus rapidly referred to the military occupation of the country when Innocent took into his hands the reins of government. For fuller details the general histories may be consulted. But as our object in this chapter is to show how completely the ecclesiastical power triumphed over the civil, we have felt it necessary to show the strong position of the latter. And now the problem is to be solved. How can a single man, by a single word, overthrow the physical force of the empire, and compel both prince and people to submit to a spiritual despotism? The unseen power, we doubt not, is from beneath. The blending of the *lamb and the dragon,* or the man of sin, in one power, or system, proves its origin. (Rev 13:11-18)

Innocent and the States of the Church

The death of Henry, the jealousies and rivalries of the German chiefs, the exasperated state of the Italians, prepared the way for the full exercise of Innocent's great powers of administration. The cruelties of the Emperor Henry to his Italian subjects had ripened the whole country for revolt. They only awaited a deliverer from the German yoke. That deliverer was Innocent. He summoned **Markwald,** the most formidable of imperial lieutenants in command, to surrender to St. Peter all the estates of the church. Markwald paused: though he was a bold and ambitious man, and possessed of great wealth and power, he wished to avoid an open contest with the pope. He was conscious of his danger from the people's hatred of the foreign yoke; and endeavoured to draw him into an alliance with many fair promises of great service to the church. But the pope was firm and withstood all his offers whether of money or of service. He demanded the immediate unconditional surrender of all the territories of the church. Markwald refused. The people rose to assert the papal claims. The war began. The German banners were torn down, city after city rose in rebellion, and cast to the ground everything German. Markwald, insulted and burning with rage, "revenged himself by sallying forth from the gates of Ravenna, ravaging the whole region, burning, plundering, destroying homesteads and harvests, castles and churches. Innocent opened the papal treasures, borrowed large sums of money, raised an army; hurled an excommunication against the rebellious vassal of the church, in which he absolved from their oaths all who had sworn allegiance to Markwald."*

{*Milman, vol. 4, p. 19.}

The fall of Markwald filled the others with consternation They proposed terms of peace and offered to pay tribute, but Innocent would agree to no compromise. He claimed possession of the patrimonial domains without reserve, declared himself heir to the Countess Matilda's donation, and sovereign of the duchy of Tuscany. But no event, consequent on the decease of the Emperor was more important to the papacy than the faithless conduct of the Empress Constantia. Immediately after the death of her husband, though left the natural guardian of the realm, she separated herself from the German cause, and returned to Sicily with her infant son Frederick. She espoused the interest of her native land, threw herself and her son into the arms of the Holy See, caused him to be crowned in Palermo, and requested the pontifical investiture of the kingdom for her son as a fief of the papal See. Innocent saw his own strength, her weakness, and made his own terms. The Empress and her son were required to acknowledge the absolute feudal superiority of the pope over the whole kingdom of Naples and Sicily, and pay a large annual tribute. The German warriors were compelled to retire to the castles on the mainland; but only to brood over their present defeat and their future revenge.

The **conquests of Innocent** had been rapid and were apparently complete. In less than one year after his accession to the papal throne, he was virtually king of Sicily, and master of his own large territories. By means of his legates, he made his presence to be felt, and enforced obedience, throughout his newly acquired dominions. But, as ever, the beast on which the woman rode became most refractory. The territories, forts, citadels, and revenues, that had been recovered from the Germans, were claimed by the Papal See as her possessions. But as these demands were both unjust and illegal, resistance on the part of the citizens and the imperial governors was the natural consequence, and for years Sicily and her provinces was a scene of anarchy, violence, bloodshed, and ceaseless intrigues. And yet, at this very moment, Innocent reminded those cities which objected to surrender to him the full benefit of their hard-won deliverance, of the awful nature of the power they dared to oppose. Their lack of confidence in him was a crime against the Lord Jesus Himself whose successor he was, "one in whom there was no sin at all, neither was any deceit found in his mouth." Could blasphemy be more daring, more barefaced? Could there be a more wicked attempt to unite the dragon and the lamb?

Innocent and the Empire

Before the close of the eventful year over which we have been travelling, Constantia, the Sicilian princess and the German Empress, died. On the 27th of November, 1198, she breathed her last. Her death, it is supposed, was hastened by her maternal solicitude for her infant son, Frederick. He was then about four years old, had been crowned king of Sicily, and was heir of the empire. In her last will she bequeathed him to the guardianship of the pope as his liege lord, and provided that thirty thousand pieces of gold should be paid yearly to the pope for his pious protection of her son, and that all his other expenses were to be charged on the revenue of the country.

But the tranquillity of Rome was not secured by its great successes. The civil war, with all its horrors was renewed. The pontiff lost no time in making known, in loftiest phrase to the nobles of Sicily his accession to the government as regent, and commissioned his legate to administer the oath of allegiance. Markwald, in the meantime, hearing of the death of the Empress, resumed the title of Seneschal of the Empire, and, by a document which professed to be a will of the late Emperor, laid claim to the regency of Sicily during the minority of the young king. In support of these claims he had assembled a large force of adventurers, besieged and obtained possession of the papal city, Germano, and had almost become master of the great monastery of Monte Casino, which was defended for eight days by a garrison of the pope; but a fresh supply of troops and provisions from Rome strengthened the position of the warrior monks, and compelled the great duke to raise the siege. According to the best authorities, Innocent now assumed the most warlike attitude. He issued a proclamation, summoning the whole realm of Naples and Sicily to arms. He assembled troops from Lombardy, Tuscany, Romagna, and Campania, paying them from the papal treasury. Markwald and all his accomplices were excommunicated in the most solemn manner every Sunday, with quenched candles and tolling bells - bell, book, and candle. The whole kingdom was ravaged, laid waste, and distracted by the armies of the pope and the soldiers of the empire. But the death of the rebel chief, Markwald, in the year 1202, relieved the pope of his most powerful and most successful antagonist.

We now turn for a little to observe the working of that same powerful mind in the complicated affairs of the empire.

An infant Emperor, now an orphan; a vacant throne, fiercely contested by rival princes; opened up a still wider field for **papal ambition.**

The immediate object of Innocent's policy was to separate the kingdom of Sicily from the empire. While both remained in the same hands, a sovereign more powerful than himself might be placed on the Sicilian throne. The possibility of a neighbour so dangerous must be removed. The contest then raging for the possession of the crown gave him the desired opportunity. The troops, being required at home, were withdrawn from Sicily, Apulia, and Capua. The garrisons being thus reduced, the German dominion was overthrown, the countries separated from the empire, and the papal authority established by force.

Immediately after the death of Henry, his brother, Philip, duke of Swabia, took possession of the imperial treasures, declared himself regent of the realm, and protector of the interests of his young nephew. And so far he seems to have acted from a right motive. But an infant Emperor was contrary to German usage, and unsuited to those troublous times. An adverse party speedily arose, and strongly opposed the election of the child as king. The adherents of the house of **Hohenstaufen** entreated Philip to become the representative of his family, in opposition to the other candidates for the crown. He consented, and was chosen defender of the kingdom by a large body of princes and prelates assembled at Mulhausen.

The party opposed to the Swabian family was headed by Adolphus, of Altena, archbishop of Cologne. This faction was chiefly composed of the great prelates of the Rhine. Such was the principal occupation of prelates and clergy in those days. They were determined to raise up an antagonist to the house of Hohenstaufen. After several princes had refused to become candidates for the imperial dignity, the churchmen turned their thoughts to the house of **Saxony,** the irreconcilable adversary of the house of Swabia. Their choice fell on Otho, the second son of Henry the lion, duke of Saxony.

In consequence of his father's family having fallen under the ban of the empire, and being banished from Germany, he was brought up at the court of England. His mother, Matilda, was sister to King Richard Coeur de Lion. The young knight had shown signs of valour such as Richard admired, and he created Otho first Count of York and Poitou. Well furnished with English gold, and a few followers, he set forth, reached Cologne, where he was proclaimed Emperor, and champion of the church.

Philip and Otho

Philip was twenty-two years of age, Otho twenty-three. "In personal character," say the chroniclers, "in wealth, and in the number of his adherents, Philip had the advantage. He was praised for his moderation and his love of justice. His mind had been cultivated by literature to a degree then very unusual among princes, and his popular manners contrasted favourably with the pride and roughness of Otho. But Otho was the favourite with the great body of the clergy, to whom Philip was obnoxious, as the representative of a family which was regarded as opposed to the interests of the hierarchy."*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, p. 292.}

But what, the reader may be supposed to inquire - what of the young Frederick who had been crowned and anointed, and to whom both princes and prelates had sworn allegiance. and over whose rights the pope was handsomely paid to keep watch and ward? The only answer to this inquiry is to be found in the secret but perfidious policy of Innocent. His one grand object in allowing, if not in creating, this great national quarrel for the imperial crown, was the humbling of the haughty house of Swabia, and every subordinate consideration must be sacrificed to the limitation of that power. But the elastic conscience of the papacy never was at a loss for an apparently pious reason for the perpetration of the greatest wickedness, or the most faithless and treacherous conduct. Innocent could not deny, and therefore makes a show of lofty equity in admitting, the claims of Frederick. This was the dragon's voice. He admits the lawfulness of his election, and the oath of allegiance taken by the nobles of the empire. But, on the other hand, he discovers that the oath was exacted by the father before the child was a Christian by baptism. He decreed that a child of two years old, unbaptized, was a *nullity:* therefore their oaths were null and void and all obligation to the young heir was entirely set aside.

What a character, we may exclaim, for posterity to contemplate! He who assumed to be "the representative of God's eternal and immutable justice upon earth, absolutely above all passion or interest," now absolves the whole constituency of Germany from the most solemn oath of fealty to the legitimate heir of the kingdom. In place of maintaining the rights of his ward - to whom he wrote when he accepted the charge, "that though God had visited him by the death of his father and mother, he had provided him with a more worthy father - His own vicar on earth; and a better mother - the church" - rebuking the rival parties, and persuading them to peace, we see him fomenting the animosities of both, we see justice, truth, righteousness peace, and every claim of humanity all wantonly sacrificed in the hope of increasing and consolidating the papal power. The **crafty pope** kept behind the scene, but stirred up and fed the flame of contention, knowing that both parties would be compelled, from the loss of blood and treasure, to lay their cause at his feet, and then he could come forward as the sovereign director of kings, and dictate his own terms. These convictions are fully borne out by the following judgment of Dean Milman: "Ten years of strife and civil war in Germany are to be traced, if not to the direct instigation, to the inflexible obstinacy of Pope Innocent III."*

{**Latin Christianity,* vol. 4, p. 33.}

The Civil War in Germany

Richard, king of England, and **Philip Augustus,** king of France - who warmly espoused the cause of Philip - spared no amount of flatteries and professions to win over the pope to the party of their respective candidates. But he delayed, having too many objects in view to be straightforward. In the meantime war broke out along the Rhine. Philip, at the first, gained great advantages, he advanced almost to the gates of Cologne, but a powerful army of Rhenish prelates and Flemish nobles caused him to retreat. The largest and most powerful part of the empire acknowledged and supported the cause of Philip; the clergy and the Count of Flanders stood almost alone on the side of Otho.

It was a civil war of the most ferocious and barbarous lawlessness. At the end of the first year, fortune favoured the cause of Philip. The death of Richard, in 1199, had deprived Otho of his most powerful ally. John, who succeeded him, was not disposed to part with his money for such a distant and uncertain game. The war might now have terminated with a fair show of honour, even to Otho; but papal vengeance against the hated house of Hohenstaufen was not yet full. The pope openly avowed the cause of the usurper, Otho; and for nine long dreary years, with but short intervals of truce, Germany was abandoned by the tender shepherd of the Tiber to all the horrors of a civil war. But the deceitful underhand policy of Innocent became apparent to all. His suffering flock accused and reproached him as the guilty cause of all their misery, as having provoked, inflamed, and kept up the disastrous strife, for the gratification of his own malicious purpose of ruining the royal house of Henry the Severe. It required all his wits, with the help of Satan, to acquit himself of the charge.

But the war had done its work - its dragon work. "It was a war, not of decisive battles, but of marauding, desolation, havoc, plunder, wasting of harvests, ravaging open and defenceless countries - war, waged by prelate against prelate, by prince against prince; wild Bohemians, and bandit soldiers of every race, were roving through every province. Throughout the land there was no law; the roads were impassable on account of robbers; nothing was spared, nothing sacred, church or cloister." Such, and worse, was the civil war in Germany. Yet the unrelenting mind of the wretched man continued to thunder his anathemas against Philip; declared all oaths which had been taken to him null and void, and showered privileges and immunities of all sorts on the bishops and the monastic societies who espoused the party of Otho. But the thunders of the Vatican became unavailing, and the strength of Philip increased year by year.*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, p. 297. Milman, vol. 4, p. 51. Neander, vol. 7, p. 236.}

The course of events could not fail to tell even on the inflexible mind of Innocent. He was threatened with the humiliation of a total defeat. At the close of ten years the cause of Otho was hopeless. But how can the pope forget his vows of implacable enmity against the house of Swabia, or struggle out of his vows of perpetual alliance with the house of Saxony? He must find some holy and pious reasons for abandoning the cause of Otho, and espousing the cause of Philip. He found great difficulty in covering the shame of this debasing position. But Philip made such ample professions and promises to the pope by his ambassadors, that he saw it to be his duty to receive back his penitent son, and absolve him from the censures of the church. The papal legate proceeded to Metz, and there proclaimed him the victorious Emperor.

The Death of Philip

Peace now seemed to be secured on all sides. Philip had obtained the highest object of his wishes. A proposal of marriage between Otho and Beatrice, the daughter of Philip, had been sanctioned by the pope, under the pretence of healing the long-standing feud between the houses of Swabia and Saxony. But uncertain is the tenure of all human greatness and human glory. On the 21st of June, 1208, the Emperor Philip, one of the ablest and mildest of his race, was basely assassinated by the Count Palatine of Bavaria for some private offence. The country was paralysed by the news of this terrible crime. The execration of mankind pursued the murderer; his castle was levelled with the ground, and the assassin put to death with many wounds.

Innocent now retraced his steps. The crime of the Bavarian relieved him from the humiliation of his apostasy. He hastened to write to the German princes, charging them to acquiesce in the manifest declaration of divine providence in favour of Otho. He used every means in his power to prevent a fresh election, and to unite all parties in his support; and he warmly exhorted Otho to moderation and conciliation. On both sides there was an ardent desire for peace, and Otho was now undisputed Emperor.

The following year, 1209, he proceeded to Italy, to receive the imperial crown. He was attended by the princes, prelates, and nobles of the empire, with a numerous army of military dependents. Their march was a succession of festive receptions. The cities opened their gates to welcome the champion of the church, and the Emperor chosen by the pope. **Innocent and Otho** met at Viterbo. "They embraced, they wept tears of joy, in remembrance of their common trials, in transport at their common triumph." But the pope did not forget the prerogative of his pontifical throne. He demanded security that Otho would surrender, immediately after his coronation, the lands of the church, and yield every pretension to the long-disputed inheritance of the Countess Matilda. But so good, so humble, so submissive was Otho, as he was kneeling for the diadem, that his heart was grieved at the apparent suspicion of his loyalty by his holy father. "All that I have been," he exclaimed, "all I am, all I ever shall be, after God, I owe to you and the church."

The Apostasy of Otho

The imperial crown was now on the head of Otho. Not only was he crowned by the hands of Innocent in St. Peter's, at Rome, but he was raised to that dignity by the artful and cruel policy of the apostolic See. But the deceiver was deceived; the traitor was betrayed. Scarcely was the ceremony of the coronation completed, when the mask of obedience under which Otho had veiled his real intentions was thrown off. The effect of the **iron crown** was irresistible. He felt himself a new man, in a new position, and bound to maintain the prerogatives of his crown against the encroachments of the spiritual power. From that hour the Emperor and the pope were implacable enemies. Such was the disappointment, as overruled by the righteous government of God, of the unscrupulous pontiff. Satan may rule, but an all-wise God overrules. "Be not deceived," says the apostle; "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal 6:7) Innocent had taught his nominee to deceive, and now he must eat the bitter fruit of his own teaching.

The unusual strength and numbers of Otho's army which accompanied him, and now lay encamped under the walls of Rome, were regarded with great jealousy by the inhabitants. The quarrels, which had become customary on such occasions, were renewed with great fierceness. Many of the Germans were slain, and a number of their horses were killed - so they said, at least. But it was enough. Otho's smothered ambition was now kindled into a flame of indignation. He withdrew in wrath from the city. He demanded compensation. Innocent refused. The troops were distributed over the patrimony of St. Peter to the great damage of the people and the increasing alarm of the pope. The Emperor was requested to withdraw his soldiers from the neighbourhood of Rome, but he declared they would remain until the provisions of the country were exhausted. He enriched himself by the plunder of pilgrims whom his soldiery intercepted on their way to Rome. He marched into Tuscany, took possession of the cities on the frontier of the territory of the Countess Matilda, seized towns and fortresses which the pope had lately occupied; estates and dignities within the pontifical claims he bestowed upon his favourites, and the most formidable of the pope's adversaries, Count Diephold, he invested with the duchy of Spoleto. Success inflamed his ambition, he contemplated the invasion of Sicily, and seizing the young Frederick, the last of the house of Hohenstaufen.

He who had proclaimed himself infallible was in despair. After all his labours, all his sacrifices, all his treacheries, he had raised up to himself a more formidable antagonist, a more bitter foe, than any of the Swabian family had ever been. The most earnest appeals to his gratitude, the most solemn admonitions, and the loudest thunders of excommunication, were alike disregarded by the headstrong pupil of Richard Coeur de Lion.

The Fall of Otho

Otho had now been three years absent from Germany three years of unwonted peace in that country - their hands had become strong. The kindred of the young Frederick became anxious for his safety. He was now about eighteen years of age. The pope was quietly consulted. He turned round, saw good reason to take active measures against Otho, and to assume the most friendly disposition towards Frederick. There were many difficulties in the way, because of the occupation of Otho; but two brave and loyal Swabian knights accomplished the dangerous expedition, and Frederick was safely conducted from his sunny Palermo to the colder regions of Germany, where he was welcomed with open arms to resume his ancestral throne. But the cause of Frederick against Otho was really won by Philip Augustus of France.

Between the two rivals for the empire there was no great battle. France had all along been the steady friend of the Swabians, as England had been of the Saxons. Philip entered into a close alliance with Frederick. The Count of Flanders, the princes of the lower Rhine, and the king of England, entered into league with Otho. At the head of a large army he advanced, under the impulse of vindictive passion, towards the frontiers of France. He regarded Philip as the real author of all his misfortunes. But his vigilant adversary was ready to receive him. On the 27th of July, 1214, a great battle was fought at the village of **Vouvines,** not far from Lille. Philip Augustus was victorious over the last of the Othos and his allies. He survived his fall about five years, which he was allowed to spend in monastic penance without being formally deposed.

The following year **Frederick II.** was crowned at Aix-la-Chappele, and in the enthusiasm of the moment, he, with many others, made a vow to go in person on a crusade to the Holy Land. This rash promise was the occasion of troubles which he little expected, extending over his long reign of thirty-five years.

Innocent and Philip Augustus

We have seen the interference of Innocent in the elevation of three emperors to the throne of Germany, and the policy he pursued in order to obtain more temporal power for the Roman See, and a more extensive dominion over the minds and ways of all mankind. We now follow him to the kingdom of France, there to witness an expression of the same pontifical power, but on other grounds, and for other objects. He now comes before us as the protector of innocence against wrong, the preacher of christian morals, and the maintainer of the sanctity of the marriage bond. We are willing to allow that in his contest with Philip he may have been actuated by a right motive; but his outward conduct is marked by the same dictatorial spirit that has hitherto characterized his reign. He assumes to himself the high function of the supreme direction of all human affairs; as arbiter in the last resort, whether it be a contested throne, or the holy sacrament of marriage. But our main object, under this heading, is to give the reader an example of a whole kingdom being laid under the papal ban. It is difficult in our own days to believe the awful consequences of such a thing.

A remarkable circumstance in connection with the **second marriage of Philip** furnished Innocent with the desired opportunity to chastise and humble the ally and supporter of the house of Swabia. On his return from the crusade in 1193, he was attracted by the fame of the beauty and virtues of Ingeburga, or Isamburga, sister of the king of Denmark. The hand of the king of France was readily accepted, the dowry fixed. She arrived in France under an escort of Danish nobles, and the king hastened to meet her at Amiens. The day after their marriage the royal pair were crowned; but during the ceremony of the coronation Philip was observed to shudder and turn pale. It was soon found that he had conceived an unconquerable aversion for his new queen. As no real cause could be found for such a change in the king, it was popularly ascribed to witchcraft, or diabolic influence. She is described as of gentle manners, very beautiful, and sincere as a Christian. Philip proposed to send her back at once to Denmark, her attendants refused the disgraceful office; and she herself was determined to remain in France.

The king was now in a great difficulty. He applied for a divorce, but knew that, unless a dissolution of the marriage could be obtained in due form, he would have no peace. The genealogies of the royal houses were traced, and, as it was found by the bishops devoted to the king that the royal pair were within the forbidden degrees, therefore the clergy of France, with the Archbishop of Rheims at their head, pronounced the marriage null and void. When the sentence was explained to Ingeburga, who could scarcely speak a word of French, her feelings of indignation were expressed by exclaiming, "Wicked France! Rome! Rome!" Her brother took up her cause, and appealed to the aged pope, Celestine; but he was unequal to contend with the powerful king of France, and no decided step was taken during the remainder of his pontificate. In the meantime Ingeburga was shut up in a convent, and Philip married Agnes, the beautiful daughter of the duke of Meran. His affection for Agnes was as intense as his hatred of Ingeburga. The former was introduced on all occasions to grace the royal circle; the latter was dragged from convent to convent, or rather from prison to prison.

Such was the state of things in France when Innocent espoused the cause of the repudiated princess of Denmark. He first wrote to the bishop of Paris, then to the king himself. After enlarging on the sanctity of marriage, he admonished the king to put away Agnes and to restore Ingeburga. The king haughtily declared that the affair of his marriage was no business of the pope's. But Philip had soon to feel the power and the terror of the papal thunders, and as they had never before been felt in France.

The Pope's Legate in France

Peter, Cardinal of St. Mary in the Via Lata, was sent as legate into France, with authority, in case of the king's obstinacy, to lay his dominions under the papal ban. But the command to put away his beloved Agnes, and to receive again the hated Ingeburga, the king treated with contempt and defiance. The pope was inflexible. "If, within one month," he wrote to the legate, "after your communication, the king of France does not receive his queen with conjugal affection, you shall subject his whole realm to interdict - an interdict with all its awful consequences." A council was held at **Dijon,** messengers appeared from the king, protesting in his name against all further proceedings, and appealing to Rome. But the orders to the legate were peremptory. The interdict was proclaimed with all its appalling circumstances. It is thus described: - "At midnight, each priest holding a torch, were chanted the psalm for the miserable, and the prayers for the dead, the last prayers which were to be uttered by the clergy of France during the interdict. The cross on which the Saviour hung was veiled with black crepe; the relics replaced within the tombs; the host was consumed. The cardinal, in his mourning stole of violet, pronounced the territories of the king of France under the ban. All religious services from that time ceased; there was no access to heaven by prayer or offering. The sobs of the aged of the women and children, alone broke the silence. The interdict was pronounced at Dijon. Only the baptism of infants, and extreme unction to the dying, were allowed by the church, while the realm lay under the curse of the papal ban."

For the **guilt of the sovereign** the whole nation must suffer, reasoned the pope, in order that his heart might be softened, either by pity for the misery of his people or by fear of their discontent; and in those days of superstition the misery was extreme; for death at such a time would be thought eternal perdition. "Oh how terrible," exclaimed an eye-witness, "how pitiable a spectacle it was in all our cities! To see the doors of the church watched, and Christians driven away from them like dogs; all divine offices ceased; the sacrament of the body and blood of the soul was not offered; no gathering together of the people, as wont at the festivals of the saints; the bodies of the dead not admitted to christian burial, but their stench infected the air, the loathsome sight of them appalled the living: only extreme unction and baptism were allowed. There was a deep silence over the whole realm, while the organs and the voices of those who chanted God's praises were everywhere mute."*

{*See *Latin Christianity,* vol. 4, p. 67.}

The Rage of the King

Philip Augustus was a proud, haughty, arbitrary prince, not accustomed to brook encroachment quietly. He broke out into paroxysms of fury; he swore by the sword of Charlemagne that he would rather lose half his dominions than part from Agnes of Meran. He threatened the clergy with the last extremities if they dared to obey the pope. Ingeburga was seized, dragged from her cloister, and imprisoned in the strong castle of Etampes. But the wrath of the king would not prevail over the stern decree of the pope. The barons, whose power he had reduced, cared not to rally round him; the people were in a state of pious insurrection. They had assembled round the churches, forced the doors; they were determined not to be deprived of their religious services. The king became alarmed at the mutinies among the people, and promised to obey the pope.

A deputation was sent to Rome. The king complained of the harsh proceedings of the legate, but declared himself ready to abide by the sentence of the pope. "What sentence?" sternly exclaimed his holiness; "he knows our decree; let him put away his concubine, receive his lawful wife, reinstate the bishops whom he has expelled, and give them satisfaction for their losses. Then will we raise the interdict, receive his sureties, examine into the alleged relationship, and pronounce our decree." The answer went to the heart of Agnes, and drove the king to madness. "I will turn Mahometan," he exclaimed. "Happy Saladin, he has no pope above him." But the haughty Philip must bow. The affections and religious feelings of all classes were with the clergy. He summoned a parliament at Paris; it was attended by all the great vassals of the crown. "What is to be done?" demanded the king, with his beautiful Agnes by his side. "Obey the pope, dismiss Agnes, receive back Ingeburga;" was the crushing reply. Thus he who had doubled France in extent by the sharpness of his sword, and the prudence of his policy; he who had raised the crown to something like independence above the great feudal lords; must now drink the dregs of humiliation in the presence of the nobles of France **at the bidding of the pope.**

The scene was overwhelming. Agnes had declared that she cared nothing for the crown, that it was her husband she loved; a stranger, the daughter of a christian prince, young and ignorant of the world, she married the king; and had borne him two children. Sever me not from my husband, was her touching appeal. But the inexorable decree had gone forth; "Obey the pope, dismiss Agnes, receive back Ingeburga." The king at last agreed to a reconciliation with Ingeburga. She was brought in; but the sight of her so aroused the king's aversion that negotiations were almost broken off. At last he mastered himself for the moment and bowed to the papal sentence. He swore to receive and honour her as queen of France. At that instant the ringing of bells proclaimed that the interdict which had weighed so heavily on the people for upwards of seven months was taken off. "The curtains were withdrawn from the images, from the crucifixes, the doors of the churches flew open, the multitudes streamed in to satiate their pious desires, which had been suppressed during the period of the interdict."

Rome has accomplished her object; she has triumphed over the greatest king in Christendom, the word of God is fulfilled; "The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Universal dominion over the bodies and souls and affairs of men was her unquenchable desire, her unceasing aim. And beyond this display of power we cannot suppose that Rome had any higher object in view, as she had sanctioned in Philip's great predecessor more outrageous conduct.

The distressed king now separated himself from his broken-hearted Agnes. She soon after died of grief, having given birth to a son, to whom she gave the significant name of Tristan - the son of my sorrow. Ingeburga was received with outward honour, but was in reality a state prisoner; nothing could ever induce Philip to live with her as his wife, though he consented to her living in the palace. Fresh quarrels between France and England diverted the mind of Innocent from the neglected queen, and opened up a more inviting field for his active and ambitious mind. We will now turn to home scenes for a little.

Innocent and England

Richard the Lion-hearted, it will be remembered, was the great supporter of Otho, the papal claimant of the empire. England at that time was in close alliance with the See of Rome. After the death of Richard his brother John, the youngest son of Henry II., was raised to the vacant throne. According to our present laws of succession his nephew, Arthur, duke of Brittany, the only son and heir of his elder brother, Geoffrey Plantagenet, would have been king. But crowns at this time were as much elective as hereditary.

The whole reign of John - 1199-1216 - is a history of weakness and violence, of wickedness and degradation, of the most cruel, sensual, and faithless of monarchs. But the hand of the Lord is most manifest in the affairs of England at this time. Never had a viler prince worn a crown; yet God in His mercy, and in His care for England, overruled his many faults for the benefit of the church and the people of England. We speak of course in general terms. But from this reign may be dated England's wholesome dread of popery, and her enthusiasm for civil and religious liberty. Disastrous to the last degree as was the reign of John; humiliating to the king and to the nation; yet the united voice of history affirms that it was then that the foundations were laid of "the English character, the English liberties, and the English greatness; and to this reign, from the attempt to degrade the kingdom to a fief of the Roman See, may be traced the first signs of that independence, that jealousy of the papal usurpations, which led eventually to the Reformation." The overruling hand of God, in His special care of England, has been manifest in all her revolutions ever since. Scarcely any benefit resulted to either Church or State in France from the pope's interference with Philip, excepting that they were made to feel the awfulness of the papal power. But no Magna Charta was signed, no House of Commons arose.

One of John's first and great scandals, reveals in the clearest light the unprincipled character of Innocent's policy. John had been married twelve years to a daughter of the Earl of Gloucester before he came to the throne. After that, aspiring to a royal connection, he sought a dissolution, and the obsequious Archbishop of Bordeaux dissolved the marriage bond. He suddenly became enamoured with a lady who was the betrothed bride of the Count de la Mark, carried her off, and was married to her, while his own wife was living. But what will the pope now say about the holy sacrament of matrimony - he whose horror of such connections has been so inexorably displayed in the case of Philip and Agnes? Fast and thick we may expect his thunderbolts to fly at the adulterous king; but no! no censure is uttered from Rome against either the king or the archbishop. He confirms the dissolution of the marriage in the face of God, the church, and the world. Such was the glaring wickedness of "his holiness, his infallibility." But why show such partiality to John? He was the supporter of Otho, and the enemy of the house of Swabia.

But if the pope was quiescent, the world was scandalized. Such an outrage on a great vassal was a violation of the first law of feudalism. The barons of Anjou, Touraine, Poitou, Maine, were eager to avenge the indignity offered to Hugh de la Mark, and from that day they held themselves absolved from their fealty to John. They appealed to Philip, king of France, for redress. Philip Augustus felt his strength, and summoned the English king to answer in his courts of Paris for the wrongs done to the Count de la Mark. John appeared not; this led to a ruinous war, and to the loss of immense territories in France to England. In a few months Philip wrested from John the great inheritance of Rollo - the great Anglo-Norman dukedom, which in the days of his father Henry II. was equal in the extent of its territories, its revenues, its forces, its wealth, to the whole of that over which the French monarch swayed his sceptre.*

{*For details, see the civil and general church histories. We have followed chiefly names already and frequently quoted.}

John and the Papacy

We now leave the civil, and turn more directly to the **ecclesiastical history** of affairs in England at this interesting moment.

We have seen the pope overlooking the gravest immoralities in John, on account, as we suppose, of his being the partisan of Otho, and the ally of the Holy See, but John was now guilty of crimes which his Holiness could not overlook. His matrimonial irregularities, however criminal, might be allowed to pass without censure; but his disposal of sees, his taxation of monasteries, his interference in the appointment of a primate, brought him into direct collision with the papacy, and involved him in a fierce contention with his ally Pope Innocent.

Immediately after the death of Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, the younger monks hastily elected their sub-prior, Reginald, to the vacant See. But, soon finding that they had acted imprudently, they applied to the king for leave to proceed in a fresh election. The choice of a bishop was really in the hands of the sovereign, though nominally it might be in the hands of the clergy. Such was the Anglo-Norman system. The king recommended one of his chief councillors, John de Grey, bishop of Norwich, who was accordingly chosen, invested with the temporalities of the See, and sent to Rome for confirmation. The pope now saw his opportunity, and eager to extend his power in England disallowed both elections, Reginald and **John de Grey,** and commanded the election of Stephen Langton, an Englishman by birth, a learned prudent man, and of excellent character. A more fit person, as it happened, could not have been named by the pope; but his action was in defiance of the privilege claimed by the monks, the suffragan bishops, and the king himself. In vain did the representatives of Canterbury and the king's commissioners urge the necessity of the royal assent. Innocent ruled otherwise. He constituted them a chapter by "the authority of God and the Apostolic See. " The monks were now between two tyrants - the spiritual and the temporal. Twelve were under oath to the king not to elect any one but the bishop of Norwich; the pope commanded them to elect Langton, on pain of excommunication and anathema. Overcome by this awful menace, the chapter yielded to the spiritual tyrant, proceeded to elect Stephen, and on the 17th of June, 1207, the pope consecrated him Archbishop of Canterbury.

Such an interference with the rights of the established church and the prerogative of the crown was wholly new in England. Had John been a popular prince and surrounded by the strength and sympathies of his insulted people, he might have laughed to scorn the daring presumption and menaces of a foreign priest, but the folly and unpopularity of the king gave the pope the opportunity he desired. The **monks of Canterbury,** on their return from Rome, were impeached of high treason; and were in consequence expelled from their residences, and their property confiscated. But the king's fury knew no bounds; he dispatched a troop of horse to drive the monks out of the country, and, in case of resistance, to put them to death. The orders were executed in the temper they were given. The soldiers broke into the monastery with drawn swords; the prior and monks were ordered to leave the kingdom, and threatened, if they resisted or delayed, to see their monastery set on fire, and themselves thrust back into the flames. Many of them fled and found an asylum in Flanders. The king also indulged in the most insulting and stinging language to the proud and passionate pontiff; protesting that he would never accept Stephen Langton as primate, that he would maintain the right of the bishop of Norwich, and, in case of the pope's refusal, he would cut off all communication between his dominions and Rome. But the pope proceeded with no less energy than John, only with a calmer dignity.

In the course of some further exchange of letters the pope enlarges on the learning and piety of Langton, and exhorts the king to abstain from taking up arms against God and His church; but, as John made no concession, Innocent commanded the bishops of London, Worcester, and Ely, to lay the whole kingdom under an interdict. When the bishops delivered their message, the king's anger broke out in wild oaths and blasphemies. He swore that if either pope or prelate should lay the kingdom under an interdict, he would drive the bishops and clergy out of the kingdom "without eyes, ears, or noses, to be the scarecrows of all nations." The prelates withdrew, and, when at a convenient distance from John, published the interdict.

England under the Ban

In a moment all divine offices throughout the kingdom ceased, except the rite of baptism and extreme unction. "From Berwick to the British Channel," says one account of this fearful malediction, "from the Land's End to Dover, the churches were closed, the bells were silent; the only clergy who were seen stealing silently about were those who were to baptize new-born infants, or hear the confession of the dying. The dead were cast out of the towns, buried like dogs in some unconsecrated place, without prayer, without the tolling bell, without funeral rite. Those only can judge the effect of a papal interdict who consider how completely the whole life of all orders was affected by the ritual and daily ordinances of the church. Every important act was done under the counsel of the priest or the monk. The festivals of the church were the only holidays, the processions of the church the only spectacles, the ceremonies of the church the only amusements. To hear no prayer nor chant, to suppose that the world was surrendered to the unrestrained power of the devil and his evil spirits, with no saint to intercede, no sacrifice to avert the wrath of God; when no single image was exposed to view, not a cross unveiled: the intercourse between man and God utterly broken off; souls left to perish, or but reluctantly permitted absolution in the instant of death." And from other quarters we learn that, in order to inspire a deeper gloom and fanaticism, the hair was to be left uncut and the beard unshaven; the use of meat was forbidden; and even the ordinary salutation was prohibited.

Such was the state of our own country, England, for at least four years. The public misery was great and universal; but neither the misery of the subject, nor the religious privations of the Christian, moved the obdurate heart of the king or the pontiff. The triumph of the shepherd of Rome over a great kingdom was far more to be desired than the welfare of the flock. The prelates who published the edict with other rich bishops fled the kingdom; "there they lived," says the historian, "in abundance and luxury, instead of standing up as a defence for the Lord's house, abandoning their flocks to the ravening wolf." The vindictive tyrant John seemed to defy and treat with insolent disdain the awful effects of the edict on his suffering subjects. He revelled in his vengeance against the bishops and priests who obeyed the pope. He confiscated the property of the superior clergy and monasteries throughout England; and compelled the Jews to yield up their wealth by imprisonment and torture. This state of things had lasted nearly two years when another bull was issued.

The crafty pope had narrowly watched the effect of the first; and seeing that John was losing his friends and becoming more unpopular, he published the sentence of excommunication against the name and person of the sovereign. Still the profligate habits of John were such that, while he defied the pope and the hierarchy, he at the same time alienated the affections of all orders in the country. Again the pope saw his opportunity, and issued another bull yet more appalling. The subjects of John were absolved from their allegiance and commanded to avoid his presence. But with that stoical indifference to human suffering which he uniformly manifested, he determined that both himself and the nation should brave the full vengeance of Rome. The papal thunders seemed wasted on the unfeeling and irreligious king; and had he managed his nobles and people wisely, the greatest of the popes and the heaviest of his bolts must have been ineffectual on the people of England. But the rapacity, barbarities, and outrageous conduct of the king estranged all classes. Disaffection grew into murmurs almost into revolt. Innocent, observing this leaven of disaffection working so effectually in England, prepared to launch his last and most dangerous thunderbolt against the contumacious sovereign. "The interdict had smitten the land the excommunication had desecrated the person of the king there remained the act of *deposition* from the throne of his fathers, which was now pronounced. That John, king of England, be deposed from the royal crown and dignity; that his subjects be dissolved from their oath of allegiance, and be at liberty to transfer them to a person worthier to fill the vacant throne."*

{*Greenwood's *Cathedra Petri,* book 13, p. 582; Milman's *Latin Christianity, vol. 4, p. 90;* Waddington's *History of the Church, vol.* 2, p. 167.}

The **throne of England** was now publicly and solemnly declared vacant, by the decree of the pope, and the king's dominions the lawful spoil of whoever could wrest them from his unhallowed hands. Such was the power of the popes in those days, and such the terror of his thunders. He struck great nations with his anathemas, and they fell before him as if withered and blasted; he hurled great kings from their thrones, and compelled them to bend before the tempest of his wrath, and humbly obey the mandate of his will. All, without exception, in Church and State, must accept his own terms of reconciliation, or die without salvation and be tormented in the flames of hell for ever. The haughty and able Philip Augustus of France was tamed into submission in a few months; while the weak and contemptible John disregarded his fulminations for years, but it was only to receive a heavier blow at last, and submit to a deeper humiliation. We shall now see how this was accomplished; and, in the plot, the reader will also notice the deep cunning and deceitfulness of the pope. We have no difficulty, throughout this affair, in seeing the depths of Satan.

The Crown of England Offered to France

The papal sentence of deposition against the king of England having been publicly and solemnly promulgated, **Philip of France** was delegated to execute the decree. The legates placed in his hands a formal commission, directing him by apostolic authority to invade England, depose the king, and take his crown; and it is observed by the historian, that the legates and prelates feigned the most wondrous zeal and earnestness in the whole affair; while it was altogether the merest artifice. Nothing was farther from Innocent's mind than to unite the two crowns on one head. This would have strengthened France, not the Roman See. Philip had not forgotten the insolence of the pope in interdicting his kingdom, and excommunicating himself; but his hatred of John, his love of enterprise, and the pope's treachery, completely blinded him. He counted on the truthfulness of the pope, but he made a ruinous mistake. Not a moment, however, was lost by Philip in collecting a numerous fleet and army for the invasion of England.

The pope at the same time published a crusade all over Christendom against the impious king John, promising to all who should take part in this holy war the remission of sins and the privileges of crusaders. But the fallen king was not wanting either in vigour of subtlety. He assembled a large fleet at Portsmouth, and an army on Barham Downs, near Canterbury. He assumed the aggressive: but he soon discovered that in his large army there were not many to be relied upon. Maddened with passion, he threatened to become a Mahometan and seek an alliance with the Caliph; but at this moment the spirit of the impatient king underwent a sudden revolution. From the height of defiant rage he fell to the lowest depths of prostration and fear.

England Surrendered to Rome

As it was not the interest or the intention of his Holiness to allow matters to be carried to extremities, the vigilant pope saw his time was come to interfere. Two legates, Pandulph and Durand, were sent over with the final **demands of Innocent to John.** They assured him that the King of France was ready to invade England with a great host and a powerful fleet, and that he would be accompanied with the archbishops, bishops, and clergy, whom John had banished; that they would transfer their allegiance to his rival Philip, and place the crown upon his head. With many such-like statements, they terrified the king, who lost all self-possession, and threw himself and his kingdom into the hands of the legates without reserve. With a meanness of spirit almost exceeding belief, and an abject submission which knew no bounds, he laid his crown at the feet of the haughty legate, resigned England and Ireland into the hands of the pope, swore homage to him as his liege lord, and took an oath of fealty to his successors. The terms of this remarkable oath are rather long and wordy, but the following is the substance of it, as given in the *Encyclopedia Britannica.*

"I John, by the grace of God King of England and Lord of Ireland, in order to expiate my sins, from my own free will and the advice of my barons, give to the Church of Rome, to Pope Innocent and his successors, the kingdom of England and all other prerogatives of my crown. I will hereafter hold them as the pope's vassal. I will be faithful to God, to the Church of Rome, to the pope *my master,* and to his successors legitimately elected. I promise to pay him a tribute of 1000 merks,* to wit, 700 for the kingdom of England, and 300 for the kingdom of Ireland." This memorable submission took place on the 15th of May, 1213, in the fourteenth year of his reign, at the house of the Templars, not far from Dover.

{*An old Scotch silver coin, worth about 13s. 6d. This was to be paid yearly, besides Peter's pence.}

This oath was taken by the King kneeling before all the people, and with his hands held up between those of the legate. The attesting witnesses were, one archbishop, one bishop, nine earls, four barons. Having then agreed to install Langton in the primacy, he received the crown which he had been supposed to have forfeited. The wary and politic Pandulph, having received the fealty of the King of England, and **eighty thousand sterling** as compensation for the exiled bishops, hastily gathered up his charter and his money-bags, and hurried to rejoin the banished prelates in Normandy and divide the money. He next hastened to the camp of King Philip Augustus, and finding the army on the point of embarkation for England, he coolly informed the King, "that there was now no further need for his services; and that in fact any attempt to invade the kingdom, or to annoy the King of England, must be highly offensive to the holy See, inasmuch as that kingdom was now part and parcel of the patrimony of the church: it was therefore his duty to dismiss his army, and himself to return home in peace." When Philip discovered that he had been so thoroughly duped, he broke out in a storm of indignant invectives against the pope. "He had been drawn into enormous expense; he had called forth the whole strength of his dominions, under the delusive promise of a kingdom and the remission of his sins; all this he had done at the earnest entreaty of the pope. And was all the chivalry of France, in arms around their sovereign, to be dismissed like hired menials when there was no more use for their services?" But the King's fury was met by a cool repetition of the order, "Desist from hostilities against the vassal of the Holy See."*

{**Cathedra Petri,* book 13, p. 588.}

Philip's disappointment and mortification were great; but not daring to offend the pope and unwilling to disband his army without attempting some enterprise, he made a descent on Flanders. Ferrand, the earl, though a peer of France, having entered into a secret league with John, gave Philip a fair pretext for turning his arms against his revolted vassal. But the fleets of England joined the Flemings, and the attempted conquest of Flanders ended in disgraceful defeat. The English captured three hundred vessels, and destroyed about a hundred more: whilst Philip, finding it impossible to prevent the rest from falling into the hands of the enemy, set fire to them himself, and thus abandoned the enterprise. Such was the heavy loss and discomfiture of Philip through the deep laid plot of Innocent.

Magna Charta

John having thus triumphed over his bitter enemy, and secured the alliance of the Holy See, continued the same cruel and tyrannical measures which had hitherto rendered him odious to his subjects. His long misgovernment, and his reckless indulgence in excesses of every vicious habit, had exhausted the patience of all classes both in Church and State. A general desire was expressed for the privileges and the control of settled law.

The story of **Magna Charta** is so truly English, so well known, and so intimately connected with church, as well as civil history, that we must give it a brief notice in our "Short Papers." Besides, it is said by historians, that no event of equal importance occurred in any other country of Europe during the thirteenth century; and that the results of no single incident have ever been so enduring or so widely spread as those of the meeting of the barons at Runnymede and the summoning of the burgesses to Parliament. While monarchy was making such rapid strides in France, a counter-balancing power was formed in England by the combination of the nobility and the rise of the House of Commons.

Archbishop Langton, whom Innocent had raised to the primacy, in order by his means to maintain all the exorbitant pretensions of Rome over England, was himself an Englishman, and on all occasions showed a sincere regard for the interests of the kingdom to the utter disappointment of the pope. Having found amidst the rubbish of an obscure monastery a copy of the charter of Henry I., he conferred privately with the barons, and exhorted them to have it renewed. Those of the barons who had felt deeply the degradation which John had inflicted on the whole kingdom by his abject submission to the pope, received the document with loud acclamations, and took a solemn oath to conquer or to die in the defence of their liberties. After several conferences and delays forty-five barons, armed in mail, well mounted on their war-steeds, and surrounded with their knights, servants, and soldiers, presented a petition to the King, praying him to renew and ratify the charter. John at first resented their presumption in a furious passion, and swore "that he would never grant *them* liberties which would make himself a slave." But the barons were firm and united, and the court of John rapidly diminished. He eventually submitted and agreed to a friendly conference. The barons named **Runnymede** as a proper place for meeting. It was a meadow situated between Staines and Windsor; the ground is still held in veneration as the spot where the standard of English freedom was first unfurled. On the 15th day of June, 1215, both parties met there; the King signed the charter - the great charter of the liberties of England.

The Rage of Innocent

Among the witnesses to that signature was **Pandulph,** the haughty legate. He saw it was a deadly blow to the papal power in England. Innocent was soon in possession of the startling news. His infallibility shuddered with alarm; he raged, he swore, as his manner was; he knit his brow, as the historian says, and broke out into the language of astonishment. "What! have the barons of England presumed to dethrone a king who has taken the cross, and placed himself under the protection of the apostolic See? Do they transfer to others the patrimony of the Church of Rome? By St. Peter we cannot leave such a crime unpunished." The great charter was declared null and void, the King forbidden under pain of excommunication to respect the oath which he had taken or the liberties he had confirmed. But the spiritual censures, the annulling edicts, were now received by the barons with utter disregard.

War broke out; and to the still deeper disgrace of John, who had no army of his own, he brought over from the continent bands of adventurers and freebooters promising them the estates of the English barons as rewards of valour. At the head of these mercenary troops with the aid of two warlike bishops, **Worcester** and **Norwich,** he traversed the whole country from the channel to the Forth. He let loose his ferocious hordes like wild beasts upon his unhappy realm. The barons had made no preparations for war, not suspecting the introduction of a foreign army. Here again we see the depths of Satan; he is ever ready to give to another what power he has over the nations, provided he to whom he gives it subjects himself entirely to his will. "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Mat 4:8-9) It was much the same to John whether he became a vassal of the pope, Mahomet, or Satan. For a short time he was undisputed master of the field. The whole land was wasted with fire and sword. Plunder, murder, torture, raged without control. Nothing was sacred, nothing was safe. Nobles and peasants fled with their wives and families when it was possible. The blood-stained assassins of the King and the pope passed through the country with the sword in one hand and the torch in the other; when a cry rose to heaven, "Oh, unhappy England! Oh, unhappy country! May God have mercy on us, and may His judgments fall on the King and the pope."

The judgment was not long delayed. Neither heaven nor earth could tolerate their cruelties and tyrannies any longer. The pope died on July 16th, 1216, at the age of fifty-five; just a year, a month, and a day, after the signing of Magna Charta. John survived him only a few months. He died on the 12th of October, 1216, in the forty-ninth year of his age, and the seventeenth of his reign. It is supposed that he died from fright accompanied by drunkenness. As he was returning from one of his scenes of slaughter, the royal waggons were crossing the sands of the Wash, from Norfolk into Lincolnshire, when the tide rose suddenly and all sank in the abyss. The accident filled the King with terror; he felt as if the earth was about to open and swallow him alive. He drank copiously of cider, which, with fear and remorse, closed the days of the meanest and most despicable tyrant that has ever sat on the throne of England. The names of other kings, whose vices are black enough to call forth the execrations of posterity, are often surrounded with such a **halo of talent,** either in the senate or the field, as to mitigate the severity of the sentence. But King John dies: his character stands before us unredeemed by one solitary virtue.*

{**Encyclopedia Britannica,* vol. 8, p. 721; D'Aubigne, vol. 5, p. 98; James White, *Eighteen Christian Centuries,* p. 290.}

25 South of France

Chapter 25

Innocent and the South of France

A new field of blood, and an entirely new character of warfare, were now brought before the mind of the voracious priest of Rome. It was a war not against the enemies of the faith abroad, or against the refractory kings at home, but the army of the church warring against the confessed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was a new thing in the annals of Christendom.

By the favour of the princes and by the indifference of the clergy the **Albigenses** had been allowed for centuries to preach the gospel and to spread the truth unmolested. Roman Catholicism had nearly perished from the provinces of Count Raymond. The people generally were well inclined to break off their connection with the church of Rome altogether. When this state of things came to the ears of Innocent, he called for a crusade against the heretics of Languedoc, and rested not until he had swept the whole population from the soil of France.

But we must first of all go back a few steps in order to connect the line of witnesses for Christ and His gospel.

The Chain of Witnesses

When we parted with the **Paulicians** - the Eastern witnesses for God and His truth - we promised to meet with them again in the regions of the West. It is asserted that in their missionary zeal they spread themselves over Europe; but whether they remained a distinct and characteristic sect, or mingled with the sectaries of the West, has been a question with historians. Among the various forms of heresy which were denounced by the dominant church, scarcely one of them escaped the charge of Manicheism - the brand affixed to the emigrants from the East. But it would be unreasonable to contend from this general charge that the Western sects were the fruit of their mission, though branded with the same name. It is more than likely, however, that they found many separatists in spirit, though not openly so, and in such cases may have become their teachers, and in this way perpetuated their principles.

The Western witnesses we have no doubt were the result of the same spirit of grace and truth, through the faithfulness of God, who never left Himself without a witness, but we see no ground to speak of them as the descendants of the misrepresented Paulicians. More likely there was an *intermingling* of these seceders from the established church.

We shall now endeavour to trace the *silver line* of God's grace, which was actively at work, though under different forms and names, during the darkest period of the papal oppression. There is no difficulty in identifying God's witnesses from the earliest period down to the Reformation, or in tracing the unbroken chain of testimony against the wickedness of Rome, and for the true gospel of the grace of God. We brought the line of witnesses in the history of the Paulicians down to the tenth century; we shall now notice the more prominent sects which arose in the West before and since that period.

1. **Claudius,** a Spaniard by birth, was famous as a commentator on the scriptures in the court of Louis in Aquitaine. His patron, the Emperor, promoted him to the bishopric of Turin in the year 814. He is spoken of in history as the Wycliffe of the ninth century, and the strenuous advocate of primitive Christianity. On reaching his diocese he found the churches filled with images and embellished with flowers and garlands. He at once, and in the most unceremonious manner, ordered all such ornaments to be removed. No distinction was to be made in favour of any picture, relic, or cross; all were to be swept away as with the besom of destruction. He denounced the worship of such things as the renewer of the worship of demons under other names, in place of preaching the glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He declared that the apostolic office of St. Peter ceased with the life of the apostle. He therefore made light of papal censures and the alleged power of the keys. It has been said that he went the length of separating his church from the Romish communion.

But, like many other reformers, Claudius was rough and intemperate in his zeal. The fearful corruptions of the clergy and the idolatries of the people led him to speak and write in strong and passionate terms. Nor need we wonder. But the Lord watched over him in the most marvellous way. Though he was a bold reformer and a fearless iconoclast in an Italian city, he was permitted by the unseen hand of Providence to finish his labours in the full privileges of a bishop, though not unopposed.

As a link in the chain of witnesses, Claudius has a very distinct place. His influence was great and widely spread. Theodemir, abbot of a monastery near Nismes, ingenuously confesses, says Milman, that most of the great transalpine prelates thought with Claudius. And the hostility to the Romish church and her many sacraments, which afterwards prevailed in the Alpine valleys, has been generally traced to the reformer, Claudius. He died in the year 839.

Petrobrussians

2. About the year 1110, a preacher, named **Peter de Brueys**, began to declaim against the corruptions of the dominant church and the vices of the clergy. As a missionary, he laboured chiefly in the south of France, Provence, and Languedoc. And, what may seem strange to us, he was allowed to disseminate his new doctrines with impunity for about twenty years. The enemy could neither silence nor kill the witness until his testimony was finished. But as nearly all we know of such men comes to us through the writings of their adversaries, we only hear of what were called their heresies. The venerable abbot of Cluny wrote a treatise against Peter's followers - thence called *Petrobrussians:* they are charged with many offences but which may be reduced to the following - opposition to infant baptism, to the mass, celibacy, crucifixes, transubstantiation, and the efficacy of prayers for the salvation of the dead. But nothing which the founder of this sect did or said seemed to rouse the public feeling against him until he burned a number of crosses bearing the image of Christ. The priests then succeeded, a popular tumult was raised, and he was burned alive at St. Gilles in Languedoc. But his protest was not so easily consumed. Divine light may be overshadowed for a time, but it can never be extinguished.

Henricians

3. The fire which burned Peter de Brueys neither discouraged nor silenced his followers. One of these, named **Henry, a monk of Cluny,** and a deacon, became a more daring and a more powerful preacher than Peter. In the retirement of his monastery he had devoted himself to the study of the New Testament; and having gained a knowledge of Christianity from the pure word of God, he longed to go forth into the world to proclaim the truth to his fellow-men. His personal appearance, and his private education, combined to make his preaching most powerful and awakening. The rapid change in his countenance is likened to a stormy sea; his stature was lofty, his eyes were rolling and restless; his powerful voice, his naked feet and neglected apparel, attracted an attention, which was fixed by the fame of his learning and his sanctity.

In years he was but a youth, yet his deep tones, his wonderful eloquence, with his remarkable appearance, appalled the clergy and delighted the people. In the spirit of a John the Baptist he called upon the people to repent, and turn to the Lord, and not infrequently assailed the unpopular vices of the clergy.

But the opposition which Henry encountered from the clergy only attracted the people the more towards him. Multitudes, both of the poorer and the wealthier classes, received him as their spiritual guide in all things. He is first heard of historically at Lausanne, but he traversed the south of France from Lausanne to Bordeaux; and, as Neander observes, "he chained the people to himself, and filled them with contempt and hatred towards the higher clergy - they would have nothing to do with them. The divine service celebrated by them was no longer attended. They found themselves exposed to the insults and gibes of the populace, and had to apply for protection to the civil arm." The prudent bishop of Le Mans, seeing the influence he had gained over the people, contented himself with simply directing Henry to another field of labour. The zealous monk quietly withdrew, and made his appearance in Provence, where Peter de Brueys had laboured before him. Here he developed still more clearly his opposition to the errors of the church of Rome, and drew down upon himself the bitter hostility of the hierarchy.

Henry was apprehended by the archbishop of Arles; he was condemned as a heretic by the Council of Pisa, which was held in 1134, and sentenced to confinement in a cell. In a short time he escaped, and returned to Languedoc. Desertion of churches, it is said, total contempt of the clergy, followed the eloquent heresiarch wherever he went. A legate, named Alberic, was sent by Eugenius III. to subdue the revolt; but his mission would have been fruitless, had he not prevailed on St. Bernard to share with him the labour and the glory of the enterprise. "Henry is an antagonist," he said, "who can only be put down by the conqueror of Abelard and of Arnold of Brescia."

The powerful abbot of Clairvaux wrote to the prince of the Provence to prepare for his arrival, and signifying the object of his coming. "The churches," he wrote, "are without people; the people without priests; the priests without honour; and Christians without Christ. The churches are no longer conceived holy, nor the sacraments sacred, nor are the festivals any more celebrated. Men die in their sins - souls are hurried away to the terrible tribunal - without penitence or communion; baptism is refused to infants, who are thus precluded from salvation." The abbot wrought miracles, as was believed; the people wondered and admired; Henry fled; Bernard pursued, purifying the places infected by the pestilence of heresy. At length the heretic was seized; he was handed over in chains to the bishop of Toulouse, who consigned him to prison, where he soon afterwards died suddenly. He was thus delivered from all his persecutors in the year 1148, and entered into his rest.

Vaudois, Albigenses, Waldenses

4. The origin of the Western sectaries, so-called, under the common name of **Waldenses,** has been the subject of much controversy. One class of writers, favourable to Romanism, with the view of involving them in the common charge of Manicheism, have endeavoured to prove that their opinions were of Eastern, or Paulician origin, while the opposite party affirm that they were free from the Manichean error, and that they have been the inheritors and maintainers, from father to son, of a pure and scriptural Christianity, from the time of Constantine, if not from the days of the apostles.*

{*In the first edition of *Short Papers,* the following sentence occurs:-"It also appears very certain that the Albigenses of the southern provinces of France owe their origin to the Paulicians." Most of the general histories are calculated to give this impression; but after consulting the special histories and laborious researches of Peter Allix, D.D., W.S. Gilly, M.A., W. Beattie, M.D., and others, we are fully persuaded of their great antiquity, the purity of their faith, and their Alpine locality-that they existed as a distinct christian people long before the Paulicians, or even the papacy.}

But as it is not so much our object at present to trace the history of these ancient, simple, and devoted christian people, as to bring out another feature of the papacy under Innocent, in its most fully expressed blasphemy and cruelty; we will merely satisfy the reader as to who these people were, and as to the scene of their slaughter. "The terms," says Dr. Gilly, "Vaudois in French, Vallenses in Latin, Valdisi in Italian, and Waldenses in English ecclesiastical history, signifying nothing more or less than **'men of the valleys;'** and as the valleys of Piedmont have had the honour of producing a race of people who have remained true to the faith introduced by the first missionaries who preached Christianity in those regions, the synonyms have been adopted as the distinguishing names of a religious community, faithful to the primitive creed, and free from the corruptions of the church of Rome."

The **Albigenses,** though essentially one with the Waldenses in matters of faith, were so called because the greater part of Narbonnese-Gaul which they inhabited was called Albigesium, or from Albi, a town in Languedoc. The Alps separated the two communities. God found an asylum for the Waldenses in the valleys on the eastern side, and for the Albigenses in the valleys on the western side, of that great mountain range, where they were preserved and fortified for many centuries.

Peter Waldo

From a similarity of names, Peter Valdo, or Waldo, the reformer of Lyons, has frequently been spoken of as the first founder of the Waldensian sect. This we think a mistake, but one easily made, and one which the Romanists eagerly improved as an argument against their antiquity, and one which has been adopted by most of the general histories. But Mr. Elliot, in his "Horae Apocalypticae," and those mentioned in the note above, have examined the question with great patience and research, and, we believe, clearly established the conclusion of the orthodoxy and the antiquity of the "men of the valleys."*

{*See Marsden's *Dictionary,* "Albigenses." Milner, vol. 3, p. 92. Bartlett's *Scenery of the Waldenses,* Introduction.}

At the same time **Peter Waldo** is worthy of all praise for his self-denying services in the cause of truth, and against error. His piety, zeal, and courage were most conspicuous at a period when the papal hierarchy began to persecute all who questioned its authority and infallibility. He was no doubt raised up of God just at that time to give greater distinctness to the testimony of the Alpine peasants. The simplicity of their worship, and the scene of their tranquillity, appear not to have excited the jealousy of their neighbours or the suspicion of the universal church till about this time. It happened, under the hand of God, in this way.

About the year 1160 the practices of idolatry which accompanied the doctrine of transubstantiation deeply impressed Peter with an alarming sense of the wickedness of the times, and the dangerous corruptions of the papacy. This led to the true conversion of his soul to God. From that moment he was devoted to His service and His glory. He abandoned his mercantile occupations, and distributed his wealth to the poor, in imitation of the early disciples. Numbers gathered around him; he felt the need of instruction in the things of God; where was it to be found? He became deeply desirous to understand the Gospels which he had been accustomed to hear in church. He employed two ecclesiastics to translate them into the native tongue, with some other books of scripture, and some passages of the Fathers. This was Waldo's greatest work, for which he deserves the best thanks of posterity. The scriptures at that time were in a great measure a sealed book in Christendom being only in the Latin tongue. The followers of Waldo being thus provided with copies of the scriptures in their own tongue, they were able to explain to the people that they were not advancing doctrines of their own, but a pure faith as it really existed in the Bible. After the manner of the seventy, he sent out his disciples, two by two, into the neighbouring villages to preach the gospel.

This awoke the thunders of the Vatican. As long as Waldo and his friends confined themselves to their own protest against the innovations, the hierarchy did not seriously molest them; but as soon as they employed that dreaded engine, the scriptures in the vulgar tongue, they were immediately anathematized and excommunicated. As yet they contemplated no secession from the church, but only its reformation. They persisted in preaching the glorious gospel of the grace of God to lost sinners: an interdict was issued against them by the Archbishop of Lyons. Waldo resolutely replied, "We must obey God rather than man." From that time "the poor men of Lyons," as they were called, were branded by the Clergy with obloquy and contempt as heretics. For three years after his first condemnation, which took place in 1172, Waldo contrived to remain concealed in the city of Lyons or its neighbourhood, but Pope Alexander the Third fulminated his threats and terrors so effectually not only against Waldo, but against all who should dare to hold the slightest communication with the reformer, that, for his friends' sake, he fled from Lyons, and became a wanderer for the rest of his life. After seeking a shelter in several places, but finding a resting-place in none, he passed from among the Bohemian mountaineers, the ancestors of Huss and Jerome, into his eternal rest about the year 1179.

The Dispersion of Waldo's Followers

When Waldo fled, his disciples followed him. The dispersion took place similarly to that which arose on the occasion of Stephen's persecution. The effects were also similar; the blessed gospel was more widely disseminated throughout Europe. Their great strength was their possession of the sacred scriptures in their own language. They read the Gospels; they preached and they prayed in the vulgar tongue. Many of them, no doubt, found their way to the valleys of Piedmont and the cities of Languedoc. A new translation of the Bible was doubtless a rich accession to the spiritual treasures of that interesting people.

The scene was now ready for Pope Innocent: the papal threatenings having been transmitted to his vigorous hand, were executed with a willing and unrelenting mind. He who had humbled the great kings of Germany, France, and England, and had received implicit submission from almost every part of Christendom, was still disowned as supreme head of the church by the Waldenses wherever they were found. It was not likely that such a spirit as Innocent's would continue to endure with calmness this resistance to his boasted universal supremacy. But what was their crime? where were they to be found? and how were they to be dealt with?

1. They had the highest reputation everywhere, even from their worst enemies, for modesty, frugality, honest industry, chastity, and temperance. "In no instance," says a high authority, but not very favourable to what he calls the antisacerdotalists, "are the morals of Peter Waldo and the Alpine Bible-Christians arraigned by their bitterest foes." Their mortal sin was found in their appeal to the scriptures, and to the scriptures alone, in all matters of faith and worship. They rejected the vast system of tradition-religion, as maintained by the church of Rome. Both in life and in doctrine they were noble witnesses for Christ and the simplicity of the gospel; but they formed a powerful protest against the wealth, the power, and the superstitions of the dominant religion. They rejected the almost innumerable sacraments of Rome, and maintained that there were only two in the New Testament - baptism and the Lord's supper. In general we may say that they anticipated and held the same doctrines which, after the lapse of three centuries, were to be promulgated by the Reformers of Germany and England, and which form the creed of Protestants at the present time.

2. The progress of **"the poor men of Lyons,"** after their persecutions, appears to have been rapid, and widely extended. They spread abroad, we are told, into the south of France, into Lombardy, and into Arragon. "In Lombardy and Provence," says Robertson, "the Waldenses had more schools than the Catholics; their preachers disputed and taught publicly, while the number and importance of the patrons whom they had gained, rendered it dangerous to interfere with them. In Germany they had forty-one schools in the diocese of Passau, and they were numerous in the dioceses of Metz and Toul. From England to the south of Italy, from the Hellespont to the Ebro, their opinions were widely spread."*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, pp. 179-202. Waddington, vol. 2, p. 187. Sir. J. Stephen's History of France, vol. 1, p. 218.}

3. Such was the state of things on the accession of Pope Innocent III. With anxious forebodings, and a far-seeing eye, he watched this spirit of religious independence, but how to crush it effectually was the question. Besides, at that time, as the reader will remember, his hands were full. He was seeking to destroy the balance of power in Germany and Italy, he was contending with the kings of France and England by turns, he was directing the march of the Crusaders, and overturning by their means the Greek empire at Constantinople; yet was he watching, and determined to punish every dissent from the tenets of the church of Rome, and every exercise of the thinking faculty on religious subjects. It was loudly rumoured about this time that the **two** principal seats of this disaffection towards Rome were the valleys of Piedmont and the south of France. The Piedmontese Christians flourished in comparative obscurity, while the Albigenses were rendered more notorious, as well as more dangerous, by the protection afforded them in the wealthy cities of Languedoc. **Raymond VI.,** Count of Toulouse, not only favoured those of the Waldensian creed as the best of his subjects, but employed them in his family, though avowedly himself a Roman Catholic. The Count of Foix was married to a Waldensian, of his two sisters, one was said to be a Waldensian, and the other a catharist, or puritan.

The Region of Albi

The name of *Languedoc* was given to these remote provinces of the kingdom, because of the rich, melodious, and flexible language which was then vernacular there. In refinement, wealth, and liberty, both political and religious, they surpassed all the rest of France. The old Roman civilization still lingered in the valleys of Languedoc and Provence. The feudal chieftains, especially the counts of Toulouse and Foix, though owning the king as lord paramount, possessed and exercised sovereign authority in their own domains. By the favour of Raymond, and the indifference of the other chiefs, this beautiful region had advanced far more rapidly towards civilization than any other part of Europe, but this civilization, observes Milman, was entirely independent of, or rather hostile to, ecclesiastical influence. The curse of popery, as we have often seen, is not only ruinous to the souls of men, but destructive of all progress in the arts of life and in general civilization. Even the face of a Catholic country seems blasted by its withering influence. The mind must be kept ignorant, superstitious and enslaved, if popery is to flourish. But for a long time the inhabitants of Languedoc had been left unmolested by the hierarchy of Rome, and, as a natural consequence, their cities were filled with a peaceful, industrious, and wealthy community.

But, on the other hand, as was most natural, in proportion as the word of God and liberal opinions prevailed, the church of Rome and the clergy sank into the greatest comtempt. Nobles and knights no longer allowed their younger sons to be trained for the church, but put sons of their serfs into benefices, and appropriated the tithes. Equally hated by the nobility and the common people for their grasping and unprincipled conduct, the priests could offer no resistance to the progress of the new opinions. They were no longer feared for their spiritual power, and they were despised for their **sensuality.** They became the song and the jest of the Troubadours; their spoiling of orphans, their swindling of widows, their dishonesty, gluttony, and drunkenness, were proverbial, and undeniable. "So sensible," says Robertson, "were they themselves of their ignominy, that they were fain to hide their tonsure by drawing the hair from the back of the head over it." The simplest peasant, on hearing of a scandalous action, was in the habit of saying, "I would rather be a priest than be guilty of such a deed. " So numerous were the seceders from Rome become, that they constituted the mass of the population. The Jews were also numerous and wealthy; and, of course' a number of individuals properly of no sect, peopled the flourishing cities of Languedoc; but we must now speak of them all under the common name of Albigenses.

Innocent and the Albigensian Persecution

Such was the state of things in that sunny, peaceful, prosperous region, when a dark thunder-cloud gathered in the horizon. Innocent heard with dismay the progress of the new opinions, and resolved to crush them. With this object in view, he first of all addressed a letter to the prelates and princes of southern France, exhorting them to take vigorous measures for the suppression of heresy, all heretics were to be anathematized and banished. But to Raymond and others such a merciless requisition appeared so arbitrary, that it met with little attention. "We have been brought up with these people," replied Raymond; "we have relations among them, we know that their life is honest; how can we persecute those whom we respect as the most peaceable and loyal of our people?" It was obvious that in such a sacrifice of the population the interests and the revenues of the princes were involved, and that it would amount to a process of extermination; but to this fearful process the supreme shepherd of Christ's flock did not hesitate to resort, however much the temporal sovereign might. The Albigenses were excommunicated, and placed under an anathema, which extended to every one who might lodge or shelter them, deal with them in trade, or join with them in social intercourse. But the disobedient Raymond still showed favour to his heretical subjects, and the enraged pope, in consequence, next sent two legates - Reinerius and Guido - to inquire into the causes of the failure, and armed with full authority to extirpate the heretics. Many of these inoffensive people were arrested, condemned, and committed to the flames; still Raymond was inactive, and the heresy grew and gathered strength.

What was to be done? New powers were demanded; sterner and more active agents were required. Raymond, an independent sovereign, and knowing the blameless character of his subjects, refused to execute the demands of Rome. St. Bernard, long the champion of the papacy, was dead, but the pope turned to his spiritual descendants. **Peter of Castelnau,** a Cistercian monk, was sent to Raymond as apostolic legate, in the year 1207, to demand that he should exterminate his heretical subjects with fire and sword. But the tolerant prince, who seems to have been a gay, pleasure-loving man, without strength of character to be either a heretic or a bigot, could not be aroused to obey the papal mandate. Twice he refused, and twice he was excommunicated, and his dominions laid under a solemn interdict. Innocent sanctioned what his legate had done, and wrote a letter to Raymond, unexampled in the arrogance and insolence of its language. "Pestilent man! imperious, cruel, and direful tyrant; what pride has seized your heart, and what is your folly, to refuse peace with your neighbours, and to brave the divine laws, by protecting the enemies of the faith? If you do not fear eternal flames, ought you not to dread the temporal chastisements which you have merited by so many crimes? For verily the church can have no peace with the captain of freebooters and robbers - the patron of heretics - the contemner of the holy seasons - the friend of Jews and usurers - the enemy of the prelates, and a persecutor of Jesus Christ and His church. The arm of the Lord shall still be stretched out against thee, until thou art crushed to dust and atoms. Verily, He shall make thee feel how difficult it is to withdraw thyself from the wrath thou hast called down upon thine own head."

Such is a specimen of the vehemence of papal invective in mediaeval times. And for what? the reader may inquire. Not for immorality, however bad he may have been; but because he refused to be the pope's executioner, and shed the blood of his own peaceful, industrious, faithful subjects. But such was the power of these incarnate fiends, that Raymond was frightened into submission. He signed a treaty, most reluctantly, for the extermination of all heretics from his dominions. He was slow, however, in proceeding with the work of persecution. The legate perceiving this, could not conceal his rage, but broke out in the most reproachful language against the prince - called him a coward, accused him of perjury, and renewed the excommunication in all its plenitude. Need we wonder that a feudal prince was irritated to wrathful indignation by the daring impudence of the monk? He is reported to have exclaimed, in an unhappy moment, that he would make Castelnau answer for his insolence with his life. It is supposed that the menace was heard by one of his attendants, who, the following day, after an angry debate, drew his poignard struck the legate in the side, and killed him. The quarrel as has been observed, assumed an aspect similar to that which raged a short time before this between Henry II. of England and Thomas a Becket.

Raymond - a Spiritual Outlaw

Innocent had now obtained what he wished - a decent pretext for the full outpouring of the vials of his wrath. The honours of martyrdom were decreed to the victim, Raymond was denounced as the author of the crime, and proclaimed a spiritual outlaw; and the faithful were called upon to assist in his destruction. "Up, soldiers of Christ," he writes to Philip Augustus of France, "up most christian King! hear the cry of blood; aid us in wreaking vengeance on these malefactors. Up ye nobles, knights of France, the rich and sunny lands of the south will be the reward of your valour." The preaching of the crusade was entrusted to the Cistercian order, under their fanatical abbot, Arnold; "a man," says Milman, "whose heart was sheathed with the triple iron of pride, cruelty, bigotry." Just at this moment, the missionaries fell in with the notable Spaniard, **Dominic,** ever since famous as the founder of the *Inquisition* and the *Dominican* friars. His heart was in no wise softer than Arnold's, and he was more successful as a preacher. Not a moment was lost in denouncing the crime and its perpetrators. Every heart and hand was engaged to take vengeance for the insult upon God in the person of His servant. The same indulgences which had ever been granted to the champions of the holy sepulchre were assured to those who should enter upon the new crusade against Raymond and the Albigenses. The clergy everywhere preached with indefatigable zeal this new way of obtaining the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

"To that ignorant and superstitious generation," says Sir James Stephens, "no summons could have been more welcome. Danger, privations, and fatigue, in their direst forms, had beset the rugged paths by which the crusaders to the East had fought their way to the promised paradise. But in the war against the Albigenses the same inestimable recompense was to be won, not by self-denial, but by self-indulgence. Every debt owing to man was to be cancelled, every offence already committed against the law of God was to be pardoned, and an eternity of blessedness was to be won, not by a life of future sanctity, but by a life of future crime; not by the restraint, but by the gratification, of their foulest passions; by satiating their cruelty, their avarice, and their lust, at the expense of a people whose wealth excited their covetousness, and whose superiority provoked their resentment." Forward to this mingled harvest of blood and plunder, of priestly absolution and military fame, rushed all the wild spirits of the age. The whole of Europe resounded with preparations for the holy war.

The Home Crusade

In the year 1209, in answer to the call of one man, and he professedly the chief pastor of the church of Christ, three hundred thousand soldiers gathered around the infected provinces. Some of the writers of that age raise the number to half a million, and all wearing in solemn mockery the symbol of the cross. They formed three great armies, over each of which presided an archbishop, a bishop, and mitred abbot. But eminent above all the leaders of this sacred war was the notorious Simon de Montfort, lord of a fief near Paris, and Earl of Leicester, in right of his mother, an English lady. Satan had skilfully selected his instruments Innocent, Arnold, Dominic, and de Montfort are names of awful memory in history. It would be difficult to say which of the four hearts was most thoroughly sheathed in the triple iron.

Raymond, being wholly unprepared to meet such a host, took refuge in submission. The pope promised absolution on certain conditions. But these were hard and cruel in the extreme. 1. He must clear himself of the murder of Castelnau; 2. as a proof of his sincerity he must surrender seven of his best castles; 3. that he should do public penance for his past offences; 4. that he should in his own person become a crusader against his own subjects. The poor count complained of the terms imposed on him, but such were the tender mercies of the pope, and they must be rigorously fulfilled to the letter. He submitted and received absolution in St. Gilles in the presence of three archbishops and nineteen bishops. He next appeared in the cathedral where Castelnau was buried, with naked shoulders, and a rope round his neck, either end of which was carried by a bishop; the scourge was then applied, not as a mere ceremony, but with hearty goodwill, till, covered with blood, the unhappy count was permitted to escape from his tormentors and from the vast crowd which had gathered to witness this almost incredible degradation of their suzerain lord. But this was not the worst penalty; he was obliged to accompany the crusaders against his own loyal subjects, and against his nephew, Raymond-Roger, the Viscount of Beziers, whose territories were said to be full of the odious Albigenses.

The vindictive soul of the pope being so far propitiated with having abased and duped his enemy, the mighty armament moved on. Three hundred thousand infuriated warriors poured into his beautiful states. "Forward," was the cry of the holy abbot, "you shall ravage every field, you shall slay every human being; strike and spare not. The measure of their iniquity is full, and the blessing of the church is on your head." Thus instructed by the priest, De Montfort was prepared to act. The vast army marched through the land of vineyards, and of oliveyards, burning, slaying, ravaging, as they went. The peasantry were ridden down and slaughtered in cold blood.

The Slaughter and Burning of Beziers

Raymond-Roger, a gallant young man of twenty-four, displayed a braver spirit than his uncle, and resolved to defend his people against the crusaders. His two great cities, Beziers and Carcassonne, were his chief strength. He threw himself into the latter, the stronger place. "The soldiers of the cross the priests of the Lord," as they called themselves, appeared before Beziers; which had been well provided and garrisoned by the viscount. The bishop of the place was in the army: he was allowed by Arnold to offer his advice to the people and recommend a surrender. "Renounce your opinions and save your lives," was the bishop's advice; but the Albigenses firmly replied that they would not renounce a faith which gave them the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The Catholics joined with the heretics in declaring that, rather than surrender, they would suffer death in its worst form. "Then," said Arnold, "there shall not be left one stone upon another; fire and sword shall devour men, women, and children." The town fell into the hands of the besiegers, and fearfully was the injunction obeyed. The knights, pausing at the gates, asked the abbot how the soldiers were to distinguish catholics from heretics; "Slay them all," he replied, "the Lord knoweth them that are His." The slaughter began: men, women, children, clergy, were massacred indiscriminately, while the bells of the cathedral were rung till the slaughter was complete. Trembling multitudes fled to the churches, in hope of finding a sanctuary within the hallowed walls; but not one human being was left alive. The vast population of Beziers, who so lately had thronged the streets and marts, now lay in slaughtered heaps. The numbers thus slain are estimated variously from twenty to one hundred thousand. So many from the open country flee for refuge to the cities at such times, that numbers cannot be correctly estimated. The city was given up to plunder, and then set on fire.

Never did the dragon-abbot say a truer word than that "the Lord knoweth them that are His," though he said it in awful derision, and was himself an utter stranger to the remaining part of the verse, "And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2Ti 2:19) The Lord surely knows all who believe in Him, and infinitely precious to Him is the feeblest of His saints. And Arnold will one day see, in the same glory with their Lord, those whom he denounced as heretics and slew with the sword. What a day that will be when the persecutor and the persecuted, the accuser and the accused, shall stand face to face in the presence of Him who judges righteously! Till then, may we walk by faith, seeking only to please the Lord.

The Siege Of Carcassonne

From Beziers, of which nothing now remained but a burning pile, the crusaders moved on in the direction of Carcassonne. As they advanced, they found the country desolate. The terrible example of Beziers struck terror into all hearts. The inhabitants of the defenceless villages fled as they saw the smoking ruins of the strong city. Woes innumerable tracked the polluted steps of these dragon hosts. They stood before the walls of Carcassonne: Roger commanded in person, and sustained a long siege with great valour. **Simon de Montfort** was foremost in the assault. On the other side, Roger was seen exposing himself everywhere at the head of the defenders, and animating their courage by words and example. During forty days the siege was continued, and the besiegers were repulsed with great loss. But for the treachery of the abbot, Raymond-Roger would have triumphed. Thus matters stood.

The soldiers of the cross were only required to serve forty days, both by feudal law and in order to gain all the privileges of crusaders. At the end of this period many of the leaders and the great mass of the troops returned home disappointed and dissatisfied. The excessive heat, the scantiness of water, the infected atmosphere from the unburied dead, the rapacity, cruelty, and perfidy of the priests, led many to welcome the close of their feudal term. In these extremities and surrounded with disorderly troops the abbot had recourse to craft - the wiles of Satan. The noble and brave viscount was decoyed into a conference. On the oath of the legate and the barons of the army that good faith would be maintained, Roger came out with three hundred of his followers. But with so formidable a heretic faith was not to be kept. And just as he was beginning to propose terms, the legate exclaimed that no faith was to be kept with one who had been so faithless to his God; and ordered the viscount to be put in chains and cast into prison with his followers. But he was soon relieved from his humiliation and suffering by death, which was popularly attributed to the hand of Simon. The people, dismayed by the loss of their chief, abandoned the city and escaped by means of a subterranean passage, but the priests consoled themselves by seizing about four hundred of the citizens, whom they hanged and burned for the common offence of heresy.

The city of Carcassonne and the princely heritage of Raymond-Roger were now in the hands of the papal party, and according to the law of conquest entirely at their disposal. The legate and his clergy presented these rich lands to Simon de Montfort as the firstfruits of a glorious victory over the heretics; and he was hailed as Viscount of Beziers and Carcassonne, promising to hold his dignities and territories on condition of a yearly tribute to the pope as liege lord of the conquered territories.

The election of Simon was confirmed by the pope, though the great principles of justice and the faith of treaties were so glaringly and shamelessly violated; but the King of Arragon, as suzerain, refused to invest Simon in his new possessions. The conquest appeared to be complete, but it was not really so. The Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Nevers, and other French noblemen, withdrew from the crusade, being greatly offended with the arrogance of the pope's mercenaries. De Montfort, being thus left with a comparatively small force, was unable to maintain his position. Many cities and castles that had been taken by the papal party were again lost, and an incessant war was carried on; now marked by the fierce exasperation of the people, and the most relentless cruelties on both sides. De Montfort wrote in despair to the prelates of Christendom for a fresh army.

The trumpet of Rome was again sounded: a fresh crusade was preached. **"Swarms of monks,"** says Greenwood, "issued from the numberless cells and monasteries of the Cistercian order, preaching perdition to heretics, and boundless pardons to all who should shed the blood - were it only of one - of the accursed brood. There was no crime so black, no vice so rooted in the heart, but that a forty-days' campaign against these outcasts would wipe it away, even to the last trace of guilt, nor leave the faintest sense of remorse behind." Attracted by the promise of great earthly spoils in the sunny south, and of eternal felicity in heaven, unnumbered troops of fanatics flocked to the standard of De Montfort. In the spring of 1210 he received a large reinforcement under the command of his wife, and the war recommenced with fresh fury.

The Ruin of Raymond Determined

The submission of Count Raymond to the papal terms of reconciliation appears to have been complete. He had surrendered his castles, had undergone the basest personal humiliation, and had accompanied the crusades, notwithstanding his bleeding shoulders, against his own kinsman Roger. Surely the church will be satisfied, express her approbation, and receive him back into her bosom. But, alas, it was just the opposite. True, the pope in the most treacherous manner professed to embrace him as his obedient son, absolved him from his alleged guilt as to the murder of Castelnau, and gave him a cloak and a ring. With these valuable presents the count returned to his own country, in the hope that the pope's concessions would be confirmed by his legates. But here, history has lifted the veil, and revealed the most deliberate and avowed treachery that ever blackened the policy of any ruler. In a letter written by this pontiff to his legates in Toulouse, he refers to the words of the apostle in justification of his deceitful conduct, "Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile." (2Co 12:16) Thus he writes, "We counsel you with the apostle Paul to employ guile with regard to this count, for in this case it ought to be called prudence. We must attack separately those who are separated from unity. Leave for a time this count of Toulouse, employing towards him a course of dissimulation, that the other heretics may be the more easily defeated, and that afterwards we may crush him when he shall be left alone." The confiding but doomed count, as a matter of course, urged the fulfilment of the pope's decree. But the crafty legates, Theodosius and Arnold, who were in their master's secret, had other intentions. They contrived delays, made demands, until the count found his case was hopeless in their hands. On being told that he had not cleared himself of the crimes of heresy and murder, and that they could not absolve him, he burst into tears; when the iron-hearted churchmen mocked his disappointment, quoting the text; "Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him" (Psa 32:6); and pronounced his excommunication afresh.

The Real Object of the Catholics

The reader has now before him the real, though then concealed, object of these Satan-inspired men. It is the old, the cruel story of Naboth and his vineyard: Jezebel must have the charming regions of the south as her own vineyard, the blood of Naboth the Jezreelite must be shed. It will be seen from the pope's secret injunctions to his legates, that the ruin, not only of Raymond, but of all the princes in Languedoc, was determined; and that he had deceived Count Raymond by a feigned reconciliation, so as to separate him from the rest of the Languedocian nobles, that they might be destroyed one by one with greater ease. This was the policy of Innocent as written by his own hand and still extant, and his legates were apt disciples of their master. But the spoils of the Count of Toulouse and all his partisans were a matter of necessity to Simon and his allies the legates; nothing less than the whole south could satisfy the cupidity of De Montfort and the fanaticism of the rapacious priests. It was therefore determined to involve the Counts of Foix, Comminges, and Beam, with all their territorial dependencies.

The **Count of Toulouse** was suzerain of five great subordinate fiefs. The courts of these petty sovereigns vied with each other in splendour and gallantry. Life, we are told, was a perpetual feast or tournament. Some of them had been amongst the most distinguished of the crusaders in the East and had brought home many usages of oriental luxury. It was no question with such of either heretic, Waldensian or Albigensian. They were good catholics outwardly; but their religion really was chivalry, and the music of the troubadour. Still there were some honourable exceptions; we can trace the *silver line* of God's rich sovereign grace in the courts of these gay princes. We read of **Almeric**, lord of Montreuil, and his sister, the Lady Geralda of Vetville, who were Albigenses, and who defended their own cities against the catholics, but were overpowered; and these lords and ladies with many others were instantly destroyed. Almeric, with eighty nobles, was brought before De Montfort. He ordered them all to be hanged the overloaded gibbets broke down; they were hewn to pieces; the Lady Geralda was thrown into a well and huge stones rolled down upon her. Only a few escaped the general massacre of Vetville to tell the tale. But the whole country shared a similar fate. The true Christian, the gay courtier, the gallant knight, the pleasure-loving multitude who were too enervated through the influence of the luxurious habits of the country to be either heretic or bigot - must either submit to the pope's terms, or to the halter, the stake, or the faggot.

Every department of the south was now charged with the guilt of sheltering heretics; and Raymond as suzerain lord was summoned to appear before the council at Arles. All concealment of their savage iniquity was now thrown off. The count was accompanied by his friend Pedro, king of Arragon, a good and devoted catholic, who pleaded his cause and offered to become security for his fidelity. Their terms of reconciliation were these: let the reader note them carefully as a sample of popish arrogance and audacity in those days "That Count Raymond should disband his army; that he should raze all his castles, recall all the commandants of his walled towns and strong places; that he should renounce all the tolls and dues from which the principal part of his revenue was derived, that he should compel all gentry and commonalty of his domains to wear a penitential garb; that he should deliver up all his subjects suspected of heresy to be converted or burned, as the case might be; that he should hold himself personally in readiness to pass over to Palestine to serve under the brotherhood of St. John of Jerusalem till recalled by the pope; that every head of a family should pay yearly fourpence to the legate; that he should be obedient to the church, pay all the expenses which they charge on him, and during his whole life submit himself without contradiction. All these terms duly fulfilled, his lands would be restored to him by the legate and the Count de Montfort."*

{*Greenwood, book 13, chap. 7, p. 546; Milman, vol. 4, p. 218; Sir James Stephen's Lectures, vol. 1, p. 225.}

The intent of this fresh outrage was not to be mistaken; the unhappy count, in defiance of the council's order, rode away, in company with his intercessor, the king of Arragon. Judgment was then given. "The Count of Toulouse was condemned as a declared heretic - an enemy of the church, and an apostate from the faith, and his domains and property, public or personal, were adjudged to the first occupants who should seize and appropriate them." These terms and decrees will give the reader some faint idea of how the church, under the most sanctified language and pretensions, accomplished the ruin of a nobleman in those days, in order to obtain possession of his lands and his wealth. It was everywhere so. The prince and his people must be drowned in blood or consumed in fire, if his possessions cannot be obtained by milder means. Every Naboth must deliver up his field to Jezebel if she covets it. And before leaving this point, let the reader bear in mind, that, just at this moment, when the pope and his legates were working the ruin of the count and his vassal chiefs, the inquisitors Dominic and Reinerius were busily engaged in a "religious reconnaissance of the whole area of heresy," having full authority from the pope himself to inflict capital punishment upon heretics. That dreadful tribunal, which then obtained, and yet retains, the name of the **Inquisition** was first opened this year - a year of awful memory, A.D. 1210, in a castle near Narbonne.

The War Changes Its Character

Count Raymond hastened to Toulouse; he caused the ban of excommunication, with the hard terms of his absolution, to be publicly read aloud; the citizens were indignant, and declared that they would rather submit to the greatest extremities than accept such shameful conditions. As the news spread from town to town, the same enthusiasm prevailed throughout his dominions. The character of the war was now completely changed. It was evident to all, that the crusaders were determined to conquer the provinces for the purpose of converting them into dependencies of the See of Rome; and the provinces were equally determined to resist the crusaders as base hypocrites, and to cast off the cruel and usurping tyranny of Rome. The professedly religious purposes of the crusade had degenerated into a war of universal carnage and plunder. The whole nation was thus in a state of general insurrection against the dominant church as against a foreign invader.

War was now proclaimed, but the combatants were unequal. Raymond seems to have been a gentle, kindly, indolent monarch; much loved by his people; and unambitious, save for the pleasures and gratifications of this life. There is no evidence that he was the least inclined to the Albigensian religion, but professedly a true Roman Catholic. On the other hand, Simon de Montfort, the great general of Rome, was considered the most daring and skilful military leader of his day, and the sworn champion of the papacy. He was regular in the exercises of his religion, and heard mass daily. "But," observes one, "even with Simon's better qualities were combined some of the vices which not uncommonly seek their sanctification from high religious profession - a vast ambition, a daring unscrupulousness as to the means of pursuing his objects, a ruthless indifference to human suffering, and an excessive and undisguised rapacity."* At the head of a new host of crusaders, to execute the sentence of the church, and to win the noble prize of Raymond's dominions, he marched through the devoted land. Slaughter, rapine, and the most savage barbarities, such as may not be described, tracked his every step. Heretics, or those suspected of heresy, wherever they were found, were compelled by the legate Arnold and De Montfort to ascend vast piles of burning faggots, while the monks revelled in their sufferings and mocked the shrieks of burning women.

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, p. 351.}

The whole country, as the papal army advanced, became the scene of the most wanton cruelties: they destroyed vineyards and growing crops, burnt villages and farmhouses, slaughtered unarmed peasants, women, and children, they spread desolation over the whole land, and then spoke of their sanctified zeal for religion. The exasperated people retaliated - nor need we wonder - and a savage war was waged on both sides. But details must be left to the civil historian. Having placed the real motives and objects of the pope in this unparalleled outrage on humanity and religion, in as clear a light as brevity would allow, we will now only note a few of the principal engagements in this great struggle, which brought it to a close, and which manifest yet more fully the character of Simon and the monks of Citeaux, under the direction and sanction of the pontiff.

The Barbarities of Simon and Arnold

Simon de Montfort, as feudal lord of the Viscounty of Beziers and Carcassonne, was bound by his ecclesiastical tenure to extirpate the heretics. He therefore continued his campaign; many towns and castles fell into his hands, some by force, some by panic. In the diocese of Albi, the chief seat of the obnoxious doctrines, the war was conducted with the most savage cruelty. When La Minerve, near Narbonne, after an obstinate defence, surrendered, one in whose heart a spark of humanity yet remained, proposed that the vanquished should be allowed to retire, if they would recant their heresy; but such mild terms were objected to by the merciless monks. "The terms are too easy," they exclaimed, "we come to extirpate heretics, not to show them favour!" "Be not afraid," replied the abbot in cruel mockery, "there will not be many converts." And he was right, but not in the sense in which he spoke. His intention was to kill every one of them; but their intention, or rather, firm purpose was, to accept of death rather than the papal terms. The Albigenses in the meantime were assembled for prayer. The abbot of Vaux-Cernay found a number of christian women in a house quietly engaged in prayer and waiting for the worst that could befall them. They expected no mercy from these holy fathers, and were prepared to die. He also found a number of men on their knees in another house peacefully awaiting their end. The abbot began to preach to them the doctrines of popery; but with one voice they interrupted him; and all exclaimed, "We will have none of your faith; we have renounced the church of Rome, your labour is in vain, for neither death nor life shall make us renounce the truth we hold." De Montfort was asked to speak to them. He visited both the men and the women, in all about one hundred and forty. "Be converted to the catholic faith," he said, "or mount this pile." He had previously caused an enormous pile of dry wood to be raised. Not one of the Albigenses wavered for a moment. They denied the supremacy of the pope and the authority of the priesthood; they owned no head but Christ, and no authority but His holy word. Irritated to rage at their constancy and calm firmness, he ordered the fire to be lighted, the pile was soon one mass of flames. The undaunted confessors of the name of Jesus, committing their souls into His hands, rushed voluntarily into the flames, as if ascending to heaven in a chariot of fire.

When the castle called Brau capitulated, De Montfort plucked out the eyes of more than a hundred of the defenders, and otherwise shamefully mutilated them, leaving one of them one eye that he might lead away the rest. Not, says the abbot of Vaux-Cernay, that the count took pleasure in such things, "for of all men he was the mildest," but because he wished to retaliate on the enemy. Such was the judgment of the monkish historian. At **Lavaur,** the city of the good Roger Bernard, Count of Foix, the barbarities surpassed all precedent even in this fearful war. The count is claimed by the Waldenses as one of themselves. "Of all the provincial princes," says Milman, "the Count of Foix was the most powerful, and the most detested by the church as a favourer of heretics. In this case the charge was an honour rather than a calumny. He was a man of profound religion; the first to raise the native standard against De Montfort, he was a knight of valour as of christian faith." At length the city fell into the hands of the besiegers; a general massacre was permitted; men, women, and children were cut to pieces, till there remained nothing to kill except some of the garrison and others reserved for a more cruel fate. Four hundred were burned in one great pile, which caused universal rejoicing in the camp. And amid all this rioting in fiendish cruelty, the bishops and legates stood chanting, "Come, Holy Ghost." It was here that lord Almeric with eighty nobles was brought before De Montfort, who ordered them to be hanged, as we have already seen. The pious Lady Geralda also suffered here; of whom it is said, "No poor man ever left her door without being fed."*

{**Latin Christianity, vol. 4, p.* 223; Gardner's *Faiths of the World,* "Albigenses."}

The Siege of Toulouse

From the blazing pile of four hundred human beings and gibbets overloaded with noble lords, the champion of the church advanced to the siege of **Toulouse.** His numerous conquests had rather inflamed than satisfied his "undisguised rapacity." He hoped to add to his possessions the lordship of Toulouse, and thus to raise himself to a level with sovereign princes. The bishop Fouquet was in his camp. This new bishop of Toulouse, placed there to suit the pope's purpose, is spoken of by historians, as one of the most treacherous, cruel, sanguinary and unscrupulous men that ever breathed. Rabenstein was deposed to make room for him that he might work within the gates the ruin of the count, while the inquisitors and crusaders were doing it outside. But in spite of all the pope's treachery and Simon's bravery the tide of fortune was on the turn. The Count of Toulouse, under the stern discipline of prolonged calamity showed that he was really gifted with courage and force of character. He had gathered around him his allies with their followers, who defended the city, and also made such bold sallies from the garrison that Simon was compelled to break up the siege. He revenged himself by wasting the gardens, vineyards, and fields. The state of matters was now completely changed. Raymond, instead of acting on the defensive, became the active and energetic assailant, and before a few months had elapsed, he recovered most of the places which had been seized by the crusaders. The forty-days' feudal principle caused continued fluctuation in Simon's army, and no doubt prevented him from improving his advantages to the full, so that his successes were chequered by occasional reverses. The triumph of Raymond, however, was but a temporary respite, and the prelude to a terrible defeat.

A fresh crusade was preached in Germany and northern France; many adventurers, trained in the wars of Germany and of the East, now joined the new army. All temporal blessing in a beautiful country, with heaven at last, induced numbers to assume the cross. The archbishops of Rheims and Rouen, the bishops of Paris, Laon, Toul, were with them, and William, archdeacon of Paris, was the chief engineer of the army. The poor discouraged Albigenses, at the approach of such a myriad host, fled from the open country and sought a refuge either among the woods and mountains, or in the large cities. Raymond, feeling his own weakness, sought the alliance of his kinsman Don Pedro, king of Arragon, the gallant Spaniard promised him his support, but before engaging in the war he made an appeal to the pope in favour of Raymond.

Moved by the king's appeal, and becoming jealous of the growing power of De Montfort, his holiness, for a moment, seemed disposed to alter his line of policy. He intimated his displeasure to the legates: they had, he said, laid hands on territories that had never been polluted with heresy, he commanded the restitution of the lands of the Counts of Foix and Comminges, and of Gaston de Beam. He also suspended his indulgences to the crusaders. But all this appearance of justice or pity was mere sentiment in the mind of the pope He very soon revoked all his own concessions. The letters of his legates and inquisitors were absolutely furious - "Arm yourself, my lord pope, with the zeal of Phineas; annihilate Toulouse, that Sodom, that Gomorrah, with all the wretches it contains; let not the tyrant, the heretic, Raymond, nor even his young son, lift up his head, already more than half-crushed, crush them to the very utmost. The purification of Languedoc must not be thought of until the city of Toulouse be razed to the ground, and the citizens put to the sword. If the Raymonds be allowed to lift up their heads, they will take unto themselves seven other devils worse than the first. Let your apostolic wisdom provide against this evil; let not your hand be withheld from this holy and pious work until the serpent of our Moses shall have swallowed up the serpents of this Pharaoh; until the Jebusite with all the uncircumcised and impure be dispersed, and your people rejoice in the quiet possession of the land of promise."

The Pope Temporizes - The Battle of Muret

The pope was in a difficulty, he yielded to a necessity. He alone had called forth the movement; but the power to control it had slips from his hold; his agents were only carrying out his instructions; he had no right to complain. Making a virtue of necessity, he sharply rebuked the **king of Arragon** the chief support of the Catholic cause in Spain - charged him with misrepresentation, threatened him with a crusade, and confirmed his sentence of excommunication against Raymond and his allies. De Montfort was proclaimed the active servant of Jesus Christ, and the invincible champion of the Catholic faith, he was also authorized to retain his conquests. The patience of the long-suffering king of Arragon was now exhausted, and, provoked by the insolence of the clergy, he flew to arms. At the head of a thousand knights and a large army, he crossed the Pyrenees, and encountered the crusaders at the little town of Muret, about nine miles from Toulouse. At the head of the warriors of the cross, attended by seven bishops, appeared Simon de Montfort in full military array. "His army," says Greenwood, "though fewer in numbers, consisted of the heavy-armed chivalry of France, eager, by victory over the heretical host, to earn immortal honour, or by martyrdom to be wafted into the presence of the saints in paradise." The battle which followed was fierce, short, and decisive. Don Pedro with many of his nobles was numbered with the slain. The remnant of his army, deprived of his command, broke and dispersed, and the whole of the raw and ill-armed militia of Raymond and his allies were either put to the sword, or drowned in the Garonne to the last man.

The cause of the Albigenses in consequence of the great **victory of Muret** had now become desperate, and the fate of the devoted land appeared to be decided for ever. Raymond was stripped of his territories; De Montfort was acknowledged as prince of the fief and city of Toulouse, and of the other counties conquered by the crusaders under his command. Overwhelmed by his misfortunes, and by the censures of the church, Raymond offered no opposition. Fouquet, the pope's bishop, took possession of the palace of his ancestors, and, with a cruel impudence which no language can describe, ordered the noble count and his family to retire into obscurity. Such *were* and *are* the tender mercies of the Romish priesthood, even to their own flock if reckoned disobedient, for Raymond never was accused of heresy, only of sheltering heretics in his dominions - or, in other words, of refusing to massacre in cold blood his most dutiful and loyal subjects: this was his whole crime in the sight of Rome, as heaven will surely judge.

The Conquerors Quarrel Among Themselves

The conquest appeared to be complete, and the conquerors began to divide the spoil; but Arnold and De Montfort quarrelled about the **ducal crown of Narbonne.** Each claimed the dukedom. The legate had assumed the archbishopric of Narbonne, to which he affirmed the rights of temporal sovereignty were attached, but De Montfort, who took to himself the title of Duke of Narbonne, felt indignant that a priest should lay claim to that temporal authority which he asserted was all his own as prince and sovereign of the whole land. The quarrel became serious. Simon, branding Arnold and all his adherents as heretics, invaded the prelate and took possession of the city by force of arms; the legate, exercising his spiritual authority, excommunicated the great crusader, and laid all the churches of the city under an interdict. The pope, regarding with jealousy the formidable power of these great rivals, and not feeling equal to interfere in this strife, convened - A.D. 1215 - the fourth **Lateran Council,** in order to bring to an end the crusade against the Albigenses, and finally to dispose of the conquered territories.

This was the most numerous council ever held in Christendom. But we must not venture even on the faintest description of its proceedings. We would only notice what immediately affects our present subject. "Raymond and his son accompanied by the Counts of Foix and Comminges, and many other nobles of Languedoc were admitted to the presence of the pope, seated in full consistory among his cardinals and other prelates. They knelt before him: the young Raymond presented letters from his uncle the king of England. The English monarch expressed his indignation at the usurpation of the inheritance of Raymond by Simon de Montfort. The pope was moved by the beauty and graceful bearing of the young prince, thought of his wrongs, and was observed to shed tears. " This noble youth of the old ancestral house of Toulouse, and connected by blood or marriage with all the sovereigns of Europe, and who had never been accused of the taint of heresy in any way, had been robbed and spoiled by the pope's agents, and driven into exile. The son was followed by the father, and the other counts, who complained of the injustice of the legate and of De Montfort; of the pillage of their lands and the lawless massacre of their subjects. The enormous cruelties of Fouquet were dwelt upon by all the witnesses, whom they denounced as the destroyer of more than ten thousand of the flock entrusted to his pastoral care.

Something like pity seemed for a moment to touch the heart of Innocent on hearing the depositions of so many noble witnesses, and all professedly Catholics. Many members of the Council were also touched with remorse, and spoke in favour of the dispossessed princes. But this tendency to something like justice on the part of the Council raised the indignation of Simon's partisans to the most vehement height. They assured his holiness that, if the legate and De Montfort were compelled to surrender the territories and lordships which they had, no one henceforth would ever embark in the cause of the church; no one would ever be found to run any hazard in her defence. Still the pope seemed disposed to listen to the complaints of the princes; and raising his voice said, "I give leave to Raymond of Toulouse and his heirs to recover their lands and their lordships from all who hold them unjustly." The prelates were furious. The pope stood dismayed before the power he had created, and by which he was now compelled into injustice. De Montfort was confirmed in all his conquests, with the exception of the territory of the Venaisin, which was reserved for the younger Raymond if his conduct should satisfy the legate. Philip Augustus acquiescing in this sentence, granted to Simon de Montfort the investiture of the Countships of Toulouse, of Beziers, and of Carcassonne, and of the dukedom of Narbonne. Simon was now on the throne which he had reached through oppression, tyranny, and blood; he was proclaimed sovereign of Toulouse, and general of the armies of God, the son and darling of the church. The clergy and people came out to meet him with the blasphemous salutation, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." But the triumphing of the wicked is short; his end and his eternal award were near at hand.

The Lies of Fouquet

The decree of the Lateran Council, which prohibited the further preaching of the crusades, deprived De Montfort of fresh supplies. This changed state of affairs revived the spirit of the younger Raymond, who resolved to raise an army and make an heroic effort to regain the conquered dominions of his father. He was soon at the head of a large force; the hope of deliverance from the cruelties of Simon, and attachment to their hereditary sovereigns, animated the whole population of Languedoc. De Montfort now treated Toulouse as a conquered city, exacting enormous sums, and endeavouring to secure them by the sternest measures. A general rising of the oppressed citizens was evident, but they unwisely accepted the treacherous mediation of their bishop, the perfidious Fouquet. He assured them that not a hair of their heads would be touched if they agreed to the terms of De Montfort. The citizens agreed, and thus he swore to them: "I swear by God, and the holy Virgin, and the body of the Redeemer, by my whole order, the abbot and other dignitaries, that I give you good counsel, better have I never given; if Count de Montfort inflict on you the least wrong, bring your complaints before me, and God and I will see you righted." How cruel! This is popery. These were the sheep of his own pasture. We are not now speaking of the rights or the wrongs of the war, but of the perfidious falsehoods of the avowed shepherd of the sheep.

The people were now in the snare of Satan. They were treated as subjects detected in revolt, and punished by the bishop himself with all his relentless cruelty. The first act of De Montfort was "the demand of *thirty thousand* marks of silver, the demolition of the walls, and every stronghold in the city, and the plunder of the inhabitants to the very last piece of cloth, or measure of meal." Thus they had to spend the winter, but the ensuing spring brought relief.

The Death of De Montfort

On the appearance of the old Count and his son beneath the broken-down walls of Toulouse with a large army, fear gave way to the enthusiastic joy with which the people welcomed back the Raymonds to the palace and the dominions of their ancestors. Many of the nobles of Languedoc raised troops and threw themselves into the city. Simon and his son, Guy, hurried to the spot, but were ignominiously repulsed. The bishop of Toulouse and the wife of Simon sought help in France. A new crusade was preached, but De Montfort could not keep an army more than forty days; numbers flocked to the Raymonds. The siege lasted nine months, it was the scene of many a fierce encounter. In the spring of 1218, De Montfort came against Toulouse with a fresh company of *one hundred thousand* crusaders. "You are about to conquer the city," said the lying spirit, "to break into the houses, out of which no single soul, neither man nor woman, shall escape alive; not one shall be spared in church, in sanctuary, in hospital!"

Such were the counsels of Rome, but God had decreed otherwise. When kneeling at high mass, a shout announced that the besieged had made a sally; instantly springing to his feet, Simon placed himself at the head of his veterans and hastened to the place of attack. But little did he think it was for the last time; at that moment he was wounded by an arrow from the city walls; this evidently troubled him in spirit; he retired a few paces, when a fragment of a rock, thrown from a machine struck him on the head and severed it from his body. As the lifeless trunk lay on the ground, his admirers dared to reproach God with his death, and to arraign the divine justice. But there we must leave them: Simon is before God, and has learnt his eternal doom.

The siege was raised, the besieging army was entirely defeated. The bell was tolled to call the citizens to offer thanksgivings in tumults of exultation. Raymond was hailed as their lawful and now undisputed sovereign; and again the standard of the house of St. Gilles waved above the palace and the ramparts of Toulouse.

The Kings of France and the Albigenses

Innocent III. was now dead, and the papal throne was occupied by the third **Honorius,** who entered with great ardour into the cause of De Montfort, and was warmly supported by the kings of France. The prospect of peace to the poor Albigenses under the mild government of Raymond was intolerable to the new shepherd of Rome. To gratify the infuriated pope, and under the pretence of fulfilling his vow and ensuring his eternal welfare, Louis, son of Philip Augustus, conducted a crusade as early as the year 1219. All the atrocities of the former time were renewed and surpassed, if possible, under the direction of the clergy. But we spare the reader the description of the satanic mixture of deceit, hypocrisy, perfidy, baseness, and savage cruelty, displayed by the clergy under the sanction of the sovereign.

The elder Raymond died, leaving the defence of his states to his son, then in the vigour of his age and hopes. It is said by Milner, "that he died of sickness, in a state of peace and prosperity, after his victory over Simon - that no man was ever treated with more injustice by the popedom." Philip Augustus also died, leaving his crown to Louis. The younger De Montfort, in the year 1224, despairing of success, finally abandoned Languedoc, and Raymond VII. sat on the throne of his ancestors, with no enemy to dread, excepting the pope and his sovereign - his pastor and his liege lord. But Raymond had a beautiful portion in France, and Louis was impatient to unite it to his crown.

Jezebel again plots; she convenes a council at **Bourges,** in the year 1225, at which Louis is enjoined to purge the land of heretics, and raises money for that purpose. Louis accordingly takes the cross, and attended by his barons and their followers, to the number of two hundred thousand men, advances once again to devastate the budding fields of Languedoc, and to exterminate all heretics according to the decrees of Rome. Poor unhappy Languedoc! When will Rome, the dragon, the devourer of God's saints, be satiated with blood? - with the blood of infants, of little children, of mothers and maidens, of unarmed, inoffensive young men and fathers! A name could be given to the beast that symbolizes the Chaldean, Persian, and Grecian empires, but the fourth beast which symbolizes the Roman, whether pagan or papal, must be left unnamed. "After this I saw in the night visions," says Daniel, "and, behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns." (Dan 7:7) As a matter of interpretation, Daniel's vision refers more directly to the civil power, but the ecclesiastical aspect of the beast as in Revelation is more blood-thirsty than the civil ever was.

This unnamed monster we have now before us in the king of France urged to extremities by the pope. At the approach of the two hundred thousand crusaders under the banner of their own sovereign, the hearts of the people sank within them. Town after town yielded, for all the defenders had died. "They had so repeatedly endured all the horrors of war in all their most frightful forms, that the barons, knights, and communes of Languedoc, with one accord, hastened to avert, by timely concessions, the continuance of these intolerable calamities." But just at this moment when all seemed lost, the hand of the Lord interposed. A **pestilence** broke out in the invading camp. Louis himself was carried off, and thirty thousand of his soldiers were swept away by the contagion. The impending ruin of the inhabitants, and of the house of Raymond, was postponed for a little.

At the death of Louis VIII. his son, who was but a child, succeeded to the throne of France, and the reins of government meanwhile fell into the hands of his mother, **Blanche of Castile.** By her orders the siege of Toulouse was renewed. The advantages of the war were all in favour of Raymond; but the glory of his victories, according to one chronicler, were sullied by the cruelty with which he treated the vanquished who fell into his hands. The siege of Toulouse was protracted and difficult; the crusaders were losing hope; in their perplexity, Fouquet, the evil genius and the lying spirit of Toulouse, suggested the only means of a successful attack. By his advice all the vines, the corn, and the fruit trees were destroyed, all the houses burned for miles round the city, till the country was converted into a desolate wilderness; and the city of Toulouse stood in the centre of a desert. Of course no supplies of any kind could be procured. This was the work of the bishop of the place, this was his diocese, these were the people over whom he had been appointed as overseer! The reader must judge whether he partakes more of the spirit of Daniel's fourth beast, or of Him who says to every shepherd, "Feed my sheep . . . Feed My lambs." (John 21)

When this new vial of papal wrath was poured out on their devoted land, and every green thing withered up, the inhabitants of the city were so discouraged, and the spirit of Raymond their leader so completely broken, that at the end of three months peace was obtained on the most humiliating terms. The **treaty of Paris,** which terminated the war for a time, was signed in the month of April, 1229. The terms were dictated by the papal legate, and approved by the king of France. Raymond VII. whose comely form and graceful manners, together with the sense of his wrongs, drew tears from Innocent in the great Lateran Council, now bows his neck to a foreign yoke, and bares his shoulders to a spiritual despotism. He was led by the legate to the church in Paris and, like his father in St. Gilles, with naked shoulders and bare feet, he underwent the same public and ignominious flogging by priestly hands. On his knees, in the church of Notre Dame, he solemnly abdicated all his feudal sovereignty to the king of France, and submitted to the penance of the church. The reader may remember that the father in his penance renounced seven castles, now the son renounces seven provinces. Thus it was ordered by Him who rules over all, and ordered for the future humbling of Rome, that the peace of Languedoc turned out so much to the advantage of Rome, as of the rapidly increasing monarchy of France. Philip Augustus had wrested from the feeble hands of John the continental possessions of the English crown, and now the dominions of the Count of Toulouse, and of the king of Arragon, north of the Pyrenees, were added to the French crown. "The possession of Normandy," says James White, "had already made France a maritime power; and now, by the acquisition of the Narbonnais and Maguelonne from Raymond VII., she not only extended her limits to the Mediterranean, but, by the extinction of two such vassals as the Count of Toulouse and the Duke of Normandy, incalculably strengthened the royal crown."*

{*For fuller details both as to the papal and the Albigensian side of this bloody warfare, see Du Pin, *thirteenth century;* Sir J. Stephen's *Lectures,* vol. 1, pp. 214-242; Milman, vol. 4, pp. 167-238; J. White. pp. 282-289; J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, pp. 340-433; Milner, vol. 3, pp. 92-155; Gardner's *Faiths of the World,* "Albigenses."}

Reflections on the Calamities of Languedoc

To every thoughtful mind, to every man of faith, especially to those who study history from a scriptural point of view, the wars in Languedoc are most suggestive. They are the first of the kind on record. It was reserved for Innocent III. to inaugurate this new character of warfare. There had been many instances of individuals being sacrificed to the prejudice of the priesthood, such as Arnold of Brescia: but this was the first experiment on a great scale, which the church made to retain her supremacy by force of arms. It was not, observe, *the army of the church* going forth in holy zeal against the pagan, the Mahometan, the denier of Christ, but **the church itself in arms** against the true followers of Christ against those who acknowledged His deity, and the authority of the word of God.

We might fill pages with quotations from their worst enemies as to the soundness of their faith, the purity of their morals, and the simplicity of their manners. We will only give two or three from the highest authorities in the church of Rome. "They denied," says Baronius, "the utility of infant baptism; that the bread and wine became the body and blood of the Lord by the consecration of a priest; that unfaithful ministers had any right to the exercise of ecclesiastical power, or to tithes or firstfruits; that auricular confession was necessary. All these things the wretched men asserted that they learned from the Gospels and Epistles, and that they would receive nothing, except what they found expressly contained therein; thus rejecting the interpretation of the doctors, though they themselves were perfectly illiterate." Reinerius, the inquisitor, and persecutor of the Albigenses, says, "they were the most formidable enemies of the church of Rome, because they have a great appearance of godliness, because they live righteously before men, believe rightly of God in all things, and hold all the articles of the creed; yet they hate and revile the church of Rome and the clergy; and in their accusations they are easily believed by the people." St. Bernard, who knew them intimately, lived amongst them, yet deemed it his duty to oppose them as being enemies to the pope, candidly admits, "If you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more christianlike; if you observe their conversation, nothing can be more blameless, and what they speak they make good by their actions. You may see a man, for the testimony of his faith, frequent the church, honour the elders, offer his gifts, make his confession, receive the sacrament. What more like a Christian? As to life and manners, he circumvents no man, overreaches no man, does violence to no man. He fasts much and eats not the bread of idleness; but works with his hands for his support."*

{*See Milner and Gardner, as quoted above.}

Such then, was the spiritual, moral, and social character of the Albigenses, as evidenced by their enemies. They were true witnesses for Christ, evidently formed by the grace of God to show forth His praise in the world. And had we as many of their writings as we have of the Reformers of the sixteenth century, we might find that they were more simple on certain points of doctrine than these were. But according to the mind of the Lord, other three hundred years were necessary to ripen Europe for the Reformation; and in the meantime the arts of printing and paper-making were discovered.

What then, it may be asked, was the crime of the Albigenses? The head and front of their offence was simply this they denied the supremacy of the pope, the authority of the priesthood, and the seven sacraments as taught by the church of Rome; and, in her eyes, greater criminals there could not be on the face of the whole earth: therefore utter extermination was the one unchangeable decree. Those who escaped the sword of the crusader must be caught in the **toils of the inquisitor.**

"In hundreds of villages," says the historian, "every inhabitant had been massacred. Since the sack of Rome by the Vandals, the European world had never mourned over a national disaster so wide in its extent, or so fearful in its character." What a record! what a witness! and if such be the records of earth, what must they be in heaven! Oh, Rome! Rome! drunken with the blood of God's saints, and covered with the execrations of millions, what must thy future be? How wilt thou bear the reproaches of those whom thou hast deceived with thy lies and caused to perish with thy sword? Do any think that we speak too strongly? let them listen to the address of one of the bishops to the crusaders before the battle of Muret: "Whosoever has confessed his sins to a priest, or has the intention of doing so after the battle, will in dying, obtain eternal life, and escape the passage through purgatory. I will be your surety in the day of judgment. Depart in the name of Christ." Was not this a soul-deceiving lie? But Jezebel will hear of it again. "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.... Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.... And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Rev 18:5-24)

But Rome overreached herself. Though Languedoc was desolate, the Albigenses who escaped the sword, fled into other countries. By the grace and the good providence of God, they preached the gospel in almost every part of Christendom, and testified against the cruelties, the superstitions and the falsehoods of the church of Rome. From this time it begins to lose its hold on the confidence and reverence of mankind. Thus the Lord prepared the way for Wycliffe and Huss, Melancthon and Luther.

26 Languedoc

Chapter 26

The Inquisition Established in Languedoc

By the treaty of Paris, A.D. 1229, the open war against the Languedocians was at an end, but the Inquisition continued its secret, and hardly less destructive crusade. It was not enough that the treachery of Arnold and the sword of Montfort had exterminated these heretics; steps must be taken to prevent their reappearance in all time coming. Dominic and his associates, although we have not seen them in the siege or in the battle, have been doing their dreadful work in secret. But now the Inquisition is to be canonized. At a Council held in Toulouse in November, 1229, it was ordered that a permanent Inquisition should be established against the heretics. One of the canons indirectly reveals the root of Satan's rage, and reflects great honour on the name of the Albigenses, but throws a deep shade of guilt on the name of their persecutors. It was discovered by the inquisitorial missionaries, that the Bible was the principal source of their opinions; therefore, to prevent its perusal by the people, the Council passed the following decree - "We prohibit the books of the Old and New Testament to the laity; unless, perhaps, they may desire to have the Psalter, or Breviary, or the Hours of the blessed Virgin Mary; but we expressly forbid their having the other parts of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue." The scriptures had long been withheld from the laity, but this is the first direct prohibition that we meet with.

The papal interpretation of this canon, or justification of its severity, will give the reader a fair specimen of how the clergy quoted and applied scripture in those days. "If so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with' a dart." The people were as beasts because of their ignorance, the word of God was as a mountain, and, if they dared to touch it, they were to be instantly killed. Innocent had a general acquaintance with scripture and used it largely in his letters and edicts, after this style; but the divine words, though misapplied, had an immense power over the ignorant mind. One grand object of the Inquisition was to keep the people in utter darkness as to the divine mind on spiritual subjects, so that the power of the clergy might be unquestioned and absolute; or, rather, the power of Satan, the prince of darkness. Not only was all public teaching suppressed by the Council of Toulouse, but freedom of thought in secret was condemned under the severest penalties. It would be difficult to conceive of wickedness more daring: to withhold the word of life, to suffer the people to perish, and to make the possession of it a capital crime, is surely the height of diabolical enmity to Christ and precious souls. And these were the professed shepherds of the sheep, who swore they would lead them by the green pastures and the still waters. But we must not stay to moralize, although it is difficult to pass on without expressing the indignation which rises in the heart against such spiritual iniquity. But knowing their just sentence is with the living God, we may withhold ours.

The Statutes of the Council of Toulouse

The following brief notice of the statues against heresy, will give the reader some idea of the unrelenting cruelties of the Catholics, and the oppressed state of the feeble remnant in Languedoc. "The archbishops, bishops, and abbots, were to appoint in every parish one priest, and three or four lay inquisitors, to search all houses and buildings, in order to detect heretics, and to denounce them to the archbishop or bishop, the lord of his bailiff, so as to ensure their apprehension. The lords were to make the same inquisition in every part of their states. Whoever was convicted of harbouring a heretic forfeited the land to his lord, and was reduced to personal slavery. Every house in which a heretic was found was to be razed to the ground, the farm confiscated, the bailiff who should not be active in detecting heretics was to lose his office, and be incapacitated from holding it in future. Heretics who recanted were to be removed from their homes and settled in Catholic cities, to wear two crosses of a different colour from their dress, one on the right side, one on the left. Those who recanted from fear of death were to be imprisoned for life. All persons, males of the age of fourteen, females of twelve, were to take an oath of abjuration of heresy, and of their catholic faith, if absent, and not appearing within fifteen days, they were held suspected of heresy. "

The above extracts from a Catholic code of persecution are sufficient to show the reader what the spirit of popery was in those days, and what it would be today if it had the same power. And these laws were considered by the legate not strict enough; and so he summoned a Council at Melun, where new statutes were enacted more rigorous and efficient. But as the heretics could only be judged by a bishop or an ecclesiastic, and the work becoming so laborious from the number of apprehensions, Pope Gregory IX. in the year 1233, committed this formidable jurisdiction into the hands of the Dominicans, and the Inquisition was then erected into a distinct institution. Having said so much about the Inquisition as to its origin, it may be interesting to glance for a moment at the gradual expansion of the inquisitorial idea in the church from its commencement.

The History of the Inquisition

Previous to the reign of Constantine, or to the union of Church and State, heresy and spiritual offences were punished by excommunications only; but shortly after his death capital punishments were added. Theodosius is generally allowed to have been the first of the Roman Emperors who pronounced heresy to be a capital crime. But the inquisitors at that time did not belong to the clerical order, they were laymen appointed by Roman prefects. Priscillian, the Spanish heretic, was put to death about 385. Justinian in 529 enacted penal laws against heretics, and as centuries rolled onward, the proceedings against them were marked by increasing severity. It was not, however, as we have just seen, until the thirteenth century that the court of Inquisition was established by canon-law. Then it became a criminal tribunal, charged with the detection, prosecution, and punishment of heresy, apostasy, and other crimes against the established faith. Whether Dominic or Innocent is to have the credit of the invention, it evidently had its origin in the Albigensian war. The papal legate discovered that the open slaughter of heretics would never accomplish their utter extermination. This difficulty led to the creation of a new fraternity, called the order of the Holy Faith the members of which were bound by solemn oaths to employ their utmost powers for the repression of free inquiry in matters of religion and for maintaining the unity of the faith, for the destruction of all heretics and for the rooting out of all heresy from the homes, the hearts and the souls of men. But it was reserved for Gregory IX., in the Council of Toulouse to fix the establishment of the Inquisition in the form of a tribunal, and at the same time to give it positive laws.

This terrible tribunal was gradually introduced into the Italian states, into France, Spain, and other countries; but into the British islands it never was allowed to force its way. In France and Italy it required strenuous and persevering efforts to organize and establish it; Germany successfully resisted a permanent Inquisition; in Spain, however, though it met with some opposition at first, it speedily gained a footing, and in time attained a magnitude which, from a variety of causes, it never reached in any other country.

Gradually the authority of the inquisitors was extended, and they were called upon to pronounce judgment, not only upon the words and actions, but even upon the thoughts and intentions of the accused. During the fourteenth century, its progress was steady, whilst its rigour and energy were continually on the increase. But it was not till the close of the fifteenth century; when Isabella, wife of Ferdinand of Arragon, had ascended the throne of Castile, and when the different kingdoms of Spain - Castile, Navarre, Arragon, and Portugal - were united under these sovereigns, that the Inquisition became general in the country, and assumed that form which it retained until the period of its dissolution in 1808.*

{*See Encyclopedia Britannica, "Inquisition," vol. 12, p. 283. Llorente's History of the Inquisition. Gardner's Faiths of the World. Milman, vol. 5, p. 16.}

The Internal Proceedings of the Inquisition

Under this head, as all know now, the darkest deeds, the most irresponsible tyranny and inhuman cruelties that ever blackened the annals of mankind, might be written; but lengthy details, however painfully interesting, would be out of place in our "Short Papers;" so we will content ourselves with a few brief statements and extracts. No tribunal, we may safely affirm, so regardless of justice, humanity, and every sacred relationship in life, ever existed in the dominions of heathenism or Mahometanism.

When a man was slightly suspected of heresy, spies, called the Familiars of the Inquisition, were employed narrowly to watch him, with the view of discovering the least possible excuse for handing him over to the tribunal of the Holy Office. The man may have been a good Catholic, for Llorente assures us that nine-tenths of the prisoners were true to the Catholic faith, but, perhaps, he was suspected of holding liberal opinions, or he may have shown in conversation that he knew more of theology than the illiterate monks, or differed with them on some point of doctrine. Any of these things would be enough to create suspicion; for nothing was more to be dreaded than new light or truth; he was now marked and denounced by the familiars.

At midnight a knock is heard, the suspected man is ordered to accompany the messengers of the Holy Office. His wife and family know what that means; their distress is great; they must now take a last farewell of the beloved husband and the beloved father. Not a word of entreaty or of remonstrance dare be breathed. Thus suddenly and unexpectedly this frightful institution pounced upon its victims. Wives gave up their husbands, husbands their wives, parents their children, and masters their servants, without a question or a murmur. Terror constituted the great element of its power. No man, from the monarch to the slave, knew when the knock might come to his door. An impenetrable secrecy characterized all the proceedings of this institution. This feeling of insecurity and the workings of the imagination lent their aid to exaggerate the fearful reality. Neither rank, nor age, nor sex, afforded any defence against its watchful vigilance and its pitiless severity.

The prisoner, the helpless victim, is now within the gates of the Inquisition; and few who ever entered there left it absolved and acquitted; not more, it is said, than one in a thousand. Certain forms were gone through as to the question of the alleged guilt of the accused, but all were a gross mockery of justice. "The court sat in profound secrecy, no advocate might appear before the tribunal, no witness was confronted with the accused; who were the informers, what the charges, except the vague charge of heresy, no one knew. The suspected heretic was first summoned to declare on oath that he would speak the truth, the whole truth, of all persons living or dead, with himself, or like himself, on suspicion of heresy, or Waldensianism. If he refused, he was cast into a dungeon, the most dismal, the most foul, the most noisome, in those dreary ages. No falsehood was too false, no craft too crafty, no trick too base, for this deliberate, systematic moral torture which was to wring further confession against himself, denunciation against others. It was the deliberate object to break the spirit; the prisoner's food was to be slowly, gradually, diminished till body and soul were prostrate. He was then to be left in darkness, solitude, and silence." The next part of the procedure of the Holy Office in these secret prisons was the application of bodily torture. The helpless victim was charged with the culpable concealment and denial of the truth. In vain did he affirm that he had answered every question fully and honestly to the utmost extent of his knowledge; he was urged to confess if ever he had entertained an evil thought in his heart against the church, or the Holy Office, or anything else they chose to name. No matter what answer he gave, he was denounced as an obstinate heretic. After some hypocritical expressions as to their love for his soul, and their sincere desire to deliver him from error, that he might obtain salvation, a vast apparatus of torturing instruments were shown to him, the rack must now be applied to make him confess his sin.

The Application of Torture

Were it not that truth and impartial history demand that the real nature of the papacy should be told, we would much rather not describe, even in the briefest way, those scenes of torture; but few of our young readers in these peaceful times have any idea of the cruel character of popery, and of its thirst for the blood of God's saints. And that nature, let it be remembered, is unchanged. As late as 1820, which may be said to be our own day, when the Inquisition was thrown open in Madrid by the orders of the Cortes, twenty-one prisoners were found in it: not one of them knew the name of the city in which he was; some had been confined for three years, some a longer period, and not one knew perfectly the nature of the crime of which he was accused. One of these persons was to have suffered death the following day by the Pendulum. This method of torture is thus described. The condemned is fastened in a groove, upon a table, on his back suspended above him is a pendulum, the edge of which is sharp, and it is so constructed as to become longer with every movement. The victim sees this implement of destruction swinging to and fro above him, and every moment the keen edge approaches nearer and nearer; at length it cuts the skin of his face, and gradually cuts through his head, until life is extinct." This was a punishment of the Secret Tribunal in 1820, and may be so today in some places in Spain and Italy!

The penances and punishments to which the accused were subjected, in order to obtain such a confession as the inquisitors desired, were many and various; the rack was usually the first. The naked arms to which a small hard cord was fastened, were turned behind the back, heavy weights were tied to the feet; and then the sufferer was drawn up by the action of a pulley to the height of the place he was in. Having been kept suspended for some time, he was suddenly let down with a jerk to within a little distance of the floor, this done several times, the joints of the arms were dislocated whilst the cord, by which he was suspended, cut through the skin and flesh, and penetrated to the bone, and by means of the weights appended to the feet, the whole frame was violently strained. This species of torture was continued for an hour and sometimes longer, according to the pleasure of the inquisitors present, and to what the strength of the sufferer seemed capable of enduring. The torture by fire was equally painful. The prisoner being extended on the floor, the soles of his feet were rubbed with lard, and placed near the fire, until, writhing in agony, he was ready to confess what his tormentors required. A second time the judges doomed their victims to the same torture, to make them own the motives and intentions of their hearts for their confessed conduct or sayings; and a third time, that they might reveal their accomplices or abettors.

When cruelties failed to wring a confession, artifices and snares were resorted to. Persons were sent into the dungeons, pretending to be prisoners like themselves, who ventured to speak against the Inquisition, but only with the view of ensnaring others that they might witness against them. When the accused was held to be convicted, either by witnesses or by his own forced confession, he was sentenced according to the heinousness of his offence. It might be to death, to perpetual imprisonment, to the galleys, or to flogging. Those sentenced to death by fire were allowed to accumulate, that the sacrifice of a great number at once might produce a more striking and terrible effect.

The Auto De Fe

The cruel death by which the Inquisition closed the career of its victims was styled in Spain and Portugal as AUTO DE FE, or "Act of Faith," being regarded as a religious ceremony of peculiar solemnity; and to invest the act with greater sanctity, the cruel deed was always done on the Lord's day. The innocent victims of this papal barbarity were led forth in procession to the place of execution. They were dressed in the most fantastic manner. On the caps and tunics of some were painted the flames of hell, and dragons and demons fanning them to keep them brisk for the heretics; and the Jesuits thundering in their ears that the fires before them were nothing to the fires of hell which they would have to endure for ever. If any brave heart attempted to say a word for the Lord, or in defence of the truth for which he was about to suffer, his mouth was instantly gagged. The condemned were then chained to stakes. Any of the persons confessing that he was a true Catholic and wished to die in the Catholic faith, had the privilege of being strangled before he was burned; but those who refused to claim the privilege, were burnt alive, and reduced to ashes.

A quantity of furze, sometimes green, and pieces of wood were laid around the bottom of the stakes and set on fire. Their sufferings were indescribable. The lowest extremities of the body were sometimes actually roasted before the flames reached the vital parts. And this appalling spectacle was beheld by crowds of people of both sexes, and of all ages, with transports of joy, so demoralized were the people by Romanism. For upwards of four centuries the Auto de Fe was a national holiday in Spain, which its kings and queens, princes and princesses, witnessed in the pomp of royalty.

According to the calculations of Llorente, compiled from the records of the Inquisition, it appears that from the year 1481 to 1808 this tribunal condemned, in Spain alone upwards of three hundred and forty one thousand persons And if to this number be added all who suffered in other countries, then under the dominion of Spain, what would the total number be? Torquemada, on being made Inquisitor-general of Arragon in 1483, burned alive, to signalize his promotion to the Holy Office, no less than two thousand of the prisoners of the Inquisition. Sovereigns, princes, royal ladies, learned men magistrates, prelates, ministers of state were boldly and fearlessly accused and tried by the Holy Office. But the Lord knows them all - He knows the sufferers, He knows the persecutors, He knows how to reward the one and how to judge the other. The dark deeds of those secret dungeons, the pitiful wail of the helpless sufferers, the cruel mockings of the unaccountable Dominicans, must all be revealed before that throne of inflexible justice, of overwhelming purity. The pope and his college of cardinals, the abbot and his fraternity of monks, the inquisitor-general and his gaolers, tormentors, and executioners, must all appear before 'the great white throne" - the judgment-seat of Christ. There we leave these wicked men, thankful that we have not to judge them, and perfectly content with the Lord's decisions. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

He who rebuked His disciples for entertaining the thought of calling down fire on the Samaritans will judge them by His own standard. He then placed on record what should have been a guide to His people in all ages. He rebuked the disciples, and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." (Luk 9:55-56)

It may be necessary just to state here, that we do not consider all who suffered by the Inquisition to be martyrs, or even Christians. The crimes of which the inquisitors took cognisance were heresy in all its different forms; such as Judaism, Mahometanism, sorcery, polygamy, apostasy besides, we have not the privilege of knowing the final testimony of the sufferers. It was quite different with the martyrs under the heathen emperors. At the same time, it is impossible not to be strongly moved with horror as well as compassion, in reading the histories of that dark and diabolical period.

The reader has now before him the commencement and the general character of the Inquisition; individual cases of its cruelty will come before us in the progress of our history. Next in order to be noticed, however briefly, are the new orders of monks which sprang out of the same memorable Albigensian war.

Ancient and Modern Monks

The origin and early history of monachism are carefully traced in the first volume of our "Short Papers;"* but, as it completely changes its character in the thirteenth century, it may be well rapidly to sketch its progress from these early times, and thus more clearly see the contrast. This plan will also give us an opportunity of glancing at the internal condition of the church of Rome before the light of the Reformation penetrated and revealed its fearful darkness.

{*See p. 268-276. See also p. 444-445.}

Towards the end of the third century, but especially during the fourth, the deserts of Syria and Egypt had been the abode of monks and hermits. The most private and unfrequented places in the wide wilderness were selected by the original recluses. The accounts of their sanctity, miracles, and devotion, became the literature of the church. The infection spread. Men who were anxious to excel in holiness, or to obtain the reputation of a peculiar piety, embraced the monastic order. The practice prevailed so rapidly, that before the beginning of the sixth century it was almost coextensive with Christendom. There were three classes of those ancient monks. 1. Solitaires - those who lived alone in places remote from all towns and habitations of men hermits. 2. Coenobites - those who lived in common with others in the same house for religious purposes, and under the same superiors. 3. Sarabaites - They are described as strolling, irregular monks, who had no fixed rule or residence. They may be considered as seceders from the Coenobites, who lived within their own gates. The wall which confined them, in some instances, enclosed also their wells and gardens, and all that was necessary for their sustenance, so as to leave no pretext even for occasional intercourse with a world which they had deserted for ever.

Those whom we call monks now-a-days are Coenobites, who live together in a convent or monastery, make vows of living according to a certain rule established by the founder, and wear a habit which distinguishes their order.

The revolutions of the West, in the fifth century, proved favourable to monasticism. The barbarians were awed by the numbers, peculiarities, and professed sanctity of the monks. Their abodes, therefore, were undisturbed, and became a quiet retreat from the troubles of the time. Superstition honoured them; wealth began to flow in, but with it degeneracy and corruption. Already there was room for a reformer, and the person who was to appear in that character was the famous St. Benedict.

St. Benedict

As nearly all the monastic institutions throughout Europe, for more than six hundred years, were regulated by the Rule of St. Benedict, we need only to give some account of this celebrated order to know the constitution and character of them all. And, as their name is legion, we will thus save a great deal of repetition.

This remarkable man was the son of a Roman senator born at Nurcia, in Italy, A.D. 480. At the age of twelve he was sent to study at Rome. He had probably heard and read about the lives of the holy anchorites and hermits of the East. With these examples before his mind, and the irregularities of his fellow-students around him, he longed for solitude. When about fifteen, unable to endure any longer the corrupt state of Roman society, he separated himself even from his faithful nurse, Cyrilla, who had been sent with him to Rome by his parents, and left her to lament over his mental derangement. The ferocious Huns and Vandals had made even the heart of Italy a wilderness, so that the youthful hermit found a secluded spot not far from Rome. For years he lived in a lonely cave; the only person acquainted with the secret of his retreat was a monk, named Romanus, who supplied him with bread, by saving a portion of his own daily allowance. But as a steep rock lay between the cloister of Romanus and the grotto of Benedict, the bread was let down by a string to the mouth of the cave. At length he was discovered by some shepherds, who were delighted to hear his instructions and witness his miracles. As the fame of his piety increased, he was persuaded to become abbot of a monastery in the neighbourhood; but the strictness of his discipline displeased its inmates, and they agreed to rid themselves of the severe recluse by mixing poison in his wine. But on his making the sign of the cross, which he usually did over his meat and his drink, the cup flew into pieces; whereupon he mildly rebuked the monks, and returned to his mountain cave.

Benedict now became an object of greater interest than ever. His fame spread, great multitudes flocked to him, men of wealth and influence joined him, and large sums of money were placed at his disposal. He was now in a position to build twelve monasteries, each of them consisting of twelve monks, under a superior. Having succeeded in so far accomplishing the object of his residence in the district, and being disquieted by the jealous interference of Florentius, a neighbouring priest, he quitted Subiaco with a few followers in the year 528. After some wanderings, he arrived at Monte Cassino, where Apollo was still worshipped by the rustics. With great skill and energy he uprooted the remains of heathen idolatry among the peasants. He cut down the grove, destroyed the idol of Apollo, and on the site of the altar an oratory was erected, which he dedicated to St. John the Evangelist and St. Martin. This was the germ of the great and renowned monastery which became the parent root of the innumerable branches which in a short time covered the face of Europe. Here Benedict drew up his famous Rule, about the year 529. It consists of seventy-three chapters, we are told, which contain a code of laws regulating the duties of monks to each other, and between the abbot and his monks. He provides for the administration of an institution, composed of every variety of character, engaged in every variety of occupation, but all to be perfectly subject to one absolute ruler. The comprehensiveness of his system is astonishing, as being the result of one mind, and without example or precedent. It is regarded by the learned as the most celebrated monument of ecclesiastical antiquity, and was in its operations the very strength and watchword of the satellites of Rome.

The Rule of St. Benedict

The wisdom of this great monk as a legislator, and the superiority of his discipline to all that had previously existed, are mainly found in the place which he gives to manual labour. This was the distinctive feature of the new order - hard, healthy, bodily labour. Monasticism had been hitherto almost entirely a life of mere seclusion and contemplation, supported by the charity of the public, or the overawed peasantry in the neighbourhood of the monastery. Benedict had seen the evil effects of this idle, dreamy, state of existence, and made ample provision for the occupation of the monks. Idleness he branded as the enemy of both soul and body. They were not only to labour in the way of prayer, worship, reading, and the education of youth; but they were to labour with their hands, as with the axe in the forest, the spade in the fields, and the trowel on the walls. The advantages of this new system were great. The Benedictine abbeys became industrious agricultural settlements. Husbandry, and the arts of civilized life, were introduced into the most barbarous regions, and the wilderness, under the hands of the monks, blossomed with fertility.

Although the order of St. Benedict was in every way contrary both to the letter and spirit of the word of God, it had more of reason and common sense than the idle and languishing systems of the East. "He was one of those who held," says Travers Hill, "that to live in this world a man must do something - that life which consumes, but produces not, is a morbid life, in fact an impossible life - a life that must decay - and therefore, imbued with the importance of this fact, he made labour, continuous and daily labour, the great foundation of his rule." His penetration is also seen in his consideration for the unfriendly climate of the West, and for European constitutions. His laws were milder and more practicable than had been attempted in Eastern countries; the diet rather more generous, and he did not propose any extreme mortification, but permitted his followers to live according to the common habits of their respective countries. In these wise and reasonable considerations lay the whole secret of the wondrous success of the Benedictine order.

But with our modern notions of good living, and of comparatively few religious services in the course of a week, the reader may be disposed to question what we have said of the mildness of the monastic rules, and of the generous nature of the diet. We have spoken of these as compared with the East, where monasticism originated.

At two o'clock in the morning the monks were aroused for vigils, on which occasion twelve psalms were chanted, and certain lessons from the scriptures read or recited. They assembled again at day-break for matins; this service was almost the same as the first, so that in their vigils and matins twenty-four psalms were to be chanted each day, that the psalter might be completed each week. The time for their in-door devotions and their out-door labours was arranged, in summer and winter, as the superior saw fit. But they were obliged to attend at least seven distinct religious services every twenty-four hours, besides seven hours each day for labour. They breakfasted about noon, and dined in the evening. Their usual food consisted of vegetables, grain, and fruit; one pound of bread per day for each monk, and a small quantity of wine. On the public table no meat was allowed; only to the sick was animal food given. Sometimes they had eggs or fish with an evening meal. But every day in Lent they fasted till six in the evening, and were allowed less time for sleep.

The dress of the monks was to be coarse and plain, but variable, according to circumstances. They were allowed the luxury of boots. Their outer garment was to be a loose black gown, with large wide sleeves, and a cowl on their heads, ending in a point behind. Every monk had two coats, two cowls, a table-book, a knife, a needle, and a handkerchief. The furniture of their cells was a mat, a blanket, a rug, and a pillow. Each had a separate bed, and they slept with their clothes on. A dean was to preside over each dormitory, and a light was to be kept burning in each. No talking was allowed after they retired. For small faults they were shut out from the meals of the brotherhood, for greater they were excluded from the chapel; incorrigible offenders were excluded from the monastery.

Thus the long and tedious day of the self-doomed monk was spent; from his midnight vigils till his evening vespers, all his observances were merely mechanical. On entering the monastery, he renounced wholly every species of personal liberty. His vow of implicit obedience to his superiors in everything was irrevocable. No one could receive a present of any kind, not even from a parent, nor have any correspondence with persons outside the monastery, except by its passing under the inspection of the abbot. A porter always sat at the gate, which was kept locked day and night, and no stranger was admitted without leave from the abbot, and no monk could go out unless he had permission from his superior.

The garden, the mill, the well, the bakehouse, were all within the walls, so that there might be no necessity for leaving the monastery. The trade or the occupation of every monk was to be determined by the abbot. A monk who once was rich and of high birth was now penniless, and might be appointed cook or waiter, tailor, carpenter, or ditcher, according to the pleasure of the absolute superior; the quality and quantity of his food were prescribed and limited as if he had been the merest child. He was not allowed to speak but at certain times. All conversation was strictly prohibited during meals; some one read aloud the whole time.

Thus was the man - the social man - isolated from society. Woman, whom God gave to man, was to be considered, not only a stranger to his thoughts, but the natural enemy of his lonely perfection. By the subtlety of Satan, self was the supreme object of all monks - of every system of monkery. How forcibly the words of the apostle come into the mind when musing on the liberty of Christ and the slavery of Satan: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Mark these truly christian words, "what things were gain to me - gain to me!" If only gain to me, what is the good of them? I want Christ. I have seen Christ in the glory. I want to be like Him. Everything that religious flesh could boast of, which was gain to him, he flung behind his back as the merest dross. "Yea, doubtless," he says, "and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." What blindness, what perversity, for any one to prefer the order of St. Benedict to Philippians 3 - to the love and liberty of Christ! But such was the deceiving power of Satan, that man thought the sure, if not the only, way to heaven was to become a monk.

The Benedictines

Before the death of Benedict, which took place in 543, his order had been established in France, Spain, and Sicily. It spread rapidly far and wide. Wherever the monks travelled, they converted the wilderness into a cultivated country; they cleared forests, drained morasses, reared stately abbeys with their own hands, civilized rude populations, pursued the breeding of cattle and the labours of agriculture in every way. They also cultivated learning, and had schools for the young. But though the Benedictines soon became a great community, and spread through various countries, they were all subject to one rule. The time when this order came into England is well known. St. Augustine and his monks were Benedictines, and so was Gregory who sent them. But although they have the credit of reducing wastes into fertility by tillage, they have also the credit of choosing, when they had the opportunity, the fairest spots in the land for their settlements. "In every rich valley," says Milman, speaking of England, "by the side of every clear and deep stream, arose a Benedictine abbey. The labours of the monks in planting, in cultivation, in laying out the sunny garden, or hanging the hills with trees, may have added much to the picturesque grace of these scenes; but in general, if a district in England be surveyed, the most convenient, most fertile, most peaceful, spot will be found to have been the site of a Benedictine abbey."*

{*Latin Christianity, vol. 1, p. 426. Hill's English Monasticism p. 71. Gardner's Faiths of the World, vol. 1, p. 318. Neander, vol. 3, p. 351.}

The first intention of St. Benedict was not to found a monastic order, but simply to prescribe rules for the Italian monks, in accordance with the practice of the anchorites and recluses of the early church. But the monks of Monte Cassino soon became famous for their superior intelligence, peaceful lives, correct habits, and earnest zeal. In a country and at a time when strife, rapine, ignorance, and dissolute manners were universal, the calm and holy monastery presented an inviting haven of shelter, where, during life's brief period, man might attend to his religious duties, and end his days in peace with heaven and with mankind. The young ardent spirit entering the world had little choice of life; practically it was between a life of war, violence, and wickedness - a life of ferocious joys and sorrows, or of seclusion, humility, obedience, and self-denying labour. The more thoughtful and timid natures welcomed the new haven of rest. Men of all ranks left their luxury or their poverty, and joined the new community; and thus it went on increasing, till its wealth and power were incredible. The following statistics will give the reader a better idea of the opulence of these ancient Benedictine abbeys than mere descriptions.

"The property belonging to the parent monastery of Monte Cassino at length included four bishoprics, two dukedoms, thirty-six cities, two hundred castles, three hundred territories, thirty-three islands, and one thousand six hundred and sixty-two churches. The abbot assumed the following titles: - Patriarch of the Holy Faith; Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Cassino; Head and Prince of all Abbots and Religious Houses; Vice-chancellor of both the Sicilies, of Jerusalem, and Hungary; Count and Governor of Campania and Terra di Savono, and of the Maritime Provinces; Vice-Emperor; and Prince of Peace."*

{*Marsden's Dictionary of Christian Churches and Sects, p. 635.}

The Missionary Zeal of Benedictines

The Benedictines, in course of time, as their numbers increased, sent out missionaries to preach the gospel amongst the nations then plunged in the depths of Paganism. It has been estimated that they were the means of converting upwards of thirty countries and provinces to the Christian faith, or, as we would say, to the church of Rome. Still, the Lord in His mercy could, and no doubt did, use the cross of Christ as then preached for salvation. A very little bit of truth about the cross or the blood of Christ will convert the soul when the Lord uses it. A most remarkable change took place in the history of the church, or of Christianity, through the preaching of the Benedictines, and of St. Benedict's order, which we will merely name, and leave for the reflection of the thoughtful.

During the first three centuries of the Christian era, the emperors, and all earth's great ones, persecuted the faithful followers of Christ; but during the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries many emperors and kings resigned their crowns, and became monks of the Benedictine order; and also empresses and queens became nuns of the same order.*

{*For a list of the names and countries of these converts, with many particulars, see English Monasticism, by O'Dell Travers Hill, p. 101. See also Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. 4, p. 562. The numbers do not quite agree in both, but, as English Monasticism was published as late as 1867, we accept the figures given there.}

From the seclusion of the Benedictine cells forty-eight popes were raised to fill the chair of St. Peter; two hundred cardinals, seven thousand archbishops, fifteen thousand bishops, fifteen thousand abbots, four thousand saints, and upwards of thirty-seven thousand religious establishments, including monasteries, nunneries, priories, hospitals, etc. The order has also produced a vast number of eminent writers, and other learned men. Rabanus established the first school in Germany, Alcuin founded the University of Paris, Guido invented the scale of music, Sylvester the organ, and Dionysius Exiguus perfected the ecclesiastical computation.

"The abbots were often little inferior to sovereign princes: their splendour was greatest in Germany, where the abbot of Angia, surnamed the Rich, had a yearly revenue of sixty thousand golden crowns, and into his monastery none were received but the sons of princes, earls, and barons. The abbots of Weissemburg, of Fulda, and St. Gall, were princes of the empire. The abbot of St. Gall once entered Strasburg with a retinue of a thousand horse."* For six hundred years all rules and societies gave way before the universal prevalence of the Benedictine order. Many other sects arose during that period, and, though differing from each other in some points of discipline or dress, all acknowledged the Rule of Benedict. The Carthusians, Cistercians, and others innumerable, were only branches growing out of the original stock.

{*Marsden's Christian Sects.}

These boasted results of the rule of the solitary hermit of Monte Cassino extend over a period of at least seven hundred years, during which time the Benedictines, like all other human institutions, experienced many reverses and many revivals, which we need not attempt to trace. We would only further say under this head, that, in accordance with the often-told story, no sooner did the monks of St. Benedict become rich and luxurious, than they began to depart from the principles of their founder, and gave themselves up to indolence and every vice. They became involved in civil affairs and the intrigues of courts, seeking only to advance the authority and power of the Roman pontiffs.

The New Orders - St. Dominic and St. Francis

It has often been remarked that, where the Spirit of God is working by means of the gospel, and where there are manifest results, in the conversion of souls to Christ, there also the enemy is sure to be active. He will not quietly suffer his kingdom to be invaded. It may be in hindering the work by persecution, or in corrupting it by seducing to self-indulgence, or by imitating it in an evil and wicked way. We have many sad instances of such things in the history of both Israel and the church - instances too numerous to be referred to here; but we shall now see, at this period of our history of the monastic institutions, what will explain our meaning.

The special object of the new orders which sprang up in the beginning of the thirteenth century, was to counterwork the influence which the Albigensian preachers acquired over the poorer classes of the people by familiarly mixing with them, and constantly preaching the gospel to them. Preaching the gospel of Christ suitably for the humbler classes had been completely neglected for centuries by the clergy of the Romish church. Sometimes an earnest preacher was raised up, such as Claudius, of Turin, Arnold, of Brescia, Fulk, of Neuilly; Henry, the deacon; or Peter Waldo, who devoted himself to the work of the gospel and the salvation of souls but these instances were few and far between. More commonly it was for some purely popish object, such as the Crusades, when the clergy attempted to rouse the people by their eloquence.

"In theory," says the ecclesiastical historian, "it was the special privilege of the bishops to preach, but there were few amongst them who had either the gift, the inclination, the leisure from their secular, judicial, or warlike occupations, to preach even in their cathedral cities; in the rest of their dioceses their presence was but occasional, a progress, or visitation of pomp and form, rather than of popular instruction. Almost the only means of religious instruction was the Ritual, which, in so far as language was concerned, had long ceased to be intelligible; and the priests were almost as ignorant as the people; they had just learned to go through the stated observances in the most mechanical way. The married, or secular clergy, as they were called, though by far the most moral and respectable, were acting in opposition to the laws of the church, and even subject to the accusation of living in concubinage; their ministrations had very little weight with the people. The unmarried, or regular clergy obeyed the outward rule, but by every account they so flagrantly violated the severer principles of the church, that their teaching, if they attempted actual teaching, must have fallen powerless on the minds of the people."*

{*Dean Milman, vol. 4, p. 243. J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, p. 363.}

Such a state of things in the Established Church left the way open for the heretics, so-called. They embraced the opportunity, stepped in, and laboured diligently to spread their doctrines among the people. Preaching in public and in private was the secret, under God, of the great success of the Waldenses and Albigenses. This was from the earliest times, and still is, the divine way of spreading the truth, and gathering souls to Jesus. The more public the preaching, the better. In all ages it has pleased God, by what the world calls "the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." Open-air preaching, visiting and teaching from house to house, public testimony within-doors and out-of-doors, are ways and means which God will always bless. And such means seem to have been diligently used by those accused of heresy in Languedoc.

The watchful enemy, observing the effect of this mode of action, changes his tactics. In place of shutting up all the sincere and earnest and pious members of the church of Rome in monasteries, to think only about themselves, instruct themselves, pray and preach only to themselves, he now sends them out as open-air preachers, and to overrun the very fields which had been occupied for centuries by the true followers of Christ. His emissaries had strict orders, not only to imitate the heretics, but to surpass them, in plainness of dress, humility, poverty, and familiarity with the people. A complete change now takes place in the history of the monastic orders; in place of cloistered monks, secluded from the eye of the world, saying their prayers, working in the fields, or gathering the fruit of their gardens, we have preaching friars at the corner of every street, and in every town throughout Europe, yea, begging from door to door. But this was not all; being favourites of the pontiffs, they had the direction of nearly everything in Church and State for three centuries. "They held the highest offices, both civil and ecclesiastical," says Mosheim, "taught with almost absolute authority in all the schools and churches, and defended the majesty of the Roman pontiffs against kings, bishops, and heretics, with amazing zeal and success. What the Jesuits were after the Reformation, the same were the Dominicans and Franciscans from the thirteenth century to the times of Luther. They were the soul of the whole Church and State, and the projectors and executors of all the enterprises of any moment."

The Origin and Character of the Dominicans

As we think it more satisfactory to know the beginning of things, we will now briefly describe the origin and character of these two great pillars of the proud temple of Rome. Up to this time - the beginning of the thirteenth century - the exertions of the popes have been almost entirely confined to the building of this temple - the establishment of their own supremacy in the church, and of their temporal authority over the State. But the increasing light of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the increasing depravity of the church, brought into the field of testimony many noble witnesses for Christ and for His gospel. The temple began to shake. The clergy had alienated the hearts of the common people by their grasping and oppressive power; and their indolence, indulgence, and immoralities, unfavourably contrasted with the industry, humility, self-denial, and consistency of those accused of heresy. The whole fabric was in danger for these heresiarchs were scattered throughout all provinces, and among all ranks and classes of society, even in Rome itself. The enemy, perceiving the necessities of the moment, hastened to the rescue of the threatened hierarchy. The two men adapted to meet the exigencies of the time were Dominic and Francis.

Dominic was born in 1170, in the village of Calaroga in Old Castile. His parents were of noble name, that of Guzman, if not of noble race. According to some writers, the effect of his burning eloquence as a preacher was foreshown by his mother dreaming that she gave birth to a whelp carrying a fire-brand in his mouth, with which he set the world on fire. But whether it was his mother or his monk historian that had the vision, he faithfully answered to the similitude. "Beware of dogs" never had a truer application than to Dominic; and literal fire, not merely the fire of his eloquence, was his chosen and favourite agent of destruction from the commencement of his career. The flames of hell Dominic and his followers alleged, were reserved for all heretics, and they deemed it a good work to begin the eternal burnings in time. From infancy his life was rigidly ascetic. His nature, at an early period, showed signs of tenderness and compassion, but his religious zeal, in process of time, steeled him against every kindly impulse of nature. His nights were, for the most part, spent in severe penitential exercises; he flogged himself nightly with an iron chain, once for his own sins, once for the sinners in this world, and once for those in purgatory.

Dominic became a canon in the rigorous house of Osma, and soon excelled the others in austerities. In consequence of his reputation, the Spanish bishop of Osma - a prelate of great ability and of strong religious enthusiasm - invited Dominic to accompany him on a mission to Denmark. He had then reached his thirtieth year, and, though he was considered mild towards Jews and infidels, he was burning with unrelenting hatred towards the heretics. Having crossed the Pyrenees, the zealous bishop and his congenial companion found themselves in the midst of the Albigensian heresy; they could not close their eyes to the disgraceful state of the Romish clergy, to the contempt into which they had fallen, and to the prosperity of the sectaries. The Mass had not been said in some places for thirty years. The papal commission too, which had been appointed by Innocent III., about the year 1200, they found in a most dejected state. This mission, it will be remembered, consisted of such men as Reinerius, Guy, Castelnau, and the infamous Arnold, all monks of Citeaux, the spiritual offspring of St. Bernard. They bitterly lamented their want of success: heresy was deaf to their warnings and threatenings; it owned not the authority of the pope.

The papal legates, according to the good old style, had been marching through the land, from city to city, in the most hierarchical pomp, in rich attire, with their retinue, and a vast cavalcade of horses. "How expect success with this secular pomp?" replied the severer Spaniards. "Sow the good seed as the heretics sow the bad. Cast off those sumptuous robes, renounce those richly-caparisoned palfreys, go barefoot, without purse and scrip, like the apostles; out-labour, out-fast, out-discipline these false teachers." The bishop of Osma and his faithful Dominic sent back their own horses, stripped themselves to the rudest monkish dress, and thus led on the spiritual army.

This was the deep subtlety of Satan. The power of the Holy Spirit had been manifested by the men of the valleys, and by the Poor Men of Lyons, who had spread themselves over the provinces; and now comes a great display of mock humility and false zeal, a base imitation of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. It was only by such lies and hypocrisy that the authority of Rome could be maintained, or that the enemy could hope to retain the nations of Europe in Captivity.

We have already spoken of Dominic's labours in the Albigensian territory. There he spent ten years in endeavouring to root out heresy. A small fraternity was then formed, who went out two and two, in imitation of the Lord's appointment of the seventy. (Luke 10; Matt. 10) The burnings in Languedoc then commenced. Like dogs of a keen scent, the Dominicans went from house to house, searching for prey to feed the sword of de Montfort, and the fires which they had kindled. Dominic's great achievements secured for him the favour of the pontiffs, Innocent III. and Honorius III., who established him in the privileges of a "Founder." He died in 1221; but before he quitted the scene of his cruelties, no fewer than sixty monasteries of his order had sprung up in various regions of Christendom. He was canonized by Gregory IX. in 1233. The fearful tribunal of the Inquisition directly or indirectly, we doubt not, owed its origin to Dominic, and the most numerous and merciless of its officials belonged to his brotherhood. A few more details may be given when speaking about the Franciscans, as they may be described together.

The Origin and Character of the Franciscans

Contemporary with St. Dominic was his great compeer in ecclesiastical fame, St. Francis, who was to rival, and even exceed, the Spanish monk in celebrity. He was a native of Assisi, a town of Central Italy. The many absurd legends which crowd the pages of his Franciscan biographers need not be referred to; they are really blasphemous. Such was their enthusiastic frenzy, that they impiously maintained that St. Francis was a second christ; that the stigmata, or wounds of the Saviour, were miraculously impressed upon his body, in imitation of the crucified body of Jesus, and this imposture they dared to found on the text, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." (Gal 6:17)

During a year's captivity in Perugia, and other bodily afflictions, he became the subject of the most extraordinary visions and raptures, by which he was encouraged to go forth into the world as a servant of God, and as a saviour of mankind. The feverish dreams of his weak mind were divine revelations to the Catholics.

Francis now began to talk mysteriously about his future bride - that bride was poverty. He exchanged his dress for rags. He was raised up, he said, "to oppose truth to error, poverty to the desire of wealth, and humility to ambition." He begged at the gates of monasteries; he discharged the most menial offices; he devoted himself to the care of lepers he washed their feet and dressed their wounds. "His mother," we read, "heard and beheld all his strange acts with a tender and prophetic admiration: but his father was ashamed of him, and treated him as a madman. " But though at first he was mocked and pelted in the streets of Assisi, he was believed in by the church, sheltered by the bishop, and soon followed by a crowd of imitators.

Francis was now openly wedded to poverty by an oath never to be broken; and it was to be poverty in its lowest form - beggary. He accepted from an old friend "a hermit's attire, a short tunic, a leathern girdle, a staff, and slippers;" but this was too much fine and comfortable for the ideas of the young fanatic. Making the worst use of the Saviour's instructions to His disciples in Matthew 10 and Luke 10, he threw away all he had, excepting a coarse dark grey tunic, which he tied round him with a rope, and set out through the city, calling all to repentance.

Such strange but fervent piety or fanaticism, at that period of dark superstition and ignorance, could not fail to kindle the zeal of others. The essence of the gospel as taught by Jesus Christ, he affirmed, consisted in the most absolute poverty of all things - that there was no safe path to heaven unless by the destitution of all earthly possessions. "Wonder grew into admiration, admiration into emulation, emulation into a blind following of his footsteps. Disciples, one by one, began to gather round him. He retired with them to a lonely spot in the bend of the river, called Rivo Torto. A rule was wanting for the young brotherhood. The Gospels were opened. Francis read three texts. 1. 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor.' 2. 'Take nothing for your journey.' 3. 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.' (Mat 19:21; Mar 6:8; Mat 16:24) Francis made the sign of the cross, and sent forth his followers into the neighbouring cities, to the east and west, the north and south."

Such was the origin, and such the character, of the new orders. Though somewhat different in their first constitution, they were very nearly assimilated in character, and even in profession, and entered upon the same career with almost the same objects in view and the same principles of action. Itinerant preachers under the vow of poverty characterized both. In their identification with the lowest of mankind they were entirely agreed. The enemy saw what the Poor Men of Lyons, or the Waldenses, were doing; and these were to be the poor men of the papacy, who were to meet the heretics on their own ground, and outdo them in poverty, humility, labour, and suffering. Having received the formal sanction and protection of the pope, Francis sent forth his followers, vowed to the service of God, to the extirpation of heretics, to chastity, poverty, and obedience.

The new orders included nuns, or a sisterhood, founded in connection with each of the brotherhoods. There was also a grade connected with the mendicant friars, called Tertiaries, who continued to be engaged in the common occupations of the world, and added greatly to the popularity and influence of the friars. It was an avowed link between the world and the church. A few words as to the habits of the preaching friars, in contrast with the earlier monastic orders, will be the simplest way of giving the reader a clear view of both. And, as we have no doubt, the new orders were permitted of God to uphold the tottering fabric of the Romish church, and to hinder the accomplishment of the Reformation for three hundred years, great interest is connected with their history. But the saints of God had a long education to pass through and the true church of Christ to be enriched with a noble army of martyrs, before that glorious end was gained.

The Earlier and Later Monastic Orders

We are fully aware that all human systems must be examined by the word of God, if we would rightly understand their real character. It is not by contrasting the later with the earlier that we can find out how far they may have wandered from the mind of the Lord. The word of the living God, by which all shall at last be judged, must be our only standard now. It matters very little what improvement may be found in one system compared with another, if both are the result of human invention. This is true as to all persons as well as all systems. The word of God must be the Christian's only rule, and Christ Himself the only head and centre, power and authority, in the system which He owns - the church, the assembly of God. But, as we have on different occasions looked into scripture on these points, we will now in a few words, state the difference between the earlier and later monastic systems.*

{*See "Reflections on the Principles of Asceticism,' Short Papers Vol. 1, p. 434.}

The chief, if not the exclusive, object of the early hermits, anchorites, and ascetics of every name, was their own religious perfection. The instruction or salvation of others formed no part of their creed. Isolation from the dangerous world, and seclusion in some lonely cell, with all its privations, were deemed necessary to this end. As the halo of their sanctity attracted and allured others, houses were built, and large tracts of land were cultivated, for the necessities of this life. These small beginnings sometimes grew up to be the most stately settlements in the country. And during the long dark night of the middle ages, with its barbarism and feudalism, the monasteries often proved a great mercy to the sick the poor, and the traveller. All must thankfully acknowledge this fact. During the five or six centuries which followed the subversion of the western empire, the monastic system became a powerful instrument in correcting the vices of society, and in protecting the lower classes from the lawless oppression of the feudal lord. Hospitality, or the entertainment of strangers and pilgrims, was one of the important uses of the monasteries at that time. Inns for the reception of travellers appear not to have existed earlier than the eleventh century. Almost the only two stately buildings which met the traveller's eye in those days, were the castle of the powerful baron and the abbey of the praying monks. The one was war, and the other peace. Religion, learning, and science found a refuge behind the monastery walls, and true piety could peacefully labour there, in writing, transcribing, and otherwise collecting and preserving useful information.

"The Benedictines," says Travers Hill, "were the depositaries of learning and the arts; they gathered books together and reproduced them in the silence of their cells, and they preserved in this way not only the volumes of sacred writ but many of the works of classic lore. They started the gothic architecture; they alone had the secrets of chemistry and medical science; they invented many colours; they were the first architects, artists, glass-stainers, carvers, and mosaic workers in mediaeval times. It was a mighty system and did good work in the world, but it went the way of a;1 human things and human institutions, it became intoxicated with its power, blinded with its own splendour, and corrupted by its own wealth; its abbots grew avaricious, its monks voluptuous; they lost their original simplicity; the rule of their founder existed no longer in the activity of their husbandmen, their scholars, and their artists but was only to be found in the words mechanically read in the chapter house monasticism engendered its own corruption, and out of that corruption came death."

The magnificent abbey of Glastonbury once covered sixty acres. Before the fall of the monasteries in England, the royal commissioners report concerning it; that they had never seen a house so great, good, and princely, with four parks adjoining, a great fishery five miles in compass, well replenished with pike, perch, bream, and roach; four manor houses, besides the chapel, hospital, tribunal, schools, and the great gate-house. Many of the houses of Glastonbury have been built out of the materials of this once superb abbey.*

{*Johnston's Gazetteer.}

The habits of the modern monks were a perfect contrast to the earlier. In place of dwelling within the walls of a superb abbey, the whole of Christendom in a short time was overspread with hosts of Dominicans and Franciscans. They were gathered from every country, and spoke, therefore, every language and dialect. They preached the old faith in its fullest mediaeval inflexible rigour, in almost every town and hamlet. Unswerving loyalty to the pope and the extirpation of heresy were their grand themes. And the pontiffs in return protected them, and conferred upon them the highest privileges and advantages. Before the century closed, the monasteries and nunneries of the Minorite order had reached the surprising number of eight thousand, and were inhabited by at least two hundred thousand inmates.

The Apostasy of the Mendicants

The two rival orders the Dominicans and Franciscans, not contented with embroiling all Europe in discord, and angry strife, began soon after the decease of their respective founders, to contend with each other for precedence. And although the pontiffs of this and the following centuries used various means to compose and terminate these unseemly disputes, their attempts were fruitless; for these two great orders continued for many a long year to cherish this keen rivalry, and to hurl at each other the most bitter recriminations. They fought hard for the mastery in all the seats of learning in Christendom, but the most noted contest was that of the Dominicans with the university of Paris. Another prominent point of great controversy which long raged, was the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. It was the favorite doctrine of the Franciscans, and was always violently assailed by the Dominicans. The famous Thomas Aquinas argued in favour of the Dominican view of the question, and Duns Scotus, the Dialectician, taking up the Franciscan view of the doctrine, entered the arena of debate, which has continued to this day; for although the present pope Pius IX. has pronounced the dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, the Dominican fraternity are unwilling to admit it. However it has now become an article of faith in the Romish church.

As early as 1256, when Bonaventura became the general of the Franciscans, he found they had begun to be faithless to their ungenial bride, poverty, and were struggling for a divorce. The affections of Francis had not survived in his followers. But under the prudent management of their new general, comparative tranquillity was maintained during his life; but after his death, which took place in 1274, dissensions broke out with as great violence as ever. Indeed these mendicant, or rather satanic, orders caused the most violent contentions in almost every country of Europe down to the period of the Reformation. But all classes, both in Church and State, had to bear with their pride and arrogance, as they were the most faithful servants and satellites of the Roman See.

The following brief sketch from the pen of Matthew Paris, a Benedictine of St. Alban's, who wrote about 1249, will place before the reader the real character and ways of these dreadful pests of society. The picture is by no means overdrawn, though Matthew belonged to the old aristocratic order and might despise his new democratic brothers. Solitude, seclusion, the lonely cell, the private chapel, communication with the outer world sternly cut off, was the old order; the following is a sample of the new, and of what prevailed in England in the thirteenth century.

"It is terrible - it is an awful - presage, that in three hundred years, in four hundred years, even in more, the old monastic orders have not so entirely degenerated as these fraternities. The friars, who have been founded hardly forty years, have built even in the present day in England, residences as lofty as the palaces of our kings. These are they, who, enlarging day by day their sumptuous edifices, encircling them with lofty walls, lay up within them incalculable treasures, imprudently transgressing the bounds of poverty, and violating, according to the prophecy of the German Hildegard, the very fundamental rules of their profession. These are they, who, impelled by the love of gain, force themselves upon the last hours of the lords, and of the rich whom they know to be overflowing with wealth; and these, despising all rights, supplanting the ordinary pastors, extort confessions and secret testaments, boasting of themselves, and of their order, and asserting their vast superiority over all others. So that no one of the faithful now believes that he can be saved, unless guided and directed by the preachers or friars minor. Eager to obtain privileges, they serve in the courts of kings and nobles, as counsellors, chamberlains, treasurers, bridesmen, or notaries of marriages; they are the executioners of the papal extortions. In their preaching they sometimes take the tone of flattery, sometimes of biting censure; they scruple not to reveal confession, or to bring forward the most rash accusations. They despise the legitimate orders, those founded by holy fathers, by St. Benedict or St. Augustine, with all other professors. They place their own order high above all; they look on the Cistercians as rude and simple, half laic or rather peasants; they treat the black friars as haughty epicureans. "*

{*Milman, vol. 4, p. 276; Mosheim, vol. 2, p. 523.}

27 Dawn of the Reformation

Chapter 27

The Approaching Dawn of the Reformation

Centuries before Luther nailed his theses to the church door in Wittemburg, the Lord was preparing both nations and individuals for the accomplishment of this great work. The weakening of the papal power and the increasing boldness of the witnesses, foretold what was approaching.

In our contemplations of Rome, we must always distinguish between the catholic church and popery, or the ecclesiastical and the temporal power. The church, though fallen and enslaved, was still the church; protestant in heart and faithful in measure to Christ, but to venture in her pious services beyond the defined limits of Roman orthodoxy subjected her to its severe discipline. The papacy vowed destruction on all trespassers. Immorality, irreligion, might be passed over, at least with a slight censure; but heresy or schism- in other words, any form of dissent from the Roman church, must be rooted out by fire and sword, and all heretics consigned by pontifical sentence to eternal death.

During the long reign of papal terror, the true saints of God witnessed and prophesied in sackcloth. But the silver line of sovereign grace was preserved unbroken from the days of the apostles, under the sheltering wing of the living God. He preserved His witnesses from the devouring dragon in the secret places of the earth; in mountains, valleys, and caverns; and in many quiet convents in the remote regions of Christendom.

But it may be interesting, first of all, to renew our acquaintance with the state of Christianity in some of the countries which we have already noticed. In this way we shall naturally fall in with our long line of witnesses, which go down to the days of Luther. And, first in order, we will notice the state of

Christianity in Ireland

Centuries have rolled on since we last looked at the state of things in the sister island. St. Patrick left behind him at his death in 492, a band of well-educated, devoted men, who greatly venerated their master and sought to follow in his footsteps. The fame of Ireland for its monasteries, missionary schools, and as the seat of pure scriptural teaching, rose so high, that it received the honourable appellation of "The isle of saints." On the testimony of Bede we learn that, about the middle of the seventh century, many of the Anglo-Saxon nobles and clergy repaired to Ireland, either for instruction or for an opportunity of living in monasteries of a stricter discipline.

We have already noticed the labours of the Irish clergy as missionaries.* The Culdees of Iona owed their origin as a christian community to the preaching of the Irish apostle Columba. Britain, France, Germany, the low countries, and different parts of the continent of Europe, were mainly indebted to Irish missionaries for their first acquaintance with divine truth. Charlemagne, himself a man of letters, invited to his court various eminent scholars from different countries, but especially from Ireland. For many ages she maintained her independence of Rome, rejected all foreign control, and acknowledged Christ only as Head of the church. But the invasion of the Danes about the beginning of the ninth century, and their occupation of the country, quenched the light, and changed the character of "the isle of saints." These piratical and predatory hordes wasted her fields, slew her sons, or dispossessed them of their inheritance, demolished her colleges, and maintained themselves in the country with the cruelty and arrogance of usurpers. Moral, spiritual, and literary darkness followed, and prepared the way for Romanism. Up till this time religious institutions, and the labours of the ecclesiastics, form the chief subjects of her history; but since then, intestine wars, turbulence, crime, and desolation.

{*See p. 317.}

Various attempts had been made by Roman pontiffs to subject the Irish church to the See of Rome, but without success until the reign of Pope Adrian IV. He was an Englishman, known by the name of Nicolas Breakspear; born in poverty and obscurity, he became a monk of St. Alban's, and was afterwards elevated in the revolution of human affairs, to the pontifical dignity. Though suddenly raised from indigence to opulence, his pride and arrogance were extreme. He took great offence at the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa for omitting to hold his stirrup, and refused to give him the kiss of peace. Frederic declared that the omission was the result of ignorance, and, submitting to the service as equerry to his Holiness, was forgiven, and received the kiss.

Amongst the earliest acts of this modest pontiff, was the assumption of authority over Ireland, and making a grant of it to Henry II., king of England. The ground on which the pope rested his right to make this grant was thus expressed: "For it is undeniable, and your majesty acknowledges it, that all islands on which Christ the sun of righteousness hath shined, and which have received the Christian faith, belong of right to St. Peter and the most holy Roman church." In virtue of this right, he authorizes Henry to invade Ireland with a view to the extension of the church, the increase of religion and virtue, and eradicating the tares of vice from the garden of the Lord; on condition that a penny shall be yearly paid from each house to the See of Rome.

From this period, 1155, the Irish church came to be essentially Romish in its doctrines, constitution, and discipline. Long before the Reformation, "Nearly six hundred monastic establishments, belonging to eighteen different orders, were scattered over the entire face of the country. Ghostly friars, black, white and grey, swarmed in countless multitudes, practising upon an ignorant and deluded people." In 1172, Henry completed his conquest of the country; an assembly of the Irish clergy convened at Waterford submitted to the papal dictation, proclaimed Henry's title to the sovereign dominion of Ireland, and took the oath of fidelity to himself and his successors. Rapid declension now marked the church in Ireland. Her far-famed spirituality and intelligence were gone. At one time she had about three hundred bishops; at the dawn of the Reformation, we believe the number was under thirty. Jealousies, contentions, and rebellions, have blotted almost every page of her history, both civil and ecclesiastical, from the ninth to the present century.*

{*See Froude's History of Ireland; Gardner's Faiths of the World, vol. 2, p. 150; Edgar's Variations of Popery, p. 153 & 192.}

Christianity in Scotland

We have already seen, that the Roman clergy experienced great difficulty in obtaining a permanent footing in Scotland.* The Culdees - whom we are disposed to honour for their works' sake - continued for centuries to resist the encroachments of popery and to maintain their ground, notwithstanding all the efforts put forth by the church of Rome to crush and exterminate them. For they held fast by the word of God, like the reformers of a later day, as the only infallible guide and authority in all matters of faith and practice. Even Bede, the monk historian, in candour admits that "Columba and his disciples would receive those things only which are contained in the writings of the prophets, evangelists, and apostles; diligently observing the works of piety and virtue." But Rome at length triumphed: the faithful Culdees, long oppressed, diminished in numbers, weakened in energy, through the sorceries of Jezebel, disappear from the page of history, and Scotland is again enshrouded in darkness and superstition. Monasteries rose rapidly, and soon overshadowed all the land; and as they reached a height of wealth and power, unsurpassed in any other portion of Europe, we must give them a brief examination.

{*See "Short papers', p. 310 and 311.}

The great mania for enriching churches began with Charlemagne: Alfred the Great imitated his example, and soon all Christendom was infected by this superstition. In the person of Margaret, the Saxon princess, it travelled northward. The invasion and conquest of England by the Normans, and the establishment of a new dynasty in that country, produced the most important effects on the history of the church in Scotland. Many of the Saxons fled into Scotland to escape from their new masters; and among others Margaret, who became the wife of the Scottish king, Malcolm III, and the mother of Alexander I, a powerful and vigorous prince, and of David I, who was a bigoted supporter of Romanism. Margaret's piety, charity, and ascetic life are celebrated with enthusiasm by her confessor and biographer, Turgot, a monk of Durham, and bishop of St. Andrew's. Malcolm, animated by the devout spirit of his beloved wife, made some donations to the church; but the royal munificence of his son David in the endowment of bishoprics and abbeys has been rewarded by the praise of all monastic writers, although James I. speaks of him as "a sore saint to the crown." Yet his extravagant superstition tended not only to impoverish the crown, but to the oppressive taxation of the people. "He founded the bishoprics of Glasgow, Brechin, Dunkeld, Dunblane, Ross, and Caithness . . . . The same pious liberality called into existence a multitude of abbacies, priories, and nunneries; and monks of every order and in every garb swarmed in the land."*

{*For carefully collected details, see Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 106.}

The superior civilization of the Anglo-Saxon refugees, and their attachment to the English hierarchy, tended greatly to its establishment in Scotland. The Celtic element was depressed, while the Court took an English tone and character. From this period, we are informed, a stream of Saxon and Norman settlers poured into Scotland. They soon acquired the most fertile districts from the Tweed to the Pentland Firth; and almost every noble family in Scotland now traces from them its descent. These new proprietors following the example of the monarch, lavished their riches on the church. The passion to found and endow monasteries became so great, that long before the Reformation, there were upwards of a hundred monasteries spread over the country, and more than twenty convents for the reception of nuns.

A brief sketch of two or three of these religious houses may not be uninteresting to the reader; which will also show the state of things introduced by the Romish hierarchy into that once simple and primitive country. The statistics are taken from Mr. Cunningham's history.

The Wealth of the Abbeys in Scotland

Jedburgh, one of the noblest abbeys in Scotland, was held by the red friars. Among the donations made to it by a succession of pious benefactors, we find - the tithe of the king's hunting in Teviotdale, a house in Roxburgh, a house in Berwick, pasture for the monks' cattle along with those of the king, timber from the royal forests according to their wants, the multure of the mill - a measure of corn - from all the men of Jedburgh, a saltpan near Stirling, exemption from any exaction on their tuns of wine, a fishing in the Tweed, acres, ploughgates and exgangs of land, with a villein to till, and several parish churches, with their tithes and other revenues. They followed the rule of St. Augustine, which bound them to devote the first part of the day to labour, and the remainder to reading and devotion.

Paisley - The Abbey of Paisley was anciently one of the richest religious houses in Scotland. It was founded by Walter Fitz-Allan, the high steward, about the year 1160, for Cluniac monks, who followed the order of St. Benedict. They were first located at Renfrew, but afterwards removed to Paisley, and were soon richly endowed by the pious liberality of successive high stewards, and by some of the great lords of Lennox and the Isles. In the thirteenth century, they were in possession of thirty parish churches, with all their revenues; and about two-thirds of the whole soil of the extensive parish of Paisley had passed into their hands, with acres and ploughgates in almost every district in the west of Scotland. The stewards had moreover given them the tithe of their hunting, and the skins of all the deer taken in the adjoining forests, pasture for their cattle, a mill at Paisley, a salmon-net in the Clyde at Renfrew, a fishing at Lochwinnoch, the liberty of quarrying both building stones and lime stones for burning at Blackhall and elsewhere, of digging coal for the use of their monasteries, its granges, smithies, and brew-houses, of making charcoal of dead wood, and of cutting turf for covering in the charcoal, of green wood for their monasteries and grange buildings, and for all operations of agriculture and fishing.

Such were the monks, and such their revenues in those days. They might well rejoice in the abundance of all the good things of this life; but the parish priest, strange to say, was left in a state of poverty and dependence. The revenues of the parish were appropriated by the bishops and religious houses, so that a very scanty income was reserved for the parochial clergy. All went to fatten the idle friars; who, whatever their primitive virtues may have been, were now the scandal of the church. At the time of the Reformation, of the thousand parishes in Scotland, about seven hundred had been appropriated to bishops and religious houses. The more thorough and regular division of the country into parishes and dioceses took place about the beginning of the twelfth century.

Some of our youthful readers may be disposed to inquire, why it was that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries more especially, the kings and nobles of the earth strove with each other to enrich the church. Many causes combined to produce this state of things. The feudal charters in those days were signed with the king's +, as he could not write his own name, and all his subjects were rude, ignorant, and superstitious. The monks and friars had a high reputation, as we have frequently noticed in our history, for superior holiness, for the fervour of their devotions, and the austerity of their lives. These things attracted the attention and won the veneration of a credulous and superstitious age. Besides, the donor was assured that his donations would secure the repose of his soul after death, which then meant eternal life. It was by means of this great religious imposture that the clergy attained to such a degree of opulence and power; that the rich became their worshippers, and built them those beautiful houses, the very ruins of which still attract the traveller, and excite his admiration."*

{*Cunningham, vol. 1, chap. 5.}

The Effects of Wealth on the Clergy

Before the Reformation, according to the most trustworthy accounts, more than the half of the wealth of Scotland belonged to the clergy, and the greater part of this was in the hands of a few individuals. The effect of such a state of things, as it has always been in every age and country, was the corruption of the whole order of the clergy, and of the whole system of religion. "Avarice, ambition, and the love of secular pomp, reigned among the superior orders. Bishops and abbots rivalled the first nobility in magnificence, and preceded them in honours; they were privy councillors, and lords of session as well as of parliament, and had long engrossed the principal offices of state. A vacant bishopric or abbacy called forth powerful competitors, who contended for it as for a principality or petty kingdom. Inferior benefices were openly put to sale, or bestowed on the illiterate and unworthy minions of courtiers; on dice-players, strolling bards, and the natural sons of bishops. The bishops never, on any occasion, condescended to preach; from the erection of the regular Scottish Episcopacy down to the era of the Reformation history mentions only one instance of a bishop preaching, and that was Dunbar, Archbishop of Glasgow, for the purpose of excluding the Reformer, George Wishart."

The lives of the clergy, corrupted by wealth and ignorance, became such a scandal to religion, and such an outrage on decency, that we cannot transfer the description of the most conscientious historian to our pages. But all historians are agreed, both Catholic and Protestant, that monasteries and all religious houses became the nurseries of superstition and idleness, and ultimately the haunts of lewdness and wickedness. Yet it was deemed impious and sacrilegious to speak of reducing their numbers or alienating their funds. "The kingdom swarmed with ignorant, idle, luxurious monks, who, like locusts, devoured the fruits of the earth, and filled the air with pestilential infection; with friars, white, black, and grey; canons regular, Carmelites, Carthusians, Cordeliers, Dominicans, Franciscan conventuals, and observantines, Jacobins, Premonstratensians, monks of Tyrone, and of Vallis Caulium, and Hospitallers, or Holy Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, nuns of St. Austin, St. Clair, St. Scholastica, and St. Catherine of Sienna, with canonesses of various clans."*

{*See a graphic description of the state of religion in Scotland before the Reformation, in Dr. McCrie's Life of John Knox, pp. 7 - 13.}

Without an adequate knowledge of the state of Christendom before the Reformation, it would be impossible to form a just estimate of the necessity and importance of that most merciful revolution. At this distance of time and with such a changed state of society before us, it is difficult to believe that such-enormous abuses then prevailed in the church. Of the doctrines of Christianity almost nothing remained but the name. At the same time we as firmly believe, that the Lord had His hidden ones - His true witnesses, who mourned over the evil ways and intolerance of the high and dominant party. The Lord Himself in His address to Thyatira, speaks of a remnant then in separation from the corruptions of Jezebel, and that their good works increased as the darkness thickened. "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." The lives, faith, and works of this remnant were no doubt regulated by the word of God; but this very circumstance ensured their obscurity, and their absence from the page of history. The silver line of God's sovereign grace could never be interrupted, and tens of thousands from the darkest ages shall reflect the glory of that grace for ever. In quietness they fulfilled their peaceful mission, and as peacefully passed off the scene, but left no record of their labours of love on the pages of the annalist. Not so with the proud, the ambitious, the fanatic, the hypocrite: all such stand prominent on the pages of ecclesiastical history. But there is another tribunal besides that of posterity before which both must stand, and be measured by God's own standard.

But we return to our theme - the state of religion in Scotland before the Reformation.

Popery as a System

The word of God, which is able to make men wise unto salvation, was locked up from the people. Even the bishops were not ashamed to confess that they had never read any part of sacred scripture, except what they had met with in their missals. The religious service was mumbled over in a dead language, which many of the priests did not understand, and some of them could scarcely read; and the greatest care was taken to prevent even catechisms, composed and approved by the clergy, from coming into the hands of the laity. The sacrifice of the mass was represented as procuring forgiveness of sins to the living and the dead; and the consciences of men were withdrawn from the precious sacrifice the finished work - of the Lord Jesus Christ, to a delusive reliance upon priestly absolutions, papal pardons, and voluntary penances.

"They were taught," says the eminent historian of John Knox, "that if they regularly said their aves and credos, confessed themselves to a priest, punctually paid their tithes and church-offerings, purchased a mass, went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of some celebrated saint, refrained from flesh on Fridays, or performed some other prescribed act of bodily mortification, their salvation was infallibly secured in due time; while those who were so rich and so pious as to build a chapel or an altar' and to endow it for the support of a priest, to perform masses, obits, and dirges, procured a relaxation of the pains of purgatory for themselves or their relatives in proportion to the extent of their liberality. It is difficult for us to conceive how empty, ridiculous, and wretched those harangues were which the monks delivered as sermons. Legendary tales concerning the founder of some religious order, his wonderful sanctity, the miracles which he performed, his combats with the devil, his watchings, fastings, flagellations; the virtues of holy water, chrism, crossing, and exorcism; the horrors of purgatory, and the numbers released from it by the intercession of some powerful saint; these, with low jests, table-talk, and fireside scandal, formed the favourite topics of the preachers, and were served up to the people instead of the pure, salutary, and sublime doctrines of the Bible.

"The beds of the dying were besieged, and their last moments disturbed, by avaricious priests, who laboured to extort bequests to themselves or to the church. Not satisfied with exacting tithes from the living, a demand was made upon the dead: no sooner had the poor husbandman breathed his last, than the rapacious vicar came and carried off his corpse-present - or a present from the corpse to the vicar which he did as often as death visited the family.* Ecclesiastical censures were fulminated against those who were reluctant in making these payments, or who showed themselves disobedient to the clergy. Divine service was neglected; and, except on festival days, the churches, in many parts of the country, were no longer employed for sacred purposes, but served as sanctuaries for malefactors, places of traffic, or resorts for pastime.

{*The corpse-present was the vicar's perquisite in the case of death. In country parishes it consisted of the best cow which belonged to the deceased, and the uppermost covering of his bed, or the finest of his body-clothes. And this demand, which was exacted with great rigour in Scotland and in other places, was distinct from the ordinary dues exacted for the interment of the body, and the deliverance of the soul from purgatory.

"And als the vicar, as I trow,

He will nocht fail to tak ane kow,

And upmaist claith, thocht babis hae nane,

From ane pure deid husbandman."}

"Persecution, and the suppression of free inquiry, were the only weapons by which its interested supporters were able to defend this system of corruption and imposture. Every avenue by which truth might enter was carefully guarded. Learning was branded as the parent of heresy. If any person, who had attained a degree of illumination amidst the general darkness, began to hint dissatisfaction with the conduct of churchmen and to propose the corrections of abuses, he was immediately stigmatised as a heretic, and, if he did not secure his safety by flight, was immured in a dungeon, or committed to the flames. And when at last, in spite of all their precautions, the light which was shining around did break in and spread through the nation, the clergy prepared to adopt the most desperate and bloody measures for its extinction."

It will now be unnecessary to trace the origin and progress of popery in other lands. The above sketch of the condition of things in Scotland, from the thirteenth till the sixteenth century, may be sufficient to illustrate the state of all Europe, and for the purpose of history. As a system it is the same in all ages and in all countries. Its grand dogma has ever been - the Unity of the Roman Catholic Church. Whether it be in the immediate vicinity of Rome or in the far distant regions of the north, its spirit is the same, and must be so until it comes to its end by the direct judgment of the Lord Himself from heaven. "How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her, for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. " (Rev 18:7-8)

The Spread of Christianity

From the time of Innocent III. Roman Catholic writers boast of the missionary zeal of the mendicant orders. They are spoken of as most assiduous in visiting prisons, hospitals, and places of imminent peril, in caring for the spiritual wants of the poor, and that they were also the most active servants of the church in the propagation of Christianity among remote and savage nations. So far this appears to have been the case in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; but as all history goes to prove, that these mendicants were the most zealous agents of the Holy See in all its ambitious schemes and worst practices throughout Christendom, it is difficult to give them credit for pure christian zeal. From the methods they pursued and the results of their missions, it is more than obvious that they had chiefly in view their own advancement or the extension of the papal sovereignty. Still, there may have been pious men amongst them, who were animated by higher motives, and laboured with disinterested devotion; and as the vices of the mendicants in general are notorious, we should be glad to record all the good of them we can.

From the time of the religious wars of Charlemagne to the exterminating wars in Languedoc, the Roman missionaries usually preached the gospel of peace at the head of an army headed by bishops, and laid the pathway for its reception open by the sword; but in the thirteenth century, pious missionary bands of Dominicans and Franciscans were sent by the Roman pontiffs to the Chinese, the Tartars, and the adjacent countries. Large numbers among these nations professed the christian faith. John of Monte Corvino, a Franciscan, was distinguished by the success of his labours; and in 1307 Clement V. erected an archiepiscopal see at Cambalu, that is, Pekin, the modern capital of China. The same pontiff sent seven other bishops, also Franciscans, into those regions; and this distant branch of the hierarchy was carefully nourished by succeeding pontiffs. "So long as the Tartar empire in China continued, not only the Latins, but the Nestorians also had liberty to profess their religion freely all over northern Asia, and to propagate it far and wide. But that most potent emperor of the Tartars, TimurBec, having embraced Mahometanism, persecuted with violence and the sword all who adhered to the Christian religion. The nation of the Tartars, in which such numbers once professed Christianity, universally submitted to the Koran. Thus the christian religion was overthrown in those parts of Asia inhabited by the Chinese, the Tartars, the Moguls, and other nations, whose history is yet imperfectly known. At least no mention-has been found of any Latin Christians resident in those countries, subsequent to the year 1370. But of the Nestorians living in China, some traces can be found, though not very clear, as late as the sixteenth century."

Among the European princes, Jagello, duke of Lithuania, Poland, was nearly the only one that still adhered to the idolatry of his ancestors. And he, in the year 1386, embraced the christian rites, was baptized, and persuaded his subjects to do the same thing. What remains there were of the old religions in Prussia and Livonia, were extirpated by the Teutonic knights and crusaders with war and massacres. In Spain the Saracens still held the sovereignty of Granada, Andalucia, and Murcia; and against them the christian kings of Castile, Arragon, and Navarre, waged perpetual war; and, though with difficulty, triumphed, and became sole masters of Spain in the fifteenth century under the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella.*

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 358; Mosheim, vol. 2, p. 592.}

Reflections on the History of Popery

We have traced, however briefly, the origin, progress, and loftiest height of the papal system. This was reached by the great abilities of Innocent III. But how varied and full of all contrarieties and contradictions is that marvellous and mysterious history! We pause for a moment to reflect on the hypocrisies and tyrannies, the assumed piety and positive cruelty, of that woman Jezebel. It was she who sent the choicest of her children in early times to dwell in the lonely mountain cave or the secret cloister, under the pretence of there peacefully contemplating the glory of God and being transformed to His image. But again we hear her with altered voice rallying the myriad hosts of Europe to go forth and rescue the Holy Land from the foul grasp of the uncircumcised Philistines, and defend the banner of the cross on the holy sepulchre. Now she becomes callous to the common feelings of nature, insensible to the miseries of mankind, and stained with the blood of millions. For two hundred years she employed all her power in promoting the destruction of human life by the ruinous expeditions to the Holy Land. And as each successive Crusade proved more hopeless and disastrous than the former, she redoubled her exertions to renew and perpetuate those scenes of unequalled folly, suffering, and bloodshed.

But turn again and behold the double aspect of her character at the same moment. When the Crusaders came in sight of Jerusalem they alighted from their horses, and uncovered their feet, that they might approach the sacred walls as true pilgrims. Loud shouts were raised, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! as if holy fear were moving their hearts. But when the governor offered to admit them as peaceful pilgrims, they refused. No, they were determined to open their way with their swords, and to wrest by military ardour the holy city from the hands of the unbelievers. Hardly had they scaled the walls when they rushed forth to the indiscriminate massacre of Mahometans and Jews, and filled the holy places with blood. And then, for a little while, the work of carnage and plunder was suspended, that the pious pilgrims might perform their devotions; but the places on which they came to kneel in adoration were covered with slaughtered heaps. This is a true picture of the spirit and character of Jezebel as manifested in all ages and countries. When Dominic himself grew ashamed of the bloodstained missionaries of Innocent in Languedoc, having seen thousands of the peaceful peasantry murdered in cold blood, he retired to a church and prayed for the success of the good cause, and the victories of Montfort and his ruffians were attributed to the prayers of the saintly-minded Spaniard. This was a crusade, not against Turks and Infidels, but against the saints of the Lord because they dared to speak of certain abuses in holy mother church. And, the more effectually to chastise her children she invented the Inquisition, that engine of domestic persecution, torture, and death.

And, strange as it may seem now-a-days, and cruel beyond all compare, wholesale destruction of human life and property was the very life-blood of popery. She grew rich by appropriating the contributions that were raised for the purposes of the Crusades; and she grew strong through weakening the monarchs of Europe by exhausting their treasures and depopulating their countries. Thus was the papal zeal inflamed to a burning passion for the Crusaders and thus it passed from Urban II. and the Council of Clermont down to his successors. Every thought of the papal mind, every feeling of the papal heart, every mandate that issued from the Vatican, had but one object in view - the enriching and strengthening of the Roman See. No matter how subversive of all peace, how baneful to all society she pursued her own interests with a callous uncompromising obduracy. Excommunications were used for the same purposes of papal aggrandisement. "The heretic forfeited not only all dignities, rights, privileges, immunities, even all property, all protection of law; he was to be pursued, taken despoiled, put to death, either by the ordinary course of justice - the temporal authority was bound to execute, even to blood, the sentence of the ecclesiastical court - or if he dared to resist by any means whatever, however peaceful, he was an insurgent, against whom the whole of Christendom might, or rather was bound, at the summons of the spiritual power, to declare war; his estates even his dominions if a sovereign, were not merely liable to forfeiture, but the church assumed the power of awarding the forfeiture, as it might seem best to her wisdom.

"The army which should execute the mandate of the pope was the army of the church, and the banner of that army was the cross of Christ. So began crusades, not on the contested borders of Christendom, not in Mahometan or heathen lands in Palestine, on the shores of the Nile, among the Livonian forests or the sands of the Baltic, but in the very bosom of Christendom; not among the implacable partisans of an antagonistic creed, but on the soil of catholic France, among those who still called themselves by the name of Christian."*

{*Milman, vol. 4, p. 168; Waddington, vol. 2, p. 270.}

Such was, and is, and ever must be, the spirit and character of the church of Rome. How dark the picture! How sad the reflection, that she who calls herself the true church of God, the holy mother of His children, and the representative of Christ on earth, should have been transformed, by Satanic agencies, into a monster of the most sickening hypocrisies, and "abominable idolatries!" She became the foster-mother of the most open, unbounded, saint, relic, picture, and image worship - of the theory of transubstantiation, and the practice of the confessional. Outwardly her unscrupulous ambition for secular glory, her intolerance in persecuting to extermination all who ventured to dispute her authority, her insatiable thirst for human blood, have no parallel in the most barbarous ages of heathenism.

And is this the church, thou mayest well exclaim in thy reflections - is this the church that so many are joining in the present day? Yes, alas, alas; and so many of the upper and intelligent classes! Such conversions, surely, can only be the fruit of the blinding power of Satan, the god of this world. (2Co 4:3-4) Many young ladies from the best families in England have submitted, in blind devotion, to be shorn of their natural covering, and imprisoned in a nunnery for life; and many of the aristocracy, both lay and clerical, have joined the communion of the Romish church. But she is not changed: the change is with those whose light has become darkness, according to the word of the prophet: "Give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." (Jer 13:16) As she was in the days of Gregory VII., Innocent III., Cardinal Pole, and bloody Mary, so is she today as to her spirit, had she only the power. But what must be the guilt of the English converts, with the New Testament before them and seeing the contrast between the blessed Lord and His apostles, and the pope and his clergy; between the grace and mercy of the gospel, and the intolerance and cruelty of popery! Rather let my reader remember the exhortation, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues . . . . for by her sorceries were all nations deceived; And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Rev. 18)

28 Decline of Papal Power

Chapter 28

The Decline of Papal Power

From the time of Innocent III. down to the age of the Reformation, the Lord was preparing the way for that great event by weakening the power of the popes over human governments, and over the minds of men generally. The decline was slow, at least for about a hundred years, for the whole power of Satan was put forth to support the "mystery of iniquity;" but it pleased God to weaken her power by raising up men of ability and integrity to expose her many evils. These witnesses we propose to examine in our next chapter. In the meantime we may add that the whole mind of Europe had become so familiarised with the assertion of the papal claims, that they were accepted as an essential part of Christianity. The ruling idea of this great theocratic scheme was the absolute supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal power, "as of the soul over the body, as of eternity over time as of Christ over Caesar, as of God over man - that all earthly power is subordinate to the spiritual power in every respect either mediately or immediately touching on or affecting religion or its chief." This principle, first asserted in all its fulness by Hildebrand, acquired its "firmest establishment and greatest expansion" in the able hands of Innocent. He stood on the summit of pontifical power and glory. What had been the day-dream of many of his predecessors was fully realized during his pontificate; but from this pinnacle the crowned priest begins to descend.

Details of the long and ruinous wars between the papacy and the empire which immediately followed, especially between Gregory IX., Innocent IV., and Frederick II., would be unsuited to our pages and unnecessary for the purpose of our history. We will therefore content ourselves with a rapid sketch of the leading pontiffs during this period of papal decline.

In the year 1216, Honorius III succeeded Innocent. The whole attention of the new pontiff was devoted to the promotion of the holy war. The Crusades had become so established an article in the papal creed, and so necessary to the maintenance of the papal power, that no cardinal who was not in heart and soul a Crusader would have been raised to the chair of St. Peter. This was the highest qualification of the chief priest of the christian religion. Hence the first act of Honorius after his installation was to send a circular letter to all Christendom, urging Christians in the most exciting terms to contribute either in money or in person to the new campaign. Frederick II., the Emperor-elect, in his youthful ardour had made a solemn vow to Innocent to engage without loss of time in a new crusade; not against the now crushed Albigenses, whose ashes were still smouldering, but for the destruction of the Mahometans, and the liberation of the holy sepulchre from infidel desecration. And no one in those times who had taken the vow was allowed to excuse himself. If unable to undertake the expedition in person, he must find substitutes or money. Letters were instantly dispatched to Frederick, reminding him of his late crusading vow, and pressing his immediate departure for the Holy Land. But Frederick was yet a youth, his rival Otho was still alive, his realm in the most unsettled state, so that he could not possibly leave for some time. Neither menace nor persuasion could move Frederick, though in him the papal hopes were chiefly centered.

The Conquest and Loss of Damietta

The call was now fiercely sounded and the hymn of battle sung by the emissaries of the pope throughout France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Hungary, and the whole of the West: the kings, princes, and nobles, were besieged and harassed to collect without delay, ships, men, money, arms, and all needed supplies. But the pope found to his mortification that the enthusiasm of former ages had passed away - that Honorius had no longer the magic power of Urban. Neither papal legates nor preaching friars could kindle in the hearts of the people a zeal for the holy war. Only one king obeyed the summons, Andrew of Hungary. Princes and prelates, dukes, archbishops and bishops, joined the Hungarian king. A large force was collected. The first object of attack was Damietta, which, after a siege of sixteen months, fell into the hands of the crusaders. But the destruction of human life for this papal folly was fearful. "The inhabitants had been so much reduced by famine, pestilence, and the sword, that out of eighty thousand only three thousand are said to have remained alive; the air was tainted by the smell of corpses; yet even in the midst of these horrors the captors could not restrain their cruelty and rapacity."*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, p. 383.}

The report of this splendid victory was received by the pope with exultation. His hopes of ultimate success were stimulated to the highest pitch. But these hopes were soon to be disappointed. It was besieged the following year by an overwhelming force of infidels under the active and able leadership of Malek al Kamul, Sultan of Egypt and Syria. Damietta was surrendered.

The deep mortification of the pope vented itself on the Emperor. The failure of the expedition, the calamities of the Christians, were ascribed to his wilful procrastination. It is supposed that thirty-five thousand Christians, and about seventy thousand Mussulmans, had perished at Damietta. But defeat and disaster only stimulated the zeal of the pontiff for fresh crusades. During a reign of eleven years, Honorius had been chiefly engaged in promoting crusades against the Albigenses in the south of France and against the Saracens in Palestine. In 1227 he died, still pressing the departure of Frederick, and, we are not sorry to add, still pressing it in vain.

Gregory IX. and Frederick II.

Gregory IX., a near relation of Innocent III., and a staunch disciple of his school, was immediately raised to the pontifical throne with loud and unanimous acclamations. His coronation was of the most gorgeous character. "He returned from St. Peter's, wearing two crowns, mounted on a horse richly caparisoned, and surrounded by cardinals, clothed in purple, and a numerous clergy. The streets were spread with tapestry, inlaid with gold and silver, the noblest productions of Egypt, and the most brilliant colours of India, and perfumed with various aromatic odours."* He had reached his eighty-first year when he ascended the throne of St. Peter. But at that extreme age his mental faculties were unimpaired. He is spoken of as having the ambition, the vigour, almost the activity, of youth; in purpose and action, inflexible, in temper, warm and vehement.

{*Waddington, vol. 2, p. 281.}

Frederick, it will be remembered, was a ward of Innocent III. The adventures, perils, and successes of the youthful king, as he struggled upward to his hereditary throne in Sicily, and to the imperial crown of Germany, are almost unparalleled in history. During the pontificate of Honorius his character was expanding into the prime of manhood; he was thirty-three when that pontiff died. At this time he was in undisputed possession of the empire, with all its rights in northern Italy, king of Apulia, Sicily, and Jerusalem. Historians vie with each other in their descriptions of his character, and the enumeration of his virtues and vices. Milman, in his usual poetical style, describes him as at once the magnificent sovereign, the gallant knight, the poet, the lawgiver, the patron of arts, letters, and science, whose farseeing wisdom seemed to anticipate some of those views of equal justice, of the advantages of commerce, of the cultivation of the arts of peace, and the toleration of adverse religions, which even in a more dutiful son of the church would doubtless have seemed godless indifference. Others describe him as at once selfish and generous, placable and cruel, courageous and faithless; and not forbidding himself the most licentious indulgences. His personal accomplishments were remarkable; he could speak fluently the languages of all the nations which were reckoned among his subjects Greek, Latin, Italian, German, French, and Arabic.

Both the papacy and the empire were now represented by able and resolute champions of their respective claims. Frederick would bear no superior, Gregory no equal. The Emperor was determined to maintain his monarchical rights; the pope was equally determined to maintain the papal dignity as above the imperial. The mortal strife began; it was the last contest between the empire and the papacy; but the Crusaders were indispensable to papal victory.

The aged canonist addressed himself to his work. His first and immediate act after his coronation was to urge the renewal of the Crusades at the various courts of Europe. But his appeals were addressed to deaf ears. Lombardy, France, England, and Germany, persisted in their hostility to the Crusades and to their promoters. The fall of Damietta was fresh in their minds. Nothing, therefore, remained to the obdurate old man but to push on Frederick. Although, for political reasons, he was unwilling to leave his dominions, yet, to please the pope, he collected a considerable armament of men and ships, and embarked from Brindisi. But a pestilence broke out, which carried off many of his soldiers; and among them the Landgrave of Thuringia and two bishops. The Emperor himself, after being three days at sea, was overtaken by the malady, and returned to land for the benefit of the baths. This caused the dispersion of the army, and the temporary abandonment of the expedition.

Frederick Disregards the Papal Excommunication

The pope was infuriated; he treated the story of his illness as an empty pretence, and, without waiting or asking for explanation, he launched the sentence of excommunication against the perjured outcast, Frederick of Swabia. This took place within six months from his elevation to the See, and from that day Frederick found but little rest in this world till he found it in his grave. In vain did he send bishops to plead his cause, and witnesses to the reality of his sickness: the pope's only answer was, "You fraudulently pretended sickness, and returned to your palaces to enjoy the delights of leisure and luxury;" and he renewed the excommunication again and again, requiring all bishops to publish it.

But in place of Frederick being humbled, and brought before Gregory IX., as Henry IV. was brought before Gregory VII. at Canosa, he boldly denounces the whole system of popery. "Your predecessors," he wrote to Gregory, "have never ceased to encroach upon the rights of kings and princes; they have disposed of their lands and territories, and distributed them among the minions and favourites of their court; they have dared to absolve subjects from their oaths of allegiance; they have even introduced confusion into the administration of justice, by binding and loosing, and persisting, without regard to the laws of the land. Religion was the pretext for all those trespasses upon the civil government; but the real motive was a desire to subjugate governors and subjects alike to an intolerable tyranny - to extort money, and so long as that was to be got, to care little if the whole structure of society were shaken to its foundations." And many other things of a like nature did Frederick dare to say, which shows the weakened state of the papal power. At the same time he was a good Catholic king in many respects, enacting severe laws against the heretics; but he wanted the pope to keep his own place and rule the church, and leave him to rule the empire. He was willing that the pope should be the clerical, but he must be the lay, chief.*

{*See a long letter to Henry III. of England, by the Emperor, in which he justly and severely reproaches the Roman church. Waddington's History, vol. 2, p. 281.}

Frederick's great crime, in the mind of the fanatical pontiff, was his reluctance to go to the Holy Land. He had preferred the interests of his empire to the orders of the Holy See. This prudential calculation was his unpardonable sin. He did not see the sense of sacrificing men, money, and ships, without a reasonable prospect of success. He was resolved, however, to fulfil his vow and prove his sincerity as a soldier of the cross.

In the end of June, 1228, he again sailed from Brindisi. Much of the deadly animosity against the Mahometans which had animated the older Crusaders had passed away. Frederick was on friendly terms with the sultan; so that, instead of seeking by fire and sword the extermination of the followers of Mahomet, the Emperor proposed a peaceful treaty. This was agreed to by the generous Kamul, and a treaty was concluded on the 18th of February, 1229, by which Jerusalem was to be made over to the Christians, with the exception of the temple, which, although open to them, was to remain under the care of the Moslem. Nazareth, Bethlehem, Sidon, and other places, were to be given up. By this treaty the Crusaders had gained more than they had for many years ventured to expect as possible.*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, p. 393.}

But this bloodless victory, gained by an excommunicated monarch, exasperated the hoary pontiff to frenzy. He denounced, in terms of furious resentment, the unheard-of presumption of one under the ban of the church daring to set his unhallowed foot on the sacred soil of the Saviour's passion and resurrection; and bewailed the pollution which the city and the holy places had contracted from the Emperor's presence. But God overruled this remarkable event, in His providence, to lay bare to all mankind the hollowness of Gregory's professed enthusiasm for the liberation of the Holy Land. His own papal and personal dignity were a thousand times dearer to him than the birth-place of Christ. He resorted to every device which his own inventive malice, and that of his advisers, could suggest to accomplish the failure of the expedition and the ruin of Frederick. His minorite friars were dispatched to the patriarch and the military orders of Jerusalem, to throw every impediment in the way, with the expressed intent that Frederick might find either a grave or a dungeon in Palestine. A plot was laid by some Templars for surprising Frederick on an expedition to bathe in the Jordan; but, the plot being discovered, the Templars were disappointed. The revengeful old man, however, had not yet done plotting. He collected a considerable force, and, headed by John of Brienne, invaded the Apulian dominions of the Emperor. Tidings of these movements brought Frederick with all speed from the East. The papal armies fled at his approach, and the whole country was rapidly recovered by the influence of his presence.

But the papal sword was now drawn - the sword of implacable strife and discord. During the course of a long reign, Frederick, the greatest of the Swabian house, "was excommunicated for not taking the cross, excommunicated for not setting out to the Holy Land, excommunicated for setting out, excommunicated in the Holy Land, excommunicated for returning, after having made an advantageous peace with the Mahometans," was deposed from his throne, and his subjects absolved from their oath of allegiance. But without attempting further to describe the military adventures of the empire, or to trace the faithless politics of the papacy, we will only add, that the wretched old pontiff died in his ninety-ninth year, in the midst of hostilities, and from a fit of wrathful agitation. He was succeeded by Innocent IV., who followed in the footsteps of Innocent III. and Gregory IX. The cause of Frederick gained nothing by the change of pontiffs. He lived till the year 1250, when, in the fifty-sixth year of his age and the twenty-seventh of his reign, he died in the arms of his son, Manfred, having confessed, and received absolution from the faithful archbishop of Palermo.

With the death of Frederick we might suppose that papal hostilities would have at least paused for a little; but it was far otherwise. The hatred that followed him to his grave, and far beyond it, pursued his sons, until it was extinguished in the blood of the last scion of his house, on the scaffold, at Naples. The war was carried on between what was called the Guelphic and the Ghibelline armies, or the papal and the imperial factions. Pope Clement IV. invited the cruel Count Charles of Anjou, the brother of Louis IX., to hasten to the help of the Guelphic army, with the promise of the crown of Sicily. "He accepted," says Greenwood, "the papal commission with the eagerness of an adventurer, and in the reckless spirit of a crusader. He was one of the most accomplished of the tyrants that figure in the world's history: cruelty, rapacity, lust, and corruption, wrought their perfect work under his command." With a large army, which had been raised for the rescue of the Holy Land, he entered Italy. Some of the bravest of the chivalry and gentry of France were in this "army of the cross." But in place of going to assist their brethren in Palestine against the Mahometans, the pope absolved them from their vow, promised them the forgiveness of sins and eternal blessedness, to turn their arms against their brethren of the house and followers of the late Emperor. This was papal zeal and honesty for the deliverance of the holy sepulchre.

Charles of Anjou being crowned king of Sicily, the pilgrims received a licence to slay and plunder in the quarters pointed out by the pope; and under his direction they invaded the fairest portions of the Emperor's dominions. But he was in his grave, and the magic of his name was gone. His sons hastened to collect such adventurers as their finances enabled them to assemble, the contest for a time was doubtful, but the well-disciplined chivalry of France at length overcame the ill-trained bands of the young princes. Manfred fell in battle, Conrad was cut off suddenly by death, and the younger Conradin, with his youthful cousin, prince Frederick of Bavaria, were taken prisoners, and beheaded by Charles in the public square at Naples.

Christendom heard with a shudder the news of this unparalleled atrocity. For no other crime than fighting for his hereditary throne against the pope's pretender, Conradin, the last heir of the Swabian house, was executed as a felon and a rebel on a public scaffold. The pope was charged with participation in the murder of a son and heir of kings; he had put the sword into the tyrant's hands, and must stand before the tribunal of divine and human judgment, as stained with the blood of Conradin. In the end of the following month the detested pope followed his victim to the grave, beyond which it is not our province to go, but sure we are that the Judge of all the earth will do right, and that from the throne of divine righteousness he will hear the sentence of eternal justice, which admits of no succeeding change for ever. The fire is everlasting, the worm never dies, the chain can never be broken, the walls can never be scaled, the gates can never be opened, the past can never be forgotten, the upbraidings of conscience can never be silenced - everything combines to fill the soul with the agonies of despair, and that for ever and ever. Who would not desire, above all things, to be pardoned and saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died to save the chief of sinners? (Mar 9:44-50)

The Overruling Hand of God

In the providence of God this odious crime, which could never be forgotten by the monarchs and people of Europe, must have tended greatly to discredit and weaken the papal power, and to strengthen the hands of the civil ruler against the usurpations and encroachments of the church of Rome. The change becomes more apparent from this date. The tragic death of Conradin of Hohenstaufen, and of Frederick of Bavaria, took place in 1268, and the famous "Pragmatic Sanction" became the "Magna Charta" of the Gallican church in 1269. This document was issued by the most pious king, Louis IX. of France, who is commonly called St. Louis. The whole tone of this edict is antipapal. It limits the interference of the court of Rome in the elections of the clergy, and directly denies its right of ecclesiastical taxation, except with the sanction of the king and the church of France. Nothing could be more just and liberal, but nothing could more directly oppose the pretensions of the See of Rome. Under the fostering care of the civil lawyers, who were now establishing in the minds of men a rival authority to that of the hierarchy and canon law, the Pragmatic Sanction became a great charter of independence to the Gallican church.

This anti-papal edict, coming from the most religious of kings - a canonized saint - awoke no opposition on the part of the Roman See. Had such a law been promulgated by Frederick II., or any of his race, the effect would have been very different. But it is more than probable that neither Louis nor the pope foresaw what would be made of this pious decree - originally intended for the benefit and reformation of the clergy. But in the hands of Parliaments, lawyers, and ambitious monarchs, it became the barrier against which the encroachments and lofty pretensions of Rome were destined to be broken to pieces.

Before concluding our already rather long chapter, we must briefly glance at the pontificate of Boniface VIII., as it is the crowning evidence of the papal decline, and the hinge on which its future history turns.

Boniface VIII. and Philip the Fair

A.D. 1295 to 1303

In less than forty years from the promulgation of this famous edict, since known in history as the "Pragmatic Sanction," the proud and imperious pontiff, Boniface VIII., was openly defied by the king of France. He was the first to teach the nations of Europe that the Roman bishops could be vanquished, and be trampled under the feet of the sovereign, as they had trampled for ages the sovereigns of Europe under their feet. Philip the Fair - so called from his personal appearance, certainly not from his actions - was as high-minded as strong-handed, as arrogant, as jealous, as violent, as unrelenting as Boniface, and even surpassed him in craft and subtlety. The pride of Boniface was his ruin; it acknowledged no limits, and disdained to bend to circumstances, and no considerations of religion, policy, or humanity could repress his violence and cruelty. But the high looks and the haughty pride of the prelate were soon to be brought low. He was deeply involved in many quarrels with many nations, sovereigns, and noble families; but the crafty and powerful king of France proved more than his match. When Boniface sent an extravagant demand to Philip, he sent back a contemptuous reply. And when bull after bull, in burning wrath, issued from the Vatican against the king, he caused them to be publicly burned at Paris, and sent back a message to his holiness that it was the office of a pope to exhort, not to command, and that he would suffer no dictator in his affairs.

But matters could not stop here; Philip determined on humbling his adversary. In strengthening his position against the proceedings of Rome, he had recourse to the most constitutional means. While Boniface was offending the population of France by his intemperate attacks on the king the politic king was attracting the admiration of his people by standing up for the dignity of his crown and the welfare of the nation against the encroachments of the pope. He assembled the nobles and prelates of France, and with them summoned the representatives of the third estate, the burgesses of France - said to be the first convocation of the States General. This plan was soon followed by other kings which deeply affected the future history of the papacy. The king had the satisfaction of obtaining a strong protest against the papal demands, and the assertion of the independence of the crown.

Boniface, not perceiving this crisis in his own history and in that of the papacy, blindly pursued with an ill-timed arrogance his former course. Addressing Philip in a letter he says, "God has set me over the nations and the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy, to build, to plant in His name and by His doctrine. Let no one persuade you, my son, that you have no superior, or that you are not subject to the chief of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He who holds that opinion is senseless, and he who obstinately maintains it is an infidel, separate from the flock of the good shepherd. Wherefore we declare, define, and pronounce, that it is absolutely essential to the salvation of every human being that he be subject to the Roman pontiff." The king's answer was moderate, but firm and defiant. Perplexities increased. Not content with these assertions, the pope laid an interdict upon France, excommunicated the king, and offered his crown to another. But Philip, in no wise troubled with these censures, which were now powerless, published an ordinance which prohibited the exportation of all gold, silver, jewels, arms, horses, or other munitions of war from the realm. By this ordinance the pope himself was deprived of his revenues from France.

The Humiliation of the Pontiff

Burning with rage, Boniface repeated and redoubled his menaces. But Philip now determined on a shorter path to settle the contest. He dispatched a trustworthy officer, Nogaret, with Sciarra Colonna, a member of a noble Italian house which Boniface had ruined and desolated, and who was, of course, the sworn enemy of the pope. These, with other adventurers, and three hundred armed horsemen, had strict orders to arrest the pope wherever he might be found, and bring him a prisoner to Paris. The perplexed old man now in his eighty-sixth year - had retired to his palace at Anagni, his native place, to compose another bull, in which he maintained, "that as vicar of Christ, he had the power to govern kings with a rod of iron, and to dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel." But his blasphemous assumption of omnipotence was soon turned into a spectacle of human weakness and death.

A shout was heard; the pope, and the cardinals, who were all assembled around him, were startled with the trampling of armed horse, and the terrible cry, "Death to pope Boniface! Long live the king of France!" The soldiers were immediately masters of the pontifical palace. Nearly all the cardinals, and even the personal attendants of the pope fled. He was left alone, but he lost not his self-command. Like the English Thomas a Becket, he awaited the final blow with courage and resolution. He hurriedly threw the mantle of St. Peter over his shoulders, placed the crown of Constantine on his head, grasped the keys in one hand and the cross in the other, and seated himself on the papal throne. His age, intrepidity, and religious majesty, struck the conspirators with awe. When Nogaret and Colonna saw the venerable form and dignified composure of their enemy, they refrained from their sanguinary purpose, and satisfied themselves with heaping vulgar abuse on the wretched old pontiff. The wrongs inflicted on the families and friends of these officers by the cruel pope had extinguished every feeling towards him but revenge. But in the providence of God they were restrained from shedding the blood of a helpless old man in his eighty-sixth year.

While the leaders were thus employed, the body of the conspirators had dispersed themselves throughout the splendid apartments in eager pursuit of plunder. "The palaces of the pope," says Milman, "and of his nephew were plundered, so vast was the wealth, that the annual revenues of all the kings in the world would not have been equal to the treasures found and carried off by Sciarra's freebooting soldiers. His very private chamber was ransacked; nothing was left but bare walls."

At length the people of Anagni were aroused to insurrection. They assaulted the soldiers by whom they had been overawed. But as they were now in possession of the plunder, and the pope imprisoned, they were not unwilling to withdraw. The pope was restored to his freedom; infuriated by the disgrace of his captivity, he hurried to Rome burning with revenge. But the violence of his passion overpowered his reason; he refused nourishment; he cried for revenge; but he was now impotent as other men. He removed all his attendants, shut himself up in a room lest any one might see him die - but he died; and he died alone; and will stand before the judgment-seat of God alone; and have to answer alone for the deeds done in the body, and under a responsibility entirely his own. We cross not the line, but what, oh what! must the eternal portion be of one, of whom impartial history says, "of all the Roman pontiffs, Boniface has left the darkest name for craft, arrogance, ambition, even for avarice and cruelty."*

{*See Dean Milman, vol. 5, p. 143; Dean Waddington, vol. 2, p. 319; Greenwood, vol. 6, p. 277.}

Reflections on the Death of Boniface

Five hundred and seventy-two years have rolled heavily and drearily over the dark regions of hell since Boniface died by his own suicidal course. What time for reflection, reproach, remorse, despair! Why, oh why, will men, intelligent men, risk an eternity of misery for a few short years of earthly glory, or sensual gratification, or the love of self in any way? But alas, the most solemn warnings are disregarded; the most gracious invitations of mercy are rejected, in the eager chase after their own selfish object. And when they have reached it, what is it? How much do they enjoy it? How long do they possess it? Only nine years did Boniface reign as supreme pontiff, and in order to secure that shadowy gleam of glory, he accomplished privately the murder of his predecessor Celestine, whom he had supplanted. But as a man sows, so must he also reap. Celestine has the compassions and sympathies of posterity; but over the tomb of Boniface all posterity has written, "He mounted the chair like a fox, he reigned like a lion, he died like a dog." And so it was, without the consolations of the mercy of God and without the tender ministries of man, he died. When his bedroom door was burst open, he was found cold and stiff. His white locks were stained with blood, the top of his staff bore the marks of his teeth, and was covered with foam.

How happy they, we are ready to exclaim, who have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all whose faith and hope are firmly fixed on Christ alone. They are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; they belong to the royal family of heaven; they need not seek after earthly glory; they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. They have a throne that can never be shaken, a crown that can never be cast to the ground, a sceptre that can never be plucked from their hands, an inheritance that can never be alienated. Still they can afford to linger over the melancholy end of a fellow-sinner with profound pity, and seek to turn that scene of darkest and deepest sorrow into an occasion of spiritual profit for others. One look of faith to the Saviour would have been life to his soul, chief of sinners though he was, and the first look of faith is eternal life to the chief of sinners today. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Isa 45:22)

But we must now return to our history.

The Popes of Avignon

We have been at some pains to present to our readers, as fully as our space would admit, the quarrel between Boniface and Philip, as it is one of the great epochs in the papal history. From this moment it sank rapidly and never rose again to the same commanding height. But the degradation of the papal chair was not yet complete according to the hard and unrelenting spirit of Philip. His next object was to have the pope under his own eye, and as his abject slave. This he accomplished in Clement V., who was raised to the chair in the year 1305. His election led to the most debasing period in the history of the Romish church. Clement, who was a native of France, and the king's obedient servant, immediately transferred the papal residence from Rome to Avignon. The pope was now a French prelate, Rome was no longer the metropolis of Christendom. This period of banishment lasted about seventy years, and is spoken of in history as the Babylonian captivity of the popes in Avignon. The great line of mediaeval pontiffs, the Gregorys, the Alexanders, and the Innocents, expired with Boniface VIII. After seventy years of exile they emerged from their state of slavery to the kings of France, but only to resume a modified supremacy.

Philip survived his adversary eleven years; he died A.D. 1314. History speaks of him as one of the most unprincipled, evil-hearted kings that ever reigned. But nothing so blackens his memory as his cruel assault on the order of the Templars. His avarice was excited by their wealth, and he resolved on the dissolution of the order, the destruction of the leaders, and the appropriation of their wealth. He knew that thousands of the best manors in France belonged to the institution, and that the spoils of such a company would make him the richest king in Christendom. In order to lay his hand on such treasures, he first sought to discredit the knights because of their defeat at Courtrai - the battle of the Spurs; then he exacted the consent of his creature, Pope Clement V., and summoned a council of the realm to sanction the suppression of the order. Having now these authorities to support him - the sacred and the civil - his covetous and cruel ends were gained. Numbers of these gallant Christian knights - for such they were, though they had greatly degenerated from their original vows - were seized and thrown into prison, on a charge of having dishonoured the cross, and trampled on the sign of salvation. The severest tortures were applied to crush out confessions of guilt, numbers were condemned and burned alive, sixty-eight were burned alive at Paris in 1310. The grand master, James de Molay, was also burned at Paris in 1314. Letters were sent to all other kings and princes, under the sanction of the pope and Philip, to pursue the same course; but the European sovereigns in general were satisfied with the spoils, and adopted gentler methods in dissolving the order.

The reader may here note for further examination what we may call a new division in the history of Europe. The papacy, feudalism, and knighthood, which had risen and flourished together since about the time of Charlemagne, fell together during the reign of Philip the Fair.

But a heavy cloud was gathering over the house of the cruellest and worst of kings. The darkest shades of immorality covered with shame and disgrace his whole family. The deep dishonour of the royal house of France through the infidelity of his queen and his three daughters-in-law sank into his heart, and hastened his end. The people now said, it is the vengeance of heaven for the outrage on Boniface, others said, it is for the iniquitous persecution and extinction of the Templars. But he was now before a tribunal without the shelter of a pope, or the sanction of a national assembly, and must answer to God for every deed done in the body, and for every word uttered by his lips; for even the thoughts and counsels of the heart must be brought into judgment. And neither the people nor the ermine can shelter a sinner there; nothing but the blood of Christ, sprinkled as it were on the door-posts of the heart before we leave this world, can be of any avail in the waters of death. Those who neglect to apply the blood of Christ by faith now, must be engulfed for ever in the cold, deep, dark waters of eternal judgment. But the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us who believe from all sin.

We now leave this fresh division of our history, and take up the line of witnesses, and the forerunners of the Reformation.

29 Forerunners of the Reformation

Chapter 29

The Forerunners of the Reformation

In a former chapter we brought down the line of witnesses for the truth of God and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the great Albigensian war, during which so many of them were slain. We have also brought down the history of the papacy to its humiliation and fall in Boniface VIII. and to its banishment from the throne of St. Peter with all its traditional majesty and glory in Clement V. We will now return to the chain of witnesses which we believe has been maintained unbroken since the earliest times; though the silver line of God's grace has often been so overlaid and obscured that it became difficult to trace its path. Still, it was ever bright to the eye of God, and the mirror on which His own grace and glory were reflected.

The First Great Schools of Learning

The rise of public schools or academies in the twelfth century, and the increase of intellectual activity, no doubt contributed greatly to the weakening of the papacy and the feudal aristocracy. This led the way to the rise and the establishment of the third estate in the realm - the middle classes - and to commercial enterprise. The enlightenment and the liberties of Europe from this period steadily advanced. Schools were erected almost everywhere, the thirst for knowledge increased. "The kings and princes of Europe seeing what advantages a nation may derive from the cultivation of literature and the useful arts, invited learned men to their territories, encouraged a taste for information and rewarded them with honours and emoluments." But with such an increase of mental activity, many wild and dangerous doctrines and opinions were taught. Scholastic theology, Aristotelian philosophy, sacred and civil law, had their place and reputation by turns. It was about this time the middle of the twelfth century - that the great universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Paris were founded; with many others on the continent. Greek and Hebrew were studied and lectures given in the way of expositions and commentaries on the holy scriptures, which the Lord could use in blessing to the students, and through them to others.

"To impose some restraint," says Dean Waddington, "on this great intellectual licentiousness - to revive some respect for ancient authorities - to erect some barrier, or at least some landmark, for the guidance of his contemporaries, Peter the Lombard published his celebrated "Book of the Sentences." Having studied for some time in the famous school at Bologna, he proceeded to Paris for the purpose of prosecuting his studies in divinity. The Book of the Sentences is a collection of passages from the Fathers, especially from St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine - a sad mixture, no doubt, of truth and error; but the Lord is above all and could use His own word, though intermixed with fashionable subtleties, for the conversion and blessing of souls. It long retained an undisputed supremacy in the theological schools, and its author was raised to great honours.

The Real Worthies of Ecclesiastical History

The true pioneers of the Reformation, and the real worthies of ecclesiastical history, are difficult to discover. In humility of mind, and not seeking the praise of men, they walked before the Lord, quietly doing His will. Their ministrations of sympathy, their deeds of charity, their desire to lead souls to the Saviour, their endeavours to spread the knowledge of His word, are features of character but little observed by the eye of the historian. And the deeper their piety, the greater their obscurity. But they have their reward; their record is on high. Multitudes of God's saints during the long dark night of the middle ages thus fulfilled their mission, and passed off the scene without leaving a trace of their usefulness in the annals of time. Not so the pompous prelate, the wonder-working saint, the intriguing rapacious cardinal, the noisy polemics, and the whole host of proud ambitious enthusiasts; the pages of the annalist are principally consecrated to such.*

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 363.}

After a careful examination of the prominent characters which appear on the page of history from the twelfth century to the Reformation, they seem to fall into three distinct classes: 1, Literary men; 2, Theologians; 3, Reformers, or protestants. By noticing these in order we shall have the forerunners of the Reformation fairly before us.

Literary Men

The chief of this class were such men as Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and our English Chaucer. Soon after the founding of colleges, and the great uprising of the human mind, these four "stars of literature" arose almost simultaneously. It pleased God, in His infinite wisdom, to use the writings of these men, and many others, for the exposure of the evils of the Romish system, and for the weakening of its power. And while many of lesser note, and for smaller crimes, suffered bonds, imprisonment, and death, these writers were allowed, not only to escape the vengeance of the church, but to pursue their own course. Their attractive literary productions gave them such favour generally, that the priests were afraid to molest them. Thus, in the providence of God, the hitherto half-concealed corruption of morals which prevailed among the clergy, monks, and every order of the system, was brought out into broad daylight; under the veil of popular poems, pleasant tales, and satires, the corrupt state of the whole ecclesiastical system was exposed. The unbridled passions and the unblushing immoralities of the court of Avignon, and the vices of the clergy generally, became the chief subject of song and jest in almost every country in Europe. But neither the poetry nor the prose of such writers is fit to be repeated in the pages of our "Short Papers."

Dante, who is considered the father of Italian poetry, and celebrated chiefly for his imaginative description of purgatory, hell, and heaven, died A.D. 1321. Petrarch, who was some years younger, had even a greater reputation for prose; less is said of Boccaccio, his writings being of a grosser character. Chaucer is well known in this country as the author of "Canterbury Tales." He was born in 1328, and died in 1400. But enough of this class, we now turn to

The Theologians

Robert Grostete, or Greathead, an English prelate of the twelfth century, will illustrate what we mean by a theologian, and protester, though not, strictly speaking, a reformer. Like many others in all ages, his views of reformation extended only to the discipline and administration of the church, not to the uprooting and the pulling down of the incurably false thing as in the sixteenth century. He strongly held a high view of the papacy, though he might speak of individual popes as antichrist, because of their immorality or rebellion against Christ. But the anti-christian character of the papacy was not yet known, and the grand fundamental truths of Christianity but indistinctly apprehended. Grostete was born at Stradbroke, in Suffolk, about the year 1175. After having studied at Oxford, he went to Paris, which was then the fashion, as the Paris University was the most renowned in Europe. There he studied both Greek and Hebrew, and completely mastered the French language. According to the ideas of the age, he was considered a consummate theologian and philosopher.

In the year 1235, when he was sixty years of age, he became bishop of Lincoln, and laboured with an almost intolerant zeal and earnestness for the reformation of his diocese, which was one of the largest in England. He is said to have been much occupied in the study of the holy scriptures in their original languages, and owned their sovereign authority. This was a great advance on the past, and in the right direction; still, there were glaring inconsistencies as we now contemplate them. He was at first greatly captivated with the new orders - the Dominicans and Franciscans - because of their apparent sanctity; but he lived to discover their hypocrisy, and to denounce them as the deceivers of mankind. True reform denounced the existence, not merely the abuses, of the orders to be entirely opposed to the word of God. At the same time he was a bold, pious, and energetic man. He lifted up his voice against the blasphemous assumption of Innocent III., when he proclaimed himself to be the vicar, not merely of St. Peter, but of God. "To follow a pope," he said, "who rebels against the will of Christ, is to separate from Christ and His body; and if ever the time should come when all men follow an erring pontiff, then will be the great apostasy." The rapacity of the Roman court, the abuse of indulgences, the bestowal of patronage on unfit and undeserving persons, were amongst the evils against which he contended. A bishop so active, so zealous, and so fearless, was sure to create many enemies. He was accused of magic by his contemporaries, and of daring presumption by the pope. He barely escaped martyrdom. Through the Lord's tender mercy and care of His servant, he died in peace, in the year 1253.*

{*Milner, vol. 3, p. 188. J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, p. 431. D'Aubigne, vol. 1, p. 99.}

Roger Bacon, a man of superior genius and penetration, who had a clear perception of the state of things, both in the schools and in the church, deserves a brief notice, though there is not much evidence of his genuine piety and love of evangelical truth. He is said to have been the greatest of English philosophers before the time of his celebrated namesake. About the year 1214, he was born near Ilchester, in Somersetshire.

After studying at Oxford and Paris, he became a Franciscan friar at the age of thirty-four. His knowledge of physical science - astronomy, optics, mechanics, chemistry - as well as of Greek and oriental learning, exposed him to the popular but dangerous reputation of a magician. His researches placed him immensely in advance of his monastic superiors, who found a convenient refuge for their ignorance in charging the friar with dealings in magic. He was greatly persecuted, and was many years confined in a loathsome dungeon.

Though he speaks with great respect of the holy scriptures, he strangely contends for an alliance between philosophy and Christianity, reason and faith. He denounces the sophistry of the fashionable learning of his time, and complains that the original languages of the Old and New Testament were neglected; that children got the knowledge of scripture, not from the Bible itself, but from versified abridgements; that lectures on the "Sentences" were preferred to lectures on scripture. In this way he exposed the ignorance, the superstition, and the idleness of the religious orders, and so brought down upon himself the charge of heresy and the censures of the church, though he lived and died a strict Roman Catholic, probably about the year 1292. His last work was a compendium of theology.

Thomas Aquinas, the "angelic doctor," was the most renowned of the schoolmen in the thirteenth century, and the truest type of a theologian. He was descended from an illustrious family, and born in the neighbourhood of Naples about the year 1225. He entered very young into the Dominican order, greatly against the will of his nearest relations, and studied at Cologne and Paris. In 1257 he was professor of theology in Paris; but died at the early age of fifty and was canonized by the pope. When his collected writings were published at Rome, in the year 1570, they extended to seventeen folio volumes.

The ecclesiastical doctors of our own day tell us - for we are wholly unacquainted with the writings of such authors - that among the best known of his works are, the "Sum of Theology," a commentary on the four Gospels, and on other books of the Old and New Testament; an elaborate commentary on the "Sentences" of Peter Lombard, the great textbook of the schools; his expositions of Aristotle; and a treatise in favour of the Catholic faith, and against the Greek church. But notwithstanding the greatness of his learning and the number of his books, it is to be feared that he was a stranger to the saving doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the deeds of the law; though, when on his death-bed, he showed great signs of piety, similar to that of Augustine. So that we may hope he belonged to the saved remnant of the schoolmen in those days. We rejoice in the conviction that there will be a saved remnant in heaven from all classes - emperors, kings, popes, and philosophers, which will manifest the sovereignty and the power of the grace of God in all ages, and to all classes of men. The riches and the glory of the grace will be to His praise for ever.

Bonaventura, a native of Tuscany, entered into the order of the Franciscans in the year 1243 at the age of twenty-one. He completed his studies at Paris, and with such success, as to acquire the title of the "seraphic doctor." He died in 1274, as cardinal-bishop of Albano. His works were less voluminous than his contemporary, Thomas Aquinas, and less intellectual, but more devotional. "His works," it is said, "surpass in usefulness all those of his age, in regard to the spirit of the love of God and christian devotion which speaks in him, that he is profound without being prolix, subtle without being curious, eloquent without vanity, ardent without inflation; his devotion is instructive, and his doctrine inspires devotion." On being asked, when dying, from what books he had derived his learning, he answered by pointing to the crucifix, and he was in the habit of referring to the scriptures rather than to St. Francis, the founder of his order. But we must wait a little longer before we find the all-important doctrine of justification through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ taught by the learned. Bonaventura as a theologian represents the mystics. He might have been the author of the "Imitation of Christ," said to be written about this time by Thomas a Kempis. But never was book so misnamed. It begins with self, and ends with self. The internal emotions of the soul absorb the mystic. It is monastic Christianity. The love of Christ is purely unselfish: He laid down His life to save His enemies. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And faith can say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Rom. 5; Gal. 2)

Duns Scotus was a doctor of great celebrity; but his birthplace and early life are enveloped in obscurity. Dean Waddington says, without question, "This doctor died in the year 1308. He was a native of Dunse, in Scotland, and a Franciscan." He was a dialectician and styled the "subtle doctor." He boldly ventured to impugn some of the positions of the great St. Thomas, which gave rise to a controversy between the Dominicans and the Franciscans that lasted hundreds of years, engaged the attention of popes and councils, as it even still divides the schools of the Latins. The principal points of theological difference between these great doctors were, "the nature of divine co-operation, and the measure of divine grace necessary to a man's salvation," with what is called the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. The Dominicans maintained that the holy virgin was not exempt from the taint of original sin; the Franciscans supported the immaculate conception.*

{*Mosheim, cent. 4, chap. 3.}

William of Ockham, so called from his native place in the county of Surrey, had studied at Paris, under Duns Scotus and became a famous doctor of the Franciscans. According to the custom of the schools, he was distinguished by high sounding titles, such as the "singular and invincible doctor." But he was more of a metaphysician than a theologian. He boldly attacked the papal pretensions on many points, but especially as to temporal dominion and "the plenitude of power." He denied the infallibility of the pope and the general councils; and maintained that the Emperor was not dependent on the pope, but that the Emperor has the right of choosing him. These anti-papal opinions soon spread in all directions, and made their way to all classes through the agency of the mendicant friars. When threatened with the highest censures of the church, he found a shelter at the court of St. Louis, who greatly favoured the Franciscans. "Defend me with your sword," said William to the king, "and I will defend you with the word of God." He died under the sentence of excommunication at Munich, in 1347.*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 4, p. 77. For lengthy accounts of such men and their writings, see Knight's Biographical Dictionary.}

Reflections on the Schoolmen

Enough - yes, we say enough - of the scholastic doctors and the philosophical divines for our present purpose. To wade through a number, and select a few as genuine specimens, is dry and wearisome work. But they form a certain link in the chain of events between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries which has its importance; and the reader will see what is meant by the general term of "the schoolmen" at that period of our history. One salutary lesson we may at least learn from the examples before us, and that is, the utter darkness and perplexity of the mind, however great the learning and study, when the word of God, in its divine simplicity, is not known and believed. One single text, "The just shall live by faith," when used of God in the hands of Luther, was sufficient to clear away the darkness of the middle ages, while the seventeen volumes folio of Thomas Aquinas, and all the other folios of all the great schoolmen, only deepened the gloom of ignorance and perplexity as to the knowledge of God and the way of salvation. The greatest development of the natural powers of the human mind leads no guilty sinner to the cross of Christ - to the precious blood which alone cleanseth from all sin. The enemy of souls, taking advantage of the growing celebrity of the Aristotelian philosophy, seduced the best of the doctors to believe that the most important work they could be engaged in, was the reconciling of the teaching of Christ with the decrees of the Greek philosopher, lest the scholars should think more highly of the latter than the former. Such was the miserable work of the best of the schoolmen at that time; but no doubt many of simpler minds, who were not blinded by the subtleties of logic, found the way of truth and salvation amidst the darkness, though much perplexed and bewildered.

The church of Christ was scarcely visible in Europe about this time, with the exception of the churches of the valleys; there the true light continued to burn, and thousands found "the more excellent way," notwithstanding the union of the powers of earth, both secular and ecclesiastical, to extinguish it. But there was the true building of God, and the gates of hell could never prevail against the works of His hands. We now turn to renew our acquaintance with the Waldenses and other Protestants of that time.

The Waldenses

Our history naturally reverts to the fatal crusade against the Albigenses in the thirteenth century. That once beautiful region, in some respects the richest and most civilized province in the spiritual empire of St. Peter, we have -seen depopulated and desolated. The peaceful inhabitants had presumed to question the dogmas of the Vatican and the authority of the priesthood, which was sin unpardonable against the majesty of Rome. The edicts of Innocent, the sword of De Montfort, the fires of Arnold, the treachery of Fouquet, and the Inquisition of Dominic, did their terrible work. But the combined powers of Europe, with fire and sword and suffocating dungeons, failed to touch the root of that which Innocent called heresy. The divine, vital principle of Christianity was far, far beyond his reach. The sword may hew down the branches, and the fire may consume them; but the living root is in the truth and grace of God, which can never fail. The spirit of Christianity is stronger than the sword of the persecutor, and the arm on which faith leans is more powerful than the combined forces of earth and hell. The weakness of the papacy was manifested in its apparent triumphs in Languedoc. The heretics, as Jezebel thought, had been drowned in blood, but a bleeding remnant was spared, in the good providence of our God, to bear testimony in every part of Europe to the injustice, the cruelties, and the spiritual despotism of papal Rome.

The exiles from the south of France who had escaped the sword went forth to the utmost limits of Christendom preaching the doctrines of the cross, and testifying with holy indignation against the falsehoods and corruptions of the dominant church. In different parts of France, in Germany, Hungary, and the neighbouring regions, the sectaries appeared in great numbers. And the popes found many of the kings little inclined to exert themselves for the suppression of the Cathari, as they were called, or the various religious sects. It is also more than probable that many of the persecuted about this time sought a place of rest in the quiet valleys of Piedmont. The more secluded of these regions appear to have been a secure asylum for the witnesses of God until the fourteenth century. Though known to Claudius, bishop of Turin, in the ninth century, they seem to have escaped notoriety and conflict till about the thirteenth, if not later. But as the darkness of popery thickened around them, the brightness of their example became more seen and felt. Calumnies were invented, and the godly Waldenses were singled out as reprobate schismatics. They were spread over the valleys on both sides of the Cottian Alps - Dauphiny on the French side, and Piedmont on the Italian side, of the mountains.

From time immemorial these Alpine regions had been inhabited by a race of Christians who continued the same from age to age; who never acknowledged the jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff, and who had been through all periods of ecclesiastical history, a pure branch of the apostolic church. But their peaceful retreats, their happy homes, their simple worship, and their industrial habits were soon to be invaded and desolated by the Roman inquisitors. The tragedy begins. From the fifteenth to the present century, their history is a narrative of sanguinary struggles for existence, with few intervals of repose. They were often driven to desperation, yet the church of the valleys lived through it all. Like the flaming bush, it has burned but has not been consumed. Its stronghold was not merely the Alpine mountains, but the truth of the living God.

Waldensian Persecutions

In the year 1380, a monk inquisitor, named Francis Borelli, was appointed by Clement VII. to search out the heretics in the valleys of Piedmont. Armed with this papal bull, the communes of Fraissiniere and Argentiere were ransacked for heretics. In the space of thirteen years, one hundred and fifty Waldenses were burned at Grenoble, and eighty around Fraissiniere. There was now a double motive for persecution a law was made that half the goods of the condemned should go to the inquisitors' court, and the other half to their temporal lords. Thus avarice, malice, and superstition were united against the unoffending peasants. But these burnings were too few and too far between to satisfy Rome's thirst for the blood of God's saints.

In the winter of 1400, the massacre extended from Dauphiny to the Italian valley of Pragela. The poor people, seeing their mountain caves possessed by their enemies, fled over the Alps. But the severity of the season and the coldness of the heights proved fatal to nearly all who had escaped from the hand of slaughter. Many of the mothers were carrying their infants and leading by the hand the little children who were able to walk. But cold and hunger speedily brought relief. One hundred and eighty babes are said to have died in the arms of their mothers, and were soon followed, with other children, by their broken-hearted mothers. No estimate can be formed of the numbers that perished by the tyrannies and cruelties of Rome. But heaven guesses not at their number, or even at their names. The martyred parents and the children have their record and reward eternal in the heavens; while their persecutors have had time to gauge their guilt and feel their punishment these four hundred years in the place of hopeless woe. In allusion to such scenes, the noblest of our poets composed the following sonnet:

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones

Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;

Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,

When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones, Forget not; in Thy book record their groans,

Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold,

Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled

Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans

The vales redoubled to the hills, and they

To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow

O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway

The triple tyrant; that from these may grow

A hundredfold, who, having learned Thy way,

Early may flee the Babylonish woe." - MILTON.

The fires of persecution were again kindled in the valley of Fraissiniere, in the year 1460, by a monk of the order of Friars Minor, armed with the authority of the Archbishop of Embrun. Debarred from social intercourse, driven from their places of worship, beset with enemies, they had no resource, no refuge, but. in a good conscience and the living God. The inquisitors did their cruel work.

In Piedmont, the Archbishop of Turin laboured much to promote the persecutions of the Waldenses. Their charge against them was that they made no offerings for the dead, valued not masses and absolutions, and took no care to redeem their relations from the pains of purgatory. But the princes of Piedmont, who were the dukes of Savoy, were unwilling to disturb their subjects, of whose loyalty, peaceableness, and industry, they had received such good accounts. Yet every method which fraud and calumny could invent was practised against them. The priests at length prevailed, and the civil power permitted the dragon host to indulge its thirst for blood.

About the year 1486 the memorable Bull of Innocent VIII. gave unlimited powers to Albert de Capitaneis, archdeacon of Cremona, to carry confiscation and death into the infected valleys. An army of eighteen thousand was raised, and precipitated into the mountain retreats of the Waldenses. Driven to despair, and availing themselves of the natural advantages of their situation, they defended themselves with wooden clubs and crossbows - the women and children praying - and turned into confusion this great military force.

The house of Savoy - which was established in supreme authority in Piedmont about the middle of the thirteenth century - had acted in a mild and tolerant way towards the proscribed people; but, sad to say, the regent-mother, like Theodora and Irene, during the minority of her son, is the first to sign a state-paper for their persecution. She called upon the authorities of Pignerol to assist the inquisitors to compel the heretics to return to the bosom of the church - a worthy daughter of her mother Jezebel! But not a single one of the inhabitants could be forced to return to the arms of Rome. The sword was now let loose upon them; and soon were the streams of the valleys tinged with the blood of the saints. Subsequent edicts of the sons were more tolerant. They began to speak of their Waldensian subjects, not under the obnoxious appellation of heretics, but as religionists, men of the valleys, and faithful vassals; whom they recognized as privileged subjects because of ancient stipulations.

So far Rome had utterly failed to accomplish her cruel and fiend-like object. She had determined to exterminate these obstinate opponents of popery, but faithful witnesses of the truth; and to eradicate their very name from the valleys. But, wonderful to say, neither the individual executions nor the indiscriminate slaughters, the secret treachery nor the open violence, could prevail for their extinction. But Jezebel still plots; and the tiara and the mitre generally proved too strong for the crown.

Waldensian Missionaries

With the twofold object of spreading the pure truth of the gospel, and of finding new and more peaceful settlements, many of them about the close of the fourteenth century left their native valleys and settled in Switzerland, Moravia Bohemia, various parts of Germany, and probably in England. But the most extensive of these colonies was formed in Calabria in the year 1370. Being peaceable in their manners, industrious in their habits, and strictly moral in all their ways, they soon gained the confidence of their landlords, and the affections of their neighbours. The lords of the country saw their lands enriched and fertilized by the superior husbandry of the new colonists, and granted them many privileges.

They were allowed to invite pastors from the parent church in the Alps, and to introduce schoolmasters for their children. But such temporal and spiritual prosperity, with so much social comfort, was an intolerable grievance to the evil eye of popery. The priests growled and murmured exceedingly. They complained to the landlords that the strangers did not conform to the rites of the Romish church; that they had no masses said for the repose of their dead, that they were heretics. The lords, however, were not disposed to listen to the priests. "They are a very just and honest people," said they, "all know them to be temperate, industrious, and in their words peculiarly decent. Who has ever heard them utter a blasphemous expression? And as they enrich our lands and pay their rents punctually, we see no reason to condemn them."

In every country and in every age the priests of Rome have been the greatest enemies to the pure, simple, religion of the Bible; to education, toleration, light, liberty, and every social improvement. Their power, their interests, their sensuality, and every evil passion, are necessarily exposed and undermined by the introduction of light or the toleration of liberty. But the temporal interests of the lords led them to protect their tenants, and maintain them in their privileges. We have here one of the mysterious passages in divine providence, over which the mind loves to dwell a little. For nearly two hundred years these Nonconformists were allowed to remain and multiply in the districts of Calabria, in the very neighbourhood of Rome itself. But at length the pope listened to the complaints of the priests, and the dark cloud, which had long been gathering over the peaceful plains of Calabria and Apulia, burst upon them with all its fury.

The Dark Year of 1560

About the year 1560, Pope Pius IV. was seized with a fit of great zeal against the spread of heresy. It was reported to have taken deep root in several parts of Italy, besides the valleys of Piedmont. The subalpine communities and all infected districts were placed under papal interdicts. Another crusade was preached, and great preparations made for the complete extermination of the heretics. The Spanish Viceroy of Naples, commanding the troops in person, and assisted by an inquisitor and a number of monks, entered the Waldensian settlements in Calabria. Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, marched with an armed force on Piedmont; and the French King on Dauphiny. "The poor men of the valleys," with their wives and children, now saw themselves exposed to the hostile power of the French King on the one side of the Alps, and to that of the Duke of Savoy on the other. The industrious tillers of the ground in Calabria, with their ministers, schoolmasters, and families, were surrounded by the troops of the Spanish Viceroy.

Thus prepared for the slaughter of the saints, the Waldenses were commanded to banish their ministers and schoolmasters, to abstain from the exercise of their own forms of worship, and to attend the services of the Romish church. They nobly refused. Orders were now given for confiscation, imprisonment, and death. The merciless sword of persecution was openly unsheathed and did not return to its scabbard for more than a hundred years. The awful work of blood and carnage began. Two companies of soldiers, headed by the pope's agents, went on slaying, burning, ravaging the defenceless peasantry in Calabria, until the work of extermination was nearly completed. A remnant cried for mercy, for their wives and children, promising to leave the country and never to return; but the inquisitors and monks knew not how to show mercy. The most barbarous cruelties were inflicted on many, the whole apparatus of pagan persecutions was revived, until the Protestants were exterminated in the south of Italy. One of their chief ministers, Lewis Paschal, who affirmed that the pope was antichrist, was conveyed to Rome, where he was burned alive, in the presence of Pius IV., that he might feast his eyes with the sight of a heretic in the flames. But the piety and the sufferings of Paschal excited the pity and the admiration of the spectators.

Hundreds of Waldenses in the valleys perished on the scaffold, or at the stake, the villages swarmed with ruffians who, in the name of officers of justice, plundered the helpless inhabitants, and haled them to prison, until the dungeons were choked with victims. The plains were deserted; the women, children, feeble, and aged, were sent for refuge to the heights of the mountains, to the rocks and the forests. The men, taking advantage of the nature of the country, determined on resistance. Every man and boy that could handle a weapon were formed into small brigades, and so planted as to defend themselves against the troops. The duke was not much inclined to carry on such a guerrilla warfare and shortly withdrew his soldiers; but only for a little while. According to ancient treaties, the men of the valleys had certain rights and privileges, which their sovereigns were reluctant to violate, but too often yielded to the importunity and the misrepresentations of the Romish hierarchy. From the following dates the reader will see how brief were their periods of rest: - "The years 1565, 1573, 1581, 1583, and the period between 1591 and 1594, are memorable as dates of religious and civil conflict. But never did the majesty of truth and innocence stand out more brightly to view than during the tempests of persecution which raged at intervals for the next hundred years and more."*

{*Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. 21, p. 543.}

The testimony of Dr. Beattie, who visited the Protestant valleys of Piedmont, Dauphiny, and the Ban de la Roche, about forty years ago, is to the same effect. "But the fierceness of the persecution seemed only to increase the measure of their fortitude.... Although marked as the victims of indiscriminate massacre, of lawless plunder, of torture, extortion, and famine; their resolution to persevere in the truth remained unshaken. Every punishment that cruelty could invent, or the sword inflict, had expended its fury in vain; nothing could subvert their faith or subdue their courage. In defence of their natural rights as men - in support of their insulted creed as members of the primitive church in resistance of those exterminating edicts which made their homes desolate, and deluged their altars with blood - the Waldenses exhibited a spectacle of fortitude and endurance that has no parallel in history."*

{*Scenery of the Waldenses, William Beattie M.D. See also a lengthy account of the Waldenses in Milner's Church History, vol. 3.}

Having brought down the history of the witnesses to the sixteenth century, we will now leave them, in the hope of meeting them again, when we reach that period in our general history.

30 John Wycliffe

Chapter 30

John Wycliffe

Every attentive reader of history must be frequently reminded of that weighty word of warning, given by the apostle: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The most solemn and practical illustrations of this divine law in the affairs of men may be seen on every page of history. He who sows tares in spring cannot expect to reap wheat in autumn; and he who sows wheat in spring shall not be required to reap tares in autumn. We may see the truth of this principle of the divine government around us daily. How often the habits of youth determine the condition of old age! Even the riches of divine grace arrests not the course of this law. The King of Israel had to hear from the mouth of the prophet the solemn sentence, "The sword shall never depart from thine house;" but this did not hinder the flow of God's tender mercy to the royal penitent: "And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." (2 Sam. 12) Such is the boundless, measureless grace of God to the truly penitent; but such too the immutable law of His government.

Although we cannot speak with the same confidence as to the general system of human society, yet we may reverently trace the hand of the Lord in the wisdom of His ways and in the accomplishment of His purposes. For example -

The sanguinary triumphs of the papacy in Languedoc proved to be the means of its rapid decline and fall. In crushing the Count of Toulouse and the other great feudatory lords in the south of France, the dominions of the French Crown were greatly enlarged, and the kings of France from that moment became the irresistible adversaries of the pope. Louis IX. immediately published the Pragmatic Sanction, which established the liberties of the Gallican Church, and Philip the Fair compelled the haughty Boniface to drink the cup of humiliation which the popes had often mixed for the secular powers of Europe. From 1305 to 1377, the popes at Avignon were little better than the vassals of Philip and his successors. And from 1377 to 1417, the papacy itself was rent asunder by the great schism. Thus, by an equitable retribution in the providence of God, they who sought the destruction of others were their own destroyers.* We see the same thing in England.

{*Sir James Stephen's History of France, vol. 1, p. 240.}

England and the Papacy

The submission of John to Innocent III. was the turning-point in the history of the papacy in this country. In the humiliation of the sovereign the whole nation felt itself to be degraded. Innocent went too far, it was an abuse of assumed power, but it recoiled upon himself in due time. England never could forget such abject prostration on the part of its king at the feet of a foreign priest. From that hour a spirit of disaffection towards Rome grew up in the minds of the English people. The usurpations, the exorbitant claims, of the papacy, their interference with the disposal of English bishoprics, frequently brought the government and the church into collision and widened the breach. But just when men's patience was almost exhausted by the many practical grievances of popery, it pleased God to raise up a powerful adversary to the whole hierarchical system - the first man who shook the papal dominion in England to its foundation, and withal a man who sincerely loved the truth, and preached it both to the learned and to the lower classes. This man was John Wycliffe, justly styled the harbinger, or Morning Star of the Reformation.

The early part of Wycliffe's life is involved in much obscurity; but the general opinion is, that he was born of humble parentage in the neighbourhood of Richmond in Yorkshire, about the year 1324. His destination was that of a scholar, to which, we are informed, the humblest in those days could aspire. England was almost a land of schools, every cathedral, almost every monastery, having its own; but youths of more ambition, self-confidence, supposed capacity, and of better opportunities, thronged to Oxford and Cambridge. In England, as throughout Christendom, that wonderful rush of a vast part of the population towards knowledge, thronged the universities with thousands of students, instead of the few hundreds who have now the privilege of entering those seats of learning.*

{*Milman, vol. 6, p. 100.}

John Wycliffe found his way to Oxford. He was admitted a student of Queen's College, but soon removed to Merton College, the oldest, the wealthiest, and most famous of the Oxford foundations. It is supposed that he was privileged to attend the lectures of the very pious and profound Thomas Bradwardine, and that from his works he derived his first views of the freeness of grace, and the utter worthlessness of all human merit, in the matter of salvation. From Grostete's writings he first caught the idea of the pope being antichrist.

Wycliffe, according to his biographers, soon became master of the civil, the canon, and the municipal law; but his greatest efforts were diverted to the study of theology, not merely that barren art which was taught in the schools, but that divine science which is derived from the spirit as well as from the letter of scripture. In the prosecution of such inquiries, he had numerous and formidable difficulties to contend against. It was a study which the church had not sanctioned, and had not provided for. The sacred text was neglected, scholastic divinity had taken the place of the authority of scripture; the original language of the New, as well as of the Old Testament, was almost unknown in the kingdom. But, in spite of all these disadvantages and discouragements, Wycliffe pursued his way with great perseverance. "His logic," says one, "his scholastic subtlety, his rhetorical art, his power of reading the Latin scriptures, his varied erudition, may be due to Oxford; but the vigour and energy of his genius, the force of his language, his mastery over the vernacular English, the high supremacy which he vindicated for the scriptures, which by immense toil he promulgated in the vulgar tongue - these were his own, - to be learned in no school, to be attained by none of the ordinary courses of study."*

{*Latin Christianity, vol. 6, p. 103.}

Wycliffe and the Friars

About the year 1349, when Wycliffe had reached his twenty-fourth year, and was rising to some renown in the college, this country was visited by a terrible pestilence, called the "black plague." It is supposed to have made its appearance first in Tartary, and after ravaging various countries in Asia, proceeded by the shores of the Nile to the islands of Greece, carrying devastation to almost every nation of Europe. So prodigious was the waste of human life that some say a fourth part of the inhabitants were cut off others, that the half of the human race, besides cattle, were carried off in certain parts. This alarming visitation filled the pious mind of Wycliffe with the most gloomy apprehensions, and fearful forebodings as to the future. It was like the sound of the last trumpet in his heart. He concluded that the day of judgment was at hand. Solemnized with the thoughts of eternity, he spent days and nights in his cell, and no doubt in earnest prayer for divine guidance. He came forth a champion for the truth; he found his armour in the word of God.

By his zeal and faithfulness in preaching the gospel, especially to the common people on Sundays, he acquired and deserved the title of the "evangelic doctor." But that which brought him such fame and popularity at Oxford, was his defence of the university against the encroachments of the mendicant friars. He fearlessly and unsparingly attacked these orders, which he declared to be the great evil of Christendom. They were now four in number - Dominicans, Minorites or Franciscans, Augustinians, Carmelites - and swarmed in all the best parts of Europe. They strove hard in Oxford, as heretofore in Paris, to obtain the ascendancy. They took every opportunity of enticing the students into their convents, who, without the consent of their parents, were enlisted into the mendicant orders. To such an extent was this system of trepanning carried on, that parents ceased to send their children to the universities. Thirty thousand youths had at one time studied at Oxford, but from this cause the number was reduced to six thousand. Bishops, priests, and theologians, in almost every country and university in Europe were contending against those arch-deceivers, but it was all to little effect, for the pontiffs vigorously defended them as their best friends, and conferred on them great privileges.

Wycliffe struck boldly, and we believe fatally, at the root of this great and universal evil. Next to the decline of the papal power, which we have already noticed, we may begin to mark that of the mendicant orders. He published some spiritual papers entitled, "Against able Beggary," "Against idle Beggary," and on "The poverty of Christ." "He denounced mendicancy in itself, and all the others as able-bodied beggars, who ought not to be permitted to infest the land. He charged them with fifty errors of doctrine and practice. He denounced them for intercepting the alms which ought to belong to the poor; for their unscrupulous system of proselytizing; for their invasion of parochial rights; their habit of deluding the common people by fables and legends; their hypocritical pretensions to sanctity; their flattery of the great and wealthy, whom it would rather have been their duty to reprove for their sins; their grasping at money by all sorts of means, the needless splendour of their buildings, whereas parish churches were left to decay."*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 4, p. 201.}

Wycliffe was now the acknowledged champion of a great party in the university and in the church; and dignities and honours were conferred upon him. But if he had gained many friends, he had many enemies whose wrath it was dangerous to provoke. His troubles and changes now began. The friars supplied the pope with information as to all that was going on. In 1361 he was advanced to the mastership of Balliol college and rectory of Fillingham. Four years after he was chosen warder of Canterbury hall. His knowledge of scripture, the purity of his life, his unbending courage, his eloquence as a preacher, his mastery of the language of the common people, rendered him the object of general admiration. He maintained that salvation was by faith, through grace, without human merit in any way. This was striking, not at the outward evils merely, but at the very foundations of the whole system of popery. Led by divine wisdom he commenced his great work at the right place and in the right way. He preached the gospel and explained the word of God to the people in vernacular English. In this way, he planted deep in the popular mind those great truths and principles which eventually led to the emancipation of England from the yoke and tyranny of Rome.

Wycliffe and the Government

The fame of Wycliffe, as a defender of truth and liberty was no longer confined to the university of Oxford. The pope and the cardinals feared him, and minutely watched his proceedings. But on the other hand, the king and the parliament entertained so high an opinion of his integrity and judgment as to consult him on a matter of grave importance to both church and state.

About the year 1366 a controversy had arisen between Urban V. and Edward m. in consequence of the renewed demand of an annual tribute of one thousand marks, which King John had bound himself to pay to the Roman See, as an acknowledgment of the feudal superiority of the Roman pontiff over the kingdoms of England and Ireland. The payment of this ignominious tribute had never been regular, but it had been entirely discontinued for thirty-three years. Urban demanded payment in full of the arrears. Edward refused, declaring himself resolved to hold his kingdom in freedom and independence. The parliament and the people sympathized with the king. The arrogance of the pope had created great excitement in England; both houses of parliament were consulted; the settlement of the question interested all classes, even all Christendom. Wycliffe, who was already one of the king's chaplains, was appointed to answer the papal arguments; and so effectually did he prove that canon, or papal law, has no force when it is opposed to the word of God, that the papacy from that day to this ceased to lay claim to the sovereignty of England. The arguments of Wycliffe were used by the lords in parliament, who unanimously resolved to maintain the independence of the crown against the pretensions of Rome. The short, pithy, plain speeches of the barons on this occasion are curious and characteristic of the times.

In the year 1372 Wycliffe was raised to the theological chair. This was an important step in the cause of truth, and used by the Lord. Being a Doctor of Divinity, he had the right of delivering lectures on theology. He spoke as a master to the young theologians at Oxford; and having such authority in the schools, whatever he said was received as an oracle. It would be impossible to estimate the wholesome influence which he exercised over the minds of the students, who attended in great numbers at that time. The invention of printing had not yet supplied the student with books, so that the voice, the living energy, of the public teacher, was nearly all he had to depend upon. Hundreds who listened to him were in their turn to go forth as public teachers bearing the same precious seed.

Wycliffe at Avignon

Although it was now well known that Wycliffe held many anti-papal opinions, he was not yet committed to direct opposition to Rome. But in the year 1374 he was employed in an embassy to the pope, Gregory XI., whose residence was at Avignon. The object of this mission was to represent and have removed the flagrant abuses of the papal reservation of benefices in the English church. But we doubt not the Lord allowed this, that Wycliffe might see, what strangers were slow to believe, namely, that the papal court was the fountainhead of all iniquity. On his return from that mission he became the open, direct, and dreaded antagonist of Rome. The experience of Avignon and Bruges added to the results of his previous thought and inquiry, and satisfied his mind that the pretensions of the papacy were without foundation in truth. He published indefatigably the deep convictions of his soul, in learned lectures and disputations at Oxford, in pastoral addresses in his parish, and in spirited tracts written in clear English prose, which reached the humbler and less educated classes. He denounced with a burning and long-treasured indignation the whole papal system. "The gospel of Jesus Christ," he said, "is the only source of true religion. The pope is Antichrist, the proud worldly priest of Rome, and the most cursed of clippers and purse-carvers." The pride, the pomp, the luxury, the loose morals of the prelates, fell under his withering rebuke. And being a man of unimpeachable morals himself, of profound devotion, undoubted sincerity, and original eloquence, numbers gathered around the dauntless professor.*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 4, p. 203; Latin Christianity, vol. 4, p. 94; Encyclopedia Britannica, article, WYCLIFFE.}

Wycliffe a Heresiarch

Wycliffe had now risen to high distinction, and had received many marks of the royal favour. In the end of the year 1375, he was presented by the crown to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, which was his home throughout the remainder of his life, although he frequently visited Oxford. But dangers were gathering around him from other quarters: he had incurred the displeasure of the pope, and the prelates. At Lutterworth and in the villages around, he was the plain, bold, vernacular preacher; at Oxford, he was the great master. But whether in town or country, he raised his voice against the discipline of the church, the scandalous lives of churchmen, their ignorance, their neglect of preaching and the abuse of their privileges as ecclesiastics to shelter notorious criminals. It was only natural that such plain speaking should give offence. The professor was accused of heresy, and summoned to appear before the convocation which commenced its sittings in February, 1377.

Wycliffe answered to the citation and proceeded to St. Paul's Cathedral, but not alone. He was accompanied by John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and Lord Percy, marshal of England. The motives of these great personages were no doubt political, and added no real honour to the name or to the cause of Wycliffe. But we find a strange collision and confusion of religion and politics in the history of all the reformers. William Courtenay, son of the Earl of Devon, was then bishop of London, and appointed president of the assembly by Archbishop Sudbury. The proud and haughty bishop was moved to great displeasure when he beheld the heretic supported by the two most powerful nobles in England. So great was the concourse of people to witness this exciting trial, that the Earl-marshal assumed the authority of his office to make a way to the presence of the judges. The indignant bishop resented this exercise of the marshal's power inside the cathedral.

"If I had known, my lord," said Courtenay to Percy sharply, "that you claimed to be master in this church, I would have taken measures to prevent your entrance." Lancaster, who at that time administered the kingdom, coldly replied, "that the marshal would use the authority necessary to maintain order in spite of the bishops." When they reached the court in the Lady Chapel, Percy demanded a seat for Wycliffe. Courtenay now gave way to his anger, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "He must not sit down, criminals stand before their judges." Fierce words followed on both sides. The duke threatened to humble the pride, not only of Courtenay, but of all the prelacy of England. The bishop replied with a provoking, specious humility, that his trust was in God alone. A scene of great violence followed; and, instead of the proposed inquiry, the assembly broke up in confusion. The partisans of the bishop would have fallen upon the duke and the marshal; but they had force enough for their protection. Wycliffe, who had remained silent, escaped under their shelter.

Although the people were then all Roman Catholics, there were many who favoured reform; these were called Wycliffites, and they prudently remained in their own houses during this excitement. The clerical party that had thronged St. Paul's filled the streets with their clamour. The populace arose - a wild tumult began. The rioters first attacked the house of Percy; but after bursting open every door, and searching every chamber, without finding him, they imagined that he must be concealed in Lancaster's palace. They rushed to the Savoy, at that time the most magnificent building in the kingdom. A clergyman who had the misfortune of being taken for Lord Percy was put to death. The ducal arms were reversed like those of a traitor; the palace was plundered, and further outrages might have been committed but for the interposition of the bishop, who had cause to fear the consequences of such lawless proceedings.

Wycliffe and the Papal Bulls

Wycliffe was again at liberty. The severities which his persecutors had intended for him were not inflicted, and he continued to preach and instruct the people with unabated zeal and courage. Just about this time there were two popes or anti-popes; one in Rome, and one in Avignon. This fact is spoken of in history as "The schism," and caricatured by some writers as the cloven, or two-headed Antichrist. Through which head apostolic succession flows, the reader must judge for himself. Wycliffe denounced both popes alike as antichrist, and found strong sympathy in the hearts and minds of the people. The most disgraceful scenes followed. The pontiff of Rome proclaims war against the pontiff of Avignon. A crusade is preached in favour of the former. The same indulgences are granted as to the crusaders of old who went to the Holy Land. Public prayers are offered up, by order of the primate, in every church of the realm, for the success of the pontiff of Rome against the pontiff of Avignon. The bishops and clergy are called on to enforce upon their flocks the duty of contributing to this sacred purpose. Under the mitred captain, Spencer, the young and martial bishop of Norwich, the crusaders moved forward. They took Gravelines and Dunkirk, in France; but alas! this army of the pope, headed by an English bishop, surpassed the ordinary inhumanity of the times. Men, women, and children, were hewn to pieces in one vast massacre. The bishop carried a huge two-handed sword, with which he seems to have hewn down with hearty goodwill the unoffending flock of the rival pope at Avignon.

Such an expedition could only end in shame and disaster. It shook the papacy to its foundation, and greatly strengthened the cause of the reformer. From 1305 to 1377, the popes were little more than the vassals of the French monarchs at Avignon; and from that till 1417, the papacy itself was rent asunder by the great schism. But the myrmidons of the pope continued eager and constant in their pursuit after the heresiarch. Nineteen articles of accusation against him were submitted to Gregory XI. In answer to these accusations, five bulls were despatched to England, three to the archbishop, one to the king, and one to Oxford; commanding inquiry into the erroneous doctrines of Wycliffe. The opinions charged against him, were not against the creed of the church, but against the power of the clergy. He was charged with reviving the errors of Marselius of Padua, and John Gaudun, the defenders of the temporal monarch against the pope.

Wycliffe was cited a second time to appear before the same papal delegates, but on this occasion it was not at St. Paul's but at Lambeth. He had no longer the duke of Lancaster and the Earl-marshal at his side. He trusted in the living God. "The people thought he would be devoured, being brought into the lion's den," and many of the citizens of London forced themselves into the chapel. The prelates seeing their menacing looks and gestures became alarmed. But scarcely had the proceedings been opened, when a message was received from the young king's mother - the widow of the Black Prince - prohibiting them from proceeding to any definite sentence respecting the doctrine or conduct of Wycliffe. "The bishops," says Walsingham the papal advocate, "who had professed themselves determined to do their duty in spite of threats or promises, and even at the hazard of their lives, were as reeds shaken by the wind, and became so intimidated during the examination of the apostate, that their speeches were as soft as oil, to the public loss of their dignity, and the damage of the whole church. And when Clifford pompously delivered his message, they were so overcome with fear, that you would have thought them to be as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. Thus this false teacher, this complete hypocrite, evaded the hand of justice, and could no more be called before the same prelates, because their commission expired by the death of the pope Gregory XI."*

{*Milner, vol. 3, p. 251.}

The death of Gregory and the great schism in the papacy combined, in the good providence of God, to deliver Wycliffe from the cruel hand of persecution, which no doubt had marked him as its victim. He therefore returned to his former occupations, and by his pulpit discourses, his academic lectures, and his various writings, laboured to promote the cause of truth and liberty. He also organized about this time an itinerant band of preachers, who were to travel through the land, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, accepting hospitality by the way, and trusting in the Lord to meet all their need. They were called "poor priests," and not infrequently met with persecution from the clergy; but the simplicity and earnestness of these missionaries drew crowds of the common people around them.

Wycliffe and the Bible

Without following more minutely the general labours of Wycliffe, or the plottings of his enemies to interrupt him, we will now notice that which was the great work of his useful life - the complete English Version of the Holy Scriptures. We have seen him boldly and fearlessly assailing and exposing the countless abuses of popery, unfolding the truth to the students, and zealously preaching the gospel to the poor; but he is now engaged in a work which will a thousand times more enrich his own soul. He is yet more exclusively engaged with the Sacred Writings. It was not until he became more fully acquainted with the Bible, that he rejected the false doctrines of the church of Rome. It is one thing to see the outward abuses of the hierarchy, it is quite another to see the mind of God in the doctrines of His word.

As soon as the translation of a portion was finished, the labour of the copyists began, and the Bible was ere long widely circulated either wholly or in parts. The effect of thus bringing home the word of God to the unlearned - to citizens soldiers, and the lower classes - is beyond human power to estimate. Minds were enlightened, souls were saved, and God was glorified. "Wycliffe," said one of his adversaries, "has made the gospel common, and more open to laymen and to women who can read than it is wont to be to clerks well learned and of good understanding; so that the pearl of the gospel is scattered and is trodden under foot of swine." In the year 1330 the English Bible was complete. In 1390 the bishops attempted to get the version condemned by Parliament, lest it should become an occasion of heresies; but John of Gaunt declared that the English would not submit to the degradation of being denied a vernacular Bible. "The word of God is the faith of His people," it was said, "and though the pope and all his clerks should disappear from the face of the earth, our faith would not fail, for it is founded on Jesus alone, our Master and Our God." The attempt at prohibition having failed, the English Bible spread far and wide, being diffused chiefly through the exertions of the "poor priests," like "the poor men of Lyons" at an earlier period.

The christian reader will not fail to trace the hand of the Lord in this great work. The grand, the divine, instrument was now ready and in the hands of the people, by means of which the Reformation in the sixteenth century was to be accomplished. The word of God which liveth and abideth for ever is rescued from the dark mysteries of scholasticism, from the dust-covered shelves of the cloister, from the obscurity of ages, and given to the English people in their own mother-tongue. Who can estimate the blessing? Let the ten thousand times ten thousand tongues which shall praise the Lord for ever, give the answer. But oh! the wickedness the soul-murdering wickedness - of the Romish priesthood in keeping the word of life from the laity! Is the glorious truth of God's love to the world in the gift of His Son - of the efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin - to be concealed from the perishing multitude, and seen only by a privileged few? There is no refinement in cruelty on the face of the whole earth to compare with this. It is the ruin of both soul and body in hell for ever.

Partial Translations

The first attempt at anything like a vernacular translation of a portion of the holy scriptures appears to have been in the seventh century. Down to this period they were only in the Latin tongue in this country, and being chiefly in the hands of the clergy, the people in general received what they knew of the revelation of God from their instructions. But, as most of the priests knew nothing more than what they were obliged to repeat in the church service, the people were left in gross darkness.

The Venerable Bede mentions a poem in the Anglo-Saxon tongue, bearing the name of Caedmon, which gives with tolerable fidelity some of the historical parts of the Bible, but owing to its epic character, it has not been ranked with the versions of the sacred writings. Still it was a commencement in this blessed work, for which we can be truly thankful. It may have given the idea to others more competent, and been the precursor of real translations.

In the eighth century, Bede translated the apostles' creed and the Lord's prayer into Anglo-Saxon, which he frequently presented to illiterate priests: and one of his last efforts was a translation of the Gospel of St. John; which is supposed to be the first portion of the New Testament which was translated into the vernacular language of the country. He died in 735.

King Alfred, in his zeal for the improvement of his realm, did not overlook the importance of vernacular scripture. With the assistance of the learned men in his court he had the four Gospels translated. And Elfric, towards the close of the tenth century, had translated some books of the Old Testament. About the beginning of the reign of Edward III. William of Shoreham rendered the Psalter into Anglo-Norman; and he was soon after followed by Richard Rolle, chantry priest at Hampole. He not only translated the text of the Psalms, but added an English commentary. He died in 1347. The Psalter appears to be the only book of scripture which had been entirely rendered into our language before the time of Wycliffe. But the moment was come in the providence of God for the publication of the whole Bible, and for its circulation among the people. Every circumstance, in spite of the enemy, was overruled of God to favour the noble design of His servant.

Having received many warnings, many threatenings, and experienced some narrow escapes from the loathsome dungeon and the burning pile, Wycliffe was allowed to close his days in peace, in the midst of his flock and his pastoral labours at Lutterworth. After a forty-eight hours' illness from a stroke of paralysis, he died on the last day of the year 1384.*

{*For full details of the earliest English translations, see preface to Wycliffe's Bible, edited by the Rev. Josiah Forshall and Sir Frederick Madden, both of the British Museum. It is a noble book, four volumes folio, printed at the University Press, Oxford, and a noble monument of christian zeal and devotedness, under the sheltering hand of God. See also preface to Bagster's English Hexapla.}

Reflections on the Life of Wycliffe

The humble Christian, the bold witness, the faithful preacher, the able professor, and the great reformer, has passed off the scene. He has gone to his rest and his reward is on high. But the doctrines which he propagated with so much zeal can never die. His name in his followers continued formidable to the false priests of Rome. "Every second man you meet in the way," said a bitter adversary, "is a Wycliffite." He was used of God to give an impulse to christian inquiry which was felt in the most distant corners of Europe, and which rolled on through future ages. No person has expressed a juster sense of the influence of Wycliffe's Biblical labours than Dr. Lingard, the Roman Catholic historian. Thus he writes, "He made a new translation, multiplied copies with the aid of transcribers, and by his poor priests recommended it to the perusal of his hearers. In their hands it became an engine of wonderful power. Men were flattered with the appeal to their private judgment; the new doctrines insensibly acquired partizans and protectors in the higher classes, who alone were acquainted with the use of letters; a spirit of inquiry was generated; and the seeds were sown of that religious revolution, which, in little more than a century, astonished and convulsed the nations of Europe." Many of Wycliffe's doctrines were far in advance of the age in which he lived. He anticipated the principles of a more enlightened generation. "The scripture alone is truth," he said; and his doctrine was formed on that foundation alone. But it was the translation and circulation of the Bible that gave lasting efficacy to the holy truths which he taught, and was the imperishable crown of all his other labours - the treasure which he bequeathed to future and to better ages.*

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 175.}

So long as Wycliffe confined his vehement denunciations to the anti-christian spirit of the court of Rome, the wealth of the clergy, and the peculiar tenets of the papacy, so long he could count on many powerful protectors. He might sweep away one by one the many abuses of the system; but no sooner did he rise into the higher region of the positive truth and free grace of God, than the number and enthusiasm of his followers rapidly declined. His doctrinal controversy secured his banishment from Oxford about two years before his death. But this, in the providence of God, was overruled to give him a period of repose at the end of a laborious and stormy life. For many years he had preached the most distinguishing doctrines of the reformers of the sixteenth century, especially those held by Calvin. But his opposition to the Romish doctrine of salvation by works would naturally lead him to speak strongly. "To believe in the power of man in the work of regeneration," he would say, "is the great heresy of Rome, and from that error has come the ruin of the church. Conversion proceeds from the grace of God alone, and the system which ascribes it partly to man and partly to God is worse than Pelagianism. Christ is everything in Christianity; whosoever abandons that fountain which is ever ready to impart life, and turns to muddy and stagnant waters, is a madman. Faith is a gift of God, it puts aside all human merit, and should banish all fear from the mind. Let Christians submit not to the word of a priest, but to the word of God. In the primitive church there were but two orders, bishops and deacons: the presbyter and the bishop, or overseer, were one. The sublimest calling which man can attain on the earth is that of preaching the word of God. The true church is the assembly of the righteous for whom Christ shed

Such were the essential points of Wycliffe's preaching and pamphlets for nearly forty years, proclaimed with great fervour and ability in the midst of papal darkness, superstition and the worst forms of worldliness. To write the words which hand down to posterity so great, so glorious, a work of God's Spirit in our land, causes the heart to expand and arise to the throne of grace in praise and thanksgiving unfeigned, unmingled, unending. The popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, abbots, and doctors, who thirsted for his blood, have either perished from the page of history, or they are associated in our minds with the demon of persecution, while the name and the memory of John Wycliffe continue to be held with unimpaired and increasing veneration.*

{*See Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. 21, p. 949; D'Aubigne, vol. 5, p. 137.}

The Lollards

Wycliffe had organized no sect during his life, but the power of his teaching was manifested in the number and zeal of his disciples after his death. From the hut of the peasant to the palace of royalty, they were to be found everywhere under the vague name of "Lollards." Crowds gathered round their preachers. They denied the authority of Rome and maintained the absolute supremacy of the word of God alone. They maintained that the ministers of Christ should be poor, simple, and lead a spiritual life; and they publicly preached against the vices of the clergy. For a time they met with so much sympathy and success, that they no doubt thought the Reformation was about to triumph in England.

In the year 1395 the followers of Wycliffe boldly petitioned Parliament to "abolish celibacy, transubstantiation, prayers for the dead, offerings to images, auricular confession," and many other popish abuses, and then nailed their petition to the gates of St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. But these murmurs of a burdened and oppressed people were lost sight of for the moment in the dethronement and death of King Richard II., son of the favourite Black Prince, and the accession of Henry IV., the first of the Lancastrian dynasty.

When Henry, son of the famous Duke of Lancaster, the friend and patron of Wycliffe, ascended the throne, the Lollards naturally expected a warm supporter of their principles in the new king. But in this they were bitterly disappointed. Archbishop Arundel, the implacable enemy of the Lollards, had great influence with Henry. He had contributed more than all other adherents to the overthrow of Richard and to the usurpation of Henry. Arundel had great influence, was high-born, haughty, unscrupulous as a partisan, skilful as a politician, and withal, practised in the cunning and cruelty peculiar to the priesthood. He had made up his mind, through the influence of the king, to sacrifice the Lollards. Almost the first act of Henry IV. was to declare himself the champion of the clergy, the monks, and the friars, against their dangerous enemies.

The Statute for the Burning of Heretics

Down to the beginning of the fifteenth century there had been no statute law in England for the burning of heretics. In all other parts of Christendom the magistrate, as under the old Roman imperial law, had obeyed the mandate of the bishops. England stood alone: without a legal warrant no officer would have executed the ecclesiastical criminal. "In all other countries," says Milman, "the secular arm received the delinquent against the law of the church. The judgment was passed in the ecclesiastical court or that of the Inquisition; but the church, with a kind of evasion which it is difficult to clear from hypocrisy, would not be stained with blood. The clergy commanded, and that under the most awful threats, the fire to be lighted and the victim tied to the stake by others, and acquitted themselves of the cruelty of burning their fellow-creatures." But the end of this honourable distinction for England was come. The obsequious Henry, to gratify the archbishop, issued a royal edict, ordering every incorrigible heretic to be burnt alive. The lying tongues of the priests and friars had so industriously circulated reports of the wild and revolutionary purposes of the Lollards, that Parliament became alarmed and sanctioned the King's decree.

In the year 1400 "the burning of heretics" became a statute law in England. "On a high place in public, before the face of the people, the incorrigible heretic is to be burnt alive." The primate and the bishops hastened to their work.

William Sautree is the first victim under this terrible edict. He is the proto-martyr of Wycliffism. He was a preacher at St. Osyth's in London. Through natural fear of suffering he had recanted and again relapsed at Norwich; but afterwards, coming to London, and gaining more strength of mind through faith, he openly preached the gospel, and testified against transubstantiation. He was now doomed to the flames as a relapsed heretic. "The ceremony of his degradation," says the historian, "took place at St. Paul's, with all its minute, harassing, impressive formalities. He was then delivered over to the secular arm, and for the first time the air of London was darkened by the smoke of this kind of human sacrifice."

The second victim of this sanguinary edict was a plain working man. His crime was a common one among the Lollards - the denial of transubstantiation. This poor man, John Badby, was brought from Worcester to London to stand his trial. But what must the plain country-man have thought when he found himself before the dignified tribunal of the archbishops of Canterbury and York, the bishops of London Winchester, Oxford, Norwich, Salisbury, Bath, Bangor, St. David's, Edmund Duke of York, the Chancellor, and the Master of the Rolls? Arundel took great pains to persuade him that the consecrated bread was really and properly the body of Christ. Badby's answers were given with courage and firmness, and in words of simplicity and plain sense. He said that he would believe "the omnipotent God in Trinity," and said, moreover, "if every host being consecrated at the altar were the Lord's body, that then there be twenty thousand gods in England. But he believed in one God omnipotent." This incorrigible heretic was condemned to be burnt alive by these wolves, or rather fiends, in sheep's clothing. The Prince of Wales chanced to be passing through Smithfield just as the fire was kindling, or he came on purpose to witness the auto da fe. He looked on the calm inflexible martyr; but on the first sensation of the fire, he heard the word, "Mercy" fall from his lips. The prince, supposing that he was entreating the mercy of his judges, ordered him to be pulled out of the fire. "Will you forsake heresy?" said young Henry; "will you conform to the faith of holy mother church? If you will, you shall have a yearly maintenance out of the King's treasury." The martyr was unmoved. It was to the mercy of God, not of man, that he was appealing. Henry, in a rage, ordered him to be thrust back into the blazing faggots, and he gloriously finished his course in the flames.

The Constitutions of Arundel

Encouraged by the royal countenance, the clergy drew up the well-known Constitutions of Arundel, which forbade the reading of the Bible and the books of Wycliffe, asserting the pope to be "not of pure man, but of true God, here on the earth." Persecution now raged in England; a prison in the archiepiscopal palace at Lambeth, which received the name of the Lollards' tower, was crowded with the followers of Wycliffe. But there was a prisoner in the royal chamber as well as in the Lollards' tower. Death, the messenger of divine judgment to the unpardoned, had come. In the year 1413 Henry IV. died. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." These two dark and heavy clouds - death and judgment - were now ready to burst in all their fury on the unsheltered soul of the persecuting monarch. His last years were darkened by a loathsome disease - eruptions in his face. But oh! what must his future be! Darkened not merely by a temporal disease, which divine mercy restrains within certain limits, but with the full vengeance of eternal woe; and darkened and deepened still more by the fearful shadows of the burning piles in Smithfield. Oh death, oh judgment, oh eternity, great, terrible and certain! How is it, why is it, that man, in whose very nature this solemn truth is deeply planted, should be so forgetful, and so regardless?

One thing is certain with regard to future judgment and retribution, that even where such doctrines are not expressly denied, they are not made to occupy in the pulpit and in the press, the place which they hold in the New Testament. There is a very general disinclination to press, in the plain way of scripture, these most awful subjects. Yet it cannot be denied that the discourses of our blessed Lord - whose mission was love, the tenderest compassion, the richest grace - abound with the most solemn statements of future judgment. Some may say, that the fear of punishment is a comparatively low motive: be it so, but how many there are who have immortal souls, whose intelligence is such that they are not raised above such motives! God is wiser than man, and we so find with the fullest revelations of divine love, and the freest proclamations of salvation, the most solemn warnings are given. Listen to one: "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Ps. 2; Mat 11:20-30)

We now return to our history.

The witness of the execution of John Badby is now on the throne under the title of Henry V. But it is to be feared that the triumphs of divine grace in that simple artisan made no salutary impression on his mind. Few princes have had a worse character before they reached the throne and it was hoped that, having no religion, he would not be the slave of the hierarchy. But in this the Lollards were again bitterly disappointed. When he became king, he became religious according to the ideas of the time; and that was, to signalise his orthodoxy by suppressing heresy. Thomas Netter, a Carmelite, one of the bitterest opponents of Wycliffism, was his confessor. Under his influence the laws against heretics were now rigorously executed.

The Trial of Lord Cobham

The victims, under this fresh outbreak of persecution, were of all classes; but the most distinguished for character and for rank was Sir John Oldcastle, who, in right of his wife, sat in parliament as Lord Cobham. He is spoken of as a knight of the highest military reputation, and who had served with great distinction in the French wars. The whole ardour of his soul was now thrown into his religion. He was a Wycliffite - a believer in the word of God, a reader of Wycliffe's books, and a violent opposer of popery. He had caused numerous copies of the reformer's writings to be made, and encouraged the poor priests to circulate them, and to preach the gospel throughout the country. And so long as Henry IV. lived he was unmolested, the King would not permit the clergy to lay hands on his old favourite. But the young King had not the same appreciation of Sir John, though he knew something of his value as a brave soldier and a skilful general, and wished to save him.

The primate Arundel had been watching narrowly the movements of his antagonist, and resolved to crush him. He was accused of holding many heretical opinions, and on the ground of these crimes he was denounced to the King. He was summoned to appear and answer before Henry. Cobham protested the most submissive loyalty. "You I am most prompt and willing to obey: you are a christian king, the minister of God that bears not the sword in vain, for the punishment of wicked doers, and the reward of the righteous. To you, under God, I owe my whole obedience. Whatsoever you command me in the name of the Lord that I am ready to fulfil. To the pope I owe neither suit nor service, he is the great antichrist, the son of perdition, the abomination of desolation in the holy place." Henry thrust aside Cobham's hand as he presented his confession of faith: "I will not receive this paper: lay it before your judges." Lord Cobham retired to his strong castle of Cowling, near Rochester. The summonses and the excommunications of the archbishop he treated with utter contempt. The King was influenced to send one of his officers to apprehend him. The loyalty of the old baron bowed to the royal officer. Had it been any of the pope's agents, he would have settled the question with his sword according to the military spirit of the age, rather than have obeyed. He was led to the Tower. Ill-omened journey for nearly all who ever went that way!

The ecclesiastical tribunal such as John Badby stood before, was sitting at St. Paul's. The prisoner appeared. "We must believe," said Arundel, "what the holy church of Rome teaches, without demanding Christ's authority." He was called upon to confess his errors. "Believe!" shouted the priests, "believe!" "I am willing to believe all that God desires," said Sir John; "but that the pope should have authority to teach what is contrary to scripture, I never will believe." He was led back to the Tower. Two days after he was tried again in the Dominican convent. A crowd of priests, canons, friars, clerks, and indulgence-sellers, thronged the large hall of the convent, and attacked the prisoner with abusive language. The suppressed indignation of the old veteran at length burst out into a wild prophetic denunciation of the pope and the prelates. "Your wealth is the venom of the church," he cried with a loud voice. "What meanest thou," said Arundel, "by venom?" "Your possessions and your lordships .... Consider ye this, all men. Christ was meek and merciful; the pope haughty and a tyrant. Rome is the nest of anti-christ; out of that nest come his disciples." He was now adjudged a heretic and condemned.

Resuming his calm courage, he fell on his knees, and lifting up his hands unto heaven, exclaimed: "I confess to thee, O God! and acknowledge that in my frail youth I seriously offended Thee by my pride, anger, intemperance, and impurity: for these offences I implore Thy mercy!" With mild language, but with a stern and inflexible purpose, the wily priest endeavoured to reduce the high spirit of the baron, but in vain. "I will none otherwise believe than what I have told you. Do with me what you will. For breaking God's commandments man has never cursed me, but for breaking your traditions I and others are thus cruelly entreated." He was reminded that the day was passing, that he must either submit to the church or the law must take its course. "I ask not your absolution: it is God's only that I need." said the honest knight, his face still wet with tears. The sentence of death was then read by Arundel with a clear and loud voice, all the priests and people standing with their heads uncovered. "It is well," replied the intrepid Cobham, "though you condemn my body, you have no power over my soul." He again knelt down and prayed for his enemies. He was led back to the Tower; but before the day appointed for his execution he made his escape.

Rumours of conspiracies, of a general rising of the Lollards, were now circulated by the priests and friars. The King became alarmed; about forty persons were instantly put on trial and executed; a new and violent statute was passed for the suppression of the Lollards; the government was afraid of such a man as Cobham heading the insurrection; a thousand marks was offered for his arrest. It does not appear that there was any ground for these alarms, except in the lies of the priests - their false rumours. For about three years Lord Cobham was concealed in Wales. He was retaken in December 1417, and suffered without delay.

The Martyrdom of Lord Cobham

The once valiant knight, the man whom the King honoured, was now ignominiously dragged on a hurdle to St. Gile's-in-the-Fields, and there suffered a double execution. He was suspended on a gallows over a slow fire, and then burned to death. Many persons of rank and distinction were present. Before his execution he fell on his knees and implored forgiveness for his enemies. He then addressed the multitude, exhorting them to follow the instructions which God had given them in His holy word; and to disclaim those false teachers, whose lives and conversation were so contrary to Christ and His example. He refused the services of a priest: "To God only, now as ever present, I confess and entreat His pardon," was his ready answer. The people wept and prayed with him and for him. In vain did the priests affirm that he was suffering as a heretic, and as an enemy to God. The people believed in him. His last words, drowned by the crackling of flames, were "Praise God;" and, in his chariot of fire, surrounded by the angels of God, he joined on high the noble army of martyrs.

How sweet the song of victory

That ends the battle's roar;

And sweet the weary warrior's rest

When all his toils are o'er.

The London prisons at this time were filled with Wycliffites, awaiting the vengeance of the persecuting clergy. "They should be hanged on the King's account, and burned on God's account," was the cry of the false priests of Rome. From this time until the Reformation their sufferings were severe. Those who escaped prison and death, were compelled to hold their religious meetings in secret. But the papal influence gradually decreased and prepared the way for the Reformation in the next century.

Henry Chicheley, who succeeded Arundel as Archbishop of Canterbury, not only followed in his footsteps, but exceeded him in his exterminating wars against the Lollards. He is called by Milner "the firebrand of his age." He urged on Henry in his contest with France, which caused an enormous loss of human life and the most dreadful miseries to both kingdoms. Arundel seems to have died by the hand of the Lord. Soon after he read the sentence of death on Lord Cobham, he was seized with a malady in the throat, of which he died. But here we leave them, and follow the Spirit of God who is working in other lands and preparing the way for a glorious Reformation in Europe.*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 5, p. 147; Milner, vol. 3, p. 242, Milman, vol. 6, p 154; Fox's Acts and Monuments.}

31 Bohemia

Chapter 31

The Reformation Movement in Bohemia

It is truly satisfactory to know, that the blessed soul-saving truths of the gospel, which had been taught by Wycliffe and his followers, were already producing results of a wide and lasting importance: that in spite of all the burnings and slayings of Rome, they were sinking deep into the hearts of thousands and hundreds of thousands, and spreading in nearly all parts of Europe. The Bishop of Lodi in the council of Constance, A.D. 1416 - a year before the martyrdom of Cobham, and thirty-six years after the translation of the Bible - declared that the heresies of Wycliffe and Huss were spread over England, France, Italy, Hungary, Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, and through all Bohemia. Thus a bitter enemy is unconsciously, or unintentionally, the witness of the influence and the inextinguishable vitality of the good seed of the word of God.

But here it will be necessary to clear our way by saying a few words on the great papal schism, before tracing the broad silver line of God's grace in the testimony and martyrdom of Huss and Jerome.

The Council of Pisa

At the commencement of the fifteenth century, the Roman Catholic church had two heads - two rival popes, Benedict XIII. at Avignon, and Gregory XII. at Rome. Each claimed to be the representative of Christ on earth, and each accused the other before the world of falsehood, perjury, and the most nefarious secret designs. So scandalous was the conduct of these two old gray-headed prelates each above seventy years of age, that all Europe beheld with shame and indignation the obstinacy and wickedness of the contending pontiffs. What was to be done, that the wounds of the divided church might be healed? Kings and cardinals began to use both force and entreaty to induce both popes to resign their claims that one might be unanimously chosen in their stead. They promised, under oath, that they would voluntarily resign if the interests of the church should require it; but they had no sooner promised than they dissembled, deceived their cardinals, and violated their pledges. Finding that no dependence could be placed on their word, that they were men without truth, honour, or religion, the cardinals of Benedict revolted and joined the cardinals of Gregory, and the two colleges assembled at Leghorn to consider what could be done to put an end to this long and disgraceful schism. They came to the conclusion that, under the circumstances, they had an undoubted right to convoke a council which might judge between the two competitors for the popedom, and restore the church to its unity.

Pisa, a walled city in central Italy, was selected as the most suitable place for the proposed council. This was an entirely new thing in Christendom. About a dozen cardinals, without the sanction of pope or emperor, called together the famous Council of Pisa. His infallibility was now made amenable to a new tribunal, and the highest prerogative of his throne usurped; but he had so lost the respect of mankind that the whole church justified the cardinals in assuming power over him.

The council was opened on the 25th of March, 1409. The assembly was one of the most august and numerous ever seen in the history of Christendom. We will give a few details to show the youthful reader what an Ecumenical Council was in those days when Roman Catholicism was the religion of Europe. There were present twenty-two cardinals; the Latin patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Grade; twelve archbishops were present in person, and fourteen by their proctors; eighty bishops, and the proctors of one hundred and two; eighty-seven abbots, and the proctors of two hundred others; besides priors; generals of orders; the grand master of Rhodes, with sixteen commanders; the prior-general of the knights of the holy sepulchre; the deputy of the grand master and knight of the Teutonic Order; the deputies to the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Florence, Cracow, Vienna, Prague, and many others; more than three hundred doctors of theology; and ambassadors from the Kings of England, France, Portugal, Bohemia, Sicily, Poland, and Cyprus; from the Dukes of Burgundy Brabant, etc. Roads and rivers in all directions were covered for weeks with the pomp and splendour of these dignitaries. Some of them entered Pisa with two hundred horses in their train. *

{*Landon's Manual of Councils.}

The assembly continued its sittings from March till August. After much deliberation in due form, the contesting popes were unanimously condemned. On the 5th of June sentence was passed. Both were declared to be heretical, perjured, contumacious, prohibited from assuming any longer the sovereign pontificate, and unworthy of any honour: the papacy was declared vacant. The next step was to elect a new pope. This was a more difficult matter. Where is the man, possessing such qualities, as will win back the reverence of mankind for the supreme pontiff? was now the grave question. Twenty-four cardinals, after being shut up for ten days, decided upon Peter of Candia, Cardinal of Milan, seventy years of age, who took the name of Alexander V. But the two old pontiffs despised the decrees of the council, and continued to perform their functions as legitimate popes. Benedict fulminated his anathemas against the council and against his rivals; Gregory did the same, having entered into an alliance with the ambitious Ladislaus, King of Naples, Alexander, who was still without the chair and the patrimony of St. Peter, issued his anathemas and excommunications against Benedict, Gregory, and Ladislaus, who had taken possession of the dominions of the Roman See.

Murmurs were now heard in all quarters that the council, instead of extinguishing the schism, had but added a third pope. Where is now the boasted unity of the Roman Catholic church? we may inquire; and through which pope does apostolic succession flow? The three popes, of whom Christendom was ashamed and weary, fiercely assailed each other with reciprocal excommunications, reproaches, and anathemas. Alexander V. lived only about a year, and his place was filled by John XXIII., a man, says Mosheim, destitute of principle and piety. The difficulties were greater than ever; the papal kingdom thus divided against itself could not stand, it was on the eve of total ruin. Some advised that the European powers should unite and sweep away the name and power of the pontiff, or at least limit his autocracy. It was now manifest that the popes themselves would make no personal sacrifice for the peace of the church; so what next could be done to arrest the disgraceful war of the pontiffs and heal the wounds of the divided church, was now the perplexing question. Had the church been left it itself, Ladislaus might then have taken complete possession of Rome and all the papal provinces, and left the chair of St. Peter a throne in name only. But the princes of the earth were not yet prepared for such a sacrilegious overthrow. It awaited the days of Victor Emmanuel.

Sigismund, Emperor of Germany, the King of France, and other kings and princes of Europe, who showed more concern for the credit and welfare of the church than the selfish popes, prevailed on John XXIII. to assemble a general council of the whole church, for the purpose of bringing to a close this great controversy.

The Council of Constance

Constance, an imperial city on the German side of the Alps, was agreed upon as a suitable place for the gathering of such an assembly. It was accessible from all parts of the world, and provisions could be more easily obtained by means of its spacious lake. So great was the influx of persons, that it was reckoned that not less than thirty thousand horses were brought to Constance, which may give us some idea of the enormous concourse of people; and the ship-loads of provisions that would be required. Besides ecclesiastical dignitaries of every name innumerable, there were more than a hundred princes; one hundred and eight counts; two hundred barons; and twenty-seven knights. Tournaments, feasts, and various amusements were arranged by way of relief from their spiritual occupations; five hundred minstrels were in attendance to beguile the vacant hours of these holy priests and noblemen, and to soothe their anxious minds; they had come together for the avowed purpose of healing the almost deadly wound of antichrist; but what are the facts of history? For the space of three years and a half - commencing November 5th, 1414 - these dissolute men filled the quiet ancient city of Constance with their unblushing wickedness. To write that which was then open as day would defile the pages of our history. The heart shudders as we think of the pollution, the daring impiety and hypocrisy, of these so-called holy fathers, to say nothing of their remorseless cruelty in the burning of Huss and Jerome.

The object of this great council was twofold. 1, To put an end to the schism which had afflicted the church for so many years. 2, For the suppression of the heresies of Wycliffe and Huss. The first of these objects was so far satisfactorily accomplished. Having established that a pontiff is subject to a council of the whole church, John XXIII. was deposed on account of the irregularities of his life, and the violation of his oath to the Emperor. Gregory and Benedict were again deposed, and Otho de Colonna was elected pontiff, and assumed the name of Martin V.

The doctrines of Wycliffe, which John Huss and his followers were accused of propagating in the cities and villages of Bohemia, even in the University of Prague, were most offensive to the members of the council, and now engaged their attention.

The Spread of the Truth

The marriage of Anne of Bohemia to Richard II. of England had brought the two countries into close connection, just at the moment when the doctrines of Wycliffe were making their most rapid progress. "Bohemian scholars," says Milman, "sat at the feet of the bold professor of theology at Oxford; English students were found at Prague. The writings of Wycliffe were thus brought into Germany in great numbers, some in Latin, some translated into Bohemian, and disseminated by admiring partizans." The princess, whose pious exercises and study of the scriptures have been commemorated by preachers and historians, had been first affected by the reforming movement in her own land. She brought with her to England versions of the Gospels in the German and Bohemian tongues as well as in Latin. These were then precious treasures to one of her piety and love for the pure word of God; but they also show us, though indirectly, the progress which the new doctrines were making in Germany at that early period.

One of her first acts in this country shows the power of the grace of Christ in her heart, and presents a striking contrast to the persecuting spirit of Jezebel. "Some days after the marriage of the royal pair," says Miss Strickland, "they returned to London, and the coronation of the Queen was performed most magnificently. At the young Queen's earnest request a general pardon was granted by the King at her consecration. The afflicted people stood in need of this respite, as the executions, since Wat Tyler's insurrection, had been bloody and barbarous beyond all precedent. The land was reeking with the blood of the unhappy peasantry, when the humane intercession of the gentle Anne of Bohemia put a stop to the executions. This mediation obtained for Richard's bride the title of 'The good Queen Anne;' and years, instead of impairing the popularity, usually so evanescent in England, only increased the esteem felt by her subjects for this beneficent princess."

How truly refreshing to meet with such an instance of consistent piety at such a period, and in such a station of life! But there were many such at that time in Bohemia and other lands. After the death of Anne, her Bohemian attendants returned to their own country, and carried with them the valuable writings of John Wycliffe. These had been studied by many foreigners at Oxford, and they were now diligently read by the members of the university of Prague.

The most famous of these doctors was John Huss, or John of Hassinetz, a village near the Bavarian frontier. He was born about the year 1369, so that he must have been about fifteen years of age when his admired and acknowledged teacher, the venerable Wycliffe, died. It is interesting to look back and contemplate the ways of our God in His care for the maintenance and spread of the truth. Who then could have thought, that in an obscure village in Bohemia, He was raising up and qualifying a noble witness, who was to bear, in his turn, "the torch of truth, and to transmit it with a martyr's hand to a long succession of witnesses - and he was worthy of the heavenly office?"* He was early distinguished, we are informed, by the force and acuteness of his understanding, the modesty and gravity of his demeanour, and the irreproachable austerity of his life. He was tall, slender, with a thoughtful countenance; gentle, friendly, and accessible to all. His talents being of a high order, he was sent to the university of Prague, with the view of studying for the church. Here he distinguished himself by his extensive attainments as a scholar. He advanced rapidly in church and university preferments, and was made confessor to the Queen Sophia. He was also appointed preacher in the university chapel, called Bethlehem - the house of bread - on account of the spiritual food which was there to be distributed in the vernacular tongue.

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 175.}

This gave the bold and eloquent preacher an excellent opportunity for unfolding the word of God to the people in their mother-tongue; and we doubt not that he did so, for he was a sincere Christian and a true witness for Christ. But like most, if not all reformers, he may have been more anxious at first to preach against prevailing abuses than to instruct the people in the pure truth of God. We are convinced that this has generally been the case, and in all kinds of reform, and must account for many scenes of violence in the best of causes. If the people were led, first of all, through the blessing of God, to receive the truth, especially the truth as it is in Jesus, the end would be gained without the mind being inflamed by hearing denounced in strong language the vices of their priestly oppressors. The pride, luxury, and licentiousness of the whole clerical system had become intolerable to mankind; so that to condemn the abuses without touching the doctrines of the church was the high road to popularity.

God is wiser than men; and if we are guided by His word, we shall seek to lead the ignorant to love the truth and follow it, rather than create in their minds a hatred for error which, without the knowledge of Christ, is sure to end in revolutionary excitement and disaster. This divine principle is applicable to the smallest disputes as well as the greatest among men. It is always better to enlighten than to agitate. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." (2Ti 2:24-26)

Civil Commotions

Good man as John Huss was, he had overlooked the wholesome advice of the apostle. He first became involved in a university quarrel as to the privileges of the students; and again his opposition to Gregory XII. gave great offence to the archbishop of Bohemia, who sided with the anti-pope. Prohibitory decrees were issued against Huss, but, being a great favourite at court and with the people, nothing was done. He was allowed to continue his preaching in the vernacular language. But in a few short months circumstances arose which kindled anew the flames of religious contention in Bohemia.

Among the first acts of John XXIII. was to send forth his emissaries to preach a crusade against Ladislaus, King of Naples, and to offer the usual indulgences. The vendors of these indulgences, while haranguing the people about the value of their wares, were interrupted and exposed to insult and outrage. The magistrates interfered; some of the rioters were seized and privately executed; but the blood which flowed from the prison into the street betrayed the fate of the prisoners. Women dipped their handkerchiefs in the blood to treasure it as a precious relic; the passions of the multitude were stirred to the uttermost; the town-house was stormed, the headless bodies of these young men were carried off by the people, and borne in solemn procession to the various churches, chanting holy anthems. They were at length buried in the chapel of Bethlehem, with the aromatic offerings usually deposited on the tombs of martyrs. The three young men were now spoken of in sermons and writings as saints and martyrs, and the fermentation increased.

John Huss, knowing that he was suspected and accused of being the prime mover in the whole affair, wisely withdrew for a time from the city. He was summoned, but without effect, to appear before the tribunal of the Vatican. Huss was now declared to be under the ban of excommunication, and the place of his residence to be under the papal interdict. Regardless of these church censures, he continued preaching all over the country. The minds of the people being already greatly excited were easily aroused to the greatest indignation against the clergy. Nearly the whole of the kingdom was on his side, at least as against the abuses of the hierarchy.

The Imprisonment of John Huss

The agitation which these events had produced was not allayed when the Council of Constance assembled. The emperor Sigismund, who had convened the council, requested his brother the king, Wenceslaus, to send Huss to Constance, and promised him a safe-conduct. The terms of this passport were very explicit; it required all the emperor's subjects to allow the doctor to pass and repass in full security. Huss readily obeyed the emperor's summons, as he had always desired the opportunity of appealing to a general council. He arrived in Constance earlier than the emperor, and was immediately brought before the pope, John XXIII., for examination. His doctrines were well known, a long list of charges was brought against him; and as he refused to retract them, he was thrown into prison on a charge of heresy, notwithstanding the safe-conduct of the emperor. And in order to justify their flagrant breach of honour and pacify Sigismund, they passed a decree that no faith ought to be kept with a heretic.

Loud complaints were sent to the emperor from Bohemia. He received the first intimation of the imprisonment of Huss with indignation, and threatened to break open the prison. But on reaching Constance he was plied with arguments from the canon law, urging that the civil power did not extend to the protection of a heretic, and the treacherous priests absolved him from all responsibility. He now allowed the enemies of Huss to take their course. In the gloom of a loathsome dungeon, without a breath of fresh air, and harassed by priests and monks, the reformer became very ill. But the deluded emperor cared for none of these things. Historians, however, have not been wanting who utterly condemn the faithless conduct of the emperor, and charge him with having violated truth, honour, and humanity, in surrendering Huss to the will of the priests. "Breach of faith," says Milman, "admits of no excuse; and perfidy is twice perfidious in an emperor." Others affirm that in thus sacrificing Huss, he heaped up for himself many troubles which came upon him during the remainder of his reign. But what shall we say of the future - of the dark future under the fearful shadow of that heartless abandonment of a true servant of Christ to the merciless priests of Rome? The Master will not forget to own in that day His identification with His servant, and that in the most touching way "Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." But if such be the guilt of the emperor, what must be the guilt of the pope and the prelates? We must leave the answer to the great white throne.

Already the most gloomy forebodings were gathering around the pope. In the first session of the council, it was proposed that the three popes should resign, prior to the election of a new pontiff. John, the only one of the three present, promised to resign for the peace of the church, and to read his own abdication the following day. But promises, or oaths, or honour, were nothing to John. By the assistance of some friends he escaped from Constance in the disguise of a postillion. The emperor was betrayed and indignant. There was a hot pursuit after John; he was caught in Switzerland and brought back a prisoner; but unlike his victim, Huss, he was conscience-stricken, without honour, without dignity, without courage. He was now compelled to give up the insignia of universal spiritual power, the papal seal, and the fisherman's ring. Robert Hallam, bishop of Salisbury, at the head of the English, in a burst of righteous indignation, declared that a pope so covered with crime deserved to be burned at the stake. He was taken to the castle of Gotleben, where the good John Huss had been pining in irons for some months. There pope John languished till the close of the session, which was nearly four years; but, after humbling himself at the feet of the reigning pontiff, he was raised to the rank of a cardinal, and permitted to close his days in peace. But no such leniency was exercised towards the righteous and blameless Reformer, whose examination and execution we will now briefly trace.

The Examination of John Huss

In the first movement against Huss, the archbishop of Prague instituted a vigilant search for the translations of Wycliffe's writings; and having collected about two hundred volumes, many of them richly bound and decorated with precious ornaments, he caused them to be publicly burnt in the market-place at Prague. Much was said as to the identity of the doctrines of Huss with those of Wycliffe, which the council condemned as heretical under forty-five propositions; and decreed that his bones should be taken out of their grave and burned. Huss was also charged with being "infected with the leprosy of the Waldenses." Under these two general heads, Wycliffism and Waldensianism, a vast number of special charges, grossly offensive to the hierarchy, were contained.

The council, although bent on the destruction of Huss, would willingly have avoided the scandal of a public examination. Certain passages which his enemies had extracted from his writings were thought sufficient for his condemnation without a public hearing. Accordingly, he was continually harassed and persecuted in his cell by private visits, urging him to retract or confess; and not infrequently taunted and insulted. He remonstrated against this inquisitorial secrecy, and demanded for his defence an audience of the whole council. His faithful friend, John of Chlum, with other Bohemian noblemen, requested the emperor to interfere, and with his assistance the object of the fathers was defeated, and a public trial was obtained.

On the 5th of June, 1415, John Huss was brought in chains into the great senate of Christendom. The charges against him were read. But when he proposed to maintain his doctrines by the authority of the scriptures and the testimony of the Fathers, his voice was drowned in a tumult of contempt and derision. The assembly was compelled to adjourn its proceedings. Two days after he was brought up again, and Sigismund himself attended to preserve order.

The accusers of Huss were numerous, though less clamorous than the previous day. With the exception of two or three Bohemian noblemen, the reformer stood alone. He was greatly exhausted by illness, and enfeebled by long confinement, but his noble spirit refused to bend before the violence of his persecutors. He answered with great calmness and dignity, "I will not retract unless you can prove what I have said to be contrary to the word of God," was his usual reply. When charged with having preached Wycliffite doctrines, he admitted that he had said, "Wycliffe was a true believer, that his soul was now in heaven, that he could not wish his own soul more safe than Wycliffe's." This confession drew forth a burst of contemptuous laughter from the reverend fathers; and, after some hours of turbulent discussion, Huss was removed, and the assembly broke up; he went to his prison, and they, at least many of them, to their scenes of grossest dissipation.

The Council Embarrassed

The following day Huss stood a third time before the council. Thirty-nine propositions were produced and read, alleging errors which he had advanced in his writings, his preachings, and his private conversations. Huss, like most reformers, held the doctrine of salvation by grace without works of law. He affirmed that none were members of the true church of Christ whatever their dignity, whether popes or cardinals, if they were ungodly. "True faith in the word of God," he said, "is the foundation of all virtues." He appealed to the honoured name of Augustine on these points; and maintained that the only title of churchman, prelate, or pope to apostolic succession was to possess the virtues of the apostles. "The pontiff who lives not the life of St. Peter is no vicar of Christ, but the forerunner of antichrist." He quoted a sentence from St. Bernard which gave great weight to this solemn saying: "The slave of avarice is the successor not of St. Peter, but of Judas Iscariot." The council was embarrassed, as no churchman would venture to turn into ridicule the sayings of such honoured Fathers.

The propositions treated chiefly of two things: - 1, The false theology of Rome - Huss had denounced the popish doctrine of salvation by works, in the many ways which the church prescribes; 2, The false ecclesiastical system of popery with its glaring abuses - these he exposed and condemned in the most unsparing terms. But his condemnation seems to have hinged on his boldly maintaining that no office, king or priest, availed in God's sight, if the king or the priest lived in mortal sin. When interrogated on this point by the cardinal of Cambray, who saw his perilous position in the presence of the emperor, Huss repeated his words aloud - "A king in mortal sin is no king before God." These words sealed his fate. "There never lived," said Sigismund, "a more pernicious heretic." "What!" exclaimed the cardinal, "art thou not content with degrading the ecclesiastical power? wouldst thou thrust kings from their thrones?" "A man," argued another cardinal, "may be a true pope, prelate, or king, though not a true Christian." "Why, then," said Huss, "have you deposed John XXIII.?" The emperor answered, "For his notorious misdeeds." Huss was now guilty of another sin - discomfiting and perplexing his adversaries.

It would be tedious and uninteresting to notice all the false charges and calumnies which were heaped upon him, and the firm answers which he gave; but the following may be considered as the substance of his long trial. He was vehemently pressed to retract his errors, to own the justice of the accusations, to make unqualified submission to the decrees of the council, to abjure all his opinions. But neither promises nor menaces moved him. "To abjure," he said, "is to renounce an error that has been held. As to the opinions imputed to me which I have never held, those I cannot retract, as to those which I do indeed profess, I am ready to retract them - to renounce them with all my heart - when I shall be better instructed by the council." The fathers replied to the conscientious integrity of their victim, "The province of the council is not to instruct but to decide, to command obedience to its decisions or to enforce the penalty." The tender shepherds of Constance now loudly demanded a universal retraction, or to burn alive the atrocious heretic. The emperor condescended to argue with him, the most able and subtle of the doctors, both in philosophy and theology, reasoned with him; but Huss replied with firm humility that he sought instruction; that he could not abjure errors of which he was not convinced. He was carried back to prison; the faithful Bohemian knight - John of Chlum - a true Onesiphorus - followed to console his worn and weary friend. "Oh, what a comfort to me," said Huss, "to see that this nobleman did not disdain to stretch out his arm to a poor heretic in irons, whom all the world, as it were, had forsaken."

The Judgment of Sigismund

The court being cleared of the prisoner, the emperor rose and said, "You have heard the charges against Huss, some confessed by himself, some proved by trustworthy witnesses. In my judgment each of these crimes is deserving of death. If he does not forswear all his errors, he must be burned .... the evil must be extirpated root and branch, if any of his partizans are in Constance, they must be proceeded against with the utmost severity, especially his disciple Jerome of Prague." When Huss was informed of the emperor's judgment, he merely replied, "I was warned not to trust to his safe-conduct. I have been under a sad delusion; he has condemned me even before mine enemies."

After this mockery of a trial and final audience he was left in prison for nearly a month. During this time persons of the highest rank visited him and entreated him to abjure the errors which were imputed to him. It was hoped that, through increasing bodily infirmity and private importunity he might be overcome. But not so. He who enabled him to stand firm before public threatenings and insults was with him still. "If I abjure errors," he said, "that were falsely laid to my charge, that would be nothing less than perjury." He regarded his fate as sealed, although all through his trial and imprisonment he professed himself willing to renounce any opinion that could be proved untrue from scripture. The real object of these private solicitations on the part of the prelates was to shake his constancy, and induce him to retract. With the view so beautifully expressed by Waddington we entirely agree: "Many individuals of various characters, but alike anxious to save him from the last infliction, visited his prison, and pressed him with a variety of motives and arguments; but they were all blunted by the rectitude of his conscience and the singleness of his purpose. One of his bitterest enemies, named Paletz, was among the number; but though his counsels had been successful in degrading the person of the reformer, they failed when they would have seduced him to infamy."

On the eve of the day destined for his execution, he was visited by his true and faithful friend, John of Chlum - a name which is worthy to be everywhere recorded with all honour - a name that stands almost alone for christian feeling and virtue in that vast assembly of professedly christian teachers, and that redeems our common humanity from treachery and cruelty. "My dear master," said the noble disciple, "I am unlettered, and consequently unfit to counsel one so enlightened as you. Nevertheless, if you are secretly conscious of any one of those errors which have been publicly imputed to you, I do entreat you not to feel any shame in retracting it; but if, on the contrary, you are convinced of your innocence, I am so far from advising you to say anything against your conscience, that I exhort you rather to endure every form of torture than to renounce anything which you hold to be true." Huss was greatly overcome by the wise and affectionate counsel of his faithful friend, and replied with tears, "That God was his witness how ready he had ever been, and still was, to retract an oath, and with his whole heart, from the moment he should be convinced of any error by evidence from holy scripture."

It is perfectly evident from all history, that in the sufferings and the fortitude of Huss there is no trace of pride or stubbornness. He was firm, but he was humble; he expected death, he prepared to meet it, but never planned or schemed to escape it. "I have appealed," he said, "to Jesus Christ, the One all-powerful and all-just Judge; to Him I commit my cause, who will judge every man, not according to false witnesses and erring councils, but according to truth and man's desert." This was the crowning act of his wickedness; the fatal hour was now come.

The Condemnation of Huss

On the morning of July 6th, 1415, the council met in the cathedral. Huss, as a heretic, was detained in the porch while Mass was celebrated. The bishop of Lodi preached from the text, "That the body of sin might be destroyed." (Rom 6:6) It would be difficult to say, whether from gross ignorance or malice he perverted the word of God to the purpose of the council. It was a fierce declamation against heresies and errors, but chiefly against Huss, who was pronounced to be as bad as Arius, and worse than Sabellius. He closed with adulatory praise to the Emperor. "It is thy glorious office to destroy heresies and schisms, especially this obstinate heretic," pointing to the prisoner, who was kneeling in an elevated place and in fervent prayer. About thirty articles of accusation were read. Huss frequently attempted to speak but was not allowed. The sentence was then passed: - "That for several years John Huss has seduced and scandalized the people by the dissemination of many doctrines manifestly heretical, and condemned by the church, especially those of John Wycliffe. That he has obstinately trampled upon the keys of the church and the ecclesiastical censures, that he has appealed to Jesus Christ as sovereign judge, to the contempt of the ordinary judges of the church; and that such an appeal was injurious, scandalous, and made in derision of ecclesiastical authority. That he has persisted to the last in his errors, and even maintained them in full council. It is therefore ordained that he be publicly deposed and degraded from holy orders as an obstinate and incorrigible heretic." Huss prayed for the forgiveness of his enemies, which called forth derision from some members of the council; but in the midst of it all he lifted up his hands, and exclaimed, "Behold, most gracious Saviour, how the council condemns as an error what thou hast prescribed and practised, when, overborne by enemies, thou committedst thy cause to God thy Father, leaving us this example, that when we are oppressed we may have recourse to the judgment of God. " In his closing remarks he turned and looked steadily at Sigismund, and said, "I came to this council under the public faith of the Emperor." A deep blush passed over his face at this sudden and unexpected rebuke.

The Degradation and Execution of John Huss

The archbishop of Milan and six assisting bishops performed the inglorious ceremony of degradation. Huss was clothed in priestly garments, the sacramental cup was put into his hand, and he was led to the high altar as if about to celebrate Mass. The devoted martyr calmly observed, "that his Redeemer had been arrayed with royal robes in mockery." The bishops appointed then proceeded to the office of degradation. He was stripped, one by one, of his sacred vestments, the cup was taken from his hand, the tonsure was obliterated by the scissors, a paper crown, daubed over with demons, was placed on his head, and with the superscription, Heresiarch. The prelates then piously devoted his soul to the regions of eternal woe. "Accursed Judas, who, having forsaken the counsel of peace, art entered into that of the Jews, we take this holy cup from thee, in which is the blood of Jesus Christ." But God stood by His faithful servant in a remarkable way, and enabled him to cry aloud, "I trust, in the mercy of God, I shall drink of it this day in His kingdom." "We devote thy soul to the infernal demons," said the prelates. "But I," said Huss, "commit my spirit into Thy hands, O Lord Jesus Christ; unto Thee I commend my soul which Thou hast redeemed."

In the most awfully solemn mockery and daring hypocrisy, the false church thought to rid itself of the stain of blood by declaring Huss to be cut off from the ecclesiastical body, released from the grasp of the church, and consigned as a layman to the vengeance of the secular arm. The Emperor now took charge of the outcast, and commanded his immediate execution. The Elector Palatine, with eight hundred horse, and a great multitude from the city, conducted the martyr to the stake. They stopped before the bishop's palace, where a heap of his books which had been condemned by the council were burning. He only smiled at this feeble act of vengeance. He endeavoured to speak to the people and the imperial guards in German, but the Elector prevented him and ordered him to be burned. But nothing could disturb the peace of his mind: God was with him. He chanted the psalms as he went along, and prayed with such fervour, that the people of the town said, "What this man has done, we know not, but we hear him offer up most excellent prayers to God." On reaching the place of execution, he kneeled down, prayed for the forgiveness of his enemies, and commended his soul into the hands of Christ.

Even after Huss was tied to the stake, and the wood piled around him, the Elector asked him if he would not now recant and save his life. He nobly replied, "What I have written and taught was in order to rescue souls from the power of the devil, and to deliver them from the tyranny of sin, and I do gladly seal what I have written and taught with my blood." The faggots were then lighted; he remained firm and suffered with unshaken constancy, but his sufferings were brief. The Lord permitted a rising volume of smoke to suffocate his faithful martyr before the fire had scorched him. With the last feeble accents of his voice he was heard singing the praise of Jesus who died to save him. His ashes were carefully collected, and thrown into the lake, but his happy soul was now with Jesus in the paradise of God. The faithful piety of his affectionate followers tore up the earth from the spot of his martyrdom, carried it to Bohemia, moistened it with their tears, and preserved it as a relic of one whose name is never to be forgotten, but ever to be loved.

Thus died, thus slept in Jesus, one of the true harbingers of the Reformation. It is admitted by historians generally that he was one of the most blameless and virtuous of men, that the records of his constancy are not infected by a single stain of mere philosophical stoicism, or tainted by vanity, in anticipating a martyr's crown. But his death has affixed the brand of eternal infamy on the council that condemned him and on the Emperor that betrayed him. His beloved friend and brother in Christ, Jerome of Prague, soon followed him to his home and rest on high.

The Arrest and Imprisonment of Jerome

The news of the imprisonment of Huss greatly affected his friend and fellow-labourer, Jerome of Prague. He followed him to the council; but being warned by Huss of his danger, and finding that a safe-conduct could not be obtained, he left for Bohemia; but he was arrested, and brought back to Constance in chains. Immediately after his arrest, and laden with many chains, he was examined before a general congregation of the council. There were many to accuse and taunt him; among them was the far-famed Gerson of Paris. But the prisoner firmly declared that he was willing to lay down his life in defence of the gospel he had preached. At the close of the day he was remanded till the case of Huss was settled and committed to the care of the archbishop of Rigo. This cruel monster of a priest treated him with great barbarity. Jerome was a master in theology, though a layman, and a man of acknowledged piety, learning, and eloquence. The body of this catholic christian gentleman, who held a high place in the highest circles in Bohemia, was fastened to a tall upright beam, his head left to hang down his arms and his feet bound. Several months of weary confinement, in chains in darkness on low diet, and none to comfort or strengthen him! - his mind and spirit failed under his sufferings. He was persuaded to make a full retraction of all errors against the Catholic faith, especially those of Wycliffe and John Huss.

Poor Jerome! having abjured the opinions which had been imputed to him, he was entitled to liberty, but there was neither feeling, faith, honour, nor justice in the assembly. He was thrown back into prison under alleged suspicions as to the sincerity of his recantations. This opened the eyes of Jerome. God used it to the restoring of his soul. He bitterly repented his recantation; communion with God was again enjoyed: he rejoiced once more in the light of His countenance. Fresh charges were brought against him, that he might be seduced to a deeper humiliation. But the locks of the Nazarite had grown in his loathsome prison. At his final examination, being allowed to speak for himself, he surprised his enemies by asserting that his condemnation of Wycliffe and Huss was a sin which he deeply repented. He began by calling upon God to govern his heart by His grace, that his lips might advance nothing but what should conduce to the blessing of his soul. "I am not ignorant," he exclaimed, "that many excellent men have been borne down by false witnesses, and unjustly condemned." He then ran down the long list of scripture, noticing such cases as Joseph, Isaiah, Daniel, the prophets, John the Baptist, the blessed Lord Himself, His apostles, and Stephen. He then dwelt on all the great men of antiquity who had been the victims of false accusation, and who had laid down their lives for the truth.

The glowing eloquence of Jerome excited the wonder and admiration of his enemies, especially when they considered that for three hundred and forty days he had been immured in a dungeon. All his calm intrepidity had returned, or rather, he now spoke in the power of the Holy Spirit. He declared that no act of his life had caused him such remorse as his cowardly abjuration. "This sinful retraction," he exclaimed, "I now fully retract, and am resolved to maintain the tenets of Wycliffe and Huss to death, believing them to be the true and pure doctrines of the gospel, even as their lives were blameless and holy." No further proof of his heresy was required - he was condemned as a relapsed heretic. The bishop of Lodi was again called upon to preach the funeral sermon. His text was, "He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart," applying it especially to the incorrigible heretic before him. (Mar 16:14) In reply Jerome addressed the council, and said, "You have condemned me without having convicted me of any crime; a sting will be left on your consciences, a worm that shall never die. I appeal to the Supreme Judge, before whom you must appear with me to answer for this day." Poggius, a Roman Catholic writer then present, declares, "Every ear was captivated, and every heart touched; but the assembly was very unruly and indecent." Like Paul before Agrippa, Jerome was no doubt the happiest man in that vast assembly. He was enjoying the promised presence of His blessed Lord and Master.

The Execution of Jerome

On the 30th of May 1416, Jerome was delivered to the secular arm. The council vainly thought that, by making the civil magistrate the executioner of its unrighteous decrees, it would avoid the enduring stain of blood; but God is not mocked. He hath said of the mother of harlots, "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Rev 18:24) There the God of judgment will find the blood of Huss and of Jerome. Aeneas Sylvius, afterwards pope, in writing to a friend says, "Jerome went to the stake as to a joyful festival, and when the executioner would have kindled the faggots behind his back, 'Place the fire before me,' he exclaimed; 'if I had dreaded it, I would have escaped it.' Such was the end of a man incredibly excellent. I was an eye-witness to that catastrophe, and beheld every act." Such is the testimony of two Roman Catholic writers - Poggius and Sylvius - and members of the council. They bear witness to the indecent conduct of the council, and to the moral heroism of the two martyrs

Jerome continued to sing hymns, with a "deep untrembling voice," after he was bound to the stake. He raised his voice and sang a paschal hymn, then very popular in the church.

Hail! happy day, and ever be adored

When hell was conquered by heaven's great Lord.

He continued to live in the flames a quarter of an hour. "Thou knowest, Lord, how I have loved Thy truth," were amongst the last words of Jerome of Prague. Not a word fell from his lips that discovered the least timidity. Both he and Huss sang in the flames to their last breath. And bright angels in waiting carried their happy souls to heaven, where they would be present with the Lord.

Reflections on the Character of the Council

The reader can be at no loss to judge of the principles which govern Roman Catholics in their treatment of Protestants, or heretics, so-called, with the Council of Constance before him. The character of Jezebel never changes, as it then was, so is it today, and so it shall ever be. The only question is the opportunity for its display. And we must bear in mind that the burning of those two venerable heralds of the Reformation was not under a papal edict, or a decree of the court of Rome, but by an ecclesiastical council, representing the whole church of Rome - indeed all the powers of the Roman world, civil and ecclesiastical.

The utter contempt for the retraction of the enfeebled Jerome, and the unblushing violation of the safe-conduct of the Emperor to Huss, are alike iniquitous and perfidious. What dependence can be placed on the word, the promise, or the most sacred oath, even of a mitred head, holding such principles? We must leave the reader to judge for himself; but what language could adequately express the base cowardly, traitor-like character of such principles and actions? Truth, righteousness, honour, justice, humanity, are all publicly sacrificed on the altar of ecclesiastical dominion.

The heresy of Huss and Jerome has never been clearly defined. They seem to have retained to the last their early impressions of transubstantiation, the worship of the saints and the Virgin Mary. They testified against the power of the clergy, which had so long ruled and enslaved the minds of men, and exposed their avarice and corruptions. By these public appeals they struck at the very foundations of the whole papal system, for which also they were honoured with the crown of martyrdom. But God, who is above all, was overruling these events for the spreading forth of the long-hidden gospel, and for the ripening of Europe for the approaching changes in almost all the relations of both Church and State which were accomplished in the sixteenth century. We must now glance for a moment at the fearful effects of the decrees of this general council.

The Bohemian War

The martyrdom of the Bohemian doctors had aroused a general feeling of national as well as religious indignation. The Emperor, the pope, and the prelates had very soon to pay bitterly for their flagrant injustice and the fires of Constance. Retribution swiftly followed. Four hundred and fifty-two nobles and knights of Bohemia and Moravia attached their seals to a letter addressed to the council, protesting against the proceedings of the assembly, and the imputations which had been cast on the orthodoxy of Bohemia, by burning the most illustrious of their teachers. But the council refused to listen to these reasonable remonstrances, and resolved to make no concessions. The holy fathers, as they are profanely called, cared much more for their own sinful pleasures than for the welfare of the people. Although professedly assembled for the reformation of the church, the real effect of their four years' sojourn in Constance was the demoralization of the whole city and its suburbs. The licentiousness and profligacy of this council has never been equalled.

In the year 1418, just before the council was dissolved, Martin V., now sole and undisputed pope, sent forth a bull of crusade against the contumacious heretics, requiring all authorities, ecclesiastical and civil, to labour for the suppression of the heresies of Wycliffe, Huss, and Jerome. The question was now fairly committed to the decision of the sword. Cardinal John, of Ragusa, was sent as legate to Bohemia. He was a violent man, and talked of reducing the country by fire and sword. In his character as legate he burned several persons who opposed his authority. The Bohemians, by such atrocities, were roused to fury. The followers of Huss united and became a strong party. They bound themselves in the most solemn manner to carry out the reformation principles of their martyred chief. Huss had strongly condemned the practice of the church in withholding the cup from the laity: this they adopted as the symbol of their community, and displayed the eucharistic cup on their banners. Headed by Ziska, the one-eyed, a knight of great military genius, they moved about the country, everywhere enforcing the administration of the sacrament in both kinds - the wine as well as the bread.

The churches of Prague having been refused to the clergy who followed the doctrines of Huss, they began to look for places where they could enjoy freedom of worship. A great meeting of Hussites was convened in the month of July, 1419, on a high hill, south of Prague, where they were formally united by the celebration of the communion in the open air. It must have been an imposing sight, but alas! the sequel of their history draws a dark shadow over it. On the spacious summit of that hill three hundred tables were spread, and forty-two thousand, consisting of men, women, and children partook of the sacrament in both kinds. A love-feast followed the communion, at which the rich shared with the poor, but no drinking, dancing, gaming, or music, was allowed. There the people encamped in tents, and, being fond of the use of scripture names, called it Mount Tabor, whence they obtained the name of Taborites. They spoke of themselves as the chosen people of God, and stigmatized their enemies, the Roman Catholics, as Amalekites, Moabites, and Philistines.

The luxury, pride, avarice, simony, and other vices of the clergy, were denounced on the hill of Tabor, and Ziska and his followers exhorted the communicants to engage in the work of church reformation. This great assembly, under Ziska, first marched to Prague, where they arrived at night. The following day, a Hussite clergyman, walking at the head of a procession, with a cup in his hand, was struck with a stone as he passed the town hall, where the magistrates were sitting. Thus insulted, many of them rushed furiously into the hall; a fierce struggle ensued: the magistrates were overpowered, some were killed, some fled, and some were thrown from the windows. The alarm spread, the people of the old religion rose to arms, the reformers fought against them as the enemies of the true faith. Ziska and his followers proclaimed themselves to be the servants of God, and their mission the reformation of His church. But alas! they commenced with the work of destruction rather than of reformation. Convents were attacked and plundered, monks were slaughtered, churches and monasteries were reduced to ruins; images, organs, pictures, and all the instruments of idolatry, as they were called, were broken to pieces. The movement spread to other places, and the most desolating war followed, which continued for many, many years.

The Victories of the Taborites

Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, died just at this time from a fit of apoplexy; and as he left no heir, Bohemia fell by inheritance to his brother Sigismund. This change was the signal for open war on the part of the reformers. Sigismund was execrated as a traitor, he had lured Huss to Constance; he had abandoned him to his merciless foes, the enemies of the true faith. With the fury of religious fanaticism they demolished and defaced everything that bore the stamp of the Romish religion. The Emperor, as soon as possible, turned his special attention to his newly-inherited kingdom, but in place of a loyal welcome, his sovereignty was repudiated everywhere. The first crusading army was defeated by the victorious Ziska, and Sigismund was obliged to flee from the walls of Prague.

The followers of Ziska, being chiefly peasantry, had at first no other weapons of warfare but their agricultural implements, such as flails, clubs, pitchforks, and scythes; so that Sigismund tauntingly designated them threshers; but he was soon made to feel their irresistible power, and the deadly wounds which they inflicted. Ziska taught them to load their implements with iron, and to range their rough carts in the battle-field in such a manner as to serve the purpose of a fortress, and of the ancient war-chariots. Martin V., now safe in Rome, heard from a distance of Ziska carrying fire and sword in all directions - massacring clergy and monks, burning and demolishing churches and convents, wreaking vengeance on the enemies of the true faith, and rooting out idolatry, as his divine mission. A bull was issued at the Emperor's request, summoning the faithful to rise for the extirpation of Wycliffism, Hussism, and other heresies, and promising full indulgences to those who should take part in the enterprise either personally or by substitute. An army was collected from nearly all European countries; which is variously estimated from one hundred thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand.

The spirit of the Hussites was strengthened on all such occasions by following the example of the hill of Tabor. They celebrated the communion, swearing to spend their property and their blood to the utmost in defence of the Reformation so-called. The eucharistic chalice was not only represented on the banners of the Taborites, but it was carried by their clergy at the head of their armies. Sigismund entered Bohemia at the head of the crusading hosts; and determined to over-awe the rebellious into obedience, he burned without scruple the heretical teachers, and dragged others at the tails of his horses. But the hour of vengeance was near. Burning with indignation and religious enthusiasm, Ziska and his exasperated followers surprised the crusaders, and defeated them with great slaughter on a hill near Prague, which still bears his name. A second campaign saw the imperial army break up and, panic-stricken, flee before the renowned Ziska. A third and a fourth time the Emperor invaded the country at the head of vast forces - in one case, it is said, two hundred thousand men, but each time the armies of the church fled in confusion and disgrace before the invincible Taborites. In some instances they pursued and massacred, rather than routed, the enemies of God and of the true faith. The cruelty on both sides became excessive. The Taborites who chanced to fall into their enemies' hands were burned alive or sold as slaves. It was a war of revenge, of extermination, and considered to be the holiest of duties to seize the property and spill the blood of God's enemies.

The Total Defeat of the Papal Army

The broken-hearted Emperor was now accused of personal cowardice. A fifth crusade was resolved upon; it was to be conducted by a cardinal. Preparations were made on a very great scale. Four large armies, amounting to about two hundred thousand men, crossed the Bohemian frontier. The force which the Taborites were able to muster amounted to thirty-one thousand. But the great papal enterprise ended in the most disgraceful failure. The Germans, on coming in sight of Ziska with his wild war-chariots, were seized with a panic; the Cardinal Julian alone conducted himself with courage. As he was advancing, he met his troops fleeing in abject terror. With crucifix in hand, he entreated them by the most solemn considerations of religion to rally, but in vain. He himself was constrained to fly; he hardly escaped in the disguise of a common soldier, and left behind him the papal bull, his cardinal's hat, and his pontifical robes. These trophies were preserved for two centuries in the church of Taas, and the captured banners were hung in the Tron church in Prague. The Germans lost ten thousand men in this scandalous flight, besides many more who, in their retreat, were pursued and slain by the peasantry.

After carrying on the war for thirteen years, Ziska died. So greatly was he lamented by the Taborites, that they changed their name to Orphans. He was succeeded by Procopius, a name almost equally famous in the history of the Bohemian war. But the Emperor was not disposed to continue so ruinous a contest. The retributive sword of Ziska had shorn him of his glory in the field, and frustrated his intentions of strengthening the church. At the battle, or rather the slaughter, of Aussig in 1426, the estimated loss of the Germans varies from nine to fifteen thousand men, while the Bohemians lost only fifty. And almost every outward vestige of the Romish religion had been swept away by the overwhelming flood. Churches were burnt with those who had taken refuge in them. Sylvius, the Roman historian, describes the churches and convents of Bohemia as more numerous, more magnificent, more highly adorned, than those of any other European country; but, with few exceptions, all were demolished by the irresistible Taborites. More than five hundred churches and monasteries, with all their symbols of idolatry, were utterly destroyed. Such was the terrible retributive providence of God in His righteous dealings with the murderers of Huss and Jerome. The fearful visitation fell and with the most withering severity, on both the empire and the church of Rome.

Internal Divisions

The Hussites were not all of one mind as to a proposed treaty; so they divided and formed two parties. The Calixtines - from Calix, a cup - the more moderate party, were disposed to waive all other subjects of complaint, provided the cup was restored to the laity, with permission to read the word of God. The Taborites went much farther, they adhered to the doctrines of Huss. Besides the celebration of the Lord's supper in both kinds, they contended for a complete reformation of the church - the abolition of all popish errors and ceremonies, and the establishment of a scriptural system of doctrine and discipline.

Treachery, the unfailing resource of Rome, now saw her way clear to encompass the ruin of the Taborites. At the council of Basle, Rokyzan, a bishop of the moderates and an eloquent man, was raised to the archbishopric of Prague, that through his influence their ends might be gained. Four articles were agreed upon, called the Compact; the obedient Calixtines were received back to the bosom of the church but the privileges thus granted were soon afterwards annulled by the pope. The Taborites, refusing to sign the Compact, were persecuted both by their old friends the Calixtines and the Catholics. But, in place of resisting by means of the carnal sword as in the days of Ziska and Procopius; they were led to see that faith in God, patience, perseverance in well-doing, believing prayer, were the proper arms of a christian soldier. Rokyzan, who had still some kindly feeling for his old friends, obtained permission from the sovereign for the persecuted Taborites to withdraw to the lordship of Lititz, on the confines of Moravia and Silesia, and there to establish a colony and regulate their own worship and discipline.

The United Brethren

The first migration to Moravia was in 1451. Many of the citizens of Prague, with some of the nobility and learned men, and even some of the most pious of the Calixtines, joined them. They now assumed the name of Unitas Fratrum, or the United Brethren. This was the origin of a community which has continued to our own day. For the space of three years they enjoyed peace and liberty of conscience. The missionary spirit, by which the Moravians have always been so distinguished, displayed itself at that early period of their history. Now the silver line of the Saviour's love and their christian zeal shines brightly. We could not see a trace of it when they were using carnal weapons for the defence of the truth of God. But no sooner did grace shine and their numbers increase, than the Romish priests eyed them with suspicion. Many souls were converted through their preaching, and congregations were formed in different parts of the country.

False accusations were circulated by the monks and friars evil work which always suited their lying tongues. Sedition! was the cry. The Moravians are gathering numbers, said the monks, that they may renew the Taborite wars and seize the government. The King was alarmed; the unprincipled Rokyzan, afraid of losing his dignity in the church, sided with the Catholics and influenced the Calixtines to turn against their brethren. They were denounced as incorrigible heretics. A bitter persecution broke out in all its fury on the missionary brethren. But the tares seem to have been separated from the wheat, for, unlike the days of Ziska, the new generation of the old Hussites determined to use no carnal weapon in defence of themselves or their religion. But the undaunted courage, which characterized their forefathers in the battle-field, was now displayed in their patient endurance of suffering for Christ's sake. Under their heaviest afflictions their energy never failed them. They were declared to have forfeited the common rights of subjects; their property was confiscated; they were even driven from their homes in the depth of winter, and compelled to wander in the open fields, where many perished with cold and hunger. All the prisons in Bohemia, especially in Prague, were crowded with the brethren. Various sorts of tortures were inflicted on the prisoners: some had their hands and feet cut off; others were torn on the rack, burned alive, or barbarously murdered. These outrages continued for nearly twenty years with little abatement, but the death of the King in 1471, and the remorse of Rokyzan, the archbishop, brought a measure of relief. They were no longer exposed to torture, but were driven out of the country.

The United Brethren, thus compelled to leave their homes in Lititz and other towns and villages, were obliged to live in forests and under the shelter of rocks, kindling their fires at night. And, singular as it may seem, they not only employed themselves in comforting each other, but in perfecting, what they called, the constitution of the church; forgetting, as many others have done, that God had perfected the constitution of the church at Pentecost, and revealed it to us in His holy word. About seventy persons held a synod in the woods. Two resolutions were adopted which marked the future character of the Moravians: - 1, That it was necessary to provide fit men for the ministerial office; 2, That they were to be chosen by lot like Matthias in Act 1:24-26. As a fundamental principle, the Brethren held, "that the holy scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice." At the same time a distinction was made between essentials and non-essentials which leaves ample room for both the human will and the imagination. Essentials belong to the question of man's salvation; non-essentials, to the externals of Christianity such as rites, ceremonies, customs, and ecclesiastical regulations. And, further, these may be altered according to the best of human judgment, so that the great work of the gospel may be promoted. This is human, not exclusively Moravian. It is, practically, the common saying, "The end justifies the means." But surely what God has revealed can never be nonessential, and what He has not revealed should never be introduced into His assembly.

The Brethren who had been banished from Moravia were kindly received in Hungary and Moldavia; and were greatly distinguished by their missionary and other religious labours. About the year 1470, they published in the Bohemian language a translation of the whole Bible. This is the second translation upon record of the Bible into one of the European tongues. It passed through several editions rapidly, and in this way these interesting and devoted people prepared the way for Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin.

The Connection of the Witnesses

Before leaving the Moravians, we may recall to the reader's mind the interesting fact of an early connection between them and the Waldenses, if not the Paulicians. Bohemia and Moravia continued in heathenism as late as the ninth century when they received the gospel from Eastern missionaries; probably also from the Paulicians. Peter Waldo, in the twelfth century, driven from Lyons by persecution, found a refuge in Bohemia, where he laboured for twenty years with great success. In the fourteenth century his followers in Bohemia and Passau are said to have amounted to eighty thousand, and throughout Europe to about eight hundred thousand. The court of Rome, irritated by the zeal and offended by the practices of the united Paulician, Waldensian, Bohemian, and Moravian Christians, resolved on their subjugation to the Roman yoke. Celibacy was enjoined, the cup forbidden to the laity, and the church service performed in Latin. A struggle commenced, the Bohemians protested, Rome persecuted, and though many continued firm, others gradually declined, and lost much of their original purity of doctrine and simplicity of worship. So things continued for about three hundred years, when John Huss and Jerome of Prague again raised the standard of truth, witnessed against the corruptions of Rome, and kindled by the flames of their martyrdom a light which soon spread throughout Europe, and which continues to shine in our day, through the good providence of God. The mysterious way by which the light travelled, we must now trace.*

{*See Marsden's Dictionary of Sects, "Moravians;" Waddington, vol. 3, p. 196; Latin Christianity, vol. 6, p. 200; Milner, vol. 3, p. 336; J.C. Robertson, vol. 3, p. 284; Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 17; Edgar's Variations of Popery, pp. 202, 533.}

32 Capture of Constantinople

Chapter 32

The Capture of Constantinople

In the year 1453, after a close siege of fifty-three days, the capital of Eastern Christendom fell into the hands of the victorious Turks. The Emperor, who bore the name of the founder of Constantinople, displayed great valour in the siege; he threw off his purple and fought in the breach, till he, with the nobles that surrounded him, fell among the slain. This was the last of the Constantines, and the last christian Emperor of Constantinople. Most of the inhabitants that remained were either sold as slaves or massacred, and five thousand Turkish families were brought into the city as settlers. Destruction, violence, and profanity, far exceeding the power of description, followed. The ancient church of St. Sophia was stripped of all the valuable offerings of ages, the images were broken to pieces, and, after having been the scene of gross profanations, was turned into a mosque. The treasures of Greek learning - to the extent some say, of one hundred and twenty thousand manuscript books - were destroyed or dispersed. The conquest was complete, and Mahomet II. at once transferred the seat of government to Constantinople.

But the unbounded ambition of the fierce Ottoman was far from being satisfied, he contemplated nothing less than a conquest of all Christendom. And from his rapid and easy victories over many of the lesser christian principalities in the East, it would appear that, if death had not relieved the world of such a tyrant, he might have pursued his path of conquest through the heart of Europe. What city, what kingdom, what power, would arrest the fierce invader? All Europe trembled, especially Italy. The death of Nicholas V. was hastened, it is said, by the news of the capture of Constantinople. Grief and fear broke the old man's heart. But after overturning empires, kingdoms, and cities without number, Mahomet II. died, at the age of fifty, from internal pains, supposed to be the effects of poison.

Tidings of these heavy calamities in the East spread a deep gloom over all the West. But that which threatened to arrest the progress of civilization and the spread of Christianity was overruled by an all-wise and good Providence for the furtherance of both in a marvellous way. The falling of Constantinople into the hands of the infidels drove many learned Greeks into Italy, and from Italy into many other countries in Europe. It so happened, just at this time, that the reigning pope, Nicholas V., was distinguished by his love of literature, which he greatly promoted by his position and his wealth. The refugees had brought such books with them as they had been able to rescue from the ruins of their fallen empire. The study of Greek was revived by such means and became exceedingly popular. Among these students it pleased God to raise up men of highly cultivated minds and devout hearts, who did much in preparing the way for the great Reformation.

Invention of Printing - Improvement of Paper

Just at this period the Lord was making "all things work together for good" in a most remarkable way. Two silent agents of immense influence and power were ordained to precede the living voices of His gospel-preachers - the invention of printing and the manufacture of paper. These harmonious inventions were brought to great perfection during the latter half of the fifteenth century for which we can lift up our hearts in praise and thanksgiving to God.

We have now reached a turning point in our history; and not only in the history of the church, but of civilization, of the social condition of the European states, and of the human family. It is well to pause on such an eminence and look around us for a moment. We see a divine hand for the good of all gathering things together, though apparently unconnected. The falling of an empire, the flight of a few Greeks with their literary treasures, the awakening of the long dormant mind of the western world, the invention of printing from moveable types, and the discovery of making fine white paper from linen rags. Incongruous as "linen rags" may sound with the literature of the Greeks, and the skill of Guttenberg, both would have proved of little avail without the improved paper. Means, the most insignificant in man's account, when used of God, are all sufficient. By miraculous power, a dry rod in the hand of Moses shakes Egypt from centre to circumference, divides the Red Sea, and gives living water from the flinty rock: a smooth pebble from the brook, or an empty ram's horn, accomplishes great deliverances in Israel. The power is of God, and faith looks only to Him.

It is a deeply interesting fact to the Christian, that the first complete book which Guttenberg printed with his cut metal types was a folio edition of the Bible in the Latin vulgate, consisting of six hundred and forty-one leaves. Hallam, in his Literary History beautifully observes: "It is a very striking circumstance, that the high minded inventors of the great art tried at the very outset so bold a flight as the printing an entire Bible, and executed it with great success .... We may see in imagination this venerable and splendid volume leading up the crowded myriads of its followers, and imploring, as it were, a blessing on the new art, by dedicating its firstfruits to the service of heaven."*

{*Literature of Europe, vol. 1, p. 153.}

Although it scarcely falls within the line of our "Short Papers" even briefly to sketch the history of the great discovery, yet for the sake of some of our readers who may not have such histories at hand we must mention a few particulars, as it was one of the most powerful agents of the Reformation.

From an early period the mode of printing from blocks of wood had been practised. Sometimes the engravings, or impressions, were accompanied by a few lines of letters cut in the block. Gradually these were extended to a few leaves and called block-books. An ingenious blacksmith, it is said, invented in the eleventh century separate letters made of wood. The celebrated John Guttenberg, who was born at a village near Mentz, in the year 1397, substituted metal for the wooden letters, his associate Schaeffer cut the characters in a matrix, after which the types were cast, and thus completed the art of printing as it now remains.

Parchment, preparations of straw, the bark of trees, papyrus, and cotton had sufficed for the printer and transcriber, till the fourteenth century. But these preparations would have been utterly inadequate to supply the demand of the new process. Happily, however, the discovery of making paper from rags coincided with the discovery of letter-press printing. The first paper-mill in England was erected at Dartmouth by a German named Spielmann, in 1588, who was knighted by Queen Elizabeth.

The First Printed Bible

All historians seem to agree, that Guttenberg, having spent nearly ten years in bringing his experiments to perfection, had so impoverished himself that he found it necessary to invite some capitalist to join him. John Faust, the wealthy goldsmith of Mentz, to whom he made known his secret, agreed to go into partnership with him, and to supply the means for carrying out the design. But it does not appear that Guttenberg and his associates, Schoeffer and Faust, were actuated by any loftier motive in executing this glorious work, than that of realizing a large sum of money by the enterprise. The letters were such an exact imitation of the best copyists, that they intended to pass them off as fine manuscript copies, and thus to obtain the usual high prices. Those employed in the work were bound to the strictest secrecy. The first edition appears to have been sold at manuscript prices without the secret having transpired. A second edition was brought out about 1462, when John Faust went to Paris with a number of copies. He sold one to the king for seven hundred crowns, and another to the archbishop for four hundred crowns. The prelate, delighted with such a beautiful copy at so low a price, showed it to the king. His majesty produced his, for which he had paid nearly double the money; but what was their astonishment on finding they were identical even in the most minute strokes and dots? They became alarmed, and concluded they must be produced by magic, and the capital letters being in red ink, they supposed that it was blood, and no longer doubted that he was in league with the devil and assisted by him in his magical art.

Information was forthwith given to the police against John Faust; his lodgings were searched, and his Bibles seized other copies which he had sold were collected and compared. and finding they were all precisely alike, he was pronounced a magician. The king ordered him to be thrown into prison and he would soon have been thrown into the flames, but he saved himself by confessing to the deceit, and by making a full revelation of the secret of his art. The mystery was now revealed, the workmen were no longer bound to secrecy printers were dispersed abroad, carrying the secret of their art wherever they found a welcome, and the sound of printing presses were soon heard in many lands. About 1474 the art was introduced into England by William Caxton; and in 1508 it was introduced into Scotland by Walter Chepman.

Before the days of printing, many valuable books existed in manuscript, and seminaries of learning flourished in all civilized countries, but knowledge was necessarily confined to a comparatively small number of people. The manuscripts were so scarce and dear that they could only be purchased by kings and nobles, by collegiate and ecclesiastical establishments. "A copy of the Bible cost from forty to fifty pounds for the writing only, for it took an expert copyist about ten months' labour to make one." Although several other books issued from the new presses, the Latin Bible was the favorite book with all the printers. They usually commenced operations, wherever they went, by issuing an edition of the Latin Bible. It was most in demand and brought high prices. In this way Latin Bibles multiplied rapidly. Translators now began their work; and by individual reformers in different countries, the word of God was translated into various languages in the course of a few years. "Thus an Italian version appeared in 1474, a Bohemian in 1475, a Dutch in 1477, a French in 1477, and a Spanish in 1478; as if heralding the approach of the coming Reformation."

Rome's Opposition to the Bible

But, as usual, the great enemies of truth and light and liberty took the alarm. The archbishop of Mentz placed the printers of that city under strict censorship. Pope Alexander VI. issued a bull prohibiting the printers of Mentz, Cologne, Treves, and Magdeburg from publishing any books without the express license of their archbishops. Finding that the reading of the Bible was extending, the priests began to preach against it from their pulpits. "They have found out," said a French monk," a new language called Greek: we must carefully guard ourselves against it. That language will be the mother of all sorts of heresies. I see in the hands of a great number of persons a book written in this language called, 'The New Testament;' it is a book full of brambles, with vipers in them. As to the Hebrew, whoever learns that becomes a Jew at once." Bibles and Testaments were seized wherever found, and burnt; but more Bibles and Testaments seemed to rise as if by magic from their ashes. The printers also were seized and burnt. "We must root out printing, or printing will root out us," said the vicar of Croydon in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross. And the university of Paris, panic-stricken, declared before the parliament, "There is an end of religion if the study of Greek and Hebrew is permitted."

The great success of the new translations spread alarm throughout the Romish church, she trembled for the supremacy of her own favourite Vulgate. The fears of the priests and monks were increased when they saw the people reading the scriptures in their own mother tongue, and observed a growing disposition to call in question the value of attending mass, and the authority of the priesthood. Instead of saying their prayers through the priests in Latin, they began to pray to God direct in their native tongue. The clergy, finding their revenues diminishing, appealed to the Sorbonne, the most renowned theological school in Europe. The Sorbonne called upon parliament to interfere with a strong hand. War was immediately proclaimed against books, and the printers of them. Printers who were convicted of having printed Bibles, were burnt. In the year 1534, about twenty men and one woman were burnt alive in Paris. In 1535 the Sorbonne obtained an ordinance from the king for the suppression of printing. "But it was too late," as an able writer observes; "the art was now full born, and could no more be suppressed than light, or air, or life. Books had become a public necessity, and supplied a great public want: and every year saw them multiplying more abundantly."*

{*History of the Huguenots, by Samuel Smiles, pp. 1-23.}

While Rome was thus thundering her awful prohibitions against the liberty of thought, and lengthening her arm to persecute wherever the Bible had penetrated and found followers, at least all over France God was hastening by means of His own word and the printing press, that mighty revolution which was so soon to change the destinies of both Church and State. But had the catholics succeeded in their wicked designs, we should still have been groping our way amidst the thick darkness of the middle ages. Rome has ever been hostile to new inventions and improvements; especially if they tended to the diffusion of knowledge, the promotion of civilization, the diminishing of the distance between the clergy and the laity, or in any way weakening the power of the priesthood. Ignorance, slavery, superstition, blind subjection to priestcraft, are the chief elements of her existence. Of all inventions, none has exercised a greater influence on society than that of printing; and not only so; it is the preserver of all other inventions. Thus no thanks are due to the catholics for our modem civilization, and for the privileges of our civil and religious liberties. But the living God is above all the hostility of Rome, and will accomplish all the purposes of His grace.

The darkness of the middle ages is rapidly passing away. The rising sun of the Reformation will ere long dispel the gloom of Jezebel's long reign of a thousand years. Her boasted universal supremacy is no more, and will never again return. The pillars of her strength are already shaken and many causes are combining to hasten her complete overthrow. With these causes we shall soon become more familiar.

The Immediate Precursors of Luther

We have traced with some care the chain of witnesses from the earliest period of the church's history till the beginning of the sixteenth century; we have only further to notice a few names which connect the noble line with the name and testimony of the great Reformer. There is no missing link in the divine chain. Of these the most noted were Jerome Savonarola, John of Wesalia, and John Wessilus of Groningen.

Jerome Savonarola, the descendant of an illustrious family, was born in 1452, at Ferrara. He was in early life the subject of deep religious feelings, and supposing he had been favoured with heavenly visions as to his mission, he retired from the world and entered the Dominican order at the age of twenty-one. He devoted himself to the study of the holy scriptures, with continual prayers, fastings, and mortifications. He appears to have been greatly interested in the prophetic scriptures, especially in such portions as the Apocalypse, which he was fond of expounding, and confidently maintained that the threatened judgments were near at hand. Having spent seven years in the Dominican convent of Bologna, he was removed by his superiors to St. Mark's at Florence. After some years he was elected prior, when he introduced a thorough reformation, and a return to the earlier simplicity of food and dress.

Savonarola was unequalled in his power as a preacher; but like many others at that time, he combined the politician's with the preacher's character. Reform was his one theme - reform and repentance he proclaimed as with the voice of a prophet. Reform in the discipline of the church, in the luxury and worldliness of the priesthood, and in the morals of the whole community. The Italians being peculiarly sensitive to all appeals respecting their rights as citizens, the vast cathedral of Florence was soon crowded by multitudes who eagerly hung on his words. His preaching assumed the form of prophecy, or of one authorized to speak in the name of God; although it does not appear that his predictions were more than the result of a firm conviction in the government of God and in the fulfilment of prophecy according to the principles revealed in the holy scriptures. But though he was more or less mixed up with the political factions in Italy, he was an earnest Christian and a true reformer. He unsparingly denounced the usurpation of Lorenzo de' Medici, the despotism of the aristocracy, and the sins of the prelates and clergy he mourned over the cold indifference to spiritual things which marked the character of the age. "The church had once," he said, "her golden priests, and wooden chalices; but now the chalices were gold and the priests wooden - that the outward splendour of religion had been hurtful to spirituality." So resistless was his eloquence, which partook of a prophetic character, as if he were the messenger of an offended God whose vengeance was already impending over Italy, that the multitudes believed in his heavenly mission. The people were so controlled by his appeals that the moral effect of his warnings was speedily perceptible throughout the city. "By the modesty of their dress," says Sismondi, "their discourse, their countenance, the Florentines gave evidence that they had embraced the reform of Savonarola."

But his course was watched with the evil eye of Jezebel. Such a fearless witness was not fit to live, especially in Italy. The light must be quenched; but how to accomplish it was the difficulty, as many of the citizens were ready to pass through the flames as the substitutes of Savonarola. The church of Rome, backed by the partisans of the Medici, addressed herself to this fiendish work. As usual, her plans were founded on treachery and ended in persecution. The deceitful Alexander VI. invited Savonarola in courteous language to visit him at Rome that he might confer with him on the subject of his prophetic gifts. But he knew the pope was not to be trusted notwithstanding his flattering words, and refused to obey. He next proposed to raise him to the cardinalate in the hope of getting him under his power; but Savonarola indignantly declared from the pulpit that he would have no other red hat than one dyed with the blood of martyrdom. The mask was now thrown off; blandishments were exchanged for threatenings and excommunications. He was denounced as a "sower of false doctrine." His destruction was determined. The Franciscans, already jealous of the great fame of a Dominican, entered the conspiracy. An account of their plottings would be uninteresting to the reader; but they succeeded in diverting the people, and in accomplishing the downfall of their rival.

In the year 1498 Savonarola, and his two friends, Dominic and Silvester, were seized, imprisoned, and tortured. The nervous system of the great preacher, both from his labours and his ascetic exercises, had become so sensitive that he was unable to bear the agonies which were inflicted on him. "When I am in torture," he said, "I lose myself, I am mad: that only is true which I say without torture." In the meantime, two legates arrived from Rome with the sentence of condemnation from Alexander; the prisoners were taken the following day to the place of the signory, and, after the usual ceremony of degradation, were first hanged and then burnt. Their ashes were carefully collected by the Franciscans, and cast into the Arno; yet relics of Savonarola were preserved with veneration among his many friends and followers.

Reflections on the Life of Savonarola

The prior of St. Mark's is spoken of in history, as the most faithful public witness for Christ that had yet appeared in Italy; but there was much in his course that was contrary to the spirit and calling of a true Christian, especially in his mixing up politics with religion. It is said that he thought to combine the characters of Jeremiah and Demosthenes - to weep over sin and denounce God's judgments like the one, and to stir up the people to struggle for their liberties like the other. This was his mistake, owing to his ignorance of the teaching of the New Testament; and that which led to his dishonour and his downfall. But great allowance must be made for his education, circumstances, and the spirit of the age. Many of the later reformers fell into the same snare. They had not learnt, in those revolutionary times, that the calling of the Christian is a heavenly one - that while the Jew was blessed with all temporal mercies in a pleasant land, the Christian is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. They did not see that the purpose of God in the present period is to gather out from among the nations a people for His name by the preaching of the gospel. (Acts 15) But how few even in the present day see that the church of God is an out-calling, and so ought to walk in separation from the world!

The highest good that the preacher can accomplish for his fellow men is to gather them out of the world to the rejected Saviour. But such preachers are neither popular nor understood, even in the last quarter of the nineteenth century: indeed we may raise the question - Is the state of "the churches" generally, as regards politics, in advance of the ideas of Savonarola? He interfered in the direction of public affairs in order that the republic of Florence might be to the honour of his Lord and Master. His motives were doubtless good, but he was entirely mistaken in thinking he could unite heavenly and earthly things. His grand idea is seen in the fact, that one of the coins struck whilst Florence was under his influence bore the inscription, "Christ our king. " But not only did this remarkable man desire to see a great Reformation in both Church and State, he also longed for the salvation of souls, while his own heart rejoiced in the glorious doctrine of justification by faith alone.

The following extract from his meditations on Psalm 31 during his imprisonment will give the reader an idea of his inmost thoughts as guided by the Holy Spirit of God. "No man can boast of himself; and if in the presence of God, the question were put to every justified sinner, Have you been saved by your own strength?' all would with one voice exclaim, 'Not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name be the glory!' Therefore, O God, I seek Thy mercy, and I bring Thee not my own righteousness: the moment Thou justifiest me by Thy grace, Thy righteousness belongs to me; for grace is the righteousness of God. So long, O man, as thou believest not, thou art, because of sin, deprived of grace. O God, save me by Thy righteousness, that is, by Thy Son, who alone was found righteous before Thee." As taught of God, with what holy and lofty thoughts his mind must have been filled from the study, in a prison, of that most beautiful psalm of sorrow and triumphant praise !*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 4, p. 548. Waddington, vol. 3, p. 383. Universal History, Bagster and Sons, London, vol. 6, p. 173.}

Ah! fairest city, who hast seen expire

Three chosen martyrs in devouring fire,

Who, linked together, amidst scorn and pain,

In dying smiled, and proved "to die is gain:" -

Thy rich and honoured stream, whose bosom wide

Doth those blest ashes, as its treasure hide,

Shall see the tyrant-chief at last expire.

And every infidel destroyed by fire;

Shall see all vice and evil come to nought,

And hail new light from heavenly regions brought.

John of Wesalia, a doctor of divinity at Erfurt, was distinguished for his boldness, energy, and opposition to Rome. He incurred the indignation of the monastic orders by preaching that men are saved by grace through faith, and not by a monastic life; that a man is eternally safe who believes in Christ though all the priests in the world should condemn and excommunicate him. He pronounced indulgences, the holy oil, and pilgrimages, to be of no avail; that the pope, bishops, and priests were not instruments of salvation. He was what would now be called strictly calvinistic in his views of grace. The archbishop of Mentz ordered his imprisonment; he was brought to trial before a council of priests in the year 1479, and notwithstanding his age, ill health, and feebleness, he was subjected to a puzzling examination of his opinions, which lasted five successive days. Some things he explained, some he disavowed, and some he retracted; but his judges had no mercy, though he was bending beneath the weight of years; he was condemned to perpetual penance by the holy Inquisition and soon perished in its dungeons.

John Wesselus, a native of Groningen, in Holland, was undoubtedly the most remarkable of the immediate forerunners of the Reformation. He was one of the most learned men of the fifteenth century. But happily for John Wesselus himself, and for thousands more, his light was not only that of human learning - he was taught of God. The light of the glorious gospel of the grace of God burned brightly in his heart, in his words, in his life. He was doctor in divinity successively at Cologne, Louvain, Heidelberg, and Groningen; and he boldly exposed many of the evil doctrines and flagrant abuses of the church of Rome. He was also for some years professor of Hebrew at the university of Paris, and even there he spoke out boldly. "All satisfaction for sin," he declared, "made by men is blasphemy against Christ." But the following testimony of Luther to the writings of John Wesselus makes it unnecessary to particularize his opinions.

About thirty years after the death of Wesselus, Luther was preaching the same doctrines which his forerunner had committed to writing, though he had not then seen any of his. works. They had been led and taught by the same Holy Spirit, and instructed out of the same holy book, and fitted for the same work. The great reformer was so astonished and delighted when he first met with some of the writings of Wesselus, that he wrote a preface for a printed edition of his works in 1522, in which he says, "By the wonderful providence of God I have been compelled to become a public man, and to fight battles with those monsters of indulgences and papal decrees. All along I supposed myself to stand alone; yet have I preserved so much animation in the contest, as to be everywhere accused of heat and violence, and of hitting hard. However, the truth is, I have earnestly wished to have done with these followers of Baal among whom my lot is cast, and to live quietly in some corner, for I have utterly despaired of making any impression on these brazen foreheads and iron necks of impiety. But behold, in this state of mind, I am told that even in these days there is in secret a remnant of the people of God. Nay, I am not only told so, but I rejoice to see a proof of it. Here is a new publication by Wesselus, of Groningen, a man of an admirable genius, and of an uncommonly enlarged mind. It is very plain he was taught of God, as Isaiah prophesied that Christians should be: and as in my own case, so with him, it cannot be supposed that he received his doctrines from men. If I had read his works before, my enemies might have supposed that I had learnt everything from Wesselus, such a perfect coincidence there is in our opinions. As to myself, I derive not only pleasure but strength and courage from this publication. It is now impossible for me to doubt whether I am right in the points which I have inculcated, when I see so entire an agreement in sentiment, and almost the same words used by this eminent person, who lived in a different age, in a distant country, and in circumstances very unlike my own. I am surprised that this excellent christian writer should be so little known; the reason may be that he lived without blood and contention, for this is the only thing in which he differs from me."

We will only further relate an anecdote respecting Wesselus, which proves how thoroughly the spirit of the gospel had satisfied and filled his heart, and raised him above the most powerful temptation.

When Sixtus IV. was raised to the pontifical throne, not forgetful of an acquaintance which he had formed with Wesselus in France, he offered to grant him any request he would make. The pious Dutchman gravely replied, "May he who is regarded as the supreme shepherd of the church on earth so act as that, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear he may hear Him say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' " "That must be my care," replied Sixtus; "but do you ask something for yourself." "Give me, then," said Wesselus, "out of the Vatican Library a Greek and a Hebrew Bible." "You shall have them," replied the pope; "but is not this folly? Why do you not ask for a bishopric, or something of that sort?" "Because," said the unambitious professor, "I do not desire such things."

He was allowed to end his days in peace in the year 1489, having reached the age of seventy. His last words were "God be praised! all I know is Jesus Christ and Him crucified."*

{*Milner, vol. 3, p. 421.}

Ulric von Hutten, a German knight, having a reforming zeal, and being a great admirer of Luther, has found a place in most of the histories. Descended from an ancient family, and of brilliant talents, he distinguished himself in early life as a soldier, and afterwards as a literary adventurer, but greatly wanting, we fear, in moral weight. He published an acrimonious invective against Erasmus, and a most effective satire against the court and tyranny of Rome. "Few books," says Hallam, "have been more eagerly received than Hutten's epistles at their first appearance in 1516." But he was not long spared, either to unveil the abuses of popery, or advocate the doctrines of the Reformation. He died in 1523 at the early age of thirty-five. "He forms the link," says D'Aubigne, "between the knights and the men of letters." He was present at the siege of Padua in 1513, and his powerful book against popery appeared in 1516.

Reuchlin and Erasmus - these famous names - may be conveniently and appropriately introduced here. Although not reformers, they contributed much to the success of the Reformation. They were called "Humanists" - men eminent for human learning. The revival of literature, but especially the critical study of the languages in which the holy scriptures were written - Hebrew, Greek, and Latin - rendered the highest service to the first reformers. As in the days of Josiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the great Reformation was in immediate connection with the recovery and study of the written word of God. The Bible, which had lain so long silent in manuscript beneath the dust of old libraries, was now printed, and laid before the people in their own tongue. This was light from God, and that which armed the reformers with invincible power. Down to the days of Reuchlin and Erasmus the Vulgate was the received text. Greek and Hebrew were almost unknown in the West.

Reuchlin studied at the university of Paris. Happily for him, the celebrated Wesselus was then teaching Hebrew at that renowned school of theology. There he received, not only the first rudiments of the language, but a knowledge of the gospel of the grace of God. He also studied Greek, and learned to speak Latin with great purity. At the early age of twenty he began to teach philosophy, Greek, and Latin, at Basle; "and," says D'Aubigne, "what then passed for a miracle, a German was heard speaking Greek. " He afterwards settled at Wittemberg - the cradle of the Reformation - instructed the young Melancthon in Hebrew, and prepared for publication the first Hebrew and German grammar and lexicon. Who can estimate all that the Reformation owes to Reuchlin, though he remained in the communion of the Romish church!

Erasmus, who was about twelve years younger than Reuchlin, pursued the same line of study, but with still higher powers and greater celebrity. From about 1500 to 1518, when Luther rose into notice, Erasmus was the most distinguished literary person in Christendom. He was born at Rotterdam in 1465; was left an orphan at the age of thirteen; was robbed by his guardians, who, to cover their dishonesty, persuaded him to enter a monastery. In 1492, he was ordained a priest, but he always entertained the greatest dislike for a monastic life, and embraced the first opportunity to regain his liberty. After leaving the Augustinian convent at Stein, he went to pursue his favorite studies at the university of Paris.

With the most indefatigable industry he devoted himself entirely to literature, and soon acquired a great reputation among the learned. The society of the poor student was courted by the varied talent of the time. Lord Mountjoy, whom he met as a pupil at Paris, invited him to England. His first visit to this country, in 1498, was followed by several others, down to the year 1515, during which he became acquainted with many eminent men, received many honours, formed some warm friendships, and spent most of his brightest days. He resided at both the universities, and, during his third and longest visit, was professor of Greek at Cambridge. All acknowledged his supremacy in the world of letters, and for a long time he reigned without a rival. But our object at present is rather to inquire, "What was his influence on the Reformation?"

Under the gracious, guiding hand of Him who sees the end from the beginning, Erasmus bent all his great mental powers, and all his laborious studies, to the preparation of a critical edition of the Greek Testament. This work appeared at Basle in 1516, one year before the Reformation, accompanied by a Latin translation, in which he corrected the errors of the Vulgate. This was daring work in those days. There was a great outcry from many quarters against this dangerous novelty. "His New Testament was attacked," says Robertson; "why should the language of the schismatic Greeks interfere with the sacred and traditional Latin? How could any improvement be made on the Vulgate translation? There was a college at Cambridge, especially proud of its theological character, which would not admit a copy within its gates. But the editor was able to shelter himself under the name of Pope Leo, who had accepted the dedication of the volume. "

To question the fidelity of the Vulgate, was a crime of the greatest magnitude in the eyes of the Roman Catholic church. The Vulgate could no longer be of absolute exclusive authority; the Greek was its superior not only in antiquity, but yet more as the original text. At this time, Erasmus stood at the head of scholars and men of letters. He was patronized by the pope, many prelates, and by the chief princes of Europe. Sheltered behind such an ample shield, he was perfectly secure, and, knowing this, fearlessly went on with his great work.*

{*Although the Greek New Testament of Erasmus, published at Basle in 1516, was the first edition in which the original text of the Holy Scriptures was given to the learned world, it was not the first either as to design or printing. The Complutensian New Testament was finished in January 1514; but as it awaited the completion of the Bible and the license of the pope, it was not published until 1522. Thus it was that the edition of Erasmus appeared six years earlier than the Complutensian, though printed two years later.

This was the first Polyglott Bible, and since known as the Complutensian; Paris and London Polyglotts followed. This great work appears to have been the original conception of the celebrated Cardinal Ximenes, of Toledo, and executed at his expense. With a view to this he collected manuscripts, employed a number of scholars as editors, and imported type-cutters from Germany. The outlay is stated to have exceeded twenty-three thousand pounds-a vast sum in those days-but the yearly income of the Primate was four times that amount.

The Complutensian Polyglott, in six volumes folio, was completed at Alcala, in Spain, in 1517, but the preparations were begun as early as 1502. These six noble volumes contain the Old Testament in Hebrew, Latin and Greek; and the New Testament in Greek and Latin, with a Hebrew dictionary, and other supplementary matter.

John Froben, an enterprising publisher at Basle, having heard of this forthcoming Bible, and eager to forestall it, urged Erasmus to undertake immediately an edition of the New Testament. The first was very faulty, as Froben's haste gave him little leisure to do his work. It passed through three editions in six years: on the fourth and fifth editions Erasmus bestowed more pains, having seen the Complutensian in 1522.-See an able and useful book, entitled, "A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament," by Dr. Scrivener: George Bell and Sons, London. See also some interesting particulars in J.C. Robertson's Church History, vol. 4, p. 664.}

To give the reader some idea of the popularity of this singularly great, yet in some respects weak man, we may just notice that his book, entitled "Praise of Folly," went through twenty-seven editions during his lifetime; and his "Colloquies" were so eagerly received, that in one year twenty-four thousand copies were sold. In these books he assailed with great power, and the most bitter satire, the inconsistencies of the monks - their intrusiveness and rapacity in connection with deathbeds, wills, and funerals and thus indirectly served the cause of the Reformation.*

{*J.C. Robertson, vol. 4, p. 673.}

Erasmus had many tempting offers as to pensions and promotion, but his love for his learned labours led him to prefer comparative poverty with perfect liberty. In 1516 he took up his abode at Basle, where his works were printed by Froben, and he diligently laboured in correcting proofs, and otherwise assisting that learned printer with his fine editions of classical works.

But the great work for which he seems to have been specially fitted by God was his Greek New Testament. "Erasmus," says D'Aubigne, "thus did for the New Testament what Reuchlin had done for the Old. Henceforward divines were able to read the word of God in the original languages, and at a later period to recognize the purity of the reformed doctrines. The New Testament of Erasmus gave out a bright flash of light. His paraphrases on the Epistles, and on the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John; his editions of Cyprian and Jerome; his translations of Origen, Athanasius, and Chrysostom; his "Principles of True Theology," his "Preacher," and his commentaries on various psalms, contributed powerfully to diffuse a taste for the word of God, and for pure theology. The result of his labours even went beyond his intentions. Reuchlin and Erasmus gave the Bible to the learned; Luther gave it to the people."*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 1, p. 166.}

The chain of witnesses was now complete. Wesselus, Reuchlin, Erasmus, and Luther were linked together. The silver line of God's grace is thus traceable from the days of the apostles, or at least from the days of Constantine, to the time of Luther. There was no room for a separate line of witnesses till after the union of Church and State. The existence and testimony of the Waldenses have been traced back to these early times. Then we have witnesses for Christ in the Paulicians, the Albigenses, the Wycliffites, the Bohemians, the Moravians, or United Brethren, Savonarola, and other individual Protestants in the different nations of Europe.

And now, having pursued our dreary way through the dark ages till the beginning of the sixteenth century, we find the Bible in the original languages, and the printing press standing ready to multiply copies by thousands and tens of thousands, and broad-cast them over the face of Christendom.

The way was thus prepared for the great change which was at hand. The unblushing wickedness of Rome, the blood of God's martyred saints, and the vast multitude of souls who were perishing for lack of knowledge all cried aloud for the hand that would shorten the dominion of the papacy, and rescue the nations of Europe from the darkness and bondage of a thousand years. This was now to be done, but not by mere scholarship, or by men of polite literature, but by faith in the word of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

33 Germany

Chapter 33

The Reformation in Germany

The exclusive dominion of the Latin or Roman church was now drawing to a close. Since the pontificate of Gregory the Great, or for nearly a thousand years, she had reigned supreme. But the oppressed Teuton was now raising the arm of rebellion against the tyranny of the Roman. The warfare ended in a great secession of the Teutons, in wresting from the papacy a large portion of her dominions, and in the breaking up of Christendom, like the ship in which Paul sailed to Rome.

It has been our desire to present to the reader a fair view of the real character and ways of the church of Rome during the long period of her dominion, and he must judge whether the history warrants our interpretation of the epistle to Thyatira. Our own convictions are a thousandfold deeper at the close than they were at the commencement of the history, that we have given a true interpretation, and made a just application of the words of the Lord to the church in Thyatira. We have only Him to serve and Him to please in writing this history. For no one else would we have waded through these thousand years. The amount that we write bears little proportion to the amount that must be read in order to be satisfied as to the truthfulness of what is written. Besides, a very large proportion of papal history is wholly unfit for our pages, or to come before the eye of civilized people, far less the eye of the Christian. Her adulteries and abominations are better left on the page that was written in a ruder age, as they will surely be consigned to a place peculiarly dark in the regions of hell.

For nearly three hundred years, by means of schools, new translations, versions, printing-presses, and the intolerance of the church, the Lord had been preparing the way for the accomplishment of His purpose; and, this being done, the feeblest instrument was sufficient to bring all these agencies into full action. "When the train is properly laid, an accidental spark may cause the explosion." To effect great results by small means is the way of divine providence, that the power may be seen to be of God, and not of man. An occasion was furnished, and Luther was the prepared instrument to reap the glorious harvest of the great Reformation. But much labour was bestowed on the field by many noble hearts and hands which were not privileged to gather its fruits, at least in this world. These may have been the agents, Luther was the instrument.

During these thousand years, we have been chiefly engaged with popery and the witnesses for Christ; now it must be popery and protestantism. But if the reader would rightly understand the difference between the two, he must carefully consider what popery was down to the time of Luther's appearance.

Popery and Mankind

Comparatively few in our peaceful times have any idea of the real nature and the comprehensive grasp of popery. During the long period of the middle ages it was fully developed; but its nature remains unchanged until the present hour. Times and circumstances have changed, not popery. The clergy, including the monks and friars, were a distinct class, and stood entirely apart from the rest of mankind. A broad, deep, impassable line separated the two communities - the clergy and the laity. The lives, the laws the property, the rights, and the social duties of the one were not only different from those of the other, but often antagonistic.

Education, such as it was, had become the exclusive privilege of the clergy. Whoever had any desire for knowledge, could neither obtain nor employ it but in connection with the churchman or the monastery. The younger sons of the nobility, and even of royalty, as the church became wealthy and powerful, joined the clerical community. By this means the most famous names in the land were found among the clergy, and the Church and State were thus welded together. The universities, the schools, the whole domains of the human intellect, were in their possession. The other great division of mankind - the laity - were kept in utter darkness and ignorance. And woe betide the man who would venture to point out some new road to intelligence, freedom, and power. The faintest glimmer of light was instantly extinguished, and the discovery denounced as magical and forbidden.

The priests alone could read, write, draw up State papers, or treaties, and frame laws. From the sacredness of their character, and their intellectual superiority, they were admitted to the courts and the councils of kings, they were the negotiators and the ambassadors of sovereigns. But royal secrets and compacts were not all they knew; the confessional laid open the whole heart of every one, from the highest to the lowest, before the eye of the priesthood. No act was beyond their cognizance, hardly any thought or intention was secret. There might be smothered murmurs at the avarice, pride, and licentiousness of the priest, still he was a priest, a bishop, a pope; his sacraments lost not their efficacy, his verdict of condemnation or absolution was equally valid. Those who openly doubted the power of the clergy in such matters were heretics, outcasts, proscribed, only fit fuel for the flames both now and evermore.

The pope, as was universally believed, combined in his own person all the attributes of supreme power in matters of religion and of government. The power of emperors and kings was derived, his was original. He was armed with divine authority to depose monarchs, to absolve subjects from their allegiance and from every other obligation; and, if needful, to dissolve all the bonds of society. But above all, he was empowered to maintain the integrity of the faith as transmitted to him from his predecessors or defined by himself as head of the church, to repress dissent in every shape; to persecute to extermination all who ventured to dispute this supreme prerogative, as rebels and traitors to God and His church; and at any time to call upon the secular government, without compensation, to lavish life and money, labour and feeling, to enable him to maintain the integrity of the spiritual empire.*

{*Milman's Survey, Latin Christianity, vol. 6, p. 357; Greenwood's Summary, book 14, chap. 1.}

The State of the Church at the Beginning of the

Sixteenth Century

Such, as we have now described, was the unlimited power of the Romish priesthood at the beginning of this century. No man was independent of the priest. He was lord of the human conscience. His power was absolute both over body and soul, over time and eternity. None could afford to incur his displeasure or to lie under his censure. Excommunication cut the man off, whatever his rank or station, from the church, beyond whose pale there was no possibility of salvation.

It is not a little remarkable that just at this time no danger seemed to threaten this towering, monstrous system of iniquity. From the Vatican down to the smallest congregation the sovereignty and tranquillity of the church appeared to be completely secured. The various heresies and commotions which had disturbed her for centuries had been suppressed by fire and sword, the complaints and petitions of her most faithful children had been rejected with insolent impunity; and the warnings of her sincerest friends were neglected or despised. Where were now the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Beghards, the Lollards, the Bohemians and the various sectaries? They had been silenced or extinguished by papal management. True, there were many private murmurs against the injustice, frauds, violence, and tyranny of the court of Rome; also against the crimes, ignorance, and licentiousness of her whole priesthood; but the pontiffs had grown accustomed to these murmurings, and could either conciliate with their favours, or defy with their censures, as best suited their policy.

We can imagine the false woman, according to the language of St. John, surveying with exultation the pillars and bulwarks of her strength. "For she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." She heeded not the voice that had said, "Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." (Rev. 18)

God's time was come for at least a partial fulfilment of this prophecy. The word of arrest had gone forth. Just when she thought everything was safe and settled for ever, the end of her uncontrolled domination was at hand. But how was this to be accomplished? A reformation of the church in its head and members had been the general cry for ages; but all such demands and complaints she set at defiance. What now was to be done? Must some mighty angel come down from heaven to overthrow the despotism of Rome, and break the yoke of popery which has so long bound in fetters the bodies and souls of men? No! such agencies were not required and not used, that God may be glorified. That which the most powerful sovereigns with their armed legions utterly failed to effect, God fully and gloriously accomplished by an obscure monk in Saxony, single-handed.

This was Martin Luther of Eisleben. He was the voice of God that awoke Europe to this great work and called the labourers into the field. But if we would form a just estimate of God's chief instrument in this mighty work, and of the grace that qualified him, we must glance at what is important in the early life of the great Reformer. D'Aubigne, in his love of Luther, speaks of him as having experienced in his own soul the different phases of the Reformation before they were accomplished in the world, and exhorts his reader to study his life before he proceeds to the events that changed the face of Christendom.

The First Period of Luther's Life

Martin Luther was descended from a poor but virtuous family, which had long dwelt in the domains of the Counts of Mansfeld, in Thuringia. "I am the son of a peasant," he used to say; "my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather, were honest peasants." His father, John Luther, soon after his marriage removed to Eisleben in Saxony. There Luther was born, November 10th, 1483. It was on St. Martin's eve: the following day he was christened by the name of Martin, in honour of the saint on whose festival he was born.

His father was an upright and industrious man; frank in his manner, but disposed to carry the firmness of his character even to obstinacy. He was fond of reading, and improved his naturally strong understanding by studying such books as came within his reach. His wife, Margaret, was a humble, prayerful, pious woman, looked up to by her neighbours as a pattern of virtue.

The following summer, or when Martin was about six months old, the family removed back to Mansfeld, where they endured great poverty. "My father was a wood cutter," says Luther, "and my mother has often carried the wood on her back that she might procure the means of bringing up her children." But the Lord was not unmindful of these honest labours and raised them above such drudgery in due time. John became connected with the iron-mines at Mansfeld, and, by his habits of industry and the general respect he acquired by his good sense, he was brought into comparatively easy circumstances. He was chosen a member of the town council, and by the superior character of his mind he easily found his way to the best society in the district.

The father's fondest ambition was to make his eldest son a scholar; but he did not forget his early domestic education. As soon as he was old enough to receive instruction, his pious parents spoke to him about the Lord Jesus and prayed with him by his bedside. Martin was sent very young to school. His first instructor was one George Emilius, the schoolmaster of the place. There he was taught the catechism, the commandments, the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the rudiments of Latin. But, according to the manners of the age, poor little Martin acquired his first religious education through many and severe floggings. From an early age he was trained in the school of poverty, hardship, and suffering, for a future life of warfare. On one occasion, as he himself relates, he was flogged by the unsparing Emilius fifteen times in the same day. His treatment at home was not more merciful.

"His father administered with conscientious rigour," says one of his biographers, "what was long considered as the only instrument of moral or intellectual cultivation; and even his mother engaged in the system with so much zeal as to draw blood by her chastisements." Martin's warm and resolute temper gave frequent occasions for punishment on this principle. "My parents," he said in after life, "treated me harshly, so that I became very timid. My mother one day chastised me so severely about a nut, that the blood came; but they sincerely thought they were doing right."*

{*Waddington's Reformation, vol. 1, p. 31; D'Aubigne's Reformation, vol. 1, p. 195.}

The Second Period of Luther's Life

At the age of fourteen Martin had learned all that could be taught at Mansfeld, and having given some promise of proficiency, his father sent him to the Franciscan school at Magdeburg. But the severity of Luther's education did not cease when he left his father's house and the hard discipline of Emilius. He found himself at Magdeburg in the midst of strangers, without friends, without means, and without food enough to live upon. His spirit was crushed; he trembled in the presence of his masters, and had to employ the intervals of study in begging bread. When, with his young companions he went at Christmas through the neighboring villages singing carols, all were so timid, by reason of the menaces and tyranny with which teachers were then accustomed to rule over their pupils, that they ran away from a kind peasant, who came out with some food for them. Frightened at the sound of a loud voice calling, "Boys, where are you?" they fled. It was only his repeated calls and assurances that brought them back to partake of his bounty.

Here Luther remained about a year, but his difficulty in finding food was so great that, with the consent of his parents, he left and went to Eisenach, which contained a good school, where also his mother's relations resided. But his kindred who dwelt there either neglected him or were unable to help him. So hard were his circumstances that it seemed likely he would have to leave. But again, when pinched by hunger, he tried singing from door to door for a morsel of bread. This custom is still preserved in many German cities; and in some places the choral boys are expected to solicit contributions in aid of the funds of the institution. Such a mode of earning his bread was most humiliating to the mind of Luther. The frequent repulses he met with well-nigh broke his spirit; he shed many tears in secret, and indulged anxious thoughts about the future.

"Must I abandon all my fond hopes of education, of improvement, of advancement? must I go back to Mansfeld and be shut up in the mines for ever?" Such questions had become present realities to the young student. But there was One who was watching over him, though as yet he knew Him not, and who had destined him to work in other mines than those at Mansfeld. A Father's hand was directing and weighing every trial; the enemy could not add a grain to their weight beyond the divine measure. He was training His future servant in the school of adversity; and when he had learnt his lesson the reward would come. A crisis in his history was at hand; the Lord's time for relief had arrived.

Luther and the Pious Ursula

One day, as Luther was returning from his labours, greatly disappointed and disheartened, having sung before three successive houses unrewarded, a door suddenly opened; a woman appeared on the threshold, who invited him to come in, and relieved his wants. This was the kind-hearted Ursula, the wife of Conrad Cotta. She had noticed him before and had been struck with the sweetness of his voice and the seriousness of his expression. Conrad approved of his wife's benevolence, and they agreed that he should remain with them as an adopted son. Relieved from his temporal cares, and enjoying the many privileges of a christian family, the naturally fine mind of Luther awoke to new sympathies, new joys, new hopes - to a new and happy existence. God in mercy had opened the hearts and the home of the good Ursula and her husband for the spirit-broken youth. We need scarcely add, that their love was engraver on the heart of Luther, and recorded in heaven to be rewarded for ever.

To his literary and scientific studies - which he now pursued with fresh vigour - he added the charms of music. In gratitude to his adopted mother, he learned in his hours of recreation to play on the flute and the lute, and to sing to the latter, for she was passionately fond of the melody of his voice as an accompaniment to the lute. Thus began that love of music which continued even to old age, and was often a solace to him in times of trouble and temptation. He composed tunes for many songs, and also the words as well as the airs of some very beautiful hymns.

In the genial atmosphere of the Cotta family, it was only natural that the character of Luther should undergo a great change. His anxieties were removed, his timidity disappeared, his mind was peaceful, his ways were cheerful and happy, and his remarkable talents made him the special favorite at the Franciscan school. Thus he spent four happy years. "He surpassed all his fellows," says Melancthon, "in eloquence, and compositions both in prose and verse."

Trebonius, the superior of the convent and the head of the college, always raised his cap to salute the pupils when he entered the schoolroom. His colleagues, not adopting the same custom, expressed their surprise at his condescension. "There are among these boys," he replied, "some whom God will one day make burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, and magistrates. Although you do not yet see them with the badges of their dignity, it is right that you should treat them with respect." The youthful Luther was present, and no doubt often remembered the words of his esteemed teacher.

Encouraged by his early triumphs at Eisenach, and feeling that his course of study was secured, he thirsted for more extensive means of intellectual advancement and distinction A university education was his great desire. His father; whose circumstances were improved, agreed to this, but wished him to study the law.

Luther Enters the University at Erfurt

In the year 1501, Luther arrived at the University in Erfurt, then the most distinguished in Germany. He had reached his eighteenth year and entered with great eagerness into the studies of manhood. "My father," says Luther "maintained me there with much love and faithfulness, and supported me by the sweat of his brow." One of his biographers, moralizing on this grateful record of the son, observes: "And assuredly all the volumes of the history of mankind contain no record of a parent's manual toil being recompensed by so glorious a harvest as that which sprang from the persevering industry of the miner of Mansfeld Every drop that fell from that brow was converted by a watchful providence to the furtherance of its purposes, and made the means of fertilizing the mind, which it had ordained to change the predominant principles of the christian world."*

{*Waddington, vol. 1, p. 34.}

There is reason to believe that other thoughts besides the cultivation of his intellect were exercising the mind of Luther at this time. The merciful intervention of God in the kindness of the Cotta family, and what he had seen and learnt there, made a deep and lasting impression on his inmost soul. He strongly objected to the study of Aristotle, although his system was in great repute at the college, and represented as the best, or rather the only, discipline for his reason. "Had Aristotle not been a man," he used to say, "I should not have hesitated to take him for a devil;" so great was his aversion to the philosophy of the learned Greek. The works of the great scholastics of former ages, such as Scotus, Aquinas, Ockham, and Bonaventura, were recommended to him as the only means of piety and learning; but these, for meeting the need of a troubled conscience, were little better than the logic of Aristotle. Nevertheless, in the wisdom of God, it was necessary that he should become conversant with these writings that he might be the better able, and have the better ground, to expose their utter worthlessness as to the service and worship of God. He also studied the best Latin authors, and, being blessed with great powers of penetration, perseverance and a retentive memory, he made rapid progress in his studies, and early acquired the reputation of an expert and skilful dialectician.

In the year 1503 he took his first academic degree of Bachelor of Arts; and in 1505, he took that of Doctor in Philosophy. Having made considerable proficiency in several branches of literature, he began, in obedience to his father's wishes, to turn his attention to the subject of jurisprudence. But the Lord had other work for Luther: grace was already working in his heart. He was about that time given to much prayer; and used to say, "that prayer is the better half of studying" - a good maxim for all Christian students.

Luther's First Sight of a Bible

In a state of trembling anxiety about the salvation of his soul, he was one day searching the library at Erfurt for something new, when the hand of God directed him to a Bible. He read the title page - it is indeed the Holy Bible! He was greatly excited and interested as he rapidly turned over its leaves. He was then twenty years of age, and had not so much as seen the precious volume before. Let the Protestant reader note this - he had been brought up by pious parents, lived four years in a christian family, and had not even seen a Bible! The same ignorance of the word of God prevails in Roman Catholic communities to this hour. The Bible forms no part of a Catholic priest's education, and the people are forbidden to read it. Tens of millions are now in circulation, but in a strictly Roman Catholic district it would be difficult to find a single copy. Some extracts are used in the church service, and even pious Catholics are ready to believe that these extracts contain the substance of the whole Bible. Such is the narrow and precarious foundation on which their faith is built, and such the blinding, ruinous power of that fearful system of darkness and idolatry.

But we have also, as Protestants, to remember that the Bible is not its own power, or its own interpreter. For "what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in Him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." Without the teaching and power of the Holy Spirit, through faith in Christ Jesus, there can be no right understanding of the word of God, and no true subjection of heart to its absolute authority. Hence some of the protestant axioms, though sounding well and of importance as contrasted with popery, are nevertheless incorrect and misleading, such as, "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." This is quite true when speaking of the Bible as a standard; but if it be meant that the Bible is its own power and interpreter, it is false; for the Holy Spirit would be thereby practically excluded. "The right of private judgment" has also been much talked of by Protestants; but its effects have been most mischievous. Pride of intellect, the competency of human reason, and insubjection to the revealed will of God, are some of the evil fruits of this Protestant parent principle; although it was originally intended to contrast with the boasted infallibility of the Romish priesthood, and the enslaved mind of the laity.

How can a lost sinner, condemned already, have any private or individual rights? He has no rights save to a place among the lost. But if God is pleased to speak to him, he is bound to listen - only to listen; he has no right to reason on what God may be pleased to say; he can have no opinion of his own on divine things. People do not really believe that they are lost; they believe that they have sins - that they are guilty; but they do not believe that in their present state they are "condemned already." Most people know neither that they are lost, nor that they are saved; hence they talk of their rights as free men. But some may inquire, "What then is the use of our reason if we are not to exercise it?" To read, search, and learn the mind of God from His word, is surely the highest exercise of the human mind, and the richest privilege. But hear what another says:

How to Study the Bible

"Scripture in hand, diligent in study, what is my safeguard as to understanding it? My own competency? Its suitability to what is in me and around, which is most divinely true? Oh, no! . . . Let man humbly take his place of subjection, and God will not deny Himself - the Spirit never fails to honour the Lord Jesus; and it is written, 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.' Blessed ground this for man's soul to rest upon in contrast with the neologian or infidel ground of human competency and human diligence. To the spirit of obedience and subjection all is sure."* Doing, according to the word of the Lord, must go before knowing. There must be a readiness to do His will if we would know or understand His doctrine; but the pride of man would put it the other way - I must know His word, before I yield obedience to His will.

{*See The Present Testimony, vol. 1, p. 52.}

To Romanist as well as to Protestant, the oracles of God had been committed, and that Sacred Book will be the ground of men's judgment before the great white throne; but, historically, the one kept it laid up in the napkin, affirming that it was too sacred for the eyes of men to see or the ears of men to hear; the other brought it forth to the light, broadcast it over all lands, and caused its voice to be heard on the open highway, and in the streets and lanes of the city. Thus was the Reformation accomplished. Deep in the credulity and devotion of the multitude had Rome struck her roots; and she stood firm and unshaken until access was gained to the minds of the common people. And this was done by the free circulation of the Bible. "The movement was from above, in the great grace of God. The Spirit, still testifying to Jesus, Lord of all, gave its tongue and voice to the word. God was with it in the vessels He had afore prepared for the work: and whether in quickening, throwing light upon the path to glory, and upon those that travelled in it; or convicting and discovering Satan, with his slaves on their downward march of rebellion towards hell, it was the Holy Spirit who was the power of understanding, and proclamation, and application of the word." We now return to the history of Luther.

Again and again, Luther found his way to the library in the monastery. With increasing delight he examined the unsoiled pages of the Latin Bible, and wished in his heart that he might some day possess such a treasure. He was astonished at the mass of knowledge it contained, and arrested by its simple narratives, especially such as the history of Hannah and the young Samuel. But attractive as the word of God became to him, and much as he enjoyed reading it, he was far from seeing the way of salvation. The excessive labour which enabled him to pass his examinations with honours occasioned a dangerous illness. When death seemed approaching, what was his refuge? "O Mary, help me!" he kept calling loudly through the night. He knew not a more powerful saviour than the Virgin Mary. "Had I died at that time," he said years after, "I should have died relying upon Mary." The true ground of a sinner's pardon and salvation had never been presented to him; and he had received the most perfect education which home and the church, with her universities could give.

Luther Becomes a Monk

Encouraged by the dignities and the popularity which he had gained, he felt disposed, with returning health, to apply himself entirely to the study of law; and began to teach the ethics of Aristotle with other branches of philosophy. While thus engaged in secular pursuits, a singular and solemn event occurred which gave a new direction to his whole future life. One of his favorite college friends, Alexius, was cut off suddenly, and probably by the hand of violence; but the particulars of his death are uncertain: the results however were certain and important. Luther trembled. What would become of my soul, were I thus called away without warning? The terrors of death which had affected him before returned with redoubled violence and took possession of his whole soul. While in this state of mental agitation, and the solemn question of his soul's salvation still unsettled, he was overtaken by a dreadful thunderstorm near Erfurt. The lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, the terrified Luther threw himself upon the ground, imagining that the hour of death, judgment, and eternity were come. Encompassed with the terrors of death and ignorant of his way to God by the faith of Jesus, he called upon St. Anne, and made a vow that, if the Lord would deliver him from this danger, he would abandon the world, and shut himself up in a convent for the rest of his days.

The storm passed, Luther re-enters Erfurt, but not to resume his lectures, not to pursue the study of the law: his vow was upon him; he resigned his brilliant prospects for the obscurity of a cloister. This was the customary usage in those days for all who became seriously religious, in the hope of obtaining a holiness that would fit them to meet God. He knew it would greatly distress his father, and this thought pained him exceedingly, but his resolution was unalterable. About a fortnight after the event, on the 17th of August, 1505, he invited a few of his university friends to supper. As usual, music and conversation enlivened the social meeting. At an advanced hour in the evening Luther communicated his intention. This was his farewell entertainment - his farewell to the world. That same night, in spite of every remonstrance, he entered the Augustinian convent at Erfurt.

Luther could do nothing coldly or feebly. See him now leaving his friends, his books, his clothes, and in the darkness of the night hastening to the convent gate. "Open to me, in the name of God," he cried. "What do you want?" replied the friar. "To consecrate myself to God." The gate opened; Luther entered, and it closed again. He was now separated from his parents, his friends, his studies, the world; but, according to the notions of that time, his soul was now perfectly safe, he was alone with God.

Luther's Experience as a Monk

The motives by which Luther was actuated in taking this hasty step he thus explains about sixteen years later: "I was never in heart a monk, nor was it to mortify the lust of my fleshly appetites, but, tormented with horror and the fear of death, I took a forced and constrained vow." Immediately after his entry into the convent, he sent back to the university his robe and ring of office; he parted with the clothes he had worn up till then, that nothing might remain that could remind him of the world he had renounced. His father was greatly grieved by all these proceedings, and his friends at Erfurt were utterly astonished. Only the monks rejoiced; they were no doubt flattered by so distinguished a doctor becoming one of their order.

But the lingering desire of Luther's heart for more reading and contemplation was not to be indulged in the monastery. No sooner had he entered than he was subjected, notwithstanding his high reputation in the university, to the most degrading monastic drudgery. He was ordered to sweep out the dormitories, to wind up the clock, to open and shut the gates, to perform the duties of porter, and to be the menial servant of the cloister. But this was not all. He must be publicly mortified; the high-minded student must be humbled. When the poor monk was tired with his manual labors, and expecting rest and some time for reading and study, he was urged to turn out with his wallet and beg for the convent. He was told that it was not by study that he would benefit the community, but rather by begging bread, corn, eggs, fish, meat, and money. And thus he wandered forth with his sack through the streets of Erfurt, begging from door to door; but not now as a poor singing boy, but as a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy.

This was a severe education for Luther, but it was no doubt permitted and overruled by an all-wise providence, that he might gain through personal experience a more minute acquaintance with monastic life, and a keener sense of its delusions, than he could have learnt in any other way. But the enemy, as he often does, went too far. The university was ashamed to see one of its late honorable members laden with the monastery's breadbag, and begging, it might be, at the doors of his old friends. The prior of the convent was spoken to, and Luther was released from those errands of mendicity.

Luther's Conversion

Having obtained some relaxation from his menial duties, Luther now returned to his studies with fresh zeal. Reading and meditation were his delight. The works of the Fathers, especially of St. Augustine, attracted his attention. In a certain spot of the convent there was a Bible fastened by a chain, and thither the young monk often resorted to read the word of God, though as yet he had no spiritual discernment of its meaning. One of the friars, named John Lange, with whom Luther became acquainted, possessed considerable knowledge both of the Greek and Hebrew, languages which Luther had not yet found time to study. But his opportunity was now come, and he embraced it with great eagerness and industry. It was thus, in the seclusion of his cell, and with the help of John Lange, that he began to learn Greek and Hebrew, and thereby laid the foundation of the greatest and most useful of all his works - the translation of the Bible into the German tongue. Reuchlin's Hebrew Lexicon had just appeared, which greatly assisted him.

But Luther's reading and exercises of mind on the scriptures, from not understanding them, only increased his distress. To have the assurance of salvation was the one great desire of his agitated soul. Without this nothing could give him rest. He had entered the cloister, he had become a monk, he had struggled unceasingly against the evil of his own heart, he had spent whole nights on his knees on the floor of his cell, he had exceeded all his brethren in watchings, fastings, and mortifications, but in monkish perfection he had found no relief; it only plunged him into deeper despair, and well nigh cost him his life. Through the rigour of his asceticism he weakened his body till his mind wandered, and then he imagined that he saw and was surrounded with ghosts and demons. But why was this? some may inquire; was he not sincere? Most surely, but he sought to obtain peace with God by means of his own religious exercises, and in this he was bitterly disappointed. He was attempting to do the work for himself which Christ had done for him - and done perfectly. And are not thousands in the present day doing the very same thing that Luther did, only less sincere, less earnest, less self-denying? They are looking to themselves - it may be only to their feelings, or it may be to their doings or their reasonings, or their realizings. Still, self is the object before the mind, not Christ and His finished work. "Look unto me," says the blessed Lord; and what will the immediate result be? Salvation! - instant, complete, personal salvation! "Look unto Me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Isa 45:22) And to this truth every soul must bow before it can taste the sweetness of peace with God. But Luther was still ignorant of the sublime simplicity and the moral glory of the gospel of the grace of God.

At this period of Luther's history, he thought nothing too great a sacrifice that might enable him to attain that holiness which would secure salvation now and heaven at last. He really thought to purchase eternal happiness by his own exertions; such is the darkness of the church of Rome, and such was the delusion of one of her most faithful sons. In after years, when he knew better, he wrote to Duke George of Saxony: "I was indeed a pious monk, and followed the rules of my order more strictly than I can express. If ever monk could obtain heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it. Of this all the friars who have known me can testify. If it had continued much longer I should have carried my mortifications even to death, by means of watchings, prayers, readings, and other labours." Admission into heaven by his own merits was the end at which he aimed, and which he pursued with a zeal that endangered his life.

From the strictness and abstemiousness of his monastic life he became subject to fits of depression. On one occasion, overwhelmed with a sense of his own wretchedness and sinfulness, he locked himself up in his cell, and for several days and nights refused to admit any one. A friendly monk, who knew something of the state of his mind, burst open his cell, and was alarmed to find him with his face on the ground, and in a state of insensibility. He was, after some difficulty, restored by the sweet singing of a few chorister boys, but he fainted again - the burden was still there. He required, not the soft music of a hymn, but the sweeter music of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And this, through the mercy of God, was near at hand.

Luther and Staupitz

John Staupitz, whom the Lord sent to Luther with a message of mercy, was vicar-general of the Augustines for all Germany. Historians speak of him in the highest terms. "He was indeed of noble descent," says one, "but he was far more illustrious through the power of his eloquence, the extent of his learning, the uprightness of his character, and the purity of his life."* It is matter of thankfulness, and worthy of note, to find such a godly man filling such an important office even in the last stage of papal degeneracy. His influence was great and good. He possessed the esteem of Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, who founded the university of Wittemberg under his direction.

{*Waddington, vol. 1, p. 47.}

A visitation of this good man - the vicar-general - to inspect the monastery at Erfurt was announced just about the time when the anguish of Luther's mind had reached its height. The wasted frame, the melancholy appearance, yet the earnest resolute look of the young monk attracted the attention of Staupitz. From past experience he knew well the cause of his dejection, and most kindly instructed and comforted him. He assured Luther that he was entirely mistaken in supposing that he could stand before God on the ground of his works or his vows, that he could only be saved by the mercy of God, and that mercy must flow to him through faith in the blood of Christ. "Let your principal occupation be the study of the scriptures," says Staupitz; and along with this good advice he presented Luther with a Bible, which of all things on earth he most desired.

A ray of divine light had penetrated the dark mind of Luther. His conversations and correspondence with the vicar-general greatly helped him, but he was still a stranger to peace with God. His bodily health again gave way under the conflicts of his soul. During the second year of his residence in the convent he became so dangerously ill, that he had to be removed to the infirmary. All his former terrors returned at the approach of death. He was still ignorant of the value of the finished work of Christ to the believer, and so were his teachers. The frightful image of his own guilt, and the demands of God's holy law, filled him with fear. Not being a common-place man, and passing through an experience which common-place men could not understand, he was alone, he could tell his griefs to none.

One day, as he lay, overwhelmed with despair, he was visited by an old monk, who spoke to him of the way of peace. Won by the kindness of his words, Luther opened his heart to him. The venerable father spoke to him of the efficacy of faith, and repeated to him that article in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins. " These few simple words, with the Lord's blessing, seem to have turned the mind of Luther from works to faith. He had been familiar with the form of these words from his childhood, but he had only repeated them as a form of words, like thousands of nominal Christians in all ages. Now they filled his heart with hope and consolation. The old monk, hearing him repeating the words to himself, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," as if to fathom their depth, interrupted him by saying that it was not a mere general but a personal belief. I believe in the forgiveness, not merely of David's sins, or of Peter's sins, but of my sins. Even the devils have a general but not a personal belief. "Hear what St. Bernard says," added the pious old monk, "The testimony of the Holy Ghost to thy heart is this, thy sins are forgiven thee." From this moment divine light entered the heart of Luther, and, step by step, through the diligent study of the word and prayer, he became a great and honoured servant of the Lord.

Reflections on the Conversion of Luther

This is the simple story of Luther's conversion, and a genuine conversion it was, through the grace of God, but, so far as Luther's mind was concerned, it was not a very solid work. The measure and character of the truth presented by Staupitz and the old monk could not have fortified him against the attacks of the enemy. With so little knowledge of the mind of God, the love of Christ, the completeness of His work, of deliverance through death and resurrection, a converted soul might soon be filled and harassed with doubts and fears. And this is what we find on all hands in the present day. Very few have settled peace with God. They hope, they trust, that they are saved, but there is very little of the full assurance of faith. And why? Just because of defective views of their own lost state and of the work of Christ as perfectly meeting that state. Take one text as an illustration: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb 10:14) Surely, if we rightly apprehended the dignity and the glory of the sufferer, what would our faith be in the value of His sacrifice, of His one offering? There is no repetition, no second application, of the blood; it can never lose its efficacy. We may be daily cleansed with the water of purification, but the idea of a second application of the blood of propitiation is unknown in scripture. Once washed in that precious blood, the conscience is perfect for ever. That word, "for ever," means not so much eternally, as continuously, permanently, uninterruptedly perfect before God, even as Christ always is. God can never overlook that which has so perfectly blotted out sin, so perfectly glorified Himself, so perfectly vanquished every foe, and so perfectly obtained eternal redemption for every believer.

Up till the time that Luther met with Staupitz and the aged monk, he was, to use his own words, "in the swaddling bands of popery, and had not seen its evils." And this is true in a certain sense, of thousands still. They are in the swaddling-bands of their respective systems of doctrine and church-standing, without having ever carefully examined these things by the word of God. Consequently they are strangers to that happy liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. Luther was converted, but he was by no means out of the house of bondage. The unswathing of his soul was through unbelief, a slow process. He knew almost nothing of the privileges and blessings of the children of God, and of their standing in Christ. But we know from scripture what his blessings were, and what the blessings are of every converted soul. Immediately the woman touched the hem of the Redeemer's garment, the fountain of her disease was dried up. By the slender touch of faith the virtue that was in Jesus was made her own. Beautiful illustration of the newly-converted soul standing before God in all the virtue, the excellencies, the life, the righteousness, the peace, the joy, the happy liberty of Christ Himself! Eternal life has taken the place of spiritual death, divine righteousness of human sin, and nearness to God of moral distance. Such is the blessing of every soul the first moment of its conversion, though it may be on the borders of despair from the darkness of its condition, as Luther was.

Take another illustration - the penitent thief on the cross. A few moments after his conversion he enters heaven with Christ, and as fitted for that holy place as Christ Himself. "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." The immediate consequence of faith in Christ is meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. See also Luk 23:39-43; Mar 5:25-34; Col 1:12-14.

Luther - a Priest and a Professor

He had spent three eventful years in the cloister at Erfurt. But these years were not lost to him. The general cultivation of his mind, the discipline of his soul, his study of Hebrew and Greek, were so many branches of needed education for his future career in the Lord's service. Besides, it was the place of his spiritual birth, and the place where he first heard of justification by faith - that divine doctrine on which so much of his subsequent work was built.

In the year 1507 he was ordained a priest, at which ceremony his father was present though still dissatisfied with the course of his son. Luther had now received power from the bishop to offer sacrifice for the living and the dead, and to convert, by muttering a few words, the unleavened cake into the real body and blood of the Lord. Luther submitted to and accepted these popish pretensions, though against his convictions, and with fear and trembling, but his soul never completely recovered from the effects of this blasphemous ordination. A judicial blindness as to the scriptural simplicity of the Lord's supper settled down upon his mind. He was enabled, by the grace of God, to throw off and denounce many of Rome's superstitions, but never fully her crowning enormity, transubstantiation.

Staupitz, the faithful friend and patron of Luther, placed him, at the age of twenty-five, in a position suited for the display of his powerful and active mind, and the further development of his character. He was invited by the Elector Frederick, at the suggestion of the vicar-general, to occupy a chair of philosophy in his rising university. He removed to Wittemberg in the year 1508. But though called to be a professor he did not cease to be a monk; he lodged in a cell in the Augustinian convent. The subjects on which he was appointed to lecture were the physics and dialectics of Aristotle. This was uncongenial employment for one who was hungering and thirsting after the word of God. Neither physical science nor moral philosophy suited the spirit of his mind. But again, we may say, it was part of his needed education. He who had passed through the cloister must now occupy for a time the chair of scholastic philosophy, that he might be better fitted to expose the evils, and combat the errors, of both systems, and emancipate the minds of men from their influence.

In the mean time, though he was attracting the youths of Wittemberg by the force and style of his lectures, he was zealously applying himself to the study of Greek and Hebrew. His desire was to drink at the fountain, and He who saw the great desire of his heart and the labour of his life opened up the way for him. In a few months after his arrival at the university he obtained the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, which entitled him to lecture on theology, or on the Bible. He now felt himself in his proper sphere, and determined to communicate that only which he learnt from the word of God. His first discourses were on the Psalms, and then he passed to Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

His precious meditations on these portions in his quiet cell both at Erfurt and Wittemberg, gave a character to his lectures altogether new. He spoke, not merely as an eloquent schoolman, but as a Christian who felt the power of the great truths he taught. When he reached, in his expositions, the last clause of Rom 1:17, "the just shall live by faith," a light, we may say, beyond the brightness of the sun, filled his whole soul. The Spirit of God clothed the words with light and power to the understanding and to the heart of Luther. The grand doctrine of justification by faith alone he received into his heart as from the voice of God. He now saw that eternal life was to be obtained not by penance but by faith. The whole story of the German Reformation is connected with these few words. In their light he explained the scriptures of the Old and New Testament; by their truth he exposed the falsehoods of popery, he thrilled the heart of Europe, he brought the reign of imposture to an end, and accomplished the great Reformation. Alone he stood before all authority - before all the world - on the truth of the word of God, "the just shall live by faith." God's word is true popery is a lie; the one must fall, the other must triumph truth is health to the soul, a lie is deadly poison. These principles of eternal righteousness were now firmly fixed in the heart of Luther by the Spirit of God; and, simple as they may appear, he was enabled, through faith in the word of God, to triumph over popes, bishops, clergy, kings, and emperors, raising the standard of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without works of law.

The great work was now begun, but the workman had still some lessons to learn.

Luther Visits Rome

Some disputes having arisen between the vicar-general and several of the Augustinian monasteries, Luther was selected as a fit person to represent the whole matter before His Holiness in Rome. It was necessary, in the wisdom of God, that Luther should know Rome. As a monk in the far north, he only thought of the pope as the most holy father and of Rome as the city of the saints; and these prejudices and delusions could only be dispelled by personal observation: intelligence did not circulate then as now.

In the year 1510, penniless and barefoot, Luther crossed the Alps. A meal and a night's rest he begged at the monasteries or the farm-houses as he went along. But scarcely had he descended the Alps, when he found monasteries of marble and the monks feeding on the most sumptuous fare. All this was new and surprising to the frugal monk of Wittemberg. But when Friday came, what was his astonishment to find the tables of the Benedictines groaning with dainty meats? He was so moved with indignation that he ventured to say "The church and the pope forbid such things." For this remonstrance, some say, he nearly atoned with his life. Having received a friendly hint to be off, he quitted the monastery, travelled through the burning plains of Lombardy, and reached Bologna, dangerously ill. Here the enemy turned his thoughts in upon himself, and he became greatly troubled with the sense of his own sinfulness, for the prospect of death filled him with fear and terror. But the words of the apostle, "the just shall live by faith," like a ray of light from heaven, chased the dark clouds away, changed the current of his thoughts, and restored his peace of mind. With returning strength he renewed his journey, and after passing through Florence, and toiling under an oppressive Italian sun through the long tract of the Apennines, he at length drew near to the seven-hilled city.

We must preface Luther's entry into Rome by reminding our readers that, though he had received the truth of the gospel, he was still a papist, and that his devotion to the papacy partook of the vehemence of bigotry. Rome, to the rude German, was the holy city, sanctified by the tombs of the apostles, the monuments of saints, and the blood of martyrs. But alas! the Rome of reality was widely different from the Rome of his imagination. As he approached the gates, his heart beat violently. He fell on his knees, and, with his hands raised to heaven, he exclaimed, "Holy Rome, I salute thee! Blessed Rome, thrice sanctified by the blood of thy martyrs!" With all sorts of affectionate and respectful terms he thus saluted the metropolis of Christendom. And under the influence of this wild enthusiasm he hastened to the holy places, listening to all the legends by which they are consecrated; and all that he saw and heard he most devoutly believed. But his heart was very soon sickened with the profanity of the Italian priests. One day, when he was repeating Mass with great seriousness, he found that the priests at an adjoining altar had already repeated seven Masses before he had finished one. "Quick! quick!" cried one of them, "send our Lady back her Son," making an impious allusion to the transubstantiation of the bread into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Profanity could scarcely reach a higher pitch. Luther's disenchantment was complete, and the purpose of God in his education was accomplished.

Luther had expected to find in Rome an austere religion; "her brow circled with griefs, resting on the bare earth, quenching her thirst with the dew of heaven, clothed like the apostles, making her way along stony paths, and the gospel under her arm; but in place of this he saw the triumphal pomp of the pontiff; the cardinals in litters, on horseback, or in carriages, glittering with precious stones, and covered from the sun by a canopy of peacocks' feathers. The gorgeous churches, and the more gorgeous rituals, and the pagan splendour of the paintings, were to Luther, whose heart was heavy with thoughts of the priests' profanity, utterly unbearable. What was the Rome of Raphael, of Michael Angelo, of Perugino, and Benvenuto, to the poor German monk, who had travelled four hundred leagues on foot, expecting to find that which would deepen his devotion and strengthen his faith?"

Yet such was the power of educational superstition in Luther, notwithstanding his knowledge of scripture, and his bitter disappointment in Rome, that one day, wishing to obtain an indulgence promised by the pope to all who should ascend on their knees what is called Pilate's staircase, he was humbly creeping up those steps, which he was told had been miraculously transported from Jerusalem to Rome, when he thought he heard a voice, loud as thunder, crying, "The just shall live by faith." Amazed, he rises from the steps up which he was dragging his body; ashamed at seeing to what a depth superstition had plunged him, he flies with all haste from the scene of his folly.

Having transacted the business on which he was sent, he fumed his back for ever upon the pontifical city. "Adieu! Rome," he said; "let all who would lead a holy life depart from Rome. Everything is permitted in Rome except to be an honest man." He had no thought then of leaving the Roman church, but, perplexed and troubled, he resumed to Saxony.

Soon after Luther's' return to Wittemberg, on the pressing solicitation of Staupitz, he took the degree of Doctor in Divinity. The Senate also gave him the pulpit of the parish church, which opened up for him at once a sphere of the greatest usefulness. But Luther, alarmed at the responsibility, showed some reluctance to accept a dignity of such spiritual importance. As his friendly vicar sought to remove his scruples, and pressed the service upon him, he submitted, and in the performance of his pulpit duties he had the rare opportunity of preaching the word of God and the gospel of Christ in the cloisters of his convent, the chapel of the castle, and in the collegiate church. His voice, says history, was fine, sonorous, electrifying; his gesticulations were easy and noble. A bold originality ever marked the mind of Luther, charming many by its novelty, and overpowering others by its force. He had acquired during the last four or five years a respectable acquaintance both with Greek and Hebrew; he had read deeply the New Testament; he was fully assured that justification by faith was the peculiar doctrine of the gospel; that the word of God was the primary and fundamental means of the revival and reformation of the church.

From the year 1512 to the memorable year 1517 Luther was a bold intrepid herald of the word of life. In all things he longed only to know the truth, to shake off and cast from him the falsehoods and superstitions of Rome. And thus we leave Luther for the present, engaged in his glorious work, while we must refer for a few moments to the state of things in the church which brought John Tetzel and his indulgences into the neighbourhood of Wittemberg.*

{*D'Aubigné, vol. 1. Froude's Short Studies, vol. 1. Waddington's Reformation, vol. 1. Universal History, vol. 6, Bagster and Sons.}

34 First Papal Jubilee

Chapter 34

The First Papal Jubilee

The avarice of the Roman clergy, and the superstition of the people, had been greatly excited by the Crusades. For two hundred years these were the source of enormous wealth and power to the church, and of incalculable misery, ruin, and degradation to the nations of Europe. In these so-called holy wars about six millions of Europeans perished, and about two hundred millions of money were expended; besides, the property of the crusader was commonly placed during the expedition under the bishop's protection, and in case of his death - which generally happened - it remained in his hands. But happily that which "stands singularly marked in the temple of history as a monument of human absurdity, of unanimous infatuation," came to an end with the close of the thirteenth century.

In the year 1291 Acre, the last military station held by the Christians in Palestine, fell into the hands of the Turks. The unbelievers were then in possession of the sepulchre of Christ, and of all the holy places and objects of pilgrimage. Thus ended the great papal scheme and the boasted glory of the Crusades to the Holy Land.

Two grave questions now arose: How is the papal treasury to be filled, and the desire of the people for indulgences to be satisfied? The pope wants money, the people want their sins forgiven and are willing to pay for it. To meet these two important objects, the pope discovered a new and most successful way. We have reached the last year of the thirteenth century, said Boniface; let the first year of the fourteenth be a year of Jubilee. Palestine was irrecoverably lost; the cross and the Saviour's sepulchre were in the hands of the Saracens; but the holy city of Rome, and the tombs of the apostles were open to the pilgrims. By skilfully changing the place of pilgrimage from Jerusalem to Rome the desired end was gained. Never was superstition more successful.

On the 22nd of February, 1299, a bull was issued, promising indulgences of extraordinary fulness to all who, within the following year, should, with due penitence and devotion, visit the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul - the Romans once a day for thirty successive days, and strangers for fifteen. The bull was immediately promulgated throughout Christendom. It asserted that all who should confess and lament their sins, and devoutly make pilgrimage to the tomb of the "chief of the apostles," should receive a plenary indulgence; or, in other words, a complete remission of all sins, past, present, and to come. An indulgence of this kind had hitherto been limited to the crusaders; the consequence was that all Europe was in a frenzy of religious excitement. Multitudes hastened to Rome from all parts. The welcome sound of the Jubilee drew all western Christendom into this vast peaceful crusade. "Throughout the year, the roads in the remotest parts of Germany, Hungary, Britain, were crowded with pilgrims of all ages, of both sexes, who sought to expiate their sins, not by an armed and perilous pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but by a less costly, and a less dangerous, journey to Rome. "

The Golden Year

The calculations of the number cannot be easy or accurate; but we are assured by those who assisted at the ceremony, that there were always about two hundred thousand present in the city, and the total concourse of the year has been fixed at two millions. The wealth which flowed into the papal coffers from the Jubilee was enormous. Supposing that each individual gave only a small sum, what a royal treasure must have been collected! But offerings were heaped up on the altars. It was called by the Romans the Golden Year. An eye-witness tells us that he saw two priests with rakes in their hands, employed day and night in raking, without counting, the heaps of gold and silver that were laid on the tombs of the apostles. Nor was this tribute, like offerings or subsidies for crusades, to be devoted to special uses, such as provisions or freight of armies, but it was entirely at the free and irresponsible disposal of the pope. But from the benefits of this indulgence the enemies of the church were to be excluded, or rather the enemies of Boniface.

Christendom, with the exception of a few noted rebels against the See of Rome, had now received the gift of pardon and eternal life, and in return, of its own accord, heaped up at the pope's feet this extraordinary wealth. The authorities had taken wise and effective measures against famine for such accumulating multitudes, but many were trampled down, and perished by suffocation.

The experiment far exceeded the expectations of the pope and his partisans. Boniface had proposed that the Jubilee should be celebrated every hundredth year, but the advantages to the church were so great, that the interval was naturally thought to be too long. Clement VI., therefore, repeated the Jubilee in 1350, which drew vast multitudes of pilgrims to Rome, and incredible wealth. The numbers were nearly as great as in 1300. The streets leading to the churches which were to be visited - St. Peter's, St. Paul's, and St. John Lateran - were so crowded as to admit of no movement, except with the stream of the multitudes. High prices were charged by the Romans for food and lodgings, many had to spend their nights in the churches and streets, and not a few of the poor deluded pilgrims perished. Urban VI., in 1389, reduced the interval to thirty-three years, the supposed length of time to which the life of our Lord on earth extended. Finally, Paul II. in 1475, established that the festival of the Jubilee should be celebrated every twenty-five years, which continues to this day to be the interval at which the great festival is observed.

With the great religious impostures of the dark ages, and the sin of deluding a credulous people, we have become familiar; but it is truly heart-breaking to find that such blasphemies are believed and practised in our own day, notwithstanding the state of education and the number of witnesses to the truth of the word of God and the finished work of Christ. The following extract from a bull that was issued by the pope in 1824, appointing the Jubilee for the ensuing year, will explain what we mean.

"We have resolved, by virtue of the authority given to us from heaven, fully to unlock that sacred treasure composed of the merits, sufferings, and virtues of Christ our Lord, and of his virgin mother, and of all the saints which the Author of human salvation has entrusted to our dispensation. To you, therefore, venerable brethren, patriarchs, primates, archbishops, bishops, it belongs to explain with perspicuity the power of indulgences; what is their efficacy in the remission, not only of the canonical penance, but also of the temporal punishment due to the divine justice for past sin; and what succour is afforded out of this heavenly treasure, from the merits of Christ and His saints, to such as have departed real penitents in God's love, yet before they had duly satisfied by fruits worthy of penance, for sins of omission and commission, and are now purifying in the fire of purgatory."*

{*Gardner's Faiths of the World, vol. 2, p. 252.}

The Sale of Indulgences

Leo the tenth ascended the papal throne in the year 1513. He was the third son of Lorenzo de' Medici, the Magnificent, and brought with him to the pontifical court the refined, luxurious, and expensive style of his family. Besides, Michael Angelo had furnished him with finished design of St. Peter's, which was then in progress, and greatly increased his expenditure. The important question now was, how to find money to complete the grand cathedral, and to replenish the papal treasury for the purposes of Leo's pontificate?

The letters of Luther to this pontiff are misleading. He seems not to have known Leo's character, though he had so much to do with him, they have all the appearance of flattery. While Leo has the reputation of being one of the most polished and cultivated men of his day, he was far from being even a moral man. His court was gay, he was devoted to pleasure, and utterly careless of the duties of religion. Compared with his immediate predecessors - the dissolute Alexander VI., whose name can never be mentioned without loathing - and the wild warrior-pope, Julius II., whose stormy career filled a great part of Europe with blood and massacres - compared, we say, with such popes, the person and court of Leo would present a favourable contrast; and Luther no doubt addressed him under his superstitious veneration for the head of the church, and because of his fame as a man of learning.

To meet the various and heavy expenses of the extravagant Leo, the cry for money became louder and louder. "Money! money!" was the cry. "It was money," says one, "not charity, that covered a multitude of sins." Necessity suggested that the price of indulgences should be lowered, and that clever salesmen should be employed to push the trade all over Europe. The plan was adopted; but God overruled the shameless traffic for the accomplishment of the Reformation, and for the overthrow of the despotism of Rome. Germany, it was agreed, should be the first and especially favoured place with the sale of indulgences, as the geographical position of the country might have prevented many of the faithful from reaping the advantages of the Jubilee in Rome.

The original idea of indulgences seems to have been nothing more than a shortening of the outward penance imposed on penitents by the payment of a fine, such as we have constantly decreed in our courts of law - say, "Fined in fifty pounds, or six months' imprisonment." If the money is paid, it is placed to the credit of the criminal, and he is released and receives his discharge. In like manner the poor deluded papist supposes that the indulgence which he buys is placed to his credit in the statute-book of heaven, which balances the account against him for lies, slanders, robberies, murders, and wickedness of all kinds; or, as some have compared it, to a letter of credit on heaven, signed by the pope, in consideration of value received. Of course, if the delinquent's sins are great and many, he must pay heavily for his indulgences.

This pardon system expanded, and was so worked by the priesthood, that it became the means of enormous wealth to the papacy. Works meet for repentance were demanded from the sinner - and all were sinners - works such as fasting, castigation, pilgrimages, and after death so many years in purgatory. But the sinner was reminded that the burden of these works might be removed, and the years of purgatorial fire shortened, through the power delegated by Christ to the blessed Peter and his successors, on certain conditions. The easiest of these conditions to the penitent, and the most convenient to the pope, was "money! money!"

The Pope's Agents - John Tetzel

The speculation of Leo was a great commercial success. He sent out suitable agents into different parts of Europe with sacks of indulgences and dispensations. For a given amount a dispensation could be purchased to eat meat on Fridays and fast days, to marry one's near relation, and to indulge in every forbidden pleasure. The pedlars moved on; they extolled their wares with shouts and jokes; they assured the people that pardon and the salvation of their souls could now be purchased at greatly reduced prices. Crowds of buyers came forward, and the money of the faithful flowed in plentifully. At length they appeared in Saxony. The Archbishop of Mayence, and other spiritual dignitaries, had promised the pope their support in this shameless and iniquitous traffic, in consideration that they would receive a share of the profits; so business went on increasingly and uninterruptedly until the noisy hawkers came near to Wittemberg.

Amongst the many salesmen in this great papal fair, one man in particular attracted the attention of the spectators; this was the Dominican monk, John Tetzel, a name which has acquired an odious notoriety in European history. These dealers traversed the country in great state, lived in good style, and spent money freely. When the procession approached a town, a deputy waited on the magistrate, and said, "The grace of God and of the holy father is at your gates." Such a proclamation in those times of superstition was enough to move the quietest cities of Germany to the greatest excitement. The clergy, priests, nuns, town-councils, and trades with their banners, men and women, old and young, went out to meet the merchants, bearing lighted tapers in their hands, and advancing to the sound of music. The streets everywhere were hung with flags; bells were pealed; nuns and monks walked in procession, crying, "Buy! buy!" The great merchant monk himself sat in a chariot, holding a large red cross in his hand, and with the papal bull on a velvet cushion before him. The churches were the sale-rooms; the arms of the pope were hung on the red cross, and placed before the altar. Tetzel now ascended the pulpit, and loudly extolled in rude eloquence the efficacy of indulgences.*

{*See D'Aubigne, vol. 1, p. 322. Froude's Short Studies, vol. 1, p. 96.}

A Specimen of Tetzel's Preaching

Take the following extracts as a specimen of the blasphemous speeches of this daring impostor, and all under the sanction of the pope and the archbishop of the place.

"Indulgences are the most precious and the most noble of God's gifts. Come, and I will give you letters, all properly sealed, by which even the sins that you intend to commit may be pardoned. I would not change my privileges for those of St. Peter in heaven, for I have saved more souls by my indulgences than the apostle by his sermons. There is no sin so great that an indulgence cannot remit. But, more than this, indulgences avail not only for the living but for the dead. Priest! noble! merchant! wife! youth! maiden! do you not hear your parents and your other friends who are dead, and who cry from the bottom of the abyss? We are suffering horrible torments! a trifling alms would deliver us; you can give it, and you will not! Oh, stupid and brutish people, who do not understand the grace so richly offered! Why, the very instant your money rattles at the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies liberated to heaven. The Lord our God no longer reigns, He has resigned all power to the pope."

The wild harangue of the coarse bellowing monk being over, the terrified and superstitious crowd hastened to purchase the pardon of their sins and the deliverance of their friends from the fires of purgatory. From the royal family down to those who lived on alms, all found money to buy forgiveness. Money poured in plentifully; the papal chest overflowed; but alas! alas! the moral effects were fearful. The easy terms on which men could obtain the pope's licence for every species of wickedness, opened the way to the grossest immorality, and insubjection to all authority. Even Tetzel himself was convicted of adultery and infamous conduct at Innsbruck, and sentenced by the Emperor Maximilian to be put into a sack and thrown into the river; but the Elector Frederick of Saxony interfered, and obtained his pardon. The unblushing Dominican proceeded on his way as the representative of his holiness the pope, just as if nothing had happened.

Luther's Public Appeal

A.D. 1517

Things were now coming to a crisis. Luther, who had been watching narrowly the progress of Tetzel, stepped forward; made his grand appeal to the common sense and to the conscience of the German people; nailed his theses to the church door at Wittemberg, and in ninety-five propositions challenged the whole Catholic church to defend Tetzel and the sale of indulgences.

The axe was now laid at the root of the tree. The germs of the Reformation were contained in these propositions. "The pope's indulgence," said Luther, "cannot take away sins; God alone remits sins, and He pardons those who are truly penitent without help from man's absolutions. The church may remit penalties which the church inflicts. But the church's power is in this world only, it extends not beyond death. Who is this man who dares to say that for so many crowns the soul of a sinner can be saved? Every true Christian participates in all the blessings of Christ, by God's grace, and without a letter of indulgence." Such was the style of Luther's noble protest, though mixed with much that still savoured of Catholicism.

Luther had now entered the field against the doctrine and the abuses of the church of Rome. The university and the whole city of Wittemberg were in commotion. All read the theses; the startling propositions passed from mouth to mouth; pilgrims from all quarters then present in Wittemberg, carried back with them the famous theses of the Augustinian monk, circulating the news everywhere. "This was the first electric flash," says Pfizer, "from the torch that was kindled at the funeral pile of the Martyred Huss, and, reaching the remotest corner of the land, gave the signal of mighty future events." In less than fourteen days, it is said, these theses were read through every part of Germany; and, ere four weeks had elapsed, they had overspread the whole of Christendom, as if the angels of heaven had been the messengers to exhibit them to universal gaze.

Rome clamoured for fire and faggot. "The religious houses all Germany over," says Froude, "were like kennels of hounds howling to each other across the spiritual waste. If souls could not be sung out of purgatory, their occupation was gone. But to the young laymen, to the noble spirits all Europe over, Wittemberg became a beacon of light shining in the universal darkness." Had Luther not been guided by the wisdom of God, he might have been swept away by his sudden popularity; but of himself, through grace, he thought very little, and remained quietly at his post in the Augustinian church at Wittemberg, waiting till God in His own time and way called him forth.

Luther at Heidelberg

In the spring of 1518 a general assembly of the Augustinian order was held at Heidelberg: Luther, by invitation, was present. His friends, knowing the designs and treachery of the Dominicans, did all they could to dissuade him from going; but Luther was not the man to be hindered by the fear of danger from the accomplishment of what he believed to be his duty. His trust was in the living God. So favourable an opportunity for preaching the gospel, the spread of the truth, and the diffusion of his propositions, was not to be neglected. He started on the 13th of April, with a guide who assisted him to carry his baggage, and performed the greater part of the journey on foot.

General curiosity, the name of Luther, the fame of his theses, attracted large crowds to the city and the university of Heidelberg. Here, before a large assembly, he disputed with five doctors of divinity on a variety of subjects, but relating chiefly to theology and philosophy. His knowledge of scripture, of the traditional dogmas of the church, his want of respect for the name and system of Aristotle, his great argumentative power, proved to his opponents that he was a polemic of no common order. He returned to Wittemberg, well protected and accompanied by many friends.

The wonderful effect produced by these controversies moved Tetzel to attempt a reply to Luther's attack on the sale of indulgences. Full of vain boasting and blasphemy, he asserts and reasserts the power of the pope, and of the clergy as deputed by him, fully and for ever to forgive all sins. In answer to these daring assertions, Luther wrote a further series of propositions which he termed "Resolutions," or explanations of his former theses. In this treatise the Reformer is more distinctly seen. He brings prominently forward the great truth of the Reformation - that man is justified by faith alone without deeds of law. "For he hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2Co 5:21)

Luther now challenges the decision of the pope himself. He sent him a copy of his Resolutions, accompanied by a very humble letter, dated May 30th, 1518. Utterly careless as Leo really was as to the interests of religion, he could not treat with entire indifference the letter of Luther; especially as the emperor Maximilian had solicited his interference about the same time. He ordered Luther to be sent to Rome and there to answer for his audacity. Luther refused to obey the summons, declaring, however, his readiness to appear and defend his cause before pious, impartial, and learned judges in Germany. The pope, finding that Luther was under the protection of Frederick elector of Saxony, wrote to that prince desiring him to deliver the heretical monk to the Cardinal Thomas Cajetan, who had full instructions how to act with regard to the disobedient doctor. But, to the praise of that singularly wise and excellent prince, he refused to obey the pope's orders and protected Luther. The pope was now obliged to propose less hasty, less blood-thirsty, and more formal measures. Accordingly the citation to Rome was changed into a summons to Augsburg, which Luther declared his intention to obey.

Luther at Augsburg

Some of his friends, concerned for the safety of his valuable life, attempted to dissuade him from his purpose; but regardless of danger, and confiding in the watchful care of divine providence, he was determined to appear. In his monk's brown frock, he started on foot from Wittemberg, and accompanied by the citizens, high and low, to the gates, he cheerfully walked to Augsburg.

The cardinal assumed the appearance of a tender and compassionate father, and addressed Luther as his dear son; giving him to understand, however, in plainest language that the pope insisted on recantation, and that he would accept of nothing else. "Condescend then," said Luther, "to inform me in what I have erred." The cardinal and his Italian courtiers, who had expected the poor German monk to fall down on his knees and plead for pardon, were astonished at his calm but dignified manner. "I am here to command," replied Cajetan, "not to argue." "Rather," answered Luther, "let us reason on the points in dispute and settle them by the decisions of sacred scripture." "What!" exclaimed the cardinal, "do you think the pope cares for the opinion of a German boor? The pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany. Do you expect your princes to take up arms to defend you - you, a wretched worm like you? I tell you, No! and where will you be then - where will you be then?"

Mark the noble answer, not of a poor monk merely, but of the man of God in trying circumstances. "Then, as now, in the hands of Almighty God." Rome was vanquished. The court dissolved. "To the amazement of the proud Italian, a poor peasant's son - a miserable friar of the provincial German town - was prepared to defy the power and resist the prayers of the sovereign of Christendom." Though armed with full power to crush his victim, he had to return to Rome and report his defeat, and tell his master that neither remonstrances, threatenings, entreaties, nor promises of the highest distinction could move the stubborn German from his wicked heresies. The faithful witness, finding his person in extreme peril, secretly left the place and returned to Wittemberg.

Incensed to the utmost by this failure, the pope wrote again to the Elector, entreating him to render up the criminal to justice or expel him from his dominions. Frederick hesitated. Many serious questions were involved in an open collision with the pope. Rather than bring his prince into trouble, Luther seriously thought of escaping to France. But He who "turneth the hearts of kings whithersoever he will," led the good Elector to throw the shield of his protection over his subject.

As nothing satisfactory had resulted from the mission of Cajetan, Leo dispatched another agent in the person of the papal nuncio, Charles von Miltitz. This emissary brought with him a golden rose, richly perfumed, as a present from the pope to the Elector Frederick. This gift was usually esteemed as a special token of the pontiff's favour, but in this instance it was doubtless intended as a bribe to the hesitating Frederick.

On reaching Saxony, Miltitz met with his old friend Spalatin, who made him acquainted with the real state of things in Germany. He assured the legate, that the divisions of the church were chiefly owing to the falsehoods, impostures, and blasphemies of Tetzel the indulgence-seller. Miltitz appeared to be astonished, and summoned Tetzel to appear before him at Altenburg and answer for his conduct. But things were greatly changed with the Dominican; he was no longer going from town to town with his papal bull and gilt car, but was hiding from the anger of his enemies in the college at Leipsic. "I should not care," he wrote to Miltitz, "about the fatigue of the journey if I could leave Leipsic without danger to my life; but the Augustinian, Martin Luther, has so excited and aroused the men of power against me, that I am nowhere safe." What an end, and what a picture, of those who engage to be the servants of men against God and His truth! With a bad conscience, and as a mean coward, he died shortly after this in great misery. But mark the contrast in the moral courage of the servant of God and of His truth, travelling on foot from Wittemberg to Augsburg.

Luther at Altenburg

The papal legate soon saw the general popularity of Luther's cause, and adopted a course directly opposite to that of the haughty Cajetan. He approached him with great demonstrations of friendliness, addressing him as "My dear Martin." His grand object was to allure the Reformer by flattery and deception to recant, and so bring the dispute to a close. And so far the crafty nuncio succeeded. He was a cunning diplomatist and a fawning papist, and Luther for the moment was caught in the snare.

"I offer," said Luther, "on my part, to be silent for the future on this matter, and to let it die away of itself, provided my opponents are silent on their part." Miltitz accepted the offer with overflowing joy, kissed the heretical monk, induced him to write a penitent letter to the pope, and lavished on him every expression of affection and kindness. Thus the great controversy between truth and falsehood, between the papacy and the dawning Reformation, seemed on the point of being terminated; but the Reformation was not to be hindered by Luther's apparent reconciliation to Rome.

Just at this time, when Luther was silenced, when he had concluded an unworthy peace with Rome, another voice is heard. Doctor Eck, the author of the Obelisken, and the champion of the papacy, challenged Carlstadt, the friend of Luther, to a public disputation on the contested points of theology, and Luther's declaration on indulgences. This aroused the energies, and awoke the eloquence, of Luther once more. A public discussion was conducted soon after at Leipsic, which lasted several weeks. Doctor Eck contended for the papacy, and Luther and Carlstadt for the Reformation. These celebrated discussions were overruled by God for the spread of the truth, not only over Germany, but over all Christendom. Luther's appeals to scripture created in the minds of many - especially in the minds of the students of the universities of Leipsic and Wittemberg - a spirit of inquiry which nothing short of the solid truth of God could satisfy. Thus the work of the Lord progressed, and the mind of Europe was prepared for the great revolution which was so soon to take place.

Distinguished Men of the Sixteenth Century

Here we may pause for a moment and note some of the great actors which now crowd the scene of this busy epoch. The age of the Reformation is one of the most remarkable in history for great men and great events.

Martin Luther, the one whom the Spirit of God is especially using, stands before us the most central and the most prominent figure. In his situation of peculiar danger, he might think that he was almost done; but God was gathering around him some of those distinguished men who early declared their entire sympathy with his position, and engaged all their powers in its defence. In the year 1518 Philip Melancthon was appointed professor of Greek in the university at Wittemberg; and from that period he became the intimate friend and the faithful fellow-labourer of the Reformer, even to the end of his life. Oecolampadius, professor at Basle, Ulric Zwingle, doctor of divinity at Zurich, Martin Bucer, and many others, did a gracious providence raise up just at this time, who have ever since been numbered among the most illustrious instruments of the Reformation.

The imperial throne falling vacant by the death of Maximilian in January 1519 proved favourable to the cause of Reform. The attention of the court of Rome was diverted from the affairs of Luther to the more pressing business of the new emperor. And Frederick, during the interregnum as vicar of the empire, was able to afford Luther a still more secure protection. The imperial crown was offered by the electors to Frederick, but he declined the perilous distinction, not caring to trouble himself with the weight of empire. The election fell on Maximilian's grandson Charles - grandson also of Ferdinand the Catholic. The youthful, handsome, and chivalrous princes, - Henry VIII. king of England, and Francis I. king of France, - aspired also to the imperial dignity, but the hereditary claims and possessions of Charles speedily turned the balance in his favour. He was sovereign of Spain, of Burgundy and the low countries, of Naples and Sicily, of the new empire of the Indies, and the discovery of America by Columbus added, to his many kingdoms, the new world. Since the days of Charlemagne, no monarch had swayed a sceptre over such vast dominions.

The pope, though at first opposed to the elevation of Charles, from the conflicting interests of the Vatican, withdrew his objections, seeing he would be elected; and Charles was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, on the 22nd of October, 1520.

Thus at the early age of nineteen, as Charles V. emperor of Germany, he assumed the imperial power. He is described as a youth of great intelligence, with a strong natural taste for military exercises. He was remarkable for a gravity and sedateness far beyond his years, and most amiable when it suited him. He possessed the subtlety and penetration of the Italian, with the taciturnity and reserve of the Spaniard; and withal he was a firm and devoted Catholic. "He was pious and silent," said Luther; "I will wager that he does not talk so much in a year as I do in a day."

This is the man to whom Luther's case must now be referred. No fitter man could have been found to execute the decrees and do the work of the Vatican. The pious reflections of D'Aubigne on this change of government are worthy of the warm-hearted biographer of Luther. "A new actor was about to appear on the scene. God designed to bring the Wittemberg monk face to face with the most powerful monarch that had appeared in Christendom since the days of Charlemagne. He selected a prince in the vigour of youth, and to whom everything seemed to announce a long reign .... and to him he opposed that lowly Reformation, begun in the secluded cell of a convent at Erfurt by the anguish and the sighs of a poor monk. The history of this monarch and of his reign was destined, it would seem, to teach the world an important lesson. It was to show the nothingness of all the strength of man when it presumes to measure itself with the weakness of God. If a prince, a friend to Luther, had been called to the imperial throne, the success of the Reformation might have been ascribed to his protection. If even an emperor opposed to the new doctrines, but yet a weak ruler, had worn the diadem, the triumph of this work might have been accounted for by the weakness of the monarch. But it was the haughty conqueror at Pavia who was destined to vail his pride before the power of God's word; and the whole world beheld the man who found it an easy task to drag Francis I. a prisoner to Madrid obliged to lower his sword before the son of a poor miner!"*

{*Vol. 2, p. 109. See also Froude's Short Studies on Great Subjects vol. 1. Universal History, Bagster, vol. 8. Waddington's Reformation, vol. 1. Mosheim, vol. 3.}

Luther and the Bull of Excommunication

We return to Luther and the close of the debate at Leipsic. Dr. Eck, the famous papal theologian, irritated by his defeat, and burning with rage against Luther, hurried away to Rome that he might obtain a bull of excommunication against his opponent. Unable to refute the camest and fervent appeals of the Reformer to the word of God, he immediately sought his condemnation and destruction. Such has ever been the way of the emissaries of Rome.

Overcome by the clamorous and the importunate applications of Eck and his friends, especially the Dominicans, Pope Leo, most unwisely, as most think, issued the desired bull on the 15th of June, 1520. Luther's writings were condemned to the flames, and he himself delivered over to Satan as a wicked heretic, unless he recanted and implored the clemency of the pontiff within sixty days. But the time was past for Luther and his friends to be silenced by ecclesiastical thunders. Had such a thing happened fifty years before, it would have been widely different. But neither Leo, Charles, Henry, nor Francis, knew the state of the public mind in Germany, or the silent but sure effects of the printing press throughout Europe. He who saw Guttenberg pulling at his press, Columbus returning from the discovery of America, Vasco di Gama from having doubled the Cape of Storms, or the learned Greeks scattered over the nations of Europe after the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, saw events which revived reaming, which expanded the human mind, and which aroused it from the lethargy into which it had fallen during the long dark night of the middle ages.*

{*James White's Eighteen Christian Centuries, p. 381.}

Before the bull of Leo reached Wittemberg, the best part of Germany was at heart with Luther, but especially the students, the artisans, and the tradesmen. He saw the ground on which he stood. The decisive step must now be taken. Open war must be proclaimed. He had written the most submissive and pacific letters to the pope, the cardinals, the bishops, the princes, and the learned men; he had appealed from the pontiff to the supreme tribunal of a general council, but all to no purpose. He now determined to withdraw from the church of Rome and publicly to resist her authority. On the 10th of December, 1520, at nine in the morning, public notice having been given, Luther took the bull, together with a copy of the pontifical canon law, and some of the writings of Eck and Emser, and in the presence of a vast crowd of spectators committed them to the flames. This being done without the city walls, Luther re-entered, accompanied by the doctors of the university, the students, and the people. Having thus thrown off the yoke of Rome, he addressed the people as to their duty with great energy. The public caught his fire and the whole nation rallied around him. Luther was now set at liberty. The tie which had so long bound him to Rome was broken. From this time he assumed the attitude of an open and uncompromising antagonist of the pope and of his emissaries. He also published many pamphlets against the Romish system and for the truth of God.

Luther and Charles the Fifth

Leo, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, thus defied by Luther, son of the miner of Mansfield, turned to Charles for help. He reminded the youthful emperor of the vows he had just taken- as the advocate and defender of the church; and called upon him to inflict due punishment upon that audacious and rebellious monk - Martin Luther. Considerable anxiety prevailed in many quarters as to what would be the policy of the new emperor. Will he sympathize with the principles of progress which are everywhere at work in literature, politics, and religion? or will he be the pliant instrument of the papal power? were questions of great importance at that moment.

Charles was reserved. He had many things in hand. Two years elapsed before he was at leisure to take up the question. The interval was profitably employed by Luther and his friends. During the years 1518-19-20, the numerous pamphlets and expositions of the word of God, which issued from the press, had done their work. By the good providence of God, the new opinions were making rapid progress not only in Germany, but in Switzerland, France, and England. The deeply-rooted prejudices of many centuries were being overturned in the minds of multitudes in many parts of Europe.

Charles at length found that something more than polemical discussion was required to arrest the progress of a movement which threatened to overthrow the religion of his ancestors and disturb the peace of his empire. His first diet, or assembly of the States of the German monarchy, was appointed to be held at Worms. Before this assembly he cited Luther to appear and answer for his contumacious conduct. The pope and his party now expected that by fair means or foul, they would certainly get rid of their adversary. But the Elector, knowing the treachery of the ecclesiastics, and suspecting that Luther might meet with the fate of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, when they attended the Council of Constance, would only consent to his subject going to Worms on two conditions: - "1, That he should have a safe-conduct under the Emperor's hand and seal; 2, That Luther, if judgment went against him, should be free for the time to return to the place from which he had come; and that he, the Elector, should determine afterwards what should be done with him." Luther himself was ready to obey the citation when the Elector was satisfied as to his safety.

The Diet of Worms

A.D. 1521 - January Till May

The monk of Erfurt, armed with the word of God, and confidence in the divine presence, had put to flight the army of indulgence-sellers, had gained an easy victory over the pope's legate at Augsburg, and the champions of the papacy in the halls of Leipsic. He had also replied to the thunders of the pope by burning his bull at Wittemberg. Rome was paralysed. Her strength was spent. Her threatenings were disregarded. The so-called church could no longer carry things in the old style. Men had begun to think for themselves, and to think how far such orders should be obeyed. But a good Catholic prince was now on the throne of the empire, and the final struggle must be with him.

Charles, the faithful servant of St. Peter, opened the diet on the 28th of January, the festival of Charlemagne. Never before, in any age of the world, had so many kings, princes, prelates, nobles, and powers of this world, met together in diet. "Electors, dukes, archbishops, landgraves, margraves, counts, bishops, barons, and lords of the realm, as well as the deputies of the towns, and the ambassadors of the kings of Christendom, thronged with their brilliant trains the roads that led to Worms. Great questions, affecting the peace of Europe, of the world, and the triumph of truth, were here to be fully and gravely discussed." But we have chiefly to do with Luther and the Reformation.

Aleander, the pope's nuncio, a man of great eloquence, addressed the Emperor, the princes, and the deputies, for about three hours. He had Luther's books before him and the papal bulls. He had said all that Rome could say against the books and their author. He maintained that there were errors enough in Luther's writings to burn a hundred thousand heretics. The power of his oratory and the enthusiasm of his language produced a deep impression on the assembly. Murmurs soon arose from every quarter against Luther and his partisans. But it is perfectly clear from Meander's long oration, that his one grand object was to prevent the bold Reformer from being cited to appear. The papal party dreaded the prominence which would necessarily be given to the new opinions by the presence of Luther in so august an assembly. Leo wrote himself to beg that Luther's safe-conduct should not be observed. The bishops agreed with the pope that safe-conducts could not protect heretics.

Luther's Summons and Safe-Conduct

The young Emperor was encompassed with difficulties. Placed between the papal nuncio and the Elector, to whom he was indebted for his crown, what must he do? He wished to please both: to spare or to sacrifice a monk was a small consideration with Charles, but not so in the sight of Him who overrules all rulers. Luther must bear witness for the truth of God and against the lie of Satan in that great assembly. The Emperor at length made up his mind. Luther's appearance before the diet seemed the only means likely to terminate an affair which engaged the attention of all the empire. At last the summons and safe-conduct were sent, and Luther prepared to obey the imperial mandate.

On the 2nd of April, Luther took leave of his friends and began his journey. He rode in a modest conveyance, accompanied by his friends Schurff, Amsdorf, and Suaven; the imperial herald with the safe-conduct rode in front. Luther discovered at every stage of his journey, that gloomy forebodings filled the hearts of all friends. He was warned that "foul play was intended, that he was condemned already that his books had been burned by the hangman, and that he was a dead man if he proceeded." But Luther, undismayed, replied, "I trust in God Almighty, whose word and commandments I have before me. " He preached at several places on his way, and accepted the entertainment of his friends. But as he drew near to Worms, the storm which he had raised became more violent. The enemies of the Reformation were boiling with indignation when they heard he was approaching the city. Spalatin, the Elector's chaplain, and Luther's faithful friend, sent a messenger to meet him with these words, "Do not enter Worms!" But the intrepid monk, full of holy courage, turned his eyes on the messenger, and said, "Tell your master, I will go if there are as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses." On the morning of the 16th of April, he discovered the walls of the ancient city. Noblemen of high rank went out to meet him, and more than two thousand accompanied him to his lodgings. From the pavement to the roofs of the houses, every place seemed covered with spectators.

The following day he was conducted to the diet by the marshal of the empire, Ulrich of Pappenheim. The crowd that filled the streets to see him pass along was so great that it was necessary to lead him through private houses and gardens to the hall of audience. Many of the knights and nobles who thronged the body of the hall spoke encouragingly to Luther as he pressed his way to the council chamber. One, who probably had received the truth and loved the Saviour, reminded him of the Master's words, "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." Another, though clad in gleaming armour, touched him on the shoulder with his gauntlet, saying, "Pluck up thy spirit, little monk: some of us here have seen warm work in our time, but neither I nor any knight in this company ever needed a stout heart more than thou needest it now. If thou hast faith in these doctrines of thine, go on in the name of God." "Yes, in the name of God," said Luther, throwing back his head, "in the name of God forward!"

Luther Appears Before the Assembly

To one who had been educated and trained amid the retirement of a cloister, the sight of such an assembly must have been overwhelming. There sat Charles, sovereign of half the world. And there on either side of him were ranged the peers and potentates of the German empire - bishops and archbishops, cardinals in their scarlet robes, papal nuncios in their official magnificence, ambassadors from the mightiest kingdoms of Christendom, to say nothing of deputies and officials. Such was the assembly of the States-General at Worms. And gathered, the reader may ask, for what? It was really to hear the trial and judge the son of a poor miner. Dressed in his monk's frock and hood, pale-faced and worn with the fatigues and hazards of his recent life, he stood silent and self-possessed in the midst of more than five thousand spectators. "Yet prophet-like that lone one stood, with dauntless words and high," answering all questions with force and modesty.

After a moment of intense stillness, the chancellor of Treves addressed him in a loud voice, first in Latin and then in German: "Martin Luther, You are called upon by his imperial Majesty to answer two questions: first, Do you admit that these books," pointing to about twenty volumes placed on a table, "were written by you? Secondly, Are you prepared to retract these books, and their contents, or do you persist in the opinions you have advanced there?" Then Luther replied: That, in respect to the first question, he did undoubtedly acknowledge these books, and would never disclaim any one of them. As to the second, he asked that some further space for consideration might be granted him, that he might so frame his answer as neither to offend the word of God nor endanger his own soul. One day was granted. Whatever may have been Luther's reason for this request we need not stay to inquire: one thing is certain, that it was overruled by God to discover and reveal the secret springs of Luther's strength and courage, and the strength and courage of faith in all ages. That wonderful prayer which was offered up shortly before his second appearing, is the most precious document in the whole history of the Reformation. We cannot characterize it; we give it from D'Aubigne's history.

Luther's Prayer

For a moment Luther felt troubled; his eye was off the blessed Lord; he was thinking of the many great princes before whom he had to stand; his faith grew weak, he was like Peter when he looked at the waves in place of the Person of Christ, he felt as if he would sink. In this state of soul he fell on his face and groaned deep thoughts which could not be uttered. It was the Spirit making intercession for him. A friend hearing his distress, listened, and was privileged to hear the broken cries of a broken heart ascending to the throne of God.

"O Almighty and Everlasting God! How terrible is this world! Behold, it openeth its mouth to swallow me up, and I have so little trust in Thee! . . . How weak is the flesh, and Satan how strong! If it is only in the strength of this world that I must put my trust, all is over! . . . My last hour is come; my condemnation has been pronounced! . . . O God! O God! . . . O God! Do Thou help me against all the wisdom of the world! Do this; Thou shouldest do this .... Thou alone ... for this is not my work, but Thine. I have nothing to do here, nothing to contend for with these great ones of the world! I should desire to see my days flow on peaceful and happy. But the cause is Thine.... And it is a righteous and eternal cause. O Lord! help me! Faithful and unchangeable God! in no man do I place my trust. It would be vain! All that is of man is uncertain, all that cometh of man fails.... O God! my God! hearest Thou me not? . . . Thou hidest Thyself! Thou hast chosen me for this work. I know it well! . . . Act, then, O God! . . . Stand at my side, for the sake of Thy well-beloved Jesus Christ, who is my defence, my shield, and my strong tower."

After a short time of silent struggling with the Lord, he again broke out in those short, deep, broken utterances, which must be experienced before they can be understood. It is the breaking of the bones of carnal confidence and self-importance; this is being broken down in the presence of God "Lord! where stayest Thou? . . . O my God! where art Thou? . . . Come! Come! I am ready! . . . I am ready to lay down my life for Thy truth .... patient as a lamb. For it is the cause of justice - it is Thine! . . . I will never separate Thyself from me, neither now nor through eternity! . . . And though the world should be filled with devils .... though my body, which is still the work of Thy hands, should be slain, be stretched upon the pavement, should be cut in pieces .... reduced to ashes .... my soul is Thine? ... Yes! Thy word is my assurance of it. My soul belongs to Thee! It shall abide for ever with Thee.... Amen.... O God! help me! ... Amen."

This prayer explains the state of Luther's mind and the character of his communion with God, better far than any description from the pen of his biographer. Here the living God is qualifying His servant for His work by giving him to taste the bitterness of death. (2Co 4:7-12) Luther was but emerging from the darkness of superstition; he had not fully learnt the blessed truth of death and resurrection, of his oneness with Christ, of his acceptance in the Beloved. But his nearness to God, the power of his prayer, and the reality of his communion, refresh our hearts after an interval of three hundred years.

Luther's Second Appearance

The fruits of his prayer were soon to be seen. Finding himself again standing before Charles, the chancellor began by saying, "Martin Luther, Yesterday you begged for a delay, which has now expired.... Reply, therefore, to the question put by his Majesty. Will you defend your books, or will you retract them?" Luther turned towards the Emperor, and with a serious countenance, wherein modesty, mildness, and firmness, were strikingly blended, he entered fully into the contents of his books. Much that he said must have been very gratifying to the Germans, but most galling to the Romans. Take the following as an example: - "In one class of my books I have written against the papacy and the doctrines of the papists, as of men who by their iniquitous tenets and examples have desolated the christian world both with temporal and spiritual calamities. Their false doctrines, their scandalous lives, their evil ways, are known to all mankind. And is it not evident that the human doctrines and laws of the popes entangle, torment, and grieve the consciences of the faithful, while at the same time the crying and perpetual extortions of Rome swallow up the wealth and the riches of Christendom, and especially of this illustrious nation!" But such explanations of his books were not what the diet required. He was pressed for a distinct avowal of retractation. "Will you or will you not retract?" exclaimed the orator of the diet.

Luther now replied without hesitation. "Since your most serene Majesty and the princes require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give it thus: - I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is as clear as day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of scripture, or by the clearest reasoning, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience." And then, looking round on the assembly - on all that was mighty in power, on all that was venerable for antiquity - he nobly said, "Here I take my stand; I cannot do otherwise: may God be my help! Amen. "

Astonished at a display of courage and veracity entirely new to them, many of the princes found it difficult to conceal their admiration, while others were utterly confounded. But, as some have said, in these words, in Luther's honest protest, the whole heart and meaning of the Reformation lay. Were men to go on for ever saying that this and that was true, because the pope affirmed it? or were the decrees of popes and the canons of councils thenceforward to be tried, like the words of other men, by the ordinary laws of evidence, by the infallible standard of the word of God? The death-knell of Absolutism was rung.

When Luther had ceased speaking, the chancellor said, "Since you do not retract, the Emperor and the States of the empire will consider what course they must adopt towards an obstinate heretic. The diet will meet tomorrow morning to hear the Emperor's decision."

The general effect produced on the diet both by the address and the demeanour of Luther was unquestionably favourable to his position. He gave his enemies cause to fear him. In the presence of so many powerful ecclesiastics, who were thirsting for his blood, he feared not to denounce in his usual vigorous style the iniquities of popery. But what was even more for the cause of Reform, he inspired his friends with his own confidence in the truth. After a night of restless anxiety and discussion by all parties, the morning came, and with it heavy tidings for Luther. The policy of the Vatican prevailed in the councils of Charles. The following edict he presented to the diet: -

"Descended from the christian emperors of Germany, from the Catholic kings of Spain, from the archdukes of Austria, from the dukes of Burgundy, who have all been renowned as defenders of the Roman faith, I am firmly resolved to imitate the example of my ancestors. A single monk, misled by his own folly, has risen against the faith of Christendom. To stay such impiety, I will sacrifice my kingdoms, my treasures, my friends, my body, my blood, my soul, and my life. I am about to dismiss the Augustinian Luther, forbidding him to cause the least disorder amongst the people, I shall then proceed against him and his adherents, as contumacious heretics, by excommunication, by interdict, and by every means calculated to destroy them. I call on the members of the States to behave like faithful Christians."

Severe as this sentence may appear, it was far from satisfying the papists. They endeavoured to procure the violation of the safe-conduct, and re-enact the tragedy perpetrated by their ancestors at Constance. "The Rhine," said they, "should receive his ashes as it had received those of John Huss a century ago." But these treacherous suggestions were overthrown by the spirit of national honour which prevailed among the German princes, and which animated the greater part of the diet. There remained now one only hope for the papal party, and that - we blush to write - assassination. "A plot," says Froude, "was formed to assassinate Luther on his return to Saxony. The insulted majesty of Rome could be vindicated at least by the dagger. But this, too, failed. The Elector heard what was intended. A party on horse, disguised as banditti, waylaid the Reformer upon the road, and carried him off to the Castle of Wartburg, where he remained out of harm's way till the general rising of Germany placed him beyond the reach of danger."*

{*Short Studies on Great Subjects.}

Reflections on the Appearance of Luther at Worms

That such a thing should have happened at all, was of itself a signal victory over the papacy. His entry into Worms was like a triumphal procession. There, although a twice-condemned, excommunicated heretic and cut off from all human society, he is privileged to stand before the most august assembly in the world. The pope had condemned him to perpetual silence, and he is now invited, in most respectful language, to speak before thousands. And, by the good providence of God, he was permitted to address attentive hearers from all parts of Christendom, at considerable length and with great boldness, yet without interruption and almost without reproof. "An immense revolution," says D'Aubigne, "had thus been effected by Luther's instrumentality. Rome was already descending from her throne, and it was the voice of a monk that caused this humiliation." The mere fact of his trial at Worms announced to the world that the spell of popery was broken, and that the victory of the Reformation was secured. A poor, persecuted, friendless, solitary monk sets himself against the majesty of the triple crown. The secular arm is called in, but the Emperor refuses to execute the pope's decree. The ban falls to the ground. A spiritual power superior to both prevails, and the shout of triumph is heard in many lands.

It is perfectly clear that neither pope, prelate, nor sovereign knew the real condition of the public mind. A generation had grown up to manhood who had been taught by the men of letters to think for themselves and to have opinions of their own. Luther knew that his own thoughts about popery and the word of God were the thoughts of thousands. Nevertheless he stood alone in that assembly as God's witness for the truth. He maintained the private right of reading and interpreting the word of God, the duty of submitting to its authority, in the face of the high-handed assumption of both church and emperor. Among all the princes present Luther had not so much as one openly avowed protector, or even a single advocate of any rank or influence, in the assembly. But the God who strengthened Elijah to withstand the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, and who stood by Paul when he appeared before the nobles and princes of this world, and before Caesar himself, gave a wisdom and power to the monk of Wittemberg which nothing could overcome, and which made all men to see that true spiritual power and happy liberty were only to be found in a good conscience, through faith in the truth, but more especially through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.*

{*Universal History, Bagster, vol. 7, p. 18. Waddington, vol. 1, p. 364. D'Aubigne, vol. 2, p. 347. For lengthy details, see Milner, vol. 4.}

35 Luther at Wartburg

Chapter 35

Luther at Wartburg

The sudden and mysterious disappearance of Luther caused no small anxiety to his friends and triumph to his foes. The most extraordinary rumours were circulated throughout the provinces, so that Luther's name, and character, and works, were more eagerly talked of now than ever. But as secrecy was necessary to his safety, friends as well as enemies were kept for some months uncertain as to the place of his concealment.

Wartburg castle, the place of his captivity, and which he called his "Patmos," had been the ancient and impregnable residence of the landgraves of Thuringia, and overlooked, from its mountain situation, the neighbourhood of Eisenach, the place of his mother's nativity, and the scene of his own early education. That no suspicion might be excited as to his real character, he was obliged to throw off his frock and cowl, allow his beard and hair to grow, and assume the attire and the title of a country gentleman - Squire George. For the rigid monk, the active Reformer, the daring antagonist of Rome, the change was extreme. He was frequently visited with severe attacks of bodily illness and mental distress. In some of his letters, dated from the Isle of Patmos, he complains bitterly of the indolent habits he was contracting, and the consequences of his sumptuous fare. But though he was cut off from his public labours in the university and the pulpit, he was most diligent with his pen. His enemies thought him a great deal too active in his retreat. He laboured with indefatigable industry, and published many new books. It was in this retirement that he commenced the greatest and the most useful of all his works - the translation of the Bible into the German language. During his solitude, in the summer months of 1521, he actually finished the New Testament; and he also took great pains to improve his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages, for the purpose of rendering his intended version of the whole Bible more complete.

Reflections on Luther's Captivity

Here we may pause a moment, and learn a useful lesson. Like a chained eagle, Luther sits all day in the midst of the dark forests of Thuringia, gloomily brooding over the degraded state of the church and clergy, and violently agitated as to the results of the diet of Worms, the welfare of his friends, and the progress of truth. The chain galls him; he has not accepted it from the Lord, his health suffers; he passes whole nights without sleep, the melancholy tendencies of his mind increase, and he imagines that he is incessantly assaulted by Satan. "Believe me," he writes, "I am delivered over to a thousand imps of Satan in this solitude; and it is much easier to contend with incarnate fiends - that is, men - than with wicked spirits in high places." He longs to be at liberty, and to stand in the front of the battle; and, fearing lest he should be accused of deserting the field, he exclaimed, "I would rather be stretched on coals of fire than lie here half dead." And all mankind would say, "a crisis has come, the active efforts, the resistless appeals of Luther are more needful now than ever, for if the leader of this mighty movement be constrained to retire at such a moment, the cause of truth must suffer, and its enemies triumph. But in spite of all human reasoning, the Master says, No. My ways are not as your ways, nor My thoughts as your thoughts. The captivity of My servant shall be the liberty of millions." And so it proved. No event in his history tended so much to enrich his mind, or mature his views as to the nature and extent of the reform which the condition of things around required, besides the books which he wrote, and the scriptures which he translated. May we learn to bow, well-pleased, when the Master's orders are to be quiet, as well as when He says, Go forth and serve in the field to which I have called you, and for which I have fitted you. Moses in Midian, Paul in Arabia, and John in Patmos, are divine lessons for all the Lord's servants.

Luther Returns to Wittemberg

During his absence at the Wartburg there was found no one among his followers who was properly qualified to maintain the reformed doctrines or direct the reformed community. The mild and peaceful scholar, Philip Melancthon, had a gentle and fruitful mind well fitted to enrich others but unsuited for the tumult and the storm of republican notions, combined with religious fanaticism. Andrew Carlstadt, a doctor of Wittemberg, an early friend of Luther, and by no means ignorant of the truth, was induced to head a few fanatical persons who fancied they were in immediate communication with deity, and arrogated to themselves the title of prophets and apostles. Their numbers increased; youths from the university joined them. They denounced Luther's attempt at Reformation to be neither sufficiently extensive, nor thorough. In their extravagant enthusiasm they proclaimed, "Woe! woe! woe!" to the false church and corrupt bishops. They entered churches, broke and burnt images, and proceeded to other excesses, which endangered the dawn of liberty and the peace of the commonwealth. The civil authorities interfered, and several of the zealots were cast into prison.

The cry for Luther was universal. He heard it at Wartburg. Without the consent of the Elector, and with much danger to his life, he hastened to the scene of confusion. Among the names who have obtained a memorial in history by this folly, we are most familiar with Nicholas Stork Mark Stubner, Martin Cellary, and Thomas Munzer. The latter Munzer - appears again in 1525, at the head of a rebellion of the peasants, which was called the peasants' war.

Luther returned from his Patmos to Wittemberg in the month of March, 1522. He was received by doctors, students and citizens, with sincere demonstrations of joy and affection. His triumph was easy, but all by moral power. "I will preach," he said, "I will speak, I will write; but I will constrain none, for faith is a voluntary act. I stood up against the pope, indulgences, and papists, but without violence or tumult. I put forward God's word, I preached and wrote this was all I did." He ascended the pulpit, and his powerful voice resounded once more through the agitated multitudes. On seven following days he delivered seven sermons. "They were followed by the most complete success," says the historian. "Every symptom of disorder immediately disappeared; the city was restored to its former tranquillity, the university to its legitimate studies and rational principles and Carlstadt, the unfortunate author of the confusion, overwhelmed by the predominance of a superior genius withdrew not long afterwards from the field of his disgrace." Luther was greatly opposed to violence. His fine principle was - before you can advantageously remove the objects of idolatry, such as images, you must first remove the errors from the minds of the worshippers. And this he sincerely believed could only be done by the word of God, which he longed to present to his nation in their own forcible tongue.

Luther and the German Bible

When peace was established he turned to his favourite object - the translation of the New Testament, and after it had undergone the more critical revision of Melancthon, he published it in the September of 1522. The appearance of such a work, and at a time when the minds of all men were in a most excited condition, produced, as might be supposed the most extraordinary effects. As if carried on the wings of the wind, it spread from one end of Germany to the other, and to many other countries. "It was written," according to D'Aubigne, "in the very tone of the holy writings, in a language yet in its youthful vigour, and which for the first time displayed its great beauties, it interested, charmed, and moved the lowest as well as the highest ranks." Even the papal historian, Maimbourg, confesses that "Luther's translation was remarkably elegant, and in general so much approved, that it was read by almost everybody throughout Germany. Women of the first distinction studied it with the most industrious and persevering attention, and obstinately defended the tenets of the Reformer against bishops, monks, and Catholic doctors." It was a national book. It was the book of the people - the book of God. This work served more than all Luther's writings to the spread and consolidation of the reformed doctrines. The Reformation was now placed on its own proper foundation - the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

The following statistics show the wonderful success of the work: "A second edition appeared in the month of December; and by 1533 seventeen editions had been printed at Wittemberg, thirteen at Augsburg, twelve at Basle, one at Erfurt, one at Grimma, one at Leipsic, and thirteen at Strasburg."

Meanwhile Luther proceeded in the accomplishment of his great work - the translation of the Old Testament. With the assistance of Melancthon and other friends, the work was published in parts as they were finished, and wholly completed in the year 1530. Luther's great work was now done. Hitherto he had spoken, but now God Himself was to speak to the hearts and consciences of men. Vast, wonderful, mighty thought! The divine testimonies of truth presented to a great nation, which had hitherto been "perishing for lack of knowledge." The divine word no longer to be concealed under an unknown tongue; the way of peace no longer to be obscured by the traditions of men; and the testimony of God Himself concerning Christ and salvation rescued from the superstitions of the Romish system.

The General Progress of the Reformation

The mighty movement on which we have now entered knew no limit, no end. The awakening in the German empire, the revival of the gospel, and the rising interests of the Reformation, had deeply affected the general state of Europe. Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, France, and the British isles, were drawn into the stream of the great religious revolution. It soon ceased to be a merely local, or even a national, question; it became the great overwhelming topic of the time. Every government found that the Reformation formed part of its scheme and policy, willingly or unwillingly, and that the constitutions of the most ancient kingdoms were shaken by this new contest about religion.

Men were passing to and fro, and ever carrying fresh tidings of the wonderful things that were being done. Vessels were arriving at all harbours, and secretly discharging packages of new translations, and of the pamphlets and sermons of the Reformers. The interest became universal. But it was not to be expected that the old church, when backed up by the civil power, would allow the new opinions to grow up in her very bosom without a struggle to crush them. Nevertheless, earnest-minded men, seeing that a Reformation was needed, and quite unable to stifle their convictions, preached Christ boldly. Some true, honest hearts were found in those sifting times beneath the monkish gown, men who dared to preach Christ as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth - that God only could forgive sins through faith in the precious blood of Christ. The clergy, perceiving that such doctrines were destructive of their power, their privileges, their very existence, raised the loud cry of "Heresy! Heresy!" Church excommunications were followed by royal edicts; persecution was waged against the preachers, apprehensions became frequent, the torture was applied, the flames were kindled, and from this time the thrilling stories of Protestant martyrs and martyrdoms begin. For a time bigotry triumphs, the godly suffer, but the power of the Lord and His truth mightily prevail.

But out on these troubled waters we cannot venture at present. We must return for a short time to Germany, and witness the rise of Protestantism, which gave a new direction to the spiritual history of mankind.

The Reformation and Henry the Eighth

The rapid diffusion of Luther's New Testament, and the immense effect which it produced in the homes of the people, awakened the deepest apprehensions of the papal party. The temporal powers, influenced by the ecclesiastics, prohibited, under the most severe penalties, the circulation of the condemned book. One of the greatest kings of Christendom now rose up against the audacious monk of Wittemberg. The gallant Henry VIII. of England, who had been destined by his father for the church, thought the present a good opportunity to show his talent, and wrote a book on the seven sacraments, in answer to Luther's treatise on the "Babylonish Captivity." None of the Reformer's compositions so excited the indignation of the papists as his "Babylonish Captivity." Need we wonder, then, that such an advocate was flattered and caressed by the pope, and complimented with the name, "Defender of the Faith," which is still one of the titles of the English crown? In reply to his royal assailant, Luther was not remarkable for his moderation, but betrayed by his irritable temper to use an abusive style of language which would have been better repressed.

Towards the close of the year 1521, an important change took place in the policy of the Vatican. Pope Leo died. Yes the brilliant but notoriously immoral Leo died - died, no longer to judge, but to be judged; no longer to roll out his thunders against heretics, but to be himself measured by the standard of eternal truth, and weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. He died denouncing the doctrine of justification by faith, as destructive of all moral obligations, while he and his dissolute cardinals were dissipating their time and health in prodigal and luxurious pleasures, and in promoting expensive and licentious spectacles at the theatre. He was succeeded by Adrian VI., a man more rigid in his morals than Leo, but no less opposed to the truth of the gospel.

Lutheran Churches

Soon after Luther's return from Wartburg, the States of the empire assembled in Diet at Nuremberg. The bishops, who formed a numerous portion of the assembly, called loudly for the execution of the sentence which had been given against the arch-heretic. But after some altercation and without coming to any agreement, the diet was adjourned till the autumn following.

Meanwhile the Reformer, in open defiance of the papal excommunication and the imperial edict, was going on steadily with his own proper work, preaching and writing, and Melancthon with his theology. It may be justly said of this period that "the word of God mightily grew and prevailed." Monks left their monasteries, and became active instruments in propagating the gospel; and Luther mentions, in a letter to Spalatin, the escape of nine nuns from their convents, among whom he speaks of Catherine von Bora, who afterwards became his wife. New services of worship were being gradually introduced into what were now termed Lutheran churches, but with great delicacy and tenderness. As a wise man, Luther exercised great patience towards those who were but creeping slowly out of the old system into the new. After his noble stand at Worms, he appears very little in what we may call the outworks of the Reformation. There he witnessed for God and His truth as few men have ever done. There is a grandeur and a moral sublimity in his position on that occasion which stands alone in his history. The true moral glory of the Reformation declines from that moment. The political element enters, and soon predominates. The outward aggressive action and the protection of the reformed churches fall into the hands of the temporal princes. This was the failure, the sad failure, the original sin, of the Reformers. But we shall see it more fully when we examine the epistle to Sardis.

The attention of the new pope, Adrian VI., had been turned to the affair of Luther, and to the restoration of the peace of the church. He professed to lament the great abuses of the papal See under his predecessor, and decided on adopting a different line of policy. On the 25th of November, 1522, he addressed a "Brief" to the diet re-assembled at Nuremberg. He deplored the ravages of the church through the perversity of a heretic, whom neither the paternal admonition of Leo nor his condemnation, confirmed by the edict of Worms, had been able to silence. He entreated the sovereigns to have recourse to the sword, he reminded them how God had punished Dathan and Abiram for their resistance to the high priest, and pressed upon them the noble example of their pious ancestors, who had, by an act of perfect justice, delivered the world from the heretics, Huss and Jerome, who were even at this moment revived in Luther.

"The Hundred Grievances"

The papal party rose up in a body, and shouted for vengeance on Luther; but the great body of the temporal princes judged rather that the moment had arrived when they might shake off the burden and the bondage of Rome under which they had so long groaned, and of which they had so often complained, but to no good purpose. Thus it was that, while contending for the doctrines of the Reformation, they prepared the memorial of "The Hundred Grievances," so celebrated in the annals of Germany.

The contrast between the temporal and the spiritual elements now became manifest in the great Reformation movement, though acting together for the humiliation and overthrow of the universal oppressor. It was no longer the friendless, the single-handed, monk meeting, in the power of God and His truth, the Goliath of popery, or the peaceful triumphs of Worms, but angry, political strife, and military enterprise. The light and truth of God in connection with the Reformation seem to have been arrested at this period of its history. We fail to discover any advancement in the farther apprehension of truth by the Reformers from the time that the princes came forward to extend it by the sword. Though Luther was a man of the most genuine faith, he failed to see the effects of the co-operation of the princes for their own selfish ends. But it wrought a spiritual blight on the results and triumphs of faith.

The "Grievances" need not be enumerated here; they were chiefly of an ecclesiastical character, and such as all other nations in Christendom groaned under. Oppressive taxation, perpetual levies of tenths under false pretences, the intrusion of cardinals into the best benefices, the ignorance and entire incapacity of the resident pastors, the pernicious superabundance of festivals, the profusion of absolutions and indulgences, the exactions of the clergy for the administration of the sacraments; indeed the universal venality of things sacred, and the general immorality of the spiritual order. "But though the object of the princes," says Waddington "was no more than to reform the externals of the church while that of Luther was to regenerate the religion at any peril to the church, yet the diversity of their views might not at the moment be perceptible to either, through the ardour of a common hatred, and, to a certain extent, a common cause."* Nevertheless, we may add, the results were ruinous to the progress of light and truth.

{*Dean Waddington, vol. 2, pp. 43-45.}

Events Adverse to the Reformation

While the Reformation, through the instrumentality of Luther, was gathering strength, and spreading rapidly in all parts of Europe, several evils arose to retard its progress and disgrace its character.

In the autumn of 1524 the German peasants, long oppressed by the exhausting, consuming, system of popery, rose in rebellion against their ecclesiastical tyrants. Besides the pomp and luxury of the higher clergy, the whole swarm of inferior clergy was likewise to be supported. But this was not all; new orders were perpetually rising up, and the old mendicants spread like locusts over the whole surface of the country, and devoured with impunity the substance of the people. There had long been deep murmurings and partial outbreaks, but the universal excitement of the moment seemed to give the signal for a general rising. Nearly all the provinces in Upper Germany were in a state of insurrection. Like some sudden tornado, they fell on the religious houses, plundered monasteries, demolished images, and were guilty of other similar excesses. As was usual in those times, the spiritual nobles and the locust friars had given the greatest provocation to revolt, so they were the first against whom the torrent of popular indignation was directed.

The greatest part of this furious rabble consisted of peasants, and hence the calamity has been called the war of the peasants. The sedition, at its commencement, was altogether of a civil nature, for these poor peasants only wished to be relieved from some part of their burdens, and to enjoy greater freedom. But some pernicious fanatics joined them, and turned it into a religious and holy war. The storm raged violently for some time, but, as usual, it passed off in the defeat and slaughter of the insurgents. In the unfortunate battle of the peasants with the army of the German princes, at Mulhausen, 1525, Thomas Munzer, their principal leader, was taken prisoner and publicly executed.

The papists and the enemies of the Reformation endeavoured to identify these wild tumults with the principles of Luther, but entirely without ground. They were unconnected with his followers, and not directly occasioned by his writings.

The Anabaptists

After the death of Munzer and the destruction or dispersion of the peasants, another sect arose, usually called Anabaptists, because they immersed all their converts after they had been already christened. This sect greatly troubled and perplexed the Reformers. What the Gnostics were to the Fathers, what the Manicheans were to the Catholics, such were the Anabaptists to the Reformers. They were purely fanatical. "The leaders claimed the gift of immediate inspiration, the privilege of direct and frequent intercourse with the Deity; and their deluded followers believed them. They had their visions and revelations of the past and the future; their numbers increased with great rapidity, and they followed everywhere in the train of the Reformation." Everywhere it was the cry of these enthusiasts, "No tribute, no tithes, all things in common, no magistrates, the kingdom of Christ is at hand, the baptism of infants is an invention of the devil." They sorely tried the spirit of Luther, as they spoke of themselves as the true and thorough Reformers. He observes concerning them: "Satan rages; the new sectarians called Anabaptists increase in numbers, and display great external appearances of strictness of life, as also great boldness in death, whether they suffer by fire or by water."

In the course of two years these fanatics had spread in considerable numbers over Silesia, Bavaria, Swabia, and Switzerland. But as some of their principles tended to the overthrow of social order, political decrees were issued against them. Persecution began; and as both the Saxon and the Swiss Reformers were opposed to them, they were everywhere visited by the civil power with the greatest severities. But they bore their sufferings with unconquerable fortitude. Neither sword, nor fire, nor gibbet, moved them to retractation of the show of fear. With the capture and the execution of their leaders at Munster, in 1536, the sect seems to have been suppressed.

The Sacramentarian Question

In the same year that the Anabaptists made their appearance (1524), a long and pernicious controversy arose among those who had withdrawn from the Romish communion, respecting the manner in which the body and blood of Christ are present in the sacred supper. Luther and his adherents, while they renounced the papal error of transubstantiation - that the bread and wine after consecration remained no longer, but were transmuted into the body and blood of Christ - yet did maintain that persons coming to the sacred supper participated truly of the body and blood of Christ, together with the bread and wine. This doctrine gave rise to the term, consubstantiation. Ulric Zwingle, the Swiss Reformer, and his adherents were much more simple, being more fully delivered from the traditions of Rome. They maintained that the body and blood of the Lord are not present in the holy supper, but that the bread and the wine are merely symbols or emblems by which people should be moved to remember the death of Christ, and the blessing flowing therefrom.

As nearly all the Swiss divines, and not a few in Upper Germany, followed the teaching of Zwingle, and Luther and his friends contended strenuously for his doctrine, great disunion was created among the true friends of the Reformation, which was artfully fomented by the papists. But more of this afterwards, if the Lord will. We now turn to the

Political Chiefs of the Reformation

The troubled state of the European nations, the frequent wars between Charles V. and Francis I., and the threatening attitude of the Turks, so occupied and perplexed the Emperor, that during several years he could not give much attention to the concerns of Germany and especially to the difficult subject, the new heresy. In all this the hand of the Lord is most manifest. While Charles was keeping vigilant watch over his French, Spanish, and Italian affairs, Luther and his associates, by their writings, lectures, and admonitions, were spreading the truth, and deepening its hold on the hearts of the common people; and the political chiefs, or evangelical princes, were drawing closer and closer together for the defence of their faith and their political liberty.

The perfidious pope, Clement VI., and his able nuncio, Campeggio, were determined to have the edict of Worms enforced and the complete extirpation of the Lutheran heresy. But this could not be done without the co-operation of powerful sovereigns. Charles had been slow in obeying papal orders. But a variety of circumstances seemed to combine at this moment which favoured the policy of the Vatican, and threatened to extinguish the infant Reformation. But God is above all. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take council together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." (Psa 2:2-4) The sword of the Emperor that was whetted for the slaughter of the Reformers, was turned through the treachery of the pope against Rome itself. Thus it happened: -

At the battle of Pavia, in 1526, Francis I. was vanquished by Charles V. and made his prisoner. As the captive King of France could be of no further service to the pope, he immediately transferred his friendship to his conqueror. An alliance was formed with the Emperor the King of England, and the Archduke Ferdinand. The principal article of this treaty was - "That all parties should unite their forces and march in arms against the disturbers of the Catholic religion and the insulters of the pope, and avenge every outrage committed against the See of Rome." By the craft of Satan, the same spirit prevailed in other negotiations of the great powers at this same moment. The treaty of Madrid, which restored Francis to liberty, provided that he should join the alliance. The three most powerful princes of Europe were now in association with the pope for the express purpose of executing the decrees of Worms, and for the extermination by fire and sword of the Lutheran confederacy.

The First Diet of Spires

The Diet of Spires, which opened in June 1526, was to strike the decisive blow. Ferdinand, the Emperor's brother, presided. The oft-repeated imperial message to the diet was read. It demanded that all contentions respecting religious subjects should cease; that the church customs should be maintained entire; that the edict of Worms should be speedily executed, and that the Lutherans should be forcibly destroyed. The princes of Germany, from not only a common object but a common danger, drew closer together. The chief of these were - John, Elector of Saxony; Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, the Archduke of Prussia; George and Casimir, Margraves of Brandenburg; the Elector Palatine; the Dukes of Lunenburg, Pomerania, and Mecklenburg; and the Princes of Anhalt and Henneberg. They met in conference and passed the following resolution: -

"That they would use their utmost exertions to advance the glory of God, and to maintain a doctrine in conformity with His word, rendering thanks to Him for having revived in their time the true doctrine of justification by faith, which had been long buried under a mass of superstition; and that they would not permit the extinction of the truth, which God had so lately revealed to them."

This is the virgin resolution of the princes, and the simplest and the purest they ever promulgated. There is nothing political, social, or financial here. The firmness of the evangelical party, their refusing to obey the edict of the Emperor, astonished the papists. But a voice from Him who is above all and over all, brought the discussions of the diet to a speedy termination. Ambassadors arrived from the King of Hungary, representing the calamities with which that country was overwhelmed, and the danger which threatened all Europe from the triumphant progress of the Turks. This drew the attention of Ferdinand off Luther, and hurried him to his own dominions which lay in that quarter.

What the victorious arms of Solyman accomplished in the case of Ferdinand, the treachery of Clement did in the case of Charles. Scarcely had Francis I. escaped from his captivity, when the pope, dreading the power of Charles in Italy, entered into an alliance with the French, the Duke of Milan, and the Venetians, against Charles. At the same time he absolved Francis from his oath, and authorized the violation of the treaty of Madrid. This so inflamed the resentment of the Emperor, that he abolished the pontifical authority throughout Spain, made war upon the pope in Italy, captured the city by his general, Charles of Bourbon; which was given up to all the horrors of a sack. The life and property of Rome were in the hands of the infuriated German and Spanish soldiers. The pope himself was treated with much personal abuse and indignity. There are few passages in history in which the overruling hand of a retributive Providence is more plainly manifested.

In the midst of these perplexities, a resolution was duly passed, which turned out most favourable for the Reformers. It was to this effect: "That a petition should be presented to the Emperor, urging him to call a free council without delay; and that in the meantime every one should be at liberty to manage the religious concerns of his own territory, in the manner he saw fit, yet under a due sense of his accountability to God and to the Emperor."

The Reformers, returning home, diligently improved this opportunity for strengthening and extending the cause of reform. Great changes were effected in their forms of worship and in the regulation of their religious affairs; and many inveterate superstitions were expelled. The princes and the people became more and more declared; and the foundation of the future division into Catholic and Protestant States, was laid in the history of the Reformation from 1526 to 1529.

The Second Diet of Spires

In the early spring of 1529, the Emperor called the famous Second Diet of Spires. The states of the empire assembled with great readiness. "The papal party especially mustered all their forces and assumed a warlike and insulting attitude. Never on any like occasion had there appeared so large an assemblage of spiritual nobles; and these more than any betrayed by their looks and manners the malignity of their designs. One or two princes, who had hitherto been considered neutral or even favourable to the Reformation, now declared against it. Others came, attended by considerable escorts of cavalry, breathing hatred and defiance. Nothing less was meditated than the immediate extinction of the heresy by the sword."

The imperial message assumed a high and despotic tone. The Emperor complained of the changes in religion, and the disrespect which had been shown to his own authority: for he claimed to be the chief of the christian world, and demanded unreserved obedience to his decrees. He observed that the religious innovations which he had proscribed were daily increasing in numbers, and that too under the pretext of the edict of Spires in 1526, which edict, by virtue of his absolute power, he abrogated as in direct opposition to his orders.

The decree of the Emperor was highly offensive and grievous to the German nobles. It struck at the very root of their privileges and their independence. The evangelical princes and the deputies of the free cities took up a strong but a just position. They affirmed that the edict of Spires had been drawn up according to the usual forms; that the commissioners to the Emperor had consented to it in his name; that it was the legal act of the whole body of the Republic; and that it was beyond the imperial power to annul it.

The Protest

The discussions which arose on this subject were long and often furious. The Catholics had their most able and artful disputants present, such as the celebrated Eck. To the oft repeated cry, "The execution of the edict of Worms," was now added, "The abrogation of the edict of Spires." But the Reformers were firm and united, and they reasoned with great justice. At length, Ferdinand, who presided in the diet demanded with an imperious tone, the unconditional submission of the German princes to the decision of the Assembly. The Reformers protested. This was on the 19th of April, 1529. That simple act being disregarded by the papists, the Reformers presented on the following day, in writing, a second and more elaborate remonstrance, and appealed to the Emperor and a future council. On that account the Reformers received the designation of The Protestants. This is the origin of the term which is now used to denote all those numerous churches and sects which protest on principle against the doctrines, rites, and ceremonies of the church of Rome.

This noble manifesto, which no doubt perplexed the papal party by its firmness and its justice, was signed by John, Elector of Saxony, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, George of Brandenburg, Ernest and Francis of Lunenberg, Wolffgang of Anhalt, and by the deputies of fourteen imperial cities. But the signatures of no theologians, no doctors of divinity, no university professors, appear. The great Reformation, or religious revolution, has passed into the hands of the powers of this world. There was no Luther at Spires as at Worms. Still both he and his friends were labouring in their studies their pulpits, their universities, for the peaceful progress of the word of God, and the triumphs of the gospel of His grace. And the Lord knows how to estimate and reward the labours of His servants. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." (1Co 4:5)

Here papal Christianity receives its deadly wound. The reign of Jezebel, as to her absolute authority, is now judged an intolerable tyranny. The Teutonic mind, which never entirely threw off its native independence, now throws off the galling yoke of Rome. Historically the Thyatiran period closes here. The Protestant period commences, as shadowed forth in the epistles to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, though all four run on to the end. Then every true Christian in all the different systems in Christendom will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and in due time come with Him in full manifested glory; when divine judgment will be executed on a ripened apostasy.

36 Protestantism

Chapter 36

Protestantism

The Protest of the Reformers at the second Diet of Spires, in 1529, forms a distinct epoch in the history of the Reformation and of the church. At the same time, we must bear in mind that Protestantism is not a novelty. The antiquity of the Roman Catholic religion is one of the vain boasts of her advocates. Popery, they say, is the offspring of antiquity; but Protestantism is the child of yesterday - of Luther and Calvin. The term, we may admit, in its acceptation in the sixteenth century was a novelty, but not that which it represented. The truth of God and its authority over the conscience were what the Protestants contended for. In this sense, Protestantism is as old as Christianity; and has always existed, though overlaid, from the time of Constantine to the sixteenth century, by a mass of error and ever accumulating superstitions.

During this dark and dreary period we have many Protestants. Despotism and error reigning, the faithful and the truth of God existing, necessarily brought out the principles of Protestantism. Besides the Paulicians, the Nestorians, and the Armenians in the East; we have our well-known friends in the West - the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Wycliffites, and the Bohemians. There were others distinguished by various appellations, such as the Cathari, Leonists, etc.; but these were the four great branches of the noble stock of witnesses for Christ and His gospel; and though called by different names, had one common origin and one common faith.

The Protestantism with which we have now to do, historically, dates from the second Diet of Spires, 1529. Then it drew its first breath. But in a short time it was embodied in the national constitution of Germany, and stood armed in defence, if needed, of religion and liberty. This was Protestantism in its political form, which alas! savoured not of Christianity, or of the church of God, the body of Christ.

But here we must pause for a little, and meditate on the Lord's address to the church in Sardis. The commencement of the Protestant part of Christendom is the right moment to introduce it. There we have the estimate, not of the partial or prejudiced pen of the historian, but of the Lord Himself. This is deeply solemn, but unspeakably precious. May He give us to see His own mind on this great subject!

The Epistle to the Church in Sardis

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Rev 3:1-6)

We have seen the general state and the active agencies of popery during the middle ages: we have now to contemplate an entirely new period of the history of the church, and a new order of things as the result of the great Reformation. Many of the moral features of the former periods no doubt exist in Sardis, but its character is sufficiently distinct to mark it as a fresh epoch in ecclesiastical and civil history.

The first four churches, which we have looked at, describe the state of things before the Reformation; the last three represent the general aspect of the professing body after the days of Luther. But we must be careful to distinguish between that positive work of the Spirit of God by means of the reformers, and that lifeless formalism which so soon appeared in the Lutheran and reformed churches, and which too plainly corresponds with the sad condition of Sardis. Scarcely had they tasted the blessings of deliverance from the oppression of Rome when they fell into a state of bondage to the governments of the world, and consequently, a state of spiritual deadness. The Lord Jesus touchingly refers to the same state of things in His address, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." This is the condition of that which is known as Protestantism, after the days of the first reformers. True Christians, of course, are not dead, their "life is hid with Christ in God," but the systems they are in, the Lord here declares to be without vitality. An orthodox creed, outward correctness, a name to live, the unclean spirit of popery gone out, the house swept and garnished, characterises Protestantism; but that awful word from the lips of Jesus - thou art dead, stamps its real character as seen by Him. The various systems of our national churches, and of the great professing bodies of dissenters, are described by that fatal word, "dead," - the living reality is gone.

But a glance at the different parts of the Epistle to Sardis will enable us to understand more fully the Lord's estimate of the various Protestant systems by which we are surrounded.

1. As usual in these epistles, the character which the Lord takes is divinely suited to the condition of those whom He is addressing. "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." Here the Lord presents Himself as having for faith, all the fulness of the Holy Spirit, and all authority in government, seven being the symbol of perfection. And this plenitude of spiritual blessing which is in Christ and at His disposal, remains for ever unaltered by the failure or outward ruin of the church so that both the body corporate, and individual Christians are without excuse if they flee for help to mere human resources.

But alas! this was the very snare into which the reformers fell. It happened in this way, and as we still see around us the effects of that mistake, we shall do well to examine it carefully.

2. The two things - the spiritual and the ecclesiastical - which we here see united in Christ, were separated by the reformers. This was the great error of the Reformation. They never saw or understood this truth. In their anxiety to obtain complete deliverance from the threatening power of the pope, backed by Catholic princes; the reformers placed themselves under the protection of the Protestant princes. This was their failure; and from the first Diet of Spires in 1526, they almost disappear from the notice of history. They overlooked the grand truth, that all needed power for the church, both inward and outward, spiritual and governmental, dwells in the Head, and that neither the tyranny of Rome, nor the feebleness of a few reformers, weaken in the least this blessed reality. "Whatever the failure of the church may be," says one, "however it may have coalesced with the world, this remains always true, that the full divine competency of the Holy Ghost in His various attributes is its portion, under Him who is the Head of the church which He cares for, loves, and watches over."* He has also the seven stars. It is not said here as it is in the address to Ephesus, "He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand;" but "He that hath the seven stars." In Sardis, although the stars are not seen "in His right hand," the blessed Lord had not given them up; this He could never do, He still has them under His hand, we may say, though not in it. "These things saith He that hath the seven stars."

{*Lectures on the addresses to the Seven Churches. J.N.D.}

But it may be necessary, in explanation of the stars, before going farther, to say a few words.

"The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." Throughout scripture "stars" symbolize subordinate power, just as the sun symbolizes supreme power; and the "angels" give the idea of representation.* "Then said they, It is his angel," or the representative of Peter, whom they believed to be in prison; and surely the angel whom Jacob wrestled with was the angel of Jehovah, for Jacob called the place "the face of God." (Acts 12; Gen. 32) The instruction, then, which we gather from the meaning of these two words, is perfectly plain and most important; namely, that the angel of the church ought to be the display of spiritual power, as representing Christ on the earth. The responsibility of the professing church is thus placed in the most solemn point of view. Whatever may be the condition of things in the professing church, the Lord Jesus is the one who has the seven Spirits of God, and who has the seven stars; or in other words, all the power of the Spirit, and all ecclesiastical authority. This is what Christ is in His own fulness of blessing for the church, and for the individual Christian also; and surely we ought to be a fair expression of Him who is our life, our wisdom, and our power in this world. May we be kept more in the spirit of obedience and dependence - nearer to Him, in His right hand.

{*See "Short Papers," vol. 1, p. 255.}

3. We think it scarcely necessary to add, after what has been said, that the titles "star" and "angel" give no sanction to the idea of clericalism or humanly appointed ministers. The system which has prevailed since the Reformation leaves a wide door for even unconverted men, if intellectual. But how different the divine system is as seen here! The "stars" have a character of authority under Christ, and act in His name, who is the Head of government, and as "angels" are representatives of the churches, and characterize them to the eye of Christ. What a sublime picture, we may exclaim, of moral identification with Christ and the assembly of God, these titles give! And one man was both. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." He was the expression of Christ to the church in subordinate power, and of the church to Christ in its moral condition. To such divinely appointed and divinely qualified ministers, there could be no objection in any age or in any country. For such we should never cease to pray.

Having now seen, as we believe, the mind of Christ as to what He is in Himself for His church in all ages and conditions, we shall be better able to understand the position of the Reformed churches as shadowed forth by the state of things in Sardis.

4. In the old Catholic system, salvation was made a question, not merely of faith in Christ Jesus, but of church privilege. Every blessing was made to depend on connection with the church of Rome. There was no pardon of sin, no peace with God, no eternal life in Christ, no salvation for the soul, outside of her communion. It was this daring blasphemous dogma that gave her such enormous power during the dark ages, and which made her excommunications the most insupportable inflictions that could possibly be laid on either persons or nations. When the church uttered her voice of censure, the victim of her thunders knew no power of resistance There was not a man, from the haughtiest monarch to the meanest subject, that did not tremble where the bolt fell. War, famine, pestilence, were tolerable, being temporal calamities; but the pope's curse blasted the soul for ever, and doomed it to an endless hell. No matter how genuine a man's faith and piety might be, if he did not belong to the holy Catholic church, and enjoy the benefit of her sacraments, salvation was impossible. This fearful doctrine, which was then believed, made the church everything - teacher lawgiver, saviour - and fellowship with her the only way to heaven whatever the individual character might be. She also claimed the privilege of saying who were to be called saints and who were not; who were to go direct to heaven after death, and who were to go to purgatory, and how long they were to be detained there. Every man's place and importance, both in time and in eternity, could only be settled by that which called itself the church, the spouse of Christ.

But this monstrous evil which was concealed for centuries in the most congenial darkness, was brought to light at the Reformation. The ripened mass of corruption could escape the execration of mankind no longer. Many rose up in rebellion against it, declared the whole system of popery to be the lie of Satan, and the protest of Luther to be the truth of God. But the reformers, in place of trusting in Christ who presents Himself to faith as superior to all circumstances and making Him their refuge and strength, fell into the snare of looking to the civil magistrate as a sheltering arm from the persecutions of Rome, and as the one who should regulate the movements of the seven stars. Ecclesiastical authority - the appointment of ministers - passed into the hands of the powers of this world. This was the failure of Protestantism from the beginning. Take the testimony of another.

"Thus Protestantism was always wrong, ecclesiastically, because it looked up to the civil ruler as the one in whose hand ecclesiastical authority was vested; so that if the church had been, under popery, the ruler of the world, the world now became, in Protestantism, the ruler of the church.... Sardis describes what followed the Reformation, when the glow and fervour of truth and the first flush of blessing had passed away, and a cold formalism had set in.... In Protestant lands, there has always been a measure of liberty of conscience. But the object of God is not merely to deliver either from gross evils, or from mere details, but that the soul should be right with God, and should allow the Lord to have His way and glory - liberty for the Lord to work by the Holy Ghost according to His will. When He is allowed His right place, there is the blessed fruit of it in love and holy liberty. It is not a human liberty derived from the power of the world that we want - though God forbid that we should speak a word against the powers that be, in their own sphere - but the liberty of the Holy Ghost. It is the sin of Christians to have put the powers that be in a false position. The Lord Jesus touches the root of the whole matter in the way He presents Himself to the church of Sardis. Whether it is spiritual power or the outward authority flowing from it, the Lord claims it all as belonging to Himself.... When there is faith to look to Him in His place as Head of the church, He will assuredly supply every need. If He listens to the simplest cry of His lambs, does He not enter into the deeper need of His church, which is always His most beloved object? He took His Headship of the church only in heavenly glory, and He went there not merely to be, but to act, as the Head."*

{*Lectures on the Revelation-Sardis, by W.K.}

5. In renouncing the errors of popery with reference to the power of the church, the reformers were drawn into an opposite mistake in attaching too much importance to individual opinion. On the Catholic principle, the church makes the Christian; on the Protestant principle, Christians make the church; and consequently, practically viewed, Christ loses His right place in both. A man, the priest would say, can only receive good to his soul from his present connection with Holy Mother Church; the moment he ceases to belong to her, he is lost, the only means of pardon and salvation being the holy sacraments. To be cast out of the church is like being cast into hell; of course, if there be repentance, or ground of some kind for priestly absolution, the soul may be delivered from its awful doom, and restored to the favour of the church, which is eternal life. But man's place in heaven, on earth, or in hell, must be determined and settled by the church. This is the great foundation principle of Roman Catholicism, and that which gives the priesthood such unlimited power over their deluded votaries. But this kind of influence is not confined to Romanism; it prevails more or less wherever the priestly element is owned: and has done so since the early days of the fathers.

The results of the unhallowed power in the hands of the Romish priesthood became utterly intolerable to all classes of society about the beginning of the sixteenth century. A protest was raised; it soon overspread the whole of Christendom; the Bible was appealed to as of absolute authority justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law became the watchword of the reformers. The galling yoke of Rome was thrown off. This was the work of God's Spirit, and the energy that accomplished the Reformation was all of Him. One result of this great revolution, and that which characterized it, was the transfer of power and importance from the church to the individual. The idea of the church as the dispenser of blessing was rejected, and every man was called upon to read the Bible for himself, examine for himself, believe for himself, be justified for himself, serve God for himself, as he must answer for himself. This was the new-born thought of the Reformation - always right, but it had long been denied by the usurpation of Romanism - individual blessing first, church formation afterwards, was the new order of things; but alas! the true idea of the church of God was then completely lost, and not recovered till the present century, as we shall see by-and-by, the Lord willing.

So far, the reformers were right. The Lord only builds living stones on the rock-foundation; but the Lord's own place and work in the assembly by the Holy Ghost being lost sight of, men began to unite and build churches, so-called, after their own minds. A great variety of churches or religious societies speedily sprang up in many parts of Christendom; but each country carried out its own idea as to how the church should be formed and governed: some thought that church power should be vested in the hands of the civil magistrate; others thought that the church should retain that power within herself; and this difference of opinion resulted in the national and innumerable dissenting bodies which we still see everywhere around us. But the mind of Christ as to the character and constitution of His church, so largely taught in the epistles, seems to have been entirely overlooked by the leaders of the Reformation. Individual faith, as the grand saving principle for the soul, was everywhere insisted on, thank the Lord; and men's souls were saved and God was thereby glorified; but that being secured, men might combine and make churches to suit their own mind. Nothing is more manifest to the student of church history with his New Testament before him than this painful fact.

For example, we read in Ephesians 4, "There is one body, and one spirit," but according to Protestantism we should read, "There are many bodies and one spirit." But there cannot be more than one of divine constitution. Again, we read, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit." This plainly means the unity of the Spirit's forming - the Holy Ghost being the formative power of the church which is Christ's body. Christians are the units formed by the Holy Spirit into a perfect unity. This we are to endeavour to "keep," not to make - to endeavour to maintain, exhibit, carry out in practice. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1Co 12:12-13)*

{*See this subject fully handled in two lectures on Corinthians 12 and 14, by W.K.}

6. Not only are the religious systems represented by Sardis without life, but the works of those who belong to them are incomplete. "I have not found thy works perfect before God," saith the Lord Jesus. He looks for fruit according to the standard given, and the resources placed at the disposal of faith. He presents Himself as the One who has all perfectness in spiritual power and energy for His church, and as looking for fruit which answers to Himself. He cannot lower His standard in dealing with our shortcomings. "Remember therefore," He says, "how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." He calls their attention in this solemn warning to the grace they had received, and the word they had heard. He looks for works complete, according to the measure of grace received, and the truth communicated. But, alas, under the plea of "there is no perfection" either in the church or in the individual, the idea of obedience according to the word of God has lost its proper place in the minds of Christians generally.

Take an example of what we mean - a common case.

A young man is converted through the visit of an evangelist. He has no associations or friends in one place of worship more than in another; but now he must attend somewhere. He is recommended to visit the different churches within reach of his residence, and settle down where he thinks he will receive the most good. This is the criterion he is to judge by - his own good. Our own blessing is, no doubt, a most important thing, and ought not to be overlooked; but when it is made the chief things, rather than the will of Christ, it must result in darkness of mind and barrenness of soul. Obedience to the word of God would surely be a deeper spring of blessing to our souls than merely seeking our own good, to the neglect of God's mind about the church as revealed in the epistles. But, alas, the common saying is, "There is good in all denominations, but none are all good therefore we must judge for ourselves, and choose the one we think the nearest to scripture - there is no system perfect." But this trite saying, however plausible, can only apply to human systems of religion. God's system must be perfect; and no system will suit Him that is not perfect. The imperfections of those who are in God's system, or endeavouring to carry it out, do not affect its divine perfection.

The distinction between a system and those who are in it, is often lost sight of. Supposing that a few weak or even faulty Christians were gathered to God's centre, that would not make the centre weak or faulty; but supposing, on the other hand, that a company of the best Christians in all Christendom were gathered to a human centre, that would not make it divine. Christ is God's centre, and those who are gathered to that centre by the power of the Holy Ghost are on God's ground, in His presence, and will surely receive His blessing. This should be our chief object - to be where God is, in the full assurance of faith, and trust Him for the good of our souls. "For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mat 18:20; Eph 4:3-4)

The difference between the great system of Sardis, and those who were in it, is very manifest in the Lord's message to them. "I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent." The church must be judged, not by a lifeless system, but by the resources which it has in Christ the head. The painful fact that things are not now as they were at the beginning, is no reason why Christians should make churches after their own minds and govern them by their own laws. But this has been the sin and practice of Protestantism until their name is legion. "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard," is the Lord's most solemn warning to Sardis, and to Protestants generally. The revealed word of God should be our only guide and authority, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ our only power. He recalls the church to these two grand points - grace received, truth heard. These form the measure of her responsibility, and the standard by which He must judge the great system of Sardis.

7. The coming of the Lord is here spoken of as if the church had fallen to the level of the world. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." This is very similar to what is said with regard to the world in 1Th 5:2 : "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." The Lord looks for His people to take a distinct path in separation from the world; but in this Sardis failed. "I have not found thy works perfect before God." There was great conformity to the world. Even in Thyatira, the saints of God are commended for their earnestness, notwithstanding the evil and for their last works being more than the first. But the idea of obedience to the word of God and separation from the world is little known in Protestantism. Therefore they must share the world's portion. "I will come on thee as a thief." As such He will come on the mere professing mass, but not so on the true believer.

"Thou hast a few names," He says, "even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." This is real comfort to those who are walking with the Lord in separation from the world. It is the world as a moral scene that defiles the Christian's garments. The few names here signify individuals. The Lord knows each one by name who is walking faithfully on the earth, and assures them that they will walk with Him in heaven. Blessed are the overcomers; instead of a blotted name, He will confess them by name before His Father and before His angels.

Having thus examined the meaning of the message to Sardis, and its application to what took place after the Reformation, we now return with mingled feelings to its history. Unfeignedly thankful for that great work of God's Spirit; unfeignedly sorry for the failure of man which so soon appeared. But it may be well to refresh the reader's mind with a glance at the successive conditions of the professing church of God on earth, before going further.

In Ephesus, we have the church cooling down in her love to Christ. "Thou hast left thy first love." This is the origin of all the failure that has since followed. In Smyrna, suffering under persecution from Satan. In Pergamos, worldliness; the church dwelling in the world where Satan's throne is. In Thyatira, corruption: suffering the prophetess Jezebel to teach, to seduce the Lord's servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. In Sardis, deadness; Jezebel is not here, Sardis had got away from her and her corruptions. A great name to live - a great profession and appearance of Christianity, but no vital power.

The Lutheran Churches

A.D. 1526-1529

In illustration of our exposition of the Epistle to Sardis and in proof of what we have said of the constitution of the Lutheran churches, we will now refer to their original organization. And that the truth on this point may be fairly and fully stated, we will quote from D'Aubigne, who has said all for Luther and the Reformation that can be said.

"The reform needed some years of repose that it might increase and gain in strength: and it could not enjoy peace unless its great enemies were at war with each other. The madness of Clement VII. was as it were the lightning-conductor of the Reformation, and the ruin of Rome built up the gospel. It was not only a few months' gain; from 1526 to 1529 there was a calm in Germany by which the Reformation profited to organize and extend itself.

"The papal yoke having been broken, the ecclesiastical order required to be re-established. It was impossible to restore their ancient jurisdiction to the bishops; for these Continental prelates maintained that they were in an especial manner, the pope's servants. A new set of things was therefore called for, under pain of seeing the church fall into anarchy. Provision was made for it. It was then that the evangelic nations separated definitely from that despotic dominion which had for ages kept all the west in bondage.

"Already on two occasions the Diet had wished to make the reform of the church a national work. The Emperor, the pope, and a few princes were opposed to it. The Diet of Spires had therefore resigned to each state the task that it could not accomplish itself.

"But what constitution were they about to substitute for the papal hierarchy?

"They could, while suppressing the pope, preserve the episcopal order; it was the form most approximate to that which was on the point of being destroyed.

"They might, on the contrary, reconstruct the ecclesiastical order, by having recourse to the sovereignty of God's word, and re-establishing the rights of the christian people. This form was the most remote from the Roman hierarchy. Between these two extremes there were several middle courses.... Evangelical Germany, at the moment in which she began to try her hand on ecclesiastical constitutions, began with that which trenched the deepest on the papal monarchy."*

{*Vol. 4, pp. 26 - 47.}

The reader will plainly see from these few extracts, that the princes of Germany, in re-constituting the church, were guided by expediency, or political principles. Although they may have been sincere in desiring to act in conformity with the word of God, yet it never seems to have crossed their minds that God has given a constitution for His church in the New Testament. He has not given to man the liberty of adding to, or altering a single word of, that divine constitution, any more than He gave to the Jews the liberty of adding to, or altering a single pin in the tabernacle. But as we have gone very fully into the question of the inauguration, constitution, and discipline of the church in the early part of our first volume, we need say nothing more on that subject here. Everything should be tried by the standard of God's word, and whatever has not the sanction of that word should be given up.

The First Planting of the Lutheran Churches

The Reformation in Germany can hardly be said to have begun with the lower classes. In Switzerland the movement was democratic, in Germany it was imperial. The princes stood in the front rank of the battle, and sat on the first bench in the council. "The democratic organization," says D'Aubigne, "was therefore compelled to give way to an organization, conformable to the civil government." This is a full admission that the constitution of the Lutheran churches was purely human, purely political. Christ as the centre, and the Holy Ghost as the gathering power to that centre, are entirely overlooked. Therefore the Lord pronounces all such systems as "dead." Christ, the Holy Spirit, the word of God, are all talked of and believed in, but none of them have their right place in the Lutheran or the reformed churches: consequently, they are without vitality. It was particularly among the higher classes that Luther found his supporters. "He admitted the princes as representatives of the people; and henceforward, the influence of the state became one of the principal elements in the constitution of the evangelical church."

Re-formation, we have to bear in mind, is not formation. The original proclamation of the truth and the formation of the church at Pentecost, should be the Reformer's guide. Re-formation is the turning of our thoughts to the beginning, or to the word and grace of God, and Re-forming the church in accordance with His grace and truth. And surely, if the church was formed in the first century without the princes of this world, could it not be Re-formed without them in the sixteenth or nineteenth? D'Aubigne very naturally asks this question, which shows that he felt there was a serious defect somewhere; for why call in a power to Re-form, which was not required in forming the church at the beginning? The idea of the church, as the assembly of God, or as the body of Christ, was now completely lost. Even the Catholics, though in a wicked and corrupt way, speak of maintaining the unity of the church. The Protestants started wrong on this point, and from that day until now, they have been going farther and farther from the truth as to the "one body."

Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, an enterprising and magnanimous prince, has the reputation of being the first in completing an ecclesiastical constitution for the churches of his hereditary states, and which was set forward as a model for the new churches of Christendom.

The Death of Frederick

In the year 1525, Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, died. He had been the friend and protector of Luther, though not much of a reformer. John, his brother and successor, was of a very different character. He was a thorough Lutheran and reformer. In ecclesiastical matters he assumed an absolute supremacy. He caused the constitution and government of the churches, the form of public worship, the duties and the salaries of the clergy to be drawn up by Luther and Melancthon, and to be promulgated by his deputies in the year 1527. "Being fully satisfied as to the truth of Luther's doctrines, and clearly perceiving the utter impossibility of preserving them, if the pontiff's authority were maintained, he took upon himself an entire jurisdiction in religious matters. He made provision for placing pious and competent teachers over all the churches, and for the removal of unsuitable ones. His example was soon followed by the other princes and states of Germany, that had cast off the dominion of the Roman Pontiff."* Such was the foundation or first planting of the Lutheran and reformed churches.

{*Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 122.}

The effect of such decided measures, as may easily be supposed, was soon manifest. Dissensions among the princes immediately followed. The moderation of Frederick had kept them tolerably united; but the proceedings of John made it obvious, that he was determined to separate the churches of his territory from the church of Rome. This awoke the fears of the Catholic princes, and led them to consult together for the defence of the old religion, and for the punishment of the daring innovators. An alliance was also formed by the Lutheran princes, and it was only the troubled state of Europe that prevented a civil war. The hands of Charles being full with his wars in different places, the Reformers were left undisturbed till the year 1529 - the year so famous in the history of the Reformation, and second only to the one we are now approaching, 1530. But we must notice one or two things which led to its importance. And first of all

The Appeal of the Princes

By the efforts of the popish party at the second Diet of Spires in 1529, the edict issued against Luther at Worms in 1521 was confirmed, and all innovations in religion were forbidden. Against this decision the majority of the evangelical princes entered their solemn and deliberate protest.* But not satisfied with merely expressing their dissent from the decree of the Diet, the protesters re-assembled immediately after its dissolution, and had a document drawn up in due form, in which they review what had passed in the assembly, state their grievances, assign reasons in justification of the step they had taken, and with respectful firmness re-assert the sacred rights of conscience on matters of salvation, and finally appeal to the Emperor and to a future General Council. The document concludes as follows: "We therefore appeal for ourselves, for our subjects, and for all who receive or who shall hereafter receive the word of God, from all past, present, or future vexatious measures, to his imperial majesty, and to a free and universal assembly of holy Christendom. "This document filled twelve sheets of parchment; the signatures and seals, which were nearly the same as had been affixed to the protest, were now affixed to the appeal.**

{*See p. 758.}

{**D'Aubigne, vol. 4, p. 83.}

A copy of this remonstrance was immediately despatched to the Emperor under the charge of three deputies. Charles was then on his way from Spain to Italy. They found him at Placentia, but met with the most discouraging reception. He was much irritated with this freedom and daring opposition to his will. The spirited tone of the memorial wounded his pride, and in a rage he ordered the deputies to be placed under arrest, and commanded them not to leave their apartments, nor to write a line to the Protestant princes, on pain of death. But in a short time he softened down, set them at liberty, and went on his way to Bologna, where he spent several months with the pope, Clement VII.

Meanwhile the Protestant chiefs were not inactive; they were employing the most effectual means for the furtherance of the Reformation and for the strengthening of their own position with the people. On the fifth of May, eleven days after the appeal was drawn up, it was printed and published by the Landgrave, and on the thirteenth, by the Elector. The great question between the Catholics and the Protestants had now taken a definite form, and was fairly before all Christendom.

Meetings of the Protestants

The apprehensions of the princes, as to the intentions of the Emperor, were now confirmed. His violent treatment of the deputies, and his present friendship with the pope, were significant signs of the severe measures he was meditating. The Protestant leaders now thought that it was high time for them to consult for their protection against the offended and indignant Charles. Meetings were held in the summer of 1529, at Rothach, Schwabach, Nuremberg, and Smalcald, but nothing definite was agreed upon, in consequence of the diversity of opinion which prevailed on the subject of the Lord's supper. It was formally decided at one of their meetings, "that unity on the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist was essential to any religious alliance among Christians." But, alas, alas, the Reformers were already two camps by means of the sacramentarian controversy.

The papal party were well acquainted with the bitter pamphlets which had already been written by Luther and Zwingle on this subject, and were artfully using them to widen the breach between their followers. During the sitting of the Diet of Spires, the Reformers were continually taunted by the Catholics on this point: "You boast of your attachment to the pure word of God, and yet you are nevertheless disunited." The Landgrave of Hesse was deeply pained by these public taunts, and determined to use every means possible to accomplish a reconciliation between the Swiss and Saxon Reformers. For this purpose he appointed a Conference to be held at Marburg in 1529, and invited Luther and Zwingle, and some other principal doctors and theologians of both parties.

37 Sacramentarian Controversy

Chapter 37

The Sacramentarian Controversy

The doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist had been established in the Romish church since the fourth Lateran Council in the year 1215. For three hundred years the mass and transubstantiation had been the principal bulwarks of Rome, and her greatest blasphemy. The idea of the corporeal presence of Christ in the holy supper threw a halo of sacred importance around it, excited the imagination of the people and fixed it deeply in their affections. It was the origin of many ceremonies and superstitions, of great wealth and dominion to the priesthood, and the most stupendous miracles were said to be wrought by the consecrated bread, both among the living and the dead. It thus became the corner stone of the papal edifice.

Luther, as a priest and a monk, firmly believed in this mystery of iniquity, and never was, throughout his whole career, delivered from its delusion. He sinned against God and his own conscience when he accepted priestly ordination, and from that period a judicial blindness seems to have rested on his mind as to the power of the priest over the elements. Transubstantiation, or the actual conversion of the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ, by priestly consecration, was then, as it still is, the recognised doctrine of the church of Rome. Those who doubt this are denounced as infidels.

As a reformer, Luther gave up the term transubstantiation and adopted, if possible, the still more inexplicable term of consubstantiation. He renounced the papal idea that the bread and wine after consecration remained no longer, but were changed into the material body and blood of Christ. His strange notion was, that the bread and the wine remained just what they were before - real bread and real wine - but that there was also together with the bread and wine, the material substance of Christ's human body. No invention of man, we may freely affirm, ever equalled this popish doctrine in absurdity, inconsistency and irreconcilable contradictions. "The hands of the priest," said the Pontiff Urban, in a great Roman Council, "are raised to an eminence granted to none of the angels, of creating God, the Creator of all things, and of offering Him up for the salvation of the whole world. This prerogative, as it elevates the pope above angels, renders pontifical submission to kings an execration." To all this the sacred synod, with the utmost unanimity, responded, Amen. Surely this is the last test of human credulity, and the consummation of human blasphemy.*

{*For the authority of this incredible blasphemy, see Edgar's Variations of Popery, p. 384.}

Zwingle's Early Views

Ulric Zwingle, the great Swiss Reformer, and compeer of Luther, differed entirely from both the teaching of Rome and the Saxon Reformers as to the real presence of Christ in the holy supper. The Swiss had long held opinions contrary alike to the Roman and the Saxon. At an early period of Zwingle's christian course his attention had been attracted by the simplicity of scripture on the subject of the Lord's supper. In the word of God he read that Christ had left this world and gone to His Father in heaven; and that this was to be a matter of special faith and hope to His disciples. This we find clearly taught in the Acts of the Apostles: "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him to into heaven." Thus we see that the blessed Lord ascended personally, bodily, visibly; and that He shall return in like manner, but not until the close of the present dispensation, or church period. "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." (Act 1:10-11; Act 3:21)

The words of our blessed Lord; "This is My body," - "This is My blood;" Zwingle maintained to be figurative in their character, and to imply nothing more than that the sacramental bread and wine were simply symbols or emblems of Christ's body, and that the ordinance or institution is commemorative of His death for us. "This do in remembrance of Me.... For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come." (1Co 11:22-28)

For several years, Zwingle had privately entertained these views of the Lord's supper, but knowing the hold that the old church doctrine had on the minds of the ignorant and superstitious people, he did not openly avow them. But believing that the time would soon come for the public promulgation of the truth, and foreseeing the opposition he would have to encounter, he diligently, though in a private way, sought to spread the truth and strengthen his position. Letters on the subject were sent to many learned men in Europe, so as to influence them to examine the word of God, even if they did not agree with the views of the Swiss Reformers. But while Zwingle was thus quietly waiting for the right moment to speak aloud, another, with more zeal than wisdom, imprudently wrote a pamphlet against Luther's doctrine of the Lord's supper, and raised the storm of controversy, which raged with great violence for four years.

Carlstadt, Luther, and Zwingle

Andrew Bodenstein, better known as Dr. Carlstadt, once a professor at Wittemberg, commenced the attack. This man has the reputation of having been both able and learned, and really devoted to the cause of the Reformation; but from his extreme views on that subject and the impetuosity of his spirit, his measures were sweeping and revolutionary. He would have all the images destroyed, and all the rites of popery abolished at once. We have met with him before. He was one of the earliest and warmest friends of Luther, but he had rejected Luther's notion of the real presence in the Eucharist, and that was the unpardonable sin in the eyes of the Reformer. He had also given too much countenance and encouragement to the excesses of the Anabaptists, or "the celestial prophets" as they were called, and this gave Luther a show of reason for visiting with the same condemnation the Sacramentaries and the Anabaptists. But this was most unjust, as Zwingle and his followers were as opposed to the fanaticism of the so-called prophets, as were Luther and his colleagues.

In refutation of Dr. Carlstadt, Luther wrote a pamphlet against these prophets in 1525, in which he says: "Dr. Carlstadt has fallen away from us, and become our bitterest foe. Although I deeply regret this scandal, I still rejoice that Satan has shown the cloven foot, and will be put to shame by these his heavenly prophets, who have long been peeping and muttering in concealment, but never would come fairly out until I enticed them with a guilder: that, by the grace of God, has been too well laid for me to rue it. But still the whole infamy of the plot is not yet brought forward, for still more lies concealed which I have long suspected. I know also, that Dr. Carlstadt has long been brewing this heresy in his mind though till now he has not found courage to spread it abroad."

Zwingle was now persuaded that the time for silence was past. Although he sympathized with Carlstadt's views of the Eucharist, he greatly objected to his offensive style and levity.

He published in the year 1525, an important treatise "concerning true and false religion." His own views of the Eucharist are fully and clearly stated in this book, besides his utter condemnation of the seditious spirit of the Anabaptists, and the errors of the papists on the subject in dispute. An opponent soon appeared in a pamphlet, "against the new error of the Sacramentaries." To this Zwingle replied in the same year, 1525; and took occasion to remind his opponents, the Lutherans, that they should be less personal in their abuse, and more rational and scriptural in their arguments. There was a mildness and respect in the writings of the Swiss, which the Saxons were utter strangers to; even Melancthon, at times, became the reflection of his violent master.

OEcolampadius, the intimate friend of Zwingle, was preaching the simple doctrine of the New Testament, as to the Lord's supper, at Basle, just about this time. But finding that his enemies were associating him with Carlstadt, he published and defended his own views. The effect of this book was great: written in such a christian spirit, so full of the closest reasoning, and the fairest arguments, both from the scriptures and the most eminent among the fathers, that many were drawn to consider the new opinions. Erasmus himself was well nigh converted by the book. "A new dogma has arisen," he writes to a friend, "that there is nothing in the Eucharist but bread and wine. To confute this is now a very difficult matter; for John OEcolampadius has fortified it by so many evidences and arguments, that the very elect might almost be seduced by it."

An abusive reply to this book very soon appeared, signed by fourteen German theologians, with a preface written by Luther. Zwingle was deeply offended, and complained of the insults offered to a brother reformer by his German brethren. "I have seen nothing in this age," he says, "less praiseworthy than this reply, on account both of the violence offered in it to Holy Writ, and of its immoderate pride and insolence. OEcolampadius, of all men the most harmless, a very model of every sort of piety and learning, he, from whom most of them have learnt what they know of literature, is so infamously treated by them, with such filial ingratitude, that we are called upon, not for reproaches, but for execrations."*

{*Waddington, vol. 2, pp. 346-3 70.}

Thus the controversy went on. Luther was deeply grieved and astonished to find so many learned and pious men holding the same views as Zwingle; and many of whom he had entertained the highest opinion now expressed themselves favourable to the new views. This was gall and wormwood to the spirit of Luther, and filled him with inexpressible grief and anger. In his letters and writings at this time he expressed himself in the most unmeasured and unguarded terms. He calls them "his Absaloms, sacrament-conjurers, in comparison with whose madness the papists are mild opponents - the Satanic instruments of my temptation." Luther's followers took up the tone of their master, and he transferred to this controversy all the vehemence and obstinacy of his own nature. From about the close of the year 1524 till the year 1529, Luther had written so violently against the Swiss, and so little against the papists, that it was sarcastically said by Erasmus, "the Lutherans are eagerly returning to the bosom of the church."

Summons to Marburg

Such were the christian doctors, and such their feelings whom the political Landgrave sought unweariedly to reconcile. The thought is a truly humiliating one, and casts a dark shade over the character of Luther. Philip, in his pacific exertions, showed much more of a christian spirit on this and former occasions than the great Reformer though it may not have been from the Christian's point of view. But we do not judge motives; there is One who will judge the secrets of all men." (1Co 4:5)

The connection of this great dispute with the political movements of Germany, made it one of intense interest and anxiety to the Protestant chiefs. It was the one great hindrance to their union; and without unity what could be done in the presence of such powerful adversaries as Rome and the Emperor? The papal theologians had been watching with malicious satisfaction the growth and bitterness of this disgraceful dissension, and were using all their art to profit by it. The Landgrave evidently grieved over this division more than the theologians of Wittemberg, and now determined without further delay to bring about a conference, and if possible, a reconciliation between the leaders of the different parties. On the great fundamental truths of revelation, the German and the Swiss reformers were agreed. Only on one point did they differ - the manner in which Christ is present in the bread and wine of the holy Eucharist. It appears that Philip thought the whole question little more than a dispute about words, as he says, "The Lutherans will hear no mention of alliance with the Zwinglians; well then, let us put an end to the contradictions that separate them from Luther." Accordingly, he summoned the principal divines of Saxony, Switzerland, and Strasburg, to meet together at Marburg in the autumn of 1529.

Zwingle accepted the invitation with all gladness, and made ready to appear at the time appointed. But Luther generally so bold and dauntless, as we have repeatedly seen expressed the greatest unwillingness to meet Zwingle. The several pamphlets that had passed between them on the subject in question had produced such an impression on his mind of the power of Zwingle, that he sought by the most unworthy means to avoid meeting him. The Landgrave's repeated entreaties, however, at length prevailed. Thus wrote Luther to Philip:

"I have received your commands to go to Marburg to a disputation with OEcolampadius and his party, about the Sacramentarian difference, for the purpose of peace and unity. Though I have very faint expectation of such unity, yet as I cannot too highly commend your zeal and care thereon, so will I not refuse to undertake a hopeless, and to us, perhaps, a dangerous office; for I will leave no foundation for our adversaries to say that they were better inclined to concord than myself. I know very well that I shall make no unworthy concession to them.... And if they do not yield to us, all your trouble will be lost." His private letters at this time express the same opinion and breathe the same spirit. The whole question was discussed, and closed in the mind of Luther before he started on his journey. But his mind was far from being at ease. He had a certain conviction that the victory would be awarded to the Swiss. This conviction is fully proved by the following propositions.

1. Luther wrote to say for himself and Melancthon, that they could only attend the conference on condition that "some honest papists should be present as witnesses against those future Thrasos and vain-glorious saints.... If there were no impartial judges the Zwinglians would have a good chance to boast of victory." This is a strange passage in the history of the Saxon divines, and exhibits a backward movement from the principles of the Reformation; but especially in the case of the author of the "Babylonish Captivity," and the denouncer of Antichrist. Had Luther forgotten that the papists were pledged to the real presence more than any other party in Christendom? And yet he proposes them as impartial judges. What a change, at least for the moment, in that great man! How can we account for this? Luther is no longer standing on the sure ground of the word of God, but on the false ground of an absurd superstition. He could not have the sense of the divine presence or approval. And little wonder that he manifested such weakness and inconsistency. In place of trusting in the living God and setting at nought popes and emperors, he pitifully turns to his old enemies to be his friends and refuge in the approaching discussion. What a solemn lesson for all Christians! May the written and living Word be our resource and refuge at all times. We need only further add, that Philip was too warm an antipapist to give any heed to Luther's proposal; it therefore fell to the ground, leaving to its authors the disgrace which impartial history has assigned to it.

2. In a letter, generally ascribed to Melancthon, written to the Prince Elector as early as May 14th, he goes farther still. "Let the prince refuse to permit our journey to Marburg, so that we may allege this excuse." "But the Elector," says D'Aubigne, "would not lend himself to so disgraceful a proceeding; and the reformers of Wittemberg found themselves compelled to accede to the request of the Landgrave."

3. Another proposition was suggested, which shows still more the fear and misgiving of the Saxon divines - "that among the theologians to be summoned from Switzerland to the controversy, Zwingle should not be one." But neither could this proposal be entertained; the invitations had been given, and Philip was already too much offended by the obstinacy of Luther to listen to his requests. These little matters are only worth recording as showing the difference of the same man when he stands for the truth of God, and when he contends for the foolish dogma of consubstantiation. In the former case he stands by faith, and grace gives him moral courage, firmness, and nobility of bearing; but in the latter, we find him exhibiting the most pitiful features of weakness, distrust, and dissimulation. It is the presence of God and faith in Him that makes the vast difference; as the poet sings:

"Is God for me? I fear not, though all against me rise;

When I call on Christ my Saviour, the host of evil flies

My friend, the Lord Almighty, and He who loves me, God!

What enemy shall harm me, though coming as a flood?

I know it, I believe it, I say it fearlessly

That God, the highest, mightiest, for ever loveth me,

At all times, in all places, He standeth by my side

He rules the battle's fury, the tempest, and the tide."

The Conference at Marburg

The senate of Zurich had positively refused to allow Zwingle to go to Marburg, lest any harm should befall him. But he felt that his presence at the conference was necessary for the welfare of the church, and that he must go! Accordingly he prepared for his journey, and started during the night, with only one friend to accompany him - Rodolph Collin, the Greek professor. He left the following note for the Senate, "If I leave without informing you, it is not because I despise your authority, most wise lords; but because, knowing the love you bear towards me I foresee that your anxiety will oppose my going." They arrived safely at Basle, where they were joined by OEcolampadius; and at Strasburg, where they were joined by Bucer, Hedio, and Sturm. The company reached Marburg on September 29th. Luther and his friends on the 30th. Both parties were courteously received by Philip, and entertained in the castle at his own table.

The Landgrave, not ignorant of the bitter feelings which the late controversy had produced between the chiefs of the parties, wisely proposed, that previously to the public conference, the theologians should have a private interview for the purpose of paving the way to reconciliation and unity. Knowing the tempers of the men, he directed Luther to confer with OEcolampadius, and Melancthon with Zwingle. But so many accusations as to false doctrine were brought against the Swiss by the Saxon divines, that little progress was made towards unity, and the main question became more complicated. The public disputation was accordingly appointed for the following day, October 2nd, 1529.

The general conference was held in an inner apartment of the castle, in the presence of the Landgrave and his principal ministers, political and religious, the deputies of Saxony Zurich, Strasburg, and Basle, and of a few learned foreigners. A table was placed for the four theologians - Luther, Zwingle, Melancthon, and OEcolampadius. As they approached, Luther, taking a piece of chalk, steadily wrote on the velvet cover of the table, in large letters, HOC EST CORPUS MEUM - "This is my body." He wished to have these words continually before him, that his confidence might not fail, and that his adversaries might be confounded. "Yes," said he, "these are the words of Christ, and from this rock no adversary shall dislodge me."

All parties having assembled, the Chancellor of Hesse opened the conference. He explained its object, and exhorted the disputants to a christian moderation, and the re-establishment of unity. Then Luther, instead of proceeding at once to the question of the Eucharist, insisted on a previous understanding concerning other articles of faith, such as the divinity of Christ, original sin, justification by faith etc. etc. The Saxon divines professed to regard the Swiss as unsound on these and other subjects. What Luther's object could be, in seeking to widen the field of debate, we pretend not to say; but the Swiss replied that their writings bore sufficient evidence, that on all these points there was no difference between them.

The Landgrave, to whom belonged the direction of the meeting, signified his assent, and Luther was compelled to give up his project; but he was evidently angry and ill at ease in his own mind, and said, "I protest that I differ from my adversaries with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's supper, and that I shall always differ from them. Christ said, 'This is My body.' Let them show me that a body is not a body. I reject reason, common sense, carnal arguments, and mathematical proofs. God is above mathematics. We have the word of God, we must adore and perform it." Such was the commencement of this celebrated debate. The impetuous headstrong Saxon, had written his text on the velvet, and was now pointing to it, and saying, "No consideration shall ever induce me to depart from the literal meaning of these words, and I shall not listen either to sense or reason, with the words of God before me." And all this was done and said, be it observed, before the deliberations were so much as opened, or a single argument had been advanced. This declaration, coupled with the notorious obstinacy of its author, was enough to crush every hope of a satisfactory termination to the conference.

But the Swiss, notwithstanding Luther's high-handed style, did not decline the argument. They no doubt knew his measure, cared little for his arrogant assertions, and probably never counted on his conversion. "It cannot be denied." said OEcolampadius mildly, "that there are figures of speech in the word of God; as John is Elias, the rock was Christ, I am the vine." Luther admitted that there were figures in the Bible, but he denied that this last expression was figurative.

OEcolampadius then reminded Luther that the blessed Lord says in John 6, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." "Now Christ who said to the people of Capernaum, the flesh profiteth nothing, rejected by these words, the oral manducation of the body. Therefore he did not establish it at the institution of the supper."

"I deny," retorted Luther vehemently, "the second of these propositions. There was a material eating of Christ's flesh, and there was a spiritual eating of it. It was the former, the material eating, of which Christ declared that it profiteth nothing."

OEcolampadius hinted that this was in effect to surrender the argument. It admitted that we were to eat spiritually, and if so, we did not eat bodily, the material manducation being in that case useless.

"We are not to ask of what use," replied Luther; "everything that God commands becomes spirit and life. If it is by the Lord's order that we lift up a straw, in that very action we perform a spiritual work. We must pay attention to Him who speaks, and not to what He says. God speaks: Then, worms, listen! God commands: let the world obey! And let us all fall down together, and humbly kiss the word."

We may just notice in passing, that there is no ground for supposing that the question of the Eucharist is referred to in John 6. It was not even instituted for some time after this. Incarnation, death, and ascension are the fundamental truths which the Lord is here unfolding to the Jews, as the only means of eternal life and of all spiritual blessings. "Himself the eternal life which was with the Father before all worlds, He took flesh that He might not only reveal the Father, and be the perfect pattern of obedience as man, but that He might die in grace for us, and settle the question o£ sin for ever glorifying God absolutely, and at all cost, on the cross. Except the corn of wheat (as He Himself taught us) fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; dying it brings forth much fruit. His death is not here regarded as an offering to God, as elsewhere often, but the appropriation of it by the believer into his own being.... He only is life, yet this not in living, but in dying for us, that we might have it in and with Him, the fruit of His redemption, eternal life as a present thing but only fully seen in resurrection-power, already verified and seen in Him, ascended up as man, where He was before as God, by-and-by to be seen in us at the last day, manifested with Him in glory.

"Jesus, therefore, come down to earth, put to death, ascending again to heaven, is the doctrine of this chapter. As come down and put to death, He is the food of faith during His absence on high. For it is on His death we must feed, in order to dwell spiritually in Him and He in us."*

{*For a fuller opening up of this subject, see Bible Treasury, vol. 10, p. 357; and Synopsis, vol. 3, p. 432.}

We now return to Marburg.

Zwingle, just at this moment, interfered in the discussion. He pressed and greatly troubled the spirit of Luther by his reasoning from the scriptures, science, the senses, etc., but he took his stand first on the ground of scripture. After quoting a number of passages in which the sign is described by the very thing signified, he introduced the argument which had been started by OEcolampadius in the morning, namely, John 6. Concluding that, in consideration of our Lord's declaration, the flesh profiteth nothing, we must explain the words of the Eucharist in a similar manner.

Luther. - "When Christ says the flesh profiteth nothing, He speaks not of His own flesh, but of ours."

Zwingle. - "The soul is fed with the Spirit, and not with the flesh."

Luther. - "It is with the mouth that we eat the body; the soul does not eat it, we eat it spiritually with the soul."

Zwingle. - "Christ's body is therefore a corporeal nourishment, and not a spiritual."

Luther. - "You are captious."

Zwingle. - "Not so; but you utter contradictory things."

Luther. - "If God should present me wild apples, I should eat them spiritually. In the Eucharist, the mouth receives the body of Christ, and the soul believes His words."

There was now great confusion and contradiction in the language of Luther; as if the four words were to be taken neither "figuratively nor literally; and yet he seemed to teach that they were to be taken in both senses." Zwingle thought that an absurdity had been reached, and that no good could be attained by proceeding farther in this line of argument. He maintained from a wider view of the scriptures, that the bread and wine of the holy Eucharist are not the very body and blood of the Lord Jesus, but only the representatives of that body and blood.

Luther was, however, by no means shaken. "This is My body," he repeated, pointing with his finger to the words written before him. "'This is My body,' and the devil himself shall not drive me from that. To seek to understand it is to fall away from the faith."

But although no favourable impression was produced on the mind of Luther, many of the hearers were struck by the clearness and simplicity of Zwingle's arguments, and many minds were opened to the truth on this important subject. Francis Lambert, the principal theologian of Hesse, who had constantly professed the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist, was amongst the most notable of the converts. He was the personal friend and a great admirer of Luther, but conscience moved him to confess the truth. "When I came to this conference," he said, "I desired to be as a sheet of blank paper on which the finger of God might write His truth. Now I see it is the Spirit that vivifies, the flesh profiteth nothing. I believe with OEcolampadius and Zwingle." The Wittemberg doctors greatly lamented this defection; but turned it off by exclaiming, "Garlic fickleness!" "What!" replied the ex-Franciscan, formerly of Avignon, "was St. Paul fickle because he was converted from Pharisaism? And have we ourselves been fickle in abandoning the lost sects of popery?"

Great agitation now prevailed in the hall, but the hour to adjourn had arrived, and the disputants retired with the prince to dinner.

In the afternoon the conversation was resumed by Luther, who said, "I believe that Christ's body is in heaven, but I also believe that it is in the sacrament. It concerns me little whether that be against nature, provided that it is not against faith. Christ is substantially in the sacrament, such as He was born of the virgin."

OEcolampadius, quoting 2Co 5:16, said, "We know not Jesus Christ after the flesh."

"After the flesh means," said Luther, "in this passage, after our carnal affections."

"Then answer me this, Dr. Luther," said Zwingle, "Christ ascended into heaven; and if He is in heaven as regards His body, how can He be in the bread? The word of God teaches us that He was in all things made like unto His brethren. (Heb 2:17) He therefore cannot be at the same instant on every one of the thousand altars at which the Eucharist is being celebrated."

"Were I desirous of reasoning thus," replied Luther, "I would undertake to prove that Jesus Christ had a wife; that he had black eyes, and lived in our good country of Germany. I care little about mathematics."

"There is no question of mathematics here," said Zwingle, "but of St. Paul who wrote to the Philippians, that Christ took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

Finding himself in danger of being moved or drawn away from his original position, he flew back to his four words, exclaiming, "Most dear sirs, since my Lord Jesus Christ says, Hoc est corpus meum, I believe that His body is really there."

Wearied with the inflexible obstinacy and unreasonableness of Luther, Zwingle moved rapidly towards him, and striking the table, said to him: "You maintain then, doctor, that Christ's body is locally in the Eucharist; for you say, Christ's body is there-there-there. There is an adverb of place. Christ's body is then of such a nature as to exist in a place. If it is in a place, it is in heaven, whence it follows that it is not in the bread."

"I repeat," replied Luther warmly, "that I have nothing to do with mathematical proofs. As soon as the words of consecration are pronounced over the bread, the body is there, however wicked be the priest who pronounces them."

Let the reader note this saying. It is certainly blasphemy, though not intentionally so by this deluded man. According to this dogma, the Lord, willing or not willing, must descend into the idolatrous bread of the priest, however wicked he may be, the moment he mutters the words of consecration. This is popery in its most daring blasphemy.

The Landgrave, perceiving that the discussion was growing hot, proposed a brief recess. As reason and fairness are all on one side, there is little interest in watching the progress of the debate. Zwingle and OEcolampadius had established their propositions by scripture, philosophy, and the testimony of the most ancient fathers, but all were met by the one unvarying answer, "This is My body." And as if to insult and exasperate the Swiss divines, Luther seized the velvet cover on which the words Hoc est corpus meum were written, pulled it off the table, held it up before their eyes saying, "See, see, this is our text, you have not yet driven us from it, as you had boasted, and we care for no other proofs."

After such an exhibition of weakness and folly, with the assumption of infallibility, there was no hope of drawing Luther from his hold, and no good reason for prolonging the conference. The discussion, however, was resumed the following morning, but at the close of the day the hostile parties were no nearer a reconciliation. A severe epidemic, in the form of the sweating sickness, had broken out in Germany about this time, and had reached Marburg during the conference, and no doubt hastened its termination. The ravages of the plague were frightful; all were filled with alarm and anxious to leave the city.

"Sirs," exclaimed the Landgrave, "you cannot separate thus; can nothing more be done to heal the breach? Must this one point of difference irreconcilably divide the friends of the Reformation?" "Is there no means," said the chancellor, "of the theologians coming to an understanding, as the Landgrave so sincerely desires?"

"I know of but one means for that," replied Luther, "and this it is; let our adversaries believe as we do." "We cannot," replied the Swiss. "Well then," said Luther, "I abandon you to God's judgment, and pray that He will enlighten you." "We will do the same," added OEcolampadius. Zwingle was silent, motionless, but deeply moved while these words were passing. At length his lively affections gave way, and he burst into tears in the presence of all.

A Proposal for Toleration and Unity

The conference was ended, and nothing had been done towards unanimity. Philip and other mediators endeavoured at least to establish an understanding of mutual toleration and unity. The theologians, one after another, were invited into his private chamber: there he pressed, entreated, warned, exhorted, and conjured them. "Think," said he, "of the salvation of the christian republic, and remove all discord from its bosom." Politically, things were threatening: Charles V. and the pope were uniting in Italy; Ferdinand and the Roman Catholic princes were uniting in Germany. Union among all the Protestants seemed the only thing that could save them. So Philip believed, and toiled exceedingly to accomplish it; but the intractable and imperious disposition of Luther stood in his way.

The Swiss doctors entered most heartily into the wishes of the Landgrave. "Let us," said Zwingle, "confess our union in all things in which we are agreed, and as for the rest, let us forbear and remember that we are brethren. Respecting the necessity of faith in the Lord Jesus, as to the grand doctrine of salvation, there is no point of discord."

"Yes, yes!" cried the Landgrave, "you agree! give then a testimony of your unity, and recognize one another as brothers." 'There is no one upon earth," said Zwingle, "with whom I more desire to be united than with you, approaching the Wittemberg doctors." OEcolampadius, Bucer, and Hedio said the same.

This most christian movement seemed for the moment to produce the desired effect. Many hearts were touched even among the Saxons. "Acknowledge them! acknowledge them!" continued the Landgrave, "acknowledge them as brothers!" Even Luther's obduracy seemed to be giving way. The keen eye of Zwingle seeing what he hoped was a measure of relenting, he burst into tears - tears of joy - approaches Luther, holds out his hand, and begged him only to pronounce the word "brother." But, alas! that glowing heart was doomed to a cruel disappointment. When all eyes were fixed on the two leaders, and all hearts full of hope that the two families of the Reformation were about to be united, Luther coldly rejected the hand thus offered, with this cutting reply, "You have a different spirit from ours;" which was equal to saying, "We are of the Spirit of God, you are of the spirit of Satan." "These words," says D'Aubigne, "communicated to the Swiss, as it were, an electrical shock. Their hearts sank each time Luther repeated them, and he did it frequently." "Luther's refusing to shake hands with Zwingle," says Principal Cunningham, "which led that truly noble and brave man to burst into tears, was one of the most deplorable and humiliating, but at the same time solemn and instructive, exhibitions of the deceitfulness of sin and the human heart the world has ever witnessed."*

{*D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation, vol. 4, pp. 88-126; Cunningham's Lectures on the Reformation, p. 218.}

A brief consultation now took place among the Wittemberg doctors, but the result was not more conciliatory. Luther, Melancthon, Agricola, Brenz, Jonas, and Osiander, conferred together.

Turning towards Zwingle and his friends, the Saxons said "We hold the belief of Christ's bodily presence in the Eucharist to be essential to salvation, and we cannot in conscience regard you as in the communion of the church."

"In that case," replied Bucer, "it were folly to ask you to recognize us as brethren. We think that your doctrine strikes at the glory of Jesus Christ, who now sits at the right hand of God. But seeing that in all things you acknowledge your dependence on the Lord, we look at your conscience, which compels you to receive the doctrine you profess, and we do not doubt that you belong to Christ."

"And we," said Luther, "declare to you once more that our conscience opposes our receiving you as brothers."

"Well, doctor," answered Bucer, "if you refuse to acknowledge as brethren those who differ from you in any point, you will not find a single brother in your own ranks."

The Swiss had exhausted their solicitations. "We are conscious," said they, "of having acted as in the presence of God." They were on the point of leaving: they had manifested a truly Catholic christian spirit, and the feeling of the conference was in their favour and also of their doctrine. Luther perceiving this, and especially the indignation of the Landgrave, appeared to soften down considerably. He advanced towards the Swiss and said; "We acknowledge you as friends, we do not consider you as brothers and members of Christ's church; but we do not exclude you from that universal charity which we owe even to our enemies."

Although this concession was only a fresh insult, the Swiss resolved to accept what was offered them without disputation. The Swiss and the Saxons now shook hands, and some friendly words passed between them. The Landgrave was overjoyed that so much had been gained, and at once called out for a report of this important result. "We must let the christian world know," said he, "that except the manner of the presence of the body and blood in the Lord's supper, you are agreed in all the articles of faith." This was resolved upon, and Luther was appointed to draw up the articles of the Protestant faith.

A "Formula of Concord" was immediately drawn up by Luther. It consisted of fourteen articles; rather general in their character - such as the Trinity, Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension, Original Sin, Justification by faith, the Authority of the scriptures, the Rejection of tradition, and lastly, the Lord's supper, which was spoken of as a spiritual feeding on the very body and very blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the thirteen articles as they were read, one by one, the Swiss gave their hearty amen. And although the terms in which the fourteenth was expressed appeared to them objectionable, yet being somewhat obscure and capable of different interpretations, they agreed to sign the articles without causing further discussion. This important document received the signatures of both parties on October 4th, 1529. A desire was expressed to cherish towards one another the spirit of Christian charity, and to avoid all bitterness in maintaining what each deemed to be the truth of God.

The confession of Marburg was now sent to the press. Its appearance gave the Saxons some ground for saying that the Swiss had signed Luther's creed; that they had recanted all their errors; that on the Eucharist alone excepted. That they were prepared to retract even that, but they had been deterred by fear of the vulgar; and that they had produced no argument against the doctrine of Luther, except their own inability to believe it. Reports such as these flew rapidly through every part of Germany; but they were false reports. The reader must have observed that the courage and confidence of the Swiss increased as the contest advanced, and that their fairness and gentleness were mightier far than the unreasonableness and haughtiness of their adversaries.

On Tuesday, October 5th, after a four days' conference, the Landgrave left Marburg early. The doctors and their friends soon followed, but the amount of truth which had been brought out, and the opinions expressed, were widely propagated in Germany, and many hearts were turned to the simplicity of the New Testament in observing the Lord's supper.

Reflections on the Conference at Marburg

With feelings of the deepest gratitude and the most unfeigned humiliation, we would pause awhile, and meditate on the late scenes at Marburg. With gratitude to God for having given such publicity to the teaching of scripture on the subject of the Lord's supper; but with mourning and humiliation over the inconsistency of one who had so much influence there. The doctrines so clearly taught by the Swiss, had been little known in Germany till that time. Consubstantiation having been adopted by Luther and his followers, the true meaning and object of that sacred institution were unknown. Great interest was awakened in all parts by the newly-discovered truths, which were embraced by an immense number of persons. It spread rapidly throughout all Germany, and may have been an everlasting blessing to thousands of precious souls. Lambert, as we have seen, was converted to the views of Zwingle; and the Landgrave himself, a short time before his death, declared that the conference had induced him to renounce the error of consubstantiation.

Thus God in His own goodness overruled these unseemly debates for the spread of the truth, and for the accomplishment of His own gracious purposes. Little did Luther contemplate the merciful use that God would make of that conference; and that, when he, Luther, was caring only for his own reputation, God was caring for the advancement of the Reformation.

But alas! what is man - fallen, self-seeking man! Where is now the Luther of the early days of the Reformation? Why has the heart that was so large, liberal, and considerate of all, so soon degenerated into the most undisguised and intolerant bigotry? The answer is plain - then he stood for God by faith; now he stood in pride as the head of a party. And this explains not only the wonderful change that had come over the spirit of Luther, but the ignoble failure of many distinguished men from that day until now. At the Diet of Worms and other places, Luther, almost alone, fought for the truth of God against the lie of Satan, but at Marburg he fought for the lie of Satan, in the form of his new dogma against the truth of God. Some may be ready to say that he was fighting for the truth according to his conscience; so far it may have been so. But it will be remembered that he resisted all peaceful investigation of the truth, all reasonable means for arriving at a proper understanding of those "four words" - This is my body - and seemed only to care for the maintenance of his own authority and power as the chief of his party. There was no concern manifested by either Luther or any of the Saxons for the general interest of the gospel, or for the triumph of the Reformation. Thus was the great and blessed work of Luther marred and vitiated by the most absurd and foolish dogma ever proposed to the credulity of man.

The position and danger of a party leader in the things of God, are clearly expressed in the following opinion of Luther. "At Marburg, Luther was pope. By general acclamation the chief of the evangelical party, he assumed the character of a despot; and to sustain that part in spiritual matters, it is necessary to create the prejudice of infallibility. If he once yielded any point of doctrine - if he once admitted that he had fallen into error - the illusion would cease, and with it the authority that was founded on it. It was thus at least with the multitude. He was obliged by the very position which he believed he occupied, or which he wished to occupy, to defend in the loftiest tone every tenet that he had once proclaimed to the people . . . .

"Upon the whole, he lost both influence and reputation by that controversy. By his imperious tone, and elaborate sophistry he weakened the affections and respect of a large body of intelligent admirers. Many now began to entertain a less exalted opinion of his talents, as well as of his candour. Instead of the self-devotion and magnanimity which had thrown such a lustre over his earlier struggles, a vain-glorious arrogance seemed to be master of his spirit; and but for the indulgence of this ignoble passion, the mantle, which might have wrapped Germany and Switzerland in one continuous fold, was rent asunder. He was no longer the genius of the Reformation. Descending from that magnificent position, whence he had given light to the whole evangelical community, he was now become little more than the head of a party, then, indeed, the more conspicuous and powerful section of the reformers, but destined in after times to undergo reverses and defections, which have conferred the appellation of Lutheran on an inconsiderable proportion of the Protestant world."*

{*Dean Waddington, vol. 2, p. 401.}

38 Council of Bologna

Chapter 38

The Council of Bologna

When we last parted with the Emperor and the pope, they were spending the winter months together at Bologna. Charles arrived in great state on the 5th of November, 1529. When the news of his approach reached Rome, Clement hastened, in full ecclesiastical pomp, to meet his majesty. The Emperor was escorted by five-and-twenty cardinals who received him on the frontiers - besides crowds of nobles, Spanish and Italian, with their brilliant equipages. The pope, overcome by the presence of his dutiful son, saluted him three times; and the Emperor, affecting the reverence due to his "holy father," fell on his knees, kissing his feet, then his hands and his face.

Such was the meeting of the two chiefs of Romish Christendom, whose main object was to consult as to the most effectual means of rooting out the heresies which had sprung up in Germany. The lips of the priest, true to his character urged the immediate adoption of the most violent measures, but the soldier, though backed by a powerful army, recommended some further delay, and suggested that there should be an opportunity given for free deliberation in council on the present aspect of affairs in the church. Clement, who dreaded above all things the public discussion of such questions, employed every argument to dissuade the Emperor from his purpose. He assured him that his forbearance would only make the heretics more presumptuous that the state of things in Germany was desperate and called for force and chastisement. But the policy of the soldier led him to milder measures. He may have cared as little in heart for the Reformation as Clement, but he became daily more convinced that menaces would not subdue the spirit of the Protestants, and he was not prepared for actual warfare. He endeavoured to persuade the pope to call a general council, but the angry pontiff thought of nothing but crushing by military power the stubborn enemies of the catholic faith.

To those who have become familiar with the principles of the papacy, the character of these consultations will be no surprise, however humiliating to contemplate. Impartial history has been careful to record the sad contrast. "On the one side was the prince and the soldier, the natural advocate of arbitrary and coercive proceedings; on the other the peaceful ecclesiastic, the representative of the religion of the God of mercy; and yet, whatever piety or virtue may be found in the above dialogue, whatever justice or pretence to justice, whatever principle of sound morality, whatever generosity of political sentiment, whatever regard for the rights or for the happiness of man, whatever respect for the trite and manifest precepts of Christ - whatever, in short, ought to have proceeded from the minister of concord and charity, was uttered by the secular despot; while the direct recommendation of violence and bloodshed issued from the lips of the spiritual priest."*

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 39.}

The crafty pope was well aware that the reformers were then weak and divided, and therefore pressed Charles to carry into execution without delay the sentence of Leo, together with the decree of the Diet of Worms. But Charles was not the man to give up his own will, even to his holy father. He now instructed his chancellor, Gattinara, to explain his views and intentions to the conference; who spoke to the following effect: -

The Emperor had regarded with deep affliction the dissensions which had arisen in his day, and of which the violence appeared to be increasing rather than abating; and that, among all the duties which providence had imposed upon him, none was nearer his heart than that of restoring the tranquillity of the church, that there was no expedient more salutary to the church, or more worthy of the sovereign pontiff and of a christian prince, than to convoke a general and free council for the scriptural determination of all controversies, that this council should be assembled immediately, and composed of the most eminent doctors of all nations, that perfect freedom of debate should be allowed; and that the articles there recommended, after receiving the sanction of the pope, should become the established doctrine of the christian world, and be supported, if necessary, by the interference of the civil powers.

Clement viewed the proposed convocation with great aversion. The proceedings of the councils of Pisa and Constance, which had deposed the popes Benedict XIII., Gregory XII., and John XXIII., excited his fears. He had many personal motives for dreading an assembly of Christendom. "Large congregations," he replied, "serve only to introduce popular opinions. It is not with the decrees of councils, but with the edge of the sword that we should decide controversies." He promised, however, to reflect on what had been said.

The Diet of Augsburg

The Emperor at length came to the conclusion that it would be unjust to follow the Council of the Vatican, and a violation of the imperial laws of Germany, to condemn worthy citizens unheard, and to make war against them. He, accordingly, in the month of January, 1530, sent his mandatory letters into Germany, summoning a diet of the empire to be held at Augsburg in the following April.

In the meantime, during his stay at Bologna, Charles expressed his desire to be crowned by the Pope as many of his ancestors had been. 'He appointed the 22nd of February for receiving the iron crown as King of Lombardy, and resolved to assume the golden crown as Emperor of the Romans, on the 24th of the same month - his birthday and the anniversary of the battle of Pavia. " We notice this fact because Charles was a different man after he sealed by a false oath his coronation vows. The pontiff having anointed him with oil, and given him the sceptre, presented him with a naked sword, saying, "Make use of this sword in defence of the church against the enemies of the faith." Next, taking the golden orb, studded with jewels, he said, "Govern the world with piety and firmness. " Then came the golden crown enriched with diamonds. Charles bent down, and Clement put the diadem on his head, saying, "Charles, Emperor invincible, receive this crown which we place on your head, as a sign to all the earth of the authority that is conferred upon you. "

The Emperor then kissed the white cross embroidered on the pope's red slipper, and exclaimed, "I swear ever to employ all my strength to defend the pontifical dignity, and the Church of Rome." But Charles at this time, was neither inclined, nor able if he had been inclined, to carry matters with that high hand against the reformers, which the pope so earnestly desired. For thirteen years the Lord had so overruled the councils of kings and pontiffs, and all agents and events, that the Reformation had been sheltered from outward violence, and so nourished it by His grace, that it gradually acquired that root and establishment which no human power could subvert. Most distinctly do we see the gracious hand of a good providence at this moment in protecting the reformers from the cruelty of the pope and the power of the Emperor.

The rivalry long existing between Charles V. and Francis I., the intrigues of the popes with these princes, and the threatening advances of the Turks, have been frequently used of God for the peace and prosperity of the Reformation. The work was His and He watched over it.

The Confession of Augsburg

When the Emperor's reasons for the convocation of the diet were known, the elector instructed the divines of Wittemberg to prepare a formula of confession. Up to this time no standard of the faith of the reformers had been published; and as the Emperor was surrounded by all the prejudices and misrepresentations of the papacy, the only hope of removing these prejudices, and of obtaining justice, was by a public and straightforward proclamation of the real principles of the Reformation, and the real objects of the reformers. Luther, with the assistance of Jonas, Pomeranus, and Melancthon, re-examined the seventeen articles which had been drawn up and signed by the Lutheran party at Schwabach in 1529, and thinking them sufficient, presented them to the Elector at Torgau, whence they are called the articles of Torgau. From these articles as a basis, Melancthon, by order and authority of the princes, prepared a more orderly and elaborate statement of their doctrines and observances, and also assigned reasons for their opposition to the Roman pontiffs. This document has ever since been well known as "The Confession of Augsburg."

But as religious concord was the Emperor's professed object in convening the assembly, it was necessary to have the confession drawn up in terms as little offensive to the papists as faithfulness to God and His truth would permit. The pious Elector had recommended the theologians to distinguish between such articles as must, at any cost, be maintained, and such as might, if it were necessary, be modified or conceded. While this celebrated confession was to speak the truth as believed by all Protestants, it was, at the same time, the lowest statement they could consent to make for the sake of peace, rather than the highest they were prepared to give on the authority of the word of God.

As the time drew near for the assembling of the diet, considerable anxiety was manifested by some of the princes as to the real intentions of the Emperor, and the safety of the Elector. He stood first among the princes in Germany, and first as to his faith in God, his love for the Reformation, his opposition to popery, and his avowed protection of Luther against papal and imperial vengeance. But John pursued the wiser and bolder course, and was the first prince who arrived in Augsburg.

The assembling of the diet was postponed till the 1st of May, and the Elector appeared on the 2nd, accompanied by a military train or suite of one hundred and sixty horsemen, and several of his most eminent divines. Luther was left at Coburg. The Elector feared that Luther's presence at the diet would exasperate the papists and drive Charles to extreme measures. He had been excommunicated by the pope, condemned by the Emperor, and viewed as the author of all those dissensions which were now so difficult to compose. But at the same time John was determined to keep Luther within reach, that he might be able to consult him.

It was about this time that Luther published his catechisms, Greater and Lesser, which are of authority in the Lutheran churches, even until this day; and in his castle at Coburg he was made acquainted with all that was going on, and gave his opinions and directions by his numerous letters. He also published just before the opening of the diet, "A remonstrance to the Spirituals assembled at the Diet of Augsburg." The object of this composition was to vindicate the position of the reformers, deny the false charges brought against them, and point out the abuses of the papacy as the ground of their persistent opposition.

On the 12th of May, Philip of Hesse arrived with an escort of one hundred and ninety horsemen, and just about the same time the Emperor reached Innsbruck, in the Tyrol, accompanied by his papal court of princes, cardinals, legates, and nobles of Germany, Spain, and Italy. We learn from Dr. Robertson, the able biographer of Charles, that he was deeply thoughtful when on his journey towards Augsburg. "He had many opportunities of observing the disposition of the Germans with regard to the points in dispute, and found their minds everywhere so much irritated and inflamed, as convinced him that nothing tending to severity or rigour ought to be attempted until all other measures proved ineffectual." It appears that he remained some considerable time at Innsbruck, for the purpose of studying the situation of Germany, and how he might best ensure the success of his schemes.

Meantime, large parties were finding their way to Augsburg from all quarters. "Princes, bishops, deputies, gentlemen, cavaliers, soldiers in rich uniforms, entered by every gate, and thronged the streets, the public inns, churches, and palaces. All that was most magnificent in Germany was about to be collected there. The critical circumstances in which the empire and Christendom were placed, the presence of Charles V. and his kindly manners, the love of novelty, of grand shows, and of lively emotions, tore the Germans from their homes."*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 4, p. 161.}

It is interesting to notice here, that at this moment, when the leading reformers were assembled at Augsburg, and the enemy close at hand, and while the storm was thus actually impending, the noble and generous Landgrave made one final effort to reconcile the two grand divisions of the reformers. But though Luther was absent, his spirit was there, and burnt with equal ardour among his disciples. They assured the Landgrave that they could never acknowledge as brothers those-who persisted obstinately in error; and that by an alliance with Zwinglians, they should expose themselves to all the hatred that attached to the latter, and thus endanger the success of the Reformation. The Landgrave could not understand how a single error, admitting it to be one, or an obscure question, should be a sufficient reason for exclusion from communion. But his reasoning with the Lutherans was all in vain. No fear of danger, no hope of success could induce them to have any fellowship with the Zwinglians.*

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 48.}

As the Emperor did not arrive till June 15th, and the city of Augsburg was crowded with inquirers, the Protestant princes resolved to place their preachers in the pulpits of some of the principal churches. This step was taken in expectation of the Emperor's opposition; but the Elector and the Landgrave thought the opportunity for confessing Christ was too favourable to be neglected. John instructed one of his theologians to preach daily with open doors in the church of the Dominicans, and of St. Catherine. Philip of Hesse appointed his chaplain Snepff to preach the gospel in the cathedral. Every day, through the mercy of God, salvation by grace without works of law, was preached in these places to immense and attentive crowds. The greater part of the population were already Lutherans.

This was a bold step, it was a grand means of converting those whom the Emperor had drawn together. The Catholics were astonished. They had expected to see the Protestants looking like criminals, and afraid to lift up their heads when the saviour of Catholicism was at the gates of the city. But what was to be done? The bishop of Augsburg ordered his preachers to ascend the pulpits and address the people. But the Romish priests were not good preachers - they never were. They understood better how to say mass than to preach the gospel. The Romanists were angry; they hastened to acquaint Charles of what was going on. He immediately sent orders from Innsbruck, that the offensive sermons should cease. The Elector replied, that it was impossible for him to impose silence on the word of God, or refuse himself the consolation of hearing it, nothing is proclaimed in the sermons but the glorious truth of God and never was it so necessary to us. We cannot therefore do without it.

The Protestants very naturally thought that such a reply would hasten the arrival of the Emperor. Melancthon was still at work on the confession. Timid and alarmed, he weighed every expression, softening it down, changing it with such minute anxiety, that his bodily strength was nearly exhausted. Luther thought all this superfluous, and enjoined Philip, under pain of anathema, to take measures for the preservation of "his little body," and not "to commit suicide for the love of God."

While the friends of the Reformation were preparing for the struggle at Augsburg, Luther was not idle at Coburg. Numerous letters and pamphlets issued from his stronghold, his second Wartburg. The castle stood on the summit of a hill, and his apartments were in the upper story, so that he sometimes dated his letters from the region of birds. Impatient at seeing the diet put off from day to day, he wrote to his friends that he had resolved to convoke one at Coburg. "We are already in full assembly," he says, in his own playful style, "you might here see kings, dukes, and other grandees, deliberating on the affairs of their kingdom, and with indefatigable voice, publishing their dogmas and decrees in the air. They dwell not in those caverns which you designate with the name of palaces. The heavens are their canopy; the leafy trees form a floor of a thousand colors, and their walls are the ends of the earth. They have a horror of all the unmeaning luxury of silk and gold; they ask neither coursers nor armour, and have all the same clothing. I have neither seen nor heard their Emperor, but if I can understand them, they have determined this year to make a pitiless war upon the most excellent fruits of the earth.... But enough of jesting - jesting, which is, however, necessary to dispel the gloomy thoughts that prey upon me." For many months he maintained a struggle, full of darkness and mental agony, such as he passed through at the Wartburg.

The Arrival of Charles at Augsburg

Gattinara, the Emperor's chancellor, died at Innsbruck. This was considered a great loss to the reformers. He was a man of good sense and moderation, and decidedly opposed to the sanguinary views of the papal party. He possessed great influence over the mind of the Emperor, and was the only man who dared to resist the pope. The timid Melancthon exclaimed on hearing of his death, "With him all the human hopes of the Protestants vanish."

Two days after Gattinara's death, Charles quitted Innsbruck. He arrived at Munich on the 10th of June, and at Augsburg on the 15th. He made his public entry into the city with extraordinary pomp. Never, according to the historians, had anything so magnificent been seen in the empire.* We only notice that which shows the firmness of the Protestants. The Elector, the princes, and their councillors left the city at three in the afternoon to meet Charles on his way. When he had come within fifty paces of the German princes, they all alighted. Perceiving the Emperor preparing to do the same, some of them advanced and begged him to remain on horseback; but Charles dismounted without hesitating, and approaching the princes with an amicable smile, shook hands with them cordially. The Roman legate remained proudly seated on his mule; but seeing the graciousness of Charles, he raised his hands and blessed the great personages thus assembled on the road. Immediately, the Emperor, the king, the princes, the Spaniards, Italians, and all who submitted to the pope, fell on their knees; but the Protestants, like Mordecai, bowed not. They remained standing in the midst of this prostrate crowd. How galling it must have been to the papal party! But Charles did not appear to notice it, though he must have understood well what it meant. After the usual formalities, the great procession moved on - two thousand imperial guards leading the way.

{*See a full account in D'Aubigne, vol. 4.}

The Emperor was now thirty years of age: of distinguished bearing and pleasing features; pale and delicate-looking with a weak voice, but winning manners, having the air of a courtier more than of a warrior. He marched straight to the cathedral as a humble worshipper, amidst the gorgeous parade of ecclesiastical wealth and display, and the military pride and warlike show of many nations and many crowned heads. When he reached the altar, he fell on his knees, and raised his hands to heaven, as if all he cared for were there and himself a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth. A gold embroidered cushion was offered him, but he refused it, and knelt on the bare stones of the church. All the assembly knelt with him; the Elector and the Landgrave alone remained standing. They required to be present officially, but they acted according to their faith in God and His word.

The Chiefs of the Augsburg Diet

Before the business of the diet commences, it may be well to place in order the principal leaders on both sides. On that of the papists there were the Emperor, his brother Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria and King of Hungary and Bohemia, the pope's legate Campeggio, two nuncios Pimpinella and Vergerio, Joachim Elector of Brandenburg, George Duke of Saxony, and William of Bavaria. These were all vehement Roman Catholics, and took an active part in the diet. Their principal divines were Faber, Eck, Cochlaeus, and de Wimpina.

On the side of the Protestants were John, Elector of Saxony, and his son, John Frederick; Philip Landgrave of Hesse, George Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach, Ernest, and Francis, Dukes of Lunenburg, Wolfgang Prince of Anhalt, Albert Count Mansfeld, and Count Philip of Hanover, besides the deputies of several imperial cities. Their chief divines were Melancthon, Justus, Jonas, Spalatin, Snepff, and Agricola. There were also several of the Swiss divines, and Bucer, Hedio, and Capito from Strasburg. *

{*History of the Church, by John Scott, M.A., vol. 1, p. 6.}

The firmness and principle of the Protestants were now to be thoroughly tested. The Emperor, on his arrival at Augsburg, repeated his order for the removal of the preachers. "We cannot," said the Landgrave, "deprive ourselves of the food of the word of God, and deny His gospel; and we entreat your majesty to withdraw your order, for our ministers preach only the pure word of God." Charles being much displeased and getting angry, said, in a positive tone, that he could not desist from his demand. "Your conscience," replied the Landgrave, "has no right to command ours." The Margrave, who had been silent until then, having received a sharp answer from Ferdinand, placed his hand on his neck, and said with deep emotion, "Rather would I instantly kneel down, and in the Emperor's presence, submit my neck to the executioner, than prove unfaithful to God, and receive or sanction antichristian error." Charles was moved and surprised, but replied with mildness and address, "that there was no intention to take any man's life." The Emperor then proposed that the preachers on both sides should be silenced, and that the selection of others during the diet should be left to him. The matter in debate was then deferred till another opportunity, but D'Aubigne and others speak as if the Protestant divines continued to preach, though, in all probability, with less provoking publicity.

Ferdinand, who had frequently tried his strength with the princes at former diets, set another snare for their feet, or rather for their necks. The day following that of the Emperor's entrance into Augsburg was the festival of the Holy Sacrament - Corpus Christi. The king was well aware that the Protestants had discontinued, as idolatrous, the ceremonies observed by the church on this occasion, and that their refusal to attend would irritate and inflame the mind of the Emperor. The snare was thus skilfully laid: of victory there can be no doubt, thought the legate. Besides, late in the evening, the Emperor sent for the Protestant princes, and signified to them his pleasure that they should attend him in the procession of the ensuing day. The princes begged to be excused. "Christ," they said, "did not institute this sacrament to be worshipped." Charles persevered in his demand, but gave them till the following morning to prepare their reply.

At the hour appointed the princes appeared before the Emperor. He repeated his demands, and they repeated their refusal. He even used entreaties, but to the same effect. Charles, who had not expected such resistance, was greatly agitated, and the legate endeavoured to exasperate him. The Margrave of Brandenburg again took speech in hand. "You know," he said, "how at the risk of our lives my ancestors and myself have supported the house of Austria, but in the present cause, which pertains to God, I am compelled to resist all impositions of this kind, whatever may be the consequence; since it is written, We ought to obey God rather than man. For the confession, therefore, of the doctrine, which I know to be the word of Christ, and eternal truth, I decline no danger - not even that of life itself, which, I hear, is threatened by some." The wisdom of God again appears, in making the wrath of man to praise Him. The Emperor, his brother, the legate, and others must hear the truth. The sacrament of the supper, the princes answered, was for spiritual blessing to Christians; "not to be paraded in pompous pageantry about the streets, as an object of adoration to the vulgar. They maintained that the festival had no authority in the word of God, and that they deplored any indecent degradation of so holy an institution."

It was already beyond the time appointed for the procession, and the Emperor and his party left the room, but the princes returned full of hope and joy to their palaces, and the festival was celebrated without them.

The defeat of the Emperor and the triumph of the Protestants were as gall and wormwood to the heart of the papal legate. But he had yet another net to spread and determined if possible, that they should be caught. The opening of the diet was fixed for the 20th of June, and the occasion was to be solemnised by the celebration of mass.

The Elector of Saxony was Grand Marshal of the empire and in virtue of his office, he was bound to carry the sword before the Emperor on such occasions. "Order him, therefore," said Campeggio to Charles, "to perform his duty at the mass of the Holy Ghost, which is to open the sittings." This, the legate thought, would not only be attending, but assisting at popish ceremonies. The Elector was requested to attend. His first impulse was to refuse, but on the representation of his theologians, that in this case, he was called to the discharge of a civil office, not to the performance of a religious duty, he consented to attend. But he was careful to inform the Emperor that in so doing he was making no religious concession.

By an overruling providence, he was once more to be a witness for the truth of God, and against the superstitions of popery, and that in its very citadel. The Grand Marshal of the empire, bearing the sword, standing near the altar, remained upright, together with his friend the Margrave, while all the rest of the congregation fell down on their knees at the elevation of the host. Two men dared to stand in that vast assembly at the moment of adoration, and that in the presence of a hostile power, both papal and imperial.

"These mere skirmishes," says one, "though followed by no personal consequences, are very deserving of the notice of the historian, not only as indicating the resolution with which the reformers approached the conflict, but as unquestionably productive of some effect on the mind of Charles. He was unacquainted with their principles and their character. It was a new thing for him to be resisted, and resisted by princes, and in his presence, on the ground of religious conscience." Whatever Charles may have thought or felt of this third resistance to his orders, he left the church immediately mass was over, entered his carriage, and repaired to the town-hall, where the sittings of the diet were to take place.

The Opening of the Diet of Augsburg

The great religious controversy, which commenced with an obscure humble monk on Saxony, now gathered around the avowed defender of the faith forty-two sovereign princes, besides many ambassadors, counts, nobles, bishops, deputies from the cities, etc., etc., forming a most illustrious assembly.

The diet was opened with a long speech, in the Emperor's name, read by the Count Palatine. It turned principally upon two subjects - war with the Turks, and the religious dissensions. Under their Sultan Solyman the Turks had taken Belgrade, conquered Rhodes, besieged Vienna, and threatened all Europe. Hence the necessity of adopting vigorous measures to arrest their progress. But the unhappy religious differences in Germany formed the important point in the Emperor's speech. It was observed that the language in his address was more hostile to the Protestants than his letters of convocation led them to expect. But Charles had been crowned since he wrote those letters; he had sworn to defend the pontiff and the Church of Rome, and his many private interviews with Clement at Bologna, would not improve his spirit towards the reformers. His tone was greatly changed. He referred to the old and oft-repeated story of the Diet of Worms. "He deplored the non-execution of that edict, and the inefficacy of all subsequent exertions for the same purpose during his absence in Spain. He was now returned to his German dominions, to institute a personal investigation, and to attend to the complaints and arguments of all parties, when they should be duly delivered to him in writing."

It was now proposed that the immediate attention of the diet should be directed to the subject of religion. The Emperor, therefore, gave notice to the Elector and his friends, that at the next session, to be held on the twenty-fourth, they should deliver to him a summary of their faith, of the ecclesiastical abuses of which they complained, and of the reformation which they demanded.

This arrangement gave the princes an interval of two days. They met at the Elector's on the twenty-third, to reconsider the Confession, or, as it was then called, The Apology; and also to commit their whole way unto the Lord. It was a time of much anxiety and prayer. The following day the diet met; but it was evidently planned by the papists that no opportunity should be given for the reading of the Apology. It was three o'clock in the afternoon before business commenced. Then much time was spent by Campeggio in presenting his credentials, and delivering his master's message. The Ambassadors of Austria and the adjoining provinces were also introduced, who occupied some time in representing the calamities which they had suffered from the Turks, and in urging the adoption of measures for the protection of these provinces. The length of these preliminary matters gave the Emperor a plausible pretext for objecting to hear the Apology read; he said it was too late. The legate, no doubt, thought he had gained his point; the Catholics, from the pope downwards, dreaded the public reading of the Protestants' Confession. The princes, however, were firm, and equally determined that it should be read aloud in a full diet, that it might have all possible publicity.

A violent struggle now took place between the two parties or rather, we should say between the powers of light and of darkness. The father of lies used every means to quench the light, to stifle this manifestation of the truth, if he could not accomplish the death of the witnesses. But a handful of faithful men, by the grace of God, nobly withstood the powers of darkness in the persons of the great Emperor, the cardinals, prelates, and catholic princes, and triumphed over them. "Deliver your Confession to the appointed officers," said Charles, "and rest assured that it shall be duly considered and answered." "Our honour is at stake," said the princes; "our souls are endangered; we are publicly accused, and we ought publicly to answer." On the continued resistance of Charles to hear the Confession, the princes became bolder and firmer. They assured the Emperor that they had no other motive in attending the diet than this, and that they must retain their papers in their own hands until they had permission to read them publicly.

Charles was surprised at the respectful but unyielding constancy of the Protestants, and saw that some concession was necessary. "Tomorrow," said the Emperor, "I will hear your summary - not in this hall, but in the chapel of the Palatine Palace." The princes agreed to this, and returned to their hotels, full of thankfulness to the Lord, while the legate and his friends now saw, to their sorrow, that the public reading of the Confession was inevitable.

The chapel where the Emperor agreed to hear the Apology was much smaller than the town-hall, and would contain only about two hundred persons. This was the enemy's device to exclude numbers from hearing it; but it was not very successful. All those whom it was most important to undeceive and enlighten on the principles of the Reformation were accommodated in the chapel, and the adjacent chambers were crowded with anxious listeners.

On the 25th of June, 1530 - a day of great interest in the history of the Reformation, of Christianity, and of mankind the Protestant chiefs stood before the Emperor. Christopher Beyer, the Elector's chancellor, held in his hand a German copy, and Pontanus, his late chancellor, held a Latin copy of the Confession. The Emperor wished the Latin copy to be read, but the Elector most respectfully reminded the Emperor that, as they were in Germany, they should be allowed to speak in German. The Emperor consented. The Elector and his companions proposed to stand during the reading, but the Emperor desired them to take their seats. The chancellor, Beyer, then read the Confession. It is said that he read slowly, clearly, distinctly, and with a voice so loud and sonorous, that he was heard in all the adjoining places. Two hours were occupied in reading all the papers, but the most profound attention prevailed during the whole time.

The two copies of this celebrated Confession, being duly signed by the princes and the deputies of the imperial cities, were handed to the Emperor's secretary by Pontanus, who said, in an audible voice, "With the grace of God, who will defend His own cause, this Confession will triumph over the gates of hell." Charles took the Latin copy for himself, and assured the Elector and his allies that he would carefully deliberate on its contents.

The effect produced by the public reading of this document was such as might have been expected. The less prejudiced portion of the listeners were astonished to find the doctrines of the Protestants so moderate, and "many eminently wise and prudent persons," says Seckendorf, "pronounced a favourable judgment of what they had heard, and declared they would not have missed hearing it for a great sum." Father Paul also observes, "that the archbishop of Salzburg, after hearing the Confession, told everyone that the reformation of the mass was needed, the liberty of meats proper, and the demand to be disburdened of so many commandments of men just: but that a poor monk should reform all was not to be tolerated - he would not have reform by means of a poor monk." Such is the pride and prejudice of the human heart. The archbishop might have remembered that God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; that no flesh should glory in His presence. But who is completely above the attractions of personal influence? It matters little to some what may be said, unless spoken by the teacher who is in favour for the time. This is a serious evil in the professing church, and has been the origin of many factions and schisms, besides, it takes multitudes off the ground of faith in the word of God and leads them to trust in the word of man. The great work of God's Spirit was acknowledged by the archbishop to be needed and good, but he rejected it because it was accomplished by means of a poor monk.

But many consciences were touched and many hearts were exercised by means of the Confession. The Lord caused the truth to be felt. For the moment it seemed to have triumphed. "All that the Lutherans have said is true," exclaimed the bishop of Augsburg, "we cannot deny it." The Duke of Bavaria, the great upholder of the papacy in Germany, after hearing the Confession, said to Eck; "Well, doctor, you had given me a very different idea of this doctrine and of this affair: but, after all, can you refute by sound reasons the Confession made by the Elector and his friends?" "No," replied the popish advocate, "by the writings of the apostles we cannot; but by the writings of the Fathers and the canons of councils we can." "I understand," replied the duke in a reproachful tone, "according to you, the Lutherans have their doctrine out of scripture, and we have our doctrine without scripture."

The joy of Luther was boundless when he heard of the Lord's goodness to his friends. "I thrill with joy," he wrote, "that my life is cast in an epoch in which Christ is publicly exalted by such illustrious confessors and in so glorious an assembly. Our adversaries thought they had succeeded to admiration when the preachers were silenced by an imperial prohibition; but they do not perceive that more is done by our public Confession than perhaps ten preachers could have accomplished. Truly Christ is not silent in the diet. The word of God is not bound. No: if it is prohibited in the pulpits, it shall be heard in the palaces of kings."

The day following the reading of the Confession, Charles convoked the states faithful to Rome. "What reply should be made to the Confession?" said he to the senate around him. Three different opinions were proposed by his advisers. 1. The men of the papacy - the pure churchmen - in accordance with the customs and views of the age, and with the violent counsels of the Romish church, had nothing to propose but immediate vengeance. "Let us not discuss our adversaries' reasons," said they, "but let us be content with executing the Edict of Worms against the Lutherans, and with constraining them by force of arms to give up their errors and return to the communion of the church of Rome." 2. Another party - called the men of the empire - proposed that the Confession should be submitted to the consideration of moderate and impartial men, and that the final decision should be given by the Emperor. 3. The men of tradition, so called, advised, that the Confession should first receive a public refutation, and that the Protestants should be compelled to conform to the established doctrines and ceremonies, until a council should decide otherwise. The last proposal was adopted with the Emperor's consent. Faber, Eck, and Cochlaeus, the old champions of Rome and the bitter enemies of the Reformation, were appointed to draw up a confutation of the Protestant Confession, and to have it ready for the diet within the period of six weeks. Meanwhile the secret emissaries of Rome were actively employed in Germany to practice her usual arts of bribery and corruption; which she frequently found to succeed after the defeat of her public exertions.

Since the Confession of Augsburg is the most celebrated document in the history of the Reformation, and has been adopted as a public standard of faith by the general body of Protestants, it may be well just to give the subjects of which it treats. The entire Confession is composed in twenty-eight articles, or chapters. In the first twenty-one is comprehended the profession of their faith. The other seven recount the errors and offensive abuses of the church of Rome, on account of which they had withdrawn from her communion.

The Articles of Faith

The Trinity - Original sin - The Person and work of Christ Justification - The Holy Spirit and the word of God - Works their necessity and acceptance - The Church - Unworthy members - Baptism - The Lord's supper - Repentance Confession - Sacraments - Ministering in the church Ceremonies - Civil institutions - Judgment and the future state - Free will - The causes of sin - Faith and good works Prayer and the invocation of saints.

The Articles Concerning Abuses

The Mass - The Communion in both kinds - Auricular Confession - The distinction of Meats and Traditions - The Marriage of Priests - Monastic vows - The Ecclesiastical Power.

In chapter 10 the Lutherans plainly assert that the real body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Eucharist, under the elements of the bread and wine, and distributed and received. In consequence of this plain assertion of the dogma of Consubstantiation, the Reformed, or Zwinglian party refused to subscribe the Augsburg Confession. Hence the imperial cities of Strasburg, Constance, Lindau, and Memmingen, offered a separate confession, called the Confession of the Four Cities - Confessio Tetrapolitana. It agreed substantially with the Augsburg Confession, except in regard to the corporeal presence; but the Emperor would not allow it to be read in public.*

{*Scott's Continuation of Milner, vol. 1, p. 30; Dean Waddington, vol. 3, p. 57; D'Aubigne, vol. 4; Faiths of the World, vol. 1, p. 258. For a Summary of the Whole Confession, see Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 139.}

The Perplexities of the Protestants

As six weeks must elapse before we can hear the refutation of the Confession, we may turn our attention to the proceedings of the contending parties during that period.

It was indeed a time of trial and suspense to the Protestants. They were perplexed and harassed on every side and in every way. Rome's system of promises and threatenings was immediately put in practice. Favours were offered and threatenings were applied to different individuals in a way most likely to gain their deceitful ends. Even the great Emperor condescended to a policy of meanness and cruelty towards the Elector of Saxony, and the Margrave of Brandenburg, with the view of separating them from the interests of reform. And the Landgrave of Hesse he endeavoured to seduce by the tempting offer of a crown. "What would you say if I elevated you to the regal dignity?" said Charles to Philip; "but," he added, "if you show yourself rebellious to my orders, then I shall behave as becomes a Roman Emperor."

On the Emperor's conduct at this moment, his biographer, Dr. Robertson, makes the following just observations. "From the divines, among whom his endeavours had been so unsuccessful, Charles turned to the princes. Nor did he find them, how desirous soever of accommodation, or willing to oblige the Emperor, more disposed to renounce their opinions. At that time, zeal for religion took possession of the minds of men, to a degree which can scarcely be conceived by those who live in an age when the passions excited by the first manifestation of the truth, and the first recovery of liberty, have in a great measure ceased to operate. This zeal was then of such strength as to overcome attachment to their political interests, which is commonly the predominant motive among princes. The Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, and other chiefs of the Protestants - though solicited separately by the Emperor, and allured by the promise or prospect of those advantages which it was known they were more solicitous to attain - refused, with a fortitude highly worthy of imitation, to abandon what they deemed the cause of God for the sake of any earthly acquisition."*

{*Robertson's Charles the Fifth, vol. 2, p. 383.}

The Sorrows and Fears of Melancthon

The Emperor having failed to draw away the leading princes from the Evangelical Confession, the legate and his deputies used every exertion to gain over some of the leading divines, especially Philip Melancthon. He had manifested great uneasiness at the secret conferences between the Emperor and the princes, and proposed to reduce the demands of the Confession, with the view of accomplishing a reconciliation. Flattered by the attentions of the legate, alarmed by the threats of war and the general appearance of affairs, he lost his balance for a moment and was driven to the very borders of recantation. Even D'Aubigne observes that "he thought it his duty to purchase peace at any cost, and resolved in consequence to descend in his propositions as low as possible." But we must bear in mind that the position of Melancthon was one of extreme difficulty. The responsibility of drawing up the Confession rested almost entirely with himself. It was no easy task to show sufficient causes for the secession of the reformers, and yet to avoid all unnecessary grounds of offence to the papists. He was thus exposed to the insults of his enemies, and to the reproaches of his friends. He had to deal with the princes on the one side, the theologians on the other, and the crafty emissaries of Rome.

The mild and tender spirit of Melancthon was in every way unfitted to contend against all these anxieties. He had neither the inflexible nature nor the religious enthusiasm, of his master Luther. Historians vie with each other in their praise of his great talents, his extensive learning, and his characteristic modesty. "Melancthon," says Dr. Robertson, "seldom suffered the rancour of controversy to envenom his style, even in writings purely polemical." But that which chiefly troubled his soul during those wearisome six weeks was an intense desire to make further concessions to conciliate the Roman Catholics, without the compromise of truth or the violation of conscience. The following letter to the legate shows Melancthon in his lowest state of despondency. Here he ventures to affirm that the Protestants were prepared to refuse no conditions on which peace and concord might be secured to them.

The Letters of Melancthon and Luther

"There is no doctrine," writes Melancthon to Campeggio, "in which we differ from the Roman Catholic Church; we venerate the universal authority of the Roman pontiff, and we are ready to obey him, provided he does not reject us, and that of his clemency, which he is accustomed to show towards all nations, he will kindly pardon or approve certain little things that it is no longer possible for us to change.... Now then, will you reject those who appear as suppliants before you? Will you pursue them with fire and sword? .... Alas! nothing draws upon us in Germany so much hatred, as the unshaken firmness with which we maintain the doctrines of the Roman church. But with the aid of God, we will remain faithful, even unto death, to Christ and to the Roman church, although you should reject us." Thus did Melancthon the head of the evangelical theologians, lower himself in the presence of Rome and of all mankind. But there was one who was watching over the interests of the Reformation, and overruling His servant's failure for the accomplishment of His own purposes and the glory of His holy name.

Melancthon had come down so low, as to entreat the Elector to demand only the two kinds in the Eucharist and the marriage of priests. Had these two things been granted, the Reformation, humanly speaking, would have been arrested, and a reconciliation with Rome accomplished. But the legate would grant nothing. The papists now accused the reformers of having dissembled their heresy in the Apology. Melancthon, filled with shame at the advances he had made to the legate, by whom he was deceived, found a place, we doubt not, of repentance and restoration.

Luther was still at Coburg, but he was constantly hearing of all that was going on, and constantly writing to his friends, especially to the Elector and Melancthon. His letters about this time breathe a very different spirit from those of Melancthon. But as Waddington justly observes, "The wild and lofty solitudes of Coburg were far more favourable to those exclusive spiritual impressions than the crowded halls and courts of Augsburg: and that perpetual contact with the weaknesses and disquietudes of friends, that unwearied wariness necessary against an ever-plotting enemy, would have shaken a firmer resolution than Melancthon's, and had Luther himself been as long exposed to those trials, they would have disturbed his equanimity, though they might not have broken his courage."*

{*Church History, vol. 3, p. 72.}

The following extracts from the letters of Luther during this crisis will give the reader some idea of his christian principles and the soundness of his judgment.

"It is your philosophy, my Philip, which vexes you so, not your theology.... Self is your greatest foe, and it is you who supply Satan with arms against you.... I, for my part, am not very much disturbed respecting our common cause. God has power to raise up the dead, He has power then to support His cause while falling, to restore it when fallen, to advance it while standing upright. If we are not worthy to be His instruments, let the work be done by others; but if we are not to find comfort and courage in His promises, who are there now on earth to whom they more properly pertain?"

Two days afterwards he wrote, "What displeases me in your letter is this, that you describe yourselves as having followed my authority in this affair. I do not choose to be, or to be said to be, your mover in this cause. If it be not also and equally your cause, I do not at least choose that it should be called mine and be imposed upon you. If the cause is mine alone, I alone will act in it.... Assuredly I am faithful to you, and present with you in my groans and prayers, and I would I were also present in body.... But it is in vain I write thus; because you, following the rules of your philosophy, persist in directing these things by reason, that is, in being rationally mad, and so you wear yourself to death, without perceiving that this cause is placed altogether beyond your reach and counsel."

Again on the 13th of July he writes to his son in the faith, "I think that you must be this time have had enough and more than enough of experience not to see, that Belial can by no devices be reconciled to Christ, and that there is not any hope of concord from a council, so far as doctrine is concerned.... Assuredly, I, for my part, will neither yield, nor suffer to be restored, so much as a hair's breadth. I will rather endure every extremity. Concede so much the less, as your adversaries require so much the more. God will not aid us until we are abandoned by all. If it were not tempting God, you would long ago have seen me at your side."

On the 21st he thus wrote to Justus Jonas: "I am delighted that Philip is beginning to find out by experience the character of Campeggio and the Italians. That philosophy of his believes nothing except from experience. I, for my part, would not trust the least, either to the Emperor's confessor, or to any other Italian. For my friend Cajetan was so fond of me, that he was ready to shed blood for me - to wit, my own blood. An Italian, when he is good, is of all men the best; but such is a prodigy as rare as a black swan.... I could wish to be the victim of this council, as Huss was the victim of that of Constance, which was the latest papal triumph."

From these extracts the reader will plainly see that Luther was not a party to the humiliating letter of Melancthon. It is also plain from all history that Luther's letters were used of God for strengthening and confirming his friends at Augsburg during that very critical interval. Though all the resources of papal diplomacy had been brought into action, the papists could not boast of a single apostate. The Elector had been especially tampered with by the Emperor, believing that, if he fell, the Confession would fall with him. But the Lord enabled his servant to triumph. "I must either renounce God or the world," said John. "Well! my choice is not doubtful. I fling myself into His arms, and let Him do with me what shall seem good to Him.... I desire to confess my Saviour." Noble resolution! Invincible warrior of light against the powers of darkness! No weapon of carnal temper could prevail against those which are spiritual and wielded by faith. Here the Elector and his friends were victorious. Would to God they had ever maintained this moral elevation! But alas! for the day when they stepped down to the world's arena of strife and conflict; then all was defeat and degradation. We shall see the mighty contrast between the two classes of weapons by-and-by.

39 Popish Refutation

Chapter 39

The Popish Refutation

On the 13th of July, or rather less than three weeks after the reading of the Protestant Confession, the popish divines presented their reply to the Emperor. It consisted of two hundred and eighty pages; but the style was so abusive and violent, that Charles would not allow it to be read in the diet. He was much displeased, and ordered another to be drawn up, shorter and more moderate. The document having been so altered as to suit the mind of the Emperor, he caused it to be read in full diet on the 3rd of August. The first copy was in accordance with the counsel of the pope, the second with the policy of Charles.

The Count-Palatine, after admitting, in a general way, that many abuses had crept into the church, and that the Emperor by no means defended them, delivered the following message: "That the Emperor found the articles of this Refutation orthodox, catholic, and conformable to the Gospels that he therefore required the Protestants to abandon their Confession, now refuted, and to adhere to all the articles that had just been set forth; that, if they refused, the Emperor would remember his office, and would know how to show himself the advocate and defender of the Roman Church."

These words could not be misunderstood by the Protestants. They breathed force and violence. This was the boasted clemency of the Emperor. Each party now stood on its own proper ground. The Protestants had taken their stand on the word of God; the Catholics on the word of man - the fathers, the popes, and the councils. These were, and are, and ever must be, the essential features of divine and human ground, of true religion and false. Once allow a lower, or another, standard than the truth of God, and where may the professor soon find himself? He may never reach Rome, but he is on the way to it. Those who maintain the pure truth of God as the only ground of faith and practice - of walk, worship, and testimony - may often have to lament their shortcomings. So much imperfection, mingled with the Christian's purest services; but the important question with every Christian should be, Can I allow, admit, or accept a lower standard than the mind of God as revealed in His word? "It is written," was the unfailing refuge of the Lord Himself in the day of His temptation; by which word He completely overcame the tempter. Christ is the Christian's one grand lesson, as the apostle says, "But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus." And the same apostle makes the rule of the Christian's life still more simple in that all comprehensive saying, "For to me to live is Christ." As if he had said, For me to live is to have Christ always before me as my object, my motive, my power; so that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in my life while here. Thus would the eye be single, the heart undivided, and the whole path full of light. Eph 4:20-21; Php 1:21; Gal 2:20; 2Co 4:10.

But we must return to our history.

The Refutation wholly rejected the doctrine of justification by faith, without the merit of good works. And with respect to the marriage of priests, the Catholics wondered that the Protestants could demand such a thing, seeing it had never been the practice for priests to marry since the days of the apostles. With regard to the mass, it was affirmed to be a sacrifice for the living and the dead; "that Daniel had prophesied long ago, that when Antichrist should come, the daily offering should cease; but as yet this had not come to pass in the Holy Catholic Church. Nevertheless, in those places where mass was despised, altars destroyed, and images burned, there that prophecy was fulfilled." Such were the enlightened arguments of the popish doctors. The moment they refer to scripture, they prove that they are blinded by the god of this world.

Such was the character of the Refutation which Charles invited the Protestant princes to accede to, out of deference to his own authority, as protector of the integrity of the Roman Church, and the religious unity of the empire.

A Copy of the Refutation Refused

John, the good Elector of Saxony, nobly answered for himself and his friends, "That they would do anything for peace which they could do with a safe conscience; and, if convicted of any error by scriptural authority, they would readily renounce it. But he desired a copy of the Refutation, that they might consider it at leisure, and show on what points it was not satisfactory to them; which would be in conformity with the fair and candid discussion to which they had been invited by the edict of convocation." This reasonable request, however, was refused. The Refutation was not published, and no copies of it were to be given to the Protestants. But they persisted in demanding a copy; and Charles agreed to give them one on the following conditions, namely, "that the Protestants should not reply; that they should speedily agree with the Emperor and submit to his decision that no transcript of it should be made, and that it should not be communicated to any other persons, as the Emperor would have no further debate." On such conditions they declined to receive it, and appealed to God and to His truth.

The firmness of the princes greatly irritated the Emperor. They thus refused all that he had proposed to them, even what he considered a favour, and he had utterly failed, with all the craft of Rome, either to gain or disunite them "Agitation, " says D'Aubigne, "anger, and affright were manifested on every bench of that august assembly. This reply of the evangelicals was war - was rebellion. Duke George of Saxony, the Princes of Bavaria, all the violent adherents of Rome, trembled with indignation. There was a sudden, an impetuous, movement, and an explosion of murmurs and hatred."*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 4, p. 277. John Scott, vol. 1, p. 53.}

Private Negotiations

So violent was the tumult produced in the diet by the Protestants rejecting the Emperor's proposals, that the Electors of Mayence and Brandenburg interposed, and requested the Emperor to accept their offices for the private and amicable arrangement of the differences. This being agreed to, mediators were appointed. They were six in number - all violent enemies of the Reformation - the Elector of Brandenburg, the Archbishop of Saltzburg, the Bishops of Strasburg, Wurtzburg, and Bamberg, and Duke George of Saxony. The affair was now placed on new ground, but no nearer a peaceful settlement. Had Charles been left to his own convictions, there would have been little difficulty in coming to peaceful terms with the reformers. He wanted both money and men from Germany, and could not see the policy of desolating the country, and exterminating his subjects because they refused obedience to the pope. Besides it is thought by some historians, that the nearer he contemplated the principles of the Reformers, the more did they strike a chord in his own spirit. And it is certain that his own sister, Mary, who was married to Christiern, King of Denmark, was a pious princess, and probably a Lutheran. Like Margaret with her brother Francis I., she often pleaded with her brother Charles on behalf of the Protestants.

But the Emperor was in a difficulty, he must play the politician. He was under the most solemn oath to defend the Roman Church and the pontifical dignity; he had therefore to assume a position that would be gratifying to the pope and his party. But as he was slow in his movements, messages were sent from Rome of the most violent character, and Campeggio redoubled his zeal. "Let the Emperor," said the legate, "conclude a treaty with the Catholic princes of Germany; and if these rebels equally insensible to threats and promises, obstinately persist in their diabolical course, then let his majesty employ fire and sword, let him take possession of all the property of the heretics and utterly eradicate these poisonous pests. Then let him appoint holy inquisitors, who shall go on the track of the remnant of reform, and proceed against them as in Spain against the Moors." Besides all this, the University of Wittemberg was to be excommunicated; the heretical books burned, and those who had studied there were to be declared unworthy the favour of pope or Emperor. "But first of all," said the crafty legate to Charles, "a sweeping confiscation is necessary. Even if your majesty confines yourself to the leaders of the party, you may extract from them a large sum of money, which is at all events indispensable to carry on the war with the Turks."*

{*Ranke's History of the Popes, vol. 1, p. 76.}

Such were the counsels of Rome, and by such the mediators were animated. In the first conference which was held, they addressed the Protestants after the style of their party - repeating to them the mildness of the Emperor, his desire to establish unity, and correct some abuses which had crept into the Christian church, in conjunction with the pope. "But," said the Elector of Brandenburg, "how contrary to the gospel are the sentiments you have adopted! Abandon then your errors, do not any longer remain separate from the church, and sign the Refutation without delay. If you refuse, then, through your fault, how many souls will be lost, how much bloodshed, what countries laid waste, what trouble in all the empire!" And, turning to the Elector of Saxony, he said in plain terms, "that if he did not renounce and anathematize the new-fangled doctrine which he had embraced, the Emperor would by force of arms deprive him of his dignities, his possessions, and his life; that certain ruin would fall upon his subjects, and even upon their wives and children." The prince, now old and infirm, was, for the moment, much affected by such outrageous language, but speedily recovered his wonted resolution. The princes remained firm and unanimous, though surrounded by the imperial guards, and the city almost in a state of siege.

Immediately after the first meeting, the Landgrave of Hesse left Augsburg. His sudden departure caused a good deal of uneasiness to the Emperor, the princes, and the whole diet. His intentions were unknown; but he left a note with his Chancellor for the Elector, in which he assured him of his unalterable constancy in the cause of the gospel, and his determination rather to shed the last drop of his blood than abandon it. He also exhorted his allies to permit themselves in no manner to be turned aside from the word of God. His ministers remained in the diet, instructed to give their vigorous support to the Protestant cause.*

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 84.}

Philip, who was a man of a quick and discerning mind probably saw that the dispute was now placed on more dangerous and more hopeless ground than ever, and, becoming weary of the insolence of the papists, longed for home. And as the result proved, his judgment was right. The whole of the month of August was spent in long conferences, but without effect. The differences did not admit of arrangement; toleration could not be thought of by the Church of Rome, nor could the unreserved submission which the Catholics demanded be thought of by the Protestants. At the end of the month, the controversy was referred back to the Emperor, in the same state in which the Electors had taken it out of his hands.

The Termination of the Diet

What divines and princes had failed to accomplish, the great Charles, no doubt, thought would soon be done by his personal influence. But he was bitterly disappointed. He probably never understood the real nature of the dispute, at least he could not understand the power of conscience enlightened by the word of God. It was a new word and a new power to the soldier. His only idea of arrangement was by concessions from both parties, or the entire submission of one. But he soon had to prove that conscience was beyond the reach of his personal influence and the power of his sword.

Finding private means, with all the ingenuity of papal diplomacy, utterly ineffectual, he sent for the chiefs of the Protestant party, on the 7th of September, to meet him in his audience chamber. Only his brother, and a select number of his confidential advisers, were present. The princes and deputies having been introduced, he expressed to them, by the mouth of the Count-Palatine, his surprise and disappointment at their conduct: - "That they, who were few in number should have introduced novelties, contrary to the ancient and most sacred custom of the universal church; should have framed to themselves a singular kind of religion, differing from what was professed by the Catholics, by himself, his brother, and all the princes and states of the empire; nay, utterly disagreeing with all the kings of the earth, and of their own ancestors. Being desirous, however, of peace, he would use his interest with the pope and the other princes to procure a general council, as soon as the place could be agreed upon, but still, on this condition, that they should, in the meantime, follow the same religion which he and the rest of the princes professed." In reply the Protestants most respectfully declined his terms. They "denied that they had stirred up new sects contrary to the holy scriptures; thanked him for the proposal of a council, but that nothing could compel them to re-establish in their churches the abuses which they had condemned in their Confession, nor, even were they so disposed, could they force them upon subjects now too enlightened to receive them."

Charles was embarrassed. He did not desire war, and yet how could he avoid it with honour? "He could not understand how a few princes, inconsiderable in power, should reject the conciliatory and condescending proposals he had made to them. It was their duty to abide by the decision of the majority, and not arrogantly to prefer their own opinion to that of the church, and their own wisdom to that of the pope and all the other princes of Christendom." He begged the Protestants to renew the conference, and hoped that the work of concord might be completed in other eight days. But they declined to renew the conference, as only occasioning useless delay; and on the 9th of September all direct communication between them and Charles terminated.

The Final Decree

The Emperor now ordered a committee to be chosen for framing a decree, and required the Elector of Saxony to stay four days longer, that he might hear the draft of it. The commissioners appointed for drawing up this decree, were the Electors of Mayence and Brandenburg, the Archbishop of Saltzburg, the Bishops of Strasburg and Spires, George, Duke of Saxony, William, Duke of Bavaria, and Henry, Duke of Brunswick - comprising all the most violent enemies of the Reformation.

On the 22nd of September the decree was read to the Protestants. It affirmed that the Confession of the Elector and his associates had been publicly heard, and confuted; that in the subsequent conferences those princes had retracted part of their new doctrines, but still retained the rest; that space was now allowed them, till the 15th of the ensuing April, to return to the doctrine of the church, at least till the decision of a council; and that they were to make known their final resolution before that day. Meanwhile they were commanded to live peaceably, to permit no changes in religion, to publish no new religious works, to prevent none of their subjects from returning to the ancient faith, and to join with the other princes of the empire to suppress the Anabaptists and Sacramentarians; assuring them that within six months the Emperor would send out his summons for a council, to commence the next year.

The tone of this resolution is extremely moderate, compared with the violent language which we have frequently heard from the papal party; but, whatever may have been their object, the Protestants replied with their usual firmness: - "That they could never admit that the Confession had been refuted; on the contrary, they were more than ever convinced that it was conformable to the word of God, which they would more fully have demonstrated, had a copy of the Refutation been allowed them." Here Pontanus presented to the diet an "Apology for the Confession," which had been composed in reply to the Refutation, so far at least as the substance of it could be recollected by those who heard it. After referring to their oft-repeated willingness to abandon every opinion not founded on scripture, and their most profound assurances of loyalty to the Emperor and the empire, they concluded by requesting a copy of the proposed decree, that they might make up their minds respecting it, before it passed.

On the morning of the 23rd of September, the Elector had his audience of leave; the Emperor then gave his hand to the princes, and allowed them to depart.

The diet continued its sittings for at least a month after the departure of the Protestant princes, chiefly engaged in providing supplies for the Turkish war. The "Recess," or final decree, of the diet was published on the 19th of November. After comparing several abstracts of this important document, we think Waddington's the clearest and simplest for modern readers; it is as follows: -

"Those who denied the corporeal presence were proscribed; the restoration of the ancient sacraments, rites, and ceremonies, in the places where they had been abolished, was commanded; so was the degradation of all married priests; nor were any other to be substituted for them, or instituted anywhere, without the approbation of the bishop. The images, which had been removed, were to be restored, the freedom of the will was to be asserted, and the opposite doctrine prohibited as insulting to God; so was the doctrine of justification by faith alone; obedience to the civil authorities was diligently inculcated; the preachers were commanded to exhort the people to the invocation of the saints, the observance of feasts and fasts, and attendance at mass the monks were to obey the rules of their order; the clergy to lead a reputable and decorous life. All who should attempt any change in doctrine or worship were made liable to personal inflictions. The destroyed monasteries were to be rebuilt, and their revenues restored to the monks. The decree was to be executed by military force, wherever it might not find voluntary obedience, and the States of the empire were to unite their forces with those of the Emperor for that purpose. The 'imperial chamber' was to pursue the rebels, and the neighbouring States to execute its sentences. The pope was to be solicited to convoke a council, within six months, to be assembled within a year from the date of convocation."

Two days after the public reading of the Recess, Charles V. quitted Augsburg. According to the opinion of D'Aubigne, he was greatly distressed in his mind, and knew not how to escape from the labyrinth in which he was caught. As the head of the State, he had interfered for the protection of the church, and the suppression of her enemies. But the opposite had been the result. "If he did not execute his threatenings, his dignity was compromised, and his authority rendered contemptible . . . . The ruler of two worlds had seen all his power baffled by a few Christians; and he who had entered the imperial city in triumph, now left it gloomy, silent, and dispirited. The mightiest power of the earth was broken against the power of God."*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 4, pp. 132-340; Waddington, vol. 3, pp. 43-113; Scott's Continuation, vol. 1, pp. 1-90; Du Pin, vol. 3, p. 206.}

Reflections on the Diet of Augsburg

No study is dry and barren, and no time is misspent, that leads us to a deeper knowledge of God, and to a more intimate acquaintance with His ways. To see His hand guiding and overruling the most complicated affairs of men for the accomplishment of His own gracious purposes, is truly refreshing and edifying to the soul. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Psa 107:43; Rom 8:28) Historians may expatiate with wonder and admiration on the results of such a contest - at the triumph of the few over the many, of the weak over the strong; but while we would seek to speak impartially of each combatant, we would have our eye especially on Him who is "Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

The reader must have observed that the pontifical ministers, guided by the subtle and experienced Campeggio, and countenanced by the Emperor, completely failed to gain any important advantage over the comparatively rude provincial princes. Like the waves breaking against the rock, their craft, duplicity, and evil counsel fell powerlessly on the Elector and his allies. By faith and constancy in the word of God, they stood firm amidst the angry passions and threatenings of their enemies. The pope, the Emperor, the legates, the princes, with all their experience in diplomacy, were utterly astonished to perceive how little they could accomplish. "Day after day," says a close observer, "their designs were penetrated, and their artifices eluded, by men of no pretensions to political skill, by Germans, natives of obscure provinces, subjects of petty princes, unpractised in the arts of courts, uninstructed even in the rudiments of intrigue. It was in vain that they taxed their ingenuity for some fresh expedient to succeed those that had failed - it was defeated by the same considerate and suspicious sagacity."

In reflecting on the proceedings of the Diet of Augsburg, we are forcibly reminded of the Diet of Worms, and of the great changes which had taken place during those nine years.

1. At that time Luther stood alone as the representative of the Reformation. Not a single prince had then declared for the new doctrines. At Augsburg all is changed. In place of a solitary monk, we see a numerous and well-organized body of princes, nobles, and theologians, and all of them men of weight and respectability. But Rome was not more humbled and perplexed by the latter than by the former. She could no more silence the single monk than the host of princes. Such was the manifest power of God in connection with His own word. Then she sent forth an edict similar to the Recess of Augsburg, but which she never was able to execute. What could be more convincing, as to the strength of the Reformation, and the weakness of her enemies!

2. The effects or results, of the Augsburg diet were evidently favourable to the Protestants. The one grand object of the papal party at this time was to crush and root out, by the sword of Charles, the very seeds of the Reformation from the soil of Germany, but in place of accomplishing its Satanic design, Protestantism was immensely strengthened, and delivered from gross misrepresentation. The calm, sober, respectful, and dignified behaviour of the princes led many of the papists to think more favourably of them, and ultimately to unite with them. "Among the most important converts were Hermann, Archbishop of Cologne, Frederic Count Palatine, first minister of the Emperor, and afterwards Elector; Eric, Duke of Brunswick; the Dukes of Mecklenburg and Pomerania; Joachim, Prince Elector of Brandenburg, who soon after succeeded his father; and George Ernest, son of Prince William of Hennenberg. Some free cities, hitherto papal or neutral, declared in favour of the Reformation; and even the Emperor and his brother carried away with them a less bigoted aversion for the faith and name of Protestant, than they had imbibed from the lessons of their ecclesiastical counsellors."

3. A considerable amount of truth was kept before the mind of that august assembly for nearly six months. This was an immense point gained. Many dignitaries both in church and state heard the pure truth of God for the first time. Besides the great Confession of the Lutheran churches, two others were presented to the diet. One was sent by Zwingle, the other was called the Tetrapolitan, deriving its name from having been signed by the deputies of the four imperial cities, Strasburg, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau. Bucer has the credit of drawing up the Tetrapolitan, as Melancthon has of the Lutheran Confession. Thus God had ordained that the truth should be established by three noble confessions. They were substantially the same as to the great fundamental truths of the word of God; they only differed on the doctrine of the real presence, or, concerning the manner in which Christ's body and blood are present in the Eucharist.

4. It would be easy to point out many blessed truths in the word of God which were not referred to in these confessions of faith, but our present object is to speak thankfully of what the Lord enabled these noble men to do, and with so much grace. The truth of God as to the church, the body of Christ, and her heavenly relations; the operations of the Holy Spirit; the difference between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of the law, the believer's oneness with an exalted Christ; the hope of the Lord's coming for His saints, and afterwards with His saints to reign in millennial glory, were comparatively, if not altogether, unknown to the Reformers. Nevertheless, they were faithful to what they knew and held it firmly in the face of every danger. It was by faith that the victory was won.

The history of the Reformation, morally viewed, is now accomplished. There will still be conferences and discussions; leagues, failures, and desolating wars; to say nothing of endless persecutions and martyrdoms; but the emancipating truth of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without the merit of good works has taken so deep a hold of the European mind, that neither the sword of the empire, the conspiracies of popery, nor the powers of hell, shall ever be able to extinguish it.

The Providence of God in the Affairs of Charles

There is nothing more interesting, in connection with the history of the Reformation, than the overruling hand of a divine providence in the midst of its enemies. The persons, the writings, and the testimony of God's chosen witnesses are guarded and protected by means the least thought of and the most remote. He only could convert the disputes of monarchs and the armies of the Turks into instruments for the furtherance of the gospel of peace. And this He did from the very commencement.

Immediately after the promulgation of the Edict of Worms against the Reformers, war commenced between the Emperor and Francis, king of France. "How desirous soever the Emperor might be to put a stop to Luther's progress," says Dr. Robertson, "he was often obliged, during the Diet at Worms, to turn his thoughts to matters still more interesting, and which demanded more immediate attention." The great object of his ambition at this time was to oppose the power of Francis. According to civil history both Charles and Francis laid claim to the duchy of Milan, which had been lost by Louis XII. after he had obtained it by conquest. "For a time Francis was successful; but, about the year 1525, Charles again brought it under his own power. Charles, on his part, laid claim to Artois as part of the Netherlands; while he had to defend Navarre, which his grandfather Ferdinand had taken from France. In addition to which, Francis asserted his right to the two Sicilies." Here we have an explanation of the Emperor's backwardness to commence hostilities against the Germans. But these quarrels and contests between the leading powers of Europe so occupied their attention for many years, that the Reformation was allowed to spread far and wide, and the oft-repeated threatenings of the papal powers were from time to time diverted and deferred.

Again, the severity of the Edict of Augsburg very naturally excited the most serious apprehensions of all the members of the Protestant body - of all Germany. There was only one expectation throughout the whole country, that of an immediate civil war - the destruction of the Protestants. Such was the outward aspect of affairs; but God had ordained otherwise. The heart, as well as the position of Charles, was unfavourable to persecution at that time. His familiar intercourse with the Protestants for nearly six months had taught him that they were not the dangerous fanatics or the domestic enemies he had understood them to be. He must have been greatly impressed with the fairness and justness of their cause, though he could not understand the civil and religious liberties which they claimed; yet he saw no reason why he should chastise them as rebels for the pleasure of the pope. Clement and all his Italian adherents were greatly disappointed that the Emperor had not assumed his proper character as defender of the church, and had not waged war against the incorrigible heretics. But in the providence of God this was impossible, even if Charles had been as blood-thirsty as Clement.

Despatches from the East greatly perplexed the Emperor, and relieved the Protestants. Solyman had again invaded Hungary at the head of three hundred thousand men, and for the avowed purpose of dethroning Ferdinand and placing another on his throne. Such intelligence drew the thoughts of the Emperor entirely away from Germany. But here we must leave him for a moment, and notice the position of the Protestants.

The League of Smalcald

Immediately after the dissolution of the Diet of Augsburg, and the issuing of its menacing decree, the Elector of Saxony and his associates proceeded to adopt such measures as appeared most likely to avert its effects, and to prepare without delay for the worst extremities. The dread of those calamities falling on the Reformers, oppressed the feeble mind of Melancthon, even to the borders of despair; but Luther was neither disconcerted nor dismayed. By his letters, written from his seclusion at Coburg, he comforted and encouraged his friends. Convinced that the work was the work of God, he exhorted the princes to stand firm on the ground of eternal truth, to trust in the protection of God, and to concede nothing of the pure gospel to the enemy.

As early as the month of November, 1530, the Landgrave of Hesse, more impetuous than the rest, and less averse to the doctrines of the Swiss reformers respecting the Lord's supper, entered into an alliance for six years with the cantons of Zurich, Berne, and Basle, and the city of Strasburg. On the 22nd of the following month, the Landgrave and the other Protestant leaders met at Smalcald, in Upper Saxony, and laid the foundation of the famous league known in history as the "Articles of Smalcald." The Landgrave, who had never desisted from his favorite object of union, took great pains to have the Swiss included in the Confederacy, but Luther and those who followed him absolutely refused to admit them.

The Protestant states of the empire, in virtue of this league, were now formed into one body for their mutual defence. But Luther, and some others who had written and spoken strongly against any confederacy, even for the defence of their cause, had great scruples as to the alliance. The jurists were consulted as well as the divines respecting its legality. The former affirmed "That there were certain cases in which the laws permitted resistance to the imperial authority; for, by virtue of the compact between the Emperor and the states, the Emperor engaged not to infringe upon the laws of the empire, and the rights and liberties of the Germanic Church. This compact the Emperor had violated; and therefore the states had a right to combine together against him." Luther replied, that he had not been aware of this, but, being now persuaded that it was so, he had no objections to make; for the gospel did in no respect invalidate civil institutions. Yet he could not approve of any offensive war. Here we may notice in passing that this is the first and fatal downward step of the Protestants. Through fear of the enemy they are taken off the ground of faith. Even Luther falls. In place of conscience and the word of God, they combine to repel force by force.

An affair, not connected with religion, happened about this time, which furnished the Protestants with a political ground of resistance to the Emperor. Charles, whose ambitious views enlarged in proportion to the increase of his power, expressed his desire that his brother Ferdinand should be elected King of the Romans. Accordingly the Emperor summoned the electoral college to meet at Cologne for this purpose. The Elector of Saxony refused to be present; but instructed his eldest son to appear there, and to "protest against the election as informal, illegal, contrary to the articles of the Golden Bull, and subversive of the liberties of the empire." But the protest was disregarded. The other electors whom Charles had been at great pains to gain, chose Ferdinand King of the Romans, who, in a few days after, was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle.

The Second Meeting at Smalcald

On the 29th of March, 1531, the Protestants opened their second assembly at Smalcald. The league, though at first limited to Protestant electors, princes, and states, was now extended so as to include those, who, whatever might be their religious sentiments, were opposed to the Emperor, and protested against the election of Ferdinand. They also took measures to bring the kings of France, England, and Denmark, as well as other princes and states, into the Confederacy. The Dukes of Bavaria, and others who had not been present at the first meeting, now joined the league. Regulations were made for the levying of supplies and soldiers to be ready in case of need.

Charles Seeks to Conciliate the Protestants

The warlike aspect of the confederates, and the position of Charles in his Turkish war, led him to court the friendship of the Protestants rather than to provoke hostilities with them He greatly needed their assistance, and sent his order for men and money. But they refused to furnish their contingent unless peace were secured to them. They reasonably replied, that it would not be wise in them to place their means of self-defence at the disposal of their persecutors, accordingly they required, that the hostile proceedings of the Imperial Chamber - the executive council of the empire - should be stopped. Charles was now in a great difficulty. To make this concession would amount to a virtual repeal of the decree of Augsburg.

After various consultations, the Elector of Mayence and the Prince Palatine interposed as mediators between the parties. They met at Schweinfurt, the following articles being proposed by the mediators: "That the Confession of Augsburg, without further innovation, or any connection with Zwinglians or Anabaptists, should be the doctrine of the Protestants until the decision of a council, that these should make no attempts to diffuse their tenets in the Catholic states, or to disturb the jurisdiction or ceremonies of the church; that they should furnish supplies for the Turkish war; that they should submit to the imperial decrees and tender their allegiance to the Emperor and to the King of the Romans." The Protestants objected, but chiefly on account of the elevation of Ferdinand. They refused to acknowledge the validity of his title, and on this ground they were supported by some of the Catholic princes and by the Kings of France and England.

The Peace of Ratisbon

The Protestants, now conscious of their own strength, replied to the mediators, "That the Emperor should proclaim forthwith a general religious peace; that the two parties should be prohibited from offering any sort of insult or molestation to each other; that the Imperial Chamber should be instructed to suspend the execution of the sentences pronounced on religious matters. If these should be accorded, they promised on their side not in any way to innovate into their confession, not to interfere with the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in places where it was still established; to render the most zealous obedience to the Emperor; and to furnish all possible supplies for the Turkish war." After some discussion, when no agreement seemed possible, the Conference was adjourned to the 3rd of June, 1532, at Nuremberg.

Meanwhile the Turks were advancing nearer to Austria, and the heart of the empire was in danger. Such was the state of things when the Conference resumed its negotiations at the time appointed. But the discussions and difficulties were speedily disposed of: "The arguments of the diplomatists were silenced by the march of Solyman; and the conditions proposed by the Protestants were accepted. The Emperor was awaiting the result at Ratisbon, and it is recorded that, when the treaty was at length brought to him, without so much as examining the document, he affixed his signature." August 2, 1532.

The Opinions of Historians

It may be interesting to notice here, how uniformly historians attribute this great triumph of the Reformers to the direct intervention of God. "It is indeed true," says Waddington, "that it was not by the physical power of the Protestants, still less by the moral authority of their doctrine, but solely by that stronger providential dispensation, which converted the very arms of the infidel into an instrument for the revival of the gospel. Still it was an advantage of most essential importance. The edicts of Worms and Augsburg were now virtually suspended; and the interval of their suspension was indefinite." Scultetus calls upon us to admire "the providence of God, which made the Turkish Sultan the great instrument of annulling, or at least suspending the execution of the decrees of Augsburg against the Reformation." Melancthon says, "By the tacit commandment of God, the Emperor was called away from his designs against the Germans by the Turkish war. The dogs lick the sores of Lazarus. The Turk mitigates the edict of Augsburg. No race of men were ever in greater peril than we were: no party was ever subjected to animosities more bitter than ourselves. There was no aid but from God."

And the testimony of the civil historian, Dr. Robertson, is even more weighty than that of the ecclesiastical historians. He says, "In this treaty it was stipulated, that universal peace be established in Germany, until the meeting of a general council, the convocation of which within six months the Emperor shall endeavour to procure: that no person shall be molested on account of religion; that a stop shall be put to all processes begun by the Imperial Chamber against Protestants, and the sentences already passed to their detriment shall be declared void. On their part, the Protestants engaged to assist the Emperor with all their forces in resisting the invasion of the Turks. Thus by their firmness in adhering to their principles, by the unanimity with which they urged all their claims, and by their dexterity in availing themselves of the Emperor's situation, the Protestants obtained terms which amounted almost to a toleration of their religion: all the concessions were made by Charles none by them; even the favorite point of their approving his brother's election was not mentioned; and the Protestants of Germany, who had hitherto been viewed only as a religious sect, came henceforth to be considered as a political body of no small consequence."*

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 160. John Scott, vol. 1, p. 112. Robertson's Reign of Charles V., vol. 5, p. 391.}

How far their attainment of political importance was conducive to the interests of Christianity, is another question, and for our own opinion on that subject we must refer the reader to our exposition of the epistle to Sardis at the beginning of the volume. The politician and the theologian should never be united in the same person. The Christian's citizenship is in heaven, the principle of his position here is strangership - that of a pilgrim and a stranger. (1Pe 2:11; Php 3:20)

The princes nobly redeemed their pledge to Charles. They brought forces into the field which exceeded the numbers expected. The Imperial army, by the fresh levies, was increased to ninety thousand well disciplined foot, and thirty thousand horse, besides a prodigious swarm of irregulars. The Emperor took the command in person; and mankind waited in suspense the issue of a decisive battle between the two greatest monarchs in the world. More than half a million men, of nearly all nations, looked each other in the face for a time, and closely watched each other's movements: but what were the results? The great Sultan, Solyman the Magnificent, with three hundred thousand men, seemed to have been deprived of energy, of decision, or to have been intimidated by this display of power, and quickly withdrew his formidable army without coming to a battle. It is remarkable, that in such a martial age, this was the first time that Charles, who had already carried on such extensive wars, and gained so many victories, appeared at the head of his troops. "In this first essay of his arms," says his able biographer, "to have opposed such a leader as Solyman was no small honour, to have compelled him to retreat, merited very considerable praise."

But who, we think, can fail to see a higher hand in this bloodless victory than the young Emperor's? When the Turk had terrified Charles into submission by his appearance, his work was done. The God who rules over all sent him home The empire must still be saved for the sake of the Reformation. Solyman had made great preparations for this campaign, but, unaccountable to all, save to faith, it ended without any memorable event. Charles returned to Spain, to superintend his vast military preparations. The Reformers returned to their peaceful and christian occupations, the church had rest from persecution, and the period of her tranquillity was prolonged for well nigh fifteen years.

The Reformation having now gained, through the Lord's watchful care, a great triumph and a solid footing in Germany, we may turn for a little and examine the rise and progress of the reform movement in Switzerland.

40 Switzerland

Chapter 40

The Reformation in Switzerland

In studying the history of the Reformation in Germany, and that of Switzerland, the heart is greatly refreshed in observing the perfect unity of the Spirit's operations in both countries. Nationally, politically, and socially, they were widely different. The great monarchical system of Germany, and the thirteen small republics of Switzerland were contrasts. In the former, the Reformation had to struggle with the imperial power, in the latter with the democratic. But, as if by concert, the great work of God's Spirit commenced in both places about the same time, and with precisely the same character of truth. This was clearly of God, and demonstrates the divine origin of the Reformation. "I began to preach the gospel," says Zwingle, "in the year of grace, 1516, that is to say, at a time when Luther's name had never been heard in this country. It is not from Luther that I learnt the doctrine of Christ, but from the word of God. If Luther preaches Christ, he does what I am doing; and that is all."

D'Aubigné is the only historian - so far as we know - who takes particular notice of this interesting fact in its divine aspect. And as he has now gone to his rest and his reward, it gives us unfeigned pleasure to bear testimony to the piety of the historian who could thus walk with God in the midst of his abundant labours. The ways of God in government as well as in grace are truly edifying if we study them in communion with Himself. But the most spiritual subjects will prove barren if He fills not our thoughts. Thus D'Aubigne writes, "Zwingle had no communication with Luther. There was, no doubt, a connecting link between these two men; but we must not look for it on earth; it was above. He who from heaven gave the truth to Luther, gave it to Zwingle also. Their bond of union was God."*

{*Vol. 2, p. 382.}

But although the Reformation in both places - and in other states of Europe - derived a striking unity from the One Spirit, the national features of each are not difficult to discern! In Germany the person of Luther, as of lofty stature, towers above all his fellow-reformers. He is seen, he is heard, he is prominent, everywhere and on all occasions. Nothing can be done, nothing can be settled without him. He is the acknowledged head of a party. But in Switzerland there was no such leader. It pleased God to reveal His truth, and to exercise many minds in different cantons at the same time. A number of noble names, resembling a republican senate, stood forth as champions of the faith; Justus, Wittenbach, Zwingle, Leo Juda, Capito, Haller, Farel, OEcolampadius, Oswald Myconius, and Calvin. But though none of them assumed the command, one name rises above all the others Ulric Zwingle.

As the great branch of the professing church, commonly called "The Reformed Churches," originated in the Swiss Reformation, it demands a careful and distinct notice, though comparatively brief. The church histories best known in the families of this country are Mosheim's and Milner's; but in neither is there any history of the Reformation in Switzerland. Mosheim, a Lutheran divine, almost ignores it: Milner merely remarks on some of the leading men in passing. But before we attempt to trace the history of the Reformation, it may be well to renew our acquaintance with the religious condition of Switzerland previously to that great moral revolution.

Christianity Introduced into Switzerland

Christianity was first introduced into that country of mountains and lakes, in the seventh century, by St. Gall, a native of Ireland, and a follower of the great abbot Columbanus.* After the death of Gallus or St. Gall, his disciples and other missionaries from Ireland continued to labour for the conversion of the Swiss, for the founding of monasteries, and for the propagation of the gospel. A Helvetian church was formed, strictly Romanist in its character, and yielding submission to papal power. About the middle of the eleventh century two hermits found their way from St. Gall to a distant valley on the lake of Zurich. By degrees the valley was peopled around their cells, and on an elevation of two thousand feet above the level of the lake, a church was built, and afterwards the village of Wildhaus. The bailiff or magistrate of this parish, about the end of the fifteenth century, was a man named Zwingle, the father of our Reformer. Thus we can trace the light of truth from Ireland to the continent, indeed throughout Europe and throughout Christendom.

{*See Short Papers, vol. 1, p. 499.}

The position of Switzerland, in the bosom of its own mountains, in the very heart of Europe, has been compared to a military school, through which the surrounding nations learnt to perfect themselves in the art of war. The reputation of the Swiss soldiers for courage and endurance, led to the ruinous habit of enlisting extensively in the service of foreign countries. Though strongly attached to their native mountains and their native liberty, the charms of foreign gold induced many to quit their Alpine pastures for the service of strangers.

This practice became a great national evil. Husbandry was neglected, families were bereaved of father and son, thousands who left never returned, and those who did were demoralized, so that the ancient simplicity of the people was gradually disappearing. But sad to relate - though recorded by all chroniclers that we know - the great foster-father of this national calamity was the Roman Pontiff. In his contentions with other nations he frequently found it necessary to solicit that help from the cantons, which his own subjects, either from a want of courage or fidelity, refused to give him. The apostolic treasury supplied the sinews of war, and the poor but brave Swiss often determined the fortunes of the pope on the battle-field of northern Italy. The priests, stationed in various parts of Switzerland, were instructed to prepare the people for this form of obedience to the holy father. "The deluded mountaineers were taught, that it was a holy thing to gird their loins for battle, and a glorious martyrdom to fall in the service of the church." But such was the growing venality of the Swiss, that the highest bidders for their services were sure to obtain them: this led the pope to great liberality in the distribution of indulgences and benefices; which naturally resulted in the moral corruption and degradation of both priests and people. From this time, the intense reverence which the Swiss church had so long entertained for the See of Rome, rapidly diminished.

"At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the church of Rome had attained such a height of grandeur and power, that it seemed impossible that it should be disturbed. Especially in Switzerland any change of religion appeared hopeless, on account both of the strict alliance which existed with the pope, and of the extreme ignorance and corruption which prevailed. But it is in such circumstances that God is pleased to work, that all the glory may be given to Him. His righteousness could not permit Him longer to tolerate the frightful excess of disorder which reigned in the churches of Europe.... But God must have His true worshippers, who shall worship Him in spirit and in truth."*

{*Abraham Ruchat, of Lausanne, as quoted by Scott, vol. 2, p. 328; Gardner's Faiths of the World, vol. 2, p. 19.}

Such was the state of things in general as the new day began to dawn in the valleys of the Alps. Ulric Zwingle has been styled the apostle of the Swiss Reformation. He was no doubt the chief instrument in commencing and carrying on this great work, though some had been in the field before him. He was possessed of a strong and clear judgment, an ardent lover of the truth, earnest in its propagation, and animated with a noble zeal for the glory of God and the good of His church. In many things he was mistaken, as the best of the Lord's servants may be, but he is well-fitted to rank with such men as Luther and Calvin, or the most illustrious names in ecclesiastical history.

The Birth and Education of Zwingle

The family of the Zwingles was ancient, respectable, and at this time in great esteem in the county of Tockenburg - a small district of lofty mountains and narrow valleys, covered with wood and pasturage. Ulric was the third son; he had five brothers and a sister. He was born on New Year's day, 1484, in an obscure village on the lake of Zurich, which, from its mountainous situation, was called Wildhaus, or the Wildhouse.

The father and sons were chiefly engaged with their flocks and herds - the chief riches of the district. And beyond the narrow sphere of Tockenburg, Ulric might never have stepped, had not the promising dispositions of his childhood determined his father to consecrate him to the church. Before he was ten years of age he was placed under the care of his uncle, the dean of Wesen. His uncle gave such an account of his abilities to his father, that with his sanction and assistance he studied successfully at Basle, Berne, Vienna, and then again at Basle. From the remarkable progress which he made in his studies and the promising dispositions he displayed, he was a great favourite with all his masters. While at Berne, the Dominicans had remarked the beautiful voice of the young mountaineer, and hearing of his precocious understanding, prevailed upon him to come and reside in their convent. When the father heard of this step, he strongly expressed his disapproval and ordered his son forthwith to leave Berne and proceed to Vienna. The unsuspecting youth thus escaped from those monastic walls within which Luther suffered so much, and from the moral effects of which he suffered all his life.

During Zwingle's second visit to Basle, he studied theology under the justly celebrated Thomas Wittenbach. From this able theologian, who did not conceal from his pupils the errors of the church of Rome, Zwingle seems to have learnt, what Luther about the same time learnt from Staupitz, the great doctrine of justification by faith. "The hour is not far distant," said Wittenbach, "in which the scholastic theology will be set aside, and the old doctrines of the church revived." He assured those earnest young men who flocked around him "that the death of Christ was the only ransom for their souls." The warm heart of Zwingle drank in the truth, and like his master and some of his fellow-students eagerly rushed into the new field of conflict.*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 2, p. 399; Waddington, vol. 2, p. 268; The Faiths of the World, vol. 2, p. 20.}

Here too, he formed some of his warmest friendships which continued through life and which death itself could not destroy. Leo Juda, the son of an Alsatian priest, and Capito, were now the intimate friends of Ulric. Like the mountaineers in general, and like his compeer, Luther Zwingle was a musician, and could play on several instruments: the lute, harp, violin, flute, dulcimer, and hunting horn, were familiar to him, and were often applied to in hours of heaviness, or as a relaxation from severer studies.

Zwingle, Pastor of Glaris

After having gone through his course of theology, and taken the degree of Master of Arts, he was chosen - the same year, A.D. 1506 - by the community of Glaris to be their pastor. There he remained for ten years, faithfully discharging his professional duties while diligently studying the Holy Scriptures. During this time he seems to have acquired in knowledge and experience the needed preparation for his future services to the Lord and to His church. "A most interesting manuscript," says one of his biographers, "still exists in the library of Zurich - a copy of all St. Paul's epistles in the original Greek, with numerous annotations from the principal fathers, which Zwingle wrote with his own hand, and then committed entire to memory." At the end of the MS. is written, "copied by Ulric Zwingle, 1514." He also studied the Latin classics, and collected from the writings of the fathers - especially from Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom - the doctrines and practices of the early church. "I study the doctors," he said, "not as authorities, but with the same end as when we ask a friend: How do you understand this passage?" The writings of Wycliffe and Huss he also knew, but like all students of his age, he devoured the writings of Erasmus as they successively appeared.

From this time, the ecclesiastical abuses which Rome had introduced became obvious to his mind; and, while expounding the scriptures from the pulpit, he faithfully and fearlessly exposed the innovations and corruptions of the Romish system. This was the dawn of the Reformation in Switzerland. Zwingle was maintaining the absolute authority of the truth of God and denouncing the falsehoods of Rome.

While thus engaged, he was obliged to leave his more sacred duties, and accompany the confederate army on an Italian expedition. Threatened by Francis I. who vowed to avenge in Italy the honour of the French name, the pope, in great consternation, entreated the cantons to come to his aid. It was then the custom in Switzerland for the Landamman, or chief magistrate of the canton, and the pastor of the parish to take the field with the troops on such campaigns. In the years 1513 and 1515, Zwingle was compelled to follow the banner of his parish to the plains of Italy. On the former of these occasions, the French were defeated by the confederates at Novara; and monks and priests proclaimed from their pulpits that the Swiss were the people of God, who avenged the bride of the Lord on her enemies. But, on the latter occasion he witnessed a signal defeat of his countrymen on the fatal field of Marignan. There, says history, the flower of the Helvetian youth perished. And Zwingle, who had been unable to prevent the great disaster, and overcome by his national feelings and patriotism, seized a sword and threw himself into the midst of danger. This was natural, and in those times it was considered noble, but it was not christian. He forgot for the moment that as a minister of Christ he should fight only with the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal," says the apostle, "but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2Co 10:4-5)

Zwingle now felt more keenly than ever the necessity of reform in both church and state. He had seen the consequences of the practice long prevalent among his people, of letting out their soldiers to fight the battles of other nations, and to settle quarrels which did not belong to them. The sight of so many of his brave countrymen being slaughtered beyond the Alps in defence of a faithless and ambitious pope, filled him with indignation. He raised his voice against the practice; and, through his means, it was given up by several of the cantons. He also saw when in Italy, as Luther had seen, the pride and luxury of the prelates, the avarice and ignorance of the priests, and the licentiousness and dissipation of the monks. His future course was decided. He ascended the pulpit with a holier determination to preach the word of God more clearly, more fully, comparing scripture with scripture; and soon a fresh spirit of inquiry began to breathe on the mountains and in the valleys of Switzerland.

The question of priority between Zwingle and his Saxon ally, as to their aggressions on the papacy, has been raised by some historians. Both seem to have received the truth about the same time, especially the knowledge of salvation by grace through faith alone; but as a Reformer, Luther evidently was first in the field. When Zwingle was preaching the gospel in a comparatively quiet way, Luther was publicly raising the standard of truth against the dominion of error, and causing his voice to be heard in all parts of Christendom.

Zwingle at Einsidlen

In the autumn of 1516, Zwingle received an invitation from the governors of the Benedictine monastery of Einsidlen, in the canton of Schweitz, to be pastor and preacher in the church of the Virgo Eremitana - "Our Lady of the Hermitage." The hand of the Lord in bringing his servant to Einsidlen is very manifest. It was the grand resort of superstition for all Switzerland, for nearly all Christendom. "It may be called," says Ruchat, "the Ephesian Diana, or the Loretto of Switzerland." Legends of the most marvellous kind crowd its early history. Here the great Reformer was to have a nearer view of the idolatrous worship of Rome. The great object of attraction was an image of the virgin, carefully preserved in the monastery, and which had, it was said, the power of working miracles. Crowds of pilgrims flocked to Einsidlen from every part of Christendom, to pay their devotions and present their offerings.

Over the gate of this abbey the blasphemous inscription was engraver on a tablet, and supported by the figure of an angel, "Here a plenary remission of sins may be obtained." This delusion brought pilgrims from all quarters to merit this grace by their pilgrimage, at the festival of the virgin. "The church, the abbey, and all the valley were filled with her devout worshippers. But it was particularly at the great feast of 'the consecration of the angels' that the crowd thronged the Hermitage. Many thousand individuals of both sexes climbed in long files the slopes of the mountain leading to the oratory, singing hymns or counting their beads. Such was then, and is even to the present day, the scenes at 'our Lady of the Hermitage.' It is computed that not less than a hundred thousand poor deluded votaries visit this place yearly. Such is popery, even in the present hour, where it is dominant; and that in a free country, surrounded by an enlightened population, and within sight of Protestant establishments." *

{*Scott, vol. 2, p. 344. D'Aubigne, vol. 2, p. 426.}

After what we have said of the extraordinary sanctity of this monastery, the reader may be surprised to find that the abbot, Conrad of Rechburg, was the most celebrated huntsman and breeder of horses in the whole country. He was greatly averse to superstition, therefore he preferred his stud and the field to the Hermitage. When urged by the visitors of the convent on one occasion to celebrate the sacrifice of the mass, he replied, "If Jesus Christ is really present in the host, I am unworthy to look upon Him, much less to offer Him in sacrifice to the Father; and, if He is not there present, woe unto me if I present bread to the people as the object of their worship instead of God.... I can only cry with David, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness,' . . . 'and enter not into judgment with Thy servant. 'I desire to know nothing more."

The manager of the temporalities of the abbey, Baron Geroldseck, was a man of another order. He is represented as mild in character, sincere in piety, and a zealous patron of learning. His favorite habit was to invite learned men to his convent, and, influenced by the fame of Zwingle's learning and piety, he had invited him to accept the office of minister of the abbey church. In this seclusion the young Reformer enjoyed rest, leisure, the advantages of a library, and congenial friends. The eloquence of the new preacher and the character of the governor, drew a number of learned men to Einsidlen. He soon acquired the confidence of the admirers of Reuchlin and Erasmus, and contracted some of his most intimate and tender friendships. On this page of his history we find the names of Francis Zingk, Michael Sander, John OExlin, Capito and Hedio - men, whose names are famous in the history of the Reformation. But although he greatly enjoyed reading the scriptures, the fathers, Reuchlin and Erasmus, with these intelligent men, his real work was Reformation, and in as far as he then understood it, he honestly pursued it.

Zwingle and Reform at Einsidlen

He began with the governor. "Study the scriptures," said Zwingle to Geroldseck: "a time may soon come when Christians will not set great store either by St. Jerome or any other doctor, but solely by the word of God." He acted on the prophetic words of the Reformer himself, and also permitted the nuns in the convent to read the Bible in the vulgar tongue. And so great was his esteem and affection for Zwingle that he followed him to Zurich, and died with him on the field of Cappel, October 11, 1531. The hunting abbot, too, appears to have profited by the ministrations of the new preacher. He banished almost all superstitious observances from his abbey and died in 1526, confessing that he had confidence in nothing but the mercy of God. Zwingle's faithful and energetic preaching drew crowds to the abbey church, and made a great impression on their minds. He endeavoured to lead them away from the worship of images to faith in Christ, from human inventions and traditions to the pure doctrine of the gospel. "Seek the pardon of your sins," he cried, "not from the blessed Virgin, but in the merits and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ."

What Luther learnt from his visit to Rome, Zwingle learnt from his residence at Einsidlen. His whole soul was stirred within him when he saw thousands of pilgrims from the most distant parts of Europe, coming there to merit the forgiveness of their sins by presenting their offerings to the patroness of the Hermitage. He did not hesitate between his conscience and his interests, or the interests of the monastery, but boldly raised his voice against the delusion. He struck at the very root of the evil, by proclaiming a free salvation through faith in Christ, without the merit of pilgrimages, indulgences, vows and penances. He appealed to the multitudes on two grand fundamental truths more especially - that God is the source of salvation, and that He is the same everywhere. "Do not imagine," said he from the pulpit, "that God is in this temple more than in any other part of creation. He is as ready to hear prayers at your own homes as at Einsidlen. Can long pilgrimages, offerings, images, the invocation of the Virgin, or of the saints, secure for you the grace of God? What avails the multitude of words with which we embody our prayers? What efficacy has a glossy cowl, a smooth shorn head, a long and flowing robe, or gold embroidered slippers? .... God looks on the heart, but, alas! our hearts are far from Him."

At the same time he preached the doctrine of reconciliation through faith in the precious sacrifice of Christ once offered on Calvary. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2Co 5:20-21)

The Effect of Zwingle's Preaching

Admiring friends might have given a somewhat embellished representation of Zwingle's discourses, but the effects produced, according to the record of the times, plainly prove his great power over the multitudes of pilgrims. "Language so unexpected produced impressions difficult to describe. Admiration and indignation were painted alternately on every face while Zwingle was preaching; and, when at length the orator had concluded his discourse, a confused murmur betrayed the deep emotions he had excited. Their expression was restrained at first by the holiness of the place; but, as soon as they could be freely vented, some, guided by prejudice or personal interest, declared themselves against this new doctrine; others felt a fresh light breaking in upon them, and applauded what they heard with transport.... Many," it is said, "were brought to Jesus, who was earnestly preached to them as the only Saviour of the lost; and many carried back with them the tapers and offerings which they had brought to present to the Virgin. The grand motto of the preacher to the pilgrims - 'Christ alone saves, and He saves everywhere,' was remembered by many, and carried to their homes. Often did whole bands, amazed at these reports, turn back without completing their pilgrimage, and Mary's worshippers diminished in number daily."*

{*Scott, vol. 2, p. 348. D'Aubigne, vol. 2, p. 428.}

But although Zwingle thus uncompromisingly attacked the superstitions of the crowd that surrounded him, his orthodoxy was still unsuspected by the papal party. They saw the power which such a man would have in a republican state, and their plan was to gain him; they had gained Erasmus by pensions and honours, why not Zwingle? Besides, the court of Rome was always politic enough to allow considerable latitude to eminent men, provided they recognized the supremacy of the pontiff. Just about this time - 1518 - Zwingle was flattered by the avowed estimation in which he was held by Pope Leo X., who sent him a diploma, constituting him a chaplain of the Holy See; and for two years after this he received his pension from Rome. Both Luther and Zwingle were long in learning that the Church of Rome could not be reformed, that it was corrupt, root and branch, and that the voice of God to His people always is, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." When the Christian finds himself in a wrong position ecclesiastically, the first thing he has to do is to leave it, trusting the Lord for further light and future guidance. (Rev 18:4; Isa 1:16-17; Rom 12:9)

Zwingle Removes to Zurich

After remaining nearly three years in Einsidlen, Zwingle received an invitation from the provost and canons of the cathedral church of Zurich to become their pastor and preacher. During his residence at Einsidlen he had become known to many persons of great consideration, and the number of his friends had greatly increased. But he had no friend more devoted than Oswald Myconius, master of the public school at Zurich, and in high esteem there for his piety, learning, and intelligence. In answer to this call, and the earnest entreaties of Myconius, Zwingle went to Zurich to talk over the matter, and weigh it well in the presence of the Lord. Some of the canons, fearing the effects of the innovating spirit of so bold a preacher, objected to his appointment. But his personal appearance, as well as his reputation, was in his favour. He was a man of the most graceful form and manners, his countenance agreeable beyond expression, mild and gentle in his general bearing pleasing in conversation, and celebrated throughout the whole country for his eloquence, seriousness, and discretion. He was elected by a large majority and removed to Zurich.

On the first day of January, 1519, being his thirty-fifth birthday, Zwingle entered upon his new office. The divine Master had been educating His servant during his residence at the Hermitage for this central sphere of labour. He who had chosen the new university of Wittemberg for the Saxon Reformer, selected for the Swiss the cathedral church of Zurich. The Lord was overruling all things for the good of His church and the progress of the Reformation. The city of Zurich was regarded as the head of the Confederation. Here the Reformer would be in communication with the most intelligent and energetic people in Switzerland, and still more with all the cantons that collected around this ancient and powerful state. The new and earnest style of Zwingle's preaching attracted great crowds to the church, and produced a strong impression on their minds. Soon after his arrival he was reminded by the administrator of the temporalities that he must make every exertion to collect the revenues of the chapter, and to exhort the faithful, both from the pulpit and the confessional, to pay all tithes and dues, and to show by their offerings their affection for the church. But Zwingle was happily delivered from the spirit of the rapacious priests, and bent all his energies in another direction.

Zwingle and the Gospel

Before accepting the office, he had stipulated that he should not be confined in his preaching to the lessons publicly read, or to certain passages appropriated to the festivals and different Sundays in the year; but that he should be allowed to explain every part of the Bible. He saw that the habit of preaching from a few detached portions year after year necessarily limits the people's knowledge of the word of God. He commenced with the Gospel of St. Matthew. "The life of Christ," said he to the Chapter, "has been too long hidden from the people. I shall preach upon the whole of the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter after chapter, according to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, without human commentaries, drawing solely from the fountain of scripture, sounding its depths, comparing one passage with another, and seeking for understanding by constant and earnest prayer. It is to God's glory, to the praise of His only Son, to the real salvation of souls, and to their edification in the true faith, that I shall consecrate my ministry." Thus did Zwingle nobly abandon the exclusive use of the mere scraps of the Gospels which had been the textbook of the papal preachers since the time of Charlemagne.

Language so novel, so bold, but obviously so consistent for a minister of the New Testament, made a deep impression on the college of canons. "This way of preaching," exclaimed some, "is an innovation; one innovation will lead to another; and where shall we stop?" "It is not a new manner," replied Zwingle, "it is the old custom. Call to mind the homilies of Chrysostom on St. Matthew, and of Augustine on St. John." Unlike Luther, he did not shock men's minds by his rough and stormy replies; he was mild and courteous in his intercourse with the heads of the church. But in the pulpit - his own province - he proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation with unmeasured heart and voice, and thundered against the abuses of the times. He everywhere enforced the necessity of an undivided and unreserved adherence to the written word of God as the only standard of faith and duty. And so great was the impression which he had made on the Zurichers, that in little more than a year after his settlement there, the Supreme Council published an edict, enjoining all preachers and persons having the care of souls, to teach nothing which they could not prove from the scriptures, and to pass over in silence the mere "doctrines and ordinances of men."

Like a John the Baptist, he called most earnestly upon all classes to repent. He attacked the prevailing errors and vices among his people - idleness, intemperance, luxury, the oppression of the poor, and foreign services. "He spared no one in the pulpit," says Myconius, "neither pope, prelates, Emperor, kings, dukes, princes, lords, nor even the confederates themselves. Never had they heard a man speak with such authority. All the strength and all the delight of his heart was in God; and accordingly he exhorted all the city of Zurich to trust solely in Him." His labours were attended with the most encouraging success. At the close of his first year he could reckon upon as many as two thousand persons who had embraced his opinions, and professed to be converted to the gospel which he preached. There we leave them. God will judge the heart. But what a moment for Zurich, for the souls of men! The Lord who is Head over all things to His church, was sustaining and protecting His servant, and His Spirit was at work in the hearts and consciences of the people.

Such was God's chief instrument in the work of Reformation in Switzerland. His rejection of the errors of the papal system and his experience of the power of truth, was produced and sustained solely by the instrumentality of the New Testament, which he diligently perused with earnest prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit. From day-break until ten o'clock he used to read, write, and translate. After dinner he listened to those who required his advice, he then would walk out and visit his flock. He resumed his studies in the afternoon; took a short walk after supper, and then wrote his letters, which often occupied him till midnight. He always worked standing, and never permitted himself to be disturbed except for some important matter."*

{*See D'Aubigne, vol. 2, p. 450. Scott, vol. 2, p. 355. Universal History, vol. 7, p. 73.}

Zwingle and the Sale of Indulgences

In the month of August, 1518, the bull of Pope Leo X. for the sale of indulgences throughout Christendom, was published in Switzerland. One Bernardin Samson, a Franciscan monk of Milan, to whom the pope gave his commission crossed the Italian Alps with his long procession of attendants. He executed the disgraceful traffic entrusted to him by "his holiness," with the same blasphemous pretensions, and the same clamorous effrontery as the notorious Tetzel of Germany. Zwingle was at that time pastor of the Hermitage, and fearlessly testified against the imposture and against the personal conduct of Samson. Through the opposition thus offered by our Reformer, Samson had little success within the Canton of Schweitz. He thence proceeded to Zug, Lucerne, and Unterwalden, where he had many purchasers. But being chiefly poor people, they could not give more than a few pence for an indulgence. This did not suit Samson's money chest, and he prepared to proceed. "After crossing," says the Genevese historian - whose pardonable love for his native land leads him to embrace every opportunity to speak of its grandeur - "after crossing fertile mountains and rich valleys, skirting the everlasting snows of the Oberland, and displaying their Romish merchandise in these most beautiful portions of Switzerland they arrived in the neighbourhood of Berne."

Here Samson was received with some reluctance, but eventually he succeeded in gaining admission. He entered the town with a splendid retinue, under banners displaying jointly the arms of the pope and of the cantons. He set up his stall in St. Vincent's church, and began to bawl out his indulgences, varying in price from a few pence to the sum of five hundred ducats. "Here," said he to the rich, "are indulgences on parchment for a crown." "There," said he to the poor, "are absolutions on common paper for two batz" - three halfpence. Such were the shameless impositions which the emissaries of the Romish church were permitted, and even commissioned by the pope himself, to practise upon the pitiable ignorance of its credulous devotees.

From Baden, where his traffic was turned into ridicule by the wits, he entered the diocese of the bishop of Constance. Acting solely on the authority of the pontifical bulls, he omitted to present his credentials to the bishop or to ask his sanction. The bishop was offended at this disrespectful conduct, and immediately directed Zwingle as the chief pastor of Zurich, and the other pastors of his diocese to exclude the stranger from their churches. The bishop was not sorry to have so good a reason for rejecting the intruder. He was regarded as invading the rights of bishop, parish priest, and confessor; for they were left short of their dues by this exciting trade.

In obedience to this mandate, Henry Bullinger, rural dean of Bremgarten, and father of the illustrious Reformer of the same name, refused to receive the pope's agent. After a severe altercation which ended in the excommunication of the dean, Samson proceeded to Zurich. Meanwhile Zwingle had been engaged for about two months - seeing the enemy gradually approaching - in arousing the indignation of the people against the pope's pardons. He knew in his own soul, and on the authority of scripture, the sweetness of God's forgiveness, through faith in the precious sacrifice of Christ. Like Luther he often trembled because of his sinfulness, but he found in the grace of the Lord Jesus a deliverance from all his fears. "When Satan would frighten me," he said, "by crying out, You have not done this or that which God commands' forthwith the gentle voice of the gospel consoles me by saying, That thou canst not do - and certainly thou canst do nothing - Christ has done perfectly. Yes, when my heart is troubled because of my helplessness and the weakness of my flesh, my spirit is revived at the sound of the glad tidings, Christ is thy sanctification! Christ is thy righteousness! Christ is thy salvation! Thou art nothing, thou canst do nothing! Christ is the Alpha and Omega; Christ is the first and the last, Christ is all things; He can do all things. All created things will forsake and deceive thee, but Christ, the holy and righteous One, will receive and justify thee.... Yes!" exclaimed the enlightened, the happy, the humble, but firm Reformer, "Yes! it is Christ who is our righteousness, and the righteousness of all those who shall ever appear justified before the throne of God."

In the knowledge, enjoyment, and proclamation of such soul-emancipating truths, the Zurichers in general were prepared to shut their gates against the impostor. When he reached the suburbs, a deputation was appointed to meet him outside the walls, who informed him that he would be allowed to retire unmolested, on condition of his revoking the excommunication of Bullinger. The legate, seeing the strong feeling that was against him, speedily obeyed and retired. Slowly he moved off with a wagon drawn by three horses, and laden with the money that his falsehoods had drained from the poor, he turned towards Italy and repassed the mountains. The diet immediately addressed a strong remonstrance to the pope, in which they denounced the disgraceful conduct of his legate, and recommended his holiness to recall him. Leo replied in about two months - April, 1519 - with mildness and address. His experience of the Saxon revolution no doubt led him to hope that by timely concessions he might prevent a second in the Swiss cantons.

"The Helvetic Diet," says D'Aubigne, "showed more resolution than the German. That was because neither bishops nor cardinals had a seat in it. And hence the pope, deprived of these supporters, acted more mildly towards Switzerland than towards Germany. But the affair of the indulgences, which played so important a part in the German, was merely an episode in the Swiss Reformation."

The Rising Storm

The zeal of Zwingle, in assailing and expelling the vendors of indulgences from the diocese of the bishop of Constance, was much applauded by that prelate. And John Faber, his vicar, then the warm friend of Zwingle, wrote to him in terms of kindness and esteem, exhorting him "resolutely to prosecute what he had auspiciously begun, and promising him the bishop's support." Encouraged by such commendations, and in the hope that the bishop was disposed to further the work which lay so near his heart, he invited him both by public and private solicitations, to give his support to the evangelical truth, and to permit the free preaching of the gospel throughout his diocese. "I failed not," says Zwingle "with all reverence and humility, publicly and privately, by written addresses to urge him to countenance the light of the gospel, which he now saw bursting forth so that no human power could avail to stifle or suppress it." But the Reformer soon found that a change had taken place in the mind of the bishop and his vicar since the indulgence seller had left the country. "They," he adds, "who had lately excited me by their reiterated exhortations, now deigned me no answer beyond these public and official documents, yet the vicar in the first instance, expressly assured me, both by word of mouth and by letter, that his bishop could no longer endure the insolence and unjust arrogance of the Roman Pontiff."

John Faber - whom we have seen at Augsburg, in association with Eck and Cochlaeus - after this break with Zwingle, became one of the most persevering enemies of the Reformation. The Reformer, from the commencement of his ministry at Zurich, had laboured unweariedly to instruct the people in the meaning, object, and character of the gospel and at the same time to impress upon them the importance of being guided in all their religious duties by the scriptures of truth only. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2Ti 3:16-17) Nothing can be a "good work" for the performance of which, scripture gives us no information. Such views and such teaching Zwingle had soon to prove could not long be approved by the dignitaries of the papa; hierarchy. But by the blessing of God, from this time henceforward, he was to place all his hopes and expectations on a surer foundation. Antonio Pucci, the pope's legate, endeavoured to seduce him but in vain. "He conferred with me four times," says Zwingle, "and made me many splendid promises, but I told him that from that time forward I should devote myself, by the divine grace, to the preaching of the word, as the effectual means of shaking the power of the papacy."

Thus prepared to proceed inflexibly on his course, he resigned in the year 1520 a pension which he received from Rome for the purchase of books, and as chaplain of the holy see. "Formerly," he says, "I thought myself permitted to enjoy the liberality of the pope, so long as I could maintain with a pure and pious conscience his religion and his doctrines, but after the knowledge of the Son had grown up in me, I renounced for ever both the pontiff and his presents."

The effects of Zwingle's preaching upon the minds of the people, and the influence of his presence in Zurich, were first displayed about this time. Many of the ceremonies of the Roman church were disregarded and fell into disuse. The fast of Lent, which had hitherto been kept with the utmost strictness, was neglected by the townspeople. The civil authorities became alarmed, and on the complaint of several priests some were thrown into prison. The people maintained that in their liberty as Christians they had given up such distinctions of meats. The bishop of Constance, hearing of the unsettled state of things, instantly issued an edict against the innovations and the innovators, exhorting the people by his agents to remain stedfast to the church, at least till after the decision of the council - the usual salvo. The monks, who had been ordered by an edict of the senate, to preach the word of God only, were confounded. Most of them had never read it. This decree became the signal for the most violent opposition from every order of monks and priests. Plots began to be formed against the head pastor of Zurich; his life was threatened. Sometimes it was considered necessary to place a patrol in the street to protect the Reformer and his friends.

Zwingle now saw the storm gathering in all quarters and well he knew against whom its fury would be directed. But this only aroused his zeal, and led him to write pamphlets in vindication of the truth and his friends, and to send them broadcast over the land. The principles of the Reformation now made such progress throughout Switzerland, that Erasmus, in a letter which he wrote in 1522 to the president of the court of Mechlin declared, that "the spirit of Reform had so much increased in the Helvetic confederacy that there were two hundred thousand who abhorred the See of Rome, and are to a great extent adherents of Luther."

Seeing that the work of Reformation is thus hopefully commencing in other parts of the Helvetic republic, we may here pause for a little, and briefly notice some of these positions, and some of the principal men with whom we shall become better acquainted as we proceed.

41 Leaders in Switzerland

Chapter 41

The Leaders of the Reformation in Switzerland

Having rapidly traced the course of proceedings in the successive scenes of Zwingle's labours in the three cantons, Glaris, Schweitz, and Zurich, we will now pass on to other scenes and make ourselves acquainted with some of those devoted men whom God raised up and fitted for the same blessed work of His sovereign grace and power in Switzerland.

John Hausschein, which in Greek is OEcolampadius, was born in the year 1482 at Winsberg, in Franconia, about a year before Zwingle and Luther. He was descended from a respectable family which had come from Basle. His father at first destined him to business or the legal profession, but his pious mother desired to consecrate him to God and His church; and to this end she watched over him like Monica over Augustine. He was of a mild and peaceful disposition, of excellent character, and from early life he was distinguished above his contemporaries for his progress in learning. He was sent to Heidelberg and hence to Bologna where he studied jurisprudence; but as this study was contrary to his own inclination and the desire of his mother, his father was willing that he should devote himself to theology.

In accordance with the wish of his parents he commenced his ministry in his native place; but from an over-sensitive mind, he was persuaded that he was not qualified for such a charge, and in a short time left for Basle. He was appointed to the principal church there, and two years afterwards he was promoted by the University to the dignity of doctor in theology. He was a sincere Christian, an earnest and an eloquent preacher of Christ. He was greatly loved and admired by his hearers, not only for his public ministrations, but for his humility, meekness, and piety. Meanwhile he made such unusual proficiency in the three languages of religion as to attract the attention of Erasmus. Basle was then the great city of learning and of the printing press. "Erasmus was at this time engaged in preparing his first edition of the New Testament, and obtained the assistance of OEcolampadius in comparing the quotations from the Old Testament, which are found in the New, with the Hebrew original." OEcolampadius soon became enthusiastically attached to Erasmus, and might have suffered seriously in his soul from his ideas of a half-way Reformation; but the Lord in His good providence called him away for a time to the quiet retreat of his native place. Erasmus seems to have been equally fond of the youthful preacher. He thus acknowledges the important service he rendered him: "In this part I have received no little aid from the subsidiary labours of a man eminent not for his piety only, but for his knowledge of the three languages, which constitutes a true theologian. I mean John OEcolampadius; for I had not myself made sufficient progress in Hebrew to authorize me to pronounce on those passages."

From Basle he removed to Augsburg, having received an invitation from the canons of the cathedral church to become preacher there. Here he had the opportunity of preaching Christ to large numbers of the people, but again his timidity of mind pursued him and induced him to resign. Though a Christian, he had not found perfect rest for his soul in the finished work of Christ. Peace with God is the only remedy for such uneasy, restless souls. It gives stability and consistency to the mind even in the ordinary affairs of this life. We can look at things more calmly, weigh them up in the presence of God, and estimate them in the light which makes manifest the nature and reality of everything. "I have set the Lord always before me," says the psalmist, and what are the consequences? "He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved, my heart is glad, my glory rejoiceth." These are the unfailing consequences of having the Lord always before us as our one object: at our right hand, the place of strength; hence follow stability of mind, gladness of heart, always rejoicing. But like thousands more, and in all ages, OEcolampadius had not left the corrupt system in which he found himself. In place of ceasing to do evil, and then learning to do well (as exhorted in the Old Testament), or abhorring that which is evil, then cleaving to that which is good (as in the New Testament), he remained in Rome and vainly desired a purification of Romanism. Disappointed and despairing, as every sincere heart must be that tries to patch the old garment in place of accepting the new one, he threw himself into a monastery, proposing to spend his future days in retirement and study.

There he remained for nearly two years, and there he became acquainted, like Luther, with that monastic life which is the highest expression of the papal system. After leaving the cloister of Saint Bridget, he found a refuge in the castle of the celebrated Francis Sickingen, then the resort of so many learned men; after his death he returned to Basle, where he engaged in good earnest in the work of the Reformation, and where he spent the remainder of his days.

Leo Juda is represented by historians as a man of small stature, but of a heroic mind: as full of love for the poor, and of zeal against false doctrine; indeed, it was said of Leo Juda that whatever constitutes a good man was not only found but abounded in him. He was born in the year 1482, and was descended from a family of some rank in Alsace. After studying for a time at Schlestadt, he removed in 1505 to Basle, and there became the fellow-student of Zwingle under the excellent Wittenbach. His first pastoral charge, like OEcolampadius, was in his own province, but like him also he very soon left it and returned to Basle. Having preached for some time in the church of St. Theodore, he succeeded Zwingle at Einsidlen in 1518, and from thence he removed to Zurich in 1523, to occupy the station of pastor of Saint Peter's; and to become a true yoke-fellow to Zwingle in the work of the Reformation. Besides being an earnest preacher of the gospel, he was a diligent student of the writings of Reuchlin, Erasmus, and Luther. He translated into the German language a paraphrase of the New Testament by Erasmus; which was considered at the time of great importance, as scarcely any exposition of the scriptures in the vernacular tongue was then in circulation. He also employed his knowledge of the Hebrew in the production of valuable translations of the sacred writings into the German and Latin languages.

Conrad Kirsner, or Pellican, was also a native of Alsace and born in the year 1478. He was celebrated for his acquaintance with Hebrew and other oriental literature, which he consecrated to the illustration of divine truth. Much against the wishes of his friends he entered upon the monastic life at the age of sixteen. At the age of twenty-four, his learning and piety recommended him to the office of professor of theology at Basle; and two years afterwards he received the degree of doctor in divinity by a bull from the pope. He was taken ill at Milan on his way to Italy - where he was to be crowned with higher honours - but he returned to Basle, and was employed by the bishop to draw up a summary of the chief points of christian doctrine, directly from the sacred scriptures. His fame, influence, and honours rapidly advanced, but with them a great and salutary change of mind. He had now begun to distrust the reigning doctrines and figments of popery- indulgences, confessions, purgatory, and the pope's supremacy. The writings of Luther began at this time to be spread abroad; the ninety-five theses which that Reformer had published were put into his hand, with which he agreed in the main, but hoped that Luther would explain himself more fully. After this Pellican gradually prepared to renounce his monastic cowl, and his prospects of advancement; he laboured to disseminate the pure truth of God for some time at Basle, and in the year 1526 removed to Zurich, where he continued till his death in 1556.

Wolfgang Fabricus Koefflin, or Capito, was the son of an Alsatian senator. His mother was of noble family. He was born at Haguenau in the year 1478. Thus the province of Alsace has the honour of being the birthplace of three most distinguished men and zealous Reformers. Capito's own inclination was the church, but as his father had a strong dislike to the character of the clergy and the theology of the times, he applied himself to medicine; indeed he successively studied physics, divinity, and canon-law, and gained the degree of doctor in each; but after his father's death he confined himself to his original choice of the clerical profession.

His career may be briefly stated. He was professor of philosophy for a short time at Friburg, then preacher at Spires for three years; when on a visit to Heidelberg, he formed an acquaintance with OEcolampadius which was interrupted only by the death of the latter. In 1513 he found his way to Basle. On the invitation of the senate, he accepted the office of minister of the cathedral church of their city. Erasmus speaks of him as "a profound theologian, a man eminently skilled in the three languages, and of the utmost piety and sanctity." When settled at Basle, he persuaded his friend OEcolampadius to join him there. This was the dawn of the Reformation in that place. These two devoted men laboured abundantly in the gospel and in the ministry of the word. Much good seed was sown, which produced a rich harvest in the salvation of souls to the glory of God the Father.

For five years, ending with 1520, Capito had been happily engaged in expounding the scriptures, especially the Gospel of Matthew, to large congregations; and he thus announced, in that year, his progressive success: "Here matters are constantly improving. The theologians and monks are with us. A very large audience attends my lectures on Matthew. There are some indeed who threaten dreadful things against Luther, but the doctrine is too deeply rooted to be torn up by violence. Some accuse me of favouring Lutheranism; but I carefully conceal from them my inclination." This smooth state of things did not long continue. He was charged with the heresy of Luther; a conspiracy of priests and monks was formed against him; and, being at that time solicited by Albert, Archbishop of Mentz, to become his chancellor, he accepted the invitation and left the place. The people hearing of this were greatly excited, their indignation was roused against the priests and the monks, and a violent commotion broke out in the city.

The fame of Capito as a man of learning and piety was now so great, that Leo X., unsolicited, conferred on him a provostship. The Emperor, Charles V., raised him to the rank of a noble; and Albert, the first prince of the German Empire, gave him the appointment of ecclesiastical counsellor and chancellor. But these high positions and honours did not suit the spirit of his mind, the real desire of his heart; though at that time he little understood the great work for which the Lord was preparing him. Gradually, his eyes were opening to the discovery of the truth; the mass became offensive to his conscience, and he refused to celebrate it any more. After being about three years at the court of the cardinal archbishop, he resigned, and joined Bucer at Strasburg as a humble preacher of the gospel, where he continued till his death in 1541. This was the work in which his soul delighted. He began to urge the necessity of a reformation, and of vigorously prosecuting the work in dependence upon the living God. He and Pellican, as early as 1512, were of one mind as to the Lord's supper being a memorial or remembrance of Christ. This was long before the doctrine was taught publicly by the Swiss Reformers.

Caspar Hedio was a native of the Marquisate of Baden in Swabia. He was educated and graduated at Basle. He laboured long and successfully in the gospel, first at Mayence, and then at Strasburg. When Capito left Basle, Hedio was chosen as his successor. The papal party objected. "The truth stings," says the indefatigable preacher, "it is not safe now to wound tender ears by preaching it; but it matters not! Nothing shall make me swerve from the straight path." The monks redoubled their efforts. "He is Capito's disciple," they cried, and the general disturbance increased. "I shall be almost alone" wrote Hedio to Zwingle about this time, "left in my weakness to struggle with these pestilent monsters. Learning and Christianity are now between the hammer and the anvil. Luther has just been condemned by the Universities of Louvain and Cologne. If ever the church was in imminent danger, it is now." He seems to have retired some time after this to Strasburg, where his labours were less interrupted. He was a man of a mild and moderate temper.

Berthold Haller, the Reformer of Berne, was born at Aldingen in Wurtemberg, about the year 1492. He studied at Pforzheim, where Simmler was his teacher, and Melancthon his fellow student. The Bernese, who had been hostile to the new opinions, and incensed at Zurich for the countenance it had given to what they called Lutheranism, began to relax in their prejudices under the gentle but evangelical preaching of Berthold Haller. In the year 1520, he was appointed to a canonry and preachership in the cathedral. He was joined in his labours by Sebastian Meyer, a Franciscan, who had been a papist, but was now: a zealous preacher of the gospel of the grace of God. Haller was possessed of considerable learning and eloquence, and his powers as a preacher gained him great influence with the citizens. By the united efforts of these two Reformers, the state of religious feeling in a short time was such as to call for the interference of the government.

Naturally timid and diffident, he applied to Zwingle for counsel in his troubles, and confided to him all his trials, and Zwingle was well fitted to inspire him with courage. "My soul is overwhelmed," said he one day to Zwingle, "I cannot support such unjust treatment. I am determined to resign my pulpit and retire to Basle, to employ myself wholly, in Wittenbach's society, in the study of sacred learning." "Alas!" replied Zwingle, "And I too feel discouragement creep over me when I see myself unjustly assailed; but Christ awakens my conscience by the powerful stimulus of His threatenings and promises. He alarms me by saying, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me before men, of him shall I be ashamed before My Father,' and He restores me to tranquillity by adding, 'Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him also will I confess before My Father.' Oh! My dear Berthold, take courage! Our names are written in imperishable characters in the annals of the citizens on high. I am ready to die for Christ.... Oh! that your fierce bear-cubs would hear the doctrine of Jesus Christ, then would they grow tame. But you must undertake this work with great gentleness, lest they should turn round furiously, and rend you in pieces." Berthold's courage greatly revived. The flame that burned so brightly in Zwingle's bosom rekindled that of Haller's. He preached with increasing zeal and power, and by the blessing of God, the pure gospel was restored to the republic of Berne whence it had so long been exiled.

Oswald Myconius - to be distinguished from Frederick Myconius, the disciple of Luther - was a native of Lucerne, and born in 1488. He studied at Basle, where he became known to many learned men who then formed the circle of Erasmus, but more especially to Zwingle. He presided over the public school, first at Basle, then at Zurich, and afterwards in his native town of Lucerne. From the strong military spirit which prevailed in this canton, the preacher of the gospel of peace, who ventured to condemn the practice of foreign service, or who sought to restrain their warlike habits, was instantly met by the most determined and violent opposition. "He is a Lutheran," was the cry, "and Luther must be burned, and the schoolmaster with him." He was summoned to appear before the council, and forbidden to read Luther's works to his pupils, or ever to mention him before them, or even to think of them. "But what need has anyone to introduce Luther," he answered, "who has the Gospels and the writings of the New Testament to draw from?" His naturally gentle spirit was wounded and depressed: "Everyone is against me," he exclaimed, "assailed by so many tempests, whither shall I turn, or how shall I escape them? If Christ were not with me, I should long ago have fallen beneath their blows." In the year 1523, he was expelled from Lucerne, and after several changes he became the successor of OEcolampadius at Basle, both in his professorship and his pulpit; and continued in that situation till his death in 1552. He laboured much to disseminate the truth, and his services to the cause of reform were great and valuable.

Joachim Von Walt, or Vadian, was a distinguished layman, a native of St. Gall, where he was eight times raised to the consulate. He was intimately acquainted with almost every kind of learning; but at an early period his mind became affected by the great question of Reform, and, by the grace of God, he steadily, zealously, and with great wisdom and prudence promoted the cause of the Reformation. He more than once presided at the great public disputations by which the good work was so materially advanced in Switzerland.

Thomas and Andrew Blaurer were of a noble family at Constance, and both laboured early in the cause of the Reformation. The latter, in particular, is distinguished as the Reformer of his native city. This city, so famous in the history of papal persecution and christian stedfastness, was also favoured with the devoted labours of Sebastian Hoffmeister and John Wauner. They nobly maintained the doctrines of the Reformation in that celebrated city, though they suffered for so doing.* {*The dates and facts of the foregoing sketches have been taken chiefly from Scott's History where the reader will find many details which we have omitted. Vol. 2, pp. 366-384.}

Reflections on the Dawning of the Swiss Reformation

Who could fail to see and adore the good providence and sovereign grace of God in this noble array of witnesses for Christ and His gospel! So many different men, in so many different places - as if by concert - all studying the same truths, from the same motives, with the same desires, and persuaded of the same results, and yet, for a time, without the knowledge of each other, and independently of the same character of movement in Germany. We have avoided bringing down the history of these pioneers to a later period than about 1520 - a year before the Diet of Worms - when the name and writings of Luther were beginning to find their way into other lands.

The attentive reader must have noticed that most of the leaders we have named were men of high character, of great learning and ability, with the most flattering prospects as to preferments and honours; all of which they willingly sacrificed that they might devote themselves entirely to the Lord Jesus Christ and the service of His gospel. And God - who never forgets to honour them that honour His Son - accepted the willing sacrifice, and consecrated their learning, talents, and character, to the accomplishment of His own great work. He made their moral weight to be felt by their most prejudiced enemies. Here it may be truly said, "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it." (Psa 68:11) And it has been remarked, that these eminent men were like brethren dwelling together in unity; that they were all firm and faithful friends, even unto death; and not a discordant note was heard among them.

The heart of faith leaps with joy to see so manifestly the hand and power of God working for the glory of His Son, and the emancipation of His church from the thraldom of popery. There is nothing more wonderful in this world than the triumphs of truth when the Spirit of God is working. What have we before us now? As at the beginning, a few men, by the force of truth alone, engage to change the religious views, feelings, and ways of their contemporaries. The veneration of mankind for antiquity, for the religion of their ancestors, and a thousand different interests arise to arrest its progress; the kings of the earth and their armies, the pontiff and his emissaries, combine to oppose the new doctrines and to silence the witnesses by death: but this work is of no avail, unless it be to purify the motives and deepen the zeal of the Reformers. To the natural eye the obstacles must appear invincible; yet the cause of truth prevails, every obstacle is surmounted, and without any visible means, save the preaching of the word and prayer.

In proceeding with our history we shall see the truth of this. Whole nations, obedient to the voice of the Reformers, abandon the worship of their fathers, destroy their idols, and overthrow in one day the usages of many generations. That which at first appeared to be a dispute, only interesting to theologians, produced a great moral revolution, the influence of which extended over the civilized world.*

{*Preface, Life of Zwingle, by J.G. Hess. Translated by Lucy Aikin.}

Progress of the Reformation - Zurich

A.D. 1522

It was in the course of the year 1520 - as we have already seen - that the civil authorities of Zurich first interfered with the work of the Reformation. The effect produced upon the middle and lower classes by the preaching of Zwingle then began to display itself. In addition to the subject of Lent, which then came before the senate, through the edict of the bishop of Constance, Zwingle called the attention of the Zurichers to the gross licentiousness which prevailed in Switzerland through the celibacy of the clergy; and in a private letter to the bishop he entreated him not to promulgate any edict injurious to the gospel, nor any longer to tolerate fornication, nor to enforce the celibacy of the priesthood. "In some of the cantons the priests were required to keep concubines, and everywhere that practice was permitted for money." Instead, however, of listening to the needed and respectful remonstrance of the Reformer, the bishop began to persecute several of the clergy who were known to have embraced the new opinions. They were branded as Lutheran heretics, and denounced as holding opinions hostile to the See of Rome. Until this time the Swiss Reformers had not met with any public or systematic opposition: but now, the church implored the state to interfere and arrest their progress everywhere.

But under the good providence of God, the opposition which now arose in so many quarters was overruled for the deepening and the extension of the work. The controversies and the public disputations were eminently used in Switzerland for the furtherance of the Reformation. The wind of persecution but scattered the good seed of the kingdom, and caused it to take root all over the land. "The priests stood up," says the Swiss historian, "as in the days of the apostles, against the new doctrines. Without these attacks, it would probably have remained hidden and obscure in a few faithful souls. But God was watching the hour to manifest it to the world. Opposition opened new roads for it, launched it on a new career, and fixed the eyes of the nations upon it. The tree that was destined to shelter the people of Switzerland had been deeply planted in her valleys, but storms were necessary to strengthen its roots and extend its branches. The partisans of the papacy, seeing the fire already smouldering in Zurich, rushed forward to extinguish it, but they only made the conflagration fiercer and more extensive."*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 2, p. 502.}

The Monks Conspire against Zwingle

In the year 1522, the new doctrines had made such progress at Zurich, as not only to cause the bishop but the senate considerable anxiety. The divisions and confusion that had prevailed for some time in the city were evidently on the increase. And the monks, encouraged by their superiors raised the accustomed cry of heresy, sedition, and infidelity. There were three orders of monks in the city - Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians. These formed a conspiracy against Zwingle, and charged him before the magistrates with "incessantly attacking their orders, and exposing them in his discourses to the contempt and ridicule of the people." They petitioned the senate to silence the preacher, and to repeal the edict of 1520, or at least to allow them to draw their sermons from Aquinas and Scotus. The authorities not only refused the petition but renewed the order - "that nothing should be introduced into the pulpit which could not be clearly proved from the written word of God." The exasperated monks were no longer careful to conceal their intentions, but vowed, that if Zwingle did not restrain his hostilities, they would be driven to adopt more violent measures.

The bishop, about the same time, made his second and great appeal to the senate. He laid before that body many and heavy charges against Zwingle. A long exhortation was addressed to the clergy and magistrates of his diocese, and also to the provost and chapter of the city. These exhortations were accompanied by copies of the pope's bull, with the edict of Worms against Luther, and all were entrusted to three ecclesiastical deputies.

When Zwingle stood up and replied to the various accusations of the bishop, his adversaries were completely silenced. But he was so distressed, so grieved in spirit, by the presence of his accusers, who were once his intimate friends, and also by the general state of matters, that he respectfully requested that a public conference should be held, at which he might have an opportunity of defending himself and his doctrines. Meanwhile he employed his pen with all diligence that he might make more widely known the truths which he held and taught, and the errors and abuses against which he testified.

The Publications of Zwingle

In July, 1522, he addressed to the members of the Helvetic Confederation at large, a "Pious and Friendly Exhortation," entreating them "not to obstruct the preaching of the gospel, or discountenance the marriage of the clergy." "Fear nothing," he said to the heads of the cantons, "from granting us this liberty; there are certain signs by which everyone may know the truly evangelical preachers. He who, neglecting his own private interest, spares neither pains nor labour to cause the will of God to be known and revered, to bring back sinners to repentance, and give consolation to the afflicted, is undoubtedly in unison with Christ. But when you see teachers daily offering new saints to the veneration of the people, whose favour must be gained by offerings, and when the same teachers continually hold forth the extent of sacerdotal power, and the authority of the pope, you may believe that they think much more of their own profit, than of the care of the souls entrusted to them."

"If such men counsel you to put a stop to the preaching of the gospel by public decrees, shut your ears against their insinuations, and be certain that it is their aim to prevent any attacks from being made upon their benefices and honours; say that if this work cometh of men, it will perish of itself, but that if it cometh of God, in vain would all the powers of the earth league together against it."*

{*Hess, pp. 130-138.}

After explaining the nature of the gospel, and showing that all salutary doctrine is to be drawn from the scriptures alone, he touches on the immorality that prevailed among the ecclesiastics as one great prejudice to the cause of Christianity, he pleads most earnestly against the prohibition of marriage to the clergy - proving that it is a modern device, for the purpose of aggrandising the church, by breaking the ties which should attach the ministers of religion to the people, by rendering them strangers to the domestic affections, and thus concentrating all their zeal upon the interests of the particular body, or order, to which they belong, and the upholding of the papal system.

He addressed a similar remonstrance about the same time to the bishop of Constance; "in which," says Hess, "he conjured the bishop to put himself at the head of those who were labouring to accomplish a Reform in the church, and to permit to be demolished with precaution and prudence, what had been built up with temerity. " These two petitions were signed by Zwingle and other ten of the most zealous advocates of the Reformation in Switzerland.

The exhortation, or mandate, of the bishop to the chapter of Zurich, drew forth from Zwingle another work which he called his "Archeteles," a word which signifies "the beginning and the end;" it was a summary of the main points at issue between the Reformers and their adversaries. "This work," says Gerder, "exhibits a true picture of the Zwinglian Reformation - very different from what it has been represented by many writers." It obtained more celebrity than his previous pamphlets, and was highly esteemed, not only in Switzerland, but in foreign countries, as proving the author to be "mighty in the scriptures," and one who united an intrepid courage with true christian moderation.*

{*Scott's quotations from Gerdes, or Gerdesius, professor of divinity at Groningen, and from A. Ruchat, vol. 2, p. 406.}

While these things were taking place in connection with Zurich, the bishop, now distrusting his own power to repress the growing dissensions, appealed to the national assembly held at Baden, and claimed the interference of the entire Helvetic body for the execution of his decrees. But the seeds of the Reformation were springing up there as strongly as at Zurich, at least among the pastors, for they had come to the unanimous resolution of preaching no doctrine which they could not prove from scripture. "This appeal of the bishop," says Waddington, "ended in the persecution of a single and humble delinquent." One Urban Wyss, pastor of Visisbach in the County of Baden, boldly preached against the invocation of saints; he was seized and delivered over to the prelate; and a long imprisonment, which he endured at Constance, has distinguished him as the first of the Swiss Reformers who suffered for the truth's sake.

Zwingle and His Brothers

As we mentioned in connection with the early days of our Reformer, that he had five brothers, it may be interesting to notice, that they were all alive at this period of his history, and, hearing such reports concerning Ulric's apostasy, they manifested great uneasiness about their brother, and wished to see and confer with him on the subject. Although their anxiety seems to have been more for the respectability of their family than for the salvation of his soul it gave him an opportunity of writing most fully and freely on the great subject of the gospel, and of expressing the deep christian feelings of his heart.

After expressing his most sincere affection for his brothers, and the deep interest he always feels in their welfare, he assures them that he will never cease to discharge faithfully and diligently the duties of a christian pastor, unmoved by the fear of the world or the powerful tyrants that rule in it. "With respect to myself," he says, "I am not at all solicitous; for I have long since committed myself and all that concerns me to the hands of God.... Be assured there is no kind of evil which can befall me, that I have not fully taken into my account, and that I am not prepared to meet. I know indeed that my strength is perfect weakness. I know also the power of those with whom I have undertaken to contend. But as St. Paul says concerning himself, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.... But you 'What a disgrace would it be, and with what infamy would it brand our whole family, should you be brought to the stake as a heretic, or otherwise suffer an ignominious death? And what profit could result from it?' My dearest brothers, hear my answer, Christ the Saviour and Lord of all, whose soldier I am, hath said, 'Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.' (Luk 6:22-23) Hence learn, that the more my name is branded with infamy in this world for the Lord's sake, the more will it be had in honour in the sight of God Himself .... Christ the Son of God condescended to shed His blood for our salvation: he, therefore, is a cowardly soldier of His, and unworthy the name, who would not willingly sacrifice his life for the glory of his commander, but rather, like one who, basely casting away his shield, contemplates disgraceful flight....

"You are my own brothers, and as such I acknowledge you; but if you will not be my brothers in Christ, I must grieve over you with the deepest pain and sorrow, for the word of the Lord requires us to forsake even father and mother if they would draw away our hearts from Him. Rely on the word of God with an unhesitating and assured mind. Carry all your sorrows and complaints to Christ, pour out your prayers before Him, seek from Him alone grace, peace, and the remission of your sins. Finally, be joined to Christ by such an intimate tie and bond of union, that He may be one with you, and you one with Him. God grant, that being received under His guardian care, you may be led by His Spirit, and under His teaching! Amen. I will never cease to be your faithful brother if only you will be the brethren of Christ. - At Zurich, in great haste, in the year of Christ, 1522."

These deep breathings of the innermost soul of Zwingle must command the grateful praise of every renewed heart to the God of all grace. What devotion to Christ, to His gospel, to His church, to his own relatives, to his country, to mankind! How evidently, how wonderfully, taught of God! His knowledge of the way of salvation, and his deeper entrance into the grand rest-giving truth of the believer's identification with Christ, fill our hearts with admiring delight. True, he did not understand deliverance through death from sin, Satan, and the world, as taught in Romans 6 and similar portions, nor could he have known the teaching of scripture on the subject of the church as the body of Christ, according to that word - "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1Co 12:13) But he understood that there was communion in grace and blessing through faith in Christ's precious sacrifice. Had he been more under "the power of His resurrection" he would have been less of what his biographers call "the christian patriot, the christian hero." Not that he would have loved his neighbour, his kindred, or mankind less, but he would have manifested his love more in accordance with the spirit of one who is not only dead, but risen in Christ, and joined unto the Lord by one Spirit - the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Like Luther he held that justification by faith alone is the key-stone of Christianity; though, evidently, he was less under the power of prejudice, and had a much broader view of divine truth than the Saxon Reformer, and a more elevated style of expressing it.

The Disputations at Zurich

In compliance with the request of Zwingle, already noticed, the senate of Zurich proclaimed a conference for the discussion, or the composing, of religious differences, to be held on January 29th, 1523. This was the first of those public disputations which, under the overruling providence of God, so rapidly advanced the progress of the Reformation. An invitation was given to all persons who had anything to allege against the chief pastor to come forward publicly and state their charges.

One noble stipulation, however, was announced by the senate - "that all appeals must be made to the scriptures, as the sole rule of judgment, and not to mere custom or the traditions of men." The clergy of the canton were invited, and the bishop was especially entreated to appear in person, or, if that were impossible, to send competent representatives.

That all parties might be well informed as to the subjects proposed for discussion, and that none might plead that they were taken by surprise, Zwingle published some time before, sixty-seven propositions, embodying the chief doctrines he had preached, and which he was prepared to maintain. These he had extensively distributed in good time.

The Theses of Zwingle

As the theses of Zwingle may be considered the creed of the Swiss Reformers, it will be satisfactory to the reader, briefly to state the most important of these propositions

"That the gospel is the only rule of faith, and the assertion erroneous that it is nothing without the approbation of the Church of Rome; that Christ is the only head of the church; that all traditions are to be rejected; that the attempt of the clergy to justify their pomp, their riches, honours, and dignities, is the cause of the divisions in the church, that penances are the dictates of tradition alone, and do not avail to salvation; that the mass is not a sacrifice, but simply the commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ; that meats are indifferent; that God has not forbidden marriage to any class of Christians, and consequently it is wrong to interdict it to priests, whose celibacy has become the cause of great licentiousness of manners. To give absolution for money is to be guilty of simony; that God alone has power to forgive sins the word of God says nothing of purgatory. The assertion that grace is necessarily derived from receiving the sacraments is a doctrine of modern invention, that no person ought to be molested for his opinions, as it is for the magistrate to stop the progress of those which tend to disturb the public peace."*

{*Hess, p. 148.}

The Meeting at Zurich

At an early hour on the morning of the 29th, great numbers, say the chroniclers, thronged the hall of conference. All the clergy of the city and canton, with many others from distant parts, were present, and a numerous company of citizens scholars, men of rank, and other persons of various descriptions. The consul of the Republic, Mark Reust, a man of high character, opened the deliberations. He referred to the sixty-seven propositions of Zwingle, and called upon any who dissented from them to state their objections without fear. The grand-master of the episcopal court, and the vicar-general Faber, with several theologians were present as the bishop's representatives. All supposed that Faber would have attempted a confutation of Zwingle's theses, and a defence of the established system; but Faber knew his opponent too well, and refused to discuss any one of the articles. Zwingle pressed him to the disputation, but in vain. "I was not sent here to dispute," said Faber, "but to listen, besides, this is not the place for so great an argument; that it was more decorous to await the decision of a general council, which was the only legitimate tribunal in doctrinal matters and which would shortly be convoked; meanwhile, that he was commanded to offer his mediation for the removal of the differences which distracted the city."

Zwingle, who was urgent to have his doctrines subjected to the severest examination was deeply pained by the evasive courtier-like style of Faber. "What!" he exclaimed, standing in front of a table on which a Bible lay; "is not this vast and learned meeting as good as any council? We have only to defend the word of God." After making this appeal - which produced a solemn silence in the assembly - he addressed the meeting at some length. "He complained of the calumnious charges with which his doctrines were continually assailed; he challenged his slanderers to come forward on that public occasion, appointed for that express purpose, and discuss with him the articles in question." But the Reformer found, that those who were most prompt to accuse and defame him in secret preserved an obstinate silence in public. But he had an upright conscience, and he wished to give an account of his doctrine, publicly, before the senate of his country, before his diocesan, and before the whole church of God, and to hear whatever could be alleged against him - thankful to be corrected if he were in error, but prepared to maintain what he believed to be the truth of God.

Faber still refused to dispute with Zwingle before the great council, but promised to publish a written refutation of his errors.

As no other opponent appeared, the president then said, "If there be any one here who has anything to say against Zwingle or his doctrines, let him come forward." This was repeated three times, but as no one presented himself, the senate declared that the evangelical propositions had gained an undisputed triumph, and immediately published an edict to the following effect. "That since Master Ulric Zwingle had publicly and repeatedly challenged the adversaries of his doctrines to confute them by scriptural arguments, and since, notwithstanding, no one had undertaken to do so, he should continue to announce and preach the word of God, just as heretofore. Likewise that all other ministers of religion, whether resident in the city or country, should abstain from teaching any tenet which they could not prove from scripture; that they should refrain, too, from making charges of heresy and other scandalous allegations, on pain of severe punishment. "

On hearing the decree, Zwingle could not refrain from publicly expressing his heartfelt joy. "We give thanks to thee, O Lord, who willest that Thy most holy word should reign alike in heaven and on earth." Faber, on hearing this could not restrain his indignation. "The theses of Master Ulric," said he, "are contrary to the honour of the church and the doctrine of Christ, and I will prove it." "Do so," said Zwingle, "but I will have no other judge than the gospel."

Leo Juda, Hoffmann, Meyer, and others, endeavoured, as well as Zwingle, to draw the papal party into a discussion, but beyond the slightest skirmishing respecting the invocation of the saints, nothing passed between them.

The Effects of the Decree

The promulgation of this decree, according to Hess, gave a powerful impulse to the progress of the Reformation in Switzerland. And the effect of Zwingle's address in the hall was most favourable to himself and his doctrines. "His simplicity, firmness, and gentleness inspired his audience with great veneration, his eloquence and knowledge carried away those who were hesitating between the two parties and the silence of his adversaries, being regarded as a tacit proof of their weakness, served his cause almost as much as his own arguments. From this time the friends of Reform multiplied rapidly in all classes of society." Considering that the times were still papal, the decree was most just and reasonable. It ordained no pains, no penalties on religious grounds; Zwingle, and all the pastors, were merely to be protected in going on to preach the word of God as heretofore; and by that word the preachers were to stand or fall. A breach of the peace, or what directly tended to it, was to be punished by the authorities.

Faber, soon after the conference, writing to a friend at Mayence, expressed in the following terms his apprehensions of Zwingle: "I have no news for you, except that a second Luther has arisen at Zurich, who is the more dangerous, as he has an austerer people to deal with. Contend with him, whether I will or not, I must; I do it with the greatest reluctance, but I am compelled. You will presently learn this, when I publish my book to prove the mass to be a sacrifice."* But in proportion to the triumph of the Reformers and the confirmation of their principles, was the vexation and disappointment of their opponents. The most skilful advocates of the papacy had been silent before the great council of their country- The Two Hundred. They were evidently afraid to enter into debate with Zwingle. But unscrupulous Rome had other weapons. It is stated by the most reliable historians, that the pope's legate, Ennius, and the bishop of Constance employed emissaries to take the life of Zwingle, if the opportunity could be found without too great a risk. "Snares surround you on every side, " wrote a secret friend to Zwingle, "a deadly poison has been prepared to take away your life. I am your friend; you shall know me hereafter." "Leave Zwingle's house forthwith; a catastrophe is at hand," said another to a chaplain who lived with him. But the man of God was calm and peaceful, trusting in Him. "I fear my enemies," said he, "as a lofty rock fears the roaring waves, with the help of God." But though both the poison and the poignard failed to accomplish the foul deed, Rome had not exhausted her means; now she tries flattery.

{*Waddington, vol. 2, p. 284.}

Soon after the decree was issued, Hadrian, who then filled the papal chair appeared to take no interest in the controversy at Zurich though he was thundering his anathemas in Saxony. He despatched a most flattering letter to Zwingle, called him "his beloved son," and assured him of "his special favour." "And what has the pope commissioned you to offer him?" said Myconius to the bearer of the papal brief. "Everything except the chair of St. Peter." Mitre, crosier, or cardinal's hat were at his will; but Rome was greatly mistaken with the Reformer of Zurich in this respect. All her proposals were unavailing. Even D'Aubigne admits, "that in Zwingle the Romish church had a still more uncompromising enemy than Luther." He had never been a monk; his conscience was less perplexed, his judgment less enthralled by popish dogmas, and altogether he cared less for the ceremonies of former ages than the Saxon Reformer. It was enough for his Swiss ally if any custom, however innocent in itself, were not warranted by scripture, he fell violently upon it. His jealous care for the dignity, sufficiency, and authority of scripture was remarkable. "The word of God," he used to say, "should stand alone." "Yet these convictions," it has been said, "were attained through fewer struggles, and burnt with less violence, than in the heart of Luther." This we can only see to be true in the case of one doctrine - justification by faith alone. All will readily admit, that although the Swiss Reformer believed this truth as sincerely as the Saxon, it never was to the former what it was to the latter. As a divine truth, it was the source of Luther's convictions, strength, comfort, vitality, and energy. The two men had been led of God by different paths, and were differently furnished for their great work.

The Zeal of Zwingle and Leo Juda

Notwithstanding the immense power and popularity which Zwingle gained by the result of the conference in January, he was in no haste to promote alterations. His great object was to instruct the people, remove their prejudices, and bring them to oneness of mind before recommending any great changes. He therefore devoted himself to the preaching of the word with greater zeal and boldness than ever, and he was ably assisted by his friend, Leo Juda, who had lately been elected a minister of Zurich. It is not certain that Faber's promised book on the mass ever appeared, but Zwingle produced one in the same year, "On the canon of the Mass," arguing with great force against that cornerstone of the papal system. About the same time a priest, named Louis Hetzer, published a treatise entitled, The Judgment of God against images, which produced a great sensation, and engrossed the thoughts of the people.

The citizens of Zurich were now become warm friends of the Reformation, and in their zeal some of the more ardent spirits expressed a determination to purge the city of idols. Outside the city gates stood a crucifix elaborately carved and richly ornamented. The superstition and idolatry to which this image gave rise, moved the people to give vent to their indignation. Some of the lower classes, having at their head an artisan named Nicholas Hottinger - "a worthy man," says Bullinger, "and well read in the holy scriptures" - assembled and ignominiously threw down this favorite idol. This daring and unlawful act spread dismay on every side. "They are guilty of sacrilege! they deserve to be put to death!" exclaimed the friends of Rome. The authorities were obliged to interfere, and caused the leaders of this outbreak to be apprehended; but when sentence was to be pronounced upon them, the council was divided. What some regarded as a crime worthy of death, others considered to be a good work, but done in a wrong way from inconsiderate zeal. During the debates upon this sentence, Zwingle maintained in public that the law of Moses expressly forbade images to be the objects of religious worship, and concluded that those who had pulled down the crucifix could not be accused of sacrilege; but he pronounced them deserving of punishment for open resistance to the authorities.

The language of Zwingle increased the embarrassment of the magistrates; the whole city was much divided; and the council again determined to submit the question to a discussion, in the meantime retaining the prisoners in custody.

Thus we see that, in the good providence of God, even such acts of insubordination by the rude undisciplined children of the Reformation, were the means of bringing to light not only the dark shades of popery, but the truth of God on subjects of vital importance, and of securing fresh triumphs and greater liberty to the Reformers.

The Second Disputation at Zurich

The 26th of October, 1523, was the day fixed for the second disputation; and the subjects to be discussed were - "whether the worship of images was authorized by the gospel, and whether the mass ought to be preserved or abolished." The assembly was much more numerous than the preceding; above nine hundred persons were present, from every part of Switzerland, including the grand council of Two Hundred, and about three hundred and fifty ecclesiastics. Invitations had been sent to the bishops of Constance, Coire, and Basle, to the university of the latter city, and to the twelve cantons, requesting them to send deputies to Zurich. But the bishops declined the invitation: the humiliation of their deputies in January was fresh in their mind, and they were not disposed to risk a second defeat. Only the towns of Schaffhausen and St. Gall sent delegates, and these, Vadian of St. Gall, and Hoffmann of Schaffhausen were chosen presidents. The edict of convocation having been read, and the object of the meeting stated, Zwingle and Leo Juda were requested to answer all who defended the worship of images and the mass as a sacrifice.

With a devotion and piety, ever prominent in the spirit of Zwingle, he proposed that the deliberations should be opened with prayer. He reminded the friends of the promise of Christ, that "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mat 18:20) After prayer, and a few words from the president, enjoining upon all who spoke to draw their argument only from scripture, Zwingle was desired to commence the proceedings.

Before speaking on the first proposition-the worship of images-he begged to offer a few remarks on the scriptural usage of the word church; since on that depended the right and authority of their present deliberations. He rejected the exorbitant claims of the church of Rome which asserted that nothing was valid in the whole christian world, but what was done with her sanction. According to his view, the term "the church," designated, first, the universal body of the faithful; secondly, any portion of that body meeting in the same province or city; such as the church of Ephesus, of Corinth, the churches of Galatia, or the church of Zurich. He denied that the term could be restricted to a convention, consisting of the pope, cardinals, bishops, and other ecclesiastics exclusively. His object was to overthrow the objections urged by the Roman Catholics against the authority of such assemblies as the present; and to show that every assembly, united together by faith in Christ, and by the gospel, as the only rule of faith and practice, possessed the perfect right to discuss and settle their affairs. Zwingle was thus withdrawing the church of Zurich from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Constance, and separating it from the Latin hierarchy.

Here Zwingle paused; and an invitation was given to all who had anything to object to his positions, to come forward and express their sentiments without fear. The Reformers sought publicity, and feared not fair discussion. One Conrad Hoffmann, a canon of Zurich, attempted a reply, but as he spoke only of the authority of the pope's bull, the Emperor's edict, the canons, and the impropriety of all such discussions, without any reference to scripture, he was given to understand that he was not observing the rule of the assembly. The prior of the Augustinians, a famous preacher, and much attached to the ancient orthodoxy, confessed that he could not refute the propositions of Zwingle, unless he were allowed to have recourse to the canon law. Zwingle immediately referred to a passage in the canon law, which showed that the scriptures alone were to be relied upon. The monk thus silenced, resumed his seat, muttering to himself, "The pope has decided: I abide by his decisions, and leave others to argue."

Leo Juda, to whom was entrusted the subject of the images, addressed the assembly at some length, proving from the scriptures, "that images are forbidden by the word of God; and that Christians ought not to make them, set them up, or pay them any homage." On the second day of the Conference, Zwingle introduced the subject of the mass, showing from the words of the institution, and from other portions of the New Testament, that the mass is not a sacrifice, that no one man can offer to God a sacrifice for another; and that the mode of celebrating the Eucharist in the church of Rome is quite different from the institution of the Saviour. The few feeble attempts that were made to sustain the established practice and doctrine, were immediately confuted by the two champions of the Reformation, to the entire satisfaction of the Council.

The Word of God Prevails

A deep and salutary impression was produced on the assembly. "Until this hour," exclaimed Schmidt, the commander of Kussnacht, "ye have all gone after idols. The dwellers in the plains have run to the mountains, and those of the mountains have gone to the plains; the French to Germany, and the Germans to France. Now ye know whither ye ought to go. God has combined all things in Christ. Ye noble citizens of Zurich, go to the true source; and may Christ at length re-enter your territory, and there resume His ancient empire." The aged warrior, Reust, turning to the Council, gravely said, though in military language, "Now, then . . . . let us grasp the sword of God's word, and may the Lord prosper His work." With such expressions of sympathy Zwingle was completely overcome. "God is with us," he said, with deep feeling, "He will defend His own cause. Let us go forward in the name of the Lord." Here his emotion was too great for utterance; he burst into tears, and many mingled their tears with his.

Thus the colloquy ended; it lasted three days; it was decisive in favour of the Reformation. The victory was undisputed. The presidents rose; Vadian of St. Gall, speaking on behalf of those who had presided with him, observed, "that no definite sentence was to be pronounced as the decision of the meeting. They had heard the testimony of God's word in support of the two propositions, and likewise what could be urged against them; each person must judge for himself what was the conclusion to be formed, and must follow the dictates of his own conscience." Reust joined in the exhortation, and "entreated all present to take the word of God for their only guide, and to follow it, fearing nothing." The meeting then closed.

Reflections on the Character of the Conference

All who know something of the value of the word of God, must reflect with supreme satisfaction on the rule by which these disputations were governed. We can never be too thankful for such an appreciation of the holy scriptures. In this respect Zwingle did a great and a noble work. He restored the Bible to its true place, and the people to their true privileges. Perfect freedom of discussion was allowed to both parties, with this stipulation-"that all arguments were to be derived directly from scripture, the sole standard of judgment; that all merely verbal disputes, and vain contentious subtleties, were to be instantly repressed." And this, let us bear in mind, this noble assertion of the authority and sufficiency of scripture was publicly made at a time when nearly all classes were only beginning to hear of the errors of popery, and of the character, if not of the existence, of the Bible. Many of the priests even had never seen one, and scarcely any of them had read it.

It required more than the commanding presence of Zwingle-more than his brilliant talents, his high cultivation, his natural eloquence, to maintain such a position. Nothing less than faith in the living God, and in the divine presence, could have sustained him at such a moment. Mere cleverness and superstition could then give, as they can give now, a thousand reasons why the dogmas of the papacy should be held supreme; but faith did then-as it must now-assail the whole system of popery as the imposture of Satan, and in direct opposition to the truth of God. In the face of nine hundred members of the Roman Catholic church, lay and clerical, Zwingle, Leo Juda, and others maintained, that the pure word of God, which should be in the hands of the people, was the only standard of faith and morals, and that all the time-honoured customs and traditions of Romanism, though sanctioned by the credulity of ages, and backed by the display of worldly power, were the mere inventions of priestcraft, and ruinous to the souls of men.

This was bold work, and at such a time; but when Christ has His right place in the heart, His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The word of God, we know, is the sword of the Spirit, by which all questions should be settled, and to which alone all Christians should appeal. One line of scripture far out weighs ten thousand reasons. But how far, we may ask, is this rule observed by Christians in the present day? Where shall we find such inflexible adherence to the plain truth of God? We know not where to look for it. But we hear on all sides of questions being raised as to the plenary inspiration of the scriptures; and that, as it is capable of various interpretations by the learned, it cannot be appealed to as decisive. Hence the invention of creeds and confessions as the bulwarks of the church in place of the word and power of God. Such alas! alas! is the growing infidelity of our own day, which will tend to the increase of Romanism, and to the final apostasy of Christendom. Meanwhile let all who love the Lord hold fast His word as unchanged and unchangeable. Thou, Lord, hath "magnified Thy word above all Thy name." And it still holds true, that, "them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." The Lord give us grace to honour His name by faithfully keeping His word, and, like the Master, be able to say as to all our religious observances, "Thus saith the Lord" .... "It is written," "it is written." (Rev 3:8; Psa 138:2; 1Sa 2:30; Matt. 4)

42 Results of the Disputations

Chapter 42

The Results of the Disputations

The authorities, though convinced that neither the mass nor the use of images could be justified by the word of God, did not think it expedient to abolish by law either the one or the other at that moment. Zwingle prudently recommended great caution and moderation. "God knows," he said to the council, "that I am inclined to build up, and not to throw down. I am aware there are timid souls who ought to be conciliated. The people generally are not yet sufficiently enlightened to receive with unanimity such extensive alterations." The magistrates, following his advice, allowed every minister to say mass or decline it, as he thought proper; reserving to themselves the right of ordaining at a future time what they should judge proper.

During this delay, the friends of the Reformation petitioned the council to release the persons imprisoned for throwing down the crucifix. All were set at liberty with the exception of Hottinger, who, because of the leading part he had taken in the commotion, was banished for two years from the canton of Zurich. This slight sentence, contrary to the intentions of those who passed it, was soon followed by a violent and cruel death.

The First Martyr of the Swiss Reformation

In proportion as the cause of the Reformation advanced, the rage of its adversaries increased. At a diet held at Lucerne, in the month of January, 1524, all the cantons were represented with the exception of Zurich and Schaffhausen. The clergy present endeavoured to excite the council against the new doctrines and those who had promulgated them. Alarmed at what might be the consequences of the changes which were taking place at Zurich, they were determined to be silent spectators no longer. Through the influence of the partisans of Rome in the council, an edict was passed, "forbidding the people to preach, or to repeat any new or Lutheran doctrine in private or public, or to talk or dispute about such things in taverns or at feasts, that whatever laws the bishop of Constance enacted respecting religion should be observed; that everyone, whether man or woman, old or young, who saw or heard anything done, preached or spoken, contrary to this edict, should give immediate information of the same to the proper authorities." Thus was the snare laid, through the subtlety of Satan, for the feet of the Reformers; and, the council being national, it was spread over all Switzerland. Hottinger was the first to be caught in its toils.

When banished from Zurich, he repaired to the country of Baden, where he lived by the labour of his hands. He neither sought nor avoided occasions of speaking about his religion. When asked what the new doctrines were which the Zurich pastors preached, he frankly conversed on the subject. He was now narrowly watched, and reported to have said, "That Christ was sacrificed once for all Christians; and that by this one sacrifice, as St. Paul says, He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; therefore the mass is no sacrifice; and that the invocation of saints and the adoration of images are contrary to the word of God." This was more than enough to condemn the unsuspecting man. He was denounced for his impiety to the grand bailiff, and very soon arrested. When questioned as to his religious belief, he did not conceal his convictions, and professed himself ready to justify what he had stated. He was convicted before the tribunal of having contravened an ordinance of the sovereign power, which forbade all discussions on the subject of religion. He was then removed to Lucerne, when he was condemned by the deputies of seven cantons to be beheaded.

When informed of his sentence, he calmly answered, "The will of the Lord be done! May He be pleased to pardon all who have contributed to my death...." "That will do," said one of his judges, "we do not sit here to listen to sermons; you can have your talk some other time." "He must have his head off this once," said another of his judges, "but if he should ever get it on again, we will then be of his religion." "To Jesus also it was said," he replied, "'Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.'" A monk presented a crucifix to his lips, but he put it from him, saying, "It is by faith that we must embrace Christ crucified in our hearts." He was greatly strengthened by the presence of the Lord when on his way to the place of execution. Many followed him in tears. "Weep not for me," he said, "I am on my way to eternal happiness." He preached the gospel to the people as one so near his end would, entreating them to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone pardon and salvation could be found. His last words on the scaffold were, "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit, O my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." In a few moments he was absent from the body and present with the Lord.

The tranquillity, courage, and wisdom which Hottinger showed before his judges, and on his way to the scaffold, give him a high place among those who died for the cause of the Reformation. Calmly and firmly in his last moments he prayed for the mercy of God in favour of his judges, and that their eyes might be opened to the truth. Then turning to the people, he said, "If I have offended anyone among you, let him forgive me as I have forgiven my enemies. Pray to God to support my faith to the last moment. When I shall have undergone my sentence, your prayers will be useless to me."*

{*Hess, p. 168.}

The Blood of Hottinger Inflames the Zeal of the Papists

The council of Zurich had protested against the irregularity of its allies in the condemnation of a fellow citizen; but in place of listening to remonstrance, their persecuting zeal was evidently inflamed by the execution of Hottinger; for scarcely was the blood of that innocent man cold when the diet determined on more vigorous efforts to crush the Reformation itself. They immediately resolved that a deputation should be sent to Zurich, the seat of the mischief, calling upon the council and the citizens to renounce their new opinions.

In accordance with this resolution an embassy was sent to Zurich on the 21st of March, 1524, in which all the cantons represented at Lucerne united, with the single exception of Schaffhausen. The deputies, in the most specious style of address, lamented that the unity of the ancient christian faith should be broken, and that universal sorrow should be occasioned by the unhappy changes which had lately been introduced: the delightful repose of church and state, transmitted from all antiquity, had been thus violently interrupted. "Confederates of Zurich," said the delegates, "join your efforts to ours; let us stifle this new faith; it had been well if this growing evil had been stopped in the beginning, and if, after the example of our ancestors, we had vindicated the honour of God, the blessed Virgin, and all the saints, at the expense of our lives and fortunes: the fruits of the doctrine of Luther are everywhere apparent in the menacing aspect of the people, who show themselves ripe for rebellion." Thus the deputation appealed to the Zurichers, and entreated them to dismiss Zwingle and Leo Juda, the instruments of communicating this contagion to the Swiss. That there were abuses in the ecclesiastical system, they readily admitted. "They were all oppressed by the pope, and his train of cardinals, bishops, and agents, who, by their usurpations, simony, and indulgences, exhausted the wealth of the country. They were willing to co-operate in any scheme for the correction of these evils and such as these; but the states in assembly could no longer endure the innovations which were sheltered and nourished by the Senate of Zurich."

Thus spoke the adversaries of the Reformation: and what reply can the council give to such fair speeches from so large a portion of the Helvetic body? The answer was immediate, firm, and noble. The death of Hottinger had not discouraged them, but rather raised their indignation against the states which had perpetrated it.

The Answer of Zurich to Lucerne

"We can make no concessions," said the Zurichers, "in what concerns the word of God. For five years past we have been listening to the sacred instructions of our ministers: at first their doctrine did seem new to us, as we had heard nothing of the like before. But when we understood and clearly perceived that this was its end and scope-to make manifest Jesus Christ as the author and finisher of our salvation; who died on the cross as the Saviour of mankind, and shed His precious blood to cleanse our sins away, who is now in heaven as the only Advocate and Mediator between God and man;-when we heard so salutary a message we could not refrain from embracing it with great eagerness." They then proceeded to reply at some length to the representations of the delegates, to expose the abuses of the Church of Rome, and to assert that all blessing to their souls and all harmony in the states must spring from obedience to the word of God. They reasserted that the single weapon for overthrowing the power, usurpations, and rapacity of the papists is the preaching of the pure word of God.

How interesting to the Christian reader of the present day to find that statesmen, warriors, and political bodies, so openly and with such wondrous faith, referred to the word of God in those times. It was their only standard of appeal and their sole rule in practice. It is too much taken for granted now that all are secretly governed by it, therefore there is no reference to it in our public assemblies. "There is nothing," said the senate in conclusion, "that we desire more ardently, than the universal prevalence of peace, nor will we in any respect violate our laws and treaties of alliance. But in this affair, which involves our eternal safety, we cannot act otherwise than we do, unless we should be first convicted of error. We therefore again exhort you, as we have already done, if you think our doctrine opposed to scripture, to point it out, and prove it against us; but we must entreat you not to delay the attempt beyond the close of the month of May; till that time we shall expect an answer from you and from the bishops, and from the university of Basle."

The Downfall of the Images

The appointed interval had elapsed, and as no reply was received from the Roman Catholic cantons, the council of Zurich determined to proceed in the work of Reformation. The decree for the demolition of images was passed in January, but the authorities were in no haste to have it executed. There is nothing more to be admired at this moment of our history, than the patient and considerate way in which this delicate matter was conducted by the magistrates. They delayed in the expectation that the work would be accomplished by the general consent, and not by the open violence, of the people.

At the request of the three pastors, Zwingle, Leo Juda, and Engelhardt, the council published an order to the effect that honour being due to God only, the images should be removed from all the churches of the canton, and their ornaments sold for the benefit of the poor; that the council prohibit all private persons from destroying any image, without public authority, except such as are their own property, that every separate church may destroy its images after a prescribed method; that those persons whose families had erected images in the churches must have them removed within a limited time, or they will be destroyed by public authority. By these prudent and moderate measures, of which Zwingle was the councillor, civil dissension was entirely avoided, and the work proceeded as if by the unanimous determination of the citizens.

The appointed officers, consisting of twelve councillors, the three pastors, the city architect, masons, carpenters, and other necessary assistants, went into the various churches and, having closed the doors, took down the crosses, defaced the frescoes, whitewashed the walls, burned the pictures, and broke in pieces or otherwise destroyed every idol, to prevent their ever becoming again the objects of idolatrous worship. The country churches, following the example of the capital, displayed even greater zeal in destroying their ancient decorations and the objects of their recent adoration. Zwingle speaks with a little playfulness of a famous stone statue of the Virgin among the nuns in Altenbach, held in great reverence, and of much miraculous celebrity. The monks affirmed that it could never be removed from its place, or at least it could never be kept from its venerated station. It had been repeatedly taken away, firmly fixed and fastened elsewhere, and even locked up, but it always reappeared the following morning on its former basis. But alas! it failed to vindicate the prediction of the monks; it quietly submitted to be roughly removed, and returned no more to its ancient position. Thus the idol lost credit with the people.

"I rejoice, then," exclaims Zwingle, "and bid all others to rejoice with me, that this most iniquitous imposture was at length removed from the eyes of men, for, when this was once accomplished, all the other figments of popery were overthrown more easily. To God, through whose power and grace all this has been accomplished, be praise and glory for ever. Amen."

The Swiss and German Reformation

Here, in the presence of such a mighty work of God's Spirit, it may be well to pause for a moment and contemplate the difference between the two great leaders of the Reformation, the character of their principles and action, and the consequent results. The difference has often arrested us, and sometimes we have referred to it, and as D'Aubigne, the warm-hearted champion of Luther, has noticed the difference we refer to, we may draw attention to it the more freely.

That which completely ruled Zwingle's mind, and all his teaching and actings as a Reformer, was his supreme regard for the holy scriptures. All religious observances that could not be found in, or proved by, the word of God, he boldly maintained should be abolished. His Hebrew Bible and his Greek New Testament lay on the table before him in the halls of discussion, and he would own no standard but these. Luther's principle of dealing with the old religion was of a widely different character. He desired to maintain in the church all that was not directly or expressly contrary to the scriptures. This is by no means a safe or a sound principle. It might be difficult to prove that certain things are expressly forbidden in the word of God, though it might be still more difficult to prove that they had any place in scripture. Truth is definite and positive, this dogma is loose and uncertain.

Even D'Aubigne admits that Luther rose up against those who had violently broken the images in the churches of Wittemberg, while the idols fell in the temples of Zurich by Zwingle's own direction. The German Reformer wished to remain united to the Church of Rome, and would have been content to purify it of all that was opposed to the word of God. The Zurich Reformer passed over the middle ages entirely, and reckoned nothing of absolute authority that had been written or invented since the days of the apostles. Restoration to the primitive simplicity of the church was his idea of a Reformation. There was therefore greater completeness in the mind of Zwingle as a Reformer.

Primitive Christianity had been transformed in its early days by the self-righteousness of Judaism and the paganism of the Greeks into the confusion of Roman Catholicism. The Jewish element prevailed in that part of her doctrine which relates to man - to salvation by works of human merit, or to trading in the salvation of the souls of men, as by indulgences. The pagan element prevailed especially in that which relates to God - to the innumerable false gods of popery; to the long reign of images, symbols, and ceremonies; to the dethroning of the infinitely blessed and all gracious God. "The German Reformer proclaimed the great doctrine of justification by faith, and with it inflicted a death-blow on the self-righteousness of Rome. The Reformer of Switzerland unquestionably did the same; the inability of man to save himself forms the basis of the work of all the Reformers. But Zwingle did something more: he established the sovereign, universal, and exclusive supremacy of God, and thus inflicted a deadly blow on the pagan worship of Rome."*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 3, pp. 356-359.}

The Marriage of Zwingle

Of the many innovations which were now introduced, none gave a greater scandal to the papal party than the marriage of the clergy. It was setting at defiance all ecclesiastical discipline, and by those who were naturally expected to be its guardians. To live, as if married, was overlooked, if not sanctioned, by the ecclesiastical authorities; but to marry was a mortal sin. Such was the morality of popery. But the Spirit of God was now working, and the eyes of many were being opened to the truth. One of the pastors in the city of Strasburg, who had been living like many others at that time, was led to see his sin and married immediately. The bishop, because it had been done publicly, could not overlook the offence, and caused a great stir to be made both in the church and in the senate. The time, however, was past for the bishop to have all his own way: numbers approved of the new doctrine, following the example of the pastor; and the magistrates refused to interfere.

In the month of April, 1524, Zwingle availed himself of the privilege which he had so often claimed for all the priesthood. His nuptials with Anna Reinhart, widow of John Meyer, lord of Weiningen, in the county of Baden, were publicly proclaimed, thereby setting a good example to his brethren. Only two of several children survived him, Ulric who became a canon and archdeacon of Zurich, and Regula who was married to Rudolph Gaulter, a divine of eminence. The following year Luther was married to Catherine of Bora. These events gave occasion to great calumnies; but as Zwingle had not been a monk, or his bride a nun, the scandal was not so enormous as in the case of Luther and Catherine.

The Progress of Reform

The Lord greatly blessed the labours of the Reformers in Zurich at this time, and stayed the cruel hand of their enemies. The word of the Lord had found its right place in their hearts, and, through them, in the hearts of the people. And God never fails to bless the people or the nation that honours His word. It is ever the certain pathway to the richest blessings. He still says, "Them that honour Me I will honour." (1Sa 2:30)

The downfall of the images was immediately followed by the voluntary dissolution of the two most important religious institutions in Zurich. The first was that of an ancient and wealthy abbey, of royal foundation, known by the name of Frauen-Munster, and used for the reception of ladies of quality. It was distinguished not only by very high antiquity but also by various immunities and privileges, and the possession of splendid revenues. This extraordinary society of females exercised the sovereign right of coining all the money circulated, and of nominating the persons who should preside in the tribunals of justice. The lady-abbess, of her own accord, surrendered all the rights and possession of the institution into the hands of the government, on the understanding that the funds should be applied to pious and charitable purposes, with a due respect to vested rights. The abbess, Catherine Cimmern, retired on an honourable pension and soon after married. In consequence of this change, the city of Zurich, in the year 1526, for the first time coined money and established courts of justice in its own name.

The chapter of canons also, of which Zwingle was a member, after arranging with the government respecting their rights and revenues, followed the example of the opulent nuns. The few remaining monks of the three orders were collected into one monastery; the young to be taught some useful trade, the aged to end their days in peace.

The news of these triumphs of the word of God rapidly spread over the mountains and valleys of Switzerland. The Roman Catholic cantons were exasperated. Facts were distorted, falsehoods were circulated; diets were assembled unknown to the senate of Zurich, and the deputies of the cantons bound themselves never to permit the establishment of the new opinions in Switzerland.

Meanwhile the pontiffs were not indifferent spectators. Clement VII addressed a brief to the Helvetic republic generally, which he saluted with the most profuse expressions of respect and benevolence. He also addressed himself in the most flattering terms to all - lay and clerical - who had exerted themselves in support of the catholic faith. Their zeal was "more glorious than all the victories and military achievements of their brave country;" and he further exhorted them to persevere in their laudable course, until they had extirpated the "Lutheran doctrines" from the soil of Switzerland.

Animated by this artful address, and roused by the proceedings at Zurich, the ten cantons, which had not avowed the reformed faith, assembled at Zug, in the month of July, and sent a deputation to Zurich, Schaffhausen and Appenzel. The delegates were commissioned to acquaint these states with the firm resolve of the diet to crush the new doctrines; and to prosecute its adherents to the forfeiture of their goods, of their honours, and even of their lives. Zurich could not hear such threatenings without deep emotion; but she was ready with her usual reply: "In matters of faith the word of God alone must be obeyed." On receiving this answer, the Catholic cantons trembled with rage. Lucerne, Uri, Schweitz, Zug, Unterwalden, and Friburg, declared to the citizens of Zurich, that they would never again sit with them in diet unless they renounced their novel dogmas. The federal unity was thus broken by the partisans of Rome; and, in spite of their oaths and alliances, they determined to arrest the progress of truth by the sword of persecution.

The Weapons of Rome's Warfare

Matters now began to assume a more alarming aspect. An event soon occurred which increased the misunderstanding of the confederates, and gave Rome the opportunity of showing with what weapons she was prepared to fight for the ancient faith.

The village of Stamheim, situated on the frontiers of Thurgau was dependent upon Zurich, except for its criminal jurisdiction, which was vested in the bailiff of Thurgau. This village possessed a chapel dedicated to St. Anne, and enriched by the gifts of a multitude of pilgrims. But, not withstanding these great advantages to the inhabitants, they were inclined to abandon their idolatrous practices and gains, and embrace the principles of Reform. Stamheim was at that time governed by a vice-bailiff, named John Writh, a worthy man, and an earnest Reformer. He had two sons young priests, John and Adrian, who had been stationed there by the council of Zurich for the instruction of the people. Full of piety and courage, and zealous preachers of the gospel, the citizens were taught to regard the honours which were offered to the patroness of their village as dishonouring to God and contrary to His holy word, and having received the edict of the council of Zurich on the subject of images, they burned the votive pictures that attested the miracles of St. Anne, and removed the images which had been placed in the public situations of Stamheim.

For the moment the popular feeling was in favour of Reform, but there were many still who clung to their idols with a tenacity peculiar to idolatry, and murmured deeply for the blood of their destroyers. Such carried their complaints to the grand-bailiff of Thurgau, named Joseph Amberg. This unhappy man was at one time inclined to the opinions of Zwingle; but when a candidate for the office of grand-bailiff, in order to obtain the suffrages of his fellow citizens, all zealous Catholics, he promised to use his utmost power to suppress the new sect in Thurgau. He would gladly have seized and imprisoned the offenders, but Stamheim was beyond his jurisdiction. His violent hatred, however, of the bailiff Writh and his sons he took no pains to conceal, nor of his purpose to be avenged because of the dishonour done to the images.

The Illegal Arrest of OExlin

The evil genius of Rome came to the assistance of Amberg. He saw that the minds of men were in that state of excitement which indicates a readiness for tumult and violence. This was his snare and a fatal one it proved. OExlin, a great friend of Zwingle's, and the principal apostle of the Reformation in Thurgau, was arrested in the hope of stopping its progress. At midnight, on the 7th of July, 1524, the learned and pious minister of Burg was seized by the bailiff's soldiers and carried off, in defiance of his cries and in contempt of the privileges of his position. The inhabitants, hearing the disturbance, rushed into the streets, and the village soon became the scene of a frightful uproar, but their pastor was not rescued, the soldiers were off, and the night was dark. According to the custom of those times, the tocsin was rung - the alarmbell; and the inhabitants of the adjacent villages were soon on the move and inquiring of one another what was the matter.

When John Writh and his sons heard that their friend and brother had been violently carried off, they hastened to join the pursuers. But they were too late; the soldiers, hearing the alarm, redoubled their speed, and soon placed the river Thus between themselves and the pursuing party. Application was made to Amberg for the release of OExlin on bail, but their terms were refused. Unhappily, a number of unprincipled, turbulent spirits, who always make their appearance in such tumults, became unruly. They applied for some refreshment at the convent of Ittingen, but not content with what they received, they began to pillage and drank to excess. Writh and his sons did their utmost to restrain them, but without success. It was believed by the populace that the inmates had encouraged the tyranny of Amberg, and that they should be revenged on the monks of Ittingen. While revelling in the store-rooms and cellars, a fire broke out, and the monastery was burned to the ground.

The Wriths Falsely Accused

This was enough for the evil purposes of the adversary. The grand-bailiff, in giving an account to his government of the fatal event, blamed the inhabitants of Stein and Stamheim, and above all, the bailiff Writh and his sons, whom he accused of causing the tocsin to be sounded; of being the authors of the excesses committed at Ittingen; of having profaned the host, and burned the monastery.

In a few days the deputies of the cantons assembled at Zug. So great was their indignation, that they would have marched instantly with flying banners on Stein and Stamheim, and put the inhabitants to the sword. "If any one is guilty," said the deputies of Zurich with more reason, "he must be punished, but according to the laws of justice, and not by violence." They also represented to the deputies of the cantons, that the grand-bailiff had provoked the commotion by violating the privileges of the town of Stein in the illegal arrest of the pastor OExlin. In the meantime the Council of Zurich sent one of its members, with an escort of soldiers to Stamheim - whose subjects they were - to seize the persons accused. Several consulted their safety by flight; but Writh and his sons, who had returned before the monastery was burned, and were living quietly at Stamheim, refused to fly, depending upon their own innocence and the justice of their government. When the soldiers made their appearance, the worthy bailiff said to them, "My lords of Zurich might have spared themselves all this trouble. If they had sent a child, I should have obeyed their summons." The three Wriths, with their friend, Burchard Ruteman, bailiff of Nussbaum - a man of the same spirit - were taken prisoners, and carried to Zurich.

After a three weeks' imprisonment, they were brought up for examination. They acknowledged that they had gone out at the sound of the tocsin, and that they had followed the crowd to Ittingen; but they proved that, instead of exciting the peasants to disorder, they had endeavoured to dissuade them from it, and that they had returned home immediately they knew that the grand-bailiff refused to set OExlin at liberty. Nothing could be proved against them; they had only acted according to the republican principles of their country, in turning out at the sound of the alarm-bell. They were pronounced, after a full examination, to be entirely innocent.

The Assembly of Baden

These proceedings were communicated to the cantons then assembled at Baden, but they were not satisfied. Jezebel's thirst for blood had been whetted by having her prey so near her grasp, and she determined on lengthening her arm, and making it secure. Contrary to the established customs of the Confederation, she demanded the prisoners to be given up, in order to be judged at Baden. The Zurichers refused on the ground that to them belonged the right to judge their own subjects, and that the diet had no right over the persons accused. On hearing this, the deputies trembled with rage. "We will do ourselves justice," they exclaimed, "if the accused are not delivered up to us immediately, we will march our troops to Zurich and carry them off by force of arms." Knowing the state of feeling against Zurich because of Zwingle and the Reformation, and dreading the calamities of a civil war, the resolution of the Senate was shaken.

Unhappy moment for the honour of Zurich! "To yield to threats," said Zwingle, "to renounce your just rights when the life of a subject is at stake, is a criminal weakness, from which none but the most fatal consequences can be expected. If the persons accused were guilty, I should be far from wishing to save them from the sword of justice, but since they have been judged innocent, why deliver them up to a tribunal, determined beforehand to make the whole weight of its hatred against the Reformation fall upon their heads?" The whole town was in agitation; opinions were divided. At last it was supposed that a middle course had been found. The prisoners were to be delivered to the diet, on condition that they would only be examined with regard to the affair of Ittingen, and not as to their faith. The diet agreed to this, and on Friday, August 18th, the three Wriths and their friend, accompanied by four councillors of state, and several armed men, quitted Zurich.

"A deep concern," says the historian, "was felt by all the city at the prospect of the fate which awaited the two youths and their aged companions. Sobbing alone was heard as they passed along. What a mournful procession! exclaimed one. God will punish us for delivering them up, cried another. Let us pray Him to impart His grace to these poor prisoners, and to strengthen them in their faith." The churches were all filled. Zwingle and others lifted up their voices; and who, we may ask, did not bathe with their tears those first-fruits to God of the Reformation in Switzerland?

The Wriths and Ruteman Falsely Condemned

When the prisoners reached Baden, they were thrown into a dungeon. The form of an examination began the following day; the bailiff Writh was first brought in. The Catholics, acting upon their old motto, "that it is wrong to keep faith with heretics," immediately questioned the bailiff concerning the removal of the images at Stamheim, and other points affecting his religion. The deputies of Zurich protested, reminding the diet that this was a gross violation of the conditions on which the prisoners were allowed to appear. But expostulations were of no avail now. The Zurichers and their appeals were treated with derision. The prisoners were put to the torture, in the hope of extorting from them some confessions which might give a colour of justice to the sentence which was already determined to be pronounced upon them.

The most cruel tortures were inflicted on the father, without regard to his character or his age; but he persisted in declaring his innocence of the pillage and burning of Ittingen. From morning till noon they practised their cruelties on the old man. His pitiful cries to God to sustain and comfort him, only called forth the impiety of his tormentors. "Where is your Christ now?" said one of the deputies, "bid Him come to your relief." His intrepid son, John, was treated with still greater barbarity. But nothing could move his constancy in Christ. He seems to have triumphed in his sufferings, and gloried in his cross. Adrian was threatened with having his veins opened one after another, unless he made a confession of his guilt. But he could only confess to having preached the gospel of Christ, and been married. When wearied with their work of torture, they sent back the faithful confessors of Christ to a loathsome dungeon; their bodies well-nigh racked to pieces, themselves strong in the consciousness of their innocence, and sustained by the presence and power of their Lord and Master, Christ Jesus.

The bailiff's wife, Hannah Writh, and the mother of the two young priests, hastened to Baden, carrying an infant child in her arms, to implore the mercy of the judges. With floods of tears she pleaded for mercy to her husband and her sons; she pleaded her large family, her husband's past services to the state and his country; but all in vain. Her entreaties, such as only a wife and a mother could pour forth instead of softening the judges, irritated them more and more, and betrayed that Satanic hatred to the truth which was the real cause of all their cruelties. One of the judges, the deputy for Zug, was led in the providence of God to give the most wonderful testimony to the character of Writh, and the treachery of his judges. "You know the bailiff Writh," said a friend of the distressed wife to him. "I do," he replied, "I have been twice bailiff of Thurgau, I never knew a more innocent, upright, and hospitable man than John Writh. His house was open to all who stood in need of his assistance, in fact, his house was a convent, an inn, and a hospital; and I cannot imagine what demon can have drawn him into this tumult. If he had plundered, robbed, or even murdered, I would willingly have made every exertion to obtain his pardon; but seeing he has burned the image of the blessed St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin, he must die; there can be no mercy shown him." The court broke up, the deputies returned to their cantons, the prisoners to their cells, and did not meet again till that day month.

The Martyrdom of The Wriths and Ruteman

At length those dreary four weeks passed away, and the deputies assembled to deliberate on the sentence. In solemn mockery of all justice, and with closed doors, the sentence of death was passed on the bailiff Writh; on his son John - who was the strongest in the faith, and who had led away others and on the bailiff Ruteman. Adrian - it may have been to color over the cruelty and injustice of this sentence - was given back to his mother's tears with a show of mercy.

The officers proceeded to the tower to bring the prisoners into court. On hearing the sentence, Adrian burst into tears. His father calmly embraced the brief interval, to exact from him a promise, that he would never, in any way, attempt to avenge their death. "My brother," said John to Adrian, "the cross of Christ must always follow His word. Do not then weep, my brother; resume your courage, preach the gospel of Christ, be constant in the cause of Christ. I can render thanks to my Lord this day, that He has honoured me by calling me to suffer and die for His truth. Blessed be His holy name for ever! His holy will be done!"

They were next conducted to the scaffold. The sufferings of these faithful men from their long detention in unwholesome dungeons, and from the tortures that were inflicted on them, made death a welcome messenger of peace. But that noble son - to be remembered with admiration and gratitude for ever - whose heart was filled with the tenderest anxiety for his father, sought in every way to comfort and sustain him. Floods of tears fell from all spectators, as he embraced his father, and bade him farewell on the scaffold. "My dearly beloved father, henceforward you shall be no longer my father, nor I your son. We are brethren in Christ Jesus, for the love of whom we are about to die. But we are going to Him who is our Father, and the Father of all the faithful; and in His presence we shall enjoy eternal life. Let us fear nothing!" "Amen," replied the father, "may God be glorified, my dearly beloved son and brother in Christ." The bailiff Ruteman prayed in silence.

All three knelt down together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in another moment their heads fell on the scaffold, and their happy souls had found their home and rest in the blooming paradise of God.

The crowd gave loud utterance to their lamentations. The two bailiffs left twenty-two children, and forty-five grandchildren. Hannah had brought up a large family in the fear of the Lord, and was greatly respected for her virtues throughout the whole district. But she had not yet drained the cup of her bitter anguish. She was condemned to pay twelve crowns to the executioner who had beheaded her husband and her son. Let the reader note the refined barbarity, the ignoble littleness, the cowardly persecution, the wanton cruelty, that delights in lacerating an already sorely wounded woman's heart. "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." (Gen 49:6)

Adrian Writh was released, with orders to make a public confession of his crime at Einsidlen; but he escaped to Zurich, where he found an asylum, became pastor of Altorf, and was the father of the celebrated Rudolph or Ralph, Hospinian, author of the Sacramentarian history. OExlin was released, after having been put to the torture at Lucerne. He likewise found a refuge in the canton of Zurich, and became a pastor there.*

{*For more lengthy details, see Life of Zwingle, by Hess, 178-194. D'Aubigne, vol. 2, chap. 5. Scott, vol. 2, pp. 494-501.}

43 Progress of Reform

Chapter 43

The General Progress of Reform

The Reformation in Switzerland had now been baptized in blood - the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. The adversary of the gospel had done his work - his cruel work; but it made all men thoughtful. The violence of the blow was felt by all classes throughout Switzerland. The power of Rome was weakened, the triumphs of the Reformation were accelerated. Even the heads of the Catholic cantons, notwithstanding their hatred against the Reformers, could not conceal from themselves, that the general corruption of manners, and the glaring immoralities of the clergy, rendered some reform absolutely indispensable. And seeing the indifference of the ecclesiastical authorities to all such matters, they resolved to provide for the wants of the church, and for the tranquillity of their common country. But the plan of the deputies was opposed by the whole clerical influence, and they had neither energy nor authority to press it. The future general council, so often demanded, so long promised, was again spoken of as the only hope of pacifying Christendom.

While these things were agitating the heads of the Catholic cantons, those favorable to the Reformation were drawing closer together. Zurich, Berne, Glaris, Schaffhausen, and Appenzell, formed an alliance for the more effectual spread of the truth, and for the protection of their rights and liberties. Such were the favorable results of the martyrdom of the Wriths. "Every time," says D'Aubigne, "that Rome erects a scaffold, and that heads roll upon it, the Reformation will exalt the holy word of God, and throw down some abuses. When Hottinger was executed, Zurich suppressed images, and now that the heads of the Wriths have fallen, Zurich will reply by the abolition of the mass."

Ever since the decision of the two conferences, the council of Zurich had been resolved to abolish the superstitious rites of the mass; but it was thought desirable to delay until the public mind should appear to be prepared for the change. The mass was therefore allowed to remain untouched after the removal of the images, but no priest was compelled to say it, nor any layman to hear it. It became generally neglected, and day by day it fell more and more into disrepute, so that the proper time for its total abolition seemed to have arrived.

The Abolition of the Mass

On the 11th of April, 1525, the pastors, Zwingle, Leo Juda, and Engelhardt, accompanied by Megander, chaplain of the hospital, and Myconius, preacher in the abbey church, presented themselves before the council, and recommended the immediate abolition of the sacrifice of the altar. One advocate alone presented himself to defend the established opinion. Engelhardt, formerly a doctor of pontifical law, explained the difference between the service in the Latin church, and the Eucharist according to the institution of Christ and the apostolic practice. All felt the solemnity and importance of the resolution which the council was called upon to take, and thought it well to adjourn the debate till the following day. And then, after some further conference between the divines and the senators, a decree was published to the following effect: "Henceforward, by the will of God, celebrate the Eucharist according to the institution of Christ, and the apostolic practice. Be it permitted to those infirm, and yet rude in faith, to continue the ancient practice for this time only. Let the mass be universally abolished, laid aside, and antiquated, so as not to be repeated even tomorrow." The altars were accordingly removed from the churches, and replaced by communion tables; the great body of the people communicated according to the new form; those who attended mass were even less numerous than the Reformers expected. Thus fell that mystery of iniquity, which had deeply impressed for centuries the feelings and the credulity of mankind. Mass had been celebrated in the Latin Church from an early period; but prostration at the elevation of the host, and other ceremonies, were of a later date.

The Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Zwingle, first of all, preached from the words, "It is the Lord's passover." After the conclusion of the sermon a table was covered with a white cloth, unleavened bread, and cups filled with wine, to recall the remembrance of the last supper of our Lord with His disciples. The minister then approached the table. The words of institution from the epistle to the Corinthians, and other portions were read aloud by the deacons. The crowd was so great, and the services so prolonged, that several ministers and deacons assisted. After prayer, and exhorting the people to self-examination, the minister lifted the bread, and, with a loud voice, repeated the institution of the Lord's supper. He then delivered the bread, and afterwards the cup, to the deacons, to present them to the people, and for the people to distribute them to each other. While the elements were passing round, one of the ministers read from the Gospel of St. John those ever fresh and ever blessed discourses, held by the Lord with His disciples, immediately following the feast of the passover, in chapter 13. After the supper the congregation all knelt down, and offered up their grateful adorations and thanksgivings; then hymns, full of the expression of love and praise to their Saviour and Lord, terminated this solemn and affecting scene - the first celebration of the Lord's supper by the Reformers in Switzerland. It occupied three days - Thursday in Passion Week, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

For the establishment of the good work in Zurich, and for the spread of the truth elsewhere, Zwingle, Leo Juda, and other learned men, published about this time, several useful works on the holy scriptures, such as the Pentateuch, and other historical books of the Old Testament, besides an able commentary on "True and False Religion."

We may now leave Zurich for a time. Having given a somewhat minute account of the work of God's Spirit there, we must be brief with the other places, as many fields still lie before us. Besides, there is a great similarity in the work in the different places.

The Reformation in Berne

Berne was one of the most influential states in the confederation; it numbered many powerful friends of the gospel, and many formidable adversaries. For the first few years after the appearance of Luther and Zwingle, a strong opposition was manifested to the new opinions. Nowhere was the struggle likely to be more severe. But under the evangelical preaching of Haller and Meyer the more violent prejudices began to soften down.

By the blessing of God on the labours of these devoted, earnest, and consistent men, the cause of truth prospered, and from an act of the government in 1523, we may conclude that the balance inclined to the side of the Reformation. It was decreed, "That as conflicting doctrines were delivered to the people and the preachers thundered against each other, they should all of them thenceforward preach the same gospel, namely, the doctrine revealed by God, and illustrated by the prophetic and apostolic writings; that they should propound nothing contrary to Holy Writ, whether on Luther's, or on any other authority, and avoid every discourse of a seditious tendency."

By this decision of the senate, the preaching of the gospel in all its fulness and simplicity was encouraged, and the word of God was established as the only standard of appeal in discussion, the only test of truth. Thus was the foundation surely laid of a true Reformation, and under the sanction of the government. But these advantages, intentional or unintentional, were sufficient to alarm the papists, and to drive them to their favorite weapons of intrigue, treachery, and violence. The two faithful witnesses in Berne, Haller and Meyer, must be silenced by fair means or foul. They were falsely accused, together with the famous Wittenbach, of having spoken to some nuns with the view of inducing them to leave their convent life, and were sentenced to banishment from Berne. But when the plot was discovered, the opposition on the part of the people was so great, that the matter was carried before the Great Council, which reversed the decision of the Smaller Council, and discharged the ministers, with an exhortation to confine themselves to their pulpits, and not to meddle with cloisters. This was all that these devoted men wanted - their pulpits. Thus the Reformation gained a fresh victory, and her enemies were covered with disgrace.

The Nuns of Konigsfeldt

A few months after this occurrence, the principles of the Reformation were greatly strengthened by the conversion of the nuns of Konigsfeldt. This was a wonderful triumph of the gospel. The monastery stood near the castle of Hapsburg, and was surrounded with all the magnificence of the Middle Ages. From the family of Hapsburg the imperial house of Austria sprang in the seventh century, and gave, in after years, many Emperors to Germany. Here the daughters of the nobles in Switzerland and Swabia used to take the veil. Beatrice of Laudenberg, sister to the bishop of Constance was one of the inmates. But the truth of God, which the bishop was seeking with all his power to suppress, was the means of the conversion of many of the nuns in this imperial monastery. The writings of Luther and Zwingle, and the holy scriptures, had found their way into this institution, and the saving change was accomplished. Nor need we wonder: God was working by His Holy Spirit, and the strongest prejudices and the greatest difficulties were overcome. The following letter, written by Margaret Watteville, a youthful nun and sister to the provost of Berne, will furnish a better idea of the fruits of the Reformation, and of the christian spirit that existed in those pious women, than any explanation we could give. She writes to Zwingle:

"May grace and peace in the Lord Jesus be given and multiplied towards you always by God our heavenly Father. Most learned, reverend, and dear sir, I entreat you to take in good part the letter I now address to you. The love which is in Christ constrains me to do so, especially since I have learnt that the doctrine of salvation is spreading day by day through your preaching of the word of God. For this reason I give praise to the everlasting God for enlightening us anew, and sending us by His Holy Spirit so many heralds of His blessed word; and at the same time I offer up my ardent prayers that He will clothe with His strength both you and all those who proclaim His glad tidings, and that, arming you against all the enemies of the truth, He will cause His divine word to grow in all men. Very learned sir, I venture to send your reverence this trifling mark of my affection: do not despise it; it is an offering of christian charity. If this electuary does you any good, and you should desire more, pray let me know; for it would be a great pleasure to me to do anything that was agreeable to you; and it is not I only who think thus, but all those who love the gospel in our convent at Konigsfeldt. They salute your reverence in Jesus Christ, and we all commend you without ceasing to His almighty protection. - Saturday before Loetare."

These pious ladies, believing that they could better serve the Lord outside than inside the walls of a convent, petitioned the government for permission to leave it. The council, in alarm at this strange proceeding, endeavoured to induce them to remain, promising that the discipline of the convent would be relaxed, and their allowance increased. "It is not the liberty of the flesh that we require," said they to the council, "it is the liberty of the Spirit." As they persisted in their petition, the government found it necessary at length to yield. And the decree which restored them to liberty contained a general provision for the liberation of all who, with the consent of their parents, might desire it. The convent gates were now thrown open, which greatly weakened the credit and power of Rome, and manifested the triumphs of the Reformation, for many of those ladies were in a short time honourably married.

The Conference at Baden

But although the principles of the Reformation were gaining ground rapidly, the Roman Catholic party was still very powerful and very active. A more decisive battle must be fought before victory can be declared.

Ever since the first conference held at Zurich, the bishop of Constance, or rather John Faber, his grand vicar, had been constantly deliberating by what means he could most effectually arrest the progress of the Reformation. Experience had proved that bishops' charges were little regarded; that writing books was hopeless, as the Reformers surpassed their adversaries in learning and talents; indeed, success seemed utterly hopeless unless the destruction of Zwingle could be accomplished. His popularity and influence were increasing day by day.

A political event which happened about this time yet further impressed upon the Romanists the necessity of some instant and vigorous measure. The battle of Pavia, fought between the French and the imperialists, threw a dark shadow over Switzerland, but shed a bright gleam on the wisdom, patriotism, and Christianity of Zwingle. More than ten thousand Swiss mercenaries had fought on that field so fatal to France. Between five and six thousand swelled the number of the slain, and five thousand were made prisoners. When these were released and sent home, their maimed and emaciated forms were like so many spectacles of horror wandering over the land, and were everywhere met by the wailings of the widows and the orphans of the slain. The people now remembered how often Zwingle had thundered against these foreign enlistments from the pulpit; and spoke of him as the truest patriot and their best friend.

The Romanists now saw that the general feeling was in favour of Zwingle, and that some means must be taken to check his growing influence. But how is this to be done? Who can solve the problem? We must go wisely to work. Jezebel, long in practice, came to their aid; and thus, we may say, she counselled. The first thing to be done is to induce Zwingle to leave Zurich. Of course he will come to the conference. Once out of the territory of that state, he would be in your power. You could seize him and burn him, and the death of the champion would be the death of the whole movement. The plan was approved, victory was certain. "The torrent once stemmed, the waters of heresy will retreat to the abyss whence they issued, and the 'everlasting hills' of the old faith, which the deluge threatened to overtop, will once more lift up their heads stable and majestic as ever." Faber communicated his plan to Dr. Eck, vice-chancellor of Ingolstadt who had acquired great reputation with his party by combating the opinions of Luther at Leipsic; and it was agreed that he should take charge of the plot.

This notorious and unscrupulous advocate of the papacy addressed a letter to the cantons, filled with invectives against Zwingle, and offering to convince him publicly of his errors, if they would furnish him with a favourable opportunity. "I am full of confidence," he said, "that I shall, with little trouble, maintain our old true christian faith and customs, against Zwingle, who has no doubt milked more cows than he has read books." A diet was at length fixed to be held at Baden - a Romish city, in May, 1526.

Zwingle and the other divines of Zurich were invited to attend, but the senate refused compliance. To send Zwingle to Baden, said the council, would be to send him not to dispute, but to die. There the blood of the Wriths was shed, and there the popish cantons were all-powerful: they had burned his books at Friburg and his effigy at Lucerne, and they were only thirsting to burn himself. Indeed the papal party took no pains to conceal their intentions towards Zwingle, whom they denounced in their public manifesto as a rebel, a heretic, and a perverter of scripture. With these threatenings before them, the council of Zurich decreed that Zwingle should not go to Baden. They also protested against the resolutions that might be taken by the diet, but offered Eck full security, if he would come and confer with the Reformer at Zurich. This offer was rejected, and the conference took place without the presence of Zwingle.

The Opening of the Diet

Faber, Eck, and Murner, accompanied by prelates, magistrates, and doctors, robed in garments of silk and damask, and adorned with chains, rings, and crosses, repaired to the church. OEcolampadius and Haller, two quiet timid men, were the only Reformers who appeared in the discussion. The same dogmas which had been replied to over and over again, were brought forward by Eck. The following are his seven propositions, as given by the learned and candid Roman Catholic historian, Du Pin. They will also place before the reader the figments of popery for which the papists were fighting, and for which they were ready to shed the blood, not only of their best citizens, but of the saints of God. 1. That the real body and blood of Christ are present in the sacrament of the altar. 2. That they are truly offered in the sacrifice of the mass for the living and the dead. 3. That we ought to call on the blessed Virgin and the saints, as our intercessors. 4. That the images of Jesus Christ, and His saints, ought not to be taken down. 5. That there is a purgatory after this life. 6. That infants are born in original sin. 7. That baptism takes away that sin.*

{*Du Pin, folio ed. vol. 3, p. 201; Hess, pp. 240-250.}

Eck alone spoke in defence of the popish doctrines; but the absence of Zwingle greatly disconcerted him, and nullified the chief object of the diet. "I thank God," wrote OEcolampadius to Zwingle, "that you are not here. The turn that matters take makes me clearly perceive that, had you been here, we should neither of us have escaped the stake. How impatiently they listen to me! but God will not forsake His glory, and that is all we seek." The assembly, being entirely governed by Eck, pronounced an excommunication against Zwingle and all his adherents, and particularly required of the senate of Basle to deprive OEcolampadius of his office, and to banish him. It also strictly prohibited the sale of the books of Luther and Zwingle, and forbade all innovations - all change in worship or doctrine, under severe penalties.

The papal party affected to make much of their victory at Baden, but victory was only in appearance. OEcolampadius was received with open arms at Basle, and Haller was retained in the exercise of his functions, notwithstanding the excommunications launched against him. The cantons of Zurich, Berne, Basle, and Schaffhausen, demanded permission to inspect the acts of the assembly, but they were not allowed to see them: on which account they refused all further concern with the official decision of the diet.

A dispute, which immediately followed on the return of Haller and the deputies from Baden, fairly tested the strength of both parties. For six months preceding the conference, the Reformer had suspended the celebration of mass in Berne. The smaller senate, influenced by the decrees of Baden, insisted on his restoring it. He firmly but respectfully refused, and appealed to the larger senate. They no doubt felt the difficulty of their position. Will they annul the generous edict of 1523, and confirm the persecuting mandate of 1526? The populace came to their help. The people, by whom Haller was much loved, assembled in multitudes, and expressed their determination not to be deprived of their christian pastor. The senate, yielding to the popular commotion, decreed: That he should resign his dignity, but continue in his ministerial functions, and that the celebration of mass should not be required of him. The day was evidently past for communities to be governed by papal edicts or alarmed by church censures. The strength of public feeling, embittered by religious strife, was far beyond their reach. The breach which separated the papal and the Protestant parties was widening day by day, and the spirit and position of each becoming more and more hostile.

The Catholic cantons, or those most firmly attached to the faith of their fathers, Lucerne, Uri, Schweitz, Unterwalden, and Zug, which are frequently spoken of as the five, perceiving the instability of Berne in the case of Haller, offered to the authorities to send deputies to assist in the maintenance of the old religion. This message, fortunately, offended the pride of Berne - a military state. The government replied: "That the embassy proposed was quite unnecessary, since the people of Berne were sufficient for the management of their own affairs, and the care of their religion was of all others most especially their own." They now revoked any engagement they had come under at Baden by their deputies, they confirmed the edict of 1523; and decreed that a public disputation should be held in their city during the winter following, for the final decision of the disputed questions.

The Great Conference at Berne

The bishops of Constance, Basle, Zion, and Lausanne together with all their most eminent theologians, were summoned to appear at this great conference, on pain of forfeiting such of their possessions as lay in the Bernese territory. They commanded all their own divines to be present, and stated that the holy scriptures would be the only standard of appeal. At the same time they published ten articles, to be maintained by the advocates of the Reformed churches, and to be the subject of the conference.

1. That the church of which Jesus Christ is the only Head sprang from the word of God, and subsists by the same word 2. That the church ought to observe no other laws, and is not subject to the traditions of men. 3. That the death of Christ on the cross is a sufficient expiation for the sins of the whole world, and they that seek salvation in any other way deny Jesus Christ. 4. That it cannot be proved by any testimony of scripture, that the body and blood of Jesus Christ is corporeally received in the sacrament. 5. That the sacrifice of the mass is opposed to scripture, and derogates from the sacrifice of Christ. 6. That Christ is the only intercessor and advocate for His people with God the Father. 7. That the existence of a purgatory cannot be proved from scripture; therefore, the prayers, ceremonies, and annual services for the dead are useless. 8. That the worship of images, statues, and pictures is contrary to the word of God. 9. That marriage is not forbidden to any order of men. 10. That all lewd persons ought to be put out of the communion of the church, as the scriptures teach us; for nothing is more unbecoming the order of priesthood than a lewd and unchaste celibacy.*

{*Waddington, vol. 2, pp. 327-336. Scott, vol. 3, pp. 1-25. D'Aubigne, vol. 4, pp. 361-385. Hess, pp. 250-258.}

Haller, the real author of the ten articles, naturally turned to Zwingle for help in their defence. "If you do not stretch out your hands to me," he wrote, "I fear all is over." The contest seemed unequal. On the one side the Roman hierarchy, with the sanction of ages, the prejudices of mankind, and backed by the authority of the civil power; and on the other side, Berthold Haller, a modest, timid preacher of the gospel. But the sword of the Spirit was invincible. Nevertheless the servant of the Lord had to prove, through deep exercise of soul, his own weakness and where his great strength lay. Zwingle, as well as OEcolampadius, promised his assistance. The decisive moment was at hand. The success of the Reformation throughout the whole of Switzerland was involved in the approaching assembly.

The Opposition of Rome

The Catholic party, apprehending the results of the conference, made great efforts to prevent it. They assembled at Lucerne, and strongly opposed the meeting, referring the Bernese to the disputation of Baden as having sufficiently decided the questions at issue. The Catholics of Germany also addressed a strong remonstrance to the government of Berne, dissuasive of the conference. "They implored them not to be seduced unto those novelties by the influence of a few foreigners, but to adhere to the religion of their fathers and forefathers, under the shadow of which they had achieved so many glorious victories, and extended so widely the boundaries of their dominions." To this plausible appeal the senate of Berne nobly replied: "That the religion of Christ that the salvation of souls, that the peace of the republic, were at stake; and that from a resolution thus grounded no reasons could possibly move them. " Other means of persuasion and intimidation were then attempted. The Friburgers even endeavoured to excite the people of Berne to rise against their rulers. Passports were refused to the evangelical ministers; and all persons were forbidden to pass through the territories of the Catholic cantons to the meeting. Nor did the Emperor suffer his numerous engagements to prevent his writing to the government of Berne urging them to change their mind and refer the whole question to a general council.

The reader must draw his own conclusions as to the motives of the Catholics in uniting all their energies to prevent the proposed assembly. They dreaded the light of plain scripture. Roman Catholicism can only exist in gross darkness as to the truth of God. But their remonstrances and menaces were all in vain. The senate was firm; and the evangelical principles had made such manifest progress among all classes of the inhabitants, that any attempt to arrest the cause of Reform would have immediately ended in a popular commotion and bloodshed.

The Opening of the Conference

On the 7th of January, 1528, the great conference was opened. None of the prelates, and very few of the higher powers who had been invited were present; yet a great number of ecclesiastics and learned men assembled from all parts of Switzerland and the surrounding countries. As many as a hundred evangelical teachers from Glaris, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Constance, Ulm, Lindau, Isenach, Augsburg, Strasburg, and other places proceeded first to Zurich, in order to go in a body with Zwingle. But so suspicious were the Zurichers of papal treachery, and so anxious about the safety of their own Reformer, that the magistrates sent forward his party under a strong military escort.

More than three hundred and fifty ministers of the gospel were present at the disputation. Many of those worthy men deserve a place in our history for the Lord's sake; but we can only give the names of a few. Haller was supported by Zwingle, OEcolampadius, Capito, and Bucer, the flower of the Swiss and Strasburg Reformation, there were also Pellican, Bullinger, Blaurer, Hoffmeister, Megunder, Zingk, Schmidt, the burgomaster Reust, and Vadian, consul of St. Gall. On the side of the papacy the cause was left, says Waddington, "to the feeble protection of men without talents or learning, or any sort of reputation or authority, not comparable to Eck and Faber - Alexius Grad, Tregarius, Buchstab, Egidius - names which appear on no other occasion on the page of history. But the positions of Haller were defended with much solid erudition and great and practised talents." If we accept a few feeble attempts by the papal party to disturb the unanimity of the Reformers, there was no feature of any remarkable interest in the whole assembly at least to readers in our day.

The Regulations of the Conference

Four presidents were appointed, and that everything might be recorded with unimpeachable fidelity, four secretaries were chosen - two by each of the two parties - and sworn to give a faithful account of the proceedings. The meeting took place in the church of the Franciscans, and lasted from the 7th till the 28th of January. Two sessions were held daily, and each session was opened with prayer. Perfect freedom of debate was allowed to both parties, with this one condition, "That no proof should be admitted but from scripture, nor any explanation of the proofs which was not also supported by scripture - no judge being allowed but scripture explained by itself, that is, by the comparison of more obscure parts with those which are more clear." The ten theses composed by Haller were successively discussed. Zwingle, OEcolampadius, Capito, Bucer, and Haller defended them alternately with so much success, that a great majority of the clergy of Berne, together with the canons the prior and sub-prior of the Dominicans, signed the ten articles, declaring that they judged them in perfect accordance with the sacred scriptures. The presidents of the assembly then exhorted the magistrates to adopt such measures for the interest of religion as they should deem wise and practicable.

The Results of the Conference

The authorities proceeded immediately to act upon the advice of the presidents. The altars were removed from the churches, and the images were destroyed, yet without disorder or bloodshed. They published a decree, with the concurrence of the citizens, proclaiming the ten articles as the creed of all. They further, by this decree, deprived the four bishops of all spiritual jurisdiction within their territories, ordering the removal of all such rural deans as opposed the Reformation, and the abolition of the mass and images at Berne for ever. Thus was the downfall of the papacy throughout that extensive canton completely accomplished, and the idols which had reigned for twelve hundred years were overthrown and destroyed in one day!

When Constantine made the profession of Christianity a pathway to worldly preferment, his heathen soldiers and senators eagerly rushed into the church. But alas! they brought their idolatries with them. It was then that statues, images, paintings, pomps, festivals, vestments, and the demigods of paganism were introduced into the professing church; and all this, that she might enjoy the favour of princes. From the fourth till the sixteenth century, idolatry was supreme, and the word of God was degraded and rejected by the dominant church. But now we see a greater than Constantine - son of a herdsman in the valley of the Tockenburg - the humble pastor of Zurich; standing before us, through grace, as the noblest champion of the word of God, and the most uncompromising enemy of the Judaism and the paganism of Rome, that the sixteenth century has furnished us with. Luther was a great Reformer as to doctrine, but feeble as to idolatry; Zwingle was valiant in both. Here, all praise be to the God of all grace, and the power of His Holy Spirit, Zwingle restores the long banished Bible to its right place, and purifies the church of its inveterate abuses.

Before leaving Berne, he went to the cathedral, where twenty-five altars and a great many images had been thrown down, and finding his way through these "eloquent ruins," he ascended the pulpit in the midst of an immense crowd. In great emotion he said, "Victory has declared for the truth, but perseverance alone can complete the triumph. Christ persevered even until death. Stand fast, my brethren, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Fear not! That God who has enlightened you, will enlighten your confederates also, and Switzerland, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, shall flourish in righteousness and peace."

The work was severely complete. "The citizens were commanded, without exception, to withdraw their obedience from the episcopal authorities; deacons, pastors, and all other ministers of the church, were absolved from their oaths of allegiance to the bishop; altars, images, and masses were abolished throughout the territory, together with the long list of pontifical observances and ceremonies, such as anniversaries of the saints, dedications of churches, the use of sacred vestments, fast-days and feast-days." The capital adopted the new form of worship, and in the space of a few months all the municipalities of the canton followed the example.

The Mercy of the Gospel

How seldom it has been our lot to witness a great victory celebrated by acts of mercy! Alas! this is a new thing in Christendom. It has never been so in the reign of Jezebel. Her disobedient children have either been drowned in blood or consumed in fire. But the principles of the papacy are essentially opposed to the mercy of the gospel. Fire and sword are the arguments of the one, love and mercy of the other.

At Berne, we find that the great triumph of the truth was celebrated by public rejoicings and deeds of mercy. The magistrates opened the prison doors; two men condemned to death were pardoned; others who had been banished from the republic were recalled - her exiles returned to their homes. Thus charity followed in the footsteps of faith and victory. "A great cry resounded far and wide," writes Bullinger, "in one day Rome had fallen throughout the country, without treachery, violence, or seduction, by the strength of truth alone." The monks resigned their monasteries into the hands of the magistrates: the funds were appropriated for benevolent and educational purposes, and the religious houses were converted into schools and hospitals. And now we find the princely monastery of Konigsfeldt was also devoted to the same useful purposes. "If a king or Emperor," said the citizens, "in alliance with us, were to enter our city, would we not remit offences, and show favour to the poor? And now the King of kings, the Prince of peace, the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, has visited us, and brings with Him the pardon of our sins, who only deserve eternal banishment from His presence. And can we better celebrate the advent of Him to our city than by forgiving those who have trespassed against us?"

In the same strain followed a moral and political regeneration, which was not among the least honourable or merciful accompaniments of the Reformation. All mercenary service to foreign powers was prohibited, and foreign pensions abolished.

At Easter the Lord's supper was celebrated for the first time according to the institution of the blessed Lord, and the practice of the apostles. As to Zurich, it was a time of great solemnity and deep interest. The citizens and their wives, in quiet sober dress, gathered round the table of the Lord, which recalled the ancient Swiss simplicity. The heads of the state, and the people mingled together, and each one felt that the Lord was present with them. "How can the adversaries of the word refuse to embrace the truth at last," said Hoffmeister, "seeing that God Himself renders it so striking a testimony?"

Thus was the Reformation established at Berne, and thus it has continued until the present day. If the disputation at Baden gave a temporary ascendancy to the papal party, it was more than counteracted at Berne. "The citizens of Constance, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Glaris, Tockenburg, and other places, in which the struggle was till that time undecided, now boldly declared their adhesion to the Reformation, and gave the customary proofs of their evangelical zeal by abolishing images, altars, and the mass."*

{*For lengthy details of the great crisis, see Scott, vol. 3. He quotes from Bucer's account of the meeting, and from Munster's. He also quotes from Gerdes, Ruchat, and others. Du Pin, in apologizing for the absence of the four bishops, says, "that disputes about matters of faith ought not to be determined by scripture alone, because everyone would explain it according to his own humour .... that the law of God had provided another way to decide all doubts in religion, which is, to apply themselves to the pope, and acquiesce in his determination." Such is the blindness of Rome's most reasonable, learned, and devout members.}

The Reformation of Basle

According to all history, the triumphs of the gospel in Berne produced a most sensible effect on several cantons; but more especially on those where the Reformed doctrines had previously found an entrance. Indeed, some venture to say that all Switzerland was moved by the decided part which that powerful canton had taken in the Reform movement. "It gave new life," says Wylie, "to the Protestant cause in every part of the country. On the west, it opened the door for the entrance of the Protestant faith into French-speaking Switzerland. On the east, in German Helvetia, the movement, quickened by the impulse communicated from Berne, was consummated in those towns and villages, where for some time it had been in progress. From the Grisons, on the Italian frontier, to the borders of the Black Forest, where Basle is washed by the waters of the Rhine, the influence was felt, and the movement quickened. The great mountains in the centre of the land where the glaciers have their seat, and the great rivers their birthplace, were alone unmoved: yet not altogether unmoved, for the victory of Berne sent a thrill of surprise and horror through the Oberland."*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 70.}

But the Reformation of the learned city of Basle was the most important consequence of the decisive step of the warlike Berne. In importance, it was next to Zurich and Berne in the Swiss Confederacy. We have already spoken of Basle in connection with the early days of Zwingle and Leo Juda, when they sat at the feet of the famous Wittenbach - the first to sow the good seed of the gospel in Helvetia. Capito and Hedio successively watered that precious seed by their prayers, and the public expositions of the gospel of the grace of God. And these were followed in 1522 by a yet greater evangelist, OEcolampadius. And here too, the writings of Luther were printed by the famous Froben, and scattered over Switzerland and other lands.

The People in Advance of the Government

For about six years, the gospel had been faithfully preached by the meek and pious OEcolampadius; but with all his scholarly accomplishments, he was wanting in decision and courage. It has been said by some, that what Melancthon was to the dogmatic Luther, OEcolampadius was to the prompt and courageous Zwingle. But the middle classes had been so taught by their pastor, that they were more in favour of a change of religion than the ruling powers. "There was," says D'Aubigne, "a triple aristocracy - the superior clergy, the nobles, and the university - which checked the expansion of christian convictions." And these authorities, failing to discern the exact moment for concession to popular opinion, were compelled to yield to the demands of the citizens, and to act according to their dictation; that which ought to have been characterized as a peaceful Reformation, was accomplished (through the temporising of the magistrates) by a violent revolution.

A few years previous to this fresh excitement in 1528, the senate issued an edict, "That there should be a uniformity in the religious worship, and that on some future day a public disputation should be held on the subject of the mass, and the question of its continuance decided by vote." By this decree, the council flattered themselves that they had laid the foundation of public peace; but, like all half measures in troublous times, it entirely failed of its object. Both the Roman Catholics and the Reformers continued to assail each other in public and private; but from the boldness and bitterness of the popish preachers, and their increasing violence, the citizens began to fear that they had their secret supporters among the leading men in the senate. This suspicion aroused the Protestants. They began to assemble in large numbers. But first of all they sent deputies to remind the senate of the obligation of their decree.

This was perfectly legal, and consistent with republican principles. But the friends of popery, who resided for the most part in Little Basle, which lay on the other bank of the Rhine, assembled in arms, and brandishing their swords and lances, endeavoured to obstruct the passage of the petitioners to the town hall. Meltinger, the burgomaster, and an intrepid leader of the papists, had great influence in the senate, and haughtily refused the petition. Meyer, who was also burgomaster, and an equally zealous friend of the Reformation, had with him the majority of the people. A collision became inevitable. "The fatal hour approaches," said OEcolampadius, "terrible for the enemies of God." Much debate ensued with no good results. The council affected to be neutral; trial was made of soft words, both parties were advised to retire to their homes; but it was too late: the tumult was gradually rising into a tempest. The deputies not only stood firm, but proceeded to demand "that those senators who encouraged the papal preachings, in contempt of the decree, and to the promotion of disorder and discord, should be deprived of their dignity." This, the senate altogether refused; and from this moment the agitation increased. Basle soon wore the appearance of a military camp, which an accidental blow might have changed into that of a battlefield.

Basle in a State of Siege

On the night of the 25th of December, the partisans of the bishop, alarmed at the appearance of affairs, met under arms, and raised the cry that an Austrian army was coming to their aid. This was the first formal departure from the legal course. The Protestants hearing this terrible cry, hastily arose from their beds, seized their arms, and repaired to the Gardeners' Hall, the rendezvous of their party. The news of what was going on in Basle brought many deputies from both Reformed and Catholic cantons, to express their sympathy and offer their mediation. But the Reformed citizens were anxiously awaiting the decision of the magistrates. Both parties remained under arms for several days and nights. All the gates of the city, except two, were closed; and strong guards were posted in every quarter. The senate continued its sittings; one edict after another was issued, but so temporising, that they increased rather than appeased the violence of the crisis. The Protestants, considering what was due to the glory of Christ, to public justice, and to the welfare of their posterity, repeated their remonstrances to the council, and demanded an immediate answer.

On the 8th of February, 1529, the senate replied, "That those senators whose removal was required should refrain from voting on religious questions, but should retain their seats and voices upon all others." The citizens began to fear from the delays required, and the half-measures proposed, that some evil design was thereby concealed, and that their liberties were in danger as well as their religion. This so incensed the citizens, that they took military possession of the gates and towers of the city, and demanded the removal of the suspected members without delay. However contrary such proceedings were, and ever must be, to the gospel of peace, we must bear in mind what the principles of a popular government are, what the education of those men had been, and that they were only emerging from the darkness of popery. But a merciful providence so overruled this great commotion that no blood was shed, though a great victory was gained.

For fifteen days the patience of the townspeople had been sorely tried by the halting policy of the council. Basle was on the eve of a civil war, and, what is worse, "a war of hearths." The senate was suspected of treachery. "The mass, the mass - or to arms! to arms!" was the Catholic cry, accompanied with a storm of insults, invectives, and sanguinary menaces. The Protestants replied, "No mass, no mass - not even a single one more: we will die sooner!" The senate was embarrassed. OEcolampadius retired to his pulpit, and preached meekness and patience with such unction that the people were melted to tears. Prayer was offered up to God that He would direct them to those measures that would be for His glory and the deliverance of His people from the superstitions of Rome. Sincerely believing that they were contending for their civil and religious liberties, they resolved not to yield. Twelve hundred men, all well armed, appeared before the senate house. "We must have your reply tonight," said they. It was nine of the evening. "Tomorrow," said the council, "we will give you an answer," and begged the citizens to retire in peace to their homes. "No eyes shall be closed tonight in Basle," was the substance of their reply. The Protestants resolved not to separate, and once more, and for the last time, they demanded the answer of the council that very night. The lords of Basle began to think they had trifled long enough; some concession must be made.

When near midnight they sent a messenger to say, "That all members of senate who were relatives of priests would be excluded from that body, and as to the rest of their demands, all things touching religion and policy would be regulated according to their wishes." This reply was so far satisfactory, but the citizens viewed it as little better than a further compromise, that their enemies might gain time; so they agreed not to separate nor to relax their vigilance.

The Idols Destroyed

While both parties were thus deliberating as to the future, an apparent accident speedily brought the whole matter to an issue. Those who had been appointed to patrol the streets, and to inspect all the posts in the city, entered the cathedral church of St. Peter. One of the men, urged by curiosity, opened a side door with his halberd, where a number of idols had been stowed away. One of them falling on the stone pavement was broken to pieces. The curiosity of the spectators was further moved by the sight of the fragments, and they began turning out the images one after another that were concealed in this closet. The floor was soon covered with heads, trunks, and broken limbs; the priests, who were not far off, raised a great outcry, and attempted resistance, but this only hastened the work of destruction. The rumour of a disturbance in the church flew rapidly through the city. Hundreds of armed burghers were immediately on the spot. The hour of religious fury had arrived. "Why should we spare the idols that light up the flames of discord?" cried the Protestants; and the cathedral was swept as by a hurricane. The altars were demolished, the pictures were torn down, the idols were overturned, and the fragments piled up, and set on fire in the public squares.

The priests, trembling with fear, hastened to conceal themselves from public view. The senate came together in amazement, and attempted to interpose their authority, and appease the tumult; but it was too late. They had failed in the first requisite in the art of popular government - the wisdom to discern the right time to meet the popular demand. The citizens were long patient, but their determination gradually increased, and the senate was blinded by the influence of a small faction within it; and now they must listen to the haughty reply of the people. "We are doing in one hour that on which you have been deliberating for these three years, whether it should be done or not." While the iconoclasts respected all kinds of private property, no symbol of idolatry was spared. Under the blows of these zealous burghers, all the idols in all the churches fell, and were cast into the flames, so that they lighted up the darkness of the night, and warmed the chilly and excited crowds.

The people carried the day, the senate submitted. Twelve members - opposed to the Reformation - were dismissed to an honourable obscurity, and the demands of the citizens were granted. "They decreed, 1, That the citizens should vote in the election of the members of the two councils; 2, That from this day the idols and mass should be abolished in the city and the canton, and the churches provided with good ministers to preach the word of God; 3, That in all matters appertaining to religion and the commonwealth, two hundred and sixty of the members of the guilds should be admitted to deliberate with the senate."*

{*Wylie's History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 75.}

Such were the triumphs of these two eventful days. They had secured the establishment of the Reformed religion; and gained, what were in their estimation, great civil advantages, and all without shedding one drop of blood. The two objects, civil and religious, were generally combined in the Swiss Reformation. "The commencement of the Reformation in Basle," says Ruchat, "was not a little tumultuous, but its issue was happy, and all the troubles that arose about religion were terminated without injury to a single citizen in his life or goods." All the trades met on the 12th of February, and took the oath, guild by guild, of fidelity to the new order of things. The following Sunday the Reformed worship was introduced in all the churches of Basle, with the singing of the Psalms in German: and in the course of the week a general amnesty was proclaimed, covering all offences.

The Results of the Revolution

Everything was now changed in Basle. The leaders of the papal party, priests, scholars, and monks, prepared to leave it. Not however, from any fear of bodily harm, but from their dislike to the Protestant faith. Many of them were courteously entreated to remain; Erasmus especially-the most eminent person who withdrew from Basle at this time. In writing to his friend Pirkheimer, a little before his departure he says: "OEcolampadius made me the offer of his sincere friendship; which I accepted on condition that he would allow me to differ from him on certain points. He would have persuaded me not to leave Basle. I told him that it was with reluctance I quitted a city, which, on so many accounts, was highly agreeable to me; but that I could not longer support the odium to which a continuance there would expose me, as I should be thought to approve the public proceedings of the place." Soon after this friendly interview he took his departure and removed to Friburg. His salaries, his credit with the great, with the pope and the papal party, were in danger if he remained any longer in that polluted residence. But so prone was this great man of letters to sarcasm and jesting, that he could not restrain his wit against the superstition of his own party. "So many were the insults heaped upon the images and crucifixes," he says, "as to make it strange, that those holy saints, who had been wont to display such prodigies of power on very slight offences, should have refrained, in this important emergency, from the display of their miraculous energies."

New professors, to supply the place of Erasmus and others, were invited to fill the vacant chairs in the university, and in particular, Myconius, Phrygio, Munster, and Grynaeus. At the same time an ecclesiastical order, or confession of faith, was published, which is considered one of the most precious documents of this epoch.*

{*Scott, vol. 3, p. 40; Waddington, vol. 2, p. 321; D'Aubigne, vol. 4, p. 416.}

The Sacramental Dispute

About the period at which we have now arrived, one of the most grievous sources of discouragement to the Reformers, both in Germany and Switzerland, was the dispute which arose about the sacrament of the supper, commonly called the sacramentarian controversy. Luther, it will be remembered,* whom God used to raze to the ground almost every part of the Romish system, retained to the end of his days a superstitious reverence for a certain materialism in the supper which he called consubstantiation; that is, "he believed in the presence of the flesh and blood of Christ with, in, or under, the bread and wine." He did not believe like the Romanist, that the Lord's supper was a sacrifice, or that the body of Christ in the elements should be worshipped; but he maintained that the body was there, and received, not merely by faith, but corporeally by the communicant. Zwingle, on the other hand, was extremely simple in his views of the sacred supper. He maintained that its grand design was a memorial or commemoration. "This do in remembrance of Me." At the same time he affirmed that it can only be properly commemorated in faith. We show the Lord's death-His death for us, the blood shed by which our sins are washed away. We thus rest in faith upon His death as the sure ground of our eternal life, and joyfully feed on the rich spoils of accomplished redemption.

{*See details, pp. 781-790.}

"His precious blood was shed,
His body bruised for sin;
Remembering this, we break the bread,
And, thankful, drink the wine."

But as we have already described the conference of Marburg, we return and take up the thread of our history.

44 Extension in Switzerland

Chapter 44

The Extension of Reform in Switzerland

The Reformation was now established in the three principal cantons, Zurich, Berne, and Basle. The example of these powerful states, greatly influenced a considerable part of German Switzerland. In many places the citizens, who had been inclined to the Reformation but were undecided, now boldly declared their faith in the new doctrines. Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Glarus, Bienne, Thurgau, Bremgarten, Tockenburg, Wesen, and other parts of less consideration, were entirely or partially reformed. The effect of the discussions, followed by the zeal of those great centres, was also felt in French Switzerland, "lying at the foot of the Jura, or scattered amid the pine-forests of its elevated valleys, and which up to this time had shown the most absolute devotion to the Roman pontiff."

The Mingling of Spiritual and Political Affairs

But here we must pause for a moment and draw attention to the great and common mistake of Protestantism from the beginning-that of looking to the secular arm for protection in place of simply witnessing for the truth, and trusting in the living God. No sooner had the Reformers broken with Rome, than they, as if terrified by her remaining power, stretched out their hands to the civil governments and sought the shelter of their armies.

Luther, it is true, objected to the force of arms in the furtherance of the truth, and looked for the triumphs of the gospel through the faithfulness of its friends; yet, as we have seen, he agreed to the princes assuming the entire control over ecclesiastical and spiritual affairs from an early period of the Reformation. But Zwingle went much farther in this dangerous course. When troubles arose, and dangers beset the vessel of the Reformation, through the treachery of the Catholic cantons, he thought it his duty, like a true republican or a christian patriot, to examine federal questions, to counsel the senate, and to sanction an appeal to arms. But the end of these unscriptural proceedings, as we shall soon painfully see, was the inglorious death of the illustrious Reformer, and an almost fatal blow to the evangelical cause in Switzerland.

From the time that the Reformed states assumed, or rather usurped the functions of the church, and the ministers of the gospel interfered with politics, the clouds began to lower and the storm to gather. Desirous no doubt to strengthen the good work within their cantons, and of extending it without, the magistrates of Zurich and Berne published several edicts prohibiting their subjects from attending mass and from speaking unfavourably of the recent changes, and ordered a better attendance on evangelical services: and also, for the purification of morals, they issued a general proclamation against festivities, drunkenness, and blasphemy. But while the civil authorities were thus enforcing their religion by edicts, Zwingle descended from his sacred vocation to that of a political diplomatist. From this time the almighty arm of a divine providence, which had sheltered the great Reformer and the Swiss Reformation, seemed to be withdrawn, and the council of Zurich, though for a time boastful, was smitten with indecision, weakness, and folly.

The First False Step-"A Confederacy"

Influenced, or rather misled, as we believe, by his republican education, Zwingle thought it but right for the Reformers and the Reformation to form a league of self-defence. Having long foreseen that the Reform movement would eventually divide his beloved country into two camps he thought himself perfectly justified in promoting an alliance with the evangelical states. In the year 1527 he proposed what was called a Christian Co-Burghery, in which all the professors of the gospel might be united in a new Reformed confederation. Constance was the first to intimate her approval of the new league; Berne, St. Gall, Mulhausen Basle, Schaffhausen, and Strasburg followed. "But this Christian Co-Burghery," says D'Aubigne, "which might become the germ of a new confederation, immediately raised up numerous adversaries against Zwingle, even among the partisans of the Reformation." The pastor of Zurich was now on dangerous ground, which the end too speedily proved. As a citizen he had been taught to consider the regeneration of his country as a part of his religion, and the church in which he was cradled had for centuries wielded two swords. Even in the present day we are surprised to find how much Continental Christians are governed by what is national.

Luther, who was an imperialist, was entirely opposed to the policy of carnal resistance. "Christians," he said, "ought not to resist the Emperor, and if he requires them to die they are to yield up their lives."

The Five Cantons Form a League with Austria

The Roman Catholics, on hearing of this new alliance of the Protestants, were filled with alarm and indignation. The five, or forest cantons, Lucerne, Zug, Schweitz, Uri, and Unterwalden, remained firm in their fidelity to Rome. The herdsmen of those mountains, long wedded to their habits, their traditions, and their religion, heard with grief and dismay of the terrible wickedness of the heretics in the plains below. As priests and monks arrived in the Oberland from those scenes of daring impiety, and told their wondrous stories to the excited mountaineers, they were inflamed to madness. This cannot be borne with! this pestilent heresy must be exterminated by fire and sword, was their first thought; and they burned with desire to light the faggots.

Almost entirely ignorant of the meaning of the word Reform, we can easily imagine their feelings when messenger after messenger came running to tell them that the altars at which their fathers had worshipped were being cast to the ground, that the images were ignominiously burnt in the public squares, that mass was abolished, and that the holy priests and monks were driven into exile. Their fanatical zeal being thus raised to the highest pitch, and fanned by the artful monks, they were ready for anything desperate; and they were only restrained from proceeding immediately to open violence by the superiority, both in numbers and power, of the Protestant cantons. The bishop of Constance also appealed to them by letter, entreating them to act with firmness, or all Switzerland would embrace the Reform.

What is to be done? was now the important question. We can sit still no longer! To form an alliance with a foreign power without the consent of all the other cantons would be a violation of the fundamental principles of the Helvetic Confederation, and of the league of brotherhood. Nevertheless, allies we must have, and the claims of the church are higher far than fidelity to the nation. And knowing that Ferdinand, brother of Charles V., and Archduke of Austria, was distinguished for his hatred of the Protestants, they entered into an alliance with this prince for the extirpation of Reform, and the maintenance of Romanism.

This was unconstitutional, unnatural, and cruel. Austria was the ancient oppressor and the natural enemy of the Swiss nation-the last quarter from which a Swiss canton might have been expected to seek help. "Had they forgotten," exclaims a modern writer, "the grievous yoke that Austria made them bear in other days? Had they forgotten the blood it cost their fathers to break that yoke? Were they now to throw away what they had fought for in the gory fields of Morgarten and Sempach? They were prepared to do this. Religious antipathy overcame national hatred. Terror of Protestantism suspended their dread of their traditional foe."* The alliance was so contrary to all national feeling and prejudice, that the Austrians had some difficulty in believing it to be in good faith. "Take hostages," said the mountaineers, "write the articles of treaty with your own hands; command, and we will obey!" The league was concluded, and sworn to on both sides, the 23rd of April 1529, at Waldshut. It decreed, "that all attempts at forming new sects in the five cantons should be punished with death And in case of emergency, Austria shall send into Switzerland six thousand foot soldiers, and four hundred horse, with all requisite artillery. And if necessary, the Reformed cantons shall be blockaded, and all provisions intercepted."

{*Wylie's History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 76.}

The report of these negotiations excited great distrust and alarm even among the enemies of the Reformation. By leaguing themselves thus with a foreign power, it was said they were compromising the independence of Switzerland and, instead of an ally, they would find a master. But these feelings, as the first blush of their patriotism, were soon extinguished by their hatred of the Zwinglians. The men of Unterwalden and Uri, in their fanatical zeal, suspended the arms of Austria with their own, and decorated their hats with peacocks' feathers-the badge of Austria. This gave rise to the following lines which expressed the national feeling:

"Wail, Helvetians, wail,

For the peacock's plume of pride

To the Forest-canton's savage bull

In friendship is allied."

The eight cantons not included in this alliance, with the exception of Friburg, united in sending deputies to their mountain confederates, with a view to reconciliation. But they were everywhere disrespectfully treated. Feeling that they had the imperial army to fall back upon, the papists offered every kind of insult to the doctrines and persons of the Reformers. "No sermon, no sermon!" they cried, "would to God that your new faith was buried for ever!" The deputies, retiring in astonishment, were still further shocked in passing the door of the secretary of state, where they saw the arms of Zurich, Berne, Basle, and Strasburg, hanging from a lofty gibbet.

The Romish Cantons Persecute the Reformed

Thus war seemed inevitable. All things were tending to an open and immediate rupture. The men of the mountains became violent. In order to defend the religion of their fathers, and to exclude the new doctrines from their subjects, they began to fine, imprison, torture, and put to death the professors of the Reformed faith. One of these cases, however, was so atrocious, that it roused the feelings of mankind, and speedily brought matters to a crisis.

James Keyser, a pastor of the canton of Zurich, and a father of a family, was making his way on Saturday, 22nd May, to Oberkirk, in the parish of Gaster, where he was to preach on the Sunday. When quietly and confidently walking along a woody part of the road, which he had often gone before, he was suddenly seized by six men, posted there to surprise him, and carry him off to Schweitz. He was brought before the magistrates, tried, and condemned to be burnt alive, on no other pretence than that he was an evangelical minister. The remonstrance of Zurich, to whose territory he belonged, was treated with derision, and the barbarous sentence was carried into execution. When first the pious man heard his sentence, he burst into tears; but before the hour of his martyrdom arrived, the grace of God had so revived his courage, and filled him with joy, that he walked cheerfully to the stake, fully confessed his faith, and thanked the Lord Jesus in the midst of the flames, even to his latest breath, that He had counted him worthy to die for the gospel. "Go," said one of the Schweitz magistrates, with a sarcastic smile, to the Zurich deputies, "Go, and tell them at Zurich how he thanks us!" This was a defiant challenge to the men of Zurich, and so they understood it.

War Declared

The Zurichers, exasperated at this outrageous conduct, and regarding it as an affront to themselves, declared war against the five cantons. While it is the duty of the magistrates to defend the oppressed against the oppressor, it is the duty of the minister of Christ, to abide by his sacred calling, and only bring into the field the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. But here alas! impartial history has recorded the sad departure of the great Reformer from the gracious precepts of his Master, of which he ought to have been a living witness. The burning pile of his brother minister kindled the strongest passions of his soul as a citizen and a patriot. He raised a cry against the bigotry and intolerance of the Forest-cantons which resounded through all the Confederation.

He called for the most energetic measures on the part of the authorities. In the council, in the pulpit, he exhorted them to take up arms, to be firm and fear not. Identifying himself with the army, of which he was chaplain, he exclaimed, "We thirst for no man's blood, but we will clip the wings of the Oligarchy; if we shun it, the truth of the gospel and the lives of ministers will never be secure among us. We must trust in God alone; but when we have a just cause, we must also know how to defend it, and, like Joshua and Gideon, shed blood in behalf of our country and our

Had Zwingle been a magistrate in the council, or a general in the army, his appeals would have been consistent and inspiring; but he had forgotten that he was a minister of the Prince of peace, and that the weapons of his warfare were not to be carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through the power of God. At the same time we must remember that it was against political abuses, and not against a difference of faith that he called for force. "As for the mass, rites, idols, and superstitions," he said, "let no one be forced to abandon them. It is for the word of God alone to scatter with its powerful breath all this idle dust. Let us propose to the five cantons to allow the free preaching of the word of the Lord to renounce their wicked alliances, and to punish the abettors of foreign service."*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 4, p. 477.}

Military Preparations

Meanwhile the popish cantons were not idle. They knew what they had done, and what they had to expect. The war of religion was begun. The sound of the warhorn re-echoed in the mountains and the valleys: men were arming in every direction; messengers were sent off in haste to Austria; but Ferdinand, having been attacked by the Turks, could not furnish them with the troops he had promised. Nevertheless, firmly united among themselves, the men of the five cantons marched under the great banner of Lucerne, on the 8th of June, to join battle with the Reformers. Zurich saw there was not a moment to be lost. Four thousand men, on the 9th of June, well armed, issued from the gates of Zurich to meet the foe. The walls and towers were crowded with spectators to witness the departure, among whom was Anna, the wife of Zwingle. At nine in the evening they arrived at Cappel, a village on the frontiers of Zurich and Zug. At day-break, on the morning of the 10th, the Zurich warriors sent a herald with a formal declaration of war, and of the rupture of the alliance. Immediately the small town of Zug was filled with cries and alarm. The sudden march of the Zurichers had taken them by surprise; great consternation prevailed: men hasting to put on their armour, and women and children in tears.

But just as the first division of the Zurich army, consisting of two thousand men, was preparing to cross the frontier, a horseman was observed spurring his steed up the hill at full gallop. It was OElbi, Landamman of Glaris. "Halt!" he cried, with great emotion; "I am come from our confederates. The five cantons are prepared, but I have prevailed upon them to halt if you will do the same. For this reason I entreat my lords and the people of Zurich, for the love of God and the safety of the Confederation, to suspend their march at the present moment. In a few hours I shall be back again. I hope, with God's grace, to obtain an honourable peace, and to prevent our cottages from being filled with widows and orphans."*

{*D'Aubigne, vol 4, p. 480. Wylie, vol. 2, p. 82.}

OElbi was thought to be an honourable man, and friendly to the gospel; therefore the Zurich captains suspended their march. Many believed his embassy to be peace, but Zwingle suspected treachery. Troubled and uneasy in his camp, he beheld in OElbi's intervention the subtlety of Satan. Unable to obtain assistance from Austria at that moment, they feigned a desire for peace in order to gain time. With something like a prophetic vision, Zwingle went up to OElbi, whom he knew well, and earnestly whispered in his ear, "Godson Amman, you will have to answer to God for this mediation. Our adversaries are in our power; this is why they give us sweet words. By-and-by they will fall upon us unawares, and there will be none to deliver us." No prophecy was ever more literally fulfilled, as we shall soon see. "My dear godfather," replied OElbi, "let us act for the best, and trust in God that all will be well." So saying, he rode off to Zug, leaving Zwingle in deep thought, anticipating a dark and terrible future. "Today they beg and entreat," said he, "and in a month, when we have laid down our arms, they will crush us."

The Treaty of Cappel

The deputies of Zurich and of the Romanists, with the exertions of the neutral cantons, were sixteen days in drawing up and agreeing to the articles of peace. During this time the soldiers of both armies behaved in the most orderly and friendly manner. They seemed to remember only that they were all Swiss. In the camp of Zurich, Zwingle, or some other minister, preached every day. "No oath or dispute was heard; prayers were offered up before and after meals; and each man obeyed his superiors. There were no dice, no cards, no games calculated to excite quarrels; but psalms, hymns national songs, and bodily exercise, were the military recreations of the Zurichers. At length a treaty was concluded on June 26th, 1529, which, as Zwingle thought, was only a suspension of the storm. The warriors now struck their tents and returned to their homes. "

The terms of this treaty, though not all that the Protestants desired, were nevertheless favourable to Reform, yet not unfavourable to the Catholics. It was agreed that the Forest-cantons should abandon their alliance with Austria that liberty of conscience should be guaranteed to all subjects; and that the smaller parishes should decide by a majority of votes which religion they would profess. The people of Zurich-not Zwingle-were elated with the success which had crowned their warlike demonstration. The Bernese, who had contributed nothing towards this bloodless victory, were becoming jealous of the growing influence of Zurich, and, unhappily, a spirit of disunion sprang up between those powerful states, which led to the great catastrophe of 1531.

Zwingle's Christian Confederation

Just at this time, when the mind of Zwingle was too much occupied with politics, he fell into the snare of the enemy. Satan knew his weak point as a Christian, and tempted him with grand ideas of the unity of all Switzerland, and of the Reformed Christendom, by a unity of faith. His motives, no doubt, were of the purest and loftiest character. Meditating day and night how he might advance the Reformation, and overthrow that terrible power which had held the nations of Europe so long in bondage, the idea of a holy confederation consisting of all the Protestant states and nations of Europe filled his active mind. All Christendom was under his eye. No man of his day had such a comprehensive grasp of its condition-political, military, and religious. But not seeing the difference between the principle of law in the Old Testament, and of grace in the New, he honestly thought that it was the duty of the Protestant states to put forth their military power in defence of the gospel. "Why should not," he said, "all the Protestant powers unite in a holy confederation for the purpose of frustrating the plans which the pope and the Emperor are now concocting for the violent suppression of the Reformation?"*

{*Wylie, vol. 2, p. 86.}

This colossal scheme of the Reformer led him into many negotiations to which we need not refer. While they would have done honour to a statesman, they were a reproach to a christian minister. But whatever were his projects, or whatever his mistakes, his object was one, and a noble one-the spread and establishment of the pure gospel all over his native land. This to Zwingle was dearer far than life; and the Master knows how to give His servant credit for a good motive, even though He cannot approve of his work. Besides, it is positively affirmed that Zwingle never abated for a moment his pastoral labours; that he was present on all occasions when his duty called him.

The Five Cantons Violate the Treaty

The popish cantons, enraged at the progress of the Reformation, and its near approach to their own gates, were eager to find some pretext for ridding themselves of the treaty of Cappel. This was not difficult to find. They had never really kept it. What was called in the treaty "liberty of conscience," or what was beginning to be called by the Protestants "the rights of conscience," the Catholics never acknowledged. They knew no distinction between religious and civil obedience. With this fundamental position of the Protestants, the Catholics never could for a moment agree. It necessarily became a principal matter of contention, and the source of innumerable local jealousies and controversies, which daily increased the irritation, and determined the mountaineers openly to violate the treaty.

The cup of Catholic indignation was at length full. Blood! blood! was the cry. Nothing but the blood of living Christians could atone for the destruction of the dumb idols; nothing but the burning piles of God's saints could answer for the ashes of their altars and images. Oh Rome! Rome! when wilt thou be satisfied with the blood of God's redeemed? Thy thirst is unquenchable. The oceans which thou hast shed have only inflamed it. On every possible occasion during thy usurped dominion we see thee thirsting for blood. But what will it be when thy reign is ended, and no more blood to shed? That awful word "remember" will throw thee back over the past and fill thee with visions of blood, visions of the dungeons of the Inquisition, and of the flames of thy innocent but helpless victims. Then all will be changed. Unmingled, unending blessedness, shall be their happy portion; but what of that place where the flames shall never be quenched, where the worm shall never die, where the visions of the past shall ceaselessly flit before thy sleepless restless soul, and where one drop of cold water shall never be procured to cool thy burning tongue? There we must leave thee to the fruitfulness of thy memory, the accusations of thy conscience, and the upbraidings of those whom thou didst deceive by thy sorceries, and drag down by thy delusions to those regions of endless woe.

The Flames of Persecution Rekindled

Switzerland was now divided into two camps, and the gulf which separated them was daily widening. The Forest cantons, backed by the Emperor of his brother Ferdinand, recommenced the persecution of the Protestants with more fury than ever. They indulged in the most atrocious barbarities. The preachers and the professors of the Reformed faith wherever they could find them, they imprisoned, confiscated their goods, cut out their tongues, beheaded, and burned them alive. Those who escaped their intolerance implored the protection of Zurich. Under these circumstances, Zwingle thought it his duty to raise his voice and arouse the confederate cantons. He visited many places in person, addressed large assemblies, appealed to everything that could stimulate the zeal of the people for the defence of the gospel and the liberty of the subject. "These are Swiss," said he, "whom a faction is attempting to deprive of a portion of their liberty transmitted to them from their ancestors. If it would be unjust to attempt to force our adversaries to abolish the Romish religion from among them, it is no less so to imprison, to banish, and to deprive citizens of their property, because their consciences impel them to embrace opinions which are obnoxious to their oppressors."

On the 5th of September, 1530, the principal ministers of Zurich, Berne, Basle, and Strasburg-OEcolampadius, Capito, Megander, Leo Juda, and Myconius, assembled at Zurich, and addressed to their popish confederates an earnest and christian remonstrance, but it was utterly disregarded. In a general diet held the following April at Baden, the disputes were renewed with more than their former violence. In vain did the mediating cantons entreat the two parties to banish every cause of discord. The papal party, having made ample preparations, were now determined to make open war. The Zurichers were importunate in their complaints, and even called for a direct appeal to arms. Zwingle thought this the speediest way to bring the mountaineers to reasonable terms. The men of Berne were more temperate; while they admitted that the five cantons had broken the treaty of Cappel, and shamefully violated their own promises, they urged that a milder expedient should be tried.

The Blockade

"Let us close our markets against the five cantons," said the Bernese, "let us refuse them corn, wine, salt, steel, and iron; we shall thus impart authority to the friends of peace among them, and innocent blood shall be spared." This resolution was adopted, duly published, and rigorously carried out. Situated, as these cantons were, on the mountainous part of Switzerland, the measure was one of extreme severity. From the nature of their country, the greater part of the people had little native produce besides their flocks. They were dependent for their daily supplies upon the harvests and markets of the plain. But now those markets were closed, and roads leading to the towns were blockaded. The consequences of this pitiless decree were most disastrous. Bread, wine, and salt, suddenly failed from the chalets of the poor. Famine, with its invariable attendant, disease, spread dismay and death among the inhabitants. The cry of distress which arose from the mountains moved many hearts, and many voices were raised against the interdict, both within the confederate cities, and outside the limits of Switzerland; but it roused those who suffered from it to the highest pitch of indignation and resentment.

Zwingle's Policy

As the part which Zwingle took in the political affairs of Zurich at this time, has been much criticized by historians, and, we think, severely so by D'Aubigné, we quote the opinion of Dean Waddington, who will not be suspected of any leaning towards republicanism.

"It must here be mentioned, that Zwingle expressed his decided opposition to these measures. Doubtless he too maintained that just principle, so constantly asserted by Luther, that the cause of reason and truth, when contending with proscriptive oppression, has no enemy so dangerous as the sword. He even ascended the pulpit and preached against the publication of the interdict. He argued, that the insulting slanders of the papists ought to be endured with christian forbearance; that an example of that great evangelical virtue was especially required from those who professed the gospel. But his fellow-citizens closed their ears for once against his admonitions, and hastened whither their inauspicious passion led them."*

{*History of the Reformation, vol. 3, p. 236.}

As a matter of policy, Zwingle maintained that, if the Catholic cantons were to be punished as evil-doers, the means apparently the most violent, were nevertheless the surest to bring them to a more submissive and reasonable temper, and the most humane in the end. But to reduce a whole population to famine would fill the land with the wail of suffering, and the cry of indignation. He also clearly saw that delay would be ruinous to Zurich. "By this measure," he said, "we give the five cantons time to arm themselves, and to fall upon us first. Let us take care that the Emperor does not attack us on one side, while our ancient confederates attack us on the other; a just war is not in opposition to the word of God; but this is contrary to it-taking the bread from the mouths of the innocent as well as the guilty: straitening by hunger the sick, the aged, children, and all who are deeply afflicted by the injustice of our adversaries. We should beware of exciting by this means the anger of the poor, and transforming into enemies many who at the present time are our friends and our brothers!"* But notwithstanding these truthful and powerful appeals of the Reformer, the cantons, Berne in particular, were immovable.

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 4, p. 536.}

The indignant mountaineers, on seeing themselves surrounded by a formidable power, alone with barrenness and famine between their lakes and their mountains, determined on violent measures. "They block up our roads," said they, "but we will make a way with our swords." They first had recourse to the observances of their religion. Prayers were directed to be offered up, pilgrimages to be made, paternosters repeated, and hymns to be sung. War would immediately have broken out, had not the Catholic leaders found their advantage in delay. They knew that the Protestants were not agreed among themselves, and by delaying the attack, they hoped to widen their divisions.

The Mediators Renew Their Exertions

Several attempts were made at reconciliation, but without effect. Zurich and Berne demanded that the preaching of the word of God should be permitted, not only in the common parishes, but also in the five cantons. This was asking too much under the circumstances; and as they persisted in their demands, they only exasperated the proud and inflexible Catholics. "No," they replied, "we will not listen to any proposition before the raising of the blockade." Deputies from all the cantons met on five different occasions between June 14th and August 23rd. The neutral cantons continued their exertions, with the assistance of ambassadors from foreign powers, until all the expedients that prudence and humanity could suggest were exhausted, yet they were unable to advance the parties a single step towards reconciliation.

The situation of the Reformer was becoming every day more painful and perplexing. It is impossible to contemplate his position at this moment, without sharing the agonies of his broken heart. But alas! he was off the direct line of the word of God, and without His divine guidance. In the troubled state of affairs, as the senate could not move without him, he allowed his natural feelings as a citizen, to displace those of the Christian and the Reformer. But however well intentioned these services may have been, they were inconsistent with his high and holy calling. The unnatural union of church and state, which had corrupted Christianity from the age of Constantine, was spreading confusion everywhere, and hastening the ruin of the Reformation. The tendency of Zwingle's policy, without doubt, was to weld them together; still the word of the Lord remains the same: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." And if this divine precept, this ever-abiding christian principle, be neglected, we may have to reap the bitter fruits of disappointment and disaster. So it was with this great and noble man. He mixed the Reformation with the strife of politics, and it was now far beyond his power to avert the fearful consequences.

The Position of Zurich and the Reformation

Zwingle was anxious, disquieted, and filled with the most painful forebodings as to the future. He saw the storm gathering on all sides. Those who had been his friends turned against him; his enemies, taking courage from the ebbing tide of affairs, beset and tormented him; for there were many at Zurich whose hearts still clung to the hereditary despotism, though they had professed some zeal for the principles of Reform. The partisans of the monks, the friends of foreign service, pensioners, and the malcontents of every class, united in pointing out Zwingle as the author of all the sufferings of the people. Seeing his actions were misrepresented, and the measures he had counselled were rejected, he felt he had only to withdraw from public life.

The magistrates were dismayed. Both Zurich and the Reformation are in danger if Zwingle cease to pilot the ship; they were now in the same vessel, and on the stormy waters of religious contention. Immediately the council sent to him a deputation of honour, and entreated him not to forsake them at so critical a moment. Three days and three nights he spent in prayer, earnestly seeking divine guidance. All the tenderness of friendship, and all the ardour of patriotism were employed in vain by the deputies; but when they represented to him the blow that the Reformation would sustain if he left Zurich, he yielded and consented to retain his post.

By thus consenting to remain at the head of affairs, he had thought to recover all his former influence and restore harmony and courage to Zurich; but he was bitterly disappointed. A strange infatuation seemed to possess both rulers and people. They daily became more and more indisposed towards the war which they at first so importunately demanded, and identified themselves with the passive policy of Berne. But as the Conference still professing pacific objects was held at Bremgarten, Zwingle, attended by two ecclesiastics, secretly repaired thither. He endeavoured to persuade his friends to raise the blockade; representing to them the many evils which it had occasioned, and the fatal catastrophe in which it was likely to terminate. But his pleadings, though with tears and anguish of heart, were all in vain. On this occasion he took a mournful and last farewell of his young friend Bullinger, the pastor of the place, and commended to his charge the tottering church of God.

War Declared against Zurich

During the course of the negotiations the Forest-cantons remained intractable and warlike. Indeed the final proposals of the mediators would probably have been received by the Protestants, but they were decidedly rejected by the Catholics. Matters were now so much involved that war became inevitable. The preparations of the five cantons being completed, they-took the field on the 6th of October 1531. They were the first in arms. The defence of the church and the holy see were their real objects for waging war, though the interdiction of commerce was the ostensible grievance. The chiefs were closely united together, and the people, burning with indignation against those who had taken away their food, and were seeking to take away their religion, powerfully supported them. Their common faith and sufferings, united them as by one spirit for one object, which could not fail to impart resolution and courage in action. But no alarm had yet been given: Zurich was asleep. All the passes were seized, all communication between Zurich and the five cantons had been rendered impossible. "The terrible avalanche," says our Swiss historian, "was about to slip from the icy summits of the mountain, and to roll over the valleys, even to the gates of Zurich, overthrowing everything in its passage, without the least forewarning of its fall."

In the hope of dividing the Reformed, the Catholics declared war, not against the body of the Reformers, but against Zurich only. The eye of Jezebel was set upon the blood of Zwingle. Whoever may be saved, he must be slain. So long as he lives, there can be no peace for holy mother church in Switzerland. Let the battle be against the arch-heretic. Thus inspired by the papal demon of war, the mountain warriors assembled in their chapels, heard mass, and then, to the number of eight thousand, began their march toward the Protestant frontier. A papal army, twelve thousand strong, marched into the free parishes. The soldiers having entered the deserted churches, and seeing the images and the altars broken down, their anger was kindled to madness. They spread like a torrent over the whole country, inflicting all the horrors of war wherever they came. The country people, terrified, and running from chalet to chalet, calling aloud for help, failed to arouse the bewitched Zurichers; yet in four days was the ruin of Zurich accomplished.

The Infatuation of the Council of Zurich

On the evening of the 9th, the council was called together by the assurance that war was begun. Only a small number assembled; and instead of sounding the tocsin, or calling the people to arms, they despatched two councillors to Cappel and Bremgarten to ascertain what was going on. "The five cantons," said they, "are making a little noise to frighten us, and to make us raise the blockade." But at daybreak, on the morning of the 10th, they were aroused from their slumbers by the positive intelligence, that the enemy had crossed the frontier and seized upon Hytzkilch. Still, the council was but partially aroused. The day was spent in making speeches and lengthened tedious debates. A vanguard of six hundred men with artillery was sent on to Cappel to oppose the invaders; the main body was to follow. At seven in the evening the tocsin was sounded in all the country districts.

It was a fearful night, as if nature herself shuddered at the blood that was about to be shed. "The sun went down behind the Albis," says Wylie; "the city, the lake, and the canton were wrapped in darkness; with the darkness came trembling and terror. The bells were rung to summon to arms. They had hardly begun to toll when a tempest burst forth, and swept in terrific fury over Zurich and the surrounding country. The howling of the wind, the lashing of the waves of the lake, the pealing of the steeple-bells, the mustering of the landsturm, and the earthquake, which about nine o'clock shook the city and canton, formed a scene of horror such as had seldom been witnessed. Few eyes were that night closed in sleep. In the dwellings of Zurich there were tears, and loud wailings, and hasty and bitter partings of those who felt that they embraced probably for the last time."*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 93; see also D'Aubigné, vol. 4, p. 568.}

The Evil Forebodings of the People

This dreadful night was to be followed by a still more dreadful day. The morning came, the tempest was past, but a bright dawn could not dispel the gloom that had settled in the hearts of the Zurichers. The sound of trumpets, and the beating of drums, were calling the inhabitants to arms; but hours passed away before a few hundred soldiers could be mustered. "The irresolution of the council," says Hess, "filled the citizens with uneasiness, and lessened their submission; for the vacillation of a government destroys all confidence, and orders given with hesitation are ill obeyed." Instead of an army of four thousand men, which the council had decreed should march to Cappel, only seven hundred were under arms at ten o'clock, and these were disorderly and agitated, without uniform and inefficiently armed. Zwingle, at the command of the council, and in conformity with the customs of his country, accompanied the army as chaplain. With a broken and a bleeding heart he embraced his beloved wife and his beloved children for the last time on earth. "I know," he said, "what all this means-it is all about me-all this comes to pass, in order that I may die. " He did not deceive himself as to the issue of the expedition, but he thought it his duty to obey the orders of his superiors, without urging any objections. Calm himself in the midst of friends who trembled for his life, he endeavoured to comfort them. "Our cause is good," said he, "but ill defended. It will cost my life, and that of a number of excellent men who would wish to restore Christianity to its primitive simplicity, and our country to its manners. No matter! God will not abandon His servants; He will come to their assistance when you think all lost. My confidence rests upon God alone, and not upon men; I submit myself to His sovereign will."

The Battle of Cappel

At noon, under the drooping banner of Zurich, only seven hundred passed through the gates. The affectionate Anna was seen on the ramparts following her husband with her eyes so long as he was visible. But she had also in that ill-omened army, a son, a brother, a great number of near relations, and many intimate friends, of whose return she had no hope. She shared the forebodings of her husband, and like him, believed that it was for the holy cause of God and His truth that they thus exposed themselves to danger and to death-it was martyrdom.

Zwingle was observed to fall behind his troops. Those who were near him could hear that he was engaged in prayer. He thus rode mournfully alone, praying for the welfare of the church of God, until he reached Mount Albis.

Cappel is only three leagues from Zurich, but the road crosses Mount Albis. On its summit they halted; and some proposed that they should wait for reinforcements; but the roaring of distant cannon announced that the battle had begun. This sound awoke the native feelings of Zwingle. "Hear ye not the roar of the cannon beneath us?" he exclaimed, "they are fighting at Cappel; let us hasten forward to the aid of our brethren." The words of Zwingle prevailed with the leaders, filled them with enthusiasm, and they pushed forward.

Early on the morning of that day, the soldiers of the five cantons attended divine service, heard mass; the host was offered up for the sins of the people, and the army, eight thousand strong, began their march at nine o'clock. The division posted at Cappel was attacked by this army at one o'clock, but being ignorant of their force contended themselves with keeping up a constant fire of artillery. In two hours the Zurichers bearing the "great banner," reached their comrades and joined in battle.

The Catholics, not knowing the extent of this reinforcement, would not hazard a general engagement. The artillery of the Zurichers being advantageously posted and well served, greatly disconcerted the Catholics, who were spread out on a morass beneath them. It was four o'clock; the sun was sinking rapidly. Loud murmurs were heard in the ranks of the Catholics because of the tardiness of the chiefs. During this altercation, an experienced and brave warrior of the canton of Uri, at the head of three hundred volunteers, silently entered a wood on the left flank of the Zurich army, which they had neglected to occupy, and perceiving the weakness of the Protestant army, he immediately resolved to attack them. The mountaineers coming to the knowledge of this oversight, climbed the hill, and under cover of the beech-trees, opened a deadly fire on the men of Zurich. They were within a short distance of them, and ordered to pick out the men they desired to bring down. Having discharged their fire, they rushed out of the wood, sword in hand, and furiously charged the bewildered Zurichers, crying, "Heretics! image-breakers! we have you at last!"

The Death of Zwingle

The weakness manifested and the errors committed by the Zurich leaders, can only be accounted for on the principle of judicial blindness. They had gone far away from the narrow path of the word of God, and He was no longer with them. The church had become the state, and the state the church and the present army was composed of congregations and their ministers rather than of Swiss soldiers. This was failure which God must judge; and the Catholics were the rod in His hand to chastise the children of His love. But what a moral! What a lesson for Christians in all ages!

Finding themselves ensnared and surrounded, the men of Zurich fought desperately; but, being only as one to eight they were overpowered. And to increase the confusion, some of the enemies' spies joined the rear-guard and raised the cry of treachery, which ended in a general flight; but all those who fought in the first ranks, being thus deserted, were cut down. The carnage was great; the Alps were echoing and re-echoing the wild roar of battle, when the curtain of night fell, closed the scene of blood, and more than five hundred of the flower of Zurich slept the sleep of death: "the wisest of its councillors, the most christian of its citizens, and the ablest of its pastors, were left on that fatal field."

But it is with shame and sorrow that we have to record the melancholy fact, that among the slain there were twenty-five christian ministers, who had marched at the head of their flocks. In this respect, we doubt not, the battle of Cappel stands alone in the history of battles. Surely this was expression enough of God's sore displeasure against the unholy mixture of the church and the world, of the theologians and the politicians, which obtained to such an extent in the Swiss Reformation.

But there was one death which affected Zurich and the Reformation in Switzerland more than all the others-the death of Ulric Zwingle. Scarcely had the action begun, when, stooping to console a dying man, he received a wound on the head and fell to the earth. He attempted to rise, but he was thrice overthrown in the press, and received several wounds. He had not drawn his sword, but he had raised his voice, which was heard above all the uproar, to inspire the troops with courage, and to prevent confusion. Exhausted, he lay with clasped hands in the attitude of prayer, and was heard to say, "Alas, what a calamity is this! Well, they can indeed kill the body, but they cannot touch the soul. " These were his last words.

The Camp Followers

When the field of Cappel was in the possession of the Catholics, the camp-followers, with lighted torches, began to prowl over the battle-field. In fuming over the bodies-for the purpose of stripping or robbing them-when they found any who were still sensible, they said, "Call upon the saints and confess to our priests." If the Zuricher refused, he was instantly despatched as a vile heretic with oaths and curses. Among those heaps of slain was one, whose eyes and hands were raised to heaven;-"Do you wish for a priest to confess yourself?" said one of those slayers of the slain, holding the glimmering light of his torch against his expiring features. He shook his head. "If you cannot speak," said they, "invoke the mother of God, and the other saints for their intercession." He again shook his head, keeping his eyes fixed on heaven. "This man too is an obstinate heretic," cried they. But a soldier, moved with curiosity, turned the head in the direction of a fire that had been lighted on the spot and exclaimed, "I think it is Zwingle!" whereupon, a Captain Tockinger, of Unterwalden, who came up at that moment, hearing the name, drew his sword, struck Zwingle on the throat, uttering many curses, and thus extinguished what remained of that remarkable life. And thus too was that scripture fulfilled: "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Mat 26:52)

The night was cold; a thick hoar-frost wrapped, as in a winding-sheet, the bodies of the dead and the dying. At length the day appeared, the body of Zwingle was recognized, and then the full hatred of his enemies-especially the foreign service men-broke out against him. After offering many indignities to the lifeless body, they held the mockery of a council, and summoned it before them. It was condemned, on the double charge of treason and heresy, to be burnt to ashes. The public executioner of Lucerne carried out the sentence, and the fanatical pensioners flung the ashes to the four winds of heaven.

The condition of Zurich, when a few wounded men found their way home to tell what had happened, was beyond description terrible. But we dwell not on the agitation, confusion, sorrow. We only refer to it for the purpose of introducing one chief mourner-Anna Zwingle. She had heard from her own house the repeated discharges of artillery. She feared the worst. What hours of anguish! But at length she knows all: her husband, son, son-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, and almost all her dear friends, lie cold on the heights of Cappel. But though a woman, a wife, and a mother, she was a true Christian, and committed herself and her young children to God's tender care, and sought to rejoice in the midst of her tears, that so many whom she loved had received the crown of martyrdom.

Reflections on the Life of Zwingle

As we have discussed pretty freely, in passing, the character and principles of the great Swiss Reformer, we have little to add by way of reflection. But we cannot bid farewell to this sad scene, without offering our tribute of grateful respect to one whom God raised up and so wonderfully used and of expressing our deep sorrow that so great a light should have deviated from the narrow path, and led so many after him.

In tracing his steps from the herdsman's cottage in the Valley of the Tockenburg, we have seen much to admire and imitate, for which also posterity must be ever thankful. He pursued with constancy and fearlessness the convictions of his own mind, as to the teaching of the word of God, so far as he understood its spiritual meaning and application. We can never forget nor undervalue the noble stand he frequently made for the absolute authority of the word of God, and that at a time, when its existence was scarcely known, and had never been read, even by the priests and monks. In those halls of public disputation, when he placed his Hebrew Bible and his Greek New Testament on the table before him, and appealed to these books as the only standard of faith and practice, God was glorified, His power was manifested, and the Catholics were utterly confounded, and driven back into the darkness of their superstitions.

Zwingle, as the representative man of his time, stood triumphant. The light of the Reformation progressed rapidly, and seemed as if it would soon shed its radiance over every mountain and valley in Switzerland. All but the Forest-cantons had received the truth, either wholly or partially, and had he gone on in simple dependence upon the living God and the word of His grace, even the Oberland might soon have submitted to the new faith. But from the time that Zwingle counselled Zurich to punish the persecutors with the sword, he assumed the character of the politician. And though he was still the sincere Christian and the earnest Reformer, he thought it was his duty to study the cabinets of kings, the councils of the people, and the movements of armies. This was the rock on which the vessel of the Reformation struck, and struck with all sails set, and Zwingle at the helm. We have seen the wreck; and surely it ought to be as a beacon-light to all Christians in all ages. But instead of that there are many of the Reformed ministers so-called, even in the present day, who commend the zeal of Zwingle as a patriot and a politician; and argue that he suffered from the rashness of others.

True, he strongly objected to the blockade which led to the war; but he advocated a direct appeal to arms, which is as far from the spirit of Christ as a commercial interdict. And the two things for which the Reformer urged the government of Zurich to take up arms were the slanders and the persecutions of the papists. But what does the blessed Lord say? "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." And again, "Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not." And knowing the state of irritation which slander and persecution would naturally produce, the gracious Lord condescends to approach the oppressed in terms of the greatest endearment. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Surely both the blockade and the appeal to arms meet their utter condemnation in these divine precepts of our Lord and Master. (Mat 5:11-12; Rom 12:14; Rom 12:19-20)

The Christian is saved by grace, he stands by grace, and he ought to be the witness of grace, and that, under all circumstances. The last of these the great Reformer never understood. He never saw the truth of the Christian's separation from the world by the death and resurrection of Christ, or the heavenly relations of the church as the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Still, the word of God is plain enough, and we can find no shelter for our ignorance. At the same time, more allowance must be made for Zwingle than for many ministers of the gospel in our own day, who take a leading part in the political affairs of the world. Emerging from the darkness of popery which has no argument but the sword, and nurtured in the midst of Swiss liberty, and in the histories of the ancient republics, he honestly believed from his earliest days that tyrants should be opposed, and that Christians should unite with the government in resisting them. From not seeing, after his conversion, the heavenly calling and character of the Christian, he acted on these principles as the leader of the Reformed party.

D'Aubigne, we are glad to find, so far agrees with the views we have expressed; thus he writes-"Zwingle observing how all the powers were rising against the Reformation, had conceived the plan of a co-burghery or christian state, which should unite all the friends of the word of God in one holy and powerful league. This political phase of his character is in the eyes of some persons his highest claim to glory; we do not hesitate to acknowledge it as his greatest fault. The Reformer, deserting the paths of the apostles, allowed himself to be led astray by the perverse example of popery. The primitive church never opposed their persecutors but by the dispositions of the gospel of peace. Faith was the only sword by which it vanquished the mighty ones of the earth." But Zwingle himself appears to have had some conflict in his mind on this subject, as he says, "No doubt, it is not by human strength, it is by the strength of God alone that the word of the Lord should be upheld. But God often makes use of men as instruments to succour men. Let us therefore unite, and from the sources of the Rhine to Strasburg let us form but one people and one alliance."

As to his great intellectual powers, his literary and his theological works, we will allow a competent witness to bear his testimony. Dean Waddington, speaking of Zwingle, says, when we regard the many ingenious and elaborate compositions, polemical, exegetical, hermeneutical, which he produced in little more than twelve years-years, too, distracted by a thousand other cares and occupations-and which will remain an everlasting memorial of an extensive erudition, a sound judgment, a temper, upon the whole candid and charitable, a calm, considerate, earnest faith; it is a matter of serious sorrow, even now, that he was cut off thus unseasonably. . . .

"Together with several just and profound views of scriptural interpretation, his works contain many noble sentiments, flowing from an enlarged and elevated spirit. Gifted with much penetration, incited by an honest zeal, regulated by consummate prudence, firm and forbearing, he did not stain these great qualities by a single fault. He showed great sagacity in accomplishing his purposes; he was never guided, either in his acts or in his writings, by any factious spirit; and he was never suspected of any unworthy motive."*

{*History of the Reformation, vol. 3, p. 242.}

Zwingle was not forty-eight years old when he died. He was in the full vigour of life and the maturity of his understanding. With gifts so rich and varied, what might he not have done for the Reformation in Switzerland, and even in Europe, had he restricted himself to the ministry of the word of God' But if we fail to do the Lord's work in His way, it may be taken from us and given to another. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man strive also for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." (2Ti 2:4-5)

Treaties of Peace

The news of the disgraceful treatment of the remains of Zwingle, aroused the indignation and anger of Zurich. She rallied her forces, and the Bernese gathered from all quarters for the support of their ally. The combined army was very formidable; they assumed the offensive, and invaded the canton of Zug; but the Lord was not with them. They again exhibited every form of incapacity. With no combined plan of operation, they commenced in rashness and disunion, and insubordination prevailed, while the Catholics were orderly, united, and resolute. The victory was easy and complete.

These successes, which far surpassed the expectation of the five cantons, inspired them with religious confidence as to the holiness of their cause; and the Reformers, from their reverses, became dispirited and disposed to treat for peace. Negotiations were renewed; two treaties were drawn up and signed by the Zurichers and the Bernese, on the 16th and 23rd of November, which annulled the treaty of 1529, and gave decided advantages to the enemies of the Reformation. These treaties are of great historical importance, as they affixed a permanent boundary to the Reformation of German-Switzerland; and no important change has been wrought among the cantons from that day even until now.

It is said that Zwingle, on his departure for Cappel, in the mournful conviction that he would never return, designated as his successor, the younger Bullinger of Bremgarten, who, after a short interval, was appointed chief pastor and professor of divinity, and filled the double charge for forty years, with undisputed distinction, and rendered extensive service to the church of Christ. The same calamitous autumn witnessed the extinction of another of the brightest lights of the Reformation. The meek and gentle, the learned and devoted OEcolampadius, on hearing of the death of his friend, and the indignities which were cast upon his memory died shortly after of a broken heart, at the age of forty-nine. When he perceived that his own departure was at hand, he assembled his friends and colleagues around him, and exhorted them in the most pathetic and affectionate manner to be stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that God might be glorified, and the blessed cause of Christ become more resplendent through the light of their purity. Thus fell asleep the pacific OEcolampadius. His death was like his life, full of light and peace. He was succeeded at Basle by the learned and pious Oswald Myconius. *

{*D'Aubigné, vol. 4, pp. 465-621. John Scott, vol. 3, pp. 104-120, with quotations from Ruchat. Life of Zwingle, by J.G. Hess. Waddington, vol. 3, pp. 236-252. Wylie, vol. 2, pp. 77 - 95.}

The history of the Reformation in French Switzerland which was somewhat later, and in which the names of William Farel and John Calvin bear a prominent part, we must pass over for the present, and return to Germany, that we may examine the last years and the closing scenes of the life of the great German Reformer.

45 Reformation in Germany

Chapter 45

The Reformation in Germany

We have already traced the history of the Reformation in Germany from the year 1517, when Luther nailed his theses to the church door in Wittemberg, down to the year 1532, when the Emperor signed the treaty of peace at Ratisbon. The history of these fifteen years is certainly the most important in the annals of mankind, if we except the early part of the first christian century. We pass through a succession of events, characterized by the grace and energy of the Holy Spirit, combined with the hand of God in government, and emerge from the darkness and superstition of Rome, into the light and liberty of the truth of God. We know of no page in history, which so commands, not only our interest, but our adoration.

And how, it may be asked, was this mighty revolution so speedily accomplished? Not by philosophy, not by the schoolmen, not by the Humanists, but simply by the truth of God acting on the conscience of man, through the power of the Holy Spirit. On what ground did Luther stand and triumph at the Diet of Worms? The word of God, sustained by His grace. On what principle did the princes prevail at Augsburg? Precisely the same. And by what means did Zwingle put to flight the enemies of the truth at Zurich? By appealing to the word of God, and to that alone; but when he shifted his position, giving up divine ground for human, he became weak as other men. So long as conscience ruled in that noble mind, and raised that powerful voice, the mightiest of Rome's champions were confounded, and fled ashamed from his dignified presence. But alas! when he connected the civil sword with the sword of the Spirit, the truth of God was dishonoured, he had left the place of strength, and became the weakest of the weak. He had a bad conscience, his breastplate was gone; and that always robs a man of courage, peace, and happiness. It is only by means of conscience that truth establishes its dominion over the minds and ways of mankind.

This fact, historically viewed, is wonderful, and demands our devout consideration. Luther was as free from fanaticism as he was far from hypocrisy; he was perfectly simple; but his conscience was honestly bound by the word of God, and his affections were kindled by it, and thus, holding by that word, all Europe was shaken by a power which faith only can understand. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. " The two exquisite properties of faith are, to exclude human power, and to bring in divine. As the apostle says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Rom 4:5; Php 4:13)

We will now glance for a moment at the effects of this power in the short period of fifteen years.

A Brief Survey

The great truth which the early Reformers preached - salvation by faith without works of human merit - spread with a rapidity resembling the light of heaven. In a short time it had travelled over the greater part of Europe. In the year 1530 Luther, writing to the Elector, speaks of his dominions as if they were a millennial scene. "It gives me great pleasure," says the Reformer, "when I see that boys and girls can now understand, and speak better concerning God and Christ, than formerly could have been done by the colleges, monasteries, and schools of the papacy, or than they can do even yet. There is thus planted in your highness's dominions a very pleasant paradise, to which there is nothing similar in the whole world." The ground had been cleared of monasteries and convents, and covered with churches and schools.

Hesse, as well as Saxony, we have seen evangelized, and planted with churches and schools, and all regulated by the government. In Franconia, Silesia, East Friesland, Prussia, Brunswick, Luneburg, and Anhalt, the light of the gospel was spreading. Many of the free cities had opened their gates to the preachers of the new doctrines and were now rejoicing in the truth, and boldly witnessing for it. The rapid conquests of the Reformation in Switzerland, which we have examined with some care, fall within the limits of our period. Along the chain of the Jura, by the shores of Leman to the gates of Geneva, the light of the gospel had travelled. In Denmark and Sweden the gospel had gained a firm footing, and Bohemia, Moravia, and Hungary had been revived. Even in the court of Francis I. and in the Sorbonne, renowned for its orthodoxy, there were true believers in the doctrine of justification by faith alone; but the state ever was and is Roman Catholic; and dearly she has had to pay in her terrible revolutions for her rejection of the truth, and the persecution of its witnesses. In England, the followers of Wycliffe were revived, and the persecuted Lollards again lifted up their heads, and testified for the truth with fresh courage. The king, the parliament, and the people threw off the yoke of Rome in 1533, and Henry was declared supreme head of the British church. The authority of the Roman pontiff was then abolished in England. But the details of this important event will form a distinct theme for our "Short Papers," the Lord willing.

As early as 1528, Luther's tracts and Tyndal's New Testament had done their blessed work in Scotland. The noble, gentle, and accomplished Patrick Hamilton was burned at the stake in the centre of the large area before the gate of St. Salvator's college, Aberdeen, on a charge of "holding and maintaining divers heresies of Martin Luther."*

{*Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 220. Wylie, vol. 1, p. 620.}

A Great Increase

After the pacification of Ratisbon many, who had concealed their opinions, now came boldly forward and declared for the great truths of the Reformation. Princes, nobles, various regions and towns of Germany, year after year, professed without fear to have given up the old faith, and to have embraced the new doctrines.

An event, in its origin purely political, which occurred at this period, was so overruled, as to increase greatly the strength of the Reformers. In the year 1519, Ulrich Duke of Wurtemberg, gave offence to the league of Swabia and was expelled from his dominions, which were afterwards placed under the sceptre of Ferdinand. The exiled prince, after a long captivity of seventeen years, was restored, through the assistance of his kinsman, Philip of Hesse, to the dukedom of his ancestors. It appears that he attended the conferences at Marburg in 1529, and had received impressions favourable to the Reformation. "Hence," says Scultetus, "his first object on the recovery of his dominions, was to throw them open to the glory of Christ, and to introduce the preaching of the pure word of God, and the administration of the sacraments, according to His institution." He also engaged the assistance of several theologians to organize churches, establish schools, and arrange other details on the principles of Protestantism. This must have been like life from the dead to those extensive dominions which had been under the sway of the bigoted catholic Ferdinand.

The Reformation of the Duchy of Wurtemberg, was followed by that of Brunswick, Calenberg, Hanover, Pomerania, Mecklenburg, and the cities of Augsburg, Bremen, and Hamburg. But there was one accession to the Protestant cause about this time which demands a special notice as illustrating the overruling providence of God in those eventful times.

On the 24th of April, 1539, George, Duke of Saxony, died. He was head of the Albertine branch of the Saxony family and possessed, as Marquis of Mesnea and Thuringia, extensive territories comprising Dresden, Leipsic, and other cities now the most considerable in the electorate. From the dawn of the Reformation he had been the most resolute and determined enemy of what he styled Lutheranism. It is probable that his opposition at first was from a sincere belief in the doctrines of Romanism; but it became embittered by personal antipathy to Luther, and by the electoral princes, the other branch of the family, being his unfailing friends. By his death without issue, the succession fell to his brother Henry, whose attachment to the doctrines of the Reformation surpassed, if possible, that of his brother George to the papacy. Like Ulrich, he invited some Protestant divines, and among them Luther himself, to meet him at Leipsic. In the course of a few weeks the whole system of ancient rites was over-turned, and the full exercise of the Reformed religion established, and that with the universal applause of his subjects.

This was an event of great advantage to the Reformation. It removed an inveterate enemy from the very centre of the Reformed states, and converted that which had been a point of weakness into a position of strength. These providential, yet mysterious, accessions greatly strengthened the Smalcald league, extending the boundaries, and increasing the numbers of the Protestants. The territories of the princes, and cities attached to their cause now extended, in one great and almost unbroken line, from the shores of the Baltic to the banks of the Rhine.*

{*Robertson's History of Charles V., p. 244.}

The Great Actors Passing Off the Scene

Many of the names with which we have become familiar, and who have sustained a conspicuous part in the earlier history of the Reformation, are now passing off the stage of time. "Having discharged the offices assigned to them," says Dean Waddington, "they had proceeded on their fatal journey; and the grave which closed over their ashes might have concealed the memories of most of them in a like oblivion, had they not been cast upon one of those periods of revolutionary convulsion which break in like tempests, upon the ordinary progression of human events, and leave behind them such lasting traces of their operations on the destinies of mankind, as to give an interest to the petty performances of the humblest agents, even with a remote and intelligent posterity." But happy they, happy all, who act in the great drama of life with a good conscience towards God and man- repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ-who care for the glory of the one and the well-being of the other.

Conscience has much more to do with man's future well-being than is generally thought. A bad conscience forbids him accrediting the grace of God in Christ towards the guilty. Man knows the difference between good and evil, and, knowing that he has chosen the evil and refused the good, he believes God is against him. In this state of mind he endeavours to keep out of the way of all that which would bring him face to face with God. Therefore as unbelief is cherished, the mind becomes darker and the heart grows harder. The effects of self-complacency, through the power and subtlety of the enemy are also most ruinous. Man is so blinded by the god of this world, and so occupied with self, that he sees no moral beauty in Jesus, no need of Him as a Saviour, and no need of the salvation which is pressed upon his acceptance. And thus it is that so many pass off the scene, outwardly respectable, but inwardly heedless of the danger against which they are so solemnly and so frequently warned.

We judge not the dead; but offer the result of our reflections for the benefit of the living. May he not, as many do, slumber on under the influence of an evil conscience, self-complacency, and the blinding power of Satan, until he has played out his part; and then wake up, too late, to the importance of the truth he has rejected, and the Saviour he has slighted. But, alas! the day of mercy is past, the door of mercy is closed; and, seeing his loss to be irreparable, he sinks under the weight of hopeless despair.

John, Elector of Saxony, surnamed the Constant, died August 16th, 1532. During seven critical years, this illustrious prince, guided with great wisdom and firmness the vessel of the Reformation. At Augsburg, it will be remembered, he displayed a constancy superior to the wavering of some of his theologians; yet so tempered by moderation as to preserve him from immediate collision with the Emperor. At one time he was cruelly menaced by Charles, at another, his honesty was tempted by secret but flattering overtures; but, nobly free from personal motives, he remained true to his convictions, and generously devoted to the great public question of the sixteenth century, the Reformation. There can be no question as to the genuineness of his piety. He was affectionately attached to Luther, and on doubtful questions usually deferred to his opinion. He took such delight in the holy scriptures, that he would frequently have them read to him by youths of noble families, as much as six hours in the day. Happily the Reformation lost nothing by his death. His son, John Frederick, the new Elector, was in the flower of his youth, warmly attached to the cause, and not less to the person of Luther, than his father. He was characterized by piety and firmness in the trying circumstances through which he was afterwards called to pass.*

{*Scott, vol. 1, p. 129; Waddington, vol. 3, p. 164.}

As few of the antagonists of Luther survived him, notwithstanding the high price that was set upon his life, we will notice some of the leading ones.

Pope Clement VII. died September 27th, 1534. He died, even according to Italian history, "Detested by his court, suspected by the princes, with an offensive and hateful reputation; for he was esteemed avaricious, faithless, and by nature indisposed to do good to mankind." In addition to the evil qualities here specified, others mention an obduracy and inclemency, which grew with the decay of his frame, and the morbid weakness of declining life. The virtues commonly ascribed to him are gravity, parsimony, self-control, circumspection, or, dissimulation; for indeed, the last was so essential a quality, at the court of Rome, that he who excelled in that, in which all aspired to excel, deserved the sort of praise attached to such pre-eminence."*

{*Guicciardini and Fra Paolo, quoted by Waddington, vol. 3, p. 183.}

Clement is familiarly known to our readers as professing his willingness to call a council, yet persevering to the end of his life in the artifices which he knew would delay, if not finally prevent, its convocation. His dark and suspicious mind dreaded the thought of a general council. He was afraid of the light; he knew that the circumstances of his own history, and his elevation to the chair, were not free from reproach. How different the character and the end of the chief prince of Germany to the chief pastor of Rome! May we seek to imitate all that was of God in the former and avoid all that was of Satan in the latter.

Cardinal Cajetan, one of Luther's earliest antagonists, died the same year as Clement. He was censured by many of the dignitaries of the church for his unsuccessful contest with Luther at Augsburg, but not disgraced by the Vatican. It is thought by some that he fumed his attention more to the study of the scriptures after his defeat; but he lived and died in the service of the papacy.

Lorenzo Campeggio, the legate selected for the critical occasion of the famous Diet of Augsburg, died in 1539. He ably represented his papal majesty and the principles of the Vatican. Secretly and unceasingly he urged Charles to violent measures against the Protestants. Fire and sword sweeping confiscations, the Inquisition, burning heretical books, were the legate's arguments behind the scene. Still he was far from exceeding his orders.

Aleander, the great papal champion at the Diet of Worms died in 1542. For his great zeal in the pontifical cause, he received high ecclesiastical honours; but his life was chiefly spent in the management of public business, the affairs of state, and the councils of princes.

Erasmus, of high literary fame, and in some respects the forerunner of Luther, died in 1536 at the age of sixty-nine. His name must ever be associated with Luther and the Reformation, though latterly, Luther considered him one of its greatest enemies, and the enemy of all true religion. He lacked the essential principles of a Reformer. He was insincere, unstable, without courage, and trembled at the results of his own work. He was a reformer, until the Reformation became a great reality. He fled from Basle when the Reformation was established on the destruction of the images, and returned to it when tranquillity was restored. Yet, notwithstanding his inconsistencies, he commanded great respect from his literary reputation, his manners and accomplishments; and his death was deplored as a great national affliction. He died, professedly, in the bosom of holy mother church, and declaiming against the new evangelical practices.

John of Eck, professor of Ingolstadt, closed his noisy career in 1543, at the age of fifty-seven. He was the indefatigable champion of the dignity and absolute supremacy of Rome papal. He was arrogant, vain-glorious, and eminently gifted with the qualities which form an accomplished disputant. "His unwearied zeal hurried him into every field where the Reformers were encamped. Everywhere he was foremost in the strife; everywhere he contended with force and energy, and on more than one occasion with success.... Thus was he confronted in a long series of combats, during a space of twenty years, with all the chieftains of the Reformation." Thus he lived and thus he died, maintaining even with his latest breath the loftiest pretensions of Rome.

The Latter End of Luther

The public testimony of Luther and his associates, may be said to have closed when they delivered the confession of Augsburg. The contest then, if not before, changed its character. It was no longer between excommunicated heretics bearing witness to the truth of God against the falsehoods of Rome; but between the princes of Germany, united in league and arrayed in arms, and the imperial confederacy. But, although retiring from the notice of the public chronicler, they still laboured unweariedly in the duties of their special vocations, and had the gratification of seeing the result of their labours, in the peaceful progress of the word of God. Of Luther, however, one of his biographers remarks, "That though he continued to discharge, with his accustomed zeal, his official duties as a preacher and a professor, and published commentaries on various parts of scripture, and showed no inclination to relinquish his former habit of sending forth a popular treatise whenever circumstances in the state of religion appeared to call for it; yet, amid those various occupations, it was remarked that his enterprising spirit appeared to undergo abatement, and that in his latter years he was found to hazard no new doctrine."*

{*History of the Church by the Rev. John Fry, p. 324.}

During these years the great Reformer, who has claimed so large a portion of our attention, was chastened by long and painful sickness, and was fast descending to his resting-place, where the rude contests of life, its animosities and injuries, are all forgotten. Writing to a friend a few days before he set out on his last journey, he says, "I am old, decrepit, sluggish, weary, spiritless, and deprived of half my sight; yet, at a time when I had hoped to have a reasonable share of rest, I continue to be overwhelmed with business, writing, speaking, acting, and doing, as if I had never yet acted, written, spoken, or done anything."

In the January of 1546, the Counts of Mansfeld, having some difference about boundaries and inheritance, invited Luther to Eisleben-his native place-to decide it by his arbitration. Though not caring to meddle in such matters he consented.

He left Wittemberg on the 23rd of January, accompanied by his three sons, and his faithful friend, Justus Jonas. Though feeble and suffering, he engaged in the business on which he had come for about three weeks, and matters were arranged to the satisfaction of the lords of Mansfeld. He was received by these noblemen with great honour; they met him with an escort of one hundred horsemen, amidst the ringing of the bells in all the churches. He occasionally preached in the church and partook of the communion. Every night, as he took leave of his friends, he would say, "Pray to God that the cause of His church may prosper, for the Council of Trent is vehemently enraged against it."

On the evening of the 17th of February he dined with his friends, including his three sons-John, Martin, and Paul -and Justus Jonas. He was persuaded to abstain from business that evening, and to keep quiet in his study. He walked about the room, looked out at the window, looked upwards, and prayed earnestly. Deep thoughts were passing through his mind, but did not depress his spirits. There he had spent the morning and there, he now felt, he was to spend the evening of his life. "I was born and baptized here at Eisleben, Jonas," he would say: "what if I should remain or die here!"

The Death of Luther

Early in the evening he began to complain of an oppression in the chest; but he was relieved by means of friction and warm applications. Feeling better, he left his room and joined the party at supper. "During this last meal he was sometimes playful, even jocular, sometimes profoundly serious-such as he had ever been in the unreserved society of his friends." After supper, the oppression returned, yet he would not have medical aid called in, but asked for a warm linen cloth for his chest. He fell asleep about nine on a couch, and awoke about ten. Seeing so many friends around him, he desired that they should retire to rest. He was then led to his chamber; when he was placed in his bed, he exclaimed, "I go to rest with God .... Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." And, stretching out his hand to bid all good-night, he added, "Pray for the cause of God." Having slept about three hours, he awoke, feeling very ill. "Oh God!" he said, "how ill I am! what an oppression I feel in my chest! I shall certainly die at Eisleben!" "My reverend father," replied Jonas, "God our heavenly Father will assist you by Christ, whom you have preached. " He removed into his study without requiring assistance, and again repeating, "O my God! into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Two physicians had been sent for, who presently arrived, and likewise Count Albert, accompanied by his countess, who brought cordials and other medicines. All Luther's friends and his three sons were now collected around him, and he seemed somewhat relieved; and having lain down on a couch he fell into a perspiration. This gave the friends some hope: but he himself said, "It is a cold sweat, the forerunner of death: I shall yield up my spirit." He then began to pray, nearly in these words:-

"O eternal and merciful God, my heavenly Father, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God of all consolation! I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed unto me Thy Son, Jesus Christ; in whom I have believed, whom I have preached, whom I have confessed, whom I love and worship as my dear Saviour and Redeemer, whom the pope and the multitude of the ungodly do persecute, revile, and blaspheme. I beseech Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, receive my soul! O heavenly Father, though I be snatched out of this life, though I must lay down this body, yet know I assuredly that I shall dwell with Thee for ever, and that none can pluck me out of Thy hands." He then thrice repeated the words, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." Also those words, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He then became silent, and his powers began to fail him. The countess gave him some restorative, and he gently whispered "Yes, or No." And when Jonas raised his voice and said to him, "Beloved father, cost thou confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Saviour and Redeemer?" he clearly and audibly rejoined, "I do;" and spoke no more. With his hands clasped, a gentle respiration interrupted by sighs, continued for a short time; and then, amidst the deep lamentation of his surrounding friends, between two and three in the morning, he fell asleep in Jesus.*

{*From the account given by Justus Jonas to the Elector of Saxony, by the hand of Count Albert's secretary. See Scott's History, vol. 1, pp. 464 - 477.}

The Funeral of Luther

The Counts of Mansfeld would gladly have retained and interred the body of Luther in his native place, but they submitted to the wishes of the Elector, who directed it to be conveyed to Wittemberg. The body was then removed into the largest church at Eisleben. Great excitement prevailed. Jonas preached a funeral sermon to an immense concourse of people after which, the body was placed under the charge of ten citizens, who were to watch it during the night. Early the following day the procession moved towards Wittemberg. The citizens crowded along the streets and beyond the gates. "There the countrymen, summoned by the ringing of bells, joined, together with their wives and families, the sad procession. It was met on the way by a deputation from the Elector, then reached Wittemberg, on the 23rd of February. When the procession arrived at the gate of the city, it was received by the senate, the rector, the professors, and the students of the university, with all the principal citizens; after which it advanced, attended by the whole population to the church of All Saints. Then came the widow of Luther with her daughters and three sons, and the little company of friends, Melancthon, Pontanus, Jonas, Pomeranus, Cruciger, and others, the true yoke-fellows of the departed, the veterans of the Reformation.

Suitable hymns were sung as the funeral proceeded through the streets of the city. The body was deposited on the right of the pulpit; whence, after some further verses had been sung, Pomeranus addressed the vast multitude. Melancthon then pronounced a funeral oration. But it has been remarked, as creditable to both orators, that their feelings were more conspicuous than their powers of oratory, and that their pious attempts to console the sorrows of others were little more than a hearty demonstration of their own."*

{*For Extracts of Melancthon's Oration, see Waddington, vol. 3, pp. 353 - 356.}

Reflections on the Life of Luther

To study and estimate the different characters which pass before us in history, contrasted in everything but their common design, and to trace with the eye of faith the overruling hand of God in all their works and ways, will be found both deeply interesting and highly profitable. It is the study of what God is in government, and of what man is in himself, however richly gifted or renewed by grace. Speaking of those great, we must always add, but, fallible men. There is only One who is infallible, and, thank God, we own no Head, no centre, but Him; and no name but His-the name of Jesus; and it is only from this elevated point of view that we can rightly estimate the characters and events of history.

The life and death of Luther are full of the deepest instruction for the thoughtful student, especially when contrasted with his great compeer, Zwingle. Their object was one; but their ways of attaining that object were as wide apart as the poles. It would be hard to say which had the greater heart for the maintenance and spread of the truth of God; perhaps Luther's was the warmer and deeper, Zwingle's the clearer and broader. The one was war, the other peace; the one looked for victory only through the energy of faith and the bold confession of the truth; the other thought that the sword of the magistrate might, in some cases, be allied with the gospel of peace; the one was destined to see his labours crowned with almost universal success; the other was doomed to witness a catastrophe which threatened to engulf his dearly loved Reformation; the one died in peace, surrounded by his friends; the other by the blows of his enemies. The principle of Luther in this respect, is one of the essential principles of Christianity. The fury of the persecutor is to be met by truth and meekness-the martyr's noblest crown-not by political edicts and men-at-arms. These two great examples are no doubt intended by God to be two great lessons to all future generations. If we follow Christ, we must be characterized by His Spirit, and walk in His footsteps. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1Jn 2:6)

The Lord's Care of His Servant

We need no voice from heaven to assure us of the Lord's watchful care over His servant Luther. He trusted in God and his faith was not disappointed. There is no more wonderful instance of the preserving power of divine providence on the page of history. Its lessons are well fitted to strengthen our faith in Him who rules over all. An Augustinian monk of humble condition, without authority, without protection, rose up against the most degrading, firmly-seated despotism ever imposed on the credulity of mankind, and alone he triumphed. We cannot be too often reminded of this unseen, but invincible power. Faith is always in harmony with the mind and government of God. This was the grand secret of Luther's victory. He had scarcely an avowed supporter when he stood superior to kings, princes, popes and prelates, to all that was mighty in power, and venerable for antiquity.

No human eye could discover any adequate motive for the strange position he had taken. It was neither vanity, ambition, nor fanaticism. He never was more, and he never cared to be more, than Dr. Martin Luther. It was also a time of general peace and quiet submission to papal authority. Why then trouble the still waters? There is but one answer to this question-conscience. There was a power in the enlightened conscience of the monk which the double sword of popery was powerless to overcome. Even the natural man without conscience can never be a man in any high and noble sense of the word. But faith placed the Reformer on the solid ground of the word of God, by which he was taught the difference between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, justice and oppression. Now he stood for the truth of God; and God, in wisdom and power, stood with him. He boldly maintained "that scripture was the only test of truth; that the interpretation of scripture was of private right and privilege*; that conscience had her prerogatives, which were higher than all the powers of earth; and that despotism, whether spiritual, ecclesiastical, or intellectual, was contrary to the will of God, and to the happiness, prosperity, and dignity of mankind." On this foundation the Reformation was built; and by the maintenance of these principles, that system of delusion, which was deemed omnipotent, was shaken to its centre by a single monk in his brown frock and cowl.

{*The truer ground would have been personal responsibility to God Who has spoken to man.}

To have accomplished the destruction of such a heretic, Rome would gladly have given the half of her kingdom; but she could not touch a hair of his head, or take a day or an hour of his life from him. For well nigh thirty years he defied her utmost malice, her loudest thunders, and all her powers. Yes, the powers which, only a little time before, had made the proudest monarchs to tremble on their thrones. But now there were bolts forged at Wittemberg as well as at the Vatican, and hurled with as little ceremony at popes and kings as at the Anabaptists or the revolutionary peasants. What is to be done with the audacious monk? Will no man rid His Infallibility of this pestilent enemy of the papacy? Where are the daggers and the poisoned cups of Jezebel, which have so often come to her aid? And yet, he is always at hand, always to be seen, always in action, writing, speaking, uttering defiance to his adversaries, or inspiring his friends with courage and resolution. But he has no designs of blood; his object is life, not death. When he is most violent, it is in word only, and that he may awaken Christendom from the slumber of ages; or rage against the high ones of the earth because they have sought to arrest the progress of the truth. Every hand that was engaged on the side of papal tyranny was raised against him, yet not one of them could strike the fatal blow.

Such is the perfect security of the man who reposes under the shield of the Almighty. Diet after diet of the German Empire may be convoked, aided by the representatives of papal authority, but all in vain; Luther is beyond their reach, yet always in sight. His door stands open; the poor may come for alms; distinguished strangers from all parts of Europe may enter, converse freely, and sup with the far-famed professor; yet no man can be found to do him harm. And so he lived in the unwalled town of Wittemberg as safely as if he had been within the gates of heaven.

The Domestic and Inner Life of Luther

"Hitherto," says a competent critic, "the too common idea of the great Reformer's character has been, that it was a mere compound of violence and ruggedness. These features have been so prominent, that the finer lines of his portrait have been completely shaded from sight. The lion and the lamb were united in Luther. Nothing could exceed his submissiveness and humility when a choice was left him whether to be humble or daring: but when conscience spoke no other consideration was for a moment attended to, and he certainly did shake the forest in his magnificent ire.... We dwell not upon his constant contentment in poverty, and his contempt for riches, because this is the characteristic of almost all great men who are really worth more than gold can procure them; but his long unbroken friendship with Melancthon-a character so opposite to his own, and in some respects so superior, as he was the first to acknowledge himself-has always struck us as a proof that he possessed much sweetness and gentleness of disposition. Envy or jealousy never interrupted for a moment the fraternal affection that subsisted between these great men. Of those passions, indeed, Luther seems not to have been susceptible. Neither did personal ambition come near him. He gave himself no air of grandeur or importance, notwithstanding the great things he had performed. He seemed to consider himself as a common man among common men.

"But this great simplicity of manners exhibits, not only his native greatness, but that apostolic frame of mind, which all the messengers of God, from Moses downwards, have displayed. Such men are moulded at once by the hand that sends them. The accidents of this world have no power-as they have upon others-to change or modify their moral conformation. There is a oneness, a wholeness of character in these elect instruments; they are governed by one idea, and one only. Hence was begotten the simplicity and homeliness of Luther's walk in life. Had he acted the great man, he would have proved that he was not the apostle. In his family and among his neighbours, he was pleasant, affectionate, and pious; but his piety was not put on; it flowed in a mingled stream with his everyday life and conversation."*

{*Blackwood's Magazine-slightly altered-December 1835.}

Luther's Marriage

The marriage of Luther happening about a month after the death of his friend and patron, Frederick of Saxony, and while all Germany was bewailing the blood of her peasants, appeared to us so indiscreet, that we purposely left it out of our narrative. His usual impetuosity was strikingly manifested on this occasion.

The name of Catherine von Bora has long enjoyed a wide celebrity. She was of a good family, and one of nine recluses, who, after studying the scriptures, and finding that their vow was not binding, escaped from a convent in Mesnia. Within the space of two years eight of the nine were married; Catherine alone remained unmarried. During this time they had been supported by the bounty of friends, which was administered by Luther. In this way he must have known something of Catherine's character and disposition. He first proposed to unite her to one of his friends, a humble evangelical pastor; but not falling in with this arrangement, she remarked, with great simplicity, that had he proposed to espouse her himself, or to affiance her to Amsdorf, she should have felt less objection. Luther is represented to have been entirely overpowered by so flattering a declaration. He decided at once to be married, and without any notice of his intention, he caused the ceremony to be immediately performed.

On the 11th of June, 1525, Luther went to the house of his friend and colleague, Amsdorf. He desired Pomeranus, whom he styled The Pastor, to bless their union. The celebrated painter, Lucas Cranach, and Dr. John Apella, witnessed the marriage. Melancthon, the dearest friend of all, was absent. For Luther to take such a bold step, while so many calamities were hanging over the Reformation, overwhelmed him for the moment. But when the clamour arose against his friend, he warmly defended his friend's marriage.

No sooner was this quiet marriage known, than a shout of indignation arose, and all Europe was troubled. It afforded a fair opportunity for the enemies of Luther to spread the most false and wild calumnies; and it was regarded by his friends as a serious mortification. From this union of a monk and a nun, the Catholics confidently predicted-according to prophecy, they said-the birth of Antichrist; while the wits and scholars assailed the nuptials with their sarcastic hymns and epigrams.

We can have no idea in our own day, of the effect of such a step on the minds of men generally in that age. It was a rude violation of vows which had been considered for centuries inviolable. Even many of the disciples of the Reformation were scandalised by their chief marrying a nun. Early prejudices are difficult to overcome. But hasty as the step was, Luther was prepared to justify and defend it. He met the storm by a counterblast of invectives and sarcasms: but we have chiefly to do with that which seems to have become a matter of conscience. Marriage, he boldly affirmed, was the ordinance of God; celibacy, the institution of man. "I do not take a wife," he said, "that I may live long with her; but seeing the nations and the princes letting loose their fury against me, foreseeing that my end is near, and that after my death they will again trample my doctrine under foot, I am resolved, for the edification of the weak to bear a striking testimony to what I teach here below. " The war of the peasants had brought great reproach on the principles of the Reformation at that time, and Rome appeared to be recovering here and there the ground she had lost; she even flattered herself with the hope of victory; but the marriage of the monk, who was under the anathema of the pope, and the ban of the Emperor, spread terror and surprise through her ranks, and still more fully disclosed to her the courage of the enemy she fancied she had crushed.*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 3, p. 309.}

The Marriage Feast

On the 15th of June, Luther says, in a letter to Ruchel, "I have made the determination to cast off every shred of my former papistical life, and thus I have entered the state of matrimony, at the urgent solicitation of my father." His friend was wealthy, and while inviting him to the marriage feast on the 27th, he tells him, with characteristic frankness and simplicity, "that any present he might choose to bring with him would be acceptable." In a letter to Spalatin about the same time, he says, "I have silenced those who calumniated me and Catherine of Bora. If I am to give a feast in celebration of these nuptials, you must not only be present yourself, but you must send me a supply of venison. Meanwhile pray for us, and give us your benediction." To Wenceslaus Link he wrote, "Quite suddenly, and while I was thinking of anything rather than marriage, God wonderfully brought me into wedlock with the celebrated nun, Catherine of Bora." He invited him to the feast, but stipulated that he should bring no present, he being poor like Luther himself. The following was addressed to Amsdorf: "The report is true, that I married Catherine, and that in great haste, before the accustomed clamours of tumultuous tongues could reach me, for I hope that I shall yet live some short time, and I could not refuse this last act of obedience to the importunity of my father." The old couple from Mansfeld-John and Margaret Luther-were to be present.

It will be seen from the above extracts, that one reason, by which Luther attempted to justify his marriage, was the urgent importunity of his father. "But when we remember the contempt," says one of his fairest critics, "with which he had treated the parental instances, twenty years before, when he took the most important step in his early life in direct opposition to them, we may question whether the actions of his mature age were directed by that influence, and whether, with his present imperious character and habits, even the persuasion of a father would have induced him to take any step on which he was not previously determined.... This defence would have been sufficient for any man except Luther; but his position was so preeminent before that of all his brother Reformers, his achievements had been so splendid, his pretensions were so lofty, and above all, his success had been so much advanced by the unquestionable disinterestedness of his character and designs, that his followers had a right to expect greater self-denial from him than from a Spalatin or a Carlstadt. They had a right to expect, in return for the almost implicit obedience which they yielded him, that he would sacrifice any private inclination, however consistent with evangelical principles, rather than cast a certain, though it might be an unmerited, scandal upon the cause over which he presided. . . . Thenceforward he ceased to stand apart from his brethren, and came nearer to the level of their common humanity."*

{*Waddington, vol. 2, p. 121.}

But though this imprudent affair unquestionably lowered Luther in public estimation, it does not appear to have inflicted any serious blow upon the cause of the Reformation. The work was of God, and too deeply founded to be shaken by the infirmity of His servant; and twenty peaceful years of domestic happiness may have amply remunerated the Reformer for some loss of public reputation.

The Married Life of Luther

The union of Luther and Catherine, though without the raptures of a first affection, was no doubt a happy one. The Lord greatly blessed them. She seems to have been a woman of great modesty, with tender affections, and more than an ordinary share of good sense. She consoled him in his dejection by repeating passages from the Bible, saved him all anxiety about household affairs, contrived to sit near him during his leisure moments, amused him by working his portrait in embroidery, reminded him of letters he had to write; but sometimes she indulged rather more in general conversation than suited the doctor, which called forth his most playful sallies; such as "Did you say your Pater, Catherine, before you began that sermon? If you had, I think you would not have been allowed to preach." And sometimes he addressed her as my Lord Ketha, and the Doctoress. But his letters overflowed with tenderness for Catherine, and as age advanced, his affection seems to have increased. He styles her his dear and gracious wife, his dear and amiable Ketha.

They had six children, three sons and three daughters. Their daughter Magdaline died at the age of fourteen. "Such is the power of natural affection," says the father, "that I cannot endure this without tears and groans, or rather an utter deadness of heart. At the bottom of my soul are engraver her looks, her words, her gestures, as I gazed at her in her lifetime and on her death-bed. My dutiful, my gentle daughter! Even the death of Christ-and what are all deaths compared to His?-cannot tear me from this thought as it should. She was playful, lovely, and full of love."

The Elector provided for the mother and the five children after the father's death.*

{*As our space forbids indulging in extracts from Luther's letters to his children, his wife, his friends, and his many encounters with the invisible as well as with the visible world-such as the scenes in the castle of Wartburg; we would recommend our readers, who care to understand the personal character of Martin Luther, to study Michelet's Life of Luther, translated by Hazlitt.}

Conclusion

Before parting with the great Reformer, who has claimed so large a share of our attention in tracing the history of the church, we will bring under review the estimate formed of him by one of our most judicious writers-the historian of Charles V.; and also, Dean Waddington's review of the extent of his work.

"As Luther was raised up by divine providence, to be the author of one of the greatest revolutions recorded in history, there is not any person, perhaps, whose character has been drawn with such opposite colours. In his own age one party, struck with horror and inflamed with rage, when they saw with what a daring hand he overturned everything which they held to be sacred, or valued as beneficial, imputed to him not only the defects and vices of a man, but the qualities of a demon. The other, warmed with admiration and gratitude, which they thought he merited as the restorer of right and liberty to the christian church, ascribed to him perfections above the condition of humanity, and viewed all his actions with a veneration bordering on that, which should be paid only to those who are guided by the immediate inspiration of heaven. It is his own conduct, not the undistinguished censure, or the exaggerated praise of his contemporaries, that ought to regulate the opinions of the present age concerning him. Zeal for what he regarded as truth, undaunted intrepidity to maintain his own system, abilities, both natural and acquired, to defend his principles, and unwearied industry in propagating them, are virtues which shine so conspicuously in every part of his behaviour, that even his enemies must allow him to have possessed them in an eminent degree.

"To these may be added, with equal justice, such purity and even austerity of manners, as became one who assumed the character of a Reformer; such sanctity of life as suited the doctrine which he delivered, and such perfect disinterestedness as affords no slight presumption of his sincerity. Superior to all selfish considerations, a stranger to the elegancies of life, and despising its pleasures, he left the honours and emoluments of the church to his disciples, remaining satisfied himself, in his original state of professor in the university, and pastor of the town of Wittemberg, with the moderate appointments annexed to these offices.... His mind, forcible and vehement in all its operations, roused by great subjects, or agitated by violent passions, broke out, on many occasions, with an impetuosity which astonishes men of feebler spirits, or such as are placed in a more tranquil situation. By carrying some praiseworthy dispositions to excess, he bordered sometimes on what was culpable, and was often betrayed into actions which exposed him to censure. His confidence that his own opinions were wellfounded approached to arrogance, his courage, in asserting them, to rashness; his firmness, in adhering to them, to obstinacy; and his zeal in confronting his adversaries, to rage and scurrility. Accustomed himself to consider everything as subordinate to truth, he expected the same deference for it from other men; and, without making any allowances for their timidity or prejudices, he poured forth, against such as disappointed him in this particular, a torrent of invective mingled with contempt. Regardless of any distinction of rank or character when his doctrines were attacked, he chastised all his adversaries indiscriminately, with the same rough hand; neither the royal dignity of Henry VIII., nor the eminent learning and abilities of Erasmus, screened them from the same gross abuse with which he treated Tetzel and John of Eck.

"But these indecencies, of which Luther was guilty, must not be imputed wholly to the violence of his temper. They ought to be charged in part on the manners of his age. Some parts of Luther's behaviour, which to us appear most culpable, gave no offence to his contemporaries. The account of his death filled the Roman Catholic party with excessive as well as indecent joy, and damped the spirit of all his followers; neither party sufficiently considering that his doctrines were now so firmly rooted as to be in a condition to flourish, independently of the hand which first had planted them."*

{*Robertson's History of Charles V., vol. 6, p. 71-76.}

"But the most remarkable fact in the history of the Reformation, and, in my opinion, one of the most so in the history of the world, still remains to be mentioned-that the limits which the Reformation won while Luther lived, were very nearly those which divide the two religions at this day. Almost all that was accomplished before his death endured: almost all that was afterwards achieved was wrested back again by Rome. The enthusiasm of a single generation attained, under his guidance, the prescribed boundaries. No exertions of his disciples, no reverence for his name and virtues, no wider diffusion of faith, and knowledge, and civilization, and commercial activity, and philosophical truth, during the course of three centuries of progressive improvement, have made any lasting additions to the work which he left. Such as when it passed from the hands of its architect, or very nearly such, are its dimensions now. The form, indeed, is somewhat altered, and the part, which he considered as exclusively sacred, has been much narrowed by the change. But to the uncompromising, unrelenting enemy of Rome, it was an immortal triumph, that he extorted from her, with his own hands, all that she was ordained, so far as we yet have seen, to lose, and that he witnessed the utmost humiliation to which, even to this hour, it has pleased Providence permanently to reduce her."*

{*Waddington's History of the Reformation, vol. 3, p. 362.}

Deep thoughts had been revolving in the mind of Maurice and many others, previous to this appointment. By the late successes of Charles, the fears of many were awakened. The Vatican was the first to raise the alarm. The pope repented of having contributed so largely to the growth of a power that might one day become his master. Already Charles had shaken the foundations of ecclesiastical authority, in presuming to define articles of faith, and to regulate modes of worship. Efforts were made to form alliances with foreign powers, that a vigorous resistance might be made at once, before his power became too formidable to be opposed.

But it was now apparent to all, that Charles was bent on exacting a rigid conformity to the doctrines and rites of the Romish Church, instead of allowing liberty of conscience, as he had always promised. The nation felt that they had been grossly deceived. They had been told over and over again before the war began, that it was no part of the Emperor's plans to alter the Reformed religion. But now both the religion and the liberties of Germany were at the feet of the perfidious monarch. This could not fail to alarm the princes of the empire, and none more so than Maurice. He was addressed in satires as "Judas," and accused by his countrymen as the author of these calamities. In this painful position Maurice made his choice. Only one thing will atone for the betrayal of the Protestant Confederacy-the complete overthrow of the Emperor's power in Germany; and this he resolved to accomplish.

"He saw," says Robertson, "the yoke that was preparing for his country; and, from the rapid as well as formidable progress of the imperial power, was convinced that but a few steps more remained to be taken, in order to render Charles as absolute a monarch in Germany as he had become in Spain." Maurice was a Protestant-politically-at heart, and by his Electoral dignity, the head of the party. Besides, his passions concurred with his love of liberty. He longed to avenge the cruel imprisonment of the Landgrave, his father-in-law, who, by his persuasion, had put himself into the Emperor's hands.

When he divulged his bold purpose to the princes, they were slow to believe him; but at length, being satisfied of his sincerity, they readily promised to assist him. Having gained the confidence of the Protestant party, he next applied all his powers of art and duplicity to deceive the Emperor. The jealousy of Charles had been somewhat excited by hearing of Maurice's friendship with some of the Protestant princes; but now, by his apparent zeal against the citizens of Magdeburg, all his suspicions were allayed, and he was inspired with fresh confidence in Maurice. As general of the army, he had a large force under his command, but he managed to protract the siege of Magdeburg till his plans were matured. He secretly formed leagues with several German princes, and entered into an alliance with the powerful king of France, Henry II., who proved a most effective ally, though a Catholic.

The Revolution in Germany

A.D. 1552

When Maurice's preparations were accomplished, he published a manifesto containing his reasons for taking arms against the Emperor, namely, that he might secure the Protestant religion, which was threatened with immediate destruction; that he might maintain the laws and constitution of the empire; that he might deliver the Landgrave of Hesse from the miseries of a long and unjust imprisonment. By the first proposal he roused all the friends of the Reformation to support him, who had been rendered desperate by oppression. By the second he interested all the friends of liberty in his cause-Catholics no less than Protestants. By the third he drew to his standard all the sympathy which had been universally excited by the Landgrave's unjust imprisonment, and by the rigour of the Emperor's proceedings against him. At the same time Henry of France issued a manifesto, in which he assumed the extraordinary title of "Protector of the liberties of Germany, and of its Captive Princes. "

The Emperor, as we have seen, was reposing at Innsbruck, within three days' journey of Trent, and narrowly watching the proceedings of the council now sitting there. Maurice still concealing his designs under the veil of the most exquisite address, despatched a trusted messenger to assure the Emperor that he would wait upon him in a few days at Innsbruck; for which friendly visit the Emperor was in daily expectation. But the time for action was now come. The trumpet of war was sounded; and with a well-appointed army of twenty thousand foot and five thousand horse, Maurice pushed on by secret and forced marches, determined to surprise the Emperor and seize his person. The imperial garrisons, by the way, offered no resistance, but tidings reached the imperial quarters, that all Germany had risen and was in full march upon Innsbruck.

The Emperor's Flight

It was now late in the evening. The night was dark, and the rain falling heavily; but danger was near, and nothing could save the Emperor but speedy flight. He had been suffering for some time from a severe attack of the gout, and was unable to escape on horseback. Placed in a litter, the only motion he could bear, he travelled by the light of torches, taking his way over the Alps by roads almost impassable. His courtiers and attendants followed him with equal precipitation, and all in the utmost confusion. In this miserable plight the late conqueror of Germany arrived with his dejected train at Villach, a remote corner in Carinthia.

Maurice entered Innsbruck a few hours after the Emperor and his attendants had left it; but rather than pursue them, he abandoned all the Emperor's baggage, together with that of his ministers, to be plundered by his soldiers. There was now nothing left for the fallen Emperor but negotiation, or rather to submit to the terms proposed to him; and this he committed to his brother Ferdinand. Maurice, backed by all Germany, was absolute.

The Peace of Passau

On the 2nd of August, 1552, the famous treaty of Passau was concluded. By this treaty it was agreed that the Landgrave should be set at liberty, and conveyed in safety to his own dominions; that within six months, a diet should be held of all the states, to deliberate on the best means of terminating the existing religious dissensions, and that in the meantime no molestation whatever should be offered to those who adhered to the Augsburg confession; that, if the diet thus to be held, should fail to effect an amicable adjustment of their religious disputes, the treaty of Passau should remain in force for ever. Thus was peace restored to the empire, and entire freedom conceded to the Protestant faith. This was followed by the "Recess of Augsburg" in 1555, which not only ratified the peace of Passau, but enlarged the religious liberties of Germany. It was this memorable convention which gave to the Protestants, after so much slaughter and so many calamities and conflicts, that firm and stable religious peace which they still enjoy. But alas! the youthful Maurice, who played so conspicuous a part, both in the defeat and the triumph of the Protestants, fell in battle, in less than a year after the peace of Passau, so that he was not permitted to see the full results of his bold undertaking.*

{*Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 157. Wylie, vol. 2, p. 122. Scott, vol. 2, p. 83.}

All these arrangements and treaties were deeply mortifying to the disappointed ambition of Charles. Protestantism, which he had intended to crush entirely, was flourishing throughout the empire. The mass-priests were dismissed; the banished pastors were brought back with great joy to their beloved flocks. The esteemed Frederick, who had been carried about from place to place by the Emperor for five years, had found his way home to his affectionate family and friends, but everything shaped itself in dark and gloomy colours before the troubled mind of Charles. He never had a heart for friendship, and, it is said, he never made a friend. Thus, faint and weary, the friendless Emperor hid himself in the fastnesses of Carinthia. From civil history we learn that, at this very moment, war was going on in Hungary against the still advancing Turks. Henry II., according to his agreement with Maurice, took the field early, with a numerous and well appointed army, and completely defeated the Spanish forces in Lorraine and Alsace. Italy was on the eve of outbreak and anarchy. But the Emperor was in exile; his treasury empty; his credit gone; his armies scattered and dispirited; and, feeling himself rapidly falling from the lofty elevation which he had so long maintained, he resolved to withdraw entirely from the affairs of this world, in order that he might spend the remainder of his days in retirement and solitude.

Accordingly, at the comparatively early age of fifty-six, he filled all Europe with astonishment, by resigning the imperial crown to his brother Ferdinand, and the remainder of his vast possessions in Europe and America to his son Philip II., whom he had already, on his marriage with Mary of England, invested with Naples and Sicily. The following year, after settling his affairs, he retired to the monastery of St. Juste, near the town of Placentia, in Spain. But he was still suffering so severely from the gout, that he had to be conveyed sometimes in a chair, and sometimes in a horse-litter, suffering exquisite pain at every step, and advancing with the greatest difficulty. Like most of the religious houses in those days, the monastery of St. Juste was beautifully situated:-"it lay in a little vale, watered by a small brook, and surrounded by rising grounds covered with lofty trees; from the nature of the soil, as well as the temperature of the climate, it was esteemed the most healthful and delicious situation in Spain." Here Charles lived about two years, and died on the 21st of September, 1558, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

Reflections on the Foregoing Pages

On the cloister days of the Emperor we need not dwell. They were chiefly spent in light and mechanical amusements when relief from the gout permitted him. One of these was a kind of theatrical lamentation at his funeral before his death. He ordered his tomb to be erected in the chapel; his body was laid in the coffin with great solemnity, the monks weeping (?); then marching in funeral procession with black tapers in their hands to the chapel. The service for the dead was chanted, the coffin sprinkled with holy water, the mourners retired, and the doors of the chapel were closed. Then Charles rose out of his coffin and withdrew to his apartment, full of those awful sensations which such a revolting farce was calculated to create. He died almost immediately after.

Yes! he died-died to all his dignities and humiliation, to all his ambition and disappointments, to all his plans and his policy! Yes! he who had sacrificed hundreds of thousands of human lives, and spent millions of money with the ultimate view of extinguishing Protestantism, died in the narrow sphere of a monkish cell, while Protestantism was now filling the vast firmament of human thought with its light and glory. There we leave the great Emperor-the greatest perhaps, as to dominions, that ever sat upon a throne. He is before the tribunal where motives as well as actions are weighed, and where all must be tried by the divine standard.

But, alas! we search in vain for anything like repentance in that inveterate enemy of the Reformers. Within the holy walls of St. Juste, so far from repenting of his conduct towards them, his only regret was that he had not treated them with greater severity. When informed that Lutheranism was spreading in Spain, and that a number of persons had been apprehended under suspicion of being infected with it, he wrote letters from the monastery to his daughter, Joanna, governess of Spain, to Juan de Vega, president of the council of Castile, and to the Inquisitor-general, charging them to exert their respective powers with all possible vigour, "in seizing the whole party, and causing them all to be burnt, after using every means to make them Christians before their punishment; for he was persuaded that none of them would become sincere Catholics, so irresistible was their propensity to dogmatize." Again, he says, "If they do not condemn them to the fire, they will commit a great fault as I did in permitting Luther to live. Though I spared him solely on the ground of the safe-conduct I had sent him .... I confess, nevertheless, that I did wrong in this, because I was not bound to keep my promise to that heretic .... but in consequence of my not having taken away his life, heresy continued to make progress; whereas his death, I am persuaded, would have stifled it in its birth."*

{*History of the Reformation in Spain, by Dr. McCrie, p. 119.}

Here we have the real heart of Charles. There is no longer any reason for artifice and dissimulation, or pretended toleration to the Protestants. He has done with his wars and his politics, he has no longer a double part to play; and the real spirit of the papist is openly expressed. The one regret of his old age is, that he did not seize the prey in his youth. He seems to gnash his teeth with rage when he thinks of Luther, and grieves that he did not violate his promise. But there was One who was watching over the life of Luther and the infant Reformation; and so kept the hands of Charles full for upwards of thirty years, that he had no leisure to wage war against the Lutherans. But some think that this was ever before him as the one grand object of his life and his reign - the extermination of heresy.

But in that very contest on which he had staked everything, all was lost-his dominions, his throne, his crown, his grandeur. Never was the hand of God more strikingly displayed in the affairs of any prince. In one moment, and by one stroke, all was changed. "His power collapsed when apparently at its zenith. None of the usual signs that precede the fall of greatness gave warning of so startling a downfall in the Emperor's fortunes. His vast prestige had not been impaired. He had not been worsted on the battle-field; his military glory had suffered no eclipse; nor had any of his kingdoms been torn from him."* Of all the great men who started with him in life, such as Francis I., Henry VIII., Leo X., and Martin Luther, he was the sole survivor. His rivals had passed away before him, and none seemed left to dispute his possession of the field. But the hand of the Lord in retributive justice was lifted up against the oppressor of His people, and who could shelter him? Already a finger had written on the walls of his palace, "Mene, Mene, God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it." And, instantly, the brazen gates of his power could no longer protect him, he was compelled to flee before a power which his insidious and fraudulent policy had created. The rod which he had thus prepared for the destruction of Germany was used of God for his own complete and ignominious overthrow. What a reality is the government as well as the grace of God in the earth! He controls the movements of the mightiest monarchs, and cares for the smallest things in creation. This, faith well knows, and finds its rest and consolation therein. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." (1Pe 3:12)

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 121.}

The Calamities of the Protestants

The other lesson so plainly written on the foregoing pages is this-that God is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to another. He will have His work done by His own means and in His own way. No greater calamity could have befallen the Reformation than that its friends should have given up the divine position of faith, and descended to the world's platform of diplomacy and arms. Had it triumphed by these means, it would have lost its true character, or perished in the land of its birth, and the Reformers would have become a mere political power. But God would not have it so, and He suffered them to be shamefully defeated and stripped, until they were utterly defenceless and cast upon Himself. They had neither league nor sword, nor treasures, nor castles, nor any means of defence. They were brought back to their first principles-faith in the word of God, and martyrdom. But these divine and invincible principles seemed to have died with their great leader and to have been buried in his grave; and it was only through great suffering and humiliation that his followers were led to see their mistake.

But no sooner were they brought to feel that they had no means of defence but the word of God and a good conscience before Him, than deliverance came. The Lord had said, "The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous." (Psa 125:3) Such is the goodness and the tender mercy of our God. He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous. But it is always dangerous to give up the principles of God's word, and to be governed in our ways by the maxims and policy of this world; and this holds true in all the affairs of life; but on the subject before us the word of God is plain, as saith the apostle, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," yes, "mighty through God." And as the blessed Lord says, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (2Co 10:4; Mat 26:52)

The Reformation in Germany, embracing the Lutheran churches, was now definitively established. But the Reformed churches, embracing the followers of Zwingle and Calvin, were excluded from the privileges secured in the treaties of Passau and Augsburg, nor was legal toleration extended to them till the peace of Westphalia, nearly a century later. By this famous treaty the pacification of Passau was confirmed to the members of the Reformed churches, and the independence of Switzerland declared for the first time. "The balance of power," by which the weak amongst the nations might be effectually protected, and the powerful restrained from those aggressive schemes of ambition which had been too frequently indulged, was one of the important results of the negotiations and discussions in Westphalia.*

{*Universal History, vol. 6, p. 87; Wylie, vol. 2, p. 122.}

The Rise of the Jesuits

Before taking our leave, finally, of the reign of Charles V., we must just notice two memorable events which occurred during that reign, because of the relation they bore to the Reformation, and the great religious struggle which was then agitating all classes of society. We refer to the Council of Trent and the rise of the Jesuits. Having said a little about the former, we will only at present speak of the latter.

We can easily conceive that the enemies of the Reformation were now at their wits' end. What was to be done? That which had been looked forward to for thirty years, as the sure means of crushing it, had not only failed, but ceased to be an opposing power, while the Reformation was rapidly increasing its area and multiplying its adherents. The pope had lost immensely in dignity, influence, and revenues in the contest, and the imperial power could no more be appealed to. The friars, black, white, and grey, were dispersed and their monasteries destroyed: what was next to be done? was a grave question for the evil heart of Jezebel, and those with whom she took counsel. Men-at-arms had failed; peace and persuasion must be our tactics now, suggested the presiding spirit. An army must be raised whose uniform should be the priestly garb, whose vows must be poverty, chastity, the care of Christians, and the conversion of infidels; and the character of whose mission must be persuasive and pacific. Under these appearances a counter-work to the Reformation must be immediately instituted. This plausible proposal was unanimously agreed to; and never was suggestion more plainly from beneath-even from the depths of Satan; and never was there one more satanically executed, as the history of the Jesuits proves. The springs of human feeling, sympathy, and pity seem to have been dried up in every member of that society, and the hell-inspired springs of bigotry and cruelty, which have no parallel in history, most surely possessed them.

Ignatius Loyola

The Society of the Jesuits, a religious order of the Romish church, was founded by Ignatius Loyola, the son of a Spanish nobleman, born in the year 1491 at Guipuzcoa, in the province of Biscay. In his youth he was employed as a page at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, but he grew weary of its gaieties, and longed to be engaged in the wars of his country. In 1521 we find him defending Pampeluna against the French; but the young intrepid Loyola was severely wounded in both legs. Fever followed, and the future restorer of the papacy was nearly brought to a premature grave.

By nature ardent, romantic, and visionary, he devoured greedily, during his long illness, the romances of Spanish chivalry, founded on the conflicts of his nation with the Moors; and when these were exhausted, he betook himself to a series of still more marvellous romances-the legends of the saints. With a morbid intensity he studied those books of mystical devotion, until he resolved to emulate in his own life the wondrous virtues ascribed to a Benedict, a Dominic, or a Francis. Accordingly, on his recovery, he retired to a Benedictine monastery at Montserrat, near Barcelona, and there he passed the night at the celebrated shrine of the Virgin Mary. He suspended his lance and shield before an image of the Virgin, vowed constant obedience to God and His church, thereby abandoning a temporal for a spiritual knighthood.

To celebrate his self-dedication to Our Lady, he withdrew to the adjacent town of Manresa. Holiness, in the view of such men, does not consist in the moral likeness of the soul to Jesus, but in the mortification of the body. Next to his skin he wore alternately an iron chain, a horsehair cloth, and a sash of prickly thorns. Three times a day he laid the scourge resolutely on his bare back. This was not to mortify the deeds of the body, but the poor unoffending body itself. Such is the blinding power of Satan, and such the suited darkness for his purpose. After travelling barefoot to Rome, Jerusalem, and other places rendered sacred by the Saviour's history, he eventually found his way to Paris. Here he met with Francis Xavier, who afterwards became the great apostle of India. Other kindred spirits joining them, a small band of zealous associates gathered round Loyola, which gave origin to the society of Jesus - about eight or nine in all.

Commencement of the Order of Jesuits

On the 15th of August 1534, being the festival of the assumption of the Virgin Mary, in one of the subterranean chapels of Montmartre, and after receiving the sacrament, they all took the usual vows of poverty and chastity; and then took a solemn oath to dedicate themselves to the conversion of the Saracens at Jerusalem, and the care of the Christians, and to lay themselves and their services unreservedly at the feet of the pontiff. "The army thus enrolled was little, and it was great. It was little when counted, it was great when weighed. To foster the growth of this infant Hercules, Loyola had prepared beforehand his book, entitled 'Spiritual Exercises.' This is a body of rules for teaching men how to conduct the work of their own conversion. It consists of four grand meditations, and the penitent, retiring into solitude, is to occupy absorbingly his mind on each in succession, during the space of the rising and setting of seven suns. . . . It professes, like the Koran, to be a revelation. 'The Book of Exercises,' says a Jesuit, 'was truly written by the finger of God, and delivered to Ignatius by the Holy Mother of God.'"*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 384.}

After some delays, the pope, Paul III., approving the plan of Loyola and his companions, granted a bull in 1540, authorizing the formation of the body under the name of "The Society of Jesus;" and in April of the following year, Ignatius was installed as "The General Superior," who was to be subject to the pope only. The order had now a formal existence. Its members were to dress in black, like the secular clergy; and not being confined to cloisters, they were able to mix themselves up with all classes, and were soon found occupying courts, confessionals, and pulpits, superintending educational establishments, and otherwise securing the affections and co-operation of the young. Crowds of enthusiastic converts flocked to the new standard in all countries, and from all gradations of society.

The Jesuits' Real Object

Thus far we have trodden on ground over which the real character of the Jesuit does not appear-we have only had to do with vows intended to deceive; but were we to pursue their history, we should have to trace in every land the blood-stained footprints of the treacherous and cruel followers of Loyola. Spreading themselves over the world, we find them secretly executing the decrees and private wishes of the Vatican. Their one grand object was to extend the power of the pope, and the one grand fundamental principle of the fraternity was immediate, implicit, unquestioning, unhesitating obedience to him, through their general, who resides in Rome. The organization of their society is by far the most comprehensive of any in existence. "The Jesuit monarchy," it has been said, "covers the globe." In almost every province of the world they have Generals Provincial, who correspond with the General Superior at Rome; so that by means of the confessional, he sees and knows almost everything that is done and said, not only in the Romish church, but in private families, and throughout all parts of the habitable globe. No place is too distant, no difficulties or dangers too great, and no means too nefarious for the Jesuit, if there is the slightest hope of extending the power of the papacy.

The Gunpowder Plot, which was planned to destroy at one blow the nobility and gentry of England, is attributed to Jesuitical influence; and so are many other plots which were intended to accomplish the death of Queen Elizabeth. The gigantic wickedness of the Spanish Armada, and the crowning slaughter of the St. Bartholomew massacre, to say nothing of the many seditions, torturings, poisonings, assassinations, and massacres on a smaller scale, must be attributed to the policy, and to the seed sown by the Jesuits. So mighty did their power become, and so ruinous, that it was often found necessary for the government to suppress them. According to modern history, they were expelled from Portugal in 1759; France 1764; Spain and Spanish America, 1767; the two Sicilies, 1768; and in 1773 suppressed by the pope Ganganelli, Clement XIV. But soon after he had signed the order for their banishment, he fell a victim to their vengeance, and died by poison. In 1801 they were restored by Pius VII.; in 1860 they were dismissed from Sicily; but we need scarcely add, that they soon found ways and means to return. The late pope, Pius IX., confirmed the restoration of the order; so that they now occupy a very proud position in Rome. They have the command of most of the collegiate establishments in the city, and in so many other places, that merely to name them would fill a page.*

{*For a thorough exposure of the iniquity of the moral code of the Jesuits, see the Provincial Letters of Pascal, a Jansenist. For details of their organization, training, operations, see History of Protestantism, vol. 2; Faiths of the world-Jesuits; Universal History, Bagster, vol. 6, p. 82; Hardwick's History of the Reformation, p. 329.}

Thus was the enfeebled power of popery greatly revived - its deadly wound was healed. By means of the Reformation, many of the most opulent and powerful kingdoms of Europe had thrown off their allegiance to the pope. This was a fatal blow to his grandeur and power. It abridged his dominions, abolished his jurisdiction within their territories, and diminished his revenues. But more than this, it is well known that Charles V. seriously contemplated the reduction, if not the subversion, of the papal power. Such was the low, and almost expiring condition of the papacy, when the army of the Jesuits came to its help, which may be viewed as an illustration of Rev 13:3, though far from the full accomplishment of those solemn prophecies.

We now turn to our general history, and would briefly glance at the progress of the Reformation in different lands.

46 Council of Trent

Chapter 46

The Opening of the Council of Trent

For several years before the death of Luther, appearances were unfavourable to the peace and religious liberty of the Protestants. This led them, not so much to prayer and confidence in God as their shield and protector, but to strengthen the league of Smalcald, and prepare for war. They were now a thoroughly political body. This was the outward character of Protestantism at that early period. The man who loved peace was in his grave, and his counsels were forgotten by his followers. He could not conceive a greater calamity befalling the cause of truth than that the sword should be drawn in its defence. Better far be martyrs, he thought, than warriors.

The jealous Emperor narrowly watched the increasing power of the league, and pronounced it "an empire within an empire." But his fatal expedition to Algiers, his renewed war with Francis, and the successes of the Turks in Hungary, led him to temporize, to conceal his feelings and intentions. He held several diets of the empire for the avowed purpose of settling their religious differences, and restoring peace and harmony, but with no good results. The Protestants were deceived and thrown off their guard by fair pretences and apparent concessions. In the Diet of Spires, in 1542, the pontiff, Paul III., by his legate, renewed his promise of a council. He signified that it should be held at Trent, a city in the Tyrol, subject to the king of the Romans, and situated on the confines between Germany and Italy. Ferdinand and the whole Catholic party expressed their immediate satisfaction, and accepted the proposal. Not so the Protestants. They rejected both the place and the council proposed by the pontiff, demanding a general, or Ecumenical, Council. They protested that they would pay no regard to a council held beyond the precincts of the empire, called by the pope's authority, and over which he assumed the right of presiding. Regardless, however, of their protestations, and fortified by the general consent of his own party, he published a bull for the convocation of the council at Trent before the 1st of November, and named three cardinals to preside as his legates.

At the appointed time, the pope's legates, the imperial ambassadors, and a few prelates appeared. But as a fierce war was then raging between the Emperor and Francis, few ecclesiastics could travel with safety. It was manifest from these circumstances, that nothing satisfactory could be undertaken; and to avoid the ridicule and contempt of his enemies, the pope adjourned for an indefinite time the reopening of the council. Unhappily for the dignity and authority of the papal See at this very time, the Emperor and his brother Ferdinand, king of the Romans, found it necessary, not only to connive at the conduct of the Protestants, but to court their favour by repeated acts of indulgence. Ferdinand, who depended on their assistance for the defence of Hungary against the infidels, not only permitted their protestation to be inserted in the records of the diet, but renewed in their favour all the Emperor's concessions at Ratisbon, adding to them whatever they demanded for their further security. Thus had the Reformers rest, and the evangelical principles time to deepen and spread, though not from the good will, but from the disturbed state of their adversaries' affairs.

As late as 1544, at the diet held in the same place, the politic Charles, perceiving that the time was not yet come to offend the jealous spirit of the Protestants, or to provoke the powers of the Smalcald Confederacy, contrived to soothe the Germans by new concessions, and a more ample extension of their religious privileges. Being still engaged in foreign wars, and his hands not free, he employed all his powers of dissimulation to court and flatter the Elector and the Landgrave, the heads of the Protestant party, and through them to deceive the members of the confederacy.

Meanwhile his papal majesty was becoming day by day more jealous of these negotiations and concessions. He was longing as ardently as his three predecessors had done, for the rooting out, by force of arms, of this wide-spreading giant heresy. It had been the constant object of the Vatican, from the beginning of the Reformation, to create a hostile breach between the Emperor and the Protestants, and a consequent appeal to arms. But, so far as we can judge, the consummation of these wicked designs was prevented for nearly thirty years, in the providence of God, and chiefly in answer to the prayers of one man. But he was now off the scene, and his brethren were trusting to their military organization and numerical strength. Besides, the determined position which they had taken with reference to the proposed council, gave the pope and the Emperor every opportunity to ensnare them; and so it turned out, as we shall soon see.

The avowed object of this famous council was, of course the pacification of the church, the healing of her diseases, the restoring of her unity, and the blessing of her children; but its real object was the condemnation of the doctrines of the Reformers, Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin, and the immediate persecution of all who should oppose its decrees. This was the secret arrangement between the pontiff and the Emperor, for they were well aware that the Protestants would never subject themselves to the council, or yield obedience to its canons.

The Treaty Between the Pope and the Emperor

In December, 1545, after so many years of intrigue, dissimulation, and dispute, the long-promised council assembled at Trent, and continued its sittings till 1563.*

{*For details, see Landon's Manual of Councils, Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent. Scott's Church History, vol. 2, pp. 256-324. Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V., vol. 6.}

But the council which was to fix the destiny of Christendom was only a part of a great plot for the suppression of Lutheranism. The Emperor had ended his war with Francis by the peace of Crespy, he had patched up a treaty with Solyman, and secretly gained over some of the Catholic princes in Germany. He pushed on, but with great precaution, his preparations for war. The pope, however much he had disapproved of the Emperor's late policy, or dreaded his power, most readily agreed that all other matters should give place to that one which each accounted the most important. A treaty was concluded, the main object of which was,

1. "That the pope and the Emperor, for the glory of God, and the public good, but especially the welfare of Germany, have entered into league together upon certain articles and conditions; and, in the first place, that the Emperor shall provide an army, and all things necessary for war, and be in readiness by the month of June next ensuing, and by force of arms compel those who refuse the council, and maintain those errors to embrace the ancient religion, and submit to the holy See."

2. "The pope, on his part, in addition to one hundred thousand ducats which he had already given, stipulated to deposit as much more in the Bank of Vienna toward defraying the expense of the war; to maintain, at his own charge, during the space of six months, twelve thousand foot, five hundred horse, and to grant the Emperor for this year one-half of the church revenues all over Spain; to empower him to alienate as much of the Abbey-lands in that country as would amount to five hundred thousand ducats; and that both spiritual censures and military force should be employed against any prince who might seek to hinder the execution of this treaty."

3. "That the council, on its part, was to proceed at once to draw up a confession of faith, wherein should be contained all the articles which the church required its members to believe; that this ought to be the first and principal business of the council: and that anathemas were to be denounced in the name, and by the authority of the Holy Ghost, against all who should disclaim the truth of the Confession."*

{*See F. Paul, Teckendorf, Sleidan, Abbe Millot, quoted by Dr. Robertson, and Wylie's History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 113.}

Thus was the snare most artfully laid. It was the deep device of Satan for the destruction of the Protestants, but vigorously carried out by him who assumes the title of "most holy father," and the character of "infallibility." The enemy saw that the Reformers had shifted from moral to political ground. They were no longer merely "protesters" for the truth of God against the errors of popery, but an armed confederacy, prepared to meet the papal and imperial armies on their own ground. This was their fatal mistake. God could not appear for them on the world's ground; and their own folly and weakness were soon manifested. Thus it happened.

The council commenced its deliberations-though only a few Spanish and Italian bishops had arrived-with examining the first and chief point in controversy between the church of Rome and the Reformers, concerning the rule which should be held as supreme and decisive in matters of faith; and, by its infallible authority, determined, "That the books to which the designation of Apocryphal hath been given, are of equal authority with those which were received by the Jews and Primitive Christians into the sacred canon; that the traditions handed down from the apostolic age, and preserved in the church, are entitled to as much regard as the doctrines and precepts which the inspired authors have committed to writing; that the Latin translation of the scriptures, made or revised by Jerome, and known by the name of the Vulgate translation, should be read in churches, and appealed to in the schools as authentic and canonical."

This was an open attack on the first principles of Protestantism, a pre-judging of every question at issue, and rendering hopeless all discussion between the two parties. Luther and his followers, from the beginning, had affirmed that the word of God was the only rule in judgment; that they owned no authority in matters of faith but the one infallible standard of holy scripture. This was the foundation and corner-stone of Protestantism, but the first decision of the council was intended to undermine the foundation, to adjudge and condemn the whole system.

The Protestants, perceiving that the real object of the council was not to examine their demands, but to condemn their faith as heresy, and to draw them into collision with the Emperor, that he might decide the question with the sword, firmly rejected its decrees. At the same time they published a long manifesto, containing a renewal of their protest against the meeting of the council, together with the reasons which induced them to decline its jurisdiction. But Charles was not yet prepared for hostilities, therefore he pursued his policy of dissimulation. He had no wish to increase the zeal of the council, or to quicken the operations of the league. His first object was to deceive the Protestants, that he might gain time for ripening his schemes. For this purpose he contrived to have an interview with the Landgrave of Hesse, the most active of all the confederates, and the most suspicious of the Emperor's designs. To him he made great professions of his concern for the happiness of Germany, and of his aversion to all violent measures; he denied in express terms, having formed any treaty, or having begun any military preparations which pointed to war.

Such was the consummate duplicity of Charles, that he seems to have dispelled all Philip's doubts and apprehensions, and sent him away fully satisfied of his pacific intentions. On his return to the confederates, who were assembled at Worms, he gave them such a flattering representation of the Emperor's favourable disposition towards them, that they became dilatory and undecided in their operations, thinking that the danger was distant or only imaginary. Listening thus to the wiles of Satan the Protestant leaders were smitten with blindness and folly, even as the men of Zurich were in 1531. They were off the ground of faith and trusting to their own wisdom and strength, which led to their disgrace and humiliation. From this time every step they take is in the wrong and downward direction.

The conduct of the Emperor was everywhere directly opposite to his professions of peace, and seen by all excepting those who ought to have suspected him. Henry VIII. of England secretly informed the princes that Charles, having long resolved to exterminate their doctrines was diligently employing the present interval of tranquillity in preparing for the execution of his designs. The merchants of Augsburg, among whom were some who favoured the Protestant cause, learning from their correspondents in Italy, that the ruin of the Reformers was intended, warned them of the approaching danger. In confirmation of these reports, they heard from the Low Countries that Charles, though with every precaution which could keep the measure concealed, had issued orders for raising troops both there and in other parts of his dominions. And seeing he was not at war either with Francis or Solyman, or any other power, for what could he intend such preparations, if not for the extinction of the Smalcald league, and the heresies which had so long abounded in Germany?

The Pope Reveals the Dark Secret

The secret was now in many hands; the officers and the allies of Charles kept no such mysterious reserve, but spoke out plainly of his intentions. The pope, overflowing with joy not doubting the issue of the enterprise, began to sing the war-song, as in the days of Innocent III., exhorting the faithful to take up arms in the holy cause and gain indulgences. "Proud," says Dr. Robertson, "of having been the author of such a formidable league against the Lutheran heresy, and happy in thinking that the glory of extirpating it was reserved for his pontificate, he published the articles of his treaty with the Emperor, in order to demonstrate the pious intention of their confederacy, as well as to display his own zeal, which prompted him to make such extraordinary efforts for maintaining the faith in its purity. Not satisfied with this, he soon after issued a bull, containing most liberal promises of indulgence to all who should engage in this holy enterprise, together with warm exhortations to such as could not bear a part in it themselves, to increase the fervour of their prayers, and the severity of their mortifications, that they might draw down the blessing of heaven upon those who had undertaken it."*

{*For details of this interesting period see the History of Charles V., in vol. 4 of Dr. Robertson's Collected Writings.}

The pope being deeply grieved with Charles for endeavouring to make that pass for a political contest which he ought to have gloried in as a war that had no other object than the defence of the ancient faith, exposed the treachery of his policy and declared the overthrow of Lutheranism as at hand. The Emperor, though somewhat embarrassed by this disclosure, and not a little offended at the pope's indiscretion or malice, continued boldly to pursue his own plan, and to reassert that his intentions were only that which he had originally stated. Thus were the two heads of Christendom- the fountain of truth and the fountain of honour, so-called- proclaiming to the world that neither truth nor honour were to be found in either. And thus they stand before all posterity, down to the latest generation, a mere compound of craft, falsehood, hypocrisy, and cruelty.

But the artifices of Charles did not impose on all the Protestant confederates. Some of them clearly perceived that he had taken arms for the suppression of the Reformation, and the extinction of the German liberties. They determined, therefore, to prepare for their own defence, and resolved neither to renounce their religious liberties, nor to abandon those civil rights which had been transmitted to them by their ancestors. A deputation from the confederates waited on the Emperor, and wished to know whether these military preparations were carried on by his command, and for what end, and against what enemy? To a question put in such a form and at a time when facts were too notorious to be denied, he avowed the intentions which he could no longer conceal, but with such fascinating duplicity as to deceive the deputies. True, he admitted, that it was Germany he had in view in his preparations, but his only object was to maintain the rights and prerogatives of the imperial dignity. His purpose was, not to molest any on account of religion, but to punish certain factious members, and preserve the ancient constitution of the empire from being impaired or dissolved by their licentious conduct. Though the Emperor did not name the persons whom he had destined as the objects of his vengeance, it was well-known that he had in view John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, and Philip, Landgrave of Hesse.

Transparent as this deception was, and manifest as it might have appeared to all who considered the Emperor's character, it nevertheless lulled to sleep the timid and the wavering. They were furnished with an excuse for inactivity, "seeing," as they said, "the war does not concern religion, but is a quarrel merely between the Emperor and some members of the league." And such was the dexterity with which he used this division of feeling among the confederates, that he gained time and other solid advantages.

The Army of the Confederates

The more energetic of the confederates, soon after this, met at Ulm to give the necessary directions for their future proceedings. It was resolved that they should repel force by force and make vigorous preparations for war. They also determined, that having neglected too long to strengthen themselves by foreign alliances, they would now apply to the Venetians, the Swiss, and the kings of France and England So far alas! had the leaders of the Reformation, within the short period of thirty years from its commencement, departed from the principles which triumphed at Worms and Augsburg, to say nothing of the plain teaching of the word of God, as to apply for help to such men as Henry and Francis; but we shall see with what results.

Their negotiations with foreign courts were all unsuccessful; but the chiefs had no difficulty in bringing a sufficient force into the field. The feudal institutions, which subsisted in full force at that time in Germany, enabled the nobles to call out their numerous vassals, and to put them in motion on the shortest notice. "In a few weeks," says the historian of Charles, "they were enabled to assemble an army composed of seventy thousand foot and fifteen thousand horse, provided with a train of a hundred and twenty cannon, eight hundred ammunition wagons, eight thousand beasts of burden, and six thousand pioneers. This army, one of the most numerous, and undoubtedly the best appointed of any which had been levied in Europe during that century, did not require the united effort of the whole Protestant body to raise it. The Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, the Duke of Wurtemberg, the princes of Anhalt, and the imperial cities of Augsburg, Ulm, and Strasburg, were the only powers which contributed towards this great armament. The Electors of Cologne, of Brandenburg, the Count Palatine, and several others, overawed by the Emperor's threats, or deceived by his professions, remained neutral.

"The number of their troops, as well as the amazing rapidity wherewith they had assembled them, astonished the Emperor, and filled him with the most disquieting apprehensions. He was indeed in no condition to resist such a mighty force. Shut up in Ratisbon with an army scarcely ten thousand strong, he must have been overwhelmed by the approach of such a formidable army, which he could not fight, nor could he even hope to retreat from it in safety."

Fortunately for Charles the confederates did not avail themselves of the advantage which lay so plainly before them. Time was wasted in writing a letter to the Emperor and a manifesto to all the inhabitants of Germany. But weak and perilous though the situation of Charles was, he assumed the air of the haughty inflexible Emperor. His only reply to the letter of the Protestants was to publish the ban of the empire against the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse, their leaders, and against all who should dare to assist them. By this sentence, they were declared rebels and outlaws, and deprived of every privilege which they enjoyed as members of the Germanic body; their goods were confiscated; their subjects absolved from their oath of allegiance; and it became not only lawful but meritorious to invade their territories. This tremendous sentence, according to the German jurisprudence, required the authority of a diet of the empire, but Charles overlooked that formality and assumed the power in his own person.

The confederates, now perceiving that all hopes of accommodation were at an end, solemnly declared war against Charles, to whom they no longer gave any other title than pretended Emperor, and renounced all allegiance to him. But, now that the moment for war had come, the league was disunited and unprepared. The supreme command of the army was committed in terms of the league to the Elector and the Landgrave, with equal power. This proved disastrous from the very commencement. The natural tempers and dispositions of the two princes were widely different. The Elector was slow, deliberate, irresolute; the Landgrave was prompt, enterprising, and wished to bring the contest to a speedy issue. But if Philip was the better soldier, John was the greater prince; and could a Landgrave command an Elector? All the inconveniences arising from a divided authority were immediately felt. Much time was wasted and dissensions multiplied. Meanwhile the Emperor had moved his camp to the territories of the Duke of Bavaria, a neutral prince, leaving a small garrison in Ratisbon. A few more days were spent in deliberating whether they should follow Charles or attack Ratisbon. By this time the imperial army amounted to thirty-six thousand men; and, through cowardly defections, the Protestant army was reduced to forty-seven thousand.

The First Operations of the Protestants

As no foresight had been shown by the confederates to prevent the Spanish, Italian, and other troops, from Joining the imperial army, the Emperor was enabled to send such a reinforcement to the garrison at Ratisbon, that the Protestants, relinquishing all hope of reducing the town, marched towards Ingoldstadt on the Danube, near to which Charles was now encamped. "They complained loudly," says Dr. Robertson, "against the Emperor's notorious violation of the laws and constitution of the empire, in having called in foreigners to lay waste Germany, and to oppress its liberties. It came to be universally believed among them, that the pope, not satisfied with attacking them openly by force of arms, had dispersed his emissaries all over Germany, to set on fire their towns and magazines, and to poison the wells and fountains of water. These rumours were confirmed, in some measure, by the behaviour of the papal troops, who thinking nothing too rigorous towards heretics anathematised by the church, were guilty of great excesses in the Lutheran states, and aggravated the miseries of war by mingling with it all the cruelty of bigoted zeal."

With passions so aroused, by the report of cruelties so great, we might have expected to see a corresponding energy to bring such calamities to a close. It was now in their power, and the campaign might have been ended at the outset, had their leaders been united and firm. On their arrival at Ingoldstadt, they found the Emperor in a camp not remarkable for strength, with a small army, and surrounded only by a slight entrenchment. But the great object pursued by Charles from the first was to decline a battle, to weary out the patience of the confederates, and induce them to separate, when his victory over each prince in succession would be sure.

Before Ingoldstadt lay a plain of such extent, as afforded ample space for drawing out their whole forces, and bringing them to act at once. No army was ever more favourably situated; the soldiers were full of ardour and eager to seize the opportunity of attacking the Emperor; but alas! through the weakness or division of their leaders the advantage was lost, and so far as their credit is concerned it was lost for ever. "The Landgrave urged that, if the sole command was vested in him, he would terminate the war on that occasion, and decide by one general action the fate of the two parties. But the Elector urged, on the other hand, the discipline of the enemies' forces, the presence of the Emperor, the experience of his officers, and thought it would be unsafe to venture upon an action." While the Protestant leaders were thus debating whether they ought to surprise the Emperor or not, the imperial reinforcements arrived and the opportunity was gone.

But notwithstanding their vacillation, it was at length agreed to advance towards the enemy's camp in battle array, with the view of drawing the imperialists out of the works. But the Emperor was too wise to be caught in this snare. He was fighting on his own ground, and with his own weapons and as such, he was more than a match for all the Protestants in Germany, who were on false ground and fighting with camel, not-with spiritual, weapons. They commenced and continued firing for several hours on the imperialists, but Charles adhered to his own system with inflexible constancy. He drew up his soldiers behind the trenches; restrained them from any excursions or skirmishes which might bring on a general engagement; rode along the lines; addressed the troops of the different nations in their own language; encouraged them not only by his words, but by the cheerfulness of his voice and countenance; exposed himself in places of greatest danger, and amidst the warmest fire of the enemy's artillery. Night fell, and the confederates, seeing no prospect of alluring them to fight on equal terms, retired to their own camp.

The leisure was employed with great diligence by the imperialists in strengthening their works; but the confederates, seeing they had lost their opportunity, turned their attention-with as little success-towards preventing the arrival of a powerful reinforcement from the Low Countries. Upon the arrival of the Flemings the Emperor began to act more on the offensive, though still with the greatest sagacity avoiding a battle. He had often foretold, with confidence, that discord and the want of money would compel the confederates to disperse that unwieldy body; and for this he watched and waited with long patience. They had been on the field from midsummer to the end of autumn, and little had been done, and nothing gained on either side, when an unexpected event decided the contest, and occasioned a fatal reverse in the affairs of the Protestants, and prepared the way for the tragedy that followed.

The Treachery of Maurice

Maurice was the son of Henry, and succeeded his father in the government of that part of Saxony which belonged to the Albertine line. "This young prince, then only in his twentieth year, had, even at that early period, begun to discover the great talents which qualified him for acting such a distinguished part in the affairs of Germany. As soon as he entered upon the administration, he struck out into such a new and singular path, as showed that he aimed from the beginning at something great and uncommon."* He professed to be a zealous Protestant, but objected to join the league of Smalcald under the pretence that its principles were not sufficiently scriptural. He avowed his determination to maintain the purity of religion, but not to entangle himself in the political interests, or combinations to which it had given rise. Such was the consummate duplicity and the Satanic policy of this young man. At this very time, with great political sagacity, he was weighing both sides, and foreseeing that the Emperor was most likely to prevail in the end, he affected to place in him the most unbounded confidence, and to court his favour by every possible means, and also the favour of his brother, Ferdinand.

{*Dr. Robertson, vol. 6, p. 22.}

At the Diet of Ratisbon, in the month of May 1546, Maurice concluded a treaty with the Emperor, in which he engaged to assist him as a faithful subject, and Charles, in return stipulated to bestow on him all the spoils of the Elector, his dignities as well as his territories. But so little did the Elector suspect treachery in his young relative and neighbour, who had received many kindnesses from him, that, on leaving to join the confederates, he committed his dominions to the protection of that prince; and he, with an artful appearance of friendship, undertook the charge. The whole plan being now completed, the Emperor sent Maurice a copy of the imperial ban denounced against the Elector and the Landgrave, requiring him, upon the allegiance and duty which he owed to the head of the empire, instantly to seize and retain in his hands the forfeited estates of the Elector.

This artifice, which made the invasion appear to be one of necessity rather than of choice, was but a thin veil to conceal the treachery of both. After some formalities were observed, to give a specious appearance to his reluctance, Maurice marched into his kinsman's territories, and, with the assistance of Ferdinand, attacked and defeated the Elector's troops, and took all things under his own administration.

The Dissolution of the League

When the news of these rapid conquests reached the good Elector, he was filled with indignation and astonishment, and resolved at once to return home with his troops, for the defence of Saxony. He was most unwilling to withdraw, as he preferred the success of the common cause to the security of his own dominions; but the sufferings and complaints of his subjects increased so much, that he became most impatient to rescue them from the oppression of Maurice and from the cruelties of the Hungarian soldiers, accustomed to the merciless modes of warfare practised against the Turks. This was the fatal blow to the league of Smalcald. This diversion, which had been contrived with so much subtlety, was successful, even to the desire of the heart of Charles.

The departure of the Elector caused a separation of the confederates; and, once divided, they became an easy prey to the Emperor. A confederacy, lately so powerful as to shake the imperial throne, and threaten to drive Charles out of Germany, fell to pieces, and was dissolved in a few weeks. How empty everything is if God is not in it; and how weak everything is if He is not its strength! Charles saw his opportunity, put his army in motion, and did not allow the confederates leisure to recover from their consternation, or to form any new schemes of union. He assumed the tone of a conqueror, as if they had been already at his mercy. The union being dissolved, the princes stood exposed singly to the whole weight of his vengeance. With the exception of the Elector and the Landgrave, almost all the Protestant princes and states submitted, and implored the pardon of the Catholic Charles in the most humiliating manner. And as he was in difficulties from the want of money, he imposed heavy fines upon them, which he levied with most rapacious exactness.*

{*Dr. Robertson's History, book 8.}

With the exception of the Landgrave and the Elector, hardly any member of the league now remained in arms. And these two the Emperor had long marked out as the victims of his signal vengeance, so that he was at no pains to propose to them any terms of reconciliation. Various circumstances, for a short time, suspended the blow; but Charles, being relieved from his apprehensions of a fresh war with France, by the death of his great rival, Francis I., resolved to march against the Elector, who had nearly recovered all his dominions from the traitor Maurice.

In the spring of 1547 there was some hard fighting between the Emperor and the Elector at Muhlberg, on the Elbe, and at Mulhausen, but the latter was defeated, wounded, and taken prisoner, which virtually terminated the war. This decisive victory cost the imperialists only fifty men; but twelve hundred of the Saxons were slain, and a great number were taken prisoners. Maurice, as the reward of his treachery, was immediately put in possession of the electoral dominions. The city of Gotha, and the small territory attached to it, were settled on the Elector's family; but he himself was to remain a perpetual prisoner.

The Landgrave alone now remained in arms, and was not inclined to surrender. But Maurice, his son-in-law, prevailed on him to submit, assuring him that he and the Elector of Brandenburg, had the Emperor's guarantee for his personal liberty. But in all this Philip was cruelly deceived. And there is every reason to believe that these two nobles, while acting as mediators, were themselves deceived by the perfidious Charles. His object was to gain possession of the person of Philip, that he might have him absolutely at his disposal. But notwithstanding the assurances and entreaties of Maurice and Brandenburg, the Landgrave suspected the intentions of the Emperor, and refused to appear at his court. His reluctance, however, was at length overcome by these two princes signing a bond, in which they pledged their own lives and liberties for his. His doubts being thus removed, he repaired to the imperial camp at Halle, in Saxony.

Charles, who had assumed the haughty and imperious tone of a conqueror, was seated on a magnificent throne, with all the ensigns of his dignity, and surrounded by a numerous train of the princes of the empire. The Landgrave was introduced with great solemnity, and, advancing towards the throne, fell upon his knees. The eyes of all present were fixed on the unfortunate Landgrave-the most popular of the Protestant chiefs in Germany. "Few could behold a prince," says Robertson, "so powerful as well as high-spirited, suing for mercy in the posture of a supplicant, without being touched with commiseration, and perceiving serious reflections arise in their minds upon the instability and emptiness of human grandeur." But there was one heart that remained unmoved by that affecting scene: the unfeeling Spaniard, with Germany prostrate at his feet, viewed the whole transaction with cold indifference.

He insisted on unconditional submission. "Philip was required to surrender his person and territories to the Emperor; to implore for pardon on his knees; to pay one hundred and fifty thousand crowns towards defraying the expenses of the war; to demolish the fortifications of all the towns in his dominions, except one; to oblige the garrison which he placed in it, to take an oath of fidelity to the Emperor," etc., etc. The Landgrave, being entirely at the Emperor's mercy, ratified these conditions; and flattering himself that he had thereby fully expiated his guilt, rose from his knees, and advanced towards the Emperor, with the intention of kissing his hand, but Charles turned away abruptly, without deigning to give the fallen prince any sign of compassion or reconciliation.

Philip was allowed to retire, apparently at liberty, along with his friends Maurice and Brandenburg, and was entertained by the Duke of Alva with great respect and courtesy; but after supper, when he rose to depart, the duke made known the orders he had to detain him. The unhappy prince was struck dumb; his heart sank within him; then he broke out into those violent expressions at the injustice and artifices of the Emperor, which the circumstances naturally provoked, but all in vain. Brandenburg and Maurice had recourse to the most bitter complaints, to arguments, and to entreaties, in order to extricate the distracted prince out of the ignominious situation into which he had been betrayed. They pleaded their own honour and bond in the matter; but the Duke of Alva was inflexible. Philip was his prisoner, and placed under the custody of a Spanish guard, and did not obtain his release till after a lapse of five years, and total reverse in the affairs of the Emperor set him at liberty, and introduced a new epoch in the history of the Reformation.

The Germans Treated as a Conquered People

The Emperor's triumph was now complete. He was master of Germany. In taking possession of Wittemberg he visited the tomb of Luther. While silently gazing on the peaceful resting-place of the monk who had stirred up all Europe to mutiny, and defied both the papal and the imperial power, the Spaniards entreated him to destroy the monument of the heretic, and to dig up his bones. But Charles nobly replied, "I have nothing more to do with Luther; he has gone to another judge, whose province we must not invade. I wage war with the living, not with the dead." But how different were his feelings when he turned from the memory of the man of faith to those that had raised the arm of rebellion against him! The two princes, Frederick and Philip, followed him in his train, and were thus led about in triumph from city to city, and from prison to prison, exhibiting them as a public spectacle to their former subjects, their families and friends. This was a bitter humiliation to Germany. Loud complaints arose from every quarter against this wanton abuse of power, and cruel treatment of its two most illustrious princes.

But the day of adversity brought out the real character of these two public men. Frederick, long a true Christian, accepted the affliction from the hand of the Lord, and bowed to it. He looked beyond second causes. He dropped the spirit of the warrior, and embraced that of the martyr. All historians agree in bestowing upon him the highest praise for his meekness, patience, and christian conduct. Even the Roman Catholic historian, Thuanus, says of him, "In the judgment of all men, he rose superior to his adverse fortune by the constancy of his mind."

But alas! the conduct of the Landgrave was just the opposite to that of the Elector. We have seen something of his profession of religion, and of his zeal for the union of Christians, as at the conference at Marburg; but in "the day of adversity his strength was small." Such was his impatience under his calamity that, in order to obtain his liberty, he voluntarily offered to surrender, not his dignities merely, but his religious principles. He never judged himself or his ways in the presence of God; therefore he could not see His overruling hand in his trial. In these two men we may see illustrated the mighty difference between a mere form of religion (even when accompanied by an active, stirring mind) and the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ which takes possession of the heart. The day of trial discovers the essential difference. The one broods over the shameful treachery by which he was deprived of his liberty, and the injustice with which he is still detained, until he is driven to the wildest excesses of passion. The other is not insensible to the unfeeling cruelty with which he is treated; but he confesses his own failure, owns a wise and overruling providence in it all, waits upon God, renews his strength, and daily waxes stronger and stronger until, through divine grace, he can rejoice in his captivity, having the sweet sense of the presence of God with him, and that it will all result in a brighter crown in heaven.

But we now return to the public transactions of the Emperor.

Many of the other princes were next made to feel the power of the oppressor, though in a different way. He ordered his troops to seize the artillery and military stores belonging to those who had been members of the Smalcald league, and, "having collected upwards of five hundred pieces of cannon, a great number in that age, he sent part of them into the low countries, part into Italy, and part into Spain, in order to spread by this means the fame of his success, and that they might serve as monuments of his having subdued a nation hitherto deemed invincible. He then levied, by his sole authority, large sums of money, as well upon those who had served him with fidelity during the war, as upon those who had been in arms against him. By these exactions he amassed above one million six hundred thousand crowns-a sum which appeared prodigious in the sixteenth century."*

{*Robertson, book 9, p. 178.}

The Germans, naturally jealous of their privileges, were greatly alarmed at such extraordinary stretches of power, but so great was their consternation, that all implicitly obeyed the commands of the haughty Spaniard; though at the same time, the discontent and resentment of the people had become universal, and they were ready to burst forth on the first opportunity with unmitigated violence. While Charles was thus giving laws to the Germans like a conquered people, Ferdinand was exercising the same despotism over the Bohemians, and stripped them of almost all their privileges.

47 The Interim

Chapter 47

"The Interim"

The Emperor, now complete master of the position, and having subdued, as he thought, the independent and stubborn spirit of the Germans, held a diet at Augsburg, when he demanded of the Protestants to submit the decision of the religious dissensions which had arisen in Germany to the council of Trent. The city and assembly were surrounded by the Emperor's victorious troops, no doubt to give effect to their master's wishes. He immediately took possession of the cathedral and some other churches, and, after they had been duly purified, restored the popish worship. But scarcely had the proceedings commenced, when Charles learnt, to his deep mortification, that the council had been removed by the pope from Trent to Bologna.

The great success and assumption of Charles in Germany naturally awakened the fears and jealousy of the pontiff. He foresaw that the Emperor's power in that country would greatly influence the decisions of the council, and that he might employ it to limit or overturn the papal authority. He therefore embraced the first opportunity to withdraw the papal troops from the imperial army, and to translate the council to Bologna, a city subject to the pope. This removal was strenuously opposed by the Emperor and by all the bishops in the imperial interest. The latter remained at Trent, while the Spanish and Neapolitan bishops accompanied the legates to Bologna. Thus a schism commenced in that very assembly which had been called to heal the divisions of Christendom, and which issued in an indefinite adjournment of the council: nor were means found of restoring the council of Trent, till Julius III. succeeded Paul III. in the papal chair, A.D. 1550; but the season was then past for the purposes of Charles.

As the prospect of a general council was now more distant than ever, the Emperor, in his pious concern for the religious dissensions of his northern subjects, deemed it necessary, in the interim, to prepare a system of doctrine, to which all should conform, until a council, such as they wished for, could be assembled. This new creed was styled The Interim. It was framed by Pflug, Sidonius, and Agricola, of whom the two former were dignitaries in the Romish Church; the last was a Protestant divine, but considered by his brethren as an apostate.

The New Creed

This famous treatise contained a complete system of Roman theology; though expressed for the most part in "softest words, or in scriptural phrases, or in terms of studied ambiguity." Every doctrine peculiar to popery was retained; or, as Mr. Wylie sums it up, "The Interim taught, among other things, the supremacy of the pope, the dogma of transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, the invocation of the saints, auricular confession, justification by works, and the whole right of the church to interpret the scriptures; in short, not one concession did Rome make. In return for swallowing a creed out-and-out popish, the Protestants were to be rewarded with two paltry boons. Clergymen already married were to be permitted to discharge their office without putting away their wives; and where it was the wont to dispense the sacrament in both kinds, the custom was still to be tolerated. This was called meeting the Protestants half way."*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 118. See also Robertson's History, vol. 6, book 9.}

This document, which brought the most desolating calamities and oppressions on the Protestants, was submitted by the Emperor to the Diet of Augsburg on May 15th, 1548. Having been read in presence of the diet, in due form, the Archbishop of Mentz, without giving time for any discussion, rose up hastily, thanked the Emperor for his pious endeavours to restore the peace of the church, and in the name of the diet signified their approbation of the system of doctrine which had just been read to them. This unexpected, unconstitutional declaration amazed the whole assembly; but not one member had courage enough to contradict what the archbishop had said. Overawed by the Spanish troops outside, the diet was silent. The Emperor at once accepted the declaration as a full ratification of the Interim, proclaimed it as a decree of the empire, to remain in force till a free general council could be held, and to which all were to conform under pain of his displeasure. The Interim was immediately published in the German as well as the Latin language.

The Interim Opposed by Protestants and Papists

The Emperor, proud of his new scheme, and believing that he was on the high road to victory, and the consummation of his plans, proceeded to enforce the Interim. But to his great astonishment he found all parties declaiming against it with equal violence. The Protestants condemned it as a system containing the grossest errors of popery. The papists condemned it because some of the doctrines of the holy catholic church were impiously given up. But at Rome the indignation of the ecclesiastics rose to the greatest height. They exclaimed against the Emperor's profane encroachment on the sacerdotal office, and compared him to that apostate Henry VIII. of England, who had usurped the title as well as the jurisdiction belonging to the supreme pontiff.

Among the Protestant princes there was great diversity of feeling, into the details of which we need not enter. Some yielded a feigned submission, but there were others who made a firm stand and a faithful protest against the Interim. Charles, well knowing the great influence which the example of his prisoner, Frederick, would have with all the Protestant party, laboured with the utmost earnestness to gain his approbation of the scheme. But he was not to be moved either by the hope of liberty, or the threats of greater harshness. He now met the Emperor with weapons mightier far than all the imperial power-conscience and the word of God. And well would it have been for the Protestants and the cause of Protestantism, had no others ever been opposed to the threatenings of the pope and the Emperor. Some might have been honoured with martyrdom, but the country would have been saved from the desolations of war, and the moral glory of this divine principle would have been stamped on the Reformation.

After having declared his firm belief in the doctrines of the Reformation, he added, "I cannot now in my old age, abandon the principles for which I early contended; nor, in order to procure freedom during a few declining years, will I betray that good cause on account of which I have suffered so much, and am still willing to suffer. Better for me to enjoy, in this solitude, the esteem of virtuous men, together with the approbation of my own conscience than to return into the world, with the imputation and guilt of apostasy, to disgrace and embitter the remainder of my days." For this magnanimous resolution, in which he set his countrymen a noble pattern, he was rewarded by the Emperor with fresh marks of his displeasure. "The rigour of his confinement was increased; the number of his servants diminished, the Lutheran clergymen, who had hitherto been permitted to attend him, were dismissed, and even the books of devotion, which had been his chief consolation during a tedious imprisonment, were taken from him."

Melancthon's Submission

It is deeply to be regretted that the Wittemberg divines did not testify more firmly for the truth, and against the popish scheme of the Interim. But the feeble Melancthon, partly through fear of Charles, and partly from his excessive complaisance towards persons of high rank, endeavoured to steer a middle course, and the other theologians followed him. He then introduced the pernicious principle of essentials, non-essentials, and things indifferent in religion. He decided that the whole instrument, called the Interim, could by no means be admitted; but that there was no impediment to receiving and approving it, so far as it concerned things not essential in religion, or things indifferent. This decision gave rise to several long and bitter controversies in the Lutheran Church. The genuine followers of Luther could not account as indifferent, the teaching and object of the Interim, and opposed with great fervour the Wittemberg and Leipsic divines. They charged them, with giving up their Protestantism for the Emperor's religion. This lax principle has been doing its evil work in all the Reformed churches from that day even until now. It is a convenient covering for those who have no conscience as to the authority of the word of God, and wish to serve their own ends. But surely no part of divine truth can be either indifferent or non-essential. "The words of the Lord," says the psalmist, "are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." (Psa 12:6) How different is the estimate of the Spirit of truth and theology as to "the words of the Lord .... purified seven times."*

{*See Mosheim's History of the Lutheran Church on the Controversies, vol. 3; also Scott's continuation of Milner on Melancthon's submission, vol. 2.}

The Opposition of the Free Cities

The reception of the Interim in the different provinces depended entirely on the nearness or distance of the Emperor's power. Where his arm had not reached, it was openly resisted, where his power was felt, there was at least an outward compliance with it; but it was in the free cities that Charles met with the most violent opposition to his new scheme. There the Reformation had made the greatest progress; its most eminent divines were settled in them as pastors, and schools and other seminaries for the instruction of the young flourished within their gates. They petitioned and remonstrated, but without effect; Charles was determined to carry into full execution the resolution he had formed-universal compliance with his odious Interim.

His first attempt was upon the city of Augsburg. "He ordered one body of his troops to seize the gates; he posted the rest in different quarters of the city; and assembling all the burgesses in the town-hall, he, by his sole authority, published a decree abolishing their present form of government, dissolving all their corporations and fraternities, and nominating a small number of persons, in whom he vested for the future all the powers of government. Each of the persons thus chosen took an oath to observe the Interim." Persecution immediately followed; for many sought to maintain a good conscience before God and adhered to the truth of His word. The Protestant pastors were forced into exile, or rendered homeless in their native land; their churches were purified from Protestant defilement; the old rites were restored-masses, vestments, crosses, altars, candles, images, etc., and the inhabitants driven to mass by the soldiers of the Emperor. "In southern Germany alone four hundred faithful preachers of the gospel fled with their wives and families, and wandered without food or shelter; while those who were unable to escape fell into the hands of the enemy, and were led about in chains." This state of things continued for nearly five years, during which time the sufferings and calamities of the faithful were far beyond the record of the chronicler, and have no place in the history of the church; but there was One who heard every sigh that was heaved, and saw every tear that was shed: "and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." (Mal 3:16-17)

A New Turn in the Tide of Events

The period of their sufferings, or rather of their purifying was nearly accomplished, and the day of their deliverance was nigh at hand, though nothing was farther from the thoughts of the oppressor. He imagined that his victories were complete, his plans consummated, and that now he might rest a little from the toils of government, and taste the sweetness of retirement and repose. For this purpose he went to Innsbruck in the Tyrol, with only a few of his guards. But some already saw the storm gathering in various quarters, which was so soon to darken the whole firmament of his dominion and glory, and leave the master of two worlds without honour, and shut up in the solitude of a monkish cell. It happened in this way:-

There were still four cities of note holding out against the authority of the Emperor. These were Magdeburg, Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck. But as the resistance of Magdeburg stands connected with events which changed the whole face of affairs in Germany, we will speak of this city only.

In a diet held at Augsburg in the year 1550, it was resolved to send an army against Magdeburg, and besiege it in form. By an artful dissimulation of his real intentions, and by a seeming zeal to enforce the observance of the Interim, the notorious Maurice of Saxony undertook to reduce the rebellious city to obedience. This proposal received the sanction of the diet, and the full approbation of the Emperor.

Deep thoughts had been revolving in the mind of Maurice and many others, previous to this appointment. By the late successes of Charles, the fears of many were awakened. The Vatican was the first to raise the alarm. The pope repented of having contributed so largely to the growth of a power that might one day become his master. Already Charles had shaken the foundations of ecclesiastical authority, in presuming to define articles of faith, and to regulate modes of worship. Efforts were made to form alliances with foreign powers, that a vigorous resistance might be made at once, before his power became too formidable to be opposed.

But it was now apparent to all, that Charles was bent on exacting a rigid conformity to the doctrines and rites of the Romish Church, instead of allowing liberty of conscience, as he had always promised. The nation felt that they had been grossly deceived. They had been told over and over again before the war began, that it was no part of the Emperor's plans to alter the Reformed religion. But now both the religion and the liberties of Germany were at the feet of the perfidious monarch. This could not fail to alarm the princes of the empire, and none more so than Maurice. He was addressed in satires as "Judas," and accused by his countrymen as the author of these calamities. In this painful position Maurice made his choice. Only one thing will atone for the betrayal of the Protestant Confederacy-the complete overthrow of the Emperor's power in Germany; and this he resolved to accomplish.

"He saw," says Robertson, "the yoke that was preparing for his country; and, from the rapid as well as formidable progress of the imperial power, was convinced that but a few steps more remained to be taken, in order to render Charles as absolute a monarch in Germany as he had become in Spain." Maurice was a Protestant-politically-at heart, and by his Electoral dignity, the head of the party. Besides, his passions concurred with his love of liberty. He longed to avenge the cruel imprisonment of the Landgrave, his father-in-law, who, by his persuasion, had put himself into the Emperor's hands.

When he divulged his bold purpose to the princes, they were slow to believe him; but at length, being satisfied of his sincerity, they readily promised to assist him. Having gained the confidence of the Protestant party, he next applied all his powers of art and duplicity to deceive the Emperor. The jealousy of Charles had been somewhat excited by hearing of Maurice's friendship with some of the Protestant princes; but now, by his apparent zeal against the citizens of Magdeburg, all his suspicions were allayed, and he was inspired with fresh confidence in Maurice. As general of the army, he had a large force under his command, but he managed to protract the siege of Magdeburg till his plans were matured. He secretly formed leagues with several German princes, and entered into an alliance with the powerful king of France, Henry II., who proved a most effective ally, though a Catholic.

The Revolution in Germany

A.D. 1552

When Maurice's preparations were accomplished, he published a manifesto containing his reasons for taking arms against the Emperor, namely, that he might secure the Protestant religion, which was threatened with immediate destruction; that he might maintain the laws and constitution of the empire; that he might deliver the Landgrave of Hesse from the miseries of a long and unjust imprisonment. By the first proposal he roused all the friends of the Reformation to support him, who had been rendered desperate by oppression. By the second he interested all the friends of liberty in his cause-Catholics no less than Protestants. By the third he drew to his standard all the sympathy which had been universally excited by the Landgrave's unjust imprisonment, and by the rigour of the Emperor's proceedings against him. At the same time Henry of France issued a manifesto, in which he assumed the extraordinary title of "Protector of the liberties of Germany, and of its Captive Princes. "

The Emperor, as we have seen, was reposing at Innsbruck, within three days' journey of Trent, and narrowly watching the proceedings of the council now sitting there. Maurice still concealing his designs under the veil of the most exquisite address, despatched a trusted messenger to assure the Emperor that he would wait upon him in a few days at Innsbruck; for which friendly visit the Emperor was in daily expectation. But the time for action was now come. The trumpet of war was sounded; and with a well-appointed army of twenty thousand foot and five thousand horse, Maurice pushed on by secret and forced marches, determined to surprise the Emperor and seize his person. The imperial garrisons, by the way, offered no resistance, but tidings reached the imperial quarters, that all Germany had risen and was in full march upon Innsbruck.

The Emperor's Flight

It was now late in the evening. The night was dark, and the rain falling heavily; but danger was near, and nothing could save the Emperor but speedy flight. He had been suffering for some time from a severe attack of the gout, and was unable to escape on horseback. Placed in a litter, the only motion he could bear, he travelled by the light of torches, taking his way over the Alps by roads almost impassable. His courtiers and attendants followed him with equal precipitation, and all in the utmost confusion. In this miserable plight the late conqueror of Germany arrived with his dejected train at Villach, a remote corner in Carinthia.

Maurice entered Innsbruck a few hours after the Emperor and his attendants had left it; but rather than pursue them, he abandoned all the Emperor's baggage, together with that of his ministers, to be plundered by his soldiers. There was now nothing left for the fallen Emperor but negotiation, or rather to submit to the terms proposed to him; and this he committed to his brother Ferdinand. Maurice, backed by all Germany, was absolute.

The Peace of Passau

On the 2nd of August, 1552, the famous treaty of Passau was concluded. By this treaty it was agreed that the Landgrave should be set at liberty, and conveyed in safety to his own dominions; that within six months, a diet should be held of all the states, to deliberate on the best means of terminating the existing religious dissensions, and that in the meantime no molestation whatever should be offered to those who adhered to the Augsburg confession; that, if the diet thus to be held, should fail to effect an amicable adjustment of their religious disputes, the treaty of Passau should remain in force for ever. Thus was peace restored to the empire, and entire freedom conceded to the Protestant faith. This was followed by the "Recess of Augsburg" in 1555, which not only ratified the peace of Passau, but enlarged the religious liberties of Germany. It was this memorable convention which gave to the Protestants, after so much slaughter and so many calamities and conflicts, that firm and stable religious peace which they still enjoy. But alas! the youthful Maurice, who played so conspicuous a part, both in the defeat and the triumph of the Protestants, fell in battle, in less than a year after the peace of Passau, so that he was not permitted to see the full results of his bold undertaking.*

{*Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 157. Wylie, vol. 2, p. 122. Scott, vol. 2, p. 83.}

All these arrangements and treaties were deeply mortifying to the disappointed ambition of Charles. Protestantism, which he had intended to crush entirely, was flourishing throughout the empire. The mass-priests were dismissed; the banished pastors were brought back with great joy to their beloved flocks. The esteemed Frederick, who had been carried about from place to place by the Emperor for five years, had found his way home to his affectionate family and friends, but everything shaped itself in dark and gloomy colours before the troubled mind of Charles. He never had a heart for friendship, and, it is said, he never made a friend. Thus, faint and weary, the friendless Emperor hid himself in the fastnesses of Carinthia. From civil history we learn that, at this very moment, war was going on in Hungary against the still advancing Turks. Henry II., according to his agreement with Maurice, took the field early, with a numerous and well appointed army, and completely defeated the Spanish forces in Lorraine and Alsace. Italy was on the eve of outbreak and anarchy. But the Emperor was in exile; his treasury empty; his credit gone; his armies scattered and dispirited; and, feeling himself rapidly falling from the lofty elevation which he had so long maintained, he resolved to withdraw entirely from the affairs of this world, in order that he might spend the remainder of his days in retirement and solitude.

Accordingly, at the comparatively early age of fifty-six, he filled all Europe with astonishment, by resigning the imperial crown to his brother Ferdinand, and the remainder of his vast possessions in Europe and America to his son Philip II., whom he had already, on his marriage with Mary of England, invested with Naples and Sicily. The following year, after settling his affairs, he retired to the monastery of St. Juste, near the town of Placentia, in Spain. But he was still suffering so severely from the gout, that he had to be conveyed sometimes in a chair, and sometimes in a horse-litter, suffering exquisite pain at every step, and advancing with the greatest difficulty. Like most of the religious houses in those days, the monastery of St. Juste was beautifully situated:-"it lay in a little vale, watered by a small brook, and surrounded by rising grounds covered with lofty trees; from the nature of the soil, as well as the temperature of the climate, it was esteemed the most healthful and delicious situation in Spain." Here Charles lived about two years, and died on the 21st of September, 1558, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

Reflections on the Foregoing Pages

On the cloister days of the Emperor we need not dwell. They were chiefly spent in light and mechanical amusements when relief from the gout permitted him. One of these was a kind of theatrical lamentation at his funeral before his death. He ordered his tomb to be erected in the chapel; his body was laid in the coffin with great solemnity, the monks weeping (?); then marching in funeral procession with black tapers in their hands to the chapel. The service for the dead was chanted, the coffin sprinkled with holy water, the mourners retired, and the doors of the chapel were closed. Then Charles rose out of his coffin and withdrew to his apartment, full of those awful sensations which such a revolting farce was calculated to create. He died almost immediately after.

Yes! he died-died to all his dignities and humiliation, to all his ambition and disappointments, to all his plans and his policy! Yes! he who had sacrificed hundreds of thousands of human lives, and spent millions of money with the ultimate view of extinguishing Protestantism, died in the narrow sphere of a monkish cell, while Protestantism was now filling the vast firmament of human thought with its light and glory. There we leave the great Emperor-the greatest perhaps, as to dominions, that ever sat upon a throne. He is before the tribunal where motives as well as actions are weighed, and where all must be tried by the divine standard.

But, alas! we search in vain for anything like repentance in that inveterate enemy of the Reformers. Within the holy walls of St. Juste, so far from repenting of his conduct towards them, his only regret was that he had not treated them with greater severity. When informed that Lutheranism was spreading in Spain, and that a number of persons had been apprehended under suspicion of being infected with it, he wrote letters from the monastery to his daughter, Joanna, governess of Spain, to Juan de Vega, president of the council of Castile, and to the Inquisitor-general, charging them to exert their respective powers with all possible vigour, "in seizing the whole party, and causing them all to be burnt, after using every means to make them Christians before their punishment; for he was persuaded that none of them would become sincere Catholics, so irresistible was their propensity to dogmatize." Again, he says, "If they do not condemn them to the fire, they will commit a great fault as I did in permitting Luther to live. Though I spared him solely on the ground of the safe-conduct I had sent him .... I confess, nevertheless, that I did wrong in this, because I was not bound to keep my promise to that heretic .... but in consequence of my not having taken away his life, heresy continued to make progress; whereas his death, I am persuaded, would have stifled it in its birth."*

{*History of the Reformation in Spain, by Dr. McCrie, p. 119.}

Here we have the real heart of Charles. There is no longer any reason for artifice and dissimulation, or pretended toleration to the Protestants. He has done with his wars and his politics, he has no longer a double part to play; and the real spirit of the papist is openly expressed. The one regret of his old age is, that he did not seize the prey in his youth. He seems to gnash his teeth with rage when he thinks of Luther, and grieves that he did not violate his promise. But there was One who was watching over the life of Luther and the infant Reformation; and so kept the hands of Charles full for upwards of thirty years, that he had no leisure to wage war against the Lutherans. But some think that this was ever before him as the one grand object of his life and his reign - the extermination of heresy.

But in that very contest on which he had staked everything, all was lost-his dominions, his throne, his crown, his grandeur. Never was the hand of God more strikingly displayed in the affairs of any prince. In one moment, and by one stroke, all was changed. "His power collapsed when apparently at its zenith. None of the usual signs that precede the fall of greatness gave warning of so startling a downfall in the Emperor's fortunes. His vast prestige had not been impaired. He had not been worsted on the battle-field; his military glory had suffered no eclipse; nor had any of his kingdoms been torn from him."* Of all the great men who started with him in life, such as Francis I., Henry VIII., Leo X., and Martin Luther, he was the sole survivor. His rivals had passed away before him, and none seemed left to dispute his possession of the field. But the hand of the Lord in retributive justice was lifted up against the oppressor of His people, and who could shelter him? Already a finger had written on the walls of his palace, "Mene, Mene, God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it." And, instantly, the brazen gates of his power could no longer protect him, he was compelled to flee before a power which his insidious and fraudulent policy had created. The rod which he had thus prepared for the destruction of Germany was used of God for his own complete and ignominious overthrow. What a reality is the government as well as the grace of God in the earth! He controls the movements of the mightiest monarchs, and cares for the smallest things in creation. This, faith well knows, and finds its rest and consolation therein. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." (1Pe 3:12)

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 121.}

The Calamities of the Protestants

The other lesson so plainly written on the foregoing pages is this-that God is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to another. He will have His work done by His own means and in His own way. No greater calamity could have befallen the Reformation than that its friends should have given up the divine position of faith, and descended to the world's platform of diplomacy and arms. Had it triumphed by these means, it would have lost its true character, or perished in the land of its birth, and the Reformers would have become a mere political power. But God would not have it so, and He suffered them to be shamefully defeated and stripped, until they were utterly defenceless and cast upon Himself. They had neither league nor sword, nor treasures, nor castles, nor any means of defence. They were brought back to their first principles-faith in the word of God, and martyrdom. But these divine and invincible principles seemed to have died with their great leader and to have been buried in his grave; and it was only through great suffering and humiliation that his followers were led to see their mistake.

But no sooner were they brought to feel that they had no means of defence but the word of God and a good conscience before Him, than deliverance came. The Lord had said, "The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous." (Psa 125:3) Such is the goodness and the tender mercy of our God. He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous. But it is always dangerous to give up the principles of God's word, and to be governed in our ways by the maxims and policy of this world; and this holds true in all the affairs of life; but on the subject before us the word of God is plain, as saith the apostle, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," yes, "mighty through God." And as the blessed Lord says, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (2Co 10:4; Mat 26:52)

The Reformation in Germany, embracing the Lutheran churches, was now definitively established. But the Reformed churches, embracing the followers of Zwingle and Calvin, were excluded from the privileges secured in the treaties of Passau and Augsburg, nor was legal toleration extended to them till the peace of Westphalia, nearly a century later. By this famous treaty the pacification of Passau was confirmed to the members of the Reformed churches, and the independence of Switzerland declared for the first time. "The balance of power," by which the weak amongst the nations might be effectually protected, and the powerful restrained from those aggressive schemes of ambition which had been too frequently indulged, was one of the important results of the negotiations and discussions in Westphalia.*

{*Universal History, vol. 6, p. 87; Wylie, vol. 2, p. 122.}

The Rise of the Jesuits

Before taking our leave, finally, of the reign of Charles V., we must just notice two memorable events which occurred during that reign, because of the relation they bore to the Reformation, and the great religious struggle which was then agitating all classes of society. We refer to the Council of Trent and the rise of the Jesuits. Having said a little about the former, we will only at present speak of the latter.

We can easily conceive that the enemies of the Reformation were now at their wits' end. What was to be done? That which had been looked forward to for thirty years, as the sure means of crushing it, had not only failed, but ceased to be an opposing power, while the Reformation was rapidly increasing its area and multiplying its adherents. The pope had lost immensely in dignity, influence, and revenues in the contest, and the imperial power could no more be appealed to. The friars, black, white, and grey, were dispersed and their monasteries destroyed: what was next to be done? was a grave question for the evil heart of Jezebel, and those with whom she took counsel. Men-at-arms had failed; peace and persuasion must be our tactics now, suggested the presiding spirit. An army must be raised whose uniform should be the priestly garb, whose vows must be poverty, chastity, the care of Christians, and the conversion of infidels; and the character of whose mission must be persuasive and pacific. Under these appearances a counter-work to the Reformation must be immediately instituted. This plausible proposal was unanimously agreed to; and never was suggestion more plainly from beneath-even from the depths of Satan; and never was there one more satanically executed, as the history of the Jesuits proves. The springs of human feeling, sympathy, and pity seem to have been dried up in every member of that society, and the hell-inspired springs of bigotry and cruelty, which have no parallel in history, most surely possessed them.

Ignatius Loyola

The Society of the Jesuits, a religious order of the Romish church, was founded by Ignatius Loyola, the son of a Spanish nobleman, born in the year 1491 at Guipuzcoa, in the province of Biscay. In his youth he was employed as a page at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, but he grew weary of its gaieties, and longed to be engaged in the wars of his country. In 1521 we find him defending Pampeluna against the French; but the young intrepid Loyola was severely wounded in both legs. Fever followed, and the future restorer of the papacy was nearly brought to a premature grave.

By nature ardent, romantic, and visionary, he devoured greedily, during his long illness, the romances of Spanish chivalry, founded on the conflicts of his nation with the Moors; and when these were exhausted, he betook himself to a series of still more marvellous romances-the legends of the saints. With a morbid intensity he studied those books of mystical devotion, until he resolved to emulate in his own life the wondrous virtues ascribed to a Benedict, a Dominic, or a Francis. Accordingly, on his recovery, he retired to a Benedictine monastery at Montserrat, near Barcelona, and there he passed the night at the celebrated shrine of the Virgin Mary. He suspended his lance and shield before an image of the Virgin, vowed constant obedience to God and His church, thereby abandoning a temporal for a spiritual knighthood.

To celebrate his self-dedication to Our Lady, he withdrew to the adjacent town of Manresa. Holiness, in the view of such men, does not consist in the moral likeness of the soul to Jesus, but in the mortification of the body. Next to his skin he wore alternately an iron chain, a horsehair cloth, and a sash of prickly thorns. Three times a day he laid the scourge resolutely on his bare back. This was not to mortify the deeds of the body, but the poor unoffending body itself. Such is the blinding power of Satan, and such the suited darkness for his purpose. After travelling barefoot to Rome, Jerusalem, and other places rendered sacred by the Saviour's history, he eventually found his way to Paris. Here he met with Francis Xavier, who afterwards became the great apostle of India. Other kindred spirits joining them, a small band of zealous associates gathered round Loyola, which gave origin to the society of Jesus - about eight or nine in all.

Commencement of the Order of Jesuits

On the 15th of August 1534, being the festival of the assumption of the Virgin Mary, in one of the subterranean chapels of Montmartre, and after receiving the sacrament, they all took the usual vows of poverty and chastity; and then took a solemn oath to dedicate themselves to the conversion of the Saracens at Jerusalem, and the care of the Christians, and to lay themselves and their services unreservedly at the feet of the pontiff. "The army thus enrolled was little, and it was great. It was little when counted, it was great when weighed. To foster the growth of this infant Hercules, Loyola had prepared beforehand his book, entitled 'Spiritual Exercises.' This is a body of rules for teaching men how to conduct the work of their own conversion. It consists of four grand meditations, and the penitent, retiring into solitude, is to occupy absorbingly his mind on each in succession, during the space of the rising and setting of seven suns. . . . It professes, like the Koran, to be a revelation. 'The Book of Exercises,' says a Jesuit, 'was truly written by the finger of God, and delivered to Ignatius by the Holy Mother of God.'"*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 384.}

After some delays, the pope, Paul III., approving the plan of Loyola and his companions, granted a bull in 1540, authorizing the formation of the body under the name of "The Society of Jesus;" and in April of the following year, Ignatius was installed as "The General Superior," who was to be subject to the pope only. The order had now a formal existence. Its members were to dress in black, like the secular clergy; and not being confined to cloisters, they were able to mix themselves up with all classes, and were soon found occupying courts, confessionals, and pulpits, superintending educational establishments, and otherwise securing the affections and co-operation of the young. Crowds of enthusiastic converts flocked to the new standard in all countries, and from all gradations of society.

The Jesuits' Real Object

Thus far we have trodden on ground over which the real character of the Jesuit does not appear-we have only had to do with vows intended to deceive; but were we to pursue their history, we should have to trace in every land the blood-stained footprints of the treacherous and cruel followers of Loyola. Spreading themselves over the world, we find them secretly executing the decrees and private wishes of the Vatican. Their one grand object was to extend the power of the pope, and the one grand fundamental principle of the fraternity was immediate, implicit, unquestioning, unhesitating obedience to him, through their general, who resides in Rome. The organization of their society is by far the most comprehensive of any in existence. "The Jesuit monarchy," it has been said, "covers the globe." In almost every province of the world they have Generals Provincial, who correspond with the General Superior at Rome; so that by means of the confessional, he sees and knows almost everything that is done and said, not only in the Romish church, but in private families, and throughout all parts of the habitable globe. No place is too distant, no difficulties or dangers too great, and no means too nefarious for the Jesuit, if there is the slightest hope of extending the power of the papacy.

The Gunpowder Plot, which was planned to destroy at one blow the nobility and gentry of England, is attributed to Jesuitical influence; and so are many other plots which were intended to accomplish the death of Queen Elizabeth. The gigantic wickedness of the Spanish Armada, and the crowning slaughter of the St. Bartholomew massacre, to say nothing of the many seditions, torturings, poisonings, assassinations, and massacres on a smaller scale, must be attributed to the policy, and to the seed sown by the Jesuits. So mighty did their power become, and so ruinous, that it was often found necessary for the government to suppress them. According to modern history, they were expelled from Portugal in 1759; France 1764; Spain and Spanish America, 1767; the two Sicilies, 1768; and in 1773 suppressed by the pope Ganganelli, Clement XIV. But soon after he had signed the order for their banishment, he fell a victim to their vengeance, and died by poison. In 1801 they were restored by Pius VII.; in 1860 they were dismissed from Sicily; but we need scarcely add, that they soon found ways and means to return. The late pope, Pius IX., confirmed the restoration of the order; so that they now occupy a very proud position in Rome. They have the command of most of the collegiate establishments in the city, and in so many other places, that merely to name them would fill a page.*

{*For a thorough exposure of the iniquity of the moral code of the Jesuits, see the Provincial Letters of Pascal, a Jansenist. For details of their organization, training, operations, see History of Protestantism, vol. 2; Faiths of the world-Jesuits; Universal History, Bagster, vol. 6, p. 82; Hardwick's History of the Reformation, p. 329.}

Thus was the enfeebled power of popery greatly revived - its deadly wound was healed. By means of the Reformation, many of the most opulent and powerful kingdoms of Europe had thrown off their allegiance to the pope. This was a fatal blow to his grandeur and power. It abridged his dominions, abolished his jurisdiction within their territories, and diminished his revenues. But more than this, it is well known that Charles V. seriously contemplated the reduction, if not the subversion, of the papal power. Such was the low, and almost expiring condition of the papacy, when the army of the Jesuits came to its help, which may be viewed as an illustration of Rev 13:3, though far from the full accomplishment of those solemn prophecies.

We now turn to our general history, and would briefly glance at the progress of the Reformation in different lands.

48 Germany on the Nations of Europe

Chapter 48

The Effect of the Reformation in Germany on the Nations of Europe

The position of the German Empire, which had been chosen by divine providence as the scene of the early dawn and noonday glory of the Reformation, was most favourable; and more likely than any other nation, to affect by its revolutions, the general state of Europe. Germany was, we learn, at that time, the connecting link between Asia and Europe, and the highway for the commerce of the two hemispheres. It was also famous for imperial diets, which always attracted crowds of dignitaries, both civil and clerical; besides the peculiarity of its constitution, its numerous princes, and its free cities, gave to its internal contests an interest and an importance to all the surrounding countries. In all this we see the wisdom of God, even as to locality; and how naturally and quickly the whole of Christendom would be affected by the progress of the new opinions.

But not only the place, the time and circumstances were all ordered of the Lord to give immediate effect to the proclamation of the revived gospel. The mysterious charm which had bound mankind for ages was broken at once, and for ever. The public mind which had so long been passive, as if formed to believe whatever was taught, and meekly to bear whatever was imposed, was suddenly aroused to a spirit of inquiry and mutiny, and disdainfully threw off the yoke to which it had so long and so tamely submitted. But it was not the human mind only that was agitated by the new contest about religion; the political constitutions of the most ancient kingdoms were shaken to their foundations.*

{*History of the Church, by the Rev. John Fry, p. 333. Dr. Robertson's Works, vol. 6, p. 497.}

We will now trace its path in some of the countries most interesting to us.

Sweden and Denmark

A.D. 1520-1530

In connection with the reign of Louis the Pious, king of France, we have seen that the gospel was introduced among the Danes and Swedes as early as the ninth century. The indefatigable Ansgarius laboured about forty years in those northern regions, and died in the year 865.* Other missionaries followed, but Christianity, in all probability, maintained a questionable existence in those barbarous times, and in the midst of pagan darkness. In the twelfth century Rome succeeded in completing the work of conversion, and in adding the Swedish churches to the chair of St. Peter. An ecclesiastical constitution, according to the mystery of iniquity, was immediately imposed upon them, and soon, a flourishing priesthood, from the archbishop to the mendicant friar, covered the land, followed, as it always was, with decaying piety and an impoverished people.

{*Vol. 2, p. 6.}

At the dawn of the Reformation, the effects of the papal superstition seemed to be nowhere more firmly rooted, nor more deeply felt than in these countries. "The people were steeped in poverty, and ground down by the oppression of their masters. Left without instruction by their spiritual guides with no access to the word of God-for the scriptures had not yet been rendered into the Swedish tongue.... the people were returning to the superstitious beliefs and pagan practices of old times." As in all other countries, the Romish hierarchy had swallowed up the wealth of these kingdoms. The bishops possessed revenues which often exceeded those of the ancient nobility, and sometimes equalled or exceeded those of the sovereign; and not infrequently they dwelt in castles and fortresses, which set the power of the crown at defiance.

By an ancient law, the three kingdoms, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, like England, Scotland, and Ireland, were united under a common sovereign. The cruel tyrant, Christiern II., brother-in-law to Charles V., filled the throne of Denmark when the opinions of Luther began to spread in those countries. Being poor, compared with the priesthood, he had been waiting for an opportunity to reduce their power, that he might take possession of their wealth. Quicksighted enough to see that Protestantism might become popular, he professed to favour the new religion; sent for Reinhard, a disciple of Carlstadt, and appointed him professor of theology at Stockholm. But he, dying shortly after, was succeeded by Carlstadt himself. For some reason he only remained in Denmark a short time, when Christiern invited Luther to visit his dominions, but the Reformer declined the invitation. Meanwhile the conduct of Christiern was so tyrannical, that the Swedes refused to acknowledge him as their king, and appointed an administrator. He raised an army, being assisted with vast sums of money from the Romish clergy, invaded Sweden, gained an advantage over them, and treated the conquered with the greatest barbarity. Seventy noble lords and senators he massacred in cold blood in an open square, the archbishop of Upsala, it is said, approving of his vindictive cruelty. Among the number of these noble victims was Eric Vasa, the father of Gustavus Vasa, one of the most illustrious names in the annals of Sweden.

This noble youth, having escaped the murderous hands of Christiern, fled into Germany. During his sojourn there, he studied and embraced the principles of Luther. At length, emerging from his hiding-place, he raised the standard of revolt, and roused the peasantry of the Swedish provinces to attempt the restoration of their country's independence. After a severe struggle he defeated and overthrew the tyrant, delivered his country from oppression, was elevated to the throne, and created Sweden into an independent sovereignty in 1523. The Danes, following the example, broke out in open rebellion. Christiern was deposed, and driven from the kingdom in the year 1523. He fled to the low countries, and joined the court of Charles V. Frederick, duke of Holstein, was raised to the throne. This prince favoured the Reformation, and ruled with equity and moderation.

The truly patriotic king Gustavus, when firmly seated on his throne, exerted himself in every fair and honourable way, to establish Lutheranism in his own dominions. Instruction, not authority, for the conversion of his subjects, was his motto. Olaus Petri and his brother Laurentius, who had studied under Luther at Wittemberg, were the first preachers of the Reformation in Sweden. They also accomplished the all-important work of translating the scriptures into the vulgar tongue. At an assembly of the states in 1527, Gustavus publicly declared, "that he would lay down his sceptre, and retire from his kingdom, rather than rule a people enslaved to the orders and authority of the pope, and more controlled by the tyranny of their bishops, than by the laws of their monarchs." The king's will prevailed, the hierarchy was reduced in wealth and power, but tolerated. It would be difficult for any one to believe in our day, that the Romish clergy had gained possession, by their unhallowed influence, and were enjoying the revenues, of more than thirteen thousand estates in Sweden in less than a hundred years. But such was the prevailing power of the Protestant element in the assembly, that it was decreed, "that the estates, castles, farms, and lands, which had fallen into the hands of the church, should be restored; part to be returned to the nation, and part to those nobles from whose ancestors they had been wrested. The bishops submitted and signed the decree. Thus was the Reformation widely introduced and firmly established in Sweden.

The work in Denmark was very similar to that in Sweden. Frederick procured an edict at the assembly of the state of 1527, declaring that every subject of Denmark was free to adhere to the church of Rome, or to embrace the doctrines of the Reformation. This was enough; the new religion prevailed, teachers flocked from Wittemberg, the scriptures were translated into the Danish tongue, the singing of hymns was introduced into their public and private worship, and the Reformation advanced amid the new sounds of melody and praise. "It is not easy adequately to describe the change that now passed over Denmark. A serene and blessed light arose upon the whole kingdom. Not only were the Danes enabled to read the scriptures of the New Testament in their own tongue, and the Psalms of David, which were also often sung, both in their churches and in their fields, and on their highways, but they had likewise numerous expounders of the divine word, and preachers of the gospel, who opened to them the fountains of salvation."*

{*For minute and lengthy details of the progress of the Reformation in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland, see History of Protestantism by the Rev. J.A. Wylie-Cassell & Co.}

Italy

In no country outside of Germany did the reforming opinions find so early an entrance as in the provinces of Italy. In this we see the hand of the Lord, and the silver line of His sovereign grace. But He had a people there, and they must be brought to Jesus. Many believed and nobly witnessed for the truth of the gospel, as the record of their martyrdoms abundantly testifies. But the light was intolerable to Jezebel, who loves darkness, and it was soon extinguished by the activity of her tribunals.

No people had so little respect for the papal dignity as the Italians. The power of the pope was greater, and his commands were more implicitly obeyed, in the countries most remote from the seat of his government. The personal vices of the popes, the corruption of their administration, the ambition, luxury, licentiousness, and deceitfulness which reigned in their courts, fell immediately under the observation of the Italians. The main object of almost every succeeding pope was to raise money by means of the sacred mysteries, that he might enrich his sons, nephews, and other relatives, with immoderate wealth, even with principalities and kingdoms. Thus all thoughtful Italians, seeing the artifices by which the papacy was upheld, and the impostures on which is was founded, were ready to welcome something better.

"A controversy," says Dr. McCrie,* "which had been carried on for several years with great warmth in Germany and which was at last brought before the papal court for decision, contributed in no small degree to direct the attention of the Italians, at an early period, to the reformed doctrines." A professed convert from Judaism, leagued with an inquisitor of Cologne, obtained from the Imperial Chamber a decree ordaining all Jewish books, with the exception of the Bible, to be committed to the flames, as filled with blasphemies against Christ. John Reuchlin, the restorer of Hebrew literature among the Christians, exerted himself, both privately and from the press, to prevent the execution of the barbarous decree. But alas! the clergy sided with the apostate, and sentence was pronounced against Reuchlin, both by the divines of Cologne and the Sorbonne of Paris. He appealed to Rome. Erasmus and other distinguished friends of learning in all parts of Europe, wrote warmly in favour of Reuchlin, and determined to make his cause a common one. The monks, who dreaded and hated Erasmus and all men of learning, exerted themselves with the clergy, to obtain the execution of the decree; but the court of Rome protracted the affair from time to time, until the contention that arose between Luther and the preachers of indulgences was carried to Rome for decision; and thus the former controversy was lost sight of in the latter.

{*History of the Reformation in Italy.}

The Writings of Luther

In this remarkable providential way, the attention of the Italians had been directed to the Germans, and even to the great Reformer, who had taken part with Reuchlin. "Within two years from the time of his first appearance against indulgences his writings had found their way into Italy, where they met with a favourable reception from the learned." John Froben, the celebrated printer at Basle, writing to Luther about this time, says, "Blasius Salmonius, a bookseller at Leipsic, presented me, at the last Frankfort fair, with certain treatises composed by you, which being approved of by learned men, I immediately put to press, and sent six hundred copies to France and Spain. My friends assure me that they are sold at Paris, and read and approved of, even by the Sorbonists. Calvus, a bookseller of Pavia, himself a scholar and addicted to the Muses, has carried a great part of the impression into Italy.... In spite of the terror of pontifical bulls, and the activity of those who watched over their execution, the writings of Luther Melancthon Zwingle, and Bucer, continued to be circulated and read with avidity and delight in various parts of Italy. Some of them were translated into the Italian language, and, to elude the vigilance of the inquisitors, were published under fictitious names...." "Hail! faithful in Christ," wrote a Carmelite monk of Locarno to the Christians in Switzerland, "think, O think of Lazarus in the Gospels, and of the lowly woman of Canaan, who was willing to be satisfied with the crumbs which fell from the table of the Lord. As David came to the priest in a servile dress, and unarmed, so do I fly to you for the shewbread, and the armour laid up in the sanctuary. Parched with thirst, I seek the fountain of living water: sitting like the blind man by the wayside, I cry to Him that gives sight. With tears and sighs, we, who sit here in darkness, humbly entreat you who are acquainted with the titles and authors of the books of knowledge, to send us the writings of such elect teachers as you possess and particularly the works of the divine Zwingle, the far-famed Luther, the acute Melancthon, the accurate OEcolampadius. The prices shall be paid to you through his-excellency, Werdmyller. Do your endeavour that a city of Lombardy, enslaved by Babylon, and a stranger to the gospel of Christ, may be set free."*

{*History of the Reformation in Italy, p. 29.}

These extracts plainly show-and many more might be given-what an abundant entrance the gospel had into Italy, and at a very early period of the Reformation. And for more than twenty years the followers of Luther and Zwingle were allowed to spread the truth, publicly preach the gospel, and otherwise witness for Christ, almost unmolested. The wars, which we have had occasion to refer to in tracing the history of the Reformation in Germany, greatly affected Italy. Engrossed by foreign politics, and deeply involved in the struggle between Charles and Francis, the court of Rome disregarded, or thought exaggerated, the representations that were made to them of the progress of heresy. But these wars, so disastrous to the pope and the patrimony of St. Peter, proved an inestimable blessing to thousands of precious souls. Many of the German soldiers who followed Charles V. in his Italian expeditions, and the Swiss auxiliaries who followed the standard of his great rival, Francis I., were Protestants. "With the freedom of men," says Dr. McCrie, "who have swords in their hands, these foreigners conversed on the religious controversy with the inhabitants among whom they were quartered."

The impressions made on the people's mind, in favour of the new opinions, were greatly strengthened by the bitter and never-ending contests between the pope and the Emperor. We have seen Charles by turns an abettor of the pope, and a restraint on his authority as the fluctuations of his contest with Francis I. rendered it politic; but with the deceitfulness of Clement VII. he was maddened to fury. He accused the pope of kindling the flames of war in Europe that he might evade, what was universally called for, a general council for the Reformation of the church in its head and members. It was at this time that he threatened to abolish the jurisdiction of the pope throughout Spain; but, not satisfied with these threatenings, he sent an army into the papal territories under the command of his general, the Duke of Bourbon. Rome was besieged and sacked, and the pontiff taken prisoner, in the year 1527. "The Germans in the Emperor's army behaved with great moderation towards the inhabitants of Rome after the first day's pillage and contented themselves with testifying their detestation of idolatry; but the Spaniards never relented in their rapacity and cruelty, torturing the prisoners to make them discover their treasures." Marching up to the palace windows of the captive pontiff, a whole band of Germans, raising their hands and voices, exclaimed, "Long live Pope Luther! Long live Pope Luther!"

Thus were the hands of the pope and his counsellors filled with their own troubles, and the Reformers left tolerably free to pursue their happy work of conversion and instruction, by the good providence of God.

The Persecution of the Christians

It was not until the year 1542 that the court of Rome became seriously alarmed at the progress of the Reformed doctrines. By this time they were widely spread in nearly every province of Italy. Some of the most attractive and brilliant preachers in that country had embraced the simple gospel and were preaching to large audiences a free salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Among these, Bernardino Ochino, a Capuchin, Peter Martyr, a canon-regular of the order of St. Augustine, and the interesting Aonio Paleario, a pious and learned professor. Spies were set to watch their movements, listen to their sermons, and even then provoke conversation, with the view of procuring evidence against them. Ochino and Martyr saw their safety in flight, crossed the Alps, found an asylum in Switzerland, and ultimately in England; but the career of Paleario was crowned with martyrdom in his own country.

When asked by his accusers, 'What is the first means of salvation given by God to man?' he answered, 'Christ.' 'What is the second?' he replied, 'Christ.' 'And what is the third?' he again answered, 'Christ.' From that moment, having rejected good works as the second means, and the church as the third, he was a doomed man. But that which gave the greatest offence was a most influential treatise which he wrote on the Benefit of the Death of Christ. When the Inquisitor at length arose to crush the Lutherans and collect their heretical books, as many as forty thousand copies of this book fell into his hands. Paleario was at last condemned on four charges: 1, For denying purgatory, 2, For disapproving of the dead being buried in churches; 3, For ridiculing the monastic life; 4, For ascribing justification solely to confidence in the mercy of God forgiving our sins through Jesus Christ. After an imprisonment of three years in the dungeons of the Inquisition, his body was given to the flames in the year 1570, and in the seventieth year of his age.

His sufferings were soon over and they would all soon be forgotten in the unmingled blessedness of his Lord's presence, but the fruit of his faithful testimony will endure for ever. Who could estimate the effects, with God's blessing, of forty thousand copies of his book in the hands of the Italians? But the fruit will all appear on that morning without clouds, and like Paul with his beloved Thessalonians, he will find his Italians to be his joy and crown of rejoicing, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. What a mercy to the called of God, sustained by His grace, and enabled to witness for Him in any age and in every sphere of life! Time will soon be over, the Lord will soon be here, and bright will the future be of all that have been faithful to Him. But His threatenings will be as surely executed as His promises will be fulfilled. It has ever been the policy of Rome to destroy the character, abolish the memory, and blot out the very names of those whose lives she has taken away. But their record is on high; and all that has been of grace will be revealed in the light to the utter confounding, and eternal shame and anguish of their once haughty inquisitors. And their remembrance in hell of the perfect happiness of their innocent but helpless victims, must give vitality to the worm that never dies and vehemence to the flames that will never be quenched.

A number of excellent men, whose only crime was their love to the Lord Jesus, and their faith in His word, suffered about the same time as Paleario. Commissioned spies, in the pay of the Vatican, were dispersed over Italy, who insinuated themselves into private families, and the confidence of individuals, conveying the information which they obtained to the inquisitors. Assuming a variety of characters, they were to be found in the company of the rich and the poor, the learned and illiterate. Many excellent private persons were thus caught in the toils spread by these pests of society. In a short time the prisons of the Inquisition were filled with victims, including persons of noble birth, male and female, industrious mechanics, and many of good reputation for learning and piety. Multitudes were condemned to penance, the galleys, and the flames. To give even an outline of the imprisonments, tortures, and deaths among the Italian Protestants, would be to write a martyrology.

"Englishmen," Dr. McCrie observes, "were peculiarly obnoxious to the inquisitors. Dr. Thomas Wilson, afterwards secretary to Queen Elizabeth, was accused of heresy, and thrown into the prisons of the Inquisition at Rome, on account of some things which were contained in his books on logic and rhetoric. He made his escape in consequence of his prison doors being broken open during the tumult which took place at the death of Pope Paul IV. Among those who escaped by this occurrence was also John Craig, one of our Reformers, who lived to draw up the National Covenant, in which Scotland solemnly abjured the popish religion. Dr. Thomas Reynolds was less fortunate. In consequence of being subjected to the torture, he died in prison. In the year 1595, two persons were burnt alive in Rome, the one an Englishman, the other a native of Silesia. " But enough for the present of these details of misery. A brief notice of those who fled for their lives and liberties, will give the reader some idea of the great and blessed work of God's Holy Spirit in Italy during the sixteenth century. Perhaps in no country in Europe did the word of God so prevail from 1520 to 1550, as in that land of blind superstition, luxury, and licentiousness. Such is the mercy of our God; where sin abounds grace much more abounds, to His praise and glory. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (Joh 6:37)

Italian Exiles

Surely no truer testimony can be given to the reality and power of our religious convictions, than a readiness to leave our homes and all that is dear to us, in obedience to the word of God and the dictates of conscience. The very sight of a number of foreigners, male and female, reaching our shores as exiles, would produce an impression highly favourable to the refugees, and deeply interesting to those among whom they had sought an asylum. Such were the Italian exiles, and such the impression produced, not only on their fellow Protestants, but on their adversaries the Roman Catholics. They could not understand how men of illustrious birth, rank, learning, position, civil and ecclesiastical, could voluntarily renounce their wealth and honours, leave their dearest friends, encounter poverty with all the hardships and dangers of a speedy flight, rather than do violence to the voice of conscience.

The republic of the Grisons, owing to its proximity to Italy, was the country they first visited. "It was calculated that, in the year 1550, the exiles amounted to two hundred, of whom a fourth or fifth part were men of letters, and those not of the meanest name. Before the year 1559 the number had increased to eight hundred. From that time to the year 1568 we have ground to believe that the increase was fully as great in proportion; and down to the close of the century, individuals were to be seen, after short intervals, flying to the north, and throwing themselves on glaciers of the Alps to escape the fires of the Inquisition." Happily for the exiles, and for the Grisons themselves, the Reformation had made such progress there, that a statute law was passed, as early as 1526, securing religious liberty to all classes in the republic. In a national diet it was moved and agreed to, "That it shall be free to all persons of both sexes, and of whatever condition or rank, within the territories of the Grison confederation, to choose, embrace, and profess either the Roman Catholic or the Evangelical religion; and that no one shall, publicly or privately, harass another with reproaches or odious speeches on account of his religion, under an arbitrary penalty. That the ministers of religion shall teach nothing to the people but what is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and what they can prove by them; and that parish priests shall be enjoined to give themselves assiduously to the study of the scriptures as the only rule of faith and manners." This noble statute, notwithstanding some attempts that have been made to overthrow it, remains to this day the charter of religious liberty in the canton of the Grisons.

Many of the inhabitants in that part of Switzerland, who had come originally from Italy, and had preserved their ancient language and manners, were like a people ready for the ministrations of the exiles. And these, finding themselves perfectly free and safe, grudged no labour in communicating instruction privately and publicly, and were blessed of God to the winning of many souls for Christ. Congregations were formed, pastors appointed, the Lord's supper celebrated, and worship conducted on the principle of the Reformed churches. Others of the exiles made themselves masters of the different languages of the canton that they might be able to preach the gospel to the inhabitants. Their preaching was of the most attractive and thrilling style. They detailed the cruelties of the Inquisition; they laid bare the artifices, the superstition, ignorance, vices, and corruption of the court of Rome and its priesthood, contrasting with great enthusiasm the liberty of conscience and the pure preaching of the gospel enjoyed in the Grisons.

Thus did Rome, by her short-sighted and cruel policy, reduce her own strength at home, and send forth a band of her choicest subjects to expose her wickedness, weaken her influence abroad, and instruct many in the way of salvation. After a time many of these exiles spread themselves over the other cantons, and passed into other countries, carrying the light of the gospel with them; but alas, alas, their native and sunny Italy was doomed to be the abode of darkness, for few of the disciples of the Reformed doctrines were able to survive the barbarous and fiendish malice of the Inquisition.*

{*For full details see Dr. McCrie's History; Miss Young's Life and Times of Paleario, 2 vols., D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation in Europe. vol. 4; Hardwick's Church History, p. 105.}

Spain

The term heresy, about the time of the Reformation, was held in the highest detestation by the Spanish nation. The loudest boast of the proud Spaniard was purity of blood. The poorest peasant looked upon it as a degradation to have a drop of Jewish or Moorish blood in his veins. Yet in no country in Europe had there been such an intermixture of races. But this pride of a pure old Christian, or holy Catholic, ancestry made them peculiarly jealous of all forms of worship except their own. Besides, they had succeeded in cleansing the land by expelling the Jews, the inveterate enemies of Christ, from their courts; and they had overthrown the Mahometan empire which had been established for ages in the fairest provinces of their land; and would they now be traitors to the cross under which they had conquered and renounce their ancient faith for some new opinions of an obscure German monk? Their successes at home, with their wonderful discoveries abroad, so increased the wealth and raised the reputation of Spain, that they began to think themselves the favourites of heaven, and destined to propagate and defend the true faith throughout their vast dominions.

To the discovery of America by Columbus, the other magnificent territories by navigators of lesser name, must be added, the vast increase of strength which the Spanish monarchy received by the succession of their youthful sovereign, Charles V., to his paternal dominions in the Low Countries, Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary, and his elevation to the imperial throne of Germany.

The Introduction of the Reformed Doctrines into Spain

Such was the greatness and glory of the Spanish nation when the new faith knocked at her gates for admission. But notwithstanding the national antipathy to the German Reformation, there were many serious and thoughtful men predisposed in its favour. The scandalous corruptions of the clergy and the cruel energies of the Inquisition had alienated the hearts of many from the old religion. Accordingly, we find the writings of Luther translated and distributed in the peninsula as early as the year 1519. The Reformer's commentary on the Galatians, a work which exhibits his doctrinal sentiments on the most important points, was translated into Spanish in 1520. This was followed by translations of his treatise on Christian Liberty, and his reply to Erasmus on free-will. These books were read and approved of by many who were illustrious for their rank, learning, and influence; and had not the throne and the Inquisition combined to suppress both the books and their readers, Spain, we believe, would have produced a noble band of thorough reformers. For the first ten years at least, the papal briefs and the state authorities seemed ineffectual in arresting its progress.

"Headed by two brothers," says Hardwick, "Juan and Alfonso de Valdes, the reforming school increased from day to day in numbers and importance. It had representatives among the retinue of Charles V. himself; and both in Seville and Valladolid the crowd of earnest Lutherans was so great that cells could hardly be at last procured for their incarceration." Many noble witnesses for the gospel follow these two leading brothers, down to the year 1530, when Charles, with a great body of Spanish nobles and clergy, had an opportunity of hearing for themselves the true doctrines of the Protestants, from the confession of faith which was read to the imperial diet of Augsburg. The public reading and examination of this confession had the effect of dissipating the false ideas of the opinions of Luther which had been industriously propagated by the monks. Alfonso de Valdes, the Emperor's secretary, of whom we have already spoken, had several friendly interviews with Melancthon, and read the confession before it was presented to the diet. A. de Virves, chaplain to Charles, was also convinced of the truth of the protest and became what was called a Lutheran. Valdes, Virves, and others on their return to Spain being suspected of Lutheranism, were seized by the inquisitors and thrown into prison. A long list of nobles, priests, burgesses, monks, and nuns follow, but for details of their imprisonment, tortures, and death, we have no space.*

{*See Brief Account of the Inquisition, "Short Papers," vol. 2, pp. 291-303. Llorente's History of the Inquisition. McCrie's History of the Reformation in Spain.}

The Suppression of the Reformation in Spain

For a number of years the Lord in mercy sheltered the infant church in Spain. The Christians were in the habit of coming together with great secrecy, and breaking bread in private houses. On no other principle could we account for the truth spreading, the disciples multiplying, and the church being edified, and all in the very place where the king, the pope, and the Inquisition had sworn to keep Spain Roman Catholic. True, there were many individual cases of persecution and imprisonment, but nothing very definite, or on a large scale, was attempted till the year 1557.

The first thing which seems to have aroused the inquisitors from their security was the sudden disappearance of a number of persons, who were known to have settled in Geneva and different parts of Germany, where they were at liberty to worship God according to His holy word. This led to searching inquiries as to the cause of their departure; and, finding it was the question of religion, the inquisitors naturally suspected that those who had left were not the only persons who were disaffected, and immediately set their whole police in motion to discover their brethren who remained behind. Besides their vigilance at home, spies were sent to Geneva and Germany, that they might, through feigning themselves to be friends, obtain information as to those who had embraced Lutheranism.

This information, it is painful to relate, was obtained by the treachery of one of the preachers' wives through the wicked arts of the confessional. At Valladolid, Juan Garcia, a goldsmith, being aware of the influence of the priest over the superstitious mind of his wife, concealed from her both the time and place of their assembling. But this poor deluded woman, in obedience to her harlot-mother Jezebel, dogged her husband one night, and having ascertained the place of meeting, communicated the fact to the priest. Having made this important discovery, messengers were despatched to the several tribunals throughout the kingdom; the ramifications of heresy were to be diligently traced, guards were to be placed at convenient places to seize such persons as might attempt to escape; and by a simultaneous movement the Protestants were seized in all parts of the country. In Seville and its neighbourhood, two hundred persons were apprehended in one day; and, in a short time, the number increased to eight hundred. In Valladolid eighty persons were committed to prison, and similar numbers by other tribunals. The common prisons, the convents, and even private houses were crowded with the victims. The storm of persecution burst with equal fury on the monasteries and nunneries that were known to favour the Lutheran doctrines.

The cruel and heartless king, Philip II. and his inquisitors, were now determined to strike terror into the minds of the whole nation, and consequently, the unoffending prisoners were treated with the view of accomplishing this fiendish end. Many suffered in body and mind from a long imprisonment; others from the severity of the tortures ended their days by a lingering and secret martyrdom; while some of the most distinguished, either for rank, or of the clerical order, were reserved for a public execution, or the Spanish auto-da-fe.* But there was one family amongst the Protestants of Seville whose tragic history is so touching that we cannot withhold it from our readers.

{*See an account of the auto-da-fe, p. 573.}

"The widow of Fernando Nugnez, a native of the town of Lepe, with three of her daughters and a married sister, were seized and thrown into prison. As there was no evidence against them, they were put to the torture, but refused to inform against one another. Upon this the presiding Inquisitor called one of the young women into the audience chamber, and, after conversing with her for some time, professed an attachment to her person. Having repeated this at another interview, he told her that he could be of no service to her unless she imparted to him the whole facts of her case; but if she entrusted him with these, he would manage the affairs in such a way as that she and all her friends would be set at liberty. Falling into the snare, the unsuspecting girl confessed to him, that she had at different times conversed with her mother, sisters, and aunt, on the Lutheran doctrines. The wretch immediately brought her into court, and obliged her to declare judicially what she had owned to him in private. Nor was this all: under the pretence that her confession was not sufficiently ample and ingenuous, she was put to the torture by the most excruciating engines-the pulley and the wooden horse; by which means evidence was extorted from her, which led, not only to the condemnation of herself and her relatives, but also to the seizure and conviction of others who afterwards perished in the flames."*

{*McCrie, p. 130.}

No language could describe the meanness, perfidiousness fiendishness, of one in human form that could do such a thing, and the reader may easily imagine from the treatment of the widow, the fatherless children, and the aunt, what the victims of the Inquisition (which could be counted by thousands) had to endure, and all for the crime of believing the truth of God and rejecting the lies of Satan.

Reflections on the Policy of Spain

It is difficult to conceive in our day, and in our land of civil and religious liberty, what could have induced the church aided by the government, to persecute thousands of the choicest of her members, for a difference of opinion on some points of religion. By far the greater part of those who were apprehended, and thrown into a dungeon, or were burnt at the stake, had not left the communion of the Romish church. They might have accepted a New Testament in the Spanish language, or might have been drawn into conversation on the subject of the new opinions, either of which was sufficient to awaken the suspicion of the Familiars, and secure them imprisonment. We must look deeper down than the blind and infatuated policy of the government, or the tyranny of the papal tribunals. The source is purely Satanic. The main object of this suicidal policy was to perpetuate the reign of darkness. Popery could not live in the light; therefore the true gospel-which ameliorates the condition of society, generates a spirit of liberty among the people, discerns and corrects abuses by its sure and divine light-must be suppressed, no matter what it may cost.

The arch-enemy of God and man rules in the darkness and superstition of popery, though at the same time God overrules. He saw from the beginning that society, in all countries where the Reformation had been received, was greatly improved and enlightened. It gave a higher tone to morals, and imparted to the human mind a strong impulse of inquiry and improvement. The progress of useful knowledge, the cultivation of literature, and the extension of commerce, which exalt a nation, would be the downfall of the papal power. Therefore every movement, intellectual, civil, or religious, that would tend to raise the condition, or enlighten the minds of the people, must be put down. The ruling clergy and the inquisitors exercise the most rigid and vigilant inspection of the press and the seminaries of education, that they may arrest the progress of general or useful knowledge. This is abundantly proved by the lists of prohibited books which they publish from time to time.

As the persecution grew hotter, the number of exiles increased. While the Italians were crossing the Alps, the Spaniards were crossing the Pyrenees, and not infrequently met in the country of their adoption, and even united in the same church. Thousands of the Spanish exiles found a happy home in England, which the Lord has not forgotten. But the kindness which they received here gave great offence to the bloodthirsty Philip and the pope, and formed one of the charges against Elizabeth in the bull of her excommunication. Philip wanted them to be sent back, not for their capital or labour as useful citizens, but for their blood, that he might celebrate another victory in a grand auto-da-fe. But England on this occasion proved worthy of her well-known character for hospitality to the oppressed.

"The queen," nobly writes bishop Jewell, "of her gracious pity, granted them harbour. Is it become a heinous thing to show mercy? God willed the children of Israel to love the stranger, because they were strangers in the land of Egypt. He that showeth mercy shall find mercy. But what was the number of such who came in unto us? Three or four thousand. Thanks be to God; this realm is able to receive them if the numbers were greater. And why may not Queen Elizabeth receive a few afflicted members of Christ, which are compelled to carry His cross? Whom, when He thought good to bring safely by the dangers of the sea, and to set in at our havens, should we cruelly have driven them back again? . . . Would the vicar of Christ give this counsel? Or, if a king receive such, and give them succour, they live not idly. If they take houses of us, they pay rent for them; they hold not our grounds but by making due recompense. They beg not in our streets, nor crave anything at our hands, but to breathe our air, and see our sun. They labour truly, they live sparefully; they are good examples of virtue, travail, faith, and patience. The towns in which they abide are happy, for God doth follow them with His blessing."

The reader will now see, what has so greatly interested us, that the work of God's Spirit in Catholic Spain must indeed have been a great and a blessed work. If we think of the thousands who became the victims of the Inquisition, and the thousands who found a refuge in England, besides those who settled in Switzerland, Germany, the Low Countries, and France, how great indeed must the work of the Spirit, by means of the scanty truth which they possessed, have been; and that, too, in a very short time! Towards the close of the century Spain boasted that she had extirpated the German heresy from her territories. But she saw not in her blindness, that she had inflicted a deeper and more fatal wound on herself than on the unoffending victims of her tyranny, and had sown the seeds of a national misery and despotism which she has been reaping ever since.

During the early part of the sixteenth century, her sceptre extended over nearly half the world, but what is her condition now? Prostrate, sunk, and degraded, compared with the other nations of Europe. Holland, with no land but what she rescued from the ocean, became rich and independent, while Spain, with all her vast possessions, has become poor and helpless.*

{*See Dr. McCrie's history-Blackwood, Edinburgh.}

How true it is, not only with individuals but with nations, that, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is the principle of the government of God, however much grace may overrule the failure of the Christian for his blessing; as in the case of David. Nevertheless the sword was not to depart from his house. "Be not deceived," says the apostle, "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is a hard saying, many will say, yet it is most true and righteous. If a man sow tares in the spring, can he expect to reap wheat in the autumn? And if he sow wheat, he will not have to reap tares. But, thank God, grace reigns, not on the ruins of law and justice, but "through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." No thanks be to us when our failures turn to our deeper blessing, but to the grace of God which freely meets us on the ground of the finished work of Christ. When self is judged, the will broken, the eye of faith fixed on the blessed Lord, there is not only peace, but joy, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Gal 6:7; Rom 5:21)

The Netherlands

For some time before the days of Luther, there had existed in the Netherlands a spirit of religious inquiry, and a calm but firm resistance to the domination of the Romish church. In the fifteenth century, a school of pious mystics, represented by such men as Thomas a Kempis, had revived a spirit of devotion in many countries of the west, especially in Flanders and some parts of Germany.* It was also the land of John Wessel, who, in many things, anticipated Luther, and of Erasmus, at a later period. Most of the Reformers' books, both Swiss and Saxon, were translated, printed, and sent out from Antwerp in large quantities. The provinces were wealthy and prosperous from their extensive manufactures and commerce. Antwerp was, in that age, the emporium of the world. Hence their great facility in sending books into all parts, by concealing them in their bales of goods. It was from Antwerp chiefly, that both Italy and Spain received the new books. The writings of Erasmus against the monks may also have helped to prepare the way for the deeper doctrines of Luther and Zwingle. It was only natural, we may say, under these circumstances, that the light of the Reformation should have penetrated the Low Countries at an early period.

{*Hardwick's Middle Ages, p. 372.}

The policy of Charles

Such was the state of things in the hereditary dominions of Charles when he ascended the throne of Spain in 1519. Indeed, the movement which convulsed the whole of Germany, was early transmitted to all the other territories of the Emperor. Being a Catholic king, this fact was no doubt the cause of his double policy towards the Reformers from the Diet of Worms in 1521. With Francis I., the pope, and the Turks watching his movements on every side, and he theirs, he had no leisure to chastise the heretics. Besides, the ample revenues, which flowed into the imperial treasury from those wealthy provinces, made him unwilling to resort to severe measures, with a view to check the progress of the new opinions. At the same time, he did not fail to exhort those in power to use their authority in suppressing heresy. This is evident from a placard which was published in the name of that monarch, by Margaret of Austria, his father's sister, Governess of the Netherlands, in the year 1521. Luther is there described as a "devil in the shape of a man and the habit of a monk, that he may more easily occasion the eternal death and destruction of mankind." The placard is very long, giving strict orders for the prohibition of all books which contained any allusion to the scripture or its doctrines, and that no book was to be circulated without the approbation of the faculty of divinity in the university.*

{*See the noble work of Gerard Brandt, on the Reformation in the Netherlands, in four vols. folio. There the reader has almost the daily occurrences of these most interesting and tragic times.

See also The Rise of the Dutch Republic, by Mr. Motley, three vols. 8vo; also his book on The United Netherlands. Both embrace the political as well as the ecclesiastical history of these times.}

The Truth Prevails in Spite of the Flames

The history of the Low Countries from this time is so full of martyrdoms, that it is like a gradual extermination of the population. Nevertheless the Spirit of God wrought wonderfully, and the holy courage which was shown by many, proved the Lord's presence with them in sustaining grace and power. It was discovered that the Austin friars in the city of Antwerp had read and approved the books of Luther. Many of them were thrown into prison. Three of the monks were degraded and condemned to the flames in 1523. While the fire was being lighted, they repeated the creed, and then sang together the Te Deum in alternate verses, until the force of the flames silenced their heavenly praise. Erasmus is made to witness on this occasion, that these martyrdoms had the very opposite effect which the persecutors intended. "The city of Brussels," where they were executed, he says, "had been perfectly free from heresy till this event. But many of the inhabitants immediately after began to favour Lutheranism."

Persons of eminence, among both the clergy and the laity, ventured to espouse the cause of truth, though the martyrdoms were constantly occurring. This has always been the case. If persecution keep some at a cold selfish distance, it brings the accession of a greater number, through that instinct-in connection with the truth-which impels the human conscience to rise against injustice, and incline to the side of the oppressed. The fires were now kindled all over the country, and edict following edict, with increasing severity, kept them burning. It was death to read a page of the scriptures, death to discuss any article of the faith; death to have in one's possession any of the writings of Luther, Zwingle, or OEcolampadius, death to express a doubt respecting the efficacy of the sacraments, or the authority of the pope. In the year 1536, that good and faithful servant of the Lord, William Tyndale, was strangled and burnt at Vilvordi, near Brussels, for translating the New Testament into English and printing it in 1535.*

{*For particulars, see Annals of the English Bible by Christopher Anderson; also the biographical notice, prefixed to his writings published by the Parker Society.}

In the year 1555, Charles, though only fifty-five years of age, feeling himself growing old, passed the sceptre to his son. The sceptre and the faggot, it has been said, were closely united during the reign of the father, but they were to be still more so under the reign of the son. And there was this difference: Charles persecuted from policy, for he was burning heretics at the very time he sacked Rome, and imprisoned the pope and his cardinals. Philip persecuted from the convictions of his bigotry, and the cool vindictiveness of his nature. It was under the reign of the latter that more violent exterminating measures were devised and carried into execution by the duke of Alva, and the persecution became so intolerable, and so exasperated the people, that they ultimately rebelled, threw off the Spanish yoke, and asserted their ancient laws and liberties. But this was not done in haste; the people were slow to move, notwithstanding their unparalleled sufferings.

The Association of the Nobles

In 1566 most of the nobles, though generally Catholics, entered into an association to protect and defend the liberties of the country. The Protestants, trusting to a promise of toleration from Margaret, began to meet in great numbers in open day; and, being without places of worship they assembled in the fields, where the preachers proclaimed the truths of the gospel in the midst of overwhelming numbers. One of these field preachers, named Dathen, is said to have gathered as many as fifteen thousand at a time to listen to his discourses. But in the existing state of things such assemblies were not likely to be continued without some disturbances. A magistrate, on one occasion, furious in his bigotry, attempted to disperse them, brandishing his sword, and making as if he would apprehend the minister, but was saluted with such a plentiful shower of stones that he barely escaped with his life. The psalms of David were usually sung on such occasions; which, from the multitude of voices, were heard at a great distance, and attracted great attention. The enthusiasm of the Calvinists and the hostility of the Catholics were thereby increased, and the danger of an outbreak became every day more imminent. In order to avoid this, and prevent the need of field-preaching, those who really knew and valued the truth had, in a short time, a number of wooden churches erected. "Men of all classes engaged in the labour, while the females sold their jewels and ornaments to provide the necessary funds; and, had they been left to themselves, the power of the religion they professed would soon have quieted the storm of passion, and healed the evils of the land."*

{*Universal History, vol. 6, p. 197.}

The Protestants, now one hundred thousand in number respectfully petitioned the king for toleration, having been led by the Governess, Margaret, to expect it. By taking advantage of the brief period of repose from the conciliatory spirit of the Governess, they had formed nearly sixty congregations in Flanders, which were attended by nearly as many thousand persons. Similar meetings were opened in Artois, Brabant, Holland, Utrecht, Iceland, Friesland, and other places. But in place of listening to the reasonable demands of so large and so respectable a body of his subjects, the poor narrow-minded bigot utterly rejected the plea for "freedom to worship God, and personal liberty by settled law." Margaret had recommended moderate measures, and, when the question came before his own ministers, the Spanish council did the same, but all was in vain: violence, duplicity, and bloodshed were the only features of his policy, especially in the Netherlands. Rejecting Margaret's advice as to moderation; he directed her to raise an army of three thousand horse, and ten thousand foot soldiers, to enforce the execution of his decrees.

Attempts were now made by the government to disperse the congregations of the Protestants by force, so that the people went armed to their places of worship. Such was the melancholy state of things through the superstition and obstinacy of a single man. Many from amongst the lowest classes of the people in different parts of the country, excited by all that was going on, began to rise. They broke into churches, tore down pictures and everything in the way of ornament; images, altars, crosses, and stained windows, were broken to pieces; and the organ in the cathedral at Antwerp, said to be the finest in the world, was subjected to the same destructive enthusiasm. About four hundred churches were thus plundered and defaced in a few days. The Christians in both the reformed and Lutheran churches were deeply grieved because of this outbreak, and drew up remonstrances to Philip; and while they condemned those violent proceedings, they again petitioned for the public exercise of their religion, "in which they were resolved to live and die." The prince of Orange, the counts Egmont and Horn, endeavoured to move Philip to some consideration of the state of religious feeling in the Low Countries; but it was all to no purpose. The troops were ordered to be distributed over the distracted country, that his persecuting edicts might be enforced. The Protestants were reduced to great straits; many were put to death, and many fled the country; the association of the nobles melted away, and the Netherlands had all the appearance of a conquered land.

The Duke of Alva

But the cold-hearted bigot was not yet satisfied. A second invasion was arranged for exterminating the Reformed, tens of thousands though they were. In the year 1567 the cruel duke of Alva was sent into the Netherlands with an army of fifteen thousand Spaniards and Italians; and the Inquisition was to put forth all its energies. This added greatly to the general consternation. The reign of terror began. The very name of Alva, and the mention of the Inquisition, made the whole land shudder. The counts of Egmont and Horn, and other persons of eminence, suspected of holding liberal opinions, were immediately arrested and executed. The prince of Orange escaped to Germany, and crowds of Protestants forsook their homes and fled to other countries. The foreign merchants, manufacturers, and artisans fled from Antwerp and other once thriving cities, as if the plague were raging within their gates. The wooden churches were pulled down, and, in some places the beams were formed into a great gallows on which to hang the minister and his flock.

As the inquisitors, by the authority of Charles, before his abdication were doing their dreadful work, we will give particulars of a few cases, to show the reader what was to be witnessed almost daily in the country for nearly forty years; yet the word of God prevailed mightily, and thousands were converted.

One of the inquisitors by the name of Titelmann notorious for the number of his victims, boasted that he only "seized the virtuous and the innocent, because they made no resistance." Thomas Calberg, tapestry weaver, of Tournay, being convicted of having copied some hymns from a book printed in Geneva, was instantly burned alive. About the same time, 1561, Walter Kapell, a man of property and benevolence, and greatly beloved by the poor people, was burned at the stake for heretical opinions. A most touching scene occurred as Titelmann's officers were binding him to the stake: a poor idiot, who had often been fed by his kindness, called out, "Ye are bloody murderers; that man has done no wrong, but has given me bread to eat." With these words he cast himself headlong into the flames to perish with his beloved benefactor, and was with difficulty rescued by the officers. A day or two afterwards he visited the scene of the execution, where the half-burnt skeleton of Walter Kapell still remained. The poor idiot laid it upon his shoulders, and carried it to the place where the magistrates were sitting in session. Forcing his way into their presence, he laid his burden at their feet, crying, "There, murderers! Ye have eaten his flesh, now eat his bones." The fate of the poor man is not recorded but the testimony of so daring a witness would most likely be effectually silenced.

The year following, Titelmann caused one Robert Ogier, of Ryssel, in Flanders, to be arrested, together with his wife and two sons. Their crime consisted in not going to mass, and in practising private worship at home. They confessed the offence, for they protested that they could not endure to see the profanation of their Saviour's name in the idolatrous sacraments. They were asked what rites they practised in their own house. One of the sons, a mere boy, answered, "We fall on our knees, and pray to God that He may enlighten our hearts and forgive our sins. We pray for our sovereign, that his reign may be prosperous, and his life peaceful. We also pray for the magistrates and others in authority, that God may protect and preserve them all." The boy's simple eloquence drew tears even from the eyes of some of his judges. The father and eldest son, were, however, condemned to the flames. "O God," prayed the youth at the stake, 'eternal Father, accept the sacrifice of our lives, in the name of Thy beloved Son." "Thou liest, scoundrel!" furiously interrupted a monk who was lighting the fire; "God is not your father; ye are the devil's children." As the flames rose about them, the boy cried out once more, "Look, my father, all heaven is opening, and I see a hundred thousand angels rejoicing over us. Let us be glad, for we are dying for the truth." "Thou liest! thou liest!" again screamed the priest "all hell is opening; and ye see ten thousand devils thrusting you into eternal fire." Eight days afterwards, the wife of Ogier and his other son were burned; so that they were soon privileged to meet in the bright and happy regions above-in the perfect repose of the paradise of God. Little did these ignorant and hardened inquisitors think that they were sending so many of the children of God home to their Father's house on high, to be with Christ, which is far better.

The Administration of Alva

In the year 1567 "the council of blood," as it was called, held its first sitting. There are few readers who have not heard something of the infamous character of Alva. "Such an amount of ferocity," says Motley, "of patient vindictiveness and universal bloodthirstiness was never found in a savage beast of the forest, and but rarely in a human bosom." It was no longer the trial of ones and twos that occupied the council, as it was thought more expeditious to send the accused at once in large numbers to the flames. But no crime at that moment was so great as being rich. No belief, no virtues, could expiate such guilt. Bloodshed and confiscations were the daily amusements of the tyrant who thus gratified his avarice and his cruelty. He boasted that a golden river, a yard deep, should flow through the Netherlands, from confiscations, to replenish the treasury of his master. In the town of Tournay alone, the estates of above a hundred rich merchants were confiscated.

Blood now flowed in torrents. "Thus, for example, on the 4th of January, eighty-four inhabitants of Valenciennes were condemned; on another day, ninety-five from different places in Flanders; on another, forty-six inhabitants of Malines; on another, thirty-five persons from different localities. Yet, notwithstanding this wholesale slaughter, Philip, Alva, and the Holy Office were not satisfied with the progress of events. A new edict was issued, affixing a heavy penalty upon all waggoners carriers, and ship-masters, who should aid in the emigration of heretics. They had resolved that none should escape.

Early in the second year of the council of blood, "the most sublime sentence of death," says Motley, "was promulgated, which has ever been pronounced since the creation of the world. The Roman tyrant wished that his enemies' heads were all upon a single neck, that he might strike them off at one blow. The Inquisition assisted Philip to place the heads of all his Netherland subjects upon a single neck for the same fell purpose. Upon the 19th of February 1568 a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics. From this universal doom only a few persons, especially named, were excepted. A proclamation of the king, dated ten days later, confirmed this decree of the inquisition, and ordered it to be carried into instant execution, without regard to age, sex, condition. This is probably the most concise death-warrant that was ever framed. Three millions of people-men, women, and children, were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines."*

{*Motley, vol. 2, p. 155. Brandt, vol. 1, p. 266.}

"This horrible decree," says Brandt, "against a whole nation, drove many with their wives and children to seek a place of safety in the West-woods of Flanders, from whence turning savages through the solitude of the place, and the extinction of their hopes, they made excursions on the priests and friars, serving themselves of the darkest nights for revenge and robbery."

The Real Character of Popery

Under this universal condemnation the reader will see the real spirit of popery, and what all had to expect who did not yield an absolute, though blind submission, to all her idolatries and superstitions. Men in the highest and humblest positions were daily and hourly dragged to the stake. Alva in writing to Philip about this time, seeks to satisfy his master by assuring him that the executions, which were to take place immediately after the expiration of holy week would not be less than eight hundred heads. To prevent the victims on their way to the scaffold from addressing their friends or the bystanders, the tongue of each prisoner was screwed into an iron ring, and then seared with a hot iron.

The tendency of this monster's policy was evidently to effect the utter depopulation of the country. History informs us, that the "death-bell tolled hourly in every village; not a family that was not called to mourn for its dearest relatives; the blood of its best and bravest citizens had already stained the scaffold; the men to whom the nation had been accustomed to look for guidance and protection were dead, in prison, or in exile. Submission had ceased to be of any avail flight was impossible, and the spirit of vengeance had alighted at every fireside. The mourners went daily about the streets, for there was hardly a house that had not been made desolate.... The door-posts of private houses, the fences in the fields, were laden with human carcases, strangled, beheaded, and burned. The orchards in the country bore on many a tree the hideous fruit of human bodies." It was about this time that Don Carlos, the king's son, died in prison, or, as it was believed by some, was put to death by his father's orders. "This conduct of his in not sparing his only son, as being a favourer of heretics, was highly extolled by Pope Pius V."*

{*Brandt, vol. 1, p. 270; Motley, vol. 2, p. 142, Universal History vol. 6, p. 199.}

Such was the character of the reign of Alva for nearly six years. The heart sickens in attempting to detail the atrocities of this furious tyrant. The extent of the appalling massacres may be imagined from the boast of Alva himself, who gloried in having caused eighteen thousand of the inhabitants to perish, without reckoning those who fell in war. And it is thought that more than a hundred thousand effected their escape, and fled into other countries. Crowds flocked to the English ports, bringing with them that industrial skill which amply repaid this country for the hospitality they received.

We wonder that the church was not consumed in the flames or drowned in blood. But God had mercy on the Netherlands in preserving many of His faithful witnesses through their fiery trial that they might testify for Him in a future day. When the grass began to grow in the streets of those cities which had recently employed so many artisans, a national synod of the Dutch Reformed Church was held at Dort in 1578, at Middleburg in 1581 and at the Hague in 1586. The very means which the royal bigot, with his inquisitors and Jesuits, employed to preserve the old religion, instead of securing it from the dangers to which it was exposed, occasioned its total overthrow. The civil war, which broke out both by sea and land, resulted in the formation of a new Protestant state in Europe, under the title of THE SEVEN UNITED PROVINCES.

The Triumph of Truth and Righteousness

The history of this long and deeply interesting struggle for liberty of conscience belongs to the civil historian. We will only add, that William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, or, as he was usually called, William "the silent," felt impelled to adopt more decisive measures to prevent the utter ruin of his country. In this enterprise he was assisted by Elizabeth, Queen of England; the King of France; and the Protestants in Germany. He also sold his jewels, plate, and even the furniture of his house to raise the necessary funds. But it was difficult to contend with the experience and power of Alva, and for a length of time William was unsuccessful. His brother Louis was defeated, and his brother Adolphus was killed, but many of the towns were thrown into revolt, and Philip at length felt that some change of policy should be tried. Alva was recalled, and even Philip is said to have reproved him for his inhumanity. The war was renewed and continued to rage, with brief intervals of peace, until the year 1580, when the States-general, assembled at Antwerp, issued their declaration of national independence, and threw off the Spanish yoke for ever. Thus the infant republic, under the guidance of the Prince of Orange, secured that freedom of person, and liberty of conscience which are the inalienable right of all; and took its place among the nations of the continent.*

{*For the civil history of the new state, see Motley's History of the United Netherlands, and for the ecclesiastical, see Faiths of the World; also Mosheim, vol. 3.}

Philip now eyed the great patriot with the most deadly hatred. He saw in him the animating soul of these struggles for liberty, and hence he sought his life. "Five unsuccessful attempts had been made to assassinate William, but Philip would not give up hope. In 1580 he published a ban of proscription, in which he denounced the prince as guilty of the foulest crimes, and declared that it was permitted to all persons to assail him in his fortunes, person, and life; and promised twenty-five thousand golden crowns, a pardon for all offences whatsoever, and a patent of nobility, to anyone who should deliver up to him this implacable monarch William of Nassau, dead or alive." This infamous document soon did its work. On the 10th of July, 1584, a Jesuit, named Gerard, who had passed himself off to the unsuspecting prince as one of the Reformed faith, shot him through the heart, in the hall of his own house, with a pistol which he had bought with money obtained from the prince himself a short time before. "God have mercy on my soul, and on this unfortunate nation," exclaimed the wounded patriot and instantly expired. He had married the widow of Teligny, the daughter of the brave Coligny, who both fell in the St. Bartholomew massacre. Thus had she seen her first and second husband, and her noble father, assassinated by her side.

Thus died one of the most unselfish, wise, courageous, and memorable characters in history. "He had headed the armies of his oppressed countrymen, and led them on to victory, he had regulated their treaties, and though for twenty years he had spent his fortune, his ease, and his health, for the common good, calumny has failed to show that he had in any instance used his power for any selfish purpose; so that he well deserves the title of 'Father of his country.' " The news of the atrocious deed filled the land and all the surrounding countries with grief and consternation. Vengeance was speedily executed on the assassin; but in the midst of a deep and universal sorrow Philip rejoiced. Transported with joy, he exclaimed, "Had it only been done two years earlier, much trouble would have been spared me; but better late than never! better late than never!"*

{*Universal History, vol. 6, p. 202; Wylie's vol. 3, which we have just seen, gives a long and detailed account of the struggles and triumphs in the Netherlands.}

Reflections on Bigotry and Christianity

It is difficult to close this paper without drawing the reader's attention to the effects of bigotry, and a bigotry dignified by the name of religion, or zeal for the glory of God. We have seen what this Satanic delusion has done in the Netherlands, and also in many other places. But what has Christianity suffered from bigotry these thirteen hundred years and more! The one is the religion of the New Testament, the other that of the dogmas of Rome. The former is peace on earth, and good will to men; for as Christ in Spirit says, "My delights were with the sons of men." What could be sweeter than this-more gracious, more softening, more likely to fill us with love to all men, especially to them that believe? The latter is unfeeling obstinacy, and inexorable cruelty; and this, be it observed, to those whom they deem in error, or unsaved; so that they become the murderers, not only of the body, but of the soul. In place of trying to convert the soul, they hurry it out of this world, proclaiming it unsaved, and only fit for the flames of hell.

Philip stands before us as the personification of the religion of bigotry-the religion of the papacy. Never was there a man more suited for the enemy's purpose than this wretched king-a cold heart, a stern and morose temperament, sullen and gloomy, with an incredibly small mind, and millions of human beings at his mercy. He died in 1598, at the age of seventy-two, after protracted and excruciating sufferings, under a complication of dreadful maladies, said to be Herod's disease.

Our only safety is to have Christ ever before us as our all-governing object; and the more stedfastly we look on Him, the more will His character be mirrored on our souls, and the more distinctly shall we reflect it to others. In looking to Him, we are enlightened; to have any other object before us is to be in darkness, and there are many shades of darkness between the blindness of popish bigotry and the clouds that arise in the Christian's heart from self-occupation. To be true witnesses of a heavenly Christ, we must be heavenly-minded, and heavenly in our ways. And heavenly-mindedness is the result, not of trying to be so, but of occupation with a heavenly Christ, according to the revelation which we have of Him, through the power of the Holy Spirit. In what direction is the eye? is always the important question, for the heart is sure to follow the eye, and the feet the heart.

The following passage may be accepted as a practical view of Christianity, both negatively and positively. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." (Tit 2:11-14)

49 French Switzerland

Chapter 49

The Reformation in French Switzerland

In tracing the silver line of God's grace, in the operations of His Spirit, we are arrested by the different forms it takes in different countries. We have just left a land where the sky was reddened with the flames of martyrdom, and the earth soaked with the blood of God's saints. Such is the history of every land where the Inquisition was established. In Germany-and where it never gained a footing-the struggle was with the princes and the imperial power; but in Switzerland the question of retaining the Romish, or adopting the Reformed faith, was not infrequently decided by vote. This mode of determining the religion of a state strikingly illustrates the popular, or republican character of the Swiss government.

In German Switzerland, the principal Reformers-Zwingle, OEcolampadius, Bullinger, Haller, Wittenbach, and others, were natives; while the agents used of God for the conversion of French-Switzerland, with a single exception, were foreigners. William Farel, a French-man, and almost single-handed, had accomplished the overthrow of popery in several French districts, before he reached Geneva or saw John Calvin. D'Aubigne speaks of Farel as the Luther of French Switzerland, and of Calvin as the Melancthon.

This remarkable man-William Farel-was born of a wealthy and noble family at Gap, in Dauphiny, in the year 1489, and diligently instructed by his pious parents in the faithful observance of the devout practices of the Romish church. Naturally sincere, upright, full of ardour, and true to his convictions, he invoked the Virgin and the saints night and day, as he has himself related. He scrupulously conformed to the fasts prescribed by the church, held the pontiff of Rome to be a god upon earth, saw in the priests the sole channel of all celestial blessings, and treated as infidels whoever did not exhibit an ardour similar to his own.*

{*Felice, p. 18.}

The Early History of William Farel

After attending school for some time in Dauphiny, he obtained the permission of his parents to finish his education at the university of Paris-said to be the mother of all learning, the true light of the church which never knew eclipse. James Lefevre, doctor of Etaples, then the most renowned doctor of the Sorbonne, was professor of divinity. His genius, piety, and learning greatly attracted the young Dauphinese. From the centre of the Sorbonne he fearlessly proclaimed, "That true religion has but one foundation, one object, one head-Jesus Christ, blessed for evermore. Let us not," he continued, "call ourselves by St. Paul, Apollos, or St. Peter. The cross of Christ alone openeth the gates of heaven, and shutteth the gates of hell." Thus, as early as 1512, the leading doctrines of the Reformation were proclaimed in the presence of the most learned of the Sorbonnists. The university was in a ferment; some applauded, some condemned; and, daily, groups of men met, most anxious to discuss the new doctrines.

But there was one amongst the listening crowds in the lecture room, whose heart the Lord had prepared for the word of life. This was William Farel. His soul was deeply agitated when he heard that salvation comes through faith of Jesus Christ alone, and that works without faith are futile. He thought of the lessons and the habits of his home; his early associations, his tender recollections, his prayers, his hopes. But the declarations of scripture had produced convictions, both deeper and firmer. In his search after truth he studied the word of God in the original tongues, light broke in upon his mind; he saw that it was Jesus only, Jesus only. "Now," he exclaimed, "everything appears to me in a new aspect; scripture is cleared up; prophecy is opened; the apostles shed a strong light upon my soul. A voice, till now unknown, the voice of Jesus, my Shepherd, my Master, my Teacher, speaks to me with power. Instead of the murderous heart of a ravening wolf, He has given me one of meekness and quietness, so great is the change that has come over me. Now my heart is entirely withdrawn from the pope, and given to Jesus Christ."

William Farel, so far as we know, was the first person who professed the Reformed religion in France, and was converted in the university at Paris, so renowned for its Romish orthodoxy. Farel and Lefevre conceived for each other the closest friendship, which lasted through life, but we shall meet with them again, when speaking of the Reformation in France. When persecuted in Paris because of their doctrines, William Brissonnet, bishop of Meaux, a pious and pure-minded man, invited them to visit him, and preach the gospel to his people. Numbers came to hear, and when they heard the preachers pressing them to give, not their money to the church, but their hearts to Christ, the surprise and excitement of the inhabitants became extreme. The priests and monks of the diocese, seeing their credit weakening, and their revenues diminishing, aroused the demon of persecution, and the preachers had to preserve their lives by a speedy flight. Farel, on quitting Meaux, went to preach in Dauphiny. "Three of his brothers," says Felice, "shared his faith. Encouraged by this success, he went preaching from town to town, and place to place. His appeals agitating the whole country, the priests sought to excite the people against him; but he was neither of an age nor of a character to be stopped by persecution; his ardour increased with the danger. Wherever there was a place to plant his foot-on the border of the rivers, on the points of the rocks, in the bed of the torrents-he found one to preach the gospel. If he was threatened, he stood firm; if surrounded, he escaped; if thrust from one spot, he reappeared in another. At last, when he saw himself environed on all sides, he retreated by mountain paths into Switzerland, and arrived at Basle in the commencement of the year 1524."

Farel's Preaching in Switzerland

Having formed an intimate friendship with Bucer, Capito, OEcolampadius, and others, which death only interrupted, he was obliged to leave Basle on account of the hostility of the Roman Catholic clergy. He proceeded to Montbeliard, where he laboured with so much zeal and success under the protection of the duke of Ulric, that within two years, the whole principality professed the new opinions; and to this day the inhabitants in general are Protestants. At Neuchatel the opposition was so violent that he remained only a short time. Aigle was the next scene of his labours. The town at that time was under the jurisdiction of Berne, and the Bernese government, being favourable to the Reformation, sent him a patent constituting him pastor of Aigle. Thus sanctioned by the powerful government of Berne, he instantly commenced preaching, to the great consternation of the monks, and the delight of many of the people who heard him. "Though he had dropped from the clouds," says history, "the priests could not have been more affrighted, nor the people more surprised. His bold look, his burning eye, his voice of thunder, his words, rapid, eloquent, and stamped with the majesty of truth, reached the conscience, and increased the number of those in the valley of Aigle, who were already prepared to take the word of God for their guide."*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 248.}

The priests, and the lower classes who followed them, raised a great tumult, being secretly supported by the Syndic. Farel was insulted in every way in their power, they refused to obey the Bernese in these matters, and were determined to maintain their ancient religion. Many, by this time however, had received the gospel, professed themselves one with Farel, and were ready to defend him. But to prevent the effusion of blood, to which matters were fast tending, Farel quietly withdrew, and preached the gospel in other places which were under the government of Berne. The question however, as usual, came to the vote, and Aigle had a majority in favour of Reform.

In the spring of 1531 Farel returned to Neuchatel, determined to complete his conquests there. Since his first visit the Reformed doctrines had made great progress among the people. The priests clamoured as usual and did all in their power to raise a tumult. They sounded the tocsin to rouse the magistrates and the people, as if an invading army had reached their gates. But many gathered round Farel, and forced him to ascend the pulpit of the cathedral in spite of all opposition. His sermon was so powerful, that all the people cried out at its close, "We will follow the Protestant religion both we and our children; and in it we will live and die." The priests and monks were furious, and sought the life of Farel. But the people, determined to have the matter lawfully settled, presented themselves before the governor and deputies of Berne, to vote on the question, whether Romanism or Protestantism should be the religion of Neuchatel. A majority of eighteen votes gave the victory to the Reformation. No one was compelled to abandon popery but the Reformation was legally established.

Such was the character of Farel's work in the French-speaking parts of Switzerland, at the foot of the Jura, and on the shores of its lakes. But this was no easy work in those days. Everywhere he met with violent opposition from the Catholics; and the mob, instigated by the priests, frequently raised tumults. This was an excuse for sounding the tocsin and ringing the alarm-bells, causing the inhabitants to rush from their houses to the scene of uproar. On such occasions it fared hard with Farel, and with those who helped him in his work. At Vallengin he was seized, beaten, struck with stones, forced into a chapel and asked to kneel before the images of the saints. On his refusing he was again beaten with such violence, that the stains of his blood were long to be traced on the walls of the chapel. He was then thrown into a dungeon, but afterwards released through the intercession of his friends at Neuchatel. At St. Blaise he met with similar treatment. He was so disfigured with bruises as scarcely to be recognized by his friends; but after some care and nursing at Morat, he set out for Orbe to evangelize.

On the other hand, those who had embraced the new opinions, were often in too great haste to destroy the symbols of the old religion. This practice generally assumed the character of popular vengeance. Churches were entered, altars dismantled, images broken, pictures torn down, priceless statues, precious relics, all fell before the fury of the multitudes. But there was no Inquisition in that primitive country, no Familiars amongst the simple people who were occupied in feeding their cattle on the mountains, or in cultivating corn and the vine within their fertile valleys; and no Alva, with his ruthless Spaniards, to slay, burn, and ravage. Their tumults generally ended without bloodshed, the Reformed generally being the stronger party.*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 3, p. 496. Scott, vol. 3, p. 70. Wylie, vol. 2, p. 247.}

Farel Reaches Geneva

But Farel had Geneva before him; he was working his way to what he considered the centre of his operations. The Genevese had been contending for some time with the duke of Savoy, and their unprincipled bishop for political freedom. And in the struggle, Berthelier, Bonevard, and Levrier, names of famous memory, suffered as martyrs of liberty. Now they were to be drawn into a fresh contest, but for a higher and holier liberty.

Farel arrived in Geneva in the autumn of 1532, accompanied by Anthony Saunier, like himself a native of Dauphiny, and recommended by letters from the government of Berne. As Geneva becomes, from this time, the second centre in Reformed Christendom, we will favour the reader with an extract from the copious pen of the historian of Protestantism as to its situation and ecclesiastical condition. "There is no grander valley in Switzerland than the basin of the Rhone, whose collected floods, confined within shining shores, form the Leman. As one looks towards sunrise, he sees on his right the majestic line of the white Alps; and on his left, the picturesque and verdant Jura. The vast space which these magnificent chains enclose is variously filled in. Its grandest feature is the lake. It is blue as the sky, and motionless as a mirror. Nestling on its shores, or dotting its remoter banks, is many a beautiful villa, many a picturesque town, almost drowned in the affluent foliage of gardens and rich vines.... Above the forests of chestnuts and pine-trees soar the great peaks as finely robed as the plains, though after a different manner-not with flowers and verdure, but with glaciers and snows.

"But this fertile and lovely land, at the time we write of, was one of the strongholds of the papacy. Cathedrals, abbacies, rich convents, and famous shrines, which attracted yearly troops of pilgrims, were thickly planted throughout the valley of the Leman. These were so many fortresses, by which Rome kept the country in subjection. In each of these fortresses was placed a numerous garrison. Priests and monks swarmed like the locust.... In Geneva alone there were nine hundred priests. In the other towns and villages around the lake, and at the foot of the Jura, they were not less numerous in proportion. Cowls and shaven crowns, frocks and veils were seen everywhere. This generation of tonsured men and veiled women formed the church. And the dues they exacted of the lay population, and the processions, chants, exorcisms, and blows which they gave them in return, were styled religion."*

{*Wylie, vol. 2, p. 256.}

Such was the moral and ecclesiastical condition of Geneva when Farel and Saunier entered it. And if we add to this account of its ecclesiastical swarms, that the population at that time numbered only about twelve thousand, we may well wonder how such a ravenous host could be sustained. But a still greater wonder is, how could an evangelist, almost single-handed, venture to assail such a host, and that on their own ground-the region of darkness and wickedness? Only through faith in the living God, we answer. Doubtless Farel was a great preacher, one of the greatest in the sixteenth century. Still he required faith in the presence of God, and in the power of His Holy Spirit through the word preached.

Farel's First Preaching in Geneva

The subject of Farel's first sermon was the Holy Scriptures; he maintained that they were the only source of divine knowledge, and the only authority on earth to which the conscience of man was subjected. He denounced the traditions of the Fathers and the decrees of Councils as having no authority over the conscience in the sight of God. His second subject was the full and free forgiveness of all sin, on the ground of the work of Christ on the cross. This pardon was free to the chief of sinners, through faith in Christ; papal pardons had to be bought with money or with penance. We can imagine the burning zeal of the preacher, placing the absolute truth of God in striking contrast with the mere superstitions of the papacy, and many through grace believing.

When the canons and priests gained information of his proceedings, they were in a state of great dismay. They had heard of his desolating work in the Pays de Vaud. He was instantly arrested and carried before the council. As usual on all such occasions, it was alleged that he was an enemy to the civil government, a trumpet of sedition. Farel replied: "That he was no instrument of sedition, but only a preacher of the truth; that he was prepared to lay down his life for the divine doctrine; that the patronage of Berne was a sufficient guarantee for his honesty; that he had a right to a public and impartial trial; and that this could not be refused him without offence to God, and to the gospel, and to the lords of Berne." This last consideration had weight with the council, as Geneva was in alliance with Berne; so Farel was dismissed with an admonition to refrain from further preaching.

But the clergy were not so easily satisfied as the town council. Farel and Saunier were summoned to appear before the episcopal tribunal, under the pretext of discussing the question in dispute. And then, indeed, William Farel at least might have perished from private violence, had not two magistrates accompanied them as deputies from the council. Some of the clergy had arms concealed under their sacerdotal robes. But Farel was undaunted, notwithstanding the unbridled fury of the clergy. He demanded that his doctrines should be heard, assailed, and defended in public disputation. This was, of course, refused. Farel, then, with great boldness defended his doctrine, concluding with these words: "I have no authority but that of God, whose messenger I am." "He hath spoken blasphemy," exclaimed one of the judges, "What further need have we of witnesses? he is guilty of death. Away with him! to the Rhone! to the Rhone! Better that the wicked Lutheran die, than live and trouble the people." "Speak the words of God," Farel quickly replied, "not the words of Caiaphas!" On which all the assembly cried aloud with one voice, "Kill the Lutheran, kill him!" They closed round the two evangelists, the priests were pulling out their arms, and both must have perished, but for the interposition of the two magistrates. They were ordered forthwith to leave the city.

But it was now too late. The Reform movement was really begun, God was working and the priests were impatient to arrest the progress of His grace. Nevertheless they were allowed to manifest the spirit of their leader. When the evangelists left the episcopal tribunal, they were with difficulty preserved from the fury of a mob of women, instigated by the priests, who would have consigned the preachers, without trial or mercy, "to the Rhone;" but as the Lord would have it, at the critical moment, a military band came up which rescued the Reformers, and escorted them to their lodgings.

It was now thought by the friends of Reform, that the preaching of Farel was too powerful and his name too formidable, to begin the work in Geneva, that he should retire for a time and that some unknown name should carry on the work, now manifestly begun, in a quieter way. Farel agreed, left the place, feeling he had done so little; but he had accomplished more than he at that moment knew. Meanwhile several other preachers had arrived, but we hear only of one Froment, or Fromentius, who turned schoolmaster, seeking to introduce his doctrines to the parents through the children and by means of classes, New Testaments, and books, which he distributed. Still the Lord was working, and a number of influential people were brought to the knowledge of the truth.

Farel Returns to Geneva

In the December of 1533 Farel re-entered the gates of Geneva, determined not again to leave it till the Reformation had been consummated there. Peter Viret, of Orbe, arrived about the same time. Thus there were three of the most powerful preachers of that period in Geneva-Farel, Viret and Froment. The internal struggle had been excited afresh by the Reformers observing the Lord's supper, according to its original institution. Some of the rich and honourable of Geneva had united with them, which caused great sensation. A fierce sedition was the consequence.

But the Catholics, still the stronger party, would listen to nothing but the complete suppression of the new movement. They assembled with the deliberate purpose of perpetrating a general massacre of the Reformers. "It is affirmed," says Waddington, "that they were conducted by no fewer than five hundred armed priests; and that they were fortified by a carte blanche from the bishop, expressing his approbation of every act that, under any circumstances, they might be led to perform against the enemies of the Catholic faith." A number of women, with their aprons filled with stones helped to swell the Roman Catholic host. The tumult was allayed, however, before much mischief was done. It happened that several merchants from Friburg were in Geneva at that moment, and seeing the Catholics brandishing swords and other weapons, they boldly interfered and prevented them from carrying out their purpose. Two days afterwards an edict of peace was issued by the Council of Sixty, which rather favoured liberty of conscience. Among other things they said, "It is forbidden to preach anything that cannot be proved from Holy Writ."

But these terms of pacification lasted but a short time. In less than six weeks the Catholics broke forth again into a still ruder commotion, attended by more serious consequences. Its instigator appears to have been Canon Werali, a man of great strength, and a great warrior. It is said that he could wield his battle-axe as he could fling about his breviary. He headed the tumult, clothed in complete armour, and brandishing a two-edged sword. After nightfall rumours of war were heard in the street, the tocsin was sounded, and according to the habits of those times, most of the inhabitants rushed into the street armed; but the darkness made it difficult to distinguish between friend and foe. In the confusion, however, the great papal champion was slain, and the Catholics dispersed. Werali being a member of a noble and powerful family of the popish canton of Friburg, that state had now a plausible pretext for interfering in the troubles of Geneva by demanding the prosecution of the murderers of her citizen, and for a general intervention in favour of the established religion. Thus were the enemies of the Reformation greatly multiplied, and fresh troubles arose through the violence of the Duke of Savoy, and the treachery of the bishop.*

{*For lengthy details, see D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation in Europe, vols. 1 and 2.}

A Public Disputation

Many eyes, from all quarters, were now turned to the small town of Geneva. Clement VII. and Charles V. were anxiously watching the struggle; but God's purpose was to bless, and He overruled all these commotions for the accomplishment of His gracious object. After a great deal of menacing and remonstrance between Berne and Friburg, the grand question came to a public disputation.

On the 30th of May, 1535, the disputants met in the grand hall of the Convent de Rive. Caroli, a doctor of the Sorbonne, and Chapius, a Dominican of Geneva, appeared as the champions of the church, while one Bernard, a newly converted Franciscan, took the lead in defence of the Reformed doctrines, supported by Farel, Viret, and Froment. Eight members of council were appointed to preside, and four secretaries were to take down all that was said on both sides. The disputation lasted four weeks. Victory, as usual on such occasions, rested with the Reformers. Indeed, it was so complete that both Caroli and Chapius acknowledged themselves vanquished, and declared, in presence of the vast assembly their conversion to the Reformed faith. Multitudes professed their faith in the truth as brought forward by the Reformers and many ecclesiastics and monks followed the stream.

But Rome's resources were not yet exhausted; she had not given up hope. The anathemas of the pope, the armed priests the furious women, had all failed; but to uphold the Catholic faith a darker deed was yet to be perpetrated. It so happened at the three ministers, Farel, Viret, and Froment, lodged in the house of Bernard, which gave a favourable opportunity to cut off the three at once by poison. A woman was induced to leave Lyons, on pretence of religion, and come to Geneva She was received into the house of Bernard as a servant Shortly after she mixed her poison with the dinner prepared for the ministers. Happily, however, Froment dined elsewhere that day, and Farel, being indisposed, did not dine but Viret tasted the drugged dish, and was brought to the point of death. He recovered, but the effects of the poison remained with him till the end of his days. The wretched woman confessed the crime, but accused a canon and a priest of having bribed her to commit the offence. They denied the accusation by oath and were released, but the poor woman was executed.

The miscarriage of this and several other cruel plots of the Catholics opened the eyes of many, and tended greatly to hasten the downfall of the Romish superstition in Geneva The feeling of the public was now in favour of Reform, but the council was disposed to check, rather than to encourage the popular zeal. At length, however, after the sense of the great majority of the citizens had been ascertained, the council of Two Hundred was assembled, and the celebration of the mass was officially suspended. This decree was followed by a general edict to the effect: "That the services of God were thenceforward to be performed according to the statutes of the gospel; and that all acts of papal idolatry were to cease altogether." Ever after that day the evangelical ministers preached with perfect freedom. The monasteries were next invaded; and there were some startling revelations of the frauds by which the people had been so long and so grossly deluded, and the vast superstition upheld.

How the Monks Deceived the People

Many of these secret machinations and impostures are too vile to be transferred to our pages; but one, which is more amusing than revolting, we may quote. A number of strange lights, or small flames of fire, would sometimes be seen moving about the churchyard at night, to the utter amazement of the people. What could they be? was the question. "These," answered the priests gravely, "are souls from purgatory. They have come to excite on their behalf the compassion of their living relatives. Will fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, not freely give of their money for prayers and masses that we may not have to return to the place of torment? was their pitiful cry." The effect of this imposture was another golden harvest to the priests. But what were these livid lights and blue flames really? They were simply a number of crabs with little bits of candle stuck on their backs, the heat of which may have propelled their movements. The enlightened public, indignant at having been so long deceived, relieved the crabs of their fiery burdens, and threw them back into the cool waters of the lake.*

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 275. Wylie. vol. 2, p. 273.}

Thus far the triumph of the Reformation was confined to the city of Geneva. The next step was to extend it to the rural clergy. Ministers were commissioned to instruct them, and to preach the new doctrines to their congregations; and so effectual was this reasonable plan, that all the dependent villagers speedily adopted the creed of the metropolis.

The Reformation Established at Lausanne

Lausanne and its territory are also to be included among the places in which the Reformation was now established. In popish times this was a city of great importance. It was the resort of pilgrims who flocked thither to pray before the image of Our Lady, and to purchase indulgences; a traffic which added greatly to the riches of the church. This city could boast, besides its bishop, a chapter of thirty-two canons, a convent of Dominicans, and another of Franciscans, and a numerous staff of priests; but, with all the provision thus made for its religious instruction and improvement, it was sunk even below the habitual ignorance, superstition, and vice of the times. Farel's first visit to Lausanne in 1529, was unsuccessful; but the current of ecclesiastical affairs had been running strongly since then in favour of Reform; and when Viret visited the place in the spring of 1536, the effect of his preaching was so great, that some images were broken by the popular indignation, amidst the clamour of priests and canons. After various negotiations between Berne and Lausanne, a public disputation was called for by the Reformers. It lasted eight successive days, and ended much the same as the one at Geneva had done. Thus the triumph of the Reformation was also complete in Lausanne.

The two chief results which generally followed these great religious changes, and which were especially pursued by the Swiss Reformers, were the purification of morality, and the advancement of education. Being much in the spirit of Old Testament saints, the most rigid laws were enacted against gambling, against blasphemous oaths, against farces, lewd songs, dances, masquerades, and against every form of intemperance. We find the enactment of such laws immediately following the triumphs of Reform in all important places. It was particularly so at Geneva. There, the citizens struck a new coin to commemorate the foundations of their Protestantism, and adopted a new civic motto-"After darkness, light."

The Arrival of Calvin in Geneva

During the August of 1536, amongst the crowds of exiles who were daily arriving at the gates of Geneva, one presented himself, a Frenchman, a native of Picardy, young, being only in his twenty-eighth year, of slender figure, and pale face; he had come to rest for the night and depart on the morrow. This man was John Calvin. But though young, and of a modest bearing, he was not without celebrity, both as a scholar and a divine, nor untried as a friend of the Reformation. He was on his way from Rome, with the intention of fixing his permanent residence at Basle or Strasburg, but the war, which was then raging between France and the Empire compelled him to take a circuitous route by Geneva. But the energetic Farel thought that the author of the Christian Institutes was just the man for Geneva, and urged him to remain. The God of all goodness, he thought, had sent him at that critical moment.

Calvin replied that his education was yet incomplete; that he required still further instruction and application before he should be qualified for so difficult a position as the state of Geneva presented, and begged to be allowed to proceed to Basle or Strasburg. On this, Farel raised his voice as with the authority of a direct messenger from God, and said, "But I declare to you on the part of God, that if you refuse to labour here along with us at the Lord's work, His curse will be upon you; since, under the pretence of your studies, it is yourself that you are seeking, rather than Him." Calvin had hitherto thought that his proper sphere was his library, and the main instrument of work his pen; but feeling overwhelmed by so authoritative a declaration of the will of God, proceeding from so illustrious an apostle of the Reformation, he did not dare to decline the yoke of the ministry evidently imposed on him by the Lord. He gave his hand to Farel, and his heart to the work of the Lord in Geneva. "He was immediately appointed professor of theology, and soon afterwards minister of one of the principal parishes. This double occupation afforded space enough for the display of his great qualities, and opened the path to that singular influence, which he afterwards acquired, both in church and state."* Here he laboured for twenty-eight years-with the exception of a brief banishment-and became the great leader in the cause of Protestantism, and the most illustrious chief of the Reformation.

{*Waddington, vol. 3, p. 278.}

The Early History of Calvin

As the celebrated French Reformer is now established at Geneva, and will be henceforth the central figure in the great Reform movement, it will be interesting to the reader to know something of his early history. He was born at Noyon in Picardy, July 10th, 1509. His parents were of moderate fortune, but much respected by the people among whom they lived. His father, Gerard, was secretary to the bishop, and was so esteemed by the neighbouring gentry, that his son John received his early education with the children of a family of rank-the Momors.

At the age of fourteen Calvin went to Paris, and had there for his Latin tutor, in the college de la Marche, the celebrated Mathurin Cordier. One of his books is still well known in some of our schools as Cordier's Colloquies. But he was more than an eminent teacher; he was a man of true piety. Having embraced the Reformed faith, he ultimately removed to Geneva, where he continued to labour as a teacher in the public college to the end of his days. He died in 1564, about six months after his distinguished pupil, at the advanced age of eighty-five.

Calvin, having fulfilled his course under Cordier, passed in 1526 to the college of Montaigu, a seminary for the training of priests. As it was the manner of those times for very young persons to hold even high ecclesiastical offices, his father solicited, and obtained for him at the age of twelve years, the chaplaincy of la Gesine, a small church in the neighbourhood. He had his crown shaven by the bishop, and although not yet admitted into priest's orders, he became a member of the clergy.

Calvin's Conversion

It is with no small interest that we trace an intimate connection between the conversion of Calvin and the Sorbonne of Paris. Lefevre, as we have already seen, was the means of Farel's conversion. It now appears that another young man was listening to the lectures about the same time, and brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. This was Peter Robert Olivetan, born at Noyon, cousin to Calvin and a few years older. It was this same Olivetan who afterwards translated the Bible into French from Lefevre's version. When his cousin arrived in Paris, he made known to him the gospel he had embraced. The young Calvin at that time was a firm Romanist, and fortified himself against his cousin's arguments by the rigid observance of all the rites of his church.

"True religion," said Olivetan, "is not that mass of ceremonies and observances which the church imposes upon its followers, and which separates souls from Christ. O my dear cousin, leave off shouting with the papists, The fathers! The doctors! The church! and listen to the prophets and apostles. Study the scriptures." "I will have none of your new doctrines," answered Calvin, "their novelty offends me. I cannot listen to you. Do you imagine that I have been trained all my life in error? No! I will strenuously resist your attacks." Olivetan put the Bible into his hands, entreating him to study the word of God.

The Reformation at that time was agitating all the schools of learning. Masters and students occupied themselves with nothing else-some, no doubt, from mere curiosity, or to throw discredit upon the Reformers and their new doctrines but there was a general awakening of conscience, and a readiness to believe the true gospel of the grace of God. Happily for Calvin he was among the latter class. The Holy Scriptures, by the blessing of God, separated him from Roman Catholicism, as they had done his cousin Olivetan.

It is supposed that Calvin was under deep exercise of soul for more than three years-from 1523 to 1527. D'Aubigne who is the best authority on this point, says, "Yet Calvin whose mind was essentially one of observation, could not be present in the midst of the great movement going on in the world, without reflecting on truth, on error, and on himself. Oftentimes, when alone, and when the voices of men had ceased to be heard, a more powerful voice spoke to his soul, and his chamber became the theatre of struggles, as fierce as those in the cell at Erfurt. Through the same tempests, both these great Reformers reached the haven of rest." But the conversion of Calvin lacks the thrilling interest which all have found in the conversion of Luther, and chiefly from the absence of details. The letters which he wrote to his father at this time, and also those of Olivetan to his friends, have not been found. Theodore Beza, his most intimate friend, says, "Calvin having been taught the true religion by one of his relations named Peter Olivetan, and having carefully read the holy books, began to hold the teaching of the Roman church in horror, and had the intention of renouncing its communion." Here it is only the intention of leaving Rome; but his own words in after life are positive: "When I was the obstinate slave of the superstitions of popery," he says, "and it seemed impossible to drag me out of the deep mire, God by a sudden conversion subdued me, and made my heart more obedient to His word."

Thus we see the various spiritual links between the Sorbonne and the first and greatest Reformers. "Fare!," says D'Aubigne, "is the pioneer of the Reformation in France and Switzerland. He rushes into the wood, hews down the giants of the forest with his axe. Calvin came after, like Melancthon, from whom he differs indeed in character, but whom he resembles in his part as theologian and organizer. These two men built up, settled, and gave laws to the territory conquered by the first two Reformers." And Beza speaks of Lefevre as the man who "boldly began the revival of the pure religion of Jesus Christ; and that from his lecture room issued many of the best men of the age and of the church."*

{*D'Aubigne's Calvin, vol. 1, chap. 7, 8. D'Aubigne's Luther, vol. 3, p. 501.}

Calvin a Student of Law

The divine light which now filled the soul of Calvin, showed him the midnight darkness of the church of Rome. That which once possessed to his mind the most dazzling splendour, the weight of antiquity, and which he believed to be the habitation of God and the very gate of heaven, was now to his newly opened eyes the temple of idols and the very gate of perdition. This we gather from the fact that he could no longer minister at her altars, and he resigned his sacred office. Happily this was with the consent of his father; and he immediately turned his attention to the study of civil law at Orleans and at Bourges. But the lessons of the law, to which he had now to listen, must have ill-suited the taste of one who had just fled from the flames of martyrdom in Paris. "It is the magistrate's duty," said his teacher, "to punish offences against religion as well as crimes against the state." "What!" he would exclaim, "shall we hang a thief who robs us of our purse, and not burn a heretic who robs us of heaven?" The effect of such a maxim on the minds of the people, when taught and amplified by the priests, would certainly destroy their sympathies, and lead them to approve of the death of heretics. Such was the teaching of Calvin and of Frenchmen at that time, and as it had an appearance of justice, and professed to be applied for the protection of the true religion, it took a firm hold of the superstitious mind, and may have left deeper traces on Calvin's own mind than he was aware of.

Calvin Gives Up the Study of Civil Law

When at Bourges Calvin seems to have abandoned the study of the law, and turned again to the church as he now saw it in the holy scriptures. He applied himself to the study of the Greek language, and also to Hebrew and Syriac, in order to the better understanding of the Old Testament, for theology was still the favorite object of his attention. He was also most willing to make known the truth to others in which he now believed and delighted. Listeners flocked around him, and the solitude he loved became impossible to him. "As for me," he says, "inasmuch as being naturally diffident and retiring, I have always preferred repose and tranquillity; I began to seek for some hiding-place, and means of withdrawing myself from the world, but, so far from obtaining my wish, every retreat and every secluded spot were to me so many public schools." But he was not of those who are silent on what they believe. He preached in the secret meetings at Bourges and at Paris. Theodore Beza says "He advanced wonderfully the cause of God in many families, teaching the truth not with an affected language, to which he was always opposed, but with a depth of knowledge and so much gravity of speech, that no man heard him without being filled with admiration."

Calvin once more ventured to Paris. He had fondly hoped that France might be the sphere, and Paris the centre of his work; but the violence of the persecution compelled him to conceal both himself and his intentions. He was now about twenty-four years of age, and full of zeal and activity. One of his friends, Nicholas Cop, son of a citizen of Basle, who was first physician to the king, and rector of the university of Paris, had to deliver an oration according to custom on All Saints' Day. What an opportunity, suggested Calvin to his friend Cop, of having the gospel preached in the most public of all the pulpits of Christendom! But, Cop feeling unequal to the task of composing such an address, it was agreed that Calvin should write and that Cop should read the oration. On the 1st of November, 1533, in the midst of the learned men of Paris, the rector delivered his address to a silent and surprised audience. Calvin had forgotten to say anything about the saints, though it was "All Saints' Day," but extolled the grace of God as man's only hope of pardon and salvation through the precious sacrifice of Christ.

When the assembly rose, the storm burst forth. It was denounced as treason against the saints, and a blow struck at the very foundations of Rome. But Cop was the king's first physician and a great favourite; what was to be done? He was denounced by the Sorbonne to the parliament, and to the executioner of heretics. Cop saw his danger in time, fled to Basle, and so escaped the flames of martyrdom. Cop was gone, but his friend Calvin was suspected of being the real author of the oration. The lieutenant-criminal, the notorious John Morin, had orders to apprehend him. While sitting safely, as he thought, in his obscurity, a fellow-student rushed into his chamber, begging him to flee that instant; the sergeants were at the outer gate. Dropping from the window by means of a sheet, he escaped; and under the name of Charles Heppeville, clothed in a peasant's dress, with a garden hoe on his shoulder, he reached Angouleme, and was received into the house of the Canon Louis du Tillet, where he stayed for some time, and had a rich library at his service.

The Institutes Published

Calvin was already occupied with his great work on the christian religion, and may have collected some of his materials from Du Tillet's library. But being in peril of his life, he removed to Basle, the city of refuge for the French exiles at that time. Here he completed and published the most celebrated of all his writings, the Institutes of the Christian Religion. The work appeared in the month of August, 1535.

"This was the first theological and literary monument of the French Reformation," says Felice. "Spreading abroad in the schools, the castles of the gentry, the houses of the burghers, even the workshops of the people, the Institutes became the most powerful of preachers. Round this book the Reformers arrayed themselves as round a standard. They found in it everything-doctrine, discipline, ecclesiastical organization; and the apologist of the masters became the legislator of their children." In his dedicatory epistle to Francis I., he supplicated the king to examine the confession of faith of the Reformers, so that, beholding them to be in accordance with the Bible, he might treat them no longer as heretics. "It is your duty, sire," he says to the king, "to close neither your understanding nor your heart against so just a defence, especially when the question is of such high import, namely, how the glory of God shall be maintained on earth .... a matter worthy of your ears, worthy of your jurisdiction, worthy of your royal throne." But there is too good reason to believe that the king never deigned to read the preface to the Institutes.

Calvin was now the acknowledged leader of the French Reformation. Luther was too distant; Farel was too ardent; but Calvin had the solid character and the lively sympathies suited to the French. He paid a visit about this time to the justly celebrated Renee of France, daughter of Louis XII., and duchess of Ferrara, one of the first provinces of Italy that received the Reformation. Like her cousin, Margaret of Valois, she had embraced the true gospel, and became the patroness of the persecuted Reformers in Italy, for which she afterwards suffered severe persecution though she was the daughter of a king. This visit established a friendship which was never interrupted: we find Calvin addressing a letter to her when on his death-bed.*

{*Dr. McCrie gives many interesting details of this amiable and accomplished princess in his History of the Reformation in Italy.}

In 1536 Calvin was appointed pastor and professor at Geneva. The religious, moral, intellectual, and even political revolution he brought into that city with him, is beyond the limits of our "Short Papers." His life and labours have been often written. We will notice that which enters into the plan of this history.

Calvin soon found that it was no easy post that he was called to occupy. The people were just emerging from a state of ignorance, superstition, and immorality, in which the city had been sunk for ages; and the corruption of her "nine hundred" priests, had no doubt produced its own likeness in the manners of the citizens. But all laxity of morals, and all amusements which had that tendency, were sharply and sternly rebuked by Calvin and Farel both publicly and privately. They were not only the avowed enemies of the least vestige of popery, but they were strict disciplinarians. The majority of the people were not yet prepared for such self-denial. They had fought hard to cast off the yoke of Rome and the yoke of the Duke of Savoy, and they were determined to resist what they thought the hardest yoke of all-to give up all their pleasures and live according to a rigid ecclesiastical discipline. Even many of those who had outwardly embraced the Reformation doctrines were not in heart prepared for Calvin's system. His idea was to treat the state as a theocracy and compel the citizens to conform to the law of God, under the threatened judgments of the Old Testament.

Calvin and Farel Banished from Geneva

The Reformed ministers, as might have been expected, were soon involved in stormy contests with their congregations. They were evidently mistaken in seeking to bind a people, who had been accustomed to live according to their own pleasure, to so rigid a system, without sufficient moral training and preparation of heart by the grace of God. Immediately after his settlement at Geneva, Calvin drew up a "Formulary of Christian Doctrine and Discipline," and set himself with the other ministers to induce the citizens at large, in their popular assembly, to abjure popery, and swear to observe the scheme of doctrine and order thus prepared for them. Many objecting to do this, troubles arose, party spirit began to run high; but as the ministers were unyielding, it resulted in their refusing to celebrate the Lord's supper among the people; and the citizens, on their part, resolved to banish the ministers, and forbade them the use of their pulpits.

In the year 1538, the two banished ministers, with sad hearts, left the city on which they had bestowed much labour; but, as they have not informed us, we will not conjecture their feelings as they turned their backs upon Geneva. Farel went to Neufchatel, where he had formerly laboured, and where he remained till the end of his days. He there succeeded in establishing the system of discipline which was opposed in Geneva; and sought to serve the Lord and His church with all diligence till the year 1565, when he fell asleep in Jesus at the advanced age of seventy-six.

Calvin at Strasburg - His Work and Marriage

Calvin proceeded to Basle and thence to Strasburg, to which he had been earnestly invited by the pastors of that city, Bucer and Capitol He was immediately appointed a professor of divinity, and pastor of a congregation composed of French refugees. Nothing could speak more solemnly of the fierceness of the persecution which was at that time raging in France than the fact that about fifteen thousand French exiles gathered around Calvin to hear the gospel in their native tongue. And if fifteen thousand were found in Strasburg alone, what numbers besides must have fled to England, Germany, and other places! Here Calvin laboured in preaching and writing for three years. The advanced state of society, a more polished congregation than the one he had left in Geneva, suited his taste, and was as balm to his wounded heart. He republished his Institutes, much enlarged, wrote his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, and a treatise on the Lord's supper.

So happy was the stern severe disciplinarian in Strasburg, that he consented to marry if his friends could find for him a suitable wife. The first lady that was named was of noble birth and richly dowered; but Calvin objected to marry one above his own degree, still, if the lady would consent to learn the French language, he would give his final answer; but this the lady refused to do, and that was the end of the first nomination. Another lady was proposed, and Calvin, in this case, made certain advances himself, but, happily, he discovered in time sufficient reasons for not going farther. At last, by the advice of his friend Bucer, he married Idolette de Bure, a widow of deep piety and christian courage. The reader will readily recall and contrast the impulsive, hasty, and unseasonable marriage of Luther, with the matrimonial negotiations of Calvin, so characteristic of the two great Reformers.*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 303.}

Calvin's Return to Geneva

But while Calvin was thus happily employed at Strasburg, everything was falling into great disorder, both political and religious on the banks of the Leman. The libertines, Anabaptists, and papists, now that the stern Reformers were gone, became riotous and ungovernable, while some of the magistrates, who had made themselves leaders in the violent proceeding against the ministers, came to a most tragic end. These troubles and these judgments, led the people to believe that they had sinned against God in banishing His faithful ministers, and to cry aloud for their return. The council of two hundred resolved in 1540, "in order that the honour and glory of God may be promoted, to seek all possible means to have Master Calvin back as preacher." And it was ordered in the general council, or assembly of the people, "to send to Strasburg to fetch Master Jean Calvinus, who is very learned, to be minister in this city."

Besides these assurances of a warm welcome, an honourable deputation was sent to him from the council to solicit his return. But the very thought of going back to Geneva greatly troubled him. He dreaded the coarse rough abuse which he had received from his rude opponents-especially the libertines. And was he again to leave his peaceful and happy situation in Strasburg, and plunge into that sea of troubles. Yet he wished to do the will of the Lord and to follow His guidance. Besides his official invitations, he had letters from private christian friends urging him to return. One of them, pressing his return, assures him "that he will find the Genevese a new people-become such by the grace of God, and through the instrumentality of Viret." The pastors of Zurich also pressed his return, urging the vast importance of the situation of Geneva, as situated on the confines of Germany, Italy, and France.

At length he consented to return, but in real subjection of heart to what he believed to be the will of his Lord and master. "There is no place under heaven," he said, "that I more dread than Geneva, yet I would decline nothing that might be for the welfare of that church." And writing to Farel, informing him of his decision, he says, "Since I remember that I am not my own, nor at my own disposal, I give myself up, tied bound, as a sacrifice to God." His departure took place on the 13th of September, 1541. A mounted herald from Geneva rode before him, and the proceedings which accompanied his reception were highly honourable to all parties concerned.*

{*Scott's History, vol. 3, p. 200. D'Aubigne's Calvin, vol. 6, chaps. 15-17. Wylie's Protestantism, vol. 2, chap. 14.}

Calvin and Servetus

The condemnation and death of Michael Servetus, the arch-heretic, at Geneva, have always been spoken of, both by Romish and Protestant writers, as a deep stain on the otherwise unsullied reputation of the great Reformer. But, in judging of Calvin's connection with this melancholy affair we must bear in mind the mighty difference between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Many of the leading Reformers, both in Germany and Switzerland, believed it a duty to punish heresy with death. Yet notwithstanding these considerations, Calvin's conduct in the matter must be utterly condemned by every enlightened Christian. And we are apt to wonder, in the nineteenth century, why such a student of scripture did not see the grace which shines throughout the New Testament. The Christian is saved by grace, stands in grace, and ought, surely, to be the witness of grace in an evil world. Besides, we have the example and teaching of our Lord, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." And in his sermon on the Mount, he thus teaches his disciples-"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.... Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect:" which simply means, Be ye perfect according to the perfect pattern of grace which is here shown by your heavenly Father.

But, strange to say, Calvin not only overlooked all such scriptures, but considered "Nebuchadnezzar as highly honoured in scripture for denouncing capital punishment against any who should blaspheme the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and doubts not that, had a pious and zealous christian magistrate been at hand, St. Paul would willingly have delivered over Hymenaeus and Alexander to him, to receive the chastisement they deserved." But while charity is ready to grant that these were more the errors of the age than of the man, we must bear in mind, that unless we have Christ before us as our example and rule of life, we shall not be effectually delivered from such legal thoughts in any age. Moses and Elias must disappear, and Jesus be found alone. If we say that we abide in Him, we ought also to walk even as He walked.

The Character and Execution of Servetus

Michael Servetus was a Spaniard, born in the same year with Calvin; of an active, vigorous mind; capable of applying himself to various pursuits; but, unfortunately, too speculative in divine things. He had studied medicine, law, and theology, in the latter, he was led away by a daring, self-confident spirit, into the wildest extravagances of pantheism, materialism, and a virulent opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity. But under all this heresy, like the Anabaptists-the celestial prophets-he was seditious and revolutionary. Such men generally aim at the overthrow of existing governments, as well as Christianity. This was the great sin, and the real cause of the persecution of the Anabaptists in those days. They followed the Reformers into every country, and sought to upset their work by affirming that they only went half way, and that Christians-like themselves-should rule the state as well as the church-that the time was come for the saints to take the kingdoms of this world.

Just before Servetus came to Geneva, he had escaped from the prison at Vienna, where he had been confined for the publication of an offensive and blasphemous work, and where he was afterwards burned in effigy, with five bales of his books. Calvin, who knew him well, and had exposed his heresies years before this affair at Vienna, is represented as saying, "If Servetus came to Geneva, and his influence could prevent it he should not go away alive." Servetus did come, and Calvin informed the council of his arrival, and drew up the articles of indictment from his writings, which led to his condemnation and death. These charges he was required by the council to retract, deny, explain, or defend, as he should see good. For this preparation he was allowed all the time he demanded. But in place of conciliating enemies, or making friends by a spirit of sobriety and moderation when he made his defence he conducted himself in the most insolent manner. He gave to Calvin the lie direct over and over again, and called him by such names as "Simon the sorcerer." Particulars of this case were sent to several other states for an opinion, and it was said, "With one consent they all pronounced that he has revived the impious errors with which Satan of old disturbed the church; and is a monster not to be endured." With these concurring opinions, and the council of Geneva being unanimous, he was condemned to be led to Champel, and there burned alive.

The wretched man, up to the last, showed no signs of repentance, but the most dreadful fear of death. When Calvin heard the sentence, he was greatly affected, and interceded with the council, not that Servetus might be spared, but that his sentence might be mitigated; he prayed that the sword might be substituted for the fire-decapitation for burning. But this was refused; and on 27th of October, 1553, he was led to the summit of Champel, where the stake had been fixed. At the first glare of the flames, it is said, Servetus gave a shriek so terrible, that it made the crowd fall back and was heard at a great distance. His books were burned with him, but the fire burned slowly, and he lived half-an-hour at the stake.*

{*See the original records of the trial of Servetus before the "Little Council of Geneva," discovered by M. Albert Rilliet, and published in 1844, with a short treatise on the subject, translated from the French, by Dr. Tweedie. The production of these records, though at this late hour, will go far to soften public opinion as to Calvin's share in the death of Servetus.}

Calvin's Work

In the midst of the many conflicts in which Calvin was engaged, he was unwearied in his pastoral labours, and in his endeavours to expose and to counteract errors both in church and state, and to diffuse light and truth in all the churches. "Through the fame and the influence of this distinguished theologian, the Geneva church rapidly increased in numbers, and was looked upon as the centre of the Reformed cause. At his suggestion a college was established by the senate in 1558, in which he and Theodore Beza, along with others of great erudition and high talents, were the teachers. This seat of learning soon acquired so great fame that students resorted to it from England, Scotland, France, Italy, and Germany, in pursuit of sacred as well as secular learning." By this means, the principles of the Reformation spread widely over the various countries of Europe. "To John Calvin the Protestant churches must ever owe a deep debt of gratitude, and, among Presbyterians in particular, his memory will be embalmed, as having given to their system of church polity the weight of his influence and name." Along with this beautiful notice from "Faiths of the World," we are bound to add a line from the very solid Mr. Fry, an episcopalian historian: "Geneva soon sunk in estimation with the church of England, because of the countenance she gave to the Presbyterian form of church government, and of the violent attack by some of her divines upon the ancient episcopal government, which was still retained with considerable splendour in England and in Ireland."-Page 487.

The published works of Calvin are most voluminous. The Geneva edition amounted to twelve volumes, folio. The Amsterdam edition-said to be the best-by using larger paper, and printing closer, was reduced to nine volumes. A translation has also been published by the "Calvin Society," in fifty-four volumes octavo. These contain his commentaries, expository lectures, miscellaneous pieces, the Institutes, and the author's correspondence. The commentaries, no doubt, have formed the foundation on which the young divines of the Calvin school, from that day until now, have built up their studies, and in this respect, who can speak of the greatness or the effects of his work? But besides these works that have come down to us, we must bear in mind that a considerable amount of time is spent with such public men in seeing visitors from all parts of the world. Then there is the daily public ministration of the word, and public business of every kind. His advice or counsel by letter, for the help of other churches, is also expected. "When we think of his letters," says one of his admirers, "written on the affairs of greatest weight, addressed to the first men of position and intellect in Europe; so numerous are they, that it might have been supposed he wrote letters and did nothing besides. When we turn to his commentaries, so voluminous, so solid, and so impregnated with the spirituality, and fire, and fragrance of the divine word, again, it would seem as if we had before us the labours of a lifetime."*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 346.}

Calvin and Calvinism

Whether we agree with the doctrinal teaching of Calvin, and the style in which he treated some of his subjects, we must give him full credit for zeal, devotedness, and industry. In a feeble and sickly body, and in a comparatively short lifetime he accomplished a great work. It is to be feared, however, that some of his extreme statements, and his harsh language as to "reprobation," and "the reprobate," unsanctioned, we believe, by scripture, have done much harm to many precious souls. "But the fact, I believe is," says Scott, "that there was a coldness and hardness about Calvin's mind, which led him sometimes to regard as objects of mere intellect those things which could not but deeply move the feelings of minds differently constituted; and hence, I cannot but concur, he did not duly appreciate the effect of the language he was using upon other persons. And to these extreme statements and this obnoxious language, I must think, is to be traced a considerable portion of that storm of obloquy and odium which has not ceased to beat upon the head of Calvin and Calvinism to this day."*

{*Vol. 3, chap. 26.}

The Closing Days of Calvin

But, though we may not be able to follow the learned theologian in his vast researches, or to receive the doctrines which he taught, we shall feel that he is of one heart and one mind with us, as we gather around his death-bed. His old and faithful friend, Farel, hearing of the serious illness of Calvin, wrote to say he must come and see him. He was then seventy-five, and in feeble health. Calvin wishing to save him the fatiguing journey, immediately dictated the following brief and affectionate reply: "Farewell, my best and most faithful brother; and, since it is God's pleasure that you should survive me in this world, live in the constant remembrance of our union, which, in so far as it was useful to the church of God, will still bear for us abiding fruit in heaven. Do not expose yourself to fatigue for my sake. I respire with difficulty, and continually expect my breath to fail me; but it is enough for me that I live and die in Christ, who to His people in life and death is gain. Once more, farewell to thee, and to all the brethren, thy colleagues.-Geneva, May 2nd, 1564."

The good old man, however, a few days afterwards, came to Geneva, and spent a little time with his friend in his sick-chamber; but history has not recorded what passed between them. Unlike Luther, who was always surrounded with admiring friends, who immediately chronicled all he said or did, and thereby gave a dramatic character to every incident of his life; we know nothing of the homely, familiar social life of Calvin, which greatly detracts from the interest of one who is made a central figure.

Having seen the members of the senate, and the ministers under the jurisdiction of Geneva, and having faithfully and affectionately addressed them, he felt that his work was done. The remainder of his days he passed in almost perpetual prayer. As he was repeating the words of the apostle, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be ...." without being able to finish, he breathed his last, May 27th, 1564.

"He lived," says Beza, "fifty-four years, ten months, and seventeen days; half of which time he passed in the sacred ministry. His stature was of a middle size, his complexion dark and pale, his eyes brilliant even unto death, expressing the acuteness of his understanding. He lived nearly without sleep. His power of memory was almost incredible; and his judgment so sound, that his decisions often seemed oracular. In his words he was sparing, and he despised an artificial eloquence; yet was he an accomplished writer, and, by the accuracy of his mind, and his practice in dictating to an amanuensis, he attained to speak little differently from what he would have written.... Having given with good faith the history of his life and of his death, after sixteen years' observation of him, I feel myself warranted to declare that in him was proposed to all men an illustrious example of the life and death of a Christian, so that it will be found as difficult to emulate as it is easy to calumniate him."*

{*Beza's narrative, quoted by Scott, vol. 3, p. 485.}

50 Reformation in France

Chapter 50

The Reformation in France

The history of the Reformation in France awakens, as we approach it, the most mingled feelings. The wonderful progress of the truth in that gay, frivolous, and dissolute kingdom, creates the deepest interest, gratitude, and admiration, while the enemies' opposition and triumph fill the heart with deepest sorrow. It was then a great nation, and early blessed with the doctrines of the Reformation. Four years before the voice of Luther or Zwingle was heard, the university of Paris had been convulsed by the proclamation of a free salvation to the chief of sinners, through faith in Christ without works of human merit. The doctrine of the Reformation was not, therefore, imported from Germany or Switzerland, but was the native fruit of French soil. We cannot but lament that a kingdom so great, so central, so intelligent, did not throw off the papal yoke like England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, and the half of Germany. But dearly she has had to pay in her periodical revolutions for the rejection of the light. The two elements, the gospel of the grace of God, and the superstitions of Rome, strove mightily with each other, and produced the most violent struggles and the most tragic scenes that history has recorded.

The awakening of souls by divine grace, to the importance of the truth, evidently commenced, as we have already seen, by means of James Lefevre, then nearly seventy years of age, and his youthful convert, William Farel. Then came Olivetan; and he, in his turn, was the means of leading Calvin to the knowledge of Jesus. In the commentary published by Lefevre, as early as 1512, he says, "It is God who gives us, by faith, that righteousness, which by grace alone justifies to eternal life." These few words-as in the case of Luther when he discovered the great truth-"The just shall live by faith"-show us plainly that the doctor of the Sorbonne, as well as the monk of Erfurt, was taught of God, that divine light had filled his own soul, and that this heavenly ray was sufficient to illumine the souls of others. And thus we find it. While Lefevre was sowing the seed of eternal life in his lecture room, Farel, now fully emancipated from the superstitions of Rome, and well instructed in the gospel of Christ, was preaching outside with great boldness. "Young and resolute," says Felice, "he caused the public places to resound with his voice of thunder;" and being now master of arts, he had the privilege of lecturing in the celebrated college of the cardinal Lemoine, one of the four principal colleges of the theological faculty in Paris, equal in rank to the Sorbonne. Other young evangelists were also engaged in preaching the gospel and circulating the truth.

The priests and the doctors of the Sorbonne became greatly alarmed for the interests of holy mother church; and the university issued a formal declaration condemnatory of the new opinions. But before going farther in the order of events, it may be well to notice the entrance upon the scene of three persons, on whose will the destinies of France henceforth depended; namely, Francis I., Margaret, his sister, and their mother, Louisa of Savoy, countess of Angouleme.

The good king Louis XII., styled the father of his people, died on the 1st of January, 1515. No sovereign of France had before been so honoured and loved; his death struck consternation into all hearts. When his funeral passed along the streets to the cathedral of Notre Dame, the public criers headed the procession, ringing their bells, and proclaiming in a voice almost inaudible through tears, "Le bon roi Louis, pere du peuple, est mort"-"the good king Louis, the Father of his people, is dead." Judging from circumstances, had the Reformation taken place during his reign, the whole of France might have become protestant; but his successor was a prince of a widely different character.

On the 25th of January, 1515, Francis of Angouleme, duke of Valois and cousin to the king, was crowned at Rheims with great display. He was of tall stature, handsome in person, possessed of every accomplishment as a cavalier and a soldier, but of dissolute character, and following rashly wherever his passions led him. His education, however, under de Boisy, his tutor, had not been neglected, so that he was considered the most learned prince in France, and greatly honoured literature and learned men. His queen, Claude, is little spoken of, but his sister Margaret, afterwards queen of Navarre, always occupies a prominent place. She was his senior by two years, had great influence over her brother, and being early converted, and amongst the first to embrace the Reformed doctrines, she often sheltered the persecuted, and succeeded in moving the king's heart to clemency. But state policy, his pretended zeal for the church, and the influence of the parliament and the Sorbonne, frequently proved stronger than his sister's love. Like her brother, she was tall, extremely beautiful, fascinating in her manners, and possessed of a great mind and ability, both natural and acquired. But after her conversion, all her powers, due allowance being made for the times and her position, were consecrated to the Lord and His people.

In the history of these remarkable persons, we have an instructive and an important illustration of the effect of grace and truth on the heart and in the life. They were the only children of Louisa, who was only twenty years old when she became a widow. Her daughter Margaret had not attained her fourth year; while the infant Francis had just completed his fifteenth month. Brave of heart, highly gifted and strong in the consciousness of duty, Louisa applied herself in every possible way to the responsibilities of her position. Her two cherished children became the objects of her affection and of her unceasing care, for which she was fully repaid in after life by the devotion of her children; though, morally, they pursued such widely different paths. But we must now return to the more direct line of our history.

First-Fruits of the Reformation

Meaux was the first city in France that heard the doctrines of the Reformation publicly expounded, and where the firstfruits of the gospel were gathered. About twenty-five miles east of Paris, and not far distant from the then Flemish frontier; it was a place full of working people-mechanics, wool-carders, fullers, cloth-makers, and artisans. The bishop of the place, William Brissonnet, a man of high rank, being count of Montbrun, became a convert to the new doctrines. Being a man of noble family, and of imposing address, he had been twice sent ambassador of Francis I. to the Holy See; but he returned to Paris less a son of the church than he had been before going. He may, like Luther, have had his eyes opened to the dazzling wickedness of Rome, and to the utter hollowness of her gorgeous ceremonies.

On his return from his diplomatic missions, he was astonished to find the interest which had been awakened, and the change which had been wrought by the preaching of the new doctrines. The universities were full of debate and tumult on the subject, and the hearts of the artisans in his own diocese were greatly moved by the tidings of the gospel which had reached them. This was in 1521, four years after Luther had affixed his thesis to the door of his cathedral, and the very year in which he appeared before the Diet of Worms. The proximity of Meaux to Flanders, and the similarity of its trade to that of the larger Flemish towns occasioned a degree of intercourse between them, which doubtless contributed to the spread of the new opinions.

The bishop, evidently a pious, humble, but timid man, sought an interview with Lefevre, that he might be better instructed in the new doctrines. The aged doctor placed the Bible in the prelate's hands, assuring him that it was the Bible, and the Bible only, which ever leads the soul back to the truth as it was in the beginning of the gospel of Christ. Before there were schools, sects, ceremonies, or traditions, the truth was the means, and the Holy Spirit the power, of salvation. He searched the scriptures with great diligence; and, with the Lord's blessing, they became a source of great happiness to him. Writing to Margaret, over whom he exercised a wholesome influence, he says, "The savour of divine food is so sweet, that it renders the mind insatiable; the more one tastes, the more one desires it. What vessel is able to receive the exceeding fulness of this inexhaustible sweetness?"*

{*Freer's History of Margaret, vol. 1, p. 98; D'Aubigne, vol. 3, 509; Smiles' History of the Huguenots, p. 18.}

The Conversion of Margaret

Many of the eminent men who composed the court of Francis at this time, and who enjoy the confidence of the king, were favourably disposed towards the doctrines of Lefevre and the bishop. They were literary men whom Francis and Margaret had already encouraged and protected from the attacks of the Sorbonne, which regarded the study of Hebrew and Greek as the most pernicious of heresies. Francis, who loved learning, invited into his states learned men, thinking says Erasmus, "in this manner to adorn and illustrate his age in a more magnificent manner than he could have done by trophies, pyramids, or by the most pompous structures." For a time he was carried away by the influence of his sister, by Brissonnet, and the learned men of his court. He would often be present at the conversations of the learned, listening with delight to their discussions. It was then that he prepared the way for the word of God by founding Hebrew and Greek Professorships.

But there is one thing to be borne in mind respecting the favour shown by many learned men to the idea of Reform, at that time. They, no doubt, felt the power and the truth of the doctrines set forth by the Reformers, but were not prepared to separate from the communion of the church of Rome. They felt and owned the need of Reform, and hoped that Rome and her priesthood would take the lead in the needed Reformation, and in this way have their hopes realized. But there was one in that brilliant circle whose convictions were deeper; whose conscience was at work, and who was diligently reading the New Testament in the Greek tongue. Such was the gifted Margaret of Angouleme. But she was unhappy; she was sad at heart amidst the gaieties of the court. Francis was passionately fond of his sister whom he always called his "darling," and Margaret was not less devoted in affection to her brother. They had grown up together, wandered in the fields and gardens together as children, and for a time their lives and tastes were one. But the time was come when they must be parted-parted morally at least.

The time, too, when this moral divergence took place, made it the more trying. Her grace and beauty made her the ornament of her brother's court, and he wished her to be always at his side. "Francis," says Wylie, "after wavering some time between the gospel and Rome, between the pleasures of the world and the joys that are eternal, made at last his choice, but, alas! on the opposite side to that of his lovely and accomplished sister. Casting in his lot with Rome, and staking crown and kingdom and salvation upon the issue, he gave battle to the Reformation." The mother alas! followed her son in all the intrigues and dissimulation of state policy. She exercised the most unbounded influence over the king, and some of the calamities of France are attributed to her unjustifiable policy. He constituted her regent of France, during his absence on his Italian campaign, to the great mortification of his parliament.

Margaret, through divine grace, was led, chiefly by means of Brissonnet, to clearer and fuller views of the gospel, and to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. This took place about the year 1521, just as the persecution was beginning to burst forth, and many of the persecuted found within her gates a shelter which a merciful providence had provided against the evil days that were at hand.

The influence of Margaret's conversion was felt among the high personages of the court, and the literary circles of the capital. The surprise was great, and all talked of the king's sister embracing the new opinions. Those who sought to arrest the work of the Lord sought the ruin of Margaret. She was denounced to the king, but he pretended to think it was untrue. Meanwhile, says Brantome, "she was very kind, mild, gracious, charitable, affable, a great almsgiver, despising nobody, and winning all hearts by her excellent qualities." The heart loves to dwell on such an instance of the rich sovereign grace of God, in the midst of the corruption and frivolities of the court of Francis. But God would have His witnesses and light-bearers even in the palace in the morning of the Reformation. The dear young Christian, however, was severely tried. Her struggles between conscience and what was expected of her were great and frequent. "The timid heart of the princess," says D'Aubigne, "trembled before the anger of the king. She was constantly wavering between her brother and her Saviour, and could not resolve to sacrifice either.... However, such as she is, she is a pleasing character on the page of history. Neither Germany nor England present her parallel." Her light, we have no doubt, was often clouded and her testimony silenced by the angry looks of the king, as he manifested his hatred of the Reformation, and of the friends whom Margaret loved. But the Lord was with her though her feminine character may have sometimes drawn her into the shade.

The Reformation of Brissonnet

The courtly bishop was a constant and welcome guest at the palace. It was there he put the Bible into the hands of Margaret, and the friendship he enjoyed with Francis gave him many opportunities of spreading the new doctrines among the philosophers and scholars whom that monarch loved to assemble around him. And being a bishop,~and in such favour at court, he had many listeners, and it may be to this period, and to such conversions as Brissonnet and Margaret, that we should trace the inclination of so many French nobles to embrace Protestantism. But the king and a large majority of the people remained faithful to Rome, and many of the nobility, intimidated by her threakenings and martyrdoms, hesitated, drew back, until at length their convictions waned in their minds, and left them captives to the darkness from which they lacked the moral courage to extricate themselves.*

{*Freer's History of Margaret, vol. 1, p. 97.}

Brissonnet, now full of zeal for the Reformation of the church, determined to set the. example by reforming his own diocese. On his return from Paris to Meaux, he inquired into the lives and doctrines of the preachers, and discovered that nearly all the pulpits were filled with Franciscan monks, while the deans the incumbents, vicars, and curates, spent their time in idleness and their revenues in Paris. He ascertained that throughout his diocese there were scarcely ten resident priests, and out of one hundred and twenty-seven curates, there were only fourteen whom the.bishop could approve of, or permit to officiate in his diocese. Then the bishop, turning towards men, who did not belong to his clergy, called around him, not only his old friend Lefevre, but Farel, D'Arvande, Roussel, and Francis Vatable. Thus the light of the gospel was gradually withdrawn from Paris where God in His sovereign grace had kindled its earliest sparks; and thither the persecutors were determined to follow, but as yet the tempest is forbidden to burst. The Reformers must be protected by the hand of a divine providence until their work is more complete.*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 3, p. 532; Freer, vol. 1, p. 98.}

The Bible in French at Meaux

Like our English Wycliffe, the aged Lefevre greatly desired that every man in France should have the privilege of reading the holy scriptures in his mother tongue. For this he laboured, and with the assistance of Brissonnet the four Gospels in French were published in October, 1522, the remaining books of the New Testament soon followed, and in October, 1524, a complete edition of the New Testament was published at Meaux. There the great fountain of light was first introduced which placed the work on a solid basis, and there the first Protestant congregation publicly assembled.

The pious bishop greatly furthered this good work by his wealth and his zeal. The word of God was speedily and widely circulated, the poor were supplied gratis. Never did a prelate devote his income to nobler purposes, and never did a seed time promise to bear a more glorious harvest. The preachers transferred from Paris to Meaux, and finding themselves unfettered, were acting with great liberty, while the word of God was diligently read in the homes and workshops of the people. The effect was sudden and great. Divine light had taken the place of papal darkness. The new book became the theme of their constant conversation, for while they handled their spindles and their combs, they could talk to each other of some fresh discovery they had made in the Gospels or the Epistles, and so the villagers in the vineyards, when the meal-hours came, one read aloud while the others gathered round him. "There was engendered in many," says a chronicler of that day, "an ardent desire for knowing the way of salvation, so that artisans, fullers, and wool-combers took no other recreation, as they worked with their hands, than to talk with each other of the word of God, and to comfort themselves with the same. Sundays and holidays especially were devoted to the reading of scripture, and inquiring into the good pleasure of the Lord."

The following quotation from a Catholic historian, though hostile, bears witness to the positive influence of the word of God on the people. "Lefevre, aided by the renown of his great learning contrived so to cajole and circumvent Messire Brissonnet with his plausible talk, that he caused him to tum aside grievously, so that it has been impossible to this day to free the city and diocese of Meaux from that pestilent doctrine, where it has so marvellously increased. The misleading that good bishop was a great injury, as until then he had been so devoted to God and to the Virgin Mary."*

{*Quoted by D'Aubigne, vol. 3, p. 544.}

The Blessed Effects of the Word of God

These simple people soon became better instructed than their former teachers, the Franciscan monks. Christianity had taken the place of superstition, and the word of God had revealed Christ to their souls as the sun and centre of divine light. They now saw that praying to the saints is idolatry; that Christ is the only Mediator between God and man, and that the throne of grace is open to all. Meaux had thus become a focus of light; tidings of the great work spread through France, so that it became a proverb with reference to anyone noted for the new opinions that "he had drunk at the well of Meaux."

The preaching of the new ministers was for a time confined to private assemblies, but as the number of their hearers increased, they gained courage and ascended the public pulpits. The bishop preached in his turn; he entreated his flock to lend no ear to those who would tum them aside from the word of God; even if an angel from heaven were to preach another gospel, be sure you do not listen to him. Lefevre, energetically expounding the word on one occasion, exclaimed, "Kings, princes, nobles, peoples, all nations should think and aspire after Christ alone! .... Come near, ye pontiffs, come ye kings, come ye generous hearts! .... Nations awake to the light of the gospel, and inhale the heavenly life. The word of God is all-sufficient!" And this, henceforth became the motto of that school: THE WORD OF GOD IS ALL-SUFFICIENT.

Thus the ray of light which we have seen shining through the darkness of prejudice about the year 1512, when Lefevre proclaimed from the tribune of the popish Sorbonne the futility of works without faith, declared the one Mediator between God and man; and boldly denounced the idolatry of those who invocated, and offered prayers to the Virgin and the saints. That divine ray was not suffered to become extinct. Four nearly twelve years it has been expanding until, like a beacon in the surrounding gloom, it is showing thousands and tens of thousands the way of life and peace, and how to avoid the ways of death and hell.*

{*Freer, vol. 1, p. 70.}

Commencement of Persecution in France

We must now look at the other side of the picture. If the young flock of Meaux was peacefully feeding on the green pastures under the bishop's care, the monks, who cared little for the green pastures of the gospel, were losing their influence and their revenues, and the begging friars were returning home from their rounds with empty wallets. "These new teachers are heretics," said they; "and they attack the holiest of observances, and deny the most sacred mysteries." Then, growing bolder, the most incensed among them proceeded to the palace. On being admitted they said to the prelate, "Crush this heresy, or else the pestilence, which is already desolating the city of Meaux, will spread over the whole kingdom." Brissonnet was moved, and for a moment disturbed by the audacious monks, but did not give way. Yet admirable as were the piety and zeal of the bishop, he was of a timid and temporizing nature when danger assailed him. He lacked the firmness and constancy of spirit which enables some men, in days of persecution, to yield life rather than conscience and truth; and so he fell, yielding truth and conscience, and saving his life and liberty.

The monks, enraged at their unfavourable reception by the bishop, determined to lay their complaints before a higher tribunal. They hastened to Paris, and denounced the bishop before the Sorbonne and the parliament. "The city of Meaux," said they, "and all the neighbourhood, are infected with heresy, and its polluted waters flow from the episcopal palace." Thus was the cry of heresy raised, and France soon heard the cry raised of persecution against the gospel. The notorious Syndic, Noel Beda, eagerly listened. War was his native element. Shortly before the accession of Francis to the throne, he had been elected the head of the Sorbonne; so that he felt bound to wage war against any assertion or dogma at variance with the philosophy of the schools, or the articles of the Romish faith. "He eagerly dissected the writings of the Refommers," says Miss Freer, "to drag forth their errors, and exhibit them in triumph to the hostile Sorbonnists. His fiery oratory raged against the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages; and Paris and the university rang again with the angry protests of the irascible Syndic. His expressions of fanatic joy at the prospect of the war he was about to wage, caused a thrill of horror to pervade the university. No one dare pronounce himself, when the cruel scrutiny of Beda might detect heresy, where none but himself even dreamed that it existed." Such was the man that the timid Brissonnet had to face, along with others of a like spirit. "In a single Beda," Erasmus used to say, "there are three thousand monks."

The defeat of Pavia, where the flower of the French nobility fell, and where the knightly monarch was made the prisoner of Charles V., and carried to Madrid, made Louisa, the king's mother, Regent of France.* This augured badly for the Reformers; for she inherited the Savoy enmity to the gospel, and had become the leader of a licentious gallantry, which not only polluted the court of her son, but proved a great hindrance to the spread of the pure gospel.

{*For a brief but graphic description of this memorable engagement, which Wylie truly calls the "Flodden of France," see Freer's History of Margaret, vol. l, p. 153.}

Brissonnet Accused of Heresy

As regent, she proposed the following question to the Sorbonne: "By what means can the damnable doctrines of Luther be chased and extirpated from this most christian kingdom?" The answer was brief, but emphatic-"By the stake." And it was added, that if the remedy was not soon put in force, there would result great damage to the honour of the king, and of Madame Louisa of Savoy. Thus it was, according to a usual hollow pretence to uphold the throne, maintain the laws and order, that the authorities were compelled to unsheath the sword of persecution. The parliament was convoked. Brissonnet was summoned to appear. Beda and the monks of Meaux carried on the prosecution against the bishop and his friends, the Reformers, with unflagging vindictiveness. He was accused of holding Lutheran doctrines. The French edition of the New Testament, the joint labour of Brissonnet and Lefevre, was vehemently denounced; especially Lefevre's preface, addressed "to all christian readers." Beda had extracted from this address, and other works published at Meaux, forty-eight propositions which were declared by the faculty of theology to be heretical.

Brissonnet now saw what was before him; he must abandon the new doctrines, or go to prison, perhaps to the stake. He had not the courage necessary for resistance. Naturally timid, the menaces of Beda terrified him. Besides, he was persuaded by his friends to concede as much as would satisfy Rome, and then carry on the work of the Reformation in a less open way. He had also the powerful protection of Margaret to count upon, who was at this moment at St. Germain. But alas! he was not prepared to bear the scorn of the world, leave the church of Rome, and give up his riches and his station for the truth's sake. At last the power of present things prevailed, and he yielded to the terms of the Sorbonne. He accordingly issued, in October, 1523, his episcopal mandates. 1. To restore public prayers to the Virgin and the saints. 2. To forbid anyone to buy, borrow, read, possess, or carry about with him, Luther's works. 3. Not only to interdict the pulpits to Lefevre, Farel, and their companions, but to expel them from the diocese of Meaux. In addition to these stipulations, he had to pay a fine of two hundred livres.

What a blow this first fall of their kind and munificent friend must have been to both ministers and people! The flocks scattered, and the shepherds with heavy hearts turning their backs upon Meaux. Lefevre found his way to Nerac, where he terminated his career, under the protection of Margaret, at the advanced age of ninety-two. Farel escaped to Switzerland, where we have seen him happily engaged in the Lord's work. Gerard Roussel contributed to the progress of the Reformation in the kingdom of Navarre. The members of the church were, by persecution, dispersed throughout France; the rest of the flock, too poor to flee, had to abide the brunt of the tempest.*

{*Wylie's Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 141. D'Aubigné, vol. 3, chap. 7. Freer's History of Margaret, vol. 1, p. 134. Fry's History, p. 356.}

The First Martyrs of France

Brissonnet fallen, Lefevre and his friends compelled to flee, the Reformed church at Meaux dispersed, the monks again in the pulpits; this was a beginning of victory! But Rome was not satisfied, and never was, without the blood of the saints. "The sacerdotal and the civil power, the Sorbonne and the parliament, had grasped their arms - arms that were soon to be stained with blood. They set to work again; and blood, since it must be so, was ere long to gratify the fanaticism of Rome." The Christians at Meaux, though left without a shepherd, continued to meet in some private place for the reading of the word and prayer. One of their number, John Leclerc, a wool-comber, was so well instructed in the word, that he was soon regarded as one whom the Lord had raised up to strengthen and encourage them. True, he had neither received a college education, nor the imposition of hands, but he had the credentials of heaven, and took the oversight of the flock which the learned bishop had deserted.

Leclerc began well. He visited from house to house instructing and confirming the disciples; but his spirit was stirred within him, as he witnessed the monks so jubilant over their victory. Could he have overthrown the whole edifice of popery, and filled France with the truth of the gospel, the desire of his heart would have been answered. But like many others of a similar spirit in those times, his zeal carried him beyond the limits of prudence. He wrote a proclamation, styling the pope the Antichrist, predicting the downfall of his kingdom, and that the Lord was about to destroy it by the breath of His mouth. He then boldly posted his "placards" on the gates of the cathedral. Presently, all was in confusion. Priests, monks, and citizens gathered before the placards. Leclerc was suspected, seized, and thrown into prison. His trial was finished in a few days. The wool-comber was condemned to be whipped three days successively through the city, and branded on the forehead. He was led through the streets with his hands tied, and his neck bare, and the executioners willingly fulfilling their office. A great crowd followed, the papists yelled with rage; his friends showed him every mark of their tender compassion. When the brand of infamy was imprinted on his forehead with a hot iron, one woman drew near the martyr, with his bleeding back and burning brow, and sought to encourage him - she was his mother. Faith and maternal love struggled in her heart. At length, faith triumphed, and she exclaimed with a loud voice, 'Glory to Jesus Christ and His witnesses." The crowd, so thrilled with her emotional voice, made way for her to return home unmolested, while her son was banished from Meaux.

Leclerc found his way to Metz, where the Reformation had made some progress. Though with the brand of heretic on his brow, his zeal was unabated, his courage unabashed, and his prudence as greatly at fault. One of the great festivals of the place was approaching. A little way outside the gates of the city stood a chapel, containing images of the Virgin, and of the most celebrated saints of the province, and whither all the inhabitants of Metz were in the habit of making a pilgrimage on a certain day in the year, to worship these gods of stone, and to obtain the pardon of their sins. The pious and courageous soul of Leclerc was violently agitated. Tomorrow, he thought, the whole city, that should worship the one living and only true God, will be bowing down before these blocks of wood and stone. Without consulting the leading brethren there, he stole out of the city before the gates were closed, and sat down before the images in great conflict of mind. The passage in Exodus 23, "Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images," he believed, was now brought home to his conscience by the Spirit of the Lord, and, as Beza says "impelled by a divine afflatus," he broke down the images and indignantly scattered their fragments before the altar. At daybreak he re-entered Metz.

In a few hours, all were in motion in the ancient city of Metz. Bells were ringing, the population assembling, banners flying, and all, headed by canons, priests, and monks, moved on amidst burning tapers and smoking incense, to the chapel of Our Lady. But, suddenly, all the instruments of music were silent, and the whole multitude filled with indescribable agitation, as they saw the heads, arms, and legs of their deities strewn over the area where they had expected to worship them.

The Martyrdom of Leclerc

The branded heretic was suspected. Death, death to the impious wretch was the cry, and all returned in haste and disorder to Metz. Leclerc was seized. He admitted his crime, and prayed the deluded people to worship God only. When led before his judges, he boldly confessed his faith in Christ, God manifest in the flesh, and declared that He alone should be adored. He was sentenced to be burnt alive, and immediately dragged to the place of execution. His persecutors contrived to render his punishment most fearful and appalling. He beheld the terrible preparation of his torture, but he was calm, firm, and unmoved as he heard the wild yells of monks and the people; and through the marvellous grace and power of God, no sign of weakness marred the glory of his sacrifice. They began by cutting off his right hand; then tearing his flesh with red-hot pincers; they concluded by burning his breasts. While his enemies were in this way wearying themselves by their new inventions of torture, Leclerc's mind was at rest. He recited solemnly, and in a loud voice, the words of the psalmist: "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throats. They that make them are like unto them, so is every one that trusteth in them. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: He is their help and their shield." (Psa 115:4-9) After these tortures, Leclerc was burnt by a slow fire. Such was the death of the first martyr of the gospel in France.*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 3, p. 582.}

But the priests of Metz were not satisfied with the blood of the poor wool-comber. Dean Chatelain had embraced the Reform doctrines, and could not be shaken from the faith. He was denounced before the cardinal of Lorraine, stripped of his priestly vestments, and in a layman's dress, handed over to the secular power, which condemned him to be burnt alive: and soon the minister of Christ was consumed in the flames. But the effect of these tragedies, as might have been expected, was to cause Lutheranism to spread through the whole district of Metz. "The beholders," says a chronicler "were astonished; nor were they untouched by compassion and not a few retired from the sad scenes to confess the gospel for which they had seen the martyrs, with so serene and noble a fortitude, lay down their lives."

Reflections on the Fall of Brissonnet

It is difficult to leave the ashes of Leclerc without a mournful thought of the poor bishop. If Leclerc is to be condemned for his indiscretion, he must be admired for his courage. But what of Brissonnet? Having many friends at court, he saved his mitre, his palace, and his riches; but at the cost of conscience, truth, and a crown of life. "What Brissonnet's reflections may have been," says Wylie, "as he saw one after another of his former flock go to the stake, and from the stake to heaven, we shall not venture to guess. May there not have been moments when he felt as if the mitre which he had saved at so great a cost, was burning his brow, and that even yet he must needs arise and leave his palace with all its honours, and by the way of the dungeon and the stake, rejoin the members of his former flock who had preceded him, by this same road, and inherit with them honours and joys, higher far than any the pope or the king of France had to bestow. But whatever he felt, and whatever at times may have been his secret resolutions, we know that his thoughts and purposes never ripened into acts."

Humanly speaking, we are disposed to attribute the fall of Brissonnet to a natural weakness of character, the deceitfulness of riches, and the influence of plausible friends. His case was conducted with closed doors before a commission, so that it is unknown to what extent he renounced the faith he had preached, and laboured to diffuse with a zeal apparently so ardent and so sincere. He remained in communion with Rome till his death-which happened a few years after his recantation-and contrived so to live, that there should be no more question about his orthodoxy.

By judging of such cases in the present day, there are many things to consider. They were just emerging from the darkness, superstitions, and indescribable wickedness of popery. Men of pure and pious minds, such as Brissonnet really was, saw the great need of Reform, and honestly wished to promote it, although they may not have contemplated a complete secession from her communion. The idea of separation as taught by our Lord in John 17, where He gives the disciples His own place of rejection on earth, and His own place of acceptance in heaven, formed no part in the teaching of those early times. Luther, a man of deep convictions and strong faith, was never really separated in spirit from the idolatry of Rome. He was no image-breaker, and his doctrine of the sacraments contradicted the truth he preached.

The heavenly relations of the Christian and the church not being seen, there was very little separating truth in the teaching of the early Reformers. It was chiefly doctrinal; comparatively little for the heart. The dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the saints individually, and in the assembly as the house of God, and the hope of the Lord's return, were overlooked by the Reformers in the sixteenth century. So that we must make great allowance, and not think too hardly of some who hesitated, or even drew back for a time, when they saw the stake; and, on the other hand, we must admire the grace of God which triumphed in many who knew very little truth. The Holy Spirit was their teacher, and they knew what was necessary to their own salvation and the glory of God.

The Conversion and Faith of Louis Berquin

One of the most illustrious victims of those early times was Louis Berquin, a gentleman of Artois, and an officer of the king's body-guard. "He would have been another Luther for France," says Beza, "if he had found in Francis another Elector of Saxony." Unlike the knights of his time, acquainted only with the helmet and the sword, he was learned, contemplative, frank, open-hearted, and generous to the poor. He had acquired a great reputation at the court of Francis; and, being sheltered by the powerful patronage of his royal master, he studied diligently the works of the Reformers, and soon became one of the most zealous of their converts. His conversion, through the grace of God, proved to be genuine. His learning, his eloquence, his influence, were from that hour all consecrated to the service of the gospel. Many looked to him as the Reformer of his native land. His leisure hours were spent in translating the works of Luther Melancthon, and Erasmus into French, and writing tracts on the leading doctrines of the christian faith, which he privately printed himself.

This heretic, thought Beda, is worse than Luther, but so unobtrusive was this christian knight, that it was difficult to find a charge on which to found an indictment of heresy. Spies were now employed. A rigorous watch was kept over every word uttered by Berquin. At length witnesses were found to prove that he had asserted it was heretical to invoke the Virgin Mary instead of the Holy Spirit before the sermon in the mass. This was enough; the Syndic, obtaining authority from the parliament to search the dwelling of Berquin made a forcible seizure of his books and papers, which he laid before the faculty of theology. These were condemned as having a heretical tendency, and Berquin was thrown into prison. "This one," said the sanguinary Beda, "shall not escape us, like Brissonnet and Lefevre." He was kept in solitary confinement, preparatory to his formal trial and certain condemnation to the stake.

Margaret, who had ever professed admiration of Berquin's talents, and had distinguished him by marks of her regard was immediately informed of his fate, and asked to interest herself in his favour. With the unhappy case of her friend Brissonnet before her, and dreading to see Berquin dragged to the stake, she wrote to her brother. She represented to the king the insolence of the Sorbonne in daring to arrest one of his officers upon so frivolous a pretence, without having first ascertained his royal pleasure. The suggestion touched the pride of Francis who broke out into violent transports of passion, menaced the parliament, and sent an order for the instant liberation of his officer. A second time he was imprisoned, and again the king came to his rescue, advising him to be more prudent. But his strong convictions of duty, as a witness for Christ, could not be suppressed. He laboured to spread the truth among the poor in the country, and among his friends in the city, and at the court. But the burning desire of his heart was to communicate his convictions to all France. A third time he was imprisoned, and the Sorbonne thought that this time they had made sure of their prey. The king was a prisoner at Madrid; Louisa was all-powerful at Paris, and along with Duprat, the unprincipled chancellor supported the persecutors. But no: Margaret's word again prevailed with her impulsive brother, and a royal order dated April 1st, 1526, commanded the suspension of the matter until the king's return.

When again at liberty, his lukewarm friends entreated him to avoid giving offence to the doctors who had evidently marked him for destruction. Erasmus, in particular, who, having learned that he was about to publish a translation of one of his Latin works with the addition of notes, wrote to him letter upon letter to persuade him to desist. "Leave these hornets alone," he said, "above all, do not mix me up in these things; my burden is already heavy enough. If it is your pleasure to dispute, be it so; as for me, I have no desire of the kind." Again he wrote, "Ask for an embassy to some foreign country, travel in Germany. You know Beda and his familiars, a thousand-headed hydra is shooting out its venom on all sides. The name of your enemies is Legion. Were your cause better than that of Jesus Christ, they will not let you go until they have brought you to a cruel end. Do not trust in the protection of the king. But in any case do not commit me with the faculty of theology." This letter, so characteristic of the timid philosopher, who always steered a middle course between the gospel and popery, only redoubled the courage of Berquin. He determined to stand no longer on the defensive, but to attack. He set to work, and extracted from the writings of Beda and his brethren, twelve propositions which he accused before Francis of being false, contrary to the Bible, and heretical.

The Sorbonnists were confounded. The outcry was tremendous. What! even the defenders of the faith, the pillars of the church, taxed with heresy by a Lutheran, who had deserved death a thousand times.* The king, however, not sorry to have an opportunity of humbling these turbulent doctors, commanded them to condemn or to establish the twelve propositions from scripture. This might have been a difficult task for the doctors, the matter was assuming a grave turn, when an accident occurred which turned everything in favour of the Sorbonne. An image of the Virgin happened to be mutilated just at that moment in one of the quarters of Paris. "It is a vast plot," cried the priests; "it is a great conspiracy against religion, against the prince, against the order and tranquillity of the country! All laws will be overthrown; all dignities abolished: this is the fruit of the doctrines preached by Berquin!" At the cries of the Sorbonne, the priests, the parliament, and of the people, the king himself was greatly excited. Death to the image-breakers! No quarter to the heretics! And Berquin is in prison a fourth time.

{*Felice, p. 26.}

The Sentence of the Sorbonne, and the Martyrdom of Berquin

A commission of twelve, delegated by the parliament, condemned him to make a public abjuration, then remain in prison without books, pen or paper, for the rest of his life after having had his tongue pierced with a hot iron. "I appeal to the king," exclaimed Berquin. "If you do not submit to our sentence," replied one of the judges, "we will find means to stop your appeals for ever. " "I would rather die, " said Berquin, "than only approve by my silence that the truth is thus condemned." "Let him then be strangled and burned upon the place de Greve!" said the judges with one voice. But it was deemed advisable to delay the execution till Francis was absent; for it was feared lest his lingering affection for his favorite and loyal servant might be awakened, and that he might order Berquin's release a fourth time.

A week's delay was craved in the execution of the sentence. "Not a day," said Beda; "let him be put to death at once." That same day, April 22nd, 1529, Berquin was led forth to die. Six hundred soldiers and a vast stream of spectators escorted him to the place of execution. Erasmus, on the testimony of an eyewitness, thus describes his appearance. "He showed no sign of depression. You would have said, that he was in his library pursuing his studies, or in a temple meditating on things divine. When the executioner, with husky voice, read to him his sentence, he never changed countenance. He alighted from the cart with a firm step. But his was not the stoical indifference of the hardened criminal, it was the serenity, the peace of a good conscience." As a peer of France, he was dressed according to his dignity: "he wore a cloak of velvet, a doublet of satin and damask, and golden hose;" there was no sign of mourning, but rather as if he were to appear at court; though not the court of Francis, but the court of heaven.

Wishing to make known the Saviour to the poor people around him, Berquin tried to speak to them, but he could not be heard. The monks gave the signal, and instantly, the clamour of voices, and the clash of arms, prevented the sacred words of the dying martyr being heard. But his death spoke to all France, and that, in a voice which no clamours could silence. The fire had done its work, and where had stood the noble of France and the humble Christian, there was now a heap of ashes. "Berquin's stake was to be, in some good measure, to France, what Ridley's was to England-'a candle which by God's grace, would not be put out, but would shine through all that realm.'"*

{*Wylie, vol. 2, p. 162; D'Aubigne's Calvin, vol. 2, p. 56; Felice, p. 27.}

The Rapid Spread of the Reform Doctrines

The two examples of martyrdom which we have given-one from the humbler and one from the higher ranks of life-may be considered as types of a vast crowd of others. Our limited space prevents us from recording the patient sufferings and the triumphant death of many noble witnesses for Christ. But notwithstanding the violence of the persecution the converts were more numerous than ever. The fame of Francis I. as showing favour to men of learning, and having, through the influence of his sister, invited Melancthon to take up his residence in Paris, led many of the Reformers in Germany and Switzerland to visit France and help on the good work of the Lord. In this way the writings of Luther, Zwingle, and others, found an entrance into that country, were extensively read, and the new opinions made rapid progress among all classes of the people. Here and there missionaries of the Reformation arose, congregations were formed, and from time to time, one and another, torn from the prayer-meeting or the scripture reading, went to seal his faith with his blood.

But in 1533 better days seemed to dawn on the Reformation. The queen-mother, Louisa of Savoy, one of its bitterest persecutors, had just died. Francis had made an alliance with the Protestants of the Smalcald league, and the influence of Margaret had thence increased. Taking advantage of this favourable moment, she opened the pulpits of Paris to Roussel, Courault, and Bertault, who leaned towards the Reformed doctrines. The bishop, John du Bellay, offered no opposition. The churches were crowded; Beda and the doctors of the Sorbonne tried to raise the people, but were prevented. Meanwhile Francis returned to Paris from Marseilles, where he had an interview with Clement VII. for the marriage of his son Henry with Catherine de Medici. His renewed friendship with the pope, Catherine's uncle, strongly bent his mind against the heretics. Many of them were cast into prison, and the three suspected ministers interdicted from preaching.

Such was Francis I., on whose humour so much depended. On the important subject of religion he had never come to a decision; he neither knew what he was nor what he wished. Still, from his natural hatred of the monks, and the powerful influence of his sister, he had hitherto favoured the Reformers. But an incident, for which the latter were much to blame, took place about this time, which ended the many struggles between Margaret and her brother as to the conduct to be pursued towards the Reformers, and also put an end to the king's vacillation.

Many of the Reformers were led, or rather misled, to depend upon the favour of the court for the furtherance of the gospel, and proposed to proceed moderately, desiring to do nothing that might offend. These were called Temporizers. The other party, called the Scripturalists, thought that they should place no dependence on the favour of princes, but boldly preach the gospel and resist everything that might bring back the superstitions of Rome. The young church of France being thus divided, they agreed to consult their old teachers, Farel and the other exiles. A young Christian, by name Feret, accepted the mission and proceeded to Switzerland. Scarcely had he crossed the Jura when a spectacle, so different from Paris, met his eye. In the towns and villages the altars were being demolished, the idols cast down, and all idolatry removed from public worship. This, as we have already seen was the work of Farel, Viret, Saunier, Olivetan Froment, and others. But France was altogether different. A powerful prince and a haughty priesthood were there to contend with a mere handful of Reformers.

"These medleys of the gospel and popery," said the Swiss evangelists, "can never exist together, any more than fire and water." They recommended bold measures. A vigorous blow must be struck at that which is the citidel of the papal empire. The mass must be abolished. "If the papal hierarchy was the tree whose deadly shade killed the living seeds of the word, the mass was its root." The writing and posting of placards all over France was proposed.

The Year of the Placards

At length the evangelical protest was written. Farel has been commonly credited with the authorship. Historians vie with each other in describing the violence of its style. "Indignation guided his daring pen," says one. "It was a torrent of scathing fire;" says another. "It was a thunderbolt, fierce terrific, and grand, resembling one of those tempests that gather in awful darkness on the summits of those mountains amid which the document was written, and finally explode in flashes which irradiate the whole heavens, and in volleys of sound which shake the plains over which the awful reverberations are rolled."*

{*Wylie, vol. 2; D'Aubigné's Calvin, vol. 3; Felice, p. 35; Freer, vol. 2, p. 138.}

When the placards reached Paris, many of the Christians thought the style too bitter and violent, but the majority were in favour of their publication. A night was fixed, October 18th, 1534, for the work to be done all over France. The eventful night came, and the venerable walls of the university of Paris, the public buildings of the capital, the church doors, and the Sorbonne itself were covered with placards. The movement was simultaneous throughout France. The placard was headed in large letters-"True articles on the horrible, great and intolerable abuses of the popish mass, invented in direct opposition to the holy supper of our Lord and only Mediator and Saviour Jesus Christ." Popes, cardinals, bishops, monks, and every distinguishing tenet of the Romish faith were attacked with sharpest invectives. The long placard-which occupies over five pages in D'Aubigné's history-thus concludes, "In fine, truth has deserted them, truth threatens them, truth chases them, truth fills them with fear; by all which shall their reign be shortly destroyed for ever."

No language can describe the one universal cry of rage and consternation which resounded throughout France on the morning of the 19th. The people gathered in groups around the placards. The priests and monks kindled the rage. The Lutherans, it was said, had laid a frightful plot for burning the churches, firing the town, and massacring every one; and the whole multitude shouted, Death! death to the heretics! The king at the time was living at the Chateau de Blois. A placard was pasted-no doubt by the hand of an enemy-on the very door of the king's apartment. Montmorency and the Cardinal de Tournon drew the king's attention to the paper. The prince was greatly agitated, he grew pale and speechless. He saw therein an insult, not only against his authority, but against his person, and these enemies of the Reformation- Montmorency and Tournon-so fixed this notion in his mind, that in his wrath he exclaimed, "Let all be seized, and let Lutheranism be totally exterminated." The members of the faculties also demanded that by a general auto-de-fe the daring blasphemy might be avenged.

Now it was that the storm, long held back by a good providence, burst forth in awful fury. The king was fully committed to the system of persecution. But, making every allowance for the times, the Reformers were not free from blame. Would the apostles have written and posted such placards? We have no standard of action, no guide but the word of God. Yet there can be only one feeling towards the sufferers-that of tenderest compassion. Orders were immediately issued by the king to seize the Sacramentarians, dead or alive. By the help of a traitor, their houses were pointed out and all were in a short time seized and thrown into prison. The criminal officer having entered the house of one, named Bartholomew Millon, a cripple, wholly helpless in body, said to him, "Come, get thee up." "Alas! sir," said the poor paralytic, "it must be a greater master than thee to raise me up." The sergeants carried him out, but so full of peace and holy courage was Bartholomew, that his companions in captivity grew firm through his exhortations. Formerly, when lifted by his friends, he felt pain in every limb, but the Lord in great mercy took that sensitiveness away, so that in prison he used to say, "the roughest handling seemed tender."

The Executions

The trial of the Lutherans was soon over, and the executions began. An expiation was required for the purification of France, and the heretics must be offered in sacrifice. The burning piles were distributed over all the quarters of Paris and the executions followed on successive days. Millon was the first. The turnkey entered his cell, lifted him in his arms, and placed him on a tumbril-a cart. The procession then took its course towards the Place de Greve. Passing his father's house, he smiled, bidding adieu to his old home, as one in sight of that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. "Lower the flames," said the officer in command, "the sentence says he is to be burnt at a slow fire." He had to be lifted and flung into the flames, but he bore his lingering tortures as if miraculously sustained. Only words of peace, with great sweetness of spirit, dropped from his lips, while his soul, ransomed by the precious blood of Jesus, ascended on angels' wings to the paradise of God.

A long list of names follows. Du Bourg, of the Rue St. Denis, Calvin's friend, was the next; and many persons of distinction suffered at that time, and many, having warning, made their escape.

While these tumultuous scenes were convulsing the capital, Margaret was residing at her castle of Nerac. The news filled her with dismay. Her enemies, now that they had the ear of the king, laboured to inflame his mind against her. In times past, the slightest reflection on the reputation of his beloved sister would have been instantly and vehemently silenced by Francis. But now, in his gloomy state of mind, he listened to the representations of his ministers. It was insinuated to the king, that "if he had a mind to extirpate the heretics out of his kingdom, he must begin by his court and his nearest relations." Margaret was summoned to Paris. She immediately obeyed, confident in the integrity of her intentions, the love of her brother, and fearless of the hostile theologians, whom she neither dreaded nor respected. For the first time, perhaps, in his life, Francis received Margaret at the Louvre with cold severity, and reproached her for the evils which her support of heresy had brought on his kingdom. Margaret wept, but she concealed her tears from her angry brother. She gently expostulated with him, and soon found that bigotry had not quite extinguished his love for her. She became bolder, and ventured to suggest that it was the intolerance of the fanatical party that had filled the kingdom with discord. She was as grieved about the placards as he was, but felt sure that none of the ministers whom she knew had any hand in their publication.

Without entering into particulars, we need only further add, that her entreaties obtained the liberation of the three preachers-Roussel, Berthault, and Couralt; and that the king's countenance was changed towards those who had maligned the motives of his sister. Her presence in Paris, for a time, hindered the designs of the persecutors; but as Francis was determined to command a public procession through the streets of Paris to cleanse away the pollution of the placards, she petitioned the king to permit her departure into Beam, which he reluctantly granted.

The Procession and Martyrdoms

On the 21st of January, 1535, the "peace offering" procession marched through the most public streets of Paris in gloomy majesty, and striking awe into the hearts of all beholders. The houses along the line of procession were hung with mourning drapery. All the religious orders of Paris took part in the procession, bearing aloft the sacred relics possessed by their respective convents-the head of St. Louis, the patron saint of France, a piece of the true cross, the real crown of thorns, a holy nail, and also the spear-head which had pierced the side of our Lord. On no former occasion had so many relics been paraded in the streets of Paris. The cardinals, archbishops, and bishops followed, wearing their robes and mitres. They immediately preceded the host, which was borne by the bishop of Paris, under a canopy of crimson velvet, supported by the dauphin, the dukes of Orleans, of Angouleme, and of Vendome. Around the holy sacrament marched two hundred gentlemen of the king's household, each bearing a torch. The king followed on foot with his head bare, carrying a burning torch of white virgin-wax, surrounded by his children and the princes of the blood royal. Afterwards came a countless throng of all the noblemen of the court, princes, ambassadors, and foreigners, each carrying a flaming torch. In front of their houses stood the burgesses with lighted tapers, who sank on their knees as the holy sacrament passed them. But the end of the procession was not yet; it still moved on in mournful silence; the guilds of the capital, the municipality, the officers of the courts, the Swiss guards, the choristers of the royal chapels-amounting to several thousand persons, and every individual carrying a lighted taper. This was the comedy of the fanatical frenzy of the king, the tragedy was to follow, "to implore the mercy of the Redeemer for the insult offered to the sacrifice of the mass."

Having marched from the church of the Louvre to Notre Dame, the king seated himself on a throne, and then pronounced a harangue against the new opinions, as violent as thought could suggest, or words express. "If my arm were infected with this pestilence," he said, "I would cut it off. If one of my children were so wretched as to favour this new Reform, and to wish to make profession of it, I would sacrifice him myself to the justice of God, and to my own justice." From declamation he proceeded to action. The same day six Lutherans were burned alive. The most courageous had their tongues cut out, lest they should offer a word of exhortation to the people, or be heard praying to God. They were suspended on a moveable gibbet, which, rising and falling by turns, plunged them into the fire, where they were left a few moments, then raised into the air, and again plunged into the flames; and this continued until the ropes that fastened them to the beam were consumed; then, for the last time, they fell amid the burning faggots, and in a few moments their souls ascended, as in a chariot of fire, to the bright realms of unmingled and eternal blessedness.

Retributive Justice

The epoch of persecution and martyrdom was now solemnly inaugurated in France. The 21st of January must be a date of evil omen in that land of revolutions. Two hundred and fifty-eight years after Francis had devoted to death the humble followers of Christ, one of the simplest and most generous of the Bourbons was condemned to death by misguided and furious men, and received his death-blow on the twenty-first of January, 1793. The sight must have been beyond all conception pitiful. The poor king, Louis XVI., unlike the martyrs of his predecessors, who laid down their lives willingly for Jesus' sake, was dragged by his gaolers to the block, and held down by force till the axe gleamed in the air, and his head rolled on the scaffold. But there is a third 21st of January, and the most humiliating of the three to the pride of France. It is said that Paris resolved to capitulate to the victorious Germans on the 21st of January, 1871. The coincidence of these dates is most striking and suggestive but we offer no comments, those who have studied history aright, will surely believe in a just and retributive providence. But God gives none account of His ways; or, as the psalmist says, "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters and Thy footsteps are not known." (Psa 77:19)

Felice, the historian of the Protestants of France, observes with reference to this dismal day, "that it marks an important date in our history, for it was from this moment that the Parisian populace took part in the contest against the heretics; and once mounted on the stage, they never quitted it until the end of the league. In the chain of events this procession, intermingled with executions, was the first of the bloody days of the sixteenth century, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Barricades, the murder of Henry III. and the assassination of Henry IV., could but follow"-p. 36.

The Protestant princes of Germany, justly indignant when they heard of the cruelties of Francis, threatened to ally themselves against him with the house of Austria. Fearing a breach, he sent in the following spring an ambassador to Smalcald. His excuse was that of all persecutors in every age-"seditious tendency." Those whom he had put to death were men of a rebellious spirit, sacramentarians, and not Lutherans. He even professed a strong desire for better information respecting their doctrines, in order, no doubt, to effect a reconciliation with the league of Smalcald, and requested that one of their most eminent divines might be sent to his court. He attempted to induce Melancthon to take up his abode in Paris; but his double dealings and hypocrisies availed little: Melancthon refused, and the Smalcald league objected to an alliance with the persecutor of their brethren.

The gloomy determination, which had now taken possession of Francis to crush heresy, decided Margaret to leave Paris. She retired to her own little kingdom of Bearn, an ancient province of France. Her court became the asylum of the celebrated men who escaped from persecution. "Many refugee families brought their industry and their fortunes. Everything assumed a new face. The laws were corrected, the arts cultivated, agriculture was improved, schools were established, and the people were prepared to receive the teaching of the Reformation. In a short time, the foundations were laid of that remarkable prosperity which made the little kingdom in the Pyrenees resemble an oasis amid the desert which France and Spain were now beginning to become."*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 212.}

Margaret, the pious queen of Navarre, died, 1549; and was deeply lamented by the Bearnais, who loved to repeat her generous saying, "Kings and princes are not the lords and masters of their inferiors, but only ministers whom God has set up to serve and to keep them." She was the mother of Jeanne d'Albret, one of the most illustrious women in history, and grandmother of Henry IV.

51 Progress of the Reformation

Chapter 51

The Great Progress of the Reformation

Towards the end of the reign of Francis, and under that of his son, Henry II., the Reform movement made such rapid progress, that it becomes utterly impossible in our "Short Papers" to follow it in all its details. We can do little more than give a mere outline of the principal events from the death of Francis I. till the massacre on the eve of St. Bartholomew.

Francis lived and died as kings generally do. He commenced his reign with great splendour, but closed it in darkness and dismal forebodings. When he ascended the throne all was brilliant and loyal; he was surrounded by a vast assemblage of gallant knights, and with few exceptions, chieftains of the princely aristocracy of France; and the noblest ladies of the realm were in attendance on their gentle mistress, queen Claude, or, rather, as the female ornaments of his court. But how different when he descended from the throne to the grave! The luxury of his court, its chivalry, its festivals, its pageants, which were once the admiration of Europe, afford him no comfort now. In excruciating agonies of body from the life he had led, and in deep anguish of soul from what had been done by his orders; "He groans deeply; his starts are sudden and violent. There flits at times, across his face, a dark shadow, as if some horrible sight afflicting him with unutterable woe, were disclosed to him; and a quick tremor at these moments runs through all his frame." He is heard to mutter, as if suffering from an accusing conscience, "I am not to blame; my orders were exceeded"-referring, no doubt, to the merciless slaughter of the unoffending Waldenses. He was surrounded by a crowd of priests, courtiers, and courtesans, but they cared nothing for the dying monarch; they only increased the weight of his agony by their cold selfish indifference.

The scene closes, the last groan is uttered, the line is crossed, and the soul, under a responsibility entirely its own, appears before God. Solemn thought! all is reality now. The judgment-seat cannot bend to royal prerogative. There is no respect of persons with God, every man must be judged according to the deeds done in the body. But what must be the judgment of those who stand there with hands red, and garments stained with the blood of God's saints? Nothing but a timely repentance, and the efficacy of the precious blood of Jesus could cleanse such guilt away. May all those who are willing to pause a few moments over the melancholy scene of these closing hours believe this, and turn to the Lord Jesus, God's Son, whose blood cleanses from all sin. "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out," are His own words of gracious assurance. Three hundred years have rolled away since Louisa, Francis, and Margaret died. We cannot help lingering a moment over this solemn thought, that our reader may be prepared for that change which admits of no succeeding change for ever. Every tree is known by its fruits; and as the tree falls so it lies. Who would not say that Margaret's was the happiest course of the three? True, she had in her lifetime to suffer reproach and shame for the name of Christ, and be branded as a heretic, but she willingly identified herself with the suffering saints of God, and great is her reward in heaven. Better suffer for a few years, and even die at the stake, than be three hundred years in hell, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mar 9:44-50; Mat 5:10-12)

Reader! O reader, beware! God is not mocked; as a man sows in time, so shall he reap in eternity!

Henry II

Francis I. died in 1547, and was succeeded by his son, Henry II., the husband of the notorious Catherine de Medici, who, like Jezebel of old, was well fitted and inclined to stir him up to persecute the Naboths, and take possession of their vineyards. And this was actually done to a great extent, and the confiscations applied in many instances to the most shameful purposes. Surrounded by hostile and designing councillors, besides the example of his father and the influence of his wife, he was indeed stirred up to pursue a persecuting policy, and a great multitude of martyrs fell during his reign. When the great battle of St. Quentin was lost, and the Spaniards expected daily at the gates of Paris, the old pagan cry against the primitive Christians was raised-"We have not sufficiently avenged the honour of God, and God takes vengeance upon us." The disaster was ascribed to the mildness with which the heretics had been treated. So it was when Rome was attacked by the barbarians; the pagans accused themselves of having been too lenient towards the Christians.

The clergy, becoming alarmed at the unaccountable progress of the Reformation, used every artifice to alarm the king. They assured him that the Huguenots-as they were now called, from one Hugues, the name of a Genevese Calvinist-were the great enemies of monarchs and of all ecclesiastical and regal power; that, should they prevail they would trample his throne in the dust, and lay France at the feet of atheists and revolutionists. The effect of these misrepresentations, which were chiefly made by the cardinal de Lorraine, was to multiply the executions; and as they were viewed as appeasing the wrath of heaven, the more the king himself sinned, the more he burned to atone for his sins. But so great was the energy of God's Spirit in connection with the spread of Bibles and religious books, that all the means used to exterminate the Huguenots proved utterly fruitless. Exceeding great armies seemed to arise from the ashes of the martyrs. "Men of letters," says Felice, "of the law, of the sword, of the church itself, hastened to the banner of the Reformation. Several great provinces-Languedoc, Dauphiny, the Lyonnese, Guienne, Saintonge, Poitou, the Orleanese, Normandy, Picardy, Flanders (the most considerable towns in the kingdom) Bourges, Orleans, Rouen, Lyons Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, La Rochelle-were peopled with Reformers. It is calculated that they comprised in a few years nearly a sixth of the population, of whom they were the elite."

And still the funeral piles blazed in all quarters of Paris, and in all towns of France; and persons of all ages and both sexes fed the flames, suffering the most fearful barbarities and tortures. But as the rigour of the persecutions increased the number of the disciples multiplied. Among these were now enrolled princes of the blood, the king of Navarre, the duke of Vendome, the Bourbons, prince of Conde, Coligny Chatillon, and a great number of the nobility and gentry of France. "Besides these," says a catholic historian, "painters, watchmakers, sculptors, goldsmiths, booksellers, printers and others, who, from their callings have some nobility of mind, were among the first easily impressed."*

{*Felice, p. 52; Wylie, vol. 2, p. 522.}

Meanwhile, Farel and his fellow exiles, were inundating France with religious books and Bibles from the printing presses of Geneva, Lausanne, and Neuchatel, by means of pedlars, who hazarded their lives to introduce the precious wares into the mansion of the noble, and the hut of the peasant.

The king's alarm grew great. A little longer, and all France would be Lutheran. The first and most sacred duty of a prince, said his councillors, was to uphold the true religion, and cut off its enemies. The irritated prince proceeded to the House of Parliament to consult his senators as to the best means of appeasing the religious differences in the realm. This event happened on the 10th of August, 1559. Though the presence of the king may have been intended to overawe the members, it did not prevent them from speaking freely on the subject. The chief president, Gilles Lemaitre, spoke in favour of burning, and recommended the example of Philip Augustus to be followed, who had in one day caused six hundred of the Albigenses to be burned. The men of middle course confined themselves to vague generalities. The secret Calvinists, especially Annas du Bourg, demanded religious reforms by means of a national council. "Every day," he said, "we see crimes committed that go unpunished, while new torments are invented against men who have committed no crime. Should those be guilty of high treason who mentioned the name of the prince only to pray for him? and should the rack and the stake be reserved, not for those who raised tumults in the cities, and seditions in the provinces, but for those who were the brightest patterns of obedience to the laws, and the firmest defenders of order? It was a very grave matter to condemn to the flames men who died calling on the name of the Lord Jesus."

The angry king stung to fury by the honest speech of Du Bourg, ordered him to be arrested in full parliament by the captain of his guards, and said aloud that he would see him burned with his own eyes. He was thrown into the Bastille, and other members were arrested the following day. Fourteen days after this memorable visit to his parliament, Henry was displaying his strength and skill as a cavalier, in a tournament, to the admiration of many. He had resisted the attacks of the duke of Savoy and the duke of Guise, the two best generals in the service of France, and might have left the gay scene amidst the praise and acclamations of the ladies and nobles of Paris; but he insisted on having a tilt with count Montgomery, the captain of his guards. He meant, no doubt, to give the king the best of the shock, like his other assailants, but by some mismanagement, the lance of Montgomery broke in the king's visor, and a splinter passed through his eye to the brain: the king lay forward on his horse; a thrill of horror ran through the spectators. He died soon after, but never saw with his eyes the burning of Du Bourg; and, as the Lord would have it, the same hand that arrested the senator dealt the death-blow to the monarch.

The Martyrdom of Du Bourg

The death of the king did not release the prisoners. Du Bourg heard his sentence read without a change of countenance. As a criminal of the deepest dye, his execution was reserved for the Christmas holidays, December, 1559. "I am a Christian; yes, I am a Christian;" he said, "and I will shout still louder for the glory of my Lord Jesus Christ." When suspended on the gibbet, he proclaimed the truth to the vast crowds around him, and cried aloud, "My God, my God, forsake me not, that I may not forsake Thee."

Thus died this pious and illustrious magistrate at the age of thirty-eight. He belonged to a good family; his uncle had been chancellor of France. He was a man of great learning, integrity, and devotion to his duties. His only fault was, that he had spoken in favour of the new religion. Florimond de Ramond, then a student, avows, "that everyone in the colleges was moved to tears; that they pleaded his cause after his death, and that his martyrdom did more harm to the Catholic religion than a hundred ministers could have done by their preaching."

The First Planting of the Reformed Church in France

It was in the year 1555, that the first avowed French church on Reformed principles was established at Paris. Forty years had passed away since Lefevre first preached the gospel in the university, during which time we have met with many noble disciples, confessors, and martyrs, but no public congregations. There had always been secret gatherings of the faithful, but without fixed pastors or regular administration of the sacraments. Calvin was their acknowledged leader, and he recommended them not to observe the Lord's supper until they had duly recognized ministers. In consequence of this, though they were a large body in the aggregate, they were as isolated individuals, acting a part from each other, without the knowledge of the grand uniting principle-the presence and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," ought to have been warrant enough for remembering His love, and showing forth His death in the breaking of bread.

A church was now formed in Paris on the Genevan or Presbyterian model, with a minister, elders, and deacons. Poitiers, Angers, Bourges, and other places soon followed the example. From this time, the work or organization went on vigorously, and in the short period of five years, over a thousand Calvinistic congregations existed in France. The next step to be taken was the uniting of these isolated churches into one general church; and for this purpose a general Synod was convoked to meet at Paris, which took place on the 25th of May, 1559. But the difficulties that attended the ministers travelling from all parts of France was so great, that only thirteen churches sent their deputies to the Synod: and these braved an almost certain death. "There was in the deliberations of this assembly," says Felice, "a simplicity and moral grandeur that fills us with respect. Nothing of declamation or violence but a calm dignity, a tranquil and serene force prevailed, as if the members of the Synod debated in a profound peace, under the guardianship of the laws."

The ecclesiastical foundations of the French Reformation were then laid. The basis consisted of four grades of power, or church courts. 1. The consistory, or kirk-session-composed of the elders and deacons, the minister being their president; the affairs of the congregation were the objects of their care. 2. The colloquy, or the congregations of a district consulting each other by their deputies on their mutual interests. 3. The provincial Synod, or court of appeal from the kirk-session, in a meeting of the churches of the province. If possible, the minister and an elder from each were expected to be present. 4. The national assembly. Two ministers and two elders were expected from each of the provincial Synods. It was the highest court; it heard all appeals; determined all great causes; and to its authority, in the last resort, all were subject.*

{*For minute details of this ecclesiastical constitution, see Felice, Wylie, or Faiths of the World.}

Francis II

The new King, Francis II., was about sixteen years old when he ascended the throne. He is represented as a sickly boy, feeble in body and mind; and his wife, Mary Stuart of Scotland, a thoughtless beauty, spending her time in pleasure, was about the same age. Thus was monarchy represented in France in 1559; when a strong hand and a powerful will were required to protect the royal authority. The profligacy and extravagance of the last reign had borne their natural fruits. There was anger and discontent all over the land; the court was a hot-bed of intrigue, and the nation, broken into factions, was on the brink of civil war. Catherine de Medici, the Guises, Chatillons, Bourbons, the constable Montmorency, all worked to their own advantage these feeble children of royalty, and mingled with the religious discussions, the quarrels of their political ambition.

The two Guises, the cardinal and the general, became managers of the court. Uncles of the fair young queen, and guardians of the feeble sovereign, they had the ear of both, which gave them immense advantages over their rivals. But there was one at the foot of the throne who was a match both for the general and the cardinal. The queen-mother, Catherine de Medici, hated the Huguenots as much as the Guises-who were the heads of the Roman Catholic party-but she also hated all who would supplant her in power. Artful and vindictive, unscrupulous and ambitious, without religious faith or moral feeling, the crafty Italian dissembled that she might ruin the authority of the Guises, in order to consolidate her own. This threw Catherine for a moment on the side of the Huguenot party, which was overruled by a merciful providence to weaken the power of the Guises, divide the strength of the popish party, and save the Reformers. Affecting to hold the balance between the two parties, she was only biding her time in all changes of circumstances, by turns embracing and deserting all parties alike.

We now come to the wars of religion. Parties began to be formed from political motives, which threw the whole of France into the most ruinous, desolating, civil war, which lasted, with brief intervals, for many years-we might say, centuries. All the liberalism of France became Huguenot, which then simply meant antipapist. And thus, to their great injury and final destruction, the French Protestants became a great political party in the state. Meanwhile Francis II., after a reign of seventeen months, died; and Catherine, emerging from the obscurity in which she had restrained her ambition, claimed the custody of her next son, Charles IX., who was only nine years of age; and before the court could assemble, assumed the guardianship of the king, and in fact, if not in name, the regency of the kingdom.

The Saint Bartholomew Massacre

The Italian mother, having thus become supreme in the kingdom, began to mature her plans for stamping out heresy in the dominions of her son. Possessed in an eminent degree of the family arts of dissimulation and concealment, she pursued, with steadiness of purpose and recklessness of means, the object before her. She has justly been compared to the shark which follows the vessel through storm and calm in expectation of its prey. The country was divided into two, apparently equally matched, and irreconcilable camps. Several campaigns had been fought, and there was no immediate prospect of the Catholics overcoming the Huguenots in the field; therefore Jezebel has recourse to her old policy-which she thoroughly understood-treachery and secret assassination. At the same time, it is affirmed by Felice, that no state reason can be advanced in justification of the massacre. Rome had no longer anything to fear for her supremacy, or the crown for the maintenance of its political power. It was fanaticism, resentment, Jezebel's unquenchable thirst for the blood of God's saints, which led to the crushing of the minority in 1572.

The first and real authors of the massacre were Catherine, Pope Pius V., and Philip II. of Spain-none of them French. Others were drawn into the plot, but nothing could be done without the sanction of the king. The mother, with the assistance of the pope, accomplished this. By a gross perversion of scripture, the crafty pontiff pointed out to the young king that he was now in the position of Saul, king of Israel, who had received the orders of God, by the mouth of Samuel the prophet, to exterminate the infidel Amalekites, and not to spare one in any case. But as he did not obey the voice of God, he was deprived of his throne and his life. Charles saw the application of the allusion, and ultimately consented to kill all the Huguenots, that not one might be left to reproach him with the deed.

The King's Snare to Entrap the Huguenots

The next question was, How is it to be accomplished? The chiefs of the Reformed were in the provinces. It was necessary to draw them out and concentrate them, in order to get them into their power. The perfidious Charles, who was now committed to the plot, pretended an camest desire for the establishment of a lasting peace, and proposed a marriage between the young king of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV., and his sister, Margaret of Valois. This was a grand alliance for the poor house of Navarre, but the mother, Jeanne d'Albret, was not dazzled by it. She preferred the fear of the Lord to great riches. "I would rather," she said, "descend to be the most humble maiden of France, than sacrifice my soul and that of my son to grandeur." But the greatest Reformer in France must be brought within the toils of Catherine.

Jeanne d'Albret was the daughter of the accomplished and pious Margaret of Angouleme; but the daughter in some respects was greater than her mother; at least she was more decided as to the Reformation. But it is due to Margaret to bear in mind that she was greatly hindered by her dissolute brother and mother. In 1560 Jeanne d'Albret made open profession of the Protestant faith; abolished the popish service throughout her kingdom, and introduced the Protestant worship. When we remember that her little kingdom lay on the slope of the Pyrenees, touching France on the one side, and Spain on the other, we shall not consider her wanting in courage. The popes thundered their anathemas against her, the powerful kings of France and Spain threatened to invade her territory and raze it from the map of Europe; but for twelve years the Lord protected this pious queen, during which time she had the Bible translated into the dialect of the country, established colleges and schools, studied laws like a senator, and mightily improved the condition of her subjects.

The next person of great note was Admiral Coligny. He was a true Christian, a really godly man, and the most skilful leader of the Huguenot armies. The envoys of the court set before Jeanne, Coligny, and the chiefs of the Huguenots, that this marriage would be the best guarantee of a solid peace between the two religions. Charles declared that he married his sister, not only to the prince of Navarre, but to the whole Huguenot party. Coligny allowed himself to be deceived; the prospect was indeed bright; the entire kingdom would be united; and he thought they should trust the sincerity and oath of his majesty.

The King's Consummate Duplicity

At last Jeanne d'Albret gave her consent to the marriage, and visited the court at Blois in March, 1572 but leaving her son behind her from a lingering feeling of distrust. The king and the queen-mother caressed her with much apparent tenderness; especially the king, who called her his great aunt, his all, his best-beloved, and entertained her with so much honour and respect that everyone was astonished. She reached Paris in May, on the 4th of June she fell ill, on the 9th she died. It was said that a Florentine perfumer, Master Rene, known by the name of the "queen's poisoner," had sold her some poisoned gloves. Her end was peace, she was happy to go home, she uttered no complaints against her murderers, and seemed only anxious for the spiritual welfare of her son Henry and her daughter Catherine. Committing them to the Lord's tender care, she fell asleep in Jesus at the age of forty-four.

Admiral Coligny had also gone to court. In his first interview he knelt before the king. Charles raised him up, called him his father, and embraced the illustrious old man thrice. "We have got you now," said the king, "and you must remain with us. This is the happiest day of my life." The other chiefs of the Huguenots being assembled in Paris, the marriage was celebrated with great splendour in the cathedral church of Notre Dame on the 18th of August, 1572 the principal members of the nobility, Protestant as well as Catholic, being present on the occasion. It was followed by a succession of feasts and gaieties, in which the leaders of both parties alike participated; and the fears of the Huguenots were thus completely disarmed. Charles by his dissimulation, and Catherine by her treacherous smiles, had succeeded in deceiving all parties. Indeed all seemed to hope that the age of bloodshed was closed, and that this marriage was the harbinger of a peaceful and prosperous future for a country so long afflicted with civil wars. But at that very moment, when all classes were rejoicing and full of hope, a secret council was held, at which it was determined to arrange a general massacre of the Huguenots.

Fifty thousand crowns was offered by the king for the head of Coligny, whom Charles was embracing so warmly only a day before. To earn the reward, one Maurevert lay in wait for the admiral on the 22nd of August, in a house near the church of St. Germain. He was struck by three balls shot from an arquebuss, which shattered the forefinger of his left hand, and wounded his left arm. The assassin escaped, he is styled by historians of that day "The slayer on the king's wages, the common assassin. " Coligny succeeded in reaching his hotel, where he was attended by the celebrated surgeon Ambrose Pare. The king and his mother, like two innocents visited the admiral, professed the greatest horror at the dastardly act, swore that they would take such terrible revenge that it should never be forgotten. "You bear the wound," said the king, "and I the perpetual pain"-unparalleled deceitfulness!

Saint Bartholomew's Eve

Meanwhile the day fixed for the general massacre drew near. Between two and three o'clock in the morning of the 24th of August-the feast of St. Bartholomew-as the king sat in his chamber with his mother and the duke of Anjou the great bell of St. Germain rang to early prayers. This was the preconcerted signal. Scarcely had its first peal disturbed the silent hour of midnight, when the firing commenced. Charles was greatly agitated: a cold sweat stood upon his forehead; he started, and sent word to the duke of Guise to precipitate nothing. It was too late. The queen-mother, distrusting the constancy of her son, had commanded that the hour for a signal should be anticipated. In a few moments every steeple in Paris was sending forth its peals, and with the clamour of a hundred bells, there mingled the shoutings, cursings, and howlings of the assassins; and the shrieks, groans, and cries for mercy of the surprised Huguenots. To distinguish the assailants in the dark, they wore a white sash on their left arm, and a white cross on their hats. At the sound of the tocsin armed men rushed out from every door, shouting, "For God and the king." The streets of Paris flowed with human blood, and the savage ferocity of the Catholics knew no bounds.

The duke of Guise, accompanied by three hundred soldiers, hastened to the dwelling of Coligny. He had been awakened by the noise of firing, and dreading the worst, was engaged in prayer with his minister Merlin. His servants came rushing into his room, exclaiming, "Sire! the house is broken into, and there is no means of escape!" "I have been long prepared to die," answered the admiral calmly, "as for you, save yourselves if you can; you cannot save my life." Behem, a servant of the duke of Guise, was the first to enter the room. "Are you not the admiral?" he demanded. "Yes, I am," replied Coligny, looking with great composure on the naked sword of the assassin; and began to say a few serious words to the young man, who instantly plunged his sword into the veteran's breast, and gave him a second blow on the head. Guise who was waiting impatiently in the courtyard, called aloud, "Behem hast thou done it?" "It is done, my lord," was the reply. ' But we must see it to believe it: throw him out at the window." In lifting up the body of the admiral, who was still breathing, he clutched the window-frame, but was instantly flung into the courtyard. The duke of Guise, wiping off the blood from his face, said; "I know him, it is he," and kicking the dead body with his foot, he hastened into the streets, exclaiming, "Courage, comrades, we have begun well-now for the rest." Sixteen years afterwards, in the castle of Blois, this same Henry of Guise was assassinated by order of Henry III., who, when the dead body lay before him, kicked it in the face. Oh! the sovereign retributive justice of God!

In that awful night, Teligny, son-in-law of the admiral, and five hundred of the Protestant nobility and gentry, were sacrificed to the Moloch of bigotry, and that in the sacred name of religion. "Thick grass is more easily mown than thin," was the proverb acted upon, and the leading Protestants were lodged in the same quarter of Paris. This field was kept as the special preserve for the grim, cruel duke of Guise. The retinue of the young king of Navarre were lodged in the Louvre, as the special guests of the monarch, but with the Satanic intention of having them all conveniently murdered. They had come in the train of their royal chief to be present at the celebration of his marriage with the sister of the king. One by one they were called by name from their rooms, marched down unarmed into the quadrangle, where they were hewn down before the very eyes of their royal host, and piled in heaps at the gates of the Louvre. A more perfidious cold-blooded butchery is not to be found in the annals of mankind.

Over all Paris the work of massacre by this time extended. Ruffians by thousands-armed with the poignard, the pike, the knife, the sword, the arquebuss, every weapon of the soldier and the brigand-rushed through the streets murdering all they met who had not the white cross on their hats. They forced their way into the houses of the Protestants slaughtered the inmates in their night-clothes, men, women and children, and threw their mangled bodies into the streets. No pitiful wail for mercy was heard; the obscurest haunts were searched, and nobody was spared. By-and-by the sun rose upon Paris. The wretched Charles, who had shuddered for some moments at the commencement of the massacre, had tasted the blood of the saints, and became as ravenous for slaughter as the lowest of the mob. He and his blood-stained Italian mother, at the break of day went out on the palace balcony to feast their eyes on the slaughtered heaps. Rivers of blood flowed in the streets; corpses of men, women, and children blocked up the doorways; on all sides the groans and death-cries of the dying were heard, and the blasphemies and imprecations of the maddened populace.

Some, however, who had managed to escape were seen struggling in the river, in their efforts to swim across, and Charles seizing an arquebuss, fired on his subjects, shouting "Kill! Kill!" "Two hundred and twenty-seven years afterwards," says Felice, "Mirabeau picked the arquebuss of Charles IX out of the dust of ages to turn it against the throne of Louis XVI." Satan may rule for a time, but God overrules! On the same Sunday morning, Charles sent for Henry of Navarre, his new brother-in-law, and Henry of Conde; and, in the most furious tone said to them: "The Mass, death, or the Bastille." After some resistance, the princes consented to attend mass, but no one believed in their sincerity. On the fourth day, when the fury of the assassins had become satiated, and the Huguenots were for the most part slain, there fell a dead silence on the streets of Paris. The priests now followed the tragic scene with a play. On the Thursday, ankle-deep in blood, the clergy celebrated an extraordinary jubilee, and made a general procession to keep up the excitement. The pulpits also re-echoed with thanksgiving, and a medal was struck with this legend, "Piety has awakened justice. "

Massacre in the Provinces

But the thirst of Jezebel for blood was far from being satisfied. Orders were sent from the court to all the provinces and principal cities to pursue the same course. About a dozen of the provincial governors refused, and one priest whose name deserves to be mentioned with thankfulness to the Lord. When the king's lieutenant called on John Hennuyer, bishop of Lisieux, and gave him the order for the massacre of the Huguenots, he answered, "No, no, sir; I oppose, and will always oppose the execution of such an order. I am the pastor of Lisieux, and these people whom you command me to slaughter are my flock. Although they have at present strayed, having quitted the pasture which Jesus Christ, the sovereign Shepherd, has confided to my care, they may still come back. I do not see in the gospel that the shepherd can permit the blood of his sheep to be shed; on the contrary, I find there, that he is bound to give his blood and his life for them." The lieutenant asked him for his refusal in writing, which the bishop readily gave him.

At Rouen, Toulouse, Orleans, Lyons, and in nearly all the great towns of the kingdom, the work of blood was renewed with undiminished fury; the carnage went on without pity and without remorse for about six weeks. Thousands of dead bodies were thrown into the rivers, which were either washed on shore at different bends of the rivers, or borne to the sea. The faithful of Meaux-our early friends-were slaughtered in the prisons, and, the sword being too slow, iron hammers were employed. Four hundred houses in the most handsome quarter of the town were pillaged and devastated. But we grow weary, weary of this recital; and were it not that the St. Bartholomew massacre is the greatest and darkest crime of the christian era-and gives us, as nothing else does, a true picture of the essential principles of popery-we should willingly have ended our notice of the Reformation in France before coming to it. If ever the depths and wiles of Satan were seen in human wickedness, it is here. The premeditation, the solemn oaths of the king- which drew the Calvinists to Paris-the royal marriage, and the dagger put into the hands of the mob by the chiefs of the state, at a time of universal peace, represent a plot which has no parallel in history. And then, from the pope downwards, the Catholic community lifting up their hands to heaven, and thanking God for the glorious triumph!

At Rome the news was received with transports of joy. The bearer of the glad tidings was rewarded with a present of a thousand pieces of gold. The pope caused the guns of the castle of St. Angelo to be fired, declared a jubilee, and struck a medal in honour of the event. Philip II. of Spain, the duke of Alva, and the cardinal of Lorraine, shared in these transports of joy. But the impression produced by the massacre in Protestant countries was altogether different. In England, Germany, and Switzerland, numbers of exiles arrived, horror-struck and half-dead, to tell the sad tale; and the petrified nations cursed the name of France. Geneva tenderly related to the seventy thousand victims whose bodies covered the plains of France, or lay stranded on the banks of its rivers, instituted a day of fasting and prayer, which is still observed. In Scotland, the aged Knox, in prophetic strains, pronounced the divine vengeance against the house of Valois in the following terms: "The sentence is gone forth against this murderer, the king of France, and the vengeance of God will not be withdrawn from his house. His name shall be held in execration by posterity, and no one who shall spring from his loins shall possess the kingdom in peace, unless repentance come to prevent the judgment of God." In England, Elizabeth put her court into mourning, and when the French ambassador sought an audience to offer his hypocritical explanation, he was received with profound silence. The lords and ladies of the court, in long mourning apparel, suffered the ambassador to pass between them without saluting him, or deigning to give him so much as a look.

The Number of Victims

The whole number that perished in the massacre cannot be accurately ascertained. The victims in Paris were probably from three to four thousand. Brantome says that Charles IX might have seen four thousand bodies floating down the Seine. "There is to be found," says Wylie, "in the account-books of the city of Paris, a payment to the grave-diggers of the cemetery of the Innocents, for having interred one thousand one hundred dead bodies stranded at the turns of the Seine, near Chaillot, Auteuil, and St. Cloud. It is probable that many corpses were carried still further, and the bodies were not all thrown into the river." The number of victims throughout the whole of France was probably about seventy thousand. Perefixe, archbishop of Paris, in the seventeenth century, raises it to one hundred thousand. "This last figure," says Felice, "is probably exaggerated, if we reckon those only who met with a violent death. But if there be added those who died of misery, hunger, grief, the aged, who were helpless and abandoned, women without shelter, children without bread, the many wretched beings whose lives were shortened by this great catastrophe, it will be confessed that the number given by Perefixe is still below the truth."*

{*The above account of the massacre is chiefly drawn from the French historian, Felice, who is more inclined to abridge than to exaggerate the details of his nation's dishonour.

See also, Wylie's History of Protestantism; Smiles' History of the Huguenots; White's History of France.}

The End of the Leading Actors in the Massacre

So wonderfully had the Spirit of God wrought in France by means of the truth, that when men expected to see only the ruins of the crushed Huguenots after the massacre, they were surprised to find them resolved in many parts of the country to offer a determined resistance to the royal troops. There can be no doubt that French Protestantism had become a great political association; but not wholly so. There must have been many thousands of real Christians amongst them, though led to believe that it was right to oppose their oppressors, and fight for their lives, their families, and their religion. In the siege of Sancerre, when nearly all the young children died from hunger, we give one instance of perfect grace. A boy of ten years old, drawing nigh unto death, seeing his parents weeping near him, and handling his arms and legs, which were as dry as wood, said to them, "Why do you weep to see me die of hunger? I do not ask you for bread mother. I know you have none. But since God wills that I must thus die, we must be content. The holy Lazarus, did he not suffer hunger? Have I not read that in the Bible?" Thus passed away that precious lamb, with many others, to be folded in the everlasting embrace of the Good Shepherd who died for them; of them may not it be truly said, "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun [of persecution] light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev 7:16-17)

But not so died the perfidious and cruel king. The terrible crime in which he had taken so prominent a part, weighed heavily on his mind to the last moment of his life. Night and day he was haunted by the scenes he had witnessed on St. Bartholomew's eve. He imagined he saw his murdered guests sitting at his bedside and at his table. Sleeping or waking, the murdered Huguenots seemed ever present to his eyes with ghastly faces, and weltering in blood. But, as the Lord would have it, he-who had stipulated when giving his orders for the St. Bartholomew massacre, that not a Huguenot should be left alive to reproach him with the deed-was attended on his deathbed by a Huguenot physician, and waited upon by a Huguenot nurse. He evidently had not the slightest confidence in any of his former associates, he was even haunted by the terrible feeling that his own mother was causing his death by slow poisoning. He died of a strange and frightful malady, which caused his blood to ooze from the pores of his body, in less than two years after the St. Bartholomew massacre, having lived twenty-five years and reigned fourteen.

It is said that all the actors in the St. Bartholomew massacre, with one exception, died by violence. But we need not trace their tragic history. These bloody men were overtaken by divine vengeance, and brought down to the grave in blood. Catherine de Medici lived to see the utter failure of all her schemes, the death of all her partners in guilt, and the extinction of her dynasty. The Cardinal of Lorraine was assassinated in prison, and Henry III., the last of the Valois, fell by the dagger of the assassin in his own tent, and thus was the prophecy of John Knox fulfilled.

The vast materials furnished by the Reformation in France have detained us a little longer, and occupied more of our space than we can well afford; but the greatness of the Lord's work there, the mighty struggle between light and darkness, and the melancholy interest which all must feel in the results of that work, give it a peculiar place in the great revolutions of the sixteenth century.

The Council of Trent

At the famous Council of Trent, which met in 1545, and continued its sittings till 1563, during which the events we have rapidly described were in progress, the laws of the Roman Catholic church were more accurately defined, and measures were devised for the more effectual suppression of heresy. Their deliberations and decisions must have been greatly affected by the general state of Europe at that particular moment. But as the original object and character of this council have been already noticed,* we need only add what has not been previously mentioned.

{*See Page 951.}

What particularly distinguished this council was not the framing of new laws, but undertaking to define and fix the doctrines of the Romish church in a more accurate manner than had ever before been attempted, and to confirm them by the sanction of its authority. "The Trentine fathers," says Mosheim, "authorized nothing new; but it is equally true, that they authorized much, hitherto thought, from its want of any sufficient authority, open to individual acceptance or rejection. To these divines, therefore, forming a body chiefly Italian and Spanish, sitting in the sixteenth century .... is the church of Rome indebted for the formal authentification of her peculiar creed." By the servility of the indigent Italian bishops, the popes acquired such influence in the council, that they dictated all its decrees, and framed them, not with any intention of healing the divisions, reforming the ancient abuses, restoring unity and concord to the church, but to establish their own dominion. "Doctrines, " says Scott "which had hitherto been considered as mere private opinions, open to discussion, were now absurdly made articles of faith, and required to be received on pain of excommunication. Rites-which had formerly been observed only in deference to custom-supposed to be ancient, were established by the decrees of the church, and declared to be essential parts of its worship."*

{*Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 894; Scott, vol. 3, p. 256.

The great authority as to our knowledge of the proceedings of this assembly is Father Paul's History. "He has described its deliberations," says Dr. Robertson, "and explained its decrees, with such perspicuity and depth of thought, with such various erudition, and such force of reason, as have justly entitled his work to be placed among the most admired historical compositions.}

Pope Pius's Creed

Pope Pius IV. issued a brief summary of the doctrinal decisions of the council, which is called by his name, and has ever since been regarded as an authoritative summary of the Catholic faith.

"I profess also, that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and for the salvation of mankind, though all are not necessary for every one; namely, baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony, and that they confer grace; and of these, baptism, confirmation, and orders cannot be reiterated without sacrilege.

"I also receive and admit the ceremonies of the Catholic church, received and approved in the solemn administration of all the above said sacraments.

"I receive and embrace all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent, concerning original sin and justification.

"I profess likewise, that in the mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that, in the most holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which conversion the Catholic church calls transubstantiation.

"I confess also, that under either kind alone, whole and entire, Christ and a true sacrament is received.

"I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.

"Likewise, that the saints reigning together with Christ, are to be honoured and invocated; that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be venerated.

"I most firmly assert, that the images of Christ, and of the mother of God, ever virgin, and also of the other saints, are to be had and retained; and that one honour and veneration are to be given to them.

"I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to christian people.

"I acknowledge the holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman church, the mother and mistress of all churches. And I promise to swear true obedience to the Roman bishop, the successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, and vicar of Jesus Christ.

"I also profess, and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined, and declared, by the sacred canons and general councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent. And likewise, I also condemn, reject, and anathematise, all things contrary thereto, and all heresies whatsoever condemned, rejected, and anathematised by the church.

"This true Catholic faith, out of which none can be saved, which I now freely profess, and truly hold, I,N., promise, vow, and swear most constantly to hold and profess the same whole and entire, with God's assistance, to the end of my life; and to procure, as far as lies in my power, that the same shall be held, taught, and preached by all who are under me, or are entrusted to my care, by virtue of my office. So help me God, and these holy Gospels of God."

52 The Waldenses

Chapter 52

The Waldenses

Having brought down the history of this interesting people to the year 1560,* when they suffered so severely in their own valleys, and on the plains of Calabria, we shall now briefly notice their history from that period. Yet we must not expect to find in this remarkable people the grace that should characterize the followers of the blessed Lord and His apostles. Not that they did not believe in the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, and in His precious blood as the only and all-sufficient remedy for sin. And had they been left unmolested in their beautiful valleys, they would have been as harmless as their flocks and herds; but when assailed and persecuted by the Catholics, they looked upon Joshua Gideon, and David as their models, not the Lord and His apostles. And being sincere and honest, and believing that their God was the God of battles, they fought under His banner, and believed that nothing was impossible to Him. It is no doubt from this principle that their persecutions form one of the most heroic pages in the church's history. Like many in our own day, they did not see the difference between law and grace; but being a God-fearing people, He graciously heard and answered their prayers. Allegiance to Christ ruled in their hearts, which, after all, is the chief thing. The Scotch covenanters who fought for the crown and kingdom of Emmanuel resemble them in this.

{*See p. 634.}

Such were "the poor men of the valleys." They believed the Bible to be a revelation from God, and were governed by it, so far as they understood it. Their neighbours, the Catholics, on the other hand, believed that God had given to the church of Rome and its head, dominion over the whole christian world, and that all who refuse subjection to her authority are not only heretics, but rebellious subjects, whom the sovereign has a right to punish according to his pleasure. This was and is the established belief of Rome; and, seeing it remains so, there could be no security for life or liberty to any who dared to question her claims, had she the power to execute her arrogant assumption. Sometimes the magistrate refused to obey the priest, and the people were thereby spared; but the reader will see how easily Rome could find a plausible pretext for persecution when it suited her purpose, and how constantly the mitre prevailed over the crown.

For some time after the desolating wars of 1560 the remnant of the Waldenses were allowed to re-enter their native valleys rebuild their houses, and replant their vineyards. Their fruit trees had been cut down, their hamlets and villages made a heap of ruins, and their fields left uncultivated and unsown. Starvation stared them in the face; but a deeper grief weighed on the hearts of many. Where are our parents, husbands, sons, pastors, and many whom the enemy hath trodden down? They were now with the Lord and the Lord in His unfailing mercy, was with them; and from the nature of the country, it was not difficult to exist for a time.

"Chestnut trees of luxuriant growth," says Dr. Beattie, speaking of the valley of Rora, "shade the inferior acclivities, and from these, in seasons of scarcity, a wholesome bread is prepared, which, with the luxury of new milk, furnishes a repast which the daintiest appetite might partake of with a relish. Over the higher grounds nature has spread a rich carpet of vegetation; and thither, as the pastoral season arrives, the inhabitants repair with their families and cattle. After spending their summer on the hills, in a life of patriarchal simplicity, they again descend to the valley as symptoms of winter set in, and there prosecute those branches of industry by which they may best satisfy the state, and minister to their own mutual necessities." Speaking of the valley of Angrogna, the same poetical writer says, "When we describe it as a picture in miniature of Switzerland, the reader will form a just conception of its general features. All the ingredients of Alpine landscape, torrents, rocks, precipices, gloomy ravines, and gushing fountains, forests that at once afford shelter and sustenance verdant meadows to which the meandering streams carry freshness and fertility, fields and gardens containing the produce of different climates clinging to the very precipices, and evincing that unwearied industry on the part of the inhabitants which has purchased the means of life under the most unfavourable circumstances."*

{*History of the Waldenses, and Graphic Descriptions of the Protestant Valleys of Piedmont, by Wm. Beattie, M.D.}

Reflecting on the primitive simplicity of the natives of these valleys, their peaceful lives, their industrious habits their rigid morality, their strict observance of the sabbath day, their exactness in paying their rents and all claims, and the absence of drinking, swearing, and all such vices, we may well inquire, Why should their prince and landlord seek to exterminate the race? The answer will be found in what follows.

The Wars of Extermination

The brief periods of apparent peace which the Waldenses sometimes enjoyed, were by no means intervals of security and repose; but rather, of painful reflection and fearful anticipation. True peace, with security as to their persons, their property, and liberty of conscience-the inalienable rights of man, they knew not for hundreds of years.

In the year 1560 two events occurred which are sufficient to account for the exterminating wars which followed that period. 1. The throne of Savoy was then filled by Charles Emmanuel II., a youth of fifteen. He was a prince of a mild and humane disposition; but, like Charles IX. of France, he was counselled by his mother, and she was of the house of Medici, and granddaughter to that Catherine whose deeds of blood have justly merited the execrations of mankind. The boy-sovereign was ruled by his mother, who was regent during his minority, and she was ruled by the Vatican. 2. The Society for the "Propagation of the Faith" was established in the same year at Turin. Noble lords, ladies, laymen, priests, and people, pressed to join the society, the inducement being a plenary indulgence to all who should take part in the good work: the watchword reveals its character-"The conversion or the extermination of heretics."

The propagandists commenced their ruinous work under the fair pretext of conversion. Ladies of the court, and others of inferior rank, with swarms of monks, became zealous supporters of the society, visiting from house to house. About this time convents were established in the valleys, and the schools and colleges of the Vaudois were suppressed. The abduction of males under twelve and of females under fourteen years of age, for the purpose of conversion, was sanctioned by law. But these nefarious means were soon followed by a violent persecution similar to that of 1560.

"The bloody edict of Gastaldo"-so named from its consequences-appeared in January, 1655. In vain did the threatened inhabitants, by every means of appeal and supplication to the different members of the government, seek to avert the impending storm. More than a thousand families, in the depth of winter, were driven from their homes and properties to the shelterless heights of their ice-covered mountains. And this they were commanded to do within three days on pain of death. Anything more inhuman, more barbarous, under the circumstances, cannot be imagined. A whole population, including little children, old men, the sick, the feeble, and the bed-ridden, must leave their homes amidst the terrors of an Alpine winter. Their journey lay through valleys buried deep in snow, across rivers swollen with the flood, and over mountains covered with ice. True an alternative was offered them: they might go to mass. The historian Leger informs us that he had a congregation of well-nigh two thousand persons, and that not a man of them all accepted the alternative. "I can well bear them this testimony," he observes, "seeing I was their pastor for eleven years, and I knew every one of them by name; judge, reader whether I had not cause to weep for joy, as well as for sorrow, when I saw that all the fury of these wolves was not able to influence one of these lambs, and that no earthly advantage could shake their constancy. And when I marked the traces of their blood on the snow and ice over which they had dragged their lacerated limbs, had I not cause to bless God that I had seen accomplished in their poor bodies what remained of the measure of the sufferings of Christ, and especially when I beheld this heavy cross borne by them with a fortitude so noble?"*

{*Quoted by Wylie, vol. 2, p. 482.}

The Treachery of Pianessa

"Had the persecution ended here," says Mr. Hugh Acland, "humanity would yet have been saved from an indelible stain. The marquess of Pianessa entered the valleys at the head of fifteen thousand men; the consequent massacre is too horrible for detailed narration." Only a part of the Waldenses had suffered from the decree of Gastaldo, but the fixed object of the propaganda was the extirpation of the entire race. The marquess, being well aware of the desperate resistance he must encounter if the Vaudois should flee and unite in the mountains, betook himself to the old weapon of Jezebel-treachery. He feigned a wish for conciliation, and invited deputies to confer on the necessary terms. The wiles of the enemy alas! were successful. Well skilled in craftiness, he thoroughly deceived the simple honest-hearted Vaudois, after treating them with great kindness, and assuring them that all would be amicably settled, if they would receive as a token of fidelity on their part, a small company of soldiers in the different villages. Some of the more sagacious, especially the pastor Leger, suspected treachery; but the people in general, willing to hope for a time of peace, opened the doors of their houses to the soldiers of Pianessa. Two days were spent in great friendliness; the soldiers and the villagers eating at the same table, sleeping under the same roof and conversing freely together. These two days were employed by the enemy in making preparations for the general massacre. The villages and roads throughout the valleys were occupied by the soldiers.

At four o'clock on the morning of the third day, April 24th, a signal was given from the castle, and the assassins began their work of death. But with the exception of pastor Leger, no historian attempts to give details; and he did it as a matter of duty, being an eyewitness, and had his narrative verified by others. A priest and a monk accompanied each party of soldiers, to set fire to the houses as soon as the inmates had been despatched. "Our valley of Lucerne," exclaims Leger, "which was like a Goshen, was now converted into a Mount Etna, darting forth cinders, and fire, and flames. The earth resembled a furnace, and the air was filled with a darkness like that of Egypt, which might be felt, from the smoke of towns, villages, temples, mansions, granges, and buildings, all burning in the flames of the Vatican." But here, it was not as in the St. Bartholomew massacre, the instant despatch of their victims but the deliberate invention of barbarities and cruelties hitherto unknown. As many of the strongest escaped by their knowledge of the hills, tiny children, their mothers, the sick, and the aged were the chief victims of the soldiers of the propaganda. But we would not subject our readers to the heart-sickening details of Leger's awful narrative.

The Faith and Heroism of Gianavello

During this terrible persecution which carried fire and sword into so many of the valleys, Rora had its full proportion of calamity; but it called forth one of those ardent spirits which from time to time God raises up to exhibit those virtues which are seldom brought into action but in moments of great emergency. We allude to Joshua Gianavello, a native of the valley of Rora, but truly a mighty man of valour, whose genius and intrepidity are the subject of unqualified admiration. On the morning of the 24th, which witnessed the merciless slaughter in the valleys of Lucerne, Angrogna, La Torre, Villar, St. John, and others, a similar doom was intended for Rora, and Count Christovel, with four hundred soldiers, was charged with its execution.

Gianavello had narrowly watched their movements, and, seconded by a small determined band, seven in all, he threw himself into the defile by which the enemy was advancing upon Rora. There was not a moment to lose. The soldiers-naturally thinking that the ruthless proceedings on the other side of the Pelice had paralysed all further resistance, and ensured them an easy entrance into Rora-advanced with little attention to order. Under cover of the rocks and trees Gianavello and his band could hear the conversation, and as one of the soldiers, counting on their work being easy observed, that the people of Rora would only be waiting to bid us welcome. "We do!" exclaimed a voice of thunder when a volley of musketry from right and left carried death into the advancing column. Seven of the troop were killed. Then, reloading their pieces, and quickly changing their ground, they fired again with a like effect. No enemy was visible; but the volume of curling smoke that rolled down the rocks, convinced them that they were caught between two fires. Thrown into utter confusion by this unexpected salutation, they began to retreat in terror and precipitation. But Gianavello and his men bounding from cover to cover kept up a deadly fire, until the superstitious soldiers began to feel as if every tree discharged a bullet. Fifty-four of their number were left dead behind them, and Rora was saved from the meditated destruction.

The disgrace which attached to this enterprise Pianessa resolved to retrieve by a fresh attempt. He organized a battalion of nearly a thousand men to cross the mountain. Fully aware that such would be the case, Gianavello was on the watch and saw the enemy enter. His band was now increased to seventeen men-eleven good marksmen and six expert slingers. When the invaders had advanced to a certain point, this invisible army opened so galling a fire upon them that they were again driven back to their quarters with great loss.

The news of this second defeat was the signal for vengeance. To increase his host, Pianessa ordered detachments from the neighbouring stations, and having completed his muster, sent them once more on the pass to Rora. The numbers were so overwhelming on this occasion that the patriot and his band waited for a favourable moment. Meanwhile they knelt down in prayer and gave thanks to God who had twice by their hands saved the people, and prayed that their hearts and arms might be strengthened to work yet another deliverance. A company of soldiers, laden with booty, were immediately attacked; and, as if possessed by a superstitious terror, endeavoured to make their escape, throwing away their plunder. Their flight became most disastrous; great pieces of rock were rolled down upon them, mingled with deadly bullets; and many in their haste fell over the precipices, so that only a few survived.

But in place of the blinded bigot, Pianessa, seeing in these events the finger of God, he was only the more inflamed with rage, and jealous for his own military character. He assembled all the royal troops-to the number of eight or ten thousand men-and calling his officers together, he held a council of war. What was to be done? A mere handful of peasants had foiled the tactics of a disciplined army; and the troops were charged with cowardice and incapacity. It was resolved that the whole army should be divided into three separate companies, and, by a simultaneous movement from every accessible avenue, secure the destruction of Rora. To meet this overwhelming force, Gianavello was compelled to take up his position on the summit of the pass, and while bravely combating with the first troop of three thousand, the other divisions forced a passage in the opposite direction.

The Massacre

The village of Rora is now in the hands of the pope's soldiers, who, meeting with little resistance, abandoned themselves to the work of destruction. The inhabitants consisted of old men, women and children; the effective members of the community were now expanding their patriotic efforts on the frontier. A general massacre followed. Nearly ten thousand assassins fell upon the helpless and unoffending peasants with all the impetuosity of wolves rushing upon a fold. No distinction was made of age or sex. Happy they who were slain at once, and thus escaped indignities and barbarities, to which we cannot give utterance. "Every soldier," says Dr. Beattie, "took upon himself the office of an executioner, till the devoted hamlet presented the spectacle of a vast scaffold strewn with victims, and streaming with blood. When the morning sun rose upon the village, not a voice was heard, nor a hearth left standing; but a mass of smouldering ashes, through which protruded at intervals the ghastly features of the slain, carried its appeal to the gates of heaven"-page 56.

The wife and three daughters of Gianavello, Pianessa spared from the sword that he might work on the feelings of the father and husband. He threatened to burn them alive unless he surrendered himself a prisoner and abjured his religion. Gianavello nobly replied: "As for the first condition, my wife and children are in thy hands, and if such be God's will, thou mayest accomplish thy threat; but this barbarous act can only affect their bodies, for which their religion teaches them not to be over-solicitous. If brought to the stake, they will be supported in the hour of trial. Their faith is proof against terror, and enables the innocent to look with complacent eye upon what is terrible only to the guilty. What was once said to Pilate, I now say to Pianessa:-'Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above.' As to the question of apostasy, shall I abjure these principles I have so long defended with my blood-principles unchangeable as the word of God? Shall I desert His cause for the hopes of a renegade? No! in that cause which I have thus feebly espoused, - I am ready to perish. The terrors of the Inquisition are mild, compared with the upbraidings of conscience; and I shall never incur the one by shrinking from the other." He escaped to Geneva.

What could Pianessa do? What could the papal armies do? What could the legions of hell do against a religion that produced such faith in God, and such champions for His truth? They might crush for a time the feeble few, "the poor of the flock," and seem to triumph; but God is in the midst of them, and in the most wonderful manner preserves a remnant for Himself, a seed to serve Him, the silver link in the unbroken chain of witnesses; and the happy day will come when He will vindicate their cause in the presence of an assembled universe, and lifting up their heads on high, He will honour them with the martyr's crown, while their enemies, covered with shame and branded with eternal infamy, will seek the darkest regions of the lost that they may conceal the enormity of their guilt, and the undying agonies of hopeless despair. Those shrieks and groans of the dying which echoed and re-echoed among the Alpine hills shall be heard again; and those quivering limbs of frightened children for whom there was no pity shall be seen again, but in awful frightful vision. Haunted by such sights and sounds, with a load of guilt which now oppresses the imagination, what must that place of torment be? What vitality to the worm that never dies, what vehemence to the flame that shall never be quenched, must the recollection of such deeds for ever give! Still the grand truth remains, that, by a timely repentance and a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus, our sins, however many, are all washed away; but the soul that dies impenitent is lost for ever!

The Sympathy of England

The Protestant states of Europe were horror-struck when they heard of these massacres. But nowhere did the cry from the valleys awaken a deeper sympathy, or draw forth a stronger expression of indignation, than in England. "Cromwell, who was then at the head of the state, proclaimed a fast, ordered a collection for the sufferers, and wrote to all the Protestant princes, and to the king of France, with the intent of enlisting their sympathy and aid on behalf of the Vaudois. Milton, the Protector's Latin secretary, wrote the letters, and in token of the deep interest Cromwell took in this affair, he sent Sir Samuel Morland with a letter to the duke of Savoy."*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 486.}

The ambassador wisely visited the valleys on his way to Turin, and saw with his own eyes the frightful desolations which they still presented. After a partial allusion to the cruelties he was sent by the Protector to complain of, he, with great plainness and fervour of speech, proceeded: "Why should I mention more? Though I could enumerate infinitely more, did not my mind altogether revolt from them. If all the tyrants of all times and ages were alive again-I speak without offence to your royal highness, as convinced that none of these things are to be attributed to your highness- they would doubtless be ashamed to find that nothing barbarous, nor inhuman, in comparison of these deeds, had ever been invented by them. In the meantime the angels are stricken with horror! Men are dizzy with amazement! Heaven itself appears astonished by the cries of the dying, and the very earth to blush with the gore of so many innocent persons! Avenge not Thyself, O God, for this mighty wickedness, this parricidal slaughter. Let Thy blood, O Christ, wash out this blood!"

Ambassadors from the cantons of Switzerland, Geneva, Holland, and the Protestants of France, all denounced the late cruelties in the strongest terms. "So deep an interest was perhaps never displayed on any other occasion, neither as to the number of potentates partaking in it, nor as to the vast sums contributed to relieve the greatly afflicted Waldenses."*

{*History of the Vaudois, by Hugh Dyke Acland, p. 69.}

The duke of Savoy, pretending to listen to such remonstrances, was induced to propose peace to the "men of the valleys." The youthful prince found himself completely deceived by his mother and her advisers. He had lost thousands of his best subjects, the best tillers of the ground, the best rent-payers, the most faithful to his throne; but more- he had lost the best of his army, and spent his treasure. He declared that "to kill one Vaudois cost him fifteen soldiers." But what was his advantage? It was all loss in this life, but the priests assured him that he had secured the favour of heaven.

When the "Grand Monarch," Louis XIV. of France, was dying, he asked his confessor, father Le Chaise, "By what good deed as a king, he might atone for his many sins as a man." "Extirpate Protestantism from France," was the Jesuit's ready reply. He speedily complied, and revoked the edict of Nantes, which led to the slaughter and banishment of tens-we may say, of hundreds-of thousands of God's witnesses in France. In this way was the humane duke of Savoy influenced to send an armed force into the valleys, in order to reduce the inhabitants to the Romish obedience, or to exterminate them. But he saw his mistake, and we have no doubt was willing enough to conclude a peace, such as it was. The death of Cromwell, which took place in 1658, deprived the Waldenses of their sincerest friend and most powerful intercessor. He had sanctioned a collection for them, and contributed from his own purse two thousand pounds. The whole amount collected at that time was thirty-eight thousand pounds.

The Peace of 1655

The peace which followed the great massacre of 1655 lasted about thirty years; but history speaks of this period as rest only, when contrasted with the storms that preceded it. The Catholics still found many ways in which to annoy and oppress those whom they could neither conquer nor convert. The condition of the Vaudois, after the treaty of peace was signed, is thus described by Sir Samuel Morland, the English ambassador: "To this very day, they labour under most heavy burdens, which are laid on their shoulders by those rigid task-masters of the church of Rome.... Those very valleys which they inhabit are no other than a prison or dungeon, to which the fort of La Torre serves as a door. To all this I must add, that, notwithstanding those large supplies which have been sent them from England or foreign states, yet so great is the number of hungry creatures, and so grievous the oppressions of their popish enemies, who lie in wait to bereave them of whatsoever is given them, and snatch at every morsel of meat that goes into their mouths, that verily ever and anon they are ready to eat their own flesh for want of bread. The tongue of the suckling cleaves to the roof of its mouth, and the young children ask bread and no man gives it to them. The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets. Their miseries are more sore. and grievous than words can express-they are in a manner dying while they yet live. No grapes in their vineyards, no cattle in their fields, no herds in their stalls, no corn in their garners, no meal in their barrels, no oil in their cruse."*

{*Acland, p. 71.}

The Persecution and Expulsion of the Waldenses

Thus the inhabitants of the valleys struggled on until the year 1686, when a fresh war broke out under the sovereignty of Victor Amadeus II., but chiefly through the influence of Louis XIV. of France. When joined by the French auxiliaries, the united force amounted to between fifteen and twenty thousand men. Though vast numbers of the invaders were killed, the peasants were overpowered, and those who escaped the exterminating vengeance of the sword were dragged to prison, and the valleys were quite depopulated. We have no space for details but would just add, that treachery and atrocity, as usual, on the one side, and heroic devotedness on the other, marked the progress of the war; but treachery accomplished its end, and atrocities followed. "Fourteen thousand healthy mountaineers," says Henri Arnaud, "were thrust into the dungeons of Piedmont. But when, at the intercession of the Swiss deputies, their prisons were opened, three thousand skeletons only crawled out." Such were the tender mercies of Holy Mother Church; and such would be her tender mercies today, were her opportunities the same. At a distance of nearly two hundred years, the heart sickens, the imagination is oppressed, recoiling from the contemplation of such cold-blooded heartless cruelties. Eleven thousand perished in a few months from fetid air, cold, hunger, disease, inhumanity and utter neglect. What must have been the state of the atmosphere with such fearful mortality! But we cannot proceed further.

The prisons were thrown open in the beginning of October; but only on condition that the prisoners should immediately leave the country and embrace perpetual exile. Winter was already advancing in all its terrors, but no mercy could be shown to such heretics, and the famished band, the same evening, was driven forth to the Alps. They commenced their dreary march towards Mount Cenis; darkness soon overtook them, and before sunrise, more than one hundred and fifty had perished on the road. But the most afflicting spectacle in this harrowing procession, was that of the poor mothers and their infants. They turned their backs to the storm, so as to protect the child in arms, but many of them dropped with fatigue, and were wrapped in the stern winding-sheet of the Alps. The distressed exiles earnestly entreated the officer in command to let them rest for a day, especially as the weather showed signs of an approaching hurricane. The officer, however, had no authority to grant their prayer, and the dreary march was resumed. "During the hurricane," says Dr. Beattie, "the snow, resembling pounded ice, is tossed furiously around-like waves of sea-foam carried into the air-and deposited in overwhelming masses along the traveller's path. In its effect the snow-storm of the Alps is like the sand-storm in the Great Desert, saturating the air with its particles, and when blowing in the face, produced blindness and blistering of the skin. Under such circumstances, every hour must have been marked by some distressing incident- some new disaster that rapidly diminished their number, and sickened their hearts."*

{*For details and illustrations, see Dr. Beattie's Waldenses. Wylie's History of Protestantism-Waldenses.}

The Arrival of the Exiles at Geneva

About the middle of December the survivors of this wayworn band arrived at the gates of Geneva; but so exhausted, that several of them died between the outer and the inner gates of the city, "finding," as one has said, "the end of their life at the beginning of their liberty." Some could not speak from their tongues being swollen, and others could not hold out their hands to receive the kindness of their new friends, from their arms being frost-bitten. All, however, that humanity could suggest, all that a christian brotherhood could supply, was brought to their relief. But Geneva could not contain them all, and arrangements were made for distributing the exiles among the Reformed cantons. And the inhabitants of these cantons-to their praise be it recorded-vied with one another in offering them the most cordial sympathy, united with the most friendly ministries of brotherly love. But neither present comforts nor future prospects could make them forget their ancestral homes. As they wandered by the banks of the Rhine, they were like the Jews of old by the rivers of Babylon-they hung their harps upon the willows, and sat down and wept as they remembered their much loved valleys with all their tender recollections and cherished associations.

For the attainment of this grand object they made several attempts which proved unsuccessful. The enterprise being discovered, the senates of the different cantons in which the exiles resided, foreseeing that their departure might compromise them with the papal powers, took measures to prevent their embarkation. This was a great disappointment to the yearning heart of the Vaudois, and though they returned to their different communes, and resumed their industrious occupations, they were secretly engaged in devising measures for renewing the enterprise under more favourable circumstances. In the meantime the duke of Savoy, being made acquainted with the intention of the exiles, caught the alarm, and kindling his signals along the frontier, placed everything in a warlike attitude. He also ordered two regiments of one thousand strong, commanded by officers of high birth and merit, to take possession of the roads, bridges, and passes. While yet deliberating on the best measure to be adopted in this painful dilemma, their pastor and captain Henri Arnaud, addressed them from the words in Luke 12 "Fear not, little flock," etc., which greatly revived their spirits and their patriotism.

The Embarkation of the Exiles

At length, however, many circumstances combined to lead the Vaudois to believe that the hand of the Lord was opening the way for their return. Their place of appointed rendezvous was a large forest, in the Pays du Vaud, near the town of Neon, on the northern shore of the Leman. When all was ready, their chief offered up prayer to God in the midst of his devoted followers, and committed the expedition to Him. They embarked between ten and eleven o'clock, August 16th, 1689, and crossed the lake by starlight. When all had arrived on the southern shore of the lake, they numbered between eight and nine hundred. M. Arnaud-a man spoken of in the highest terms for his piety, patriotism, courage, and skill in military tactics-divided the whole into three bodies- advance-guard, rear-guard, and center, according to the system of regular troops, which the Vaudois always pursued. Thus they commenced their march back to their native valleys, supposed by some historians to be one of the most wonderful exploits ever performed by any people. Besides the natural difficulties of the way, such as the height of the mountains, the depth of the snow, the treachery of the glaciers, and the heavy rain, the roads were covered, and the passes guarded by the duke's soldiers, aided by the French; so that every inch of the way was disputed, and they had to fight their way right through to the valleys.

The feelings which sprung up in their hearts, when their native mountains first burst upon their sight, will be more easily imagined than described. Some could, no doubt, individualize the very peaks under whose shadow they had spent their infancy and youth, with a thousand other tender recollections, and for the recovery of which they had exposed themselves these thirty-one days to every danger, hardship, and privation, which could afflict the body or depress the mind.

"But now with that blest landscape in their view

No fears could daunt them, and no foes subdue.

A voice still whispered in their ear-Advance!

So heaven restores you your inheritance!

Beneath your mountains, where the sun goes down

Your sires have bled, and martyrs won their crown

But henceforth, at their hearths, and on their tombs,

Peace shall preside-the olive branch shall bloom

And they who now lay watch to shed their blood

Shall own at last one cause-one brotherhood!"*

{*Dr. Beattie, p. 211.}

The march of the Vaudois from the borders of the Lake of Geneva to their native valleys, not only was signalised by incidents unsurpassed in the history of events, but was crowned with success. As the Lord would have it, a quarrel arose about this time between the king of France and Victor Amadeus, which induced the latter to take this heroic band into favour. "Hitherto," said he, to the scattered remnant of his Piedmontese subjects, "we have been enemies; but from henceforth we must be friends; others are to blame more than myself for the evils you have suffered." This happy turn in their affairs was followed by treaties between the English and the Piedmontese governments, in the reigns of William III. and queen Anne. From that period to the present Great Britain has been empowered, by virtue of these solemn compacts, to interpose for their protection, and their churches ought to have had rest. But again and again, under false pretences, these oppressed people have had to contend against petty injuries and harassing grievances.*

{*See a most interesting book entitled, The Glorious Recovery by the Vaudois of their Native Valleys, by Henry Arnaud, their Commander and Pastor, with a Compendious History of that People by Hugh Dyke Acland. The march lasted thirty-one days, and there the reader will find the particulars of each day. Our space forbids even a sketch of these interesting days.}

During the French empire of Napoleon, when the iron crown of Italy was placed upon the head of "the Corsican," the Waldenses enjoyed equal rights and privileges in common with the rest of their countrymen. But, at the restoration of the House of Savoy to the kingdom of Sardinia, they were replaced under their former disabilities. This was the effect of evil counsel, for the restored prince acknowledged, on more occasions than one, "the constant and distinguished proof which the Waldenses had ever given to his predecessors of attachment and fidelity. I know," he added, "that I have faithful subjects in the Waldenses, and that they will never dishonour their character." But evil counsellors prevailed, and the yoke was again placed upon their necks.

The chief difficulty with which the Waldenses have now to contend is poverty, which need excite no surprise. But the Protestants of England have not been inattentive to the condition of their brethren in the valleys of Piedmont. Public collections have on several occasions been made throughout the kingdom; and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts is the trustee of considerable funds raised on their behalf.

Thus the Lord has watched over, preserved, and maintained a witness and a testimony for Himself in these valleys from time immemorial. And still the oil of His grace flows, and the lamp of His truth burns, while the thrones of their oppressors have been cast to the ground, and their dynasties extinguished for ever. Even the gates of Rome have been thrown open, so that we leave the Waldensian church, through the wonderful providence of God, in a wide and open field, for the exercise of their christian zeal and missionary labours.*

{*Encycl. Brit., vol. 11, p. 543. History of Protestantism, vol. 2, p. 511. For details of the creeds, confessions, catechisms, etc. of the Waldenses, see Gilly's First and Second Visits to the Valleys of Piedmont.}

53 British Isles

Chapter 53

The Reformation in the British Isles

Ireland

Although we can scarcely speak of a Reformation in Ireland, we may briefly notice the changes in her ecclesiastical history. The connection of Ireland with the crown of England originated, as we have already seen,* in a compact with Henry II., Pope Adrian IV., and the Irish prelates of the day. "This treaty," says Dr. Phelan, "would be memorable, if it had no other claim to the consideration of posterity than the hypocrisy, the injustice, and the mutual treachery of the parties; but their views and pretensions, descending regularly to their successors, and exerting a constant influence on Irish affairs, make it an object of nearer interest. Without attention to these, it is impossible either to unravel the history of Ireland, or to judge correctly of its state at the present crisis." "The acquisition of a superiority by Henry over Ireland was greatly aided," says Mosheim, "by a desire of the national hierarchy to attain that independent and prosperous condition, which was then common to all clerical communities closely connected with Rome." Thus was the position of the bishops greatly improved, and their revenues increased, though at the high price of the independence of their nation.

{*See p. 594.}

In 1172 Henry completed his conquest of the country; the clergy submitted to the papal dictation, agreed to pay Peter's pence to Rome, proclaimed Henry's title to the sovereign dominion of Ireland, and took the oath of fidelity to himself and his successors. "Adrian's sentence," says a friend of Romanism, "violated the rights of nations, and the most sacred laws of men, under the special pretext of religion and Reformation. Ireland was blotted out from the map of nations, and consigned to the loss of freedom without a tribunal and without a crime." The hierarch, however, did not regret the change. Hitherto, the native chieftains had exercised a power over the church, which tended to keep its clergy poor and subservient; so that they welcomed the sovereignty of England and the power of Rome as protection against the ravages of their lay-lords.

"Under the ancient system, an Irish prince was as absolute master of the priesthood as of any other class among his followers. But a new order of things was introduced by Henry II., and thenceforward kept regular pace with the advance of British and papal power. All the privileges of the English church, and all those vexatious pretensions, which had just attained a temporary triumph in the canonization of Thomas-a-Becket, were communicated to the Irish clergy and maintained by them with more pertinacity, in proportion to the weakness of the civil power." From this period the Irish church came to be essentially Romish, the papal encroachments were tamely submitted to, and both the civil and spiritual rights of the Irish prelates were at the entire disposal of the Roman pontiff. Henry, in order to maintain his sovereignty over the Irish clergy, filled up the vacant sees mostly with Englishmen, and the consequence was, that a spirit of jealousy and bitter hostility began to be manifested between the English and the Irish ecclesiastics. Disputes arose; the English sovereign asserted his privilege in nominating whom he would; the Irish clergy, meanwhile appealed to Rome to decide the question, or rather, to confirm their nomination. The mitre usually prevailed over the crown, and the pope's authority steadily increased.*

{*For minute and most reliable details, see Dr. Phelan's History of the Policy of the Church of Rome in Ireland.}

Thus the contest between the English sovereigns and the Irish clergy commenced; the latter sought to transfer their allegiance as churchmen from the sovereign of England to the pope of Rome, so that the struggle for supremacy lasted for centuries, even until the era of the Reformation.

Henry VIII. and the Irish Church

When Henry had secured the cordial compliance of his English subjects with the principles of the Reformation, he resolved to obtain, if possible, a like reception for the new doctrines in Ireland also; but to his deep mortification, his proposal was treated with the greatest indifference and neglect. The advocates of the pope's supremacy in opposition to the king's were zealous and determined. George Cromer, a prelate of ability and learning-who, being primate of all Ireland, filled also, at one time, the high office of chancellor-headed the opposition to Henry's proposed assumption of papal privileges, defeated his purpose for a time, and retarded the progress of what might be called the Reformation in Ireland.

The chief agent in forwarding the royal designs was George Brown, the first Protestant prelate that held a see in Ireland, having been appointed by Henry, archbishop of Dublin. His zeal for the doctrines of the Reformation in opposition to the dogmas of the Romish church, met with the most violent opposition from the bigoted Catholics, and his life was frequently in imminent danger from the zealots of that party. At the suggestion of Brown an Irish parliament was convened at Dublin in 1536, by which all opposition was silenced, and the national religion was formally changed, the Reformed faith being established as the recognized religion of the country. "Various statutes were enacted with the view of carrying out this great object. The king was declared supreme earthly head of the church in Ireland: he was invested with the first-fruits of bishoprics, and other secular promotions in the Irish church, as well as the first-fruits of abbeys, priories, colleges, and hospitals; all appeals to Rome in spiritual causes were forbidden; the authority of the pope was solemnly renounced, and all who should dare to acknowledge it in Ireland were made subject to praemunire-a heavy penalty: all officers of every kind and degree were required to take the oath of supremacy, and the refusal to take it was pronounced, as in England, to be high treason. Thus was Protestantism declared to be the religion of Ireland by law established. The religious houses were suppressed, and their lands vested for ever in the crown."*

{*Faiths of the World, vol. 2, p. 153; Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 491.}

The popish party in Ireland was very indignant at the assumption of such spiritual authority by the king of England. Numbers of the Irish chieftains avowed their readiness to take up arms in defence of the old religion. Special emissaries were secretly despatched to Rome to express the devotion of Cromer and his party to the holy father, and to implore his interposition in behalf of his spiritual authority in Ireland. Papal commissioners were immediately despatched to encourage those who were opposing the recent enactments, to rouse the chieftains of the north, and more particularly O'Neill, to rally round the sacred standard of their forefathers, and draw the sword in defence of the papal supremacy. O'Neill joyfully accepted the part assigned him by his papal majesty. A confederacy was formed for the suppression of heresy; an army was raised; O'Neill had himself proclaimed head of the northern Irish on the ancient hill of royalty, according to the custom of the native monarchs of Ireland. But this idle display and pomp was soon brought to an end. The deputy suspected a rising, and was prepared to meet it. The victory of Bellahoe, on the borders of Meath, broke the power of the northern chiefs: struck with an unaccountable panic, they all gave way and fled.

Several attempts were afterwards made to do battle in defence of the pope's authority, but the prompt measures of the government frustrated every new scheme at insurrection, and the chieftains with their tumultuous bands were dispersed in all directions. These repeated defeats weakened the influence of the Ulster nobles, rendered the cause of the pope more hopeless, and led some of the most turbulent of the chiefs to profess reconciliation to the king's government.

Henry, King of Ireland

The act of supremacy, which was passed in 1537, was followed in 1542 by another to recognize the sovereign as king of Ireland, instead of lord. Hitherto the only title which the pope had allowed the sovereigns of England to assume was the subordinate one of lord; but this term was now changed by act of parliament into that of king. The alteration was commemorated by conferring peerages on several of the heads of the great families, thereby sinking the chieftain in the peer; and some of inferior note were created barons. Thus was peace restored to Ireland in so far as the great laymen were concerned, but the priesthood was not so easily won over to the cause of Reform.

After the death of Henry, and the accession of Edward VI. to the throne, the lord-deputy of Ireland received a royal order to see that the Romish ritual was superseded by the new English liturgy. This fresh innovation roused the clergy to a bold and determined opposition. An assembly of the prelacy and inferior clergy was immediately convened; the new liturgy was treated with the utmost scorn; Dowdale, the primate, was as violent in his opposition to Edward's liturgy, as Cromer had been to Henry's supremacy. This opposition, however, was not allowed to prevail; by order of the government the English service was used in the cathedral of Christ Church, Dublin, on Easter Day, 1551.

A new revolution, occasioned by the early death of Edward, and the accession of Mary, added to this state of distraction and confusion. The religion of the country was again changed. Dowdale, who had withdrawn to the continent during the reign of Edward, was recalled to the primacy; the most violent of his opponents fled the country, and many of the clergy returned to their former faith. Liberty was given for the celebration of mass without penalty or compulsion; and the Roman Catholic faith was once more established in Ireland. The profession of Protestantism was made penal by an Irish parliament in 1556, and the sanguinary spirit of intolerance spoke of trampling down all opposition to the papacy by fire and sword; but happily the slow pace of colonial business long delayed the transmission of authority for commencing an active persecution. "At length, however," says Mosheim, "a commission for that purpose was prepared, and Dr. Cole, one of the commissioners, left London with it for Dublin. Exulting over the prospect of this crushing Irish Protestantism, he indiscreetly boasted of his charge before a woman at Chester, who was a staunch adherent of the Reformation and had a brother in the Irish metropolis. She managed to steal the commission, and to place in its room a pack of cards with the knave of clubs uppermost. Unsuspicious of his loss, the talkative messenger went on to Dublin, where he landed, October the 7th, 1558, and there looking for his credentials, was confounded by finding them so ridiculously supplanted.... A new commission was, after some delay, obtained, but before it reached Dublin, Queen Mary was dead."*

{*Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 496.}

On the accession of Elizabeth at her sister's death, the queen's well-known adherence to the cause of the Reformation, revived the hearts of Protestants throughout her dominions, gave a new impulse to Irish affairs, and set the whole country, lay and clerical, once more in motion. The whole ecclesiastical system of Mary was reversed; Protestantism was restored, and proclaimed to be henceforth the established religion of Ireland.

Irish Presbyterian Church

Having said thus much about the establishment of episcopacy in Ireland, we must briefly notice the origin of Presbyterianism in that country.

When Elizabeth ascended the throne, she found the whole island, from the restless ambition and jealousy of the chieftains, in a state of petty warfare. During the latter part of her reign, as well as the early part of the reign of her successor, James I., the northern provinces had been the scene of incessant conspiracies and insurrections. One rebellion after another kept the country in a state of commotion, fomented always by the popes of Rome, sometimes aided by Philip II. of Spain, and Cardinal Richelieu of France. Bull after bull was issued, calling upon the princes, prelates, nobles, and people of Ireland to contend for the recovery of their liberty, and the defence of the holy church; and rather to lose their lives than take that wicked and pestilent oath of supremacy, whereby the sceptre of the Catholic church was wrested from the hand of the vicar of God. Such appeals, coming from the pope himself, could not fail to exert a powerful influence upon an ignorant and superstitious people.

Details of these long continued civil wars, the extinction of titles, and the confiscation of property, fall not within the limits of our "Short Papers;" but we may just add, that by the death of some of the leaders of the rebellion, and by the flight of others, nearly the whole of Ulster was forfeited to the crown, and fell into the hands of King James. This vast tract of land comprehended six northern counties, and spread over five hundred thousand acres. The king resolved to remodel the province by removing the ancient possessors, and introducing a colony of Scotch and English settlers in their stead. This led to the plantation of Ulster, the benefits of which are felt to this day. Industry, in a short time, changed the face of the country. The lands were cultivated and improved, a number of flourishing towns were established, and the province of Ulster became the most prosperous district in Ireland. But that evil spirit of popish hatred towards every aspect of Protestantism and England never ceased to plot, until it burst forth in the great rebellion and the revolting massacre of 1641. On the 23rd of October, the carnage began; on the 30th, the order for a general massacre was issued from the camp of Sir Phelim O'Neill, and, shortly after, the manifesto of the bishop MacMahon proclaimed the commencement of a WAR OF REBELLION.*

{*Dr. Phelan's History, p. 332; Faiths of the World, vol. 2, p. 158. For lengthy and minute details see Froude's History of Ireland.}

William, prince of Orange, after the battle of the Boyne, commenced his reign by assuring the Irish Protestants that he had come to Ireland to free them from popish tyranny, and he doubted not, by the divine assistance, that he would complete his design. The war was brought to a close, peace was restored, and the Presbyterian church, being reinstated in all its privileges, addressed itself to the great work of preaching the gospel and spreading the truth to the blessing of many precious souls.

Scotland

Having already noticed the religious condition of Scotland from the earliest times down to the dawn of the Reformation,* we may commence our present sketch with the effects of that great revolution on the people of that country; but we must retrace our steps for a moment, and renew our acquaintance with the existing state of things.

{*See p. 305; p. 596.}

Before the Reformation, which commenced in Germany had found its way to the distant shores of Scotland, a spirit of religious Reform had begun to display itself in several districts, especially in the Lowlands. Many of the Lollards, or disciples of Wycliffe, who had fled from the persecution in England, found a refuge in Scotland and there remained. These, meeting with the descendants of the ancient Culdees may have quietly formed a little missionary band, maintained unbroken the chain of God's witnesses, and kept the lamp of His testimony burning in that benighted land. They denied the dogma of transubstantiation and the power of the priesthood; affirming, "That there is a universal priesthood, of which every man and woman who believes in the Saviour is a member; that the pope, who exalts himself above God, is against God; that it is not permissible to take up arms for the things of faith, and that priests may marry."

Among the protectors of these enlightened Christians- compared with many of the Reformers, especially as to universal priesthood and arms-was John Campbell, laird of Cessnock, a man well versed in the scriptures, but not equal to his wife, who could "set the dogmas of the priests face to face with the holy scriptures, and show their falsehood." "On the testimony of both friend and foe," says another historian, "there were few counties in the Lowlands of Scotland where these Lollards were not to be found. They were numerous in Fife; they were still more numerous in the districts of Cunningham and Kyle; hence their name, The Lollards of Kyle. In the reign of James IV. about 1494, some thirty Lollards were summoned before the archiepiscopal tribunal of Glasgow on a charge of heresy. They were almost all gentlemen of landed property in the districts already named; and were charged with denying the mass, purgatory, the worshipping of images, the praying to saints, the pope's vicarship, his power to pardon sin-in short, all the peculiar doctrines of Romanism. Their defence appears to have been so spirited that the king, before whom they argued their cause, shielded them from the doom that the archbishop, Blackadder, would undoubtedly have pronounced upon them."*

{*D'Aubigne's Calvin, vol. 6, p. 7; Wylie, vol. 3, p. 468.}

The flames of martyrdom had not yet been kindled, we may say, and the spirit of burning had not yet taken full hold of the priesthood, or such heretics would not have escaped. But such witnesses plainly prove, what we have found in different countries, that the Spirit of God was working and preparing a people in all parts of Europe for the great revolution in the sixteenth century.

The Progress of the Reformation

As early as the year 1526, the doctrines of the Reformation had made considerable progress in Scotland. Vessels from the continent were arriving at Aberdeen, Montrose, Dundee, and Leith, bringing fresh tidings of the progress of Protestantism, and secretly discharging packages of pamphlets and sermons of the Reformers. In this way the shores of the Firth of Forth were broad cast with the seeds of Lutheranism. When Tyndale had translated the New Testament into English, large numbers were imported from Flanders, and industriously circulated among the people. The Reformation on a divine basis now began. The darkness that had so long brooded over that country was being rolled away by the light of heaven. Almost every person had a New Testament in his hand, and God was using it in much blessing.

This was God's great mercy to Scotland, for the clergy had become so violent, that the living voice would have been instantly suppressed, though this too was needed for the great work, but the people must first be prepared by the teaching of the word of God. The Bible was Scotland's only missionary and Reformer at that moment. "With silent foot," says one, "it began to traverse the land; it came to the castle gates of the primate, yet he heard not its steps; it preached in cities, but its voice fell not on the ear of bishops; it passed along the highways and byways unobserved by the spy. To the churchman's eye all seemed calm . . . but in the stillness of the midnight hour, men welcomed this new instructor, and opened their hearts to its comforting and beneficent teaching. The Bible was emphatically the nation's one great teacher. It was stamping its own ineffaceable character upon the Scottish Reformation, and the place the Bible thus early made for itself in the people's affections, and the authority it acquired over their judgments, it was destined never to lose."* But however sacredly and firmly we believe this noble testimony of a most reliable witness, the living voice, the confessor and martyr, were all needed to arouse the nation from the deadly sleep of popery in which it had been so long and so fatally sunk.

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 3, p. 169.}

First Martyrs of the Scottish Reformation

Few martyrdoms have had such a place in the human mind as Patrick Hamilton's. His youth, his accomplishments, his refinement, his learning, his blameless life, his noble and gentle spirit, all united to make him an object of universal pity. But he was guilty of Rome's unpardonable sin. On him was the honour conferred by his divine Lord and Master, to be the first preacher of the glad tidings of salvation to his countrymen, and the first to seal his testimony with his blood. But more, the cruel death of this royal youth was made a great blessing to many, among both the learned and the common people.

He was the son of Sir Patrick Hamilton, of Kincavil, and the great-grandson, by both the father's and the mother's side, of James II. He was born in the year 1504, and being designed for the church, the abbacy of Ferne was conferred upon him in his childhood according to a custom which prevailed at that time. He received his early education at St. Andrew's; and about the year 1517, he left Scotland, to pursue a course of study in the University of Paris, where he acquired his degree of Master of Arts. He may also have learnt something of the truth in the school of Lefevre and Farel. In 1523, he returned to his native country, and entered himself at St. Andrew's University. From the character of his conversation, and the free language which he used in speaking of the corruptions of the church, he drew down upon himself the suspicions of the clergy, and inquisition was made into his opinions. Under these circumstances he again left Scotland, and, attracted by the fame of Luther, repaired to Wittemberg. Having spent some time with Luther and Melancthon, he went to pursue his studies at the University of Marburg, then newly opened by the Landgrave of Hesse. There he had the advantage of the friendship and instructions of the learned and pious Francis Lambert of Avignon. The ex-Franciscan-whom we have met with before at Marburg-conceived a strong attachment to the young Scotsman, and had a powerful influence in moulding his character. But while he was daily advancing in the knowledge of the scriptures, he became increasingly desirous of imparting to his countrymen the knowledge of Christ and salvation, which he found to be so precious to himself. "This young man," said Lambert to Philip, "has come from the end of the world to your academy, in order to be fully established in God's truth. I have hardly ever met a man who expresses himself with so much spirituality and truth on the word of the Lord."

In 1527 he was in Scotland once more, and not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He proceeded to the family mansion of Kincavil, near Linlithgow, and preached the gospel to his kinsfolk and neighbours. Many of the nobility and the common people seem to have embraced the new religion. He next resolved to carry the gospel to the church of St. Michael's, Linlithgow, termed by historians "the Versailles of Scotland." The palace was also a fortress and a prison; it was the pleasure house to which the court used to retire for relaxation, and within its walls the unfortunate Mary Stuart was born. Here the young evangelist brought the gospel within the hearing of the priests of St. Michael's and the members of the royal family. The simplicity and elegance of his style were fitted to win the hearts of his hearers, but the gospel he preached did not suit the priests. He maintained that there was no salvation for the guilty but through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for the chief of sinners; and that it is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that replenishes the soul with grace, not the chrism of the church. He was denounced as a pestilent Lutheran to archbishop Beaton of St. Andrew's; and Beaton was too zealous a churchman to let Lutheranism escape with impunity.

Still there were difficulties in the way. He was not a heretic of low degree, but of royal lineage; and would no doubt be protected by the Hamilton family and other nobility, and perhaps by the king himself. What was to be done? Pretending to wish a free conference with him on some points of church Reform, the cruel and crafty archbishop decoyed him to St. Andrew's. Both Hamilton and his friends suspected treachery, but he thought it his duty to go. He had only been married to a lady of noble birth a few weeks, who, with others besought him with tears to keep out of Beaton's way; but he seemed to feel that the Lord might make his death of more service to his country than his life and labours, and so set out for St. Andrew's.

On his arrival he was received with every mark of consideration and respect, the archbishop smiling on the youth he had resolved to sacrifice. Knowing the difficulties which surrounded this case, Beaton required time to prepare the way for success, and so allowed Patrick something like liberty in the castle. Questions were freely discussed by the young Reformer with the doctors, students, and priests, as if he had been on equal terms with them; but Beaton was only biding his time, for the opposition was great and powerful. The court in which he was tried and condemned was surrounded by some thousands of armed men, which showed the fears of the priesthood. He was found infected with divers heresies of Martin Luther, condemned as a heretic, deprived of all dignities, orders, and benefices, and delivered over to the secular arm to be burnt alive. The priests decided that the sentence should be executed the same day, as his brother, Sir James, was not far distant with a military force, determined to rescue him. The condemnation had hardly been pronounced, when the executioners' servants were seen before the gates of St. Salvator's college, raising the pile on which the royal youth was to be burnt.

The Martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton

At noon, on the last day of February, 1528, the noble confessor stood before the pile. He uncovered his head, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, remained motionless for some time in prayer. He then turned to his friends, and handed to one of them his copy of the Gospels-the volume he so much loved. Next, calling his servant, he took off his gown, and gave it to him, with his coat and cap-"Take these garments; they can do me no service in the fire, and they may still be of use to thee. It is the last gift thou wilt receive from me, except the example of my death, the remembrance of which I pray thee to bear in mind. For albeit it be bitter to the flesh and fearful before man, yet is it the entrance to eternal life which none shall possess that deny Christ Jesus before this wicked generation." As the executioners passed the iron chain round his body, and fastened him to the stake, he again exclaimed, "In the name of Jesus I give up my body to the fire, and commit my soul into the hands of the Father." By the ignorance and awkwardness of his executioners, his sufferings were protracted for nearly six hours. The details are too harrowing to be transferred to our pages. Three times the pile was kindled, and three times the fire went out because the wood was green. Gunpowder was then placed among the faggots, which, when it exploded, shot up a faggot in the martyr's face, which wounded him severely. Turning to the deathsman, he mildly said, "Have you no dry wood?" Dry wood was brought from the castle, but it was six o'clock in the evening before his body was reduced to ashes; "but during these six hours," says an eye-witness, "the martyr never gave one sign of impatience or anger, never called to heaven for vengeance on his persecutors: so great was his faith, so strong his confidence in God." His last words that were heard were, "How long, O Lord, shall darkness cover this realm? How long wilt thou suffer this tyranny of man? Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

So died the proto-martyr of the Lutheran Reformation. The rumour of his death ran speedily over the whole land, and all heard it with a shudder. People everywhere wanted to know the cause for which the young man had suffered such a cruel death. All turned to the side of the victim. It was, no doubt, around his funeral pile that the first decided movement of the Scottish Reformation took place. His gracious manners, and the mildness, patience, and fortitude which he displayed at the stake, combined to give unusual interest to his martyrdom, and were well fitted to touch the heart of the nation. "The murder of Hamilton," says a modern historian, "was afterwards avenged in the death of the nephew and successor of his persecutor; and the flames in which he expired were, in the course of one generation, to enlighten all Scotland, and to consume with avenging fury, the Catholic superstition, the papal power, and the prelacy itself."*

{*See Dr. McCrie's Life of Knox, p. 14; D'Aubigne's Calvin, vol. 6; History of Protestantism, vol. 3.}

The overruling hand of the Lord is most distinctly seen in the whole history of Patrick Hamilton. So far as we are able to judge, a life, long and laborious, would not have served the cause of the Reformation so much as his trial, condemnation, and death, all accomplished in one day. Nothing less than the fiery stake of the confessor would have aroused the nation from that sleep of death into which popery had lulled it. It began to bear fruit immediately. Henry Forrest, a Benedictine in the monastery of Linlithgow, was brought to a knowledge of the truth by the preaching of Hamilton, and he is the first to come forward and repeat his martyrdom. It was told the archbishop that Forrest had said that "Hamilton was a martyr, and no heretic," and that he had a New Testament. "He is as bad as Master Patrick," said Beaton: "we must burn him." James Lindsay, a wit, standing by, ventured to say, "My lord, let him be burned in a hollow; for the reek of Patrick Hamilton's fire has infected everyone it blew upon." The archbishop, not heeding the satire, had the stake of Forrest planted on the highest ground in the neighbourhood, that the population of Angus and Forfar might see the flames, and thus learn the danger of falling into Protestantism. Henry Forrest was Scotland's second martyr.

Many of the Clergy and Nobles Embrace the Reformation

It is a remarkable feature of the Scottish Reformation that it began among the clergy, and was early embraced by the nobility and landed gentry. Almost all her first martyrs and confessors were monks or parish priests. Alesius, canon of St. Augustine at St. Andrew's, was brought to the knowledge of the truth, and confirmed in the faith of the gospel by the testimony which Hamilton had borne to the truth during his trial, and by the simple and heroic beauty of his death, which he had witnessed. The death of Hamilton being the subject of much conversation among the canons at that time, Alesius could not refrain from expressing what he now felt and believed. He spoke of the wretched state of the church, her destitution of men competent to teach her, and that she was kept from the knowledge of the holy scriptures. This was enough; the canons could not endure it. He was denounced to prior Hepburn, a base immoral man; he was treated with the most brutal violence, and thrown into a foul and unwholesome dungeon. When this was noised abroad, it excited great interest both among citizens and nobles. The king was appealed to; but the archbishop and the prior succeeded in detaining him in prison for about a year, when the canons, who were friendly to him, opened his prison door, and urged him to leave the country immediately, without saying a word to anybody. This he did, though most reluctantly, and found a refuge on the continent.

Alexander Seaton, a monk of the Dominican order, and confessor to the king, was also brought to see that salvation is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without deeds of law. In 1532, having been appointed to preach in the cathedral of St. Andrew's in Lent, he resolved courageously to avow the heavenly doctrine which was making exiles and martyrs. "A living faith," he said, "which lays hold on the mercy of God in Christ, can alone obtain for the sinner the remission of sins. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, and no one is able by his works to satisfy divine justice. But for how many years has God's law, instead of being faithfully taught, been darkened by the tradition of men!" The people wondered at his doctrine, and why he did not speak about pilgrimages and meritorious works; and the priests were afraid to say much, as he was the king's confessor, and a great favourite. But Beaton was not the man to hesitate. "This bold preacher is evidently putting to his mouth the trumpet of Hamilton and Alesius. Proceedings must be taken against him." The archbishop succeeded in turning the king's mind against Seaton, so that he saved his life by taking flight, went to London where he became chaplain to the duke of Suffolk, and had the opportunity of preaching a full gospel to large congregations.

Many of the students of the college and noviciates of the abbey, under the teaching of Gawin Logie, principal of St. Leonard's college, and John Winram, sub-prior of the abbey, were convinced of the truth for which Hamilton suffered, and embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. But the blessed results of Patrick's martyrdom were not confined to St. Andrew's. Everywhere persons were to be found who held that the young abbot of Ferne had died a martyr, being no heretic, and that they believed as he did. Alarmed at the progress of the new opinions, the clergy adopted the most rigorous measures for their extirpation. David Straiton, a Forfarshire gentleman, and Norman Gourlay, who had been a student at St. Andrew's and was in priest's orders, were tried at Edinburgh in Holyrood house, condemned, and taken to the rood of Greenside, and burned alive as heretics. About this time a change took place in the see of St. Andrew's, but not for the better. James Beaton died, and was succeeded by his nephew, David Beaton-a more cruel and bloodthirsty tyrant than his uncle-whom the pope made a cardinal for his zeal, and to increase his power.

The Fiery Zeal of Cardinal Beaton

Strict inquisition was now made after heretics. The flames of persecution were kindled in all quarters of the country. From the year 1534, when Straiton and Gourlay were burned, till the year 1538, the spirit of persecution had greatly subsided, and the number of those who confessed Christ as their only Saviour and Lord, had greatly increased. This prosperity of the gospel was most irritating to the new cardinal, who resolved to suppress it by fire and sword. Dean Thomas Forrest, vicar of Dollar, Sir Duncan Simpson, a priest, Keillor and Beveridge, black friars, and Forrester, a notary, in Stirling, were immediately apprehended and tried for heresy before a council held by cardinal Beaton, and were condemned to the flames. A huge blazing pile was raised the same day on the Castle hill of Edinburgh, and there five faithful men were seen in the midst of it-serenely suffering, and rejoicing. To faith the fire had no terror, because death had no sting. Other names might be given, who soon followed the five martyrs on the Castle hill, and whose faith, confession, and sufferings deserve a more prominent place than can be given in our limited space; but their names are in the Lamb's book of life, their record is on high, and duly enrolled in the noble army of martyrs, and they will receive, on the morning of the first resurrection, that crown of life promised to all who are faithful unto death, with their Lord's eternal approving smile. In that day of His glory and theirs, all these sufferings will be completely forgotten, save as the remembrance of His grace which sustained them, and gave them the distinguished honour of suffering for His sake. Already they have been "with Christ," in the calm repose of paradise for three hundred years, but then, in their bodies of glory, fashioned like unto His own body of glory, what praise can they offer for the grace that honoured them with the crown of martyrdom? Heaven's estimate of Rome's heretics and their persecutions will then be made manifest; for all murderers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Rev 21:8)

The fury of the clergy, now presided over by the tyrant David Beaton, daily waxed greater and greater; and numbers, to escape the stake, fled to England and the continent. Some of these were men illustrious for their genius and learning, of whom were John Macbee, John Fife, John Macdowal, John Macbray, James Harrison, Robert Richardson, and the celebrated George Buchanan, who was surely helped by the Lord to escape from prison, and saved his life by a speedy flight. He is well known as the author of the metrical version of the Psalms, as used in Scotland, and bound with their Bibles. A few, whose constancy was overcome by the terrors of the stake, professedly returned to the old religion, but the confessors of the truth rapidly increased. By the year 1540, many eminent men had received the evangelical doctrines. The earls of Errol and of Glencairn, Lord Ruthven, Lord Kelmains, Sir David Lindsay, Sir James Sandilands, Melville of Raith, and a large number of other influential persons, appeared to be attached to the gospel by genuine conviction.

Cardinal Beaton's Proscription-Roll

The circumstances of the Scottish king, James V., about this period were peculiar and embarrassing. He was overwhelmed with sorrow at the loss of his only children, Arthur and James; he was in debt, and much in need of money; he had offended his uncle, Henry VIII. of England, by refusing to make Scotland independent of Rome, as he had made England; he also urged him to confiscate the property of the church, and in this way fill his empty exchequer. But the influence of the hierarchy-Henry's deadly enemies-under whose power James had fallen, succeeded in producing a rupture between the uncle and the nephew, which led to war and the death of James.

Cardinal Beaton, on the other hand, proposed that the property of the heretic nobles should be confiscated for the king's benefit, and not the sacred revenues of the holy church. "He drew out a list," says Cunningham, "of three hundred and sixty persons of property who were suspected of heresy, and whose possessions, if confiscated, would amply supply all the requirements of royalty." Dr. McCrie, in his Life of Knox, referring to the same period, says, "Twice did the clergy attempt to cut off the Reformed party by a desperate blow. They presented to the king a list containing the names of some hundreds, possessed of property and wealth, whom they denounced as heretics; and endeavoured to procure his consent to their condemnation, by flattering him with the immense riches which would accrue to him from the forfeiture of their estates." D'Aubigne and Wylie speak of a list, "compiled by Beaton, containing over a hundred names, and among those marked for slaughter were Lord Hamilton, the first peer in the realm, the Earls of Cassillis and Glencairn, and the Earl Marischall. "*

{*Cunningham's Church History of Scotland, vol. 1, p. 237; McCrie's Life of Knox, p. 17; D'Aubigne's Calvin, vol. 6, p. 168; Wylie's Protestantism, vol. 3, p. 479.}

This last list may be one of the two spoken of by Dr. McCrie, and may have been revised and reduced to those who were intended for immediate slaughter as well as plunder. As the statements of the different historians vary, we have given all, but we have no doubt they are substantially correct. Here the reader may pause for a moment: can he take in the appalling thought? The alleged head of the church in Scotland, the chief shepherd of the flock of Christ-who should be ready to lay down his life for the brethren-a priest, in holy orders, coolly writes out a list containing the names of some hundreds of the nobles and gentry of the land, and endeavours to tempt the king to sanction their condemnation by flattering him with the wealth of their possessions. Was ever plot more deeply laid in hell, or more diabolical in its character? But it was not to supply the king with money that hell moved in this matter, but to cut off by violence all who were known to favour the Reformed opinions, quench the light of truth for ever in Scotland, maintain the authority of the clergy, and preserve inviolate those debasing corruptions from which they derived their wealth.

When this proposal was first made to the king, he is said to have driven the messengers from his presence with marks of strong displeasure. But so violent was the dislike which he at last conceived against his nobility especially after their meeting on Fala Muir, and so much had he fallen under the influence of the clergy, that but for the watchful hand of an over-ruling providence, it is highly probable he would have yielded to the latter, and executed the deed of blood. Instead however, of the nobility and gentry, it was the poor king himself whom the clergy brought to an early grave.

The Perplexity and Death of the King

Henry VIII. had been at great pains to bring about a personal interview with James; and had obtained a promise that he should meet him at York. Henry arrived according to appointment, and remained there during six days, but no James appeared. The priests, dreading Henry's influence with James on the subject of the Reformation, prevailed upon him to remain at home; which he did, but sent a courteous apology. But the haughty revengeful English king was not to be so easily pacified. He conceived himself slighted and insulted, and vented threatenings and curses against the Scotch. A border war was the result. The priests instigated James to go to war without summoning to his banner the proscribed nobles. Bishops, priests, and their partisans were to form the army; and when the king returned in triumph from the defeat of Henry, all those suspected of heresy should be seized and executed as a thank-offering for victory. But alas! when James was waiting in Lochmaben castle for the news of triumph, some of the fugitives arriving made known the total rout of his army on Solway Moss. His distress was unbounded. So great was his agony of mind, he could hardly breathe, and only muttered some vague cries. The high-spirited monarch could bear no more. He had been deceived by that despicable man in whom he trusted, which disturbed him as much as the victory of the English.

In this state of despair he shut himself up in Falkland palace, and the violence of his grief soon induced a slow fever. While rapidly sinking, intelligence was brought that his queen, who was at Linlithgow, had been delivered of a girl, afterwards Queen Mary. This was a fresh wound as he had no son; and feeling as if his family was extinct and his crown lost, he muttered an old saying, "It cam wi' a lass, and it will gang wi' a lass." Seven days afterwards the king died, on December 14th, 1542. When disrobing him, the dreadful proscription roll was found in his pocket. The nation then saw what a merciful providence had saved them from, and how narrow its escape had been from so fearful a catastrophe. The discovery helped not a little to increase the number of the Reformed, and to prepare the way for the downfall of a religion which was capable of conceiving such plans of cruelty and avarice.

The throne was now vacant, and "Cardinal Beaton lost no time in producing a document purporting to be the will of the deceased monarch, appointing him regent of the kingdom during the minority of the infant queen;" but it was generally believed to be forged, and the Earl of Arran was peaceably established in the regency by the nobles. Thus it was, by the gracious overruling hand of God, the man whose name was first on the list of nobles marked for slaughter, was now at the head of the government, and used by the same providence to place the Bible in every Scotchman's hand. The change produced in the political state of the kingdom by the death of James and the regency of Arran was favourable to the Reformation.

The earl having formerly professed faith in the Reformed doctrines, was now surrounded with counsellors of the same opinions. It is deeply interesting to observe that, at this early stage of the Scottish Reformation, the very flower of the nobility and gentry were on its side. Not that we think of them all as true Christians, but at that time the prospect of overturning the ancient religion was distant and uncertain, and they were taking a step which exposed their lives and fortunes to the most imminent hazard, so that we cannot attribute to them a lower motive than their personal convictions.

The Bible Restored to the Nation

In the month of March, 1543, an important step was taken by the parliament toward the Reformation of the church, by making it lawful for every subject in the realm to read the holy scriptures in his mother tongue. Lord Maxwell, who brought the matter before the lords of the articles, proposed that "It should be statute and ordained that it shall be lawful for all our sovereign lady's lieges to have the Holy Writ, to wit, the New Testament and Old, in the vulgar tongue, English or Scotch, of a good and true translation, and that they shall incur no crime for the having and reading the same." The bishops, as we may suppose, protested loudly against this measure, but it was passed notwithstanding, and instructions given to the Clerk of Register to have it duly proclaimed at the market-cross; and sent into all parts of the kingdom by order of the regent. This public act in favour of religious liberty was a signal triumph of truth over error. The priests began to cry out with one voice: Heresy! heresy! and that the regent was the promoter of heresy.

"The victory," says Knox, "which Jesus Christ then won over the enemies of the truth was of no little importance. The trumpet of the gospel gave at once a certain sound, from Wigton to Inverness, from south to north. No small comfort was given to the souls, to the families, who till then durst not read the Lord's prayer or the ten commandments in English through fear of being accused of heresy. The Bible, which had long lain hidden in some out of the way corner, was now openly placed on the tables of pious and well-informed men. The New Testament was indeed already widely circulated, but many of those who possessed it had shown themselves unworthy of it, never having read ten sentences in it through fear of man. Now they brought it, and would chop their familiars on the cheek with it. The knowledge of God was wonderfully increased by the reading of the sacred writings and the Holy Spirit was given in great abundance to simple men." This important act of the Scottish parliament was never repealed.*

{*D'Aubigne's Calvin, vol. 6, p. 194; Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 242; McCrie, p. 20.}

Hitherto the Reformation had been advanced in Scotland by books imported from England and the Continent, but now the truth was disseminated, and the errors of popery were exposed by books which issued from the Scottish press. The poets and satirists were also busy. With the poet's usual license, they employed themselves in writing ballads, plays, and satires, o, the ignorance and immoralities of the clergy, and the absurdities and superstitions of the popish religion. Such compositions in the Scottish language were recta with great avidity by the people, and operated powerfully in alienating the public mind from the Catholic religion.

George Wishart

In the summer of 1544, shortly after Scotland had received the inestimable blessing of a free Bible, one of the most remarkable characters we meet with in ecclesiastical history appeared on the troubled scene. We refer to George Wishart. He was the son of Sir James Wishart of Pitarrow, an ancient and honourable family of the Mearns. He had fled from the persecuting spirit of the bishop of Brechin in 1538, and spent about six years on the continent and at Cambridge, as a learner and a teacher. When he returned, he is said to have excelled all his countrymen in learning, especially in his knowledge of the Greek tongue. As a preacher, his eloquence was most persuasive; his life irreproachable, he was courteous and affable in manners; his piety fervent; his zeal and courage in the cause of truth were tempered with uncommon meekness, modesty, patience, and charity.

He immediately commenced preaching the doctrines of the Reformation in Montrose and Dundee. But his reputation had gone before him, and great crowds gathered to hear him. Following the Swiss method, he expounded in a connected series of discourses the doctrine of salvation, according to the epistle to the Romans; and his knowledge of scripture, his eloquence, and his invectives against the falsehoods of popery, moved the populace so mightily, that in Dundee they attacked and destroyed the convents of the Franciscan and Dominican friars. So great was the excitement with the clamour of the priests and monks, and the tumultuous state of the people, that the magistrates had to interfere, and Wishart prudently retired to the western counties, where his friends were all-powerful. Lennox, Cassillis, and Glencairn were able to protect him, and secure him an entrance into every parish church. But Wishart, being essentially a man of peace, when any opposition was made to his preaching in the church, he refused to allow force to be used, and retired to the market cross or the fields. But it was a needless precaution to shut the church doors against Wishart, for no church could have contained the thousands that flocked to hear him. He preached at Barr, Galston, Manchline, and Ayr; but as the hired assassins of Beaton were constantly on the watch for his life, he was generally surrounded with armed men.

The Plague in Dundee

Not long after Wishart had been driven from Dundee, the plague entered the town. Hearing of this, with great devotedness, he hurried thither, was unwearied in preaching the gospel, visiting the sick, and seeking to prepare the dying for death. Those who were plague-stricken were kept outside the east gate, while the healthy were inside. To reach his audience on both sides, he mounted the gate-called the Cowgate, and, opening his Bible, read from Psalm. 107, "He sent his word and healed them." The mercy of God in Christ, he assured them, was free to all, and whosoever turned to Him truly would receive the blessing-a blessing which the malice of men could neither eik nor pair, add to nor diminish. Some of his hearers assured him-they were so comforted by his sermon-that they were ready to depart, and counted it more happy to go to Jesus than to remain behind. The people were greatly troubled, lest "the mouth from which such sweetness flowed should be closed." They seemed to have a presentiment that danger was near, and so it was.

A priest named Wigton, hired by cardinal Beaton to assassinate him, stood waiting at the foot of the steps by which Wishart must come down. A cloak thrown over him concealed the naked dagger which he held in his hand; but the keen eye of the evangelist, as he came down the steps noticed the priest with his hand kept carefully under his gown, and read murder in his face. "My friend," said Wishart, "what would you do?" at the same moment grasping the priest's hand, and snatching the weapon from him. The assassin fell at his feet and confessed his intention. "Deliver the traitor to us," cried the people, and they rushed on him; but Wishart put his arms round the assassin, and said, "Whosoever troubles him troubles me, for he has hurt me in nothing;" and thus saved the life of him who sought his.*

{*See Knox's History of the Reformation, folio ed, p. 49.}

Through the Lord's mercy the plague began to abate, a new life was soon felt in the stricken city; and Wishart exerted himself for the afflicted in organizing measures for the distribution of food and medicine. While thus employed, he received a message from the Earl of Cassillis to meet him and some other friends from the west at Edinburgh for the purpose of having a public disputation with the bishop. He obeyed the summons, although he knew that cardinal Beaton was bent upon his destruction, and that a cruel death awaited him. He arrived at Leith; but as that town is near Edinburgh, his friends entreated him to conceal himself for a day or two. This he could not endure. "What differ I from a dead man," he said, "except that I eat and drink? To this time God has used my labours to the disclosing of darkness and now I lurk as a man that was ashamed, and durst not show himself before men." "You know," said his friends "the danger wherein you stand." "Let my God," he replied "provide for me as best pleases Him."

Wishart began at once to preach in Leith; and afterwards proceeded to East Lothian, where he was entertained by the lairds of Brunston, Longniddry, and Ormiston. While here, he preached at Musselburgh, Inveresk, Tranent, and Haddington. On these occasions, he was surrounded by the armed retainers of his friends, and a sword was borne before him. It was here that John Knox-who was then a tutor in the family of Douglas of Longniddry-joined him. Previously to this, he had openly professed the evangelical doctrine, now he attached himself to Wishart, waited constantly on his person, and bore the sword before him. Wishart was highly pleased with the spirit and zeal of Knox, and seems to have presaged his future usefulness. After preaching at Haddington, he proceeded to Ormiston House, where he was to lodge. Knox insisted for liberty to accompany him, but the martyr dismissed him with this reply: "Nay, nay; return to your bairns"-meaning his pupils-"and God bless you. One is sufficient for a sacrifice."*

{*McCrie, p. 21. Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 248.}

The Apprehension and Martyrdom of Wishart

Meantime Beaton had come to Edinburgh; and, hearing that Wishart was in the neighbourhood, resolved upon his instant apprehension. At midnight, Ormiston House was surrounded by a troop of cavalry, under the command of the earl of Bothwell, who demanded Wishart. But neither promises nor threatenings could induce the laird to deliver up his guest. Bothwell assured him on his honour, that he would be perfectly safe with him, and that no power of the cardinal would be allowed to harm him. Ormiston was disposed to confide in this solemn promise, and told Wishart what had occurred. "Open the gates," he replied, "the blessed will of my God be done." But alas! Bothwell violated his pledge. and the victim of a faithless earl and a bloodthirsty priest was hurried from Edinburgh to St. Andrew's, and thrown into prison.

The zeal of Arran in the cause of the Reformation by this time had greatly declined; and the cardinal, who had great influence over the mind of the weak and timid earl, was dominant in the nation. As it was contrary to the canon law for clergymen to meddle in matters of blood, Beaton asked the governor to appoint a lay judge, who might pronounce sentence of death upon Wishart, if found guilty of heresy. But Arran, irresolute as he was, refused to do this, and strongly urged delay. But Beaton was not a man to be hindered by canon law, or by the expostulations of the regent. Wishart was arraigned before a clerical tribunal, was found guilty of heresy, and condemned to the flames.

On the 1st of March, 1546, a scaffold was erected before the castle of St. Andrew's, and faggots of dried wood were piled around it. As the civil power refused to take part in the proceedings, the cardinal acted instead. His men were equipped with lances, swords, axes, and other warlike array; and the guns of the castle were brought to bear upon the spot, lest Wishart's many friends should attempt to rescue him. Meanwhile the balcony of the castle was adorned with silken draperies and velvet cushions, that Beaton and other prelates might enjoy at their ease the spectacle of the pile, and the tortures of the holy sufferer. When all was ready, two deathsmen brought Wishart from his prison. He was dressed in black; small bags of gunpowder were tied to various parts of his body; his hands were firmly tied behind him; a rope round his neck, and an iron chain round his waist to fasten him to the stake. He knelt down and prayed before the pile; then he exhorted the people to love the word of God, and suffer patiently and with a comfortable heart for the word's sake, which was their undoubted salvation and everlasting comfort. "For the true gospel," he added, "which was given to me by the grace of God, I suffer this day by men, not sorrowfully, but with a glad heart and mind. For this cause I was sent, that I should suffer this fire for Christ's sake. This grim fire I fear not; I know surely that I shall sup with my Saviour Christ this night, for whom I suffer." And many other beautiful words did he say-according to Knox, Buchanan, and others.

When bound to the stake, he said, "Saviour of the world, have mercy on me! Father of heaven, into Thy hands I commit my spirit." The fire was lighted. The cardinal Dunbar, and other prelates were on the balcony watching the progress of the fire, and the sufferings of the martyr. Wishart, catching sight of the cardinal and his courtiers, fixed his eyes on the cardinal, and said, "He who in such state, from that high place, feedeth his eyes with my torments, within a few days shall be hanged out at the same window, to be seen with as much ignominy as he now leaneth there with pride. " The rope round his neck was now tightened, so that he spoke no more, and the fire reduced his body to ashes.

The Death of Cardinal Beaton

The death of Wishart produced a powerful impression all over Scotland, and excited feelings of the most diverse character. Churchmen extolled Beaton as the great champion of Rome, and the defender of the priesthood. Piety wept over the ashes of the martyr without a thought of revenge. But there were men of birth, without sharing Wishart's views who declared openly there must be life for life: the liberties of the subject were in danger when the tyrant could set aside the authority of the regent, and suppress the voice of the people. A conspiracy was formed against his life, and a small, but determined band-some of whom were instigated by resentment for private injuries; others were animated by a desire to revenge his cruelties, and deliver their country from his oppression-broke into the cardinal's apartments in the castle of St. Andrew's, beat down the barricades with which he had attempted to defend his bedroom door, and putting him instantly to death, hung out his naked and mangled body over the window, as Wishart had predicted. They then seized the castle, dismissed the household servants unharmed, and sent off a messenger to the English court to inform Henry of their success. It is well known that there was nothing for which the English monarch was more anxious than the death of Beaton. He had been the great obstacle to the accomplishment of Henry's favourite project-the uniting of the two crowns by a marriage between the infant queen and his son, Prince Edward. Some say the conspirators were in the pay of England.*

{*See Encycl. Brit., vol. 19, p. 731. Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 251. Tytler's History of Scotland, vol. 4, p. 372.}

The Results of Cardinal Beaton's Death

The murder of the cardinal-primate was followed by results the most important. It removed from the head of affairs the most powerful and unscrupulous enemy of the Reformation, and the greatest defender of Romanism in Scotland. Like Wolsey, he was all but a king. His government was characterized by political intrigue, energy, and resolution; but his one main object was the persecution of the saints, the extinguishing of the Reformation, and the definitive triumph of Rome. But the work of God's Spirit needed not the assistance of the assassin. The christian life and martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart contributed far more powerfully to the advancement of the work of God in Scotland than the violent death of its enemy. The faith, the constancy, and the serenity of the martyrs, rose far above the ferocity of their persecutors, and through that instinct, which impels the human conscience to rise against injustice, and incline to the side of the oppressed, numbers were added to the ranks of the Reformed. One of the mistakes of the early Reformers, to which we have repeatedly referred, was their trusting to the protection of princes; but the Scotch Reformers had to learn through a long period of suffering that their strength lay in an arm mightier far than the kings of the earth, which alone could give victory to the weak and defenceless. Hence their great idea was Christ as King, and the motto on the banners of the Covenanters was, Christ's Crown and Covenant.

"The new life," says D'Aubigne, "which sprang up in the sixteenth century, was everywhere the same, but nevertheless it bore a certain special character in each of the countries in which it appeared. At Wittemberg, it was to man that christian thought especially attached itself-to man fallen, but regenerated and justified by faith. At Geneva it was to God, to His sovereignty and His grace. In Scotland it was to Christ-Christ as Saviour through death, but above all as king, who governs and keeps His people, independently of human power." While we think the Genevese historian very correct in his estimate of the character of the new life in the different countries, we must also add, that Christ is nowhere spoken of in scripture as the King of the church, but everywhere as the King of the Jews. He is spoken of as the Head of the church-of His body the church, and as Head over all things to the church. A king gives the idea of subjects, but as the church is One with Christ,-His body and His bride, He is never spoken of as her King. He is a King, of course and as such He will reign when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." There are three ways in which the glory of God will be revealed by Christ: 1. In grace, as when on earth and since then. 2. In government-this will be in the millennium, when the saints will reign with Christ a thousand years. 3. In glory-also connected with government-this will be for ever, "for all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2Co 1:20; Joh 1:17; Rev 20:6; Rev 21:1-8)

John Knox

The vacant see of St. Andrew's was soon filled by John Hamilton, abbot of Paisley, and brother to the regent. But although he did not equal his predecessor in vigour of mind, he equalled him in the unrelenting zeal with which he pursued all who favoured the Reformation; so that the persecution did not abate in the absence of Beaton. The conspirators who had seized and held the castle, welcomed within its walls all who were in danger of their lives from having embraced the new doctrines. They were soon joined by many adherents, both political and religious; and the place was garrisoned by a band of determined men, who bade defiance to the regent and his brother the archbishop. Among those to whom they opened their gates, the most noted was John Knox, the great advocate and supporter of the Reformation.

This remarkable man, whose name has long been a household word in Scotland, and whose future career was connected with so many great events, was now forty years old. He was born, according to the prevailing opinion, at the village of Giffard, near Haddington, in 1505. It seems his parents were in the middle rank of rural life, and wealthy enough to give him a learned education; and had probably destined their son for the church. From the grammar school of his native town, he passed at the age of sixteen to the University of Glasgow, where the celebrated John Mair was then principal. It is said that he distinguished himself in philosophy and scholastic theology, and took priest's orders, previous to his having attained the regular canonical age. After leaving college, he passes out of view, and little is known of his history till we find him in the company of Wishart, immediately before his martyrdom.*

{*McCrie's Life of Knox. Tytler's History of Scotland, vol. 4, p. 374.}

Knox's Call to the Ministry

The Reformer was no doubt warmly welcomed by the party inside the castle, and earnestly entreated to become one of their preachers. These solicitations he stedfastly resisted, "alleging that he could not run where God had not sent him." When he received a unanimous invitation from the whole congregation, and was solemnly pressed by Mr. Rough, a preacher, not to refuse God's call as he would avoid His heavy displeasure, Knox burst into tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber. He had now very different thoughts as to the importance of the ministerial office, from what he had entertained when invested with priest's orders. The charge of declaring "the whole counsel of God, keeping nothing back," however ungrateful it might be to his hearers, with all the consequences to which the preachers of the Protestant doctrines were then exposed, filled his mind with anxiety and fear. He evidently passed through much conflict of mind on this occasion, for though he possessed great strength of character, being naturally bold, upright, and independent, he was thoroughly honest, conscientious, and modest. But when he felt satisfied that he had the call of God to engage in His work, he resolved to undertake it with all its responsibilities, and say with the apostle, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Act 20:24)

He commenced his labours as a preacher with his characteristic boldness, and was greatly blessed both to the garrison and to the inhabitants of the town. In his first sermon in the parish church of St. Andrew's, he undertook to prove that the pope of Rome was the man of sin, the Antichrist, the Babylonish harlot spoken of in scripture. He struck at the root of popery that they might destroy the whole system. During the few months that he preached at St. Andrew's, a great number of the inhabitants, besides the garrison in the castle, renounced popery, and made profession of the Protestant faith, by partaking of the Lord's supper after the Reformed mode in Scotland. But his useful labours were soon interrupted.

Mary of Guise and the French Fleet

After the death of Beaton, the queen-dowager, Mary of Guise, sister to Henry, the cruel duke, who fought against the Huguenots and directed the massacre on St. Bartholomew's Eve, was openly opposed to the Reformation, and like her family, was entirely devoted to France and Rome. Soon after the regent had completely failed to reduce the castle of St. Andrew's, a French fleet of sixteen armed galleys, commanded by Leo Strozzi, appeared in the bay. The vessels took up their line, so as at full tide completely to command the outworks towards the sea, while the forces of Arran besieged it by land. A breach was soon affected; and, within less than a week, a flag of truce was seen approaching. Thus fell the castle of St. Andrew's, and all in it including Knox, were put on board the galleys and conveyed to France. The terms of capitulation, it is said, were violated; and at the solicitations of the pope, the Scottish queen, and clergy, the principal gentlemen were incarcerated in Rouen Cherbourg, Brest, and Mont St. Michel. Knox, with a few others, was confined on board the galleys, loaded with chains, and exposed to all the indignities with which papists were accustomed to treat those whom they regarded as heretics.

During their captivity, threatenings and violence were employed to induce the prisoners to change their religion, or at least to countenance the popish worship. But so great was their abhorrence of that system, that not a single person of the whole company, on land or water, could be induced in the smallest degree to join them. Mass was frequently said within their hearing, and on such occasions they were threatened with torture if they did not give the usual signs of reverence; but instead of complying, they covered their heads as soon as the service began. One day a fine painted image of the Virgin was brought into one of the galleys, and a Scottish prisoner-probably Knox-was desired to give it the kiss of adoration. He refused, saying, that such idols were accursed, and he would not touch it. "But you shall," replied one of the officers, at the same time forcing it towards his mouth. Upon this the prisoner seized the image, and throwing it into the water, said, "Let oor Ledie noo save herself sche is licht aneuche, let hir leirne to swyme." The officers with some difficulty saved their goddess from the waves; and the prisoners were not again troubled with such importunities. *

{*Knox's History, folio, p. 83; McCrie, p. 34.}

The Lord had no doubt important lessons to teach His beloved servant and his associates by their rigorous confinement. To escape the persecution of Hamilton, he was obliged to conceal himself, and to remove from place to place, to provide for his safety. Under these circumstances we need not be surprised that he took refuge in the castle. Nevertheless, it was like casting in his lot with the assassins of the cardinal, and with them he reaped the consequences. He was detained nineteen months a galley-slave in French waters. Not one of his associates suffered death!

By what means the prisoners obtained their liberty, historians are not agreed. Dr. McCrie very reasonably concludes, "That the French court having procured the consent of the parliament of Scotland to the marriage of Queen Mary to the Dauphin, and obtained possession of her person, felt no longer any inclination to avenge the quarrels of the Scottish clergy."

Knox Regains His Liberty

Upon regaining his liberty, Knox repaired to England; emaciated in body, but vigorous and unshaken in mind. The reputation which he had gained by his preaching, and his late sufferings, recommended him to the English court, and he was chosen one of the chaplains to Edward VI. He was offered the living of All-hallows in London, which he refused as he did not agree with the English liturgy. The early death of Edward, and the accession of Mary compelled him to flee for his life. He travelled through France to Switzerland, and after visiting the most noted divines of the Helvetic church, he settled in Geneva.

The celebrated John Calvin was then in the zenith of his reputation and usefulness. Knox was affectionately received by him as a refugee from Scotland, and an intimate friendship was soon formed between them. The two great Reformers of that day were now together, nearly of the same age, very similar in their sentiments as to doctrine and the government of the church, and not unlike as to the more prominent features of their character. "Knox was a rough, unbending, impassioned, impetuous man, but full of humour: Calvin was calm, severe, often irritable, but never impassioned; rising in pure intellect above all his compeers, like Mont Blanc among the mountains, touching the very heavens, yet shrouded in eternal snows. There is no doubt but that Calvin exercised a great influence upon the mind of his fellow-Reformer. Knox was but beginning his work; Calvin's work was done; Knox was but rising into fame; Calvin was giving laws to a large section of Christendom."*

{*Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 308.}

But no friendships, no prospect of personal safety, no sphere of usefulness, could banish from his mind the thoughts of his persecuted countrymen. He was constantly writing letters to encourage, and papers to strengthen them, in the truth of God; and he was no doubt well supplied with information as to all that was going on.

Knox Returns to Scotland

In the year 1555, after an absence of eight years, Knox again visited his native land. He was entertained by James Syme, a respectable burgess of Edinburgh, in whose house the friends of the Reformation assembled to talk over their prospects and plans. Up till this time many of the warm friends of Reform had attended mass, and were not outwardly separate from the communion of the Romish church; but the earnest uncompromising discourses of Knox convinced them of their error, and decided them to participate no longer in the Romish worship. Soon after this the Lord's supper was celebrated according to the Protestant form; and in this united act the foundations were laid of the coming Reformed Church of Scotland.

Among the nobles who now gathered round the Protestant standard, were Lord Lorne, Lord Erskine, Lord James Stewart, the Earl of Marischall, the Earl of Glencairn, John Erskine of Dun, and William Maitland of Lithington. These were diligent in attending the sermons of Knox, and helping him in his work. With such a body-guard the Reformer became free and indefatigable in preaching, not only in the capital, but in the provinces. In the winter of 1555-6 he preached in Kyle, Cunningham, Angusshire, and other places, imparting with God's blessing, new life to the Reform movement, and powerfully consolidating the good work in many souls. Rumours of all this work flew through the country, the clergy were alarmed, his apprehension was determined upon, and Knox perceiving that his continued presence in the country would draw down a fresh storm of persecution on the infant community, prudently withdrew to Geneva.

The First Covenant

From this period the progress of the Reformation in many parts of Scotland was rapid and decisive. The brief visit of the Reformer proved to be of immense service to the cause of Reform. Nobles, barons, burgesses, and peasants, separated from the communion of Rome, and assembled for the reading of the word and prayer. According to the Presbyterian form, they could not have the sacraments administered without a duly ordained minister; but these small meetings paved the way for the more complete organization. The next step of the nobles was the framing of what is known in church history as the First Covenant, and the framers are called the "lords of the congregation." In this covenant they promised before "the majesty of God and His congregation, to apply their whole power, substance, and their very lives, to maintain, set forward, and establish the most blessed word of God and his congregation," etc., etc. This third day of December, 1557. God called to witness-Earls of Argyle, Glencairn, Morton, Lord of Lorne, Erskine of Dun.

These measures alarmed the clergy. They saw that their downfall was near, unless strong and decided means were taken to prevent it. But they had only one weapon-the flames of martyrdom; and these were speedily kindled. Walter Mill, a godly old man, was accused of heresy, and burnt alive at St. Andrew's, August 28th, 1558. As he stood at the stake, he addressed the people in these words: "As for me, I am fourscore and two years old, and could not live long by course of nature; but a hundred better shall rise out of the ashes of my bones. I trust in God that I shall be the last that shall suffer death in Scotland for this cause." He had been a parish priest near Montrose, but suffered as a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The clergy were at their wits' end. Martyrdoms only increased the number of Protestants. The people were rapidly leaving the mass, and openly uniting with the Reformers. It was now perfectly clear, that unless the papists could strike a decisive blow, they must surrender. The friars appealed to the bishops, and the bishops to the civil power. The queen dowager, the bigoted catholic of the House of Lorraine, now openly avowed herself on the side of Romanism. Hitherto she had been playing a part between the bishops and the lords of the congregation. Now she issued a proclamation prohibiting all persons from preaching or dispensing the sacraments without authority from the bishops. The Reformed preachers disobeyed the proclamation. They were summoned to appear before her at Stirling, and answer to a charge of heresy and rebellion. The Lords of the congregation interfered, and the queen, amazed at their firmness, agreed to delay the prosecution until she had examined the affair more seriously.

Knox's Final Return to Scotland

In the midst of these stirring and threatening times a powerful leader was wanted. A deputation was sent to Geneva, to entreat Knox to return; and on May 2nd, 1559, he arrived at Leith. The news of his arrival fell like a thunderbolt on the papal party. A royal proclamation was immediately issued, declaring Knox a rebel and an outlaw. But these proclamations were now little heeded. Chancing to pass through Perth soon after, he preached one of his vehement sermons against the idolatry of the mass, and the worship of images. The people were ripe for such a discourse, and greatly moved by it, but quietly dispersed when it was over. A priest, remaining behind, to show his contempt for the doctrine which had just been delivered, uncovered a rich altar-piece, decorated with images, began to say mass. A boy standing near, shouted, "Idolatry!" The priest in anger struck the boy, and he retaliated by throwing a stone, which, missing the priest, broke one of the images. A few idle persons who were loitering in the church, sympathized with the boy, and in the course of a few moments, the altar, images, crucifixes, and all the church ornaments were torn down and trampled under foot. The noise soon collected a mob; the excitement became great, and some one shouted, "To the monasteries," and in a short time the monasteries of the Black and Grey Friars were in ruins. The excited mob next bent their way to the abbey of the Charterhouse; and soon nothing was left of that magnificent structure but the bare walls. The magistrates of the town and the preachers hastened to the scene of the riot as soon as they heard of it, but neither the persuasion of the one nor the authority of the other could calm the tempest.*

{*McCrie, p. 127. Wylie, vol. 3, p. 491.}

Popular Tumults

The work of demolition, which was begun in a frenzy of popular rage at Perth, rapidly extended to St. Andrew's, Cupar, and other places in Fife; and to Scone, Cambaskenneth, Linlithgow, Stirling, Edinburgh etc., etc. It was upon the monasteries, chiefly, that the violence of the popular hatred expended itself. They were in evil repute among the people, as nests of idleness, gluttony, and wickedness. Tradition has ascribed to Knox the party-cry-"Pull down the nests, and the rooks will flee away." And in a single day, those nests of impurity and hypocrisy, which had stood for ages, were ravaged and swept away.

The queen, violently incensed at these outrages, vowed that she would raze the city of Perth to the ground, and sow its foundations with salt, in sign of perpetual desolation. She collected an army of considerable force, and appeared in its neighbourhood in a few days. The citizens shut the gates, and sent letters to the queen regent, the nobility, and "to the generation of Anti-Christ, the pestilent prelates, and their shavelings within Scotland." These letters proved that the lords of the congregation were prepared to meet her. Seeing the determination and force of the people, she was artful enough to come to terms of peace, and accomplish what she could by dissimulation.

A war of religion now began. It is always distressing, and deeply to be deplored, to see Reformers taking up the carnal weapons of the world in their defence, and for the moment laying aside the sword of the Spirit. But the cry to arms by the queen led the Reformers to utter the same cry in self-defense; and in that age they thought that it was as lawful to follow the example of Joshua and David as of Peter and Paul. But the Lord in mercy interposed and removed the queen dowager by death. This took place in the castle of Edinburgh on the 10th of June 1560. Her decease was the death-blow to French influence in Scottish affairs, and happily resulted in the emancipation of the nation from a foreign yoke. The way was now fully open for the establishment of the Reformation. The nation, through the wonderful preaching of Knox during the previous fifteen months was ready to throw off the papal yoke, and abolish its jurisdiction in the land.

The Papacy Abolished by Act of Parliament

Parliament was convened early in the month of August 1560, and the voice of the three estates assembled, was to determine the question of religion. All men looked forward to this convention as one of the most important that had ever been held since Scotland became a nation. We can only give the results. The estates of the realm authoritatively decreed the suppression of the Roman hierarchy, and the establishment of the Protestant faith. A short confession, or summary, of christian doctrine, had been drawn up by Knox and his associates, which was read in audience of the whole parliament, and by the estates thereof ratified and approved, "as wholesome and sound doctrine, grounded on the infallible word of God." The great victory was won. The enthusiasm of the assembly was at the highest, and the venerable Lord Lindsay rose and declared that he could say with Simeon of old, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, . . . for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Immediately after the ground had been cleared for the erection of a new ecclesiastical edifice, Knox was ready with the plan of the Reformed church in what is known as "The First Book of Discipline." The constitution of the church, as set forth in this symbolic book, is strictly Presbyterian. It recognizes four classes of ordinary and permanent office bearers-the minister, the doctor, the elder, and the deacon. 1. Ministers, who preach to the congregation. 2. Doctors who expound scripture to students in seminaries and universities. 3. Elders, who are associated with the ministers in ruling the congregation. 4. Deacons, who manage money matters, and care for the poor. Then there are four courts- the Kirk-session, the Presbytery, the Provincial Synod, and the General Assembly.

The success of the Reform movement was now decided. Parliament had declared Protestantism to be the national faith, and Knox was ready with the fashion of the new church, and the creed of its members. But he entirely overlooks-like all the other Reformers-the doctrine of the church of God, as taught by our Lord and His apostles, and frames a constitution according to human wisdom, though he no doubt thought it was in accordance with the word of God. The consequences of this mistake, as we have already seen, are set forth in the Lord's address to the church in Sardis. But we cannot speak too highly of those thirty-four years of faithful testimony to the truth at an immense expense of suffering and blood. And the Lord greatly blessed the preaching of the gospel. Nearly the whole national mind was gained over to the new teaching during that period, and the altars and the idols of superstition were destroyed throughout the land amidst the acclamations of the people.*

{*For many interesting details of this period, see Dr. Lorimer's History of the Scottish Reformation; Spottiswood's History, 3 vols.; Wylie's Protestantism; McCrie's Life of Knox; Knox's Original History.}

From this time, down to the Revolution in 1688, the Presbyterians were greatly oppressed and persecuted by the faithless and deceitful Stuarts, who wished to establish Episcopacy instead of Presbytery in Scotland. But the history of these stirring times falls not within our plan.

We must now briefly glance at the effects of the Reformation in England.

54 England

Chapter 54

England

From the times of Wycliffe, the great English Reformer, the Lord preserved a remnant in England, who witnessed for the truth, and who testified against the doctrines and superstitions of Rome. We found many of the descendants of the Lollards, or followers of Wycliffe, in the western districts of Scotland, who were prepared to receive the new doctrines of the continental divines. So it was in England. There were many, very many, among the humbler classes, who still held to the doctrines taught by their great chief; but they were compelled to hide themselves among the humbler ranks of the people, and to hold their meetings in secret. "They lived unknown, till persecution dragged them into the light, and chased them up to heaven." The least whisper of dissent from Holy Mother Church was visited with the severest penalties. As an instance of this, six men and a woman were brought to the stake at Coventry, in the year 1519, for teaching their children the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and the apostles' creed in the vulgar tongue.

Such were the scenes of daily occurrence in England, shortly before the Reformation. The priests were, as the apostle says, like "grievous wolves, not sparing the flock." Richard Hun, an honest tradesman in London, though still in the Romish communion, was a diligent student of his Bible, and a truly pious man. At the death of one of his children, the priest required of him an exorbitant fee, which Hun refused to pay, and for which he was summoned before the legate's court. Animated by that public spirit which characterizes his countrymen, he felt indignant that an Englishman should be cited before a foreign tribunal, and lodged an accusation against the priest under the act of Praemunire. Such boldness-most extraordinary at that time-exasperated the clergy beyond all bounds. "Such boldness," they said, "must be severely checked, or every layman will dare to resist the priest." Hun was accused of heresy, and thrown into the Lollards' tower of St. Paul's, and left there with an iron collar round his neck, attached to which was a heavy chain which he could scarcely drag across his prison floor.

When brought before his judges, no proof of heresy could be brought against him, and it was observed with astonishment "that he had his beads in prison with him." His persecutors were now in a great dilemma. To set him at liberty would proclaim their own defeat; and who could stop the Reformers, if the priests were to be so easily resisted? Three of their agents undertook to extricate the holy fathers from their difficulties. At midnight those men, one of them the bell-ringer, conducted the others with a light to Hun's cell. They fell upon him, strangled him, and then, putting his own belt round his neck, they suspended the lifeless body by an iron ring in the wall; and thus the turnkey found him in the morning. "The priests have murdered him," was the general cry in London, and demanded an inquest to be held on his body. Marks of violence being found on his person, and traces of blood in his cell, the jury concluded that he had been murdered; besides two of the three criminals were so conscience-stricken that they confessed their guilt. The priests were now in a greater dilemma than ever. What was to be done? This would be a serious blow to them unless they could somehow justify themselves. The house of Hun was searched, a Bible was found in it, and it was Wycliffe's translation. This was enough; He was condemned as a heretic; his body was dug up and burnt in Smithfield. But all this rather exposed than screened their guilt. The case was brought before parliament; Hun's character was vindicated; the priests were charged with the crime of murder, and restitution of his goods had to be made to his family. But through the influence of Wolsey the criminals were not punished.

The Martyrdom of John Brown

Although the clergy had been unfortunate in the affair of Hun, and exposed themselves to shame and reproach, they were by no means discouraged in their cruel course of persecution. There were many sufferers and martyrs about this time, according to our English martyrologist.

In the spring of 1517-the year in which Luther nailed his theses to the church door-John Brown of Ashford, an intelligent Christian, happened to seat himself beside a priest in the Gravesend passage-boat. "Dost thou know who I am?" said the priest, in the most haughty manner. "No, sir," said Brown. "Well then, you must know that I am a priest; you are too near me." "Indeed, sir! are you a parson, or vicar, or lady's chaplain?" "No; I am a soul-priest; I sing mass to save souls." "Do you, sir," rejoined Brown, "that is well done: and can you tell me where you find the soul when you begin the mass?" "I cannot," said the priest. "And where do you leave it, pray, when the mass is ended?" "I do not know," said the priest. "What!" continued Brown, "you do not know where you find the soul or where you leave it, and yet you say that you save it!" "Go thy ways," said the priest angrily; "thou art a heretic, and I will be even with thee."

As soon as the priest landed at Gravesend, he rode off to Canterbury, and denounced Brown to the archbishop. In three days after this conversation, as Brown sat at dinner with his family, the officers of Warham entered, dragged the man from his house, tied him on horseback, and rode off quickly. The heart-rending cries of his wife and children were of no avail. The primate's officers were too well acquainted with such tears and cries to be moved to pity. Brown was thrown into prison, and there he lay forty days, during which time his family knew not where he was, or what had been done to him. At the end of that time he was brought up for trial before the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of Rochester. He was required to retract his "blasphemy." "Christ was once offered," said Brown, "to bear the sins of many, and it is by this sacrifice we are saved, not by the repetitions of the priests." At this reply the archbishop made a sign to the executioners, who immediately took off the shoes and stockings of the pious Christian, and placed his bare feet on a pan of burning coals. This heartless cruelty was in direct violation of the English laws which forbade torture to be inflicted on any subject of the crown, but the clergy thought themselves above the laws. "Confess the efficacy of the mass," cried the two bishops to the sufferer. "If I deny my Lord upon earth," he replied, "He will deny me before his Father in heaven." The flesh was burnt off the soles of his feet even to the bones, and still John Brown remained firm and unshaken. The bishops feeling their utter weakness in the presence of divine strength, ordered him to be burnt alive-the last act of human cruelty.

The martyr was led back to Ashford. The servant of the family happening to be out when he arrived, saw him, and running back, rushed into the house, exclaiming, "I have seen him! I have seen him!" His poor wife hastened to see him, he was so tightly bound in the stocks, that he could hardly move even his head, in speaking to his wife. She sat down beside him: his features were changed by suffering; her tears and distress must remain for ever untold. He thanked the Lord for sustaining him under the torture, and for enabling him to confess his faith in the blessed Lord Jesus; and exhorted his good wife Elizabeth to continue as she had begun-to love the Lord, for He is good, and to bring up the children for Him.

The following morning, being Whitsunday, he was-taken out of the stocks and bound to the stake. His wife, his daughter Alice, and his other children, with some friends, gathered round the faggots to receive his farewell blessing. He sang a hymn while the flames were playing around him but feeling that the fire had nearly done its work, he breathed out the prayer of his Lord and Master; "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," adding, "Thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth." The martyr was now silent; but redoubled cries of anguish rent the air. His wife and daughter seemed as if they would lose their senses. The spectators moved with compassion, deeply sympathized with the distracted family, but scowled with indignation on the executioners. "Come," said Chilton, a brutal officer, "let us cast the heretic's children into the fire, lest they, too, should become heretics. So saying, he rushed towards Alice, but the maiden ran off, screaming with fright, and escaped the ruffian. "*

{*For details, see Foxe's Book of Martyrs, vol. 2, folio ed. pp. 7-14.}

Such were the servants of the archbishop, and such the heart-rending scenes in England, down to the time of Luther and the reign of Henry VIII., to which we must now turn.

Henry VIII

From the rival claims of York and Lancaster the succession to the English throne had been a matter of fierce contention for many years. The struggle of the opposing factions amongst the nobility, known in history by the term, "The Wars of the Roses," broke out about the time when Gutenberg's labours at the printing press began, and greatly hindered the peaceful triumph of the arts and literature. The country was deeply affected in all its interests by these civil wars. Commerce was reduced to its lowest state, ignorance covered the land, and true piety had scarcely any existence except amongst the despised and persecuted Lollards.*

{*Universal History, vol. 6, p. 27.}

Such was the condition of things when Henry VIII. ascended the throne in 1509. Uniting in his person the claims of the rival houses of York and Lancaster, he received the devotion of both. Everything seemed to favour the young monarch, and give hope of a peaceful and popular reign. His father, Henry VII., had successfully founded the Tudor dynasty, left him with a people outwardly quiet, and an exchequer overflowing with what would now amount to ten or twelve millions of gold. He was young-about eighteen- said to be "majestic in port, eminently handsome, and rioting in health and spirits." His manners were frank and open, and being most accomplished in all the manly exercises of the time, he became the idol of the nation. His marriage and coronation were followed by a constant succession of gaieties and amusements on the most expensive plan, which rapidly reduced the treasures accumulated by his parsimonious father.

Henry had also a taste for letters. He delighted in the society of scholars and lavished upon them his patronage. Having been destined by his father for the church, and educated accordingly, his naturally vigorous mind had been greatly improved by education, so that in mental accomplishments he far exceeded the princes of his age. The new study of revived classical literature had for some time been much cultivated in England. This was not the Reformation, but it exposed the ignorance of the clergy, and prepared the public mind for the approaching change. The priests were now as opposed to the scholars as to the heretics. They railed against the invention of printing, the manufacture of paper, and the introduction of such heathenish words as nominatives and adverbs: they were all of Satan, and sources of heresy-but, as the king favoured the most illustrious of the scholars, it was not so easy to have them murdered or burnt as poor Hun and Brown.

But of all the learned men now in England, the one they hated most was Erasmus. He could not endure-as we have already seen in the course of our history-the greed, the gluttony, and the ignorance of the monks. He had often levelled against them his keenest shafts, and his most pungent satire. He had also indulged in some of his witty sarcasms against the bishop of St. Asaph, and, though he was a favorite at court, he must be banished if he cannot be burnt. The bishops set to work accordingly. Erasmus, seeing their intentions, and true to his nature, left the country. This event was overruled by a gracious providence in the most blessed way. He went straight to Basle, and published his Greek and Latin New Testament. Copies were straightway despatched to London, Oxford, and Cambridge, where they were received with great enthusiasm. The priests had thought to maintain the darkness by driving away the master of letters, but his departure was the means of restoring to England the light of eternal truth-the pure gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Before Luther had posted up his theses, the holy scriptures were circulated in England. Thus was the Reformation chiefly accomplished by the word of God. There the Person and glory of Christ are revealed as the Saviour of sinners; salvation through faith in His precious blood, and oneness with Him through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

"The Reformation in England," says D'Aubigne, "perhaps to a greater extent than that of the continent, was effected by the word of God. Those great individualities we met with in Germany, Switzerland, and France-men like Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin-do not appear in England; but holy scripture is widely circulated. What brought light into the British Isles subsequently to the year 1517, and on a more extended scale after the year 1526, was the word-the invisible power-of the living God. The religion of the Anglo-Saxon race-a race called more than any other to circulate the oracles of God throughout the world-is particularly distinguished for its Biblical character."*

{*History of the Reformation, vol. 5, p. 199.}

Thomas Wolsey

Just as everything seemed tending to the rapid advancement of the Reformation, a powerful priest, Thomas Wolsey, appeared on the scene, who, for a time, hindered its progress.

This remarkable man, according to tradition, was the son of a wealthy butcher in Ipswich, and born in the year 1471. He seems to have been designed for the church from an early age, and was trained at Magdalen College, Oxford. About the year 1500 he was appointed chaplain to Henry VII. through the influence of Fox, bishop of Winchester. The diligence and capacity for business which he displayed soon attracted the attention of the old king, who rewarded him with the valuable deanery of Lincoln. He was equally successful in gaining the favour of the Son, Henry VIII. Although twenty years older than his new master, he adapted himself to his youth and all its tendencies. He was no ascetic, though a priest; and vice, it is said, never hung her head in his presence. He was so clever, accommodating, and unscrupulous, that he could be gay or grave, as best served the purpose of his ambition. He gradually gained such an influence over the mind of Henry, that he virtually became the ruler of the realm. Wealth, honours, offices-civil and ecclesiastical-flowed in upon him rapidly. He was created bishop of Tournay, and raised to the sees of Lincoln and York in the year 1514, and the following year he received a cardinal's hat, with the office of lord chancellor.

His enormous wealth, gathered from so many sources both at home and abroad, enabled him to maintain his elevated position with more than regal splendour. "Whenever he appeared in public, two priests, the tallest and comeliest that could be found, carried before him huge silver crosses, one to mark his dignity as archbishop, the other as papal legate. Chamberlains, gentlemen, pages, sergeants, chaplains, choristers, clerks, cup-bearers, cooks, and other domestics- to the number of more than five hundred-among whom were nine or ten lords, and the stateliest yeomen of the country-filled his palace. He generally wore a dress of scarlet velvet and silk, with hat and gloves of the same colon His shoes were embroidered with gold and silver, inlaid with pearls and precious stones." But with all this pomp and grandeur, his capacity for business was great, and seemed to enlarge with the elevation of his rank, and the increase of his offices. He patronized learning sympathized with the literary inclinations of Henry, while in matters of state, he was the most profound counsellor. in the English court, though too often swayed by his absorbing ambition.*

{*D'Aubigne, vol. 5, p. 184; Wylie, vol. 3, p. 355; Universal History, vol. 6, p. 32.}

Thus it was permitted of the Lord, that the church of Rome, the mother of harlots, should be illustrated in the man who ruled in church and state, and was arrayed in all the worldly glory spoken of in Revelation 17. It was a kind of papacy in England: he only wanted the triple crown; and the English people were to witness the kind of glory the papacy ever valued, before it sank and disappeared from the land.

The Reformation Begun

The elevation of such a prince of Rome, who was now to take a share in domestic and foreign politics, even greater than that of Henry himself, could not be favourable to the Reformation. The priests, emboldened by this display of papal power, determined to make a stand against the scholars and the Reformers. But it was too late to effect much, though heresy was still severely punished. The eve of the Reformation had arrived. Men's minds were disturbed; the papacy had lost its traditional hold upon the conscience and affections of the people, and the New Testament which Erasmus had given to England was doing a greater work than all the teachers or doctors in the land. Names so dear to every Christian's heart, and so famous in English history, now come before us.

Thomas Bilney, a student at Trinity college, Cambridge, hearing some friends speak one day of the New Testament of Erasmus, made haste to procure a copy. It was strictly forbidden by the Catholics, but was sold secretly. Bilney opened the book which he had been told was the source of all heresy-his eyes caught these words: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." He laid down his book, and meditated on the astonishing words. "What," he exclaimed, "St. Paul the chief of sinners, and yet St. Paul is sure of being saved!" The Holy Spirit shed a divine light on the sacred page, revealed Christ and His salvation to his soul, so that he at once began to preach Christ to others. He was the blessed instrument in God's hands in bringing many to the knowledge of Christ, among whom was the celebrated Hugh Latimer.

William Tyndale, from the valley of the Severn-who afterwards translated the Bible into English-was at this time a student at Oxford. He had the reputation of being an extremely virtuous young man of spotless character, and fond of sacred literature. He obtained the book which was then attracting so much attention, and God used it to the conversion of his soul. He began almost immediately to give public lectures on the gospel of Christ, and the way of salvation through faith in Him, but this being more than Oxford could yet bear, he left, and joined the dear evangelist Bilney at Cambridge.

John Fryth, from Sevenoaks, was distinguished among the students of King's college for the quickness of his understanding, and the integrity of his life. He was brought to the knowledge of Christ by means of Tyndale; and these three young students, completely emancipated from the yoke of Rome by the word of God alone, were amongst the earliest preachers of the doctrines of the Reformation, and ultimately were honoured of God with the crown of martyrdom. It was especially laid on the heart of Tyndale to translate the holy scriptures into the English tongue; but finding no convenience for this blessed work in England, he retired to the continent, and, settling at Antwerp, he there published a translation of the New Testament about the year 1527.

The Works of Luther Reach England

At the very time when God's Spirit was working so manifestly in the universities, the writings of Luther had entered the kingdom and were being widely circulated among the people. The noble stand which the monk had made at the Diet of Worms was much talked of, and awakened a deep interest in his writings. There was no small stir among the clergy; the bishops held a council to deliberate on what was to be done. The bull of Leo against Luther was sent to England; and Wolsey also issued a bull of his own against him. The bull of Leo which gave a description of Luther's perverse opinions was nailed to the church door, while Wolsey's was read aloud during high mass. The cardinal issued orders at the same time to the bishops to seize all heretical books, and books containing Martin Luther's errors; and to give notice in all the churches, that any person having such books, and failing to deliver them up within fifteen days would incur the pain of excommunication. But this was not all, the cardinal-legate, in great pomp, proceeded to St. Paul's and publicly burnt the arch-heretic's book.

The principal result of these proceedings, as some say, with the publication of Luther's alleged errors on the doors of the cathedrals and churches, was to advertise his works, awaken the slumbering interest of the English people, and prepare them for the more fearless profession of the doctrines of the Reformation. The bishops had taken counsel to arrest the progress of the gospel; but in this, as in many other cases, the efforts of adversaries only accelerated the speed of the great work, and the puny wrath of men was turned to the praise of the Lord.

Henry and Luther

When the writings of Luther were commanding such general attention, the king stood forward as the champion of the church in the character of a polemic. Henry was at this time a bigoted enemy to the principles of the Reformation, and greatly incensed against Luther for treating with contempt his favorite author, Thomas Aquinas. But Luther, nothing daunted by his royal antagonist, and in no wise convinced by his royal logic, soon replied to him in his usual style, plainly showing that, in his defence of the great principles of the Reformation, he was no respecter of persons.*

{*See vol. 2, p. 570.}

The Royal Marriages

It is not difficult to discern, at this moment, the overruling hand of a divine providence in the marvellous changes which were taking place, and how little man at his best estate is to be trusted. The same gallant Henry that showed so much zeal for the Roman See, and was rewarded with the titles, "Most Christian King; Defender of the Faith," etc., in a short time denies the pope's authority, renounces his supremacy, and withdraws his kingdom from the obedience of the pontifical jurisdiction. And the same double policy of the Catholics that turned the mind of Henry, caused the downfall of Wolsey. Rome lost both-Henry and Wolsey-and the Reformation, indirectly, greatly gained. But the events which led to these results have been so minutely related by all our historians, that we may fairly suppose the reader to be acquainted with them.

The quarrel between the king and the pope first arose on the subject of the royal marriages. Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII., was married to Catherine, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, and died without issue six months afterwards. The shrewd money-loving father-in-law, that he might preserve the advantages of the Spanish alliance, and retain her dowry of two hundred thousand ducats, proposed her marriage with Henry, his second son, now Prince of Wales. Some of the bishops were opposed to the union, as contrary to the laws of God, others favoured it; but to settle the question, a bull was obtained from Julius II. to sanction it, and the marriage took place soon after Henry's accession to the throne. For seventeen years no question appears to have arisen as to the validity of this union. Of five children- three sons and two daughters-only Mary survived the period of infancy.

One of the many reasons suggested for the king's doubts as to the lawfulness of his marriage was the loss of his children. He began to think that it was the judgment of God for marrying his brother's widow. But it is more generally believed that the origin of his doubts was the passion he had formed for Anne Boleyn. The great question of "the divorce" was first mooted about the year 1527, and it soon became the source of the most important results in both church and state, and to the nation at large. The pope was appealed to for a bull pronouncing the marriage of Henry and Catherine to be unlawful, and a dispensation for king Henry to marry again. The pope was now in a great perplexity. If he declared the marriage of the royal pair to be unlawful, he would thereby affirm to all Christendom that his infallible predecessor, Julius II., had made a mistake in declaring it to be lawful. Still, the artful pope, who was most anxious to oblige the king of England, would have had little difficulty in making that straight, but the armies of the powerful Charles -nephew to Catherine-were then in Italy, and he was indignant at the repudiation of his aunt.

This complication of interests led to the most shameful artifices and intrigues on the part of the papal court in which the double dealing of Wolsey-who had been promised the tiara by Charles if he threw difficulties in the way of the divorce-being discovered by the king, led to his disgrace and his ignominious end. For seven long years the pope, by his diplomatic strategy, kept the impetuous Henry waiting, which shows, on the other side, the immense hold which the word of a pope had upon the mind of an absolute monarch. Driven to extremities, Henry resolved to take the law into his own hands, and entirely abolish the pope's power in England. "In 1534 an act of parliament was passed, with very little opposition, which put an end to the papal authority, as well as to the various payments of whatever kind which had hitherto been made by the laity or clergy to the see of Rome."*

{*Marsden's Dict. of Churches, p. 213; Miss Strickland's Queens of England, vol. 4., Fuller's Church History of Britain, vol. 2.; Universal History, vol. 6, chap. 4; Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. 1, part 1.}

The Persecution Begins

The king, very prudently, demanded and obtained the sanction of the higher clergy to the great changes he was introducing into the ecclesiastical constitution of England. The bishops were greatly embarrassed. "If we recognize the king as supreme head of the church in England," said they, "we overthrow the pope." But they were obliged to submit to all his enactments, or fall under his displeasure. To atone for their cowardly submission to Henry, and sacrificing the pope, they resolved on kindling afresh the fires of persecution, which had been languishing during the latter years of Wolsey's reign. The evangelical preachers were becoming more numerous, Lutheranism was rapidly gaining ground, the leaders must be burnt.

"Your highness," said the bishops to the king, "one time defended the church with your pen, when you were only a member of it; now that you are its supreme head, your majesty should crush its enemies, and so shall your merits exceed all praise." Before giving Henry's reply to this insidious flattery, it is necessary to state that, although the alterations of the king had done much for the overthrow of the papal power in England, they had done nothing as yet for the deliverance of the persecuted Reformers. Henry had no intention at this time of proceeding further with the Reformation, though the steps which he had taken were overruled by God for the advancement of that great movement. The act which acknowledged the king's supremacy declared that, "they did not hereby intend to vary from Christ's church about the articles of the Catholic faith of Christendom, or in any other things, declared by the scriptures and the word of God to be necessary for their salvation."

As Henry had now broken with the pope, and the fidelity of the clergy was not much to be trusted, he felt the necessity of uniting more closely with them; and as he greatly delighted in his title "Defender of the Faith," he consented to hand over the disciples of the heretic Luther to the priests. Thus an agreement was made between the king and the clergy of the most infamous character that ever darkened the pages of history. The king gave them authority to imprison and burn the Reformers, provided they would assist him in resuming the power usurped by the pope. This was enough; the priests would agree to anything, swear to anything, if only authority were given them to burn the heretics. The bishops immediately began to hunt down the friends of the gospel-the holy men of God.

We regret being unable, from want of space, to give details of the martyrs of this period, but they are to be found in many histories,* and sure we are their record is on high; and if the reader is a believer in the gospel, which was then called heresy, he will meet them on the morning of the first resurrection. This is the sure and certain hope of all true believers. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1Th 4:16-17) Nothing can be plainer than these words of eternal truth. The church, which is His body, is complete, the Lord Himself comes for her; she hears His voice, whether in the caverns of the grave or alive upon the earth, and ascends in her chariot of clouds; He meets her in the air, and conducts her to the house of many mansions-the home of love which He has prepared for the bride of His heart. Brightly, amidst the myriad hosts of heaven, will shine on that day, the noble army of martyrs. But all will be perfect, absolutely perfect, as Christ Himself is perfect, and the joy of one will be the common joy of all; for all will be like Christ, the perfect reflection of His glory.

{*See Foxe's Book of Martyrs, vol. 2, folio ed.; Strype's Memorials of the Reformation; D'Aubigne's Luther, vol. 5; Calvin, vol. 4.}

The prisons, the stakes, the faggots, as well as the tedious sick chamber, will all be forgotten on that day, save to speak of the grace which enabled us in some measure to glorify Him. Neither will it be an indistinguishable mass, for we shall know each other, and the links which had been formed on earth by the Holy Ghost shall remain unbroken for ever. Such is the bright and blessed future for which we wait, we long, we pray; but we know He is too faithful to come before the right time. And this is the future of all who believe in Jesus-the feeblest as well as the strongest. All who come to Jesus now are received: He rejects none. His mournful complaint is, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." . . . "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (Joh 5:40; Joh 6:37)

The names of Bilney, Byfield, Tewkesbury, Barnes, Bainham, Fryth, and many others, who suffered martyrdom about this time, have become familiar as the first Reformers in England. But it was difficult for any honest man to escape persecution at this period of our history. The Reformers suffered as heretics, and many of the papists as traitors. Those who refused to take the oath of supremacy were condemned as guilty of high treason. The aged Dr. Fisher, bishop of Rochester, nearly eighty, and Sr. Thomas More, late Lord Chancellor, styled the Erasmus of England, were condemned and executed in 1534, for refusing to acknowledge Henry as supreme head of the church. Neither age, service, learning, nor virtue were respected by the cruel and vindictive tyrant. Just about this time, when scaffolds, blocks, and stakes were rapidly multiplying in the land, one of queen Anne's maids of honour attracted the attention, and excited the guilty passion of the king. But as there was no ground for pleading a divorce in the case of Anne Boleyn, he resolved to clear his way, as one has said, by the axe, to a new marriage with Jane Seymour. Pretending to suspect her fidelity, the monster threw her into the Tower. She was denied even the help of counsel on her trial, and found guilty by judges who were bound to bend before the tyranny of their master. The beautiful, and, as many say, the virtuous, Anne Boleyn, was beheaded on May 19th, 1536, and Henry and Jane Seymour were married on the day following.

The Suppression of Monasteries

Henry had been excommunicated by the pope; his subjects absolved from their allegiance; Charles V. might invade his kingdom, and avenge the cause of his royal aunt, Catherine: and should there be a popish rebellion, the whole fraternity of monks would flock to the standard of revolt. The king was no doubt moved, by such considerations and fears to make an end of the monasteries, and appropriate their wealth before the danger arose. His prime minister, Sir Thomas Cromwell, a favourer of the Reformation, and an energetic man, was authorized by his master to appoint a commission to visit the abbeys, monasteries, nunneries, and universities of the kingdom, and report the condition of these foundations. The result was overwhelming. In place of obedience, poverty, and charity, which these religious houses were established to exemplify, they had raised themselves above the laws of the land, besides rolling in wealth, and, as to their practices, we leave them in the original histories. Bishop Burnet says, "I have seen an extract of a part of this report, concerning one hundred and forty-four houses, that contains abominations in it equal to any that were in Sodom."*

{*History of the Reformation, part 1, book 3, p. 334.}

The king and the parliament, on hearing the report of the commissioners, resolved on their suppression. The lesser and greater monasteries amounted in number to six hundred and forty-five, while their possessions were valued at one-fifty of the kingdom-"at least one-fifty of the soil of England was in the hands of the monks." Besides the enormous wealth which fell to the crown, from the abolition of the religious houses, the king seized the rich shrine of Thomas a Becket at Canterbury, and his name as a saint was ordered to be erased from the calendar. The monks and nuns were turned adrift to shift for themselves, which caused great confusion and distress throughout the land. Cranmer and Latimer pleaded the part of the confiscated property should be devoted to the founding of hospitals for the sick and the poor, and institutions for the cultivation of learning; but the king and his courtiers had little to spare for such purposes. As Tyndale quaintly says, "The counsels were taken not of a pure heart and love of the truth, but to avenge themselves, and to eat the harlot's flesh, and suck the marrow of her bones."

The Six Articles

But, notwithstanding this apparent Reformation, Henry was a thorough Romanist at heart. He maintained the doctrines of Rome, while he abolished the authority of the Roman pontiff in his kingdom. Under the influence of Gardiner and Bonner, two bigoted papists, six articles were enacted by the king and his parliament, usually termed the "Bloody statute." It condemned to death all who opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation, auricular confession, vows of chastity, and private masses; and all who supported the marriage of the clergy, and the giving of the cup to the laity. This creed was thoroughly Roman. Cranmer used all his influence, and even risked the king's displeasure, to prevent its passing, but all in vain. The Romish party was still powerful, and the king's temper became more violent than ever. Latimer, now bishop of Worcester, was thrown into prison, and hundreds soon followed him. The prisons of London were crowded with all sorts of persons suspected of heresy. Papists were hung for denying the supremacy, and men and women were burnt in great numbers for denying transubstantiation. Commissioners were appointed to carry out the act, and who could escape? If a man was an honest papist, he denied the king's supremacy, and if he was an honest Protestant, he denied the real presence. The number that died by the hand of the executioner, during the reign of Henry VIII., could not be credited in our day. Some say seventy-two thousand.*

{*Wylie's History of Protestantism, vol. 3, p. 401.}

The True Source of the Reformation

There are writers, we know, who ascribe the Reformation in England to the enactments of the king; but we think this a great mistake. That mighty movement flowed from a purer source than the murderous heart of Henry. Besides, he was a Romanist to the end of his days; and bequeathed large sums to be spent in saying masses for the repose of his soul. The work throughout was evidently of God, and by means of evangelists and His own holy word.

We have already seen the learned men of England in possession of the New Testament in Greek and Latin; but the common people-unless they had Wycliffe's translation- must receive the knowledge of the truth through preachers -such as Bilney, Latimer, and others. William Tyndale, a man chosen of God, translated the Greek into English at Antwerp, and sent thousands of his New Testaments to England, concealed in vessels coming to our ports. Sometimes they were seized and burned, but many escaped detection, and were widely circulated. The whole Bible in the English of that day, translated by Tyndale, with the assistance of Miles Coverdale, appeared in 1535, dedicated to the king, being the first edition of the scriptures published by royal authority. Probably through the influence of Cranmer, Henry ordered the free sale of the Bible, and a copy in Latin and English to be provided for every parish church in the realm, and chained to a pillar or a desk in the choir, that any man might have access to it, and read it. "I rejoice," wrote Cranmer to Cromwell, "to see this day of Reformation now risen in England, since the light of God's word doth shine over it without a cloud."

England had now thrown off the tyranny of Rome, abolished the whole monastic system, and re-established the authority of scripture. Still, the Reformation made no great progress during the remainder of Henry's life. The fabric of Roman traditions had fallen, and the foundation of a new edifice was laid in restoring the Bible to the people; but much patience, toil, and suffering had to be endured before the building could be completed.

The Reign of Edward VI

On the death of Henry, in 1547, the English Reformation assumed an entirely different aspect. Edward VI., the child of Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, was acknowledged king of England, January 28, 1547, when only nine years old. His coronation took place in February, when the friends of the gospel were released from prison, the statutes of the "six articles" were abolished; many returned from exile, and the ranks of the Reformers were greatly recruited. When the procession was about to move from the abbey of Westminster to the palace, three swords were brought to be carried before the newly crowned king, emblematic of his three kingdoms. Seeing this, the king observed, "There lacks yet one." On his nobles inquiring what it was, he answered, "The Bible;" adding, "that book is the sword of the Spirit, and is to be preferred before those. It ought in all right to govern us; without it we are nothing. He that rules without it is not to be called God's minister, or a king." The Bible was brought, and carried reverently in the procession.

The natural gifts of Edward, it is said, were such as to raise him far above the ordinary conditions of childhood. His father had wisely provided him with pious teachers, who were also friends of the gospel. Numerous letters written by the precocious prince in Latin and French, before he was ten years old, are still extant. Catherine Parr, the sixth wife of his father, said to be a lady of great virtue and intelligence, carefully watched over his training.

During the brief reign of Edward, every encouragement was given to the diffusion of the English Bible. Though his reign extended to little more than seven years, no fewer than eleven editions of the Bible, and six of the New Testament were published. Various improvements were also introduced in the mode of conducting divine service. Images were ordered to be removed from the churches, prayers were no longer to be offered for the dead, auricular confession and transubstantiation were declared to be unscriptural, the clergy were permitted to marry, and the service was ordered to be performed in English in place of Latin. Articles of religion were also agreed upon in convocation; they were forty-two in number. In the reign of Elizabeth, they were reduced to thirty-nine, which continue, as then revised, to be the standard of the English church. The liturgy was revised, and re-revised, chiefly by Cranmer and Ridley-after consulting Bucer and Martyr-known as the "First and Second Book of Edward VI., and was duly ratified by the king and the parliament, and came into use in 1552. It was substantially the Book of Common Prayer now in use.

While these works of Reform were being carried on with great vigour, the pious King Edward died, in his sixteenth year, July 6th, 1553; and with his premature death a night of terrible darkness surrounded the Reformation in England. His last prayer was, "O my Lord God, bless my people, and save Thine inheritance; O Lord God, save Thy chosen people of England; O Lord God, defend this realm from popery, and maintain Thy true religion, that I and my people may praise Thy holy name, for Jesus Christ His sake." During this short reign, we may say, the Reformation was established, and Protestantism had assumed, in all essential points, the form in which we find it today. "When Henry VIII. descended into the tomb in 1547, England was little better than a field of ruins; the colossal fragments of that ancient fabric, which the terrible blows of the king had shivered to pieces, lay all about; and before these obstructions could be removed -time-honoured maxims exploded, inveterate prejudices rooted up, the dense ignorance of all classes dispelled-and the building of the new edifice begun, a generation, it would have been said, must pass away."* Yet in six short years the work proceeded with such rapidity, that the ancient faith, which for a thousand years had stood firm and been held sacred, had passed away for ever.

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 3, p. 418; Faiths of the World, vol. 1, p. 825; Marsden's Churches, p.227.}

The Reign of Mary

The Princess Mary ascended the throne in July, 1553. She inherited from her mother, Catherine of Arragon, a determined hatred of the Protestant religion, and a strong attachment to the Roman Catholic faith. Her first acts were to repeal the laws of her father and brother in favour of Reform and against the pope and popish worship. Gardiner and Bonner were released from the Tower, and the leaders of the Reformation-Cranmer, Hooper, Coverdale, Rogers, and others-were sent to occupy their vacant prisons. Meanwhile cardinal Pole arrived from Italy, with full powers from the pope to receive the kingdom of England into the Roman pale. Persecution commenced, and all men apprehended a terrible storm. "A thousand of the Reformers," says Marsden "including five bishops, many noblemen, fifty dignitaries of the church, and others whose position in society might render them obnoxious, hurried their departure, and fled abroad-chiefly to Geneva, Basle, and Zurich, where the Reformed religion was now established." The year 1555 has been termed the one of burning and blood.

Rogers, vicar of St. Sepulchre's who had been the associate of Tyndale and Coverdale in the translation of the scriptures, was the first to suffer. As he was being led to Smithfield, he saw his wife in the crowd waiting to see him. She had an infant in her arms, and ten children around her. He could only bid them all farewell with a look of faith and love. A pardon was offered him when he reached the faggots if he would recant. "That which I have preached," he said firmly "will I seal with my blood." "Thou art a heretic," said the sheriff. "That shall be known at the last day," responded the martyr. The torch was applied, the flames rose around him, and with hands raised to heaven he bore with perfect calmness the torture until they dropped into the fire. So died John Rogers, the protomartyr of the Marian persecution.

Hooper, late bishop of Gloucester, was burnt alive in front of his own cathedral. It was a market day, and a crowd of not less than seven thousand had assembled to witness the last moments of one so greatly beloved. His enemies, fearing the power of his eloquence, forbade him to speak, and threatened if he did to cut out his tongue. But it is said that the meekness, the more than usual serenity of his countenance, and the courage with which he endured his prolonged and awful sufferings, bore nobler testimony to his cause than any words he could have uttered. He was much in prayer and probably the greater part of the seven thousand were in tears. "To say nothing of his piety," says another historian "and the cause for which he suffered, he was a noble specimen of the true English character; a man of transparent honesty, of dauntless courage, of unshaken constancy, and of warm affections and a loving heart." His last words were, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Within a few days after Hooper's death, Saunders was burnt at Coventry, Dr. Taylor at Hadleigh, in Suffolk, Ferrar, bishop of St. David's, at Carmarthen, Wales. All these were clergymen.

Fires were thus kindled in all parts of England in order to strike a wider terror into the hearts of the people, and deter them by these terrible examples from siding with the Reformers. But they had just the opposite effect. Men could easily contrast the mild treatment of the papists under the reign of Edward, and the cruelties practiced on innocent men under the reign of Mary. Barbarous as the nation then was, and educationally Catholic, it was shocked beyond measure with the severities of the court of Mary, especially when the council issued an order to the sheriffs of the different counties to exact a promise from the martyrs to make no speeches at the stake-otherwise to cut out their tongues. Thus were kindred and friends deprived of the last and sacred words of the dying. Even the most rigid papists pretended to be ashamed of these savage proceedings when they saw their effect upon the nation. Undying hatred of the church which encouraged such atrocities took the place of superstitious reverence. The hearts of the people by thousands and tens of thousands were moved by sympathy to take part with the oppressed. In the summer of this year of horrors, Bradford, prebendary of St. Paul's, was burnt at Smithfield, together with an apprentice, a lad of nineteen; and many others whom we cannot name. But we must briefly notice three familiar and honoured names in the martyrology of England.

Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer

Having been examined by the queen's commissioners at Oxford on the charge of heresy, they were condemned to be burnt as obstinate heretics. They were old, learned, and greatly esteemed as ministers of Christ; Latimer was eighty-four, and had been one of the most eloquent preachers in England. They were sent back to prison, where they were detained nearly twelve months, the sentence of death hanging over them. In October 1555, an order was issued for the execution of Ridley and Latimer. They were led to the city ditch, over against Balliol college. After spending a few moments in prayer, they were fastened to the stake. The torch was first applied to the faggots around Ridley. The dear old Latimer addressed his companion in words still fresh, after three centuries, as on the day on which they were uttered: "BE OF GOOD COMFORT, MASTER RIDLEY, AND PLAY THE MAN, WE SHALL THIS DAY LIGHT SUCH A CANDLE, BY GOD'S GRACE, IN ENGLAND, AS I TRUST SHALL NEVER BE PUT OUT." They both leaned forward as if to embrace the flames-the chariot of fire that was to carry them to heaven-their happy souls soon departed to be for ever with the Lord. Quietly have they been reposing on that heart of eternal love these three hundred years, and there they will rest until the morning of the first resurrection when the sleeping dust of God's redeemed shall be raised and their bodies fashioned like unto Christ's body of glory, "according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

Cranmer was still in prison. Having acted so prominent a part under two monarchs, Henry and Edward, and in both church and state, he must be made to drink the bitterest dregs of humiliation; besides he had voted for the divorce the unpardonable sin in Mary's eyes. He was visited by the most accomplished of the Romish party, and treated with courtesy. They professed a sincere desire to prolong his life for future service, and hinted that he might have a quiet sphere in the country. His gentle spirit, his age, his failing courage, caused him to give way, and he fell into a disgraceful dissimulation by the arts of his seducers, and signed the submission required of him. The Catholics gloated over the humiliation of their victim, and hoped thereby to inflict a deadly wound on the Reformation. But Mary and Cardinal Pole had no thought of pardoning him. Instructions were secretly sent down to Oxford to prepare for his execution. On the morning of the 21st of March, 1556, the venerable archbishop, meanly habited, was led in solemn procession to St. Mary's church. Meanwhile grace had wrought deeply in the heart of Cranmer. He was truly penitent, his soul was restored, and fully prepared to make a bold confession of his faith. He was placed on a raised platform in front of the pulpit; Dr. Cole preached a sermon, as usual on such occasions. "He," says Foxe, "that was late archbishop, metropolitan and primate of England, and the king's privy counsellor, being now in a bare and ragged gown, and ill-favouredly clothed, with an old and square cap, exposed to the contempt of all men, did admonish men, not only of his own calamity, but also of their state and fortune. More than twenty several times the tears did gush out abundantly dropping down marvellously from his fatherly face."

Martyrdom of Cranmer

Sermon being ended, Dr. Cole asked him to clear himself of all suspicion of heresy, by making a public confession. "I will do so," said Cranmer, "and that with a good will." He rose up, and addressed the vast concourse, declaring his abhorrence of the Romish doctrines, and expressing his stedfast adherence to the Protestant faith. "And now," he said, "I come to the great thing that is troubling my conscience, more than anything that I ever did or said in my whole life. And forasmuch, as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall therefore first be punished; for, may I come to the fire, it shall be first burned." Hardly had he uttered the words, when the priests, filled with fury at hearing a confession contrary to what they expected, dragged him tumultuously to the stake. It was already set up on the spot where Latimer and Ridley had suffered. As soon as the flames approached him, holding his right hand in the hottest of the fire, he exclaimed, "That unworthy right hand!" and there he kept it till it was consumed, repeatedly exclaiming, "That unworthy right hand!" His constancy amazed his persecutors. He stood in the midst of the flames unmoved as the stake to which he was bound. His last words were those familiar to so many martyrs, and first uttered by the noblest of all martyrs- "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And in a few moments, his happy soul, released from all its cares and troubles, joined his companions in the paradise of God. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." (2Co 5:8)

Within three years (from 1555 to 1558) according to the historians of the time, two hundred and eighty-four martyrs suffered by fire, while many perished in prison from hunger and ill-usage. "Over all England," says one, "from the eastern counties to Wales on the west, and from the midland shires to the shores of the English Channel, blazed those baleful fires. Both sexes, and all ages and conditions, the boy of eight and the man of eighty, were dragged to the stake and burnt, sometimes singly, at other times in dozens. Just two days before the death of the queen, five martyrs were burnt in one fire at Canterbury." The news of her death filled the country with rejoicings. It is said that bonfires were lighted, that the people setting tables in the street, and bringing forth bread and wine, "did eat, drink, and rejoice." Thus was fulfilled the saying of the wise king, "When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked." (Pro 11:10-11) The world, notwithstanding the native enmity of the heart, bears its testimony to consistent godliness, both in princes and people; and what a testimony against wickedness when the death of a wicked ruler is matter of national exultation! So it was on the death of Mary; there was the shout of joy throughout the whole land. And such was the joy of Rome on the death of Nero; and of France on the death of Robespierre. And such shall it be at last when God shall judge the harlot, and avenge the blood of His saints at her hand. Then heaven shall rejoice, and shout its loud Alleluia! Alleluia! (Rev 18:20)

On the same day that Mary breathed her last-November 17th, 1558-died Cardinal Pole, her guilty counsellor. The system of Jezebel, reared at the cost of so much blood, fell with these two, never to be restored. Mary's zeal for Rome had been fired into fanaticism by her marriage with Philip II. of Spain; and her three advisers-the bigoted Gardiner the brutal Bonner, and the sanguinary Pole-led her to believe that in burning her Protestant subjects she was doing the will of God. When mourning the cold-heartedness of Philip, who rarely came to see her, Pole assured her that the estrangement of her husband was God's displeasure for her leniency towards the Amalekites: then a few more were sacrificed to bring over the gloomy bigot; but Philip cared not to come, which, with other things, in the great mercy of God to this afflicted nation, hastened her to the grave in the forty-third year of her age, and in the sixth of her reign.*

{*For minute details of the persecutions, see Foxe's Book of Martyrs; Froude's History of England, Fuller's Church History Burnet's History of the Reformation; Wylie's History of Protestantism.}

55 Reign of Elizabeth

Chapter 55

The Reign of Elizabeth

In 1558 the princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, ascended the throne in the twenty-fifth year of her age. Her accession changed everything. The terrible gloom which the reign of the "bloody Mary" had spread over the land instantly passed away. Every steeple in town and country sent forth its merry peal, the prison doors were opened, and men whom Mary had left to be burnt were set at liberty. All the laws which had been passed in the reign of Mary for the restoration of popery were repealed, and the English service was again introduced. Her conduct in relation to the Reformation-the great question of the age-was such as to preclude all hope of the restoration of popery, though she had a strong leaning to Romish ceremonies herself, and her public measures fell short of that complete removal of abuses, which many desired to see effected. The Puritan party strongly objected to the habits and vestments commanded to be worn, nor did they think the prayer book itself free from superstition. This led to a great schism in the church, and occasioned a painful controversy, which lasted from the early days of Elizabeth to the restoration of Charles II. But we can only briefly refer to its commencement.

The Puritans

"Among the first," says Marsden, "who introduced into England the controversy which soon afterwards ripened into Puritanism, was the martyr, bishop Hooper. He had lived some time abroad, and was the friend of Bullinger and Gualter-the two leaders of the Protestant cause in Germany and Switzerland. Returning from his exile in the days of Edward VI., his piety and talents were at once appreciated, and he was nominated to the see of Gloucester. But his conscience was embarrassed; and in his person a contest began, which has never since been stilled. He demurred to the robes in which the episcopal investiture usually took place." Hooper, with many of the exiles, had contracted a love for the severely simple style of worship which existed in the Reformed churches on the Continent, and led them to complain that the Reformation in England was left in an imperfect state: many abuses, both in worship and discipline, being still retained.

Hooper begged to decline the bishopric, or be admitted without the usual ceremonials. Through the influence of Peter Martyr and Bucer, then professors of divinity at Oxford and Cambridge, he at length consented to use the vestments at his consecration, and to preach in them, once at least, before the court. It is not certain that he ever wore them afterwards. But the controversy was now begun; the elevated position of Hooper and his popular eloquence kept it alive. Some of the greatest names in the church of England of that day became friendly to the Reform pleaded for by the Puritans. Many refused to be consecrated in robes worn by the bishops of the church of Rome, and which they regarded as the badge of Antichrist. Elizabeth, though opposed to popery, was resolved, notwithstanding, to retain as much show and pomp in religious matters as might be possible. From this time the court party and the Puritan party became more decidedly opposed to each other. An order was issued by the queen, that exact uniformity should be maintained in all external rites and ceremonies. This was followed by another, requiring immediate uniformity in the vestments on pain of prohibition from preaching and deprivation from office. Matters were now brought to a crisis; multitudes of godly ministers were ejected from their churches, and forbidden to preach anywhere else. All hopes of further reform in the church being now at an end, the suspended ministers formed themselves into a body distinct from the church of England, which they regarded as only half reformed. Elizabeth was enraged, and threatened them with her royal displeasure; but in the face of persecution the Puritans, or Nonconformists, as they were now sometimes called, rapidly increased. The famous Thomas Cartwright, with three hundred more, threw off their surplices in one day within the walls of one college.*

{*Faiths of the World, vol. 2, p. 725.}

During the reign of the House of Stuart, the tide of persecution ran high and strong, and the Puritans, deprived of all hopes of redress, fled in great numbers to the Continent. After the accession of Charles I. fresh ceremonies were introduced by Laud and additional cruelties were inflicted on the Nonconformists. Emigration now seemed their only hope. A body of Puritans embarked as exiles, landed on the western shores of the Atlantic, and formed a settlement in New England. This colony of the "Pilgrim Fathers" soon received vast accessions; and the desire for emigration became so great, and the numbers leaving so many, that the government became alarmed, and stopped by royal warrant eight vessels when they were on the point of sailing from the Thames with emigrants to New England. On board were ejected ministers of high standing, and men of influence and rank, among whom were Oliver Cromwell, Hampden, Hesselrig, Lord Brook, and Lord Saye. The circumstances which followed this disembarkation are so remarkable, that we are compelled to pause and wonder. The overruling providence of God is very manifest. There is only One who knows the end from the beginning, and blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. Man knows not the future, and can neither make provision for his need nor against approaching danger. In 1642-five years after the vessels were arrested- through the oppression of Charles and his popish ways the sword was drawn, and the war began, which ended in the subversion of his throne, his tragic execution, and the establishment of the Commonwealth under the protectorate of Cromwell.

Puritanism, properly so-called, became extinct under the Commonwealth. The vestments being generally laid aside, the ground of contention was removed. But the later Puritans went farther than the Hoopers and Cartwrights, and contended not only against the forms and vestments, but against the constitution of the Church of England; and these immediately became two great parties-PRESBYTERIANS AND INDEPENDENTS.

Charles II. and James II.

After the restoration of Charles II. prelacy was restored with all its popish ceremonials. On May 19, 1662, the following act was passed: "That all who had not received episcopal ordination should be re-ordained by bishops. That every minister should, on or before the 24th of August following, declare his unfeigned assent and consent to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer, on pain of being deprived of his benefice," etc. "The dreaded day arrived. Great anxiety was felt as to whether the Reformation was to stand or fall in England. But the grace of God triumphed, and the enemy was defeated. Two thousand ministers, rather than submit to the act of uniformity, surrendered their livings, and left their parsonages. Thus were the most faithful and able ministers of the church of England cast out, ignominiously reduced to great poverty, and provoked by spiteful usage."-Burnet.

Charles II. died in 1685, and his brother, the Duke of York, ascended the throne as James II. Although suspected of being a papist, he was allowed to take possession of the crown in peace and quietness. But his true character and intentions soon appeared. Being surrounded with Jesuits as his advisers, edict followed edict, the tendency of which was the overthrow of the laws and institutions of the realm, and to restore popery in all its power and completeness. One of these edicts, which was ordered to be read during divine service in all the churches, hastened the final struggle. Several of the bishops, and a vast number of the clergy refused to read it. Seven bishops were summoned before the ecclesiastical commission, and sent to the Tower by the notorious Judge Jeffreys. But the heart of the nation was too soundly Protestant to submit long to such tyranny. The bishops were tried at Westminster, and acquitted. The hall rang with shouts of joy, and the crowd rushing to the streets, crying, "Not guilty! Not guilty!" All London soon caught the flying joy; but James, agitated and troubled, heard in these sounds the mutterings of the coming storm.

The disgraceful conduct of Charles and James, and the atrocious cruelties of Jeffreys in England, and of Claverhouse in Scotland, most thoroughly convinced all parties that, if the slightest vestige of liberty was to be preserved, decisive measures must be adopted. A majority of the nobility favoured the intervention of William, Prince of Orange, son-in-law to James, and the next heir to the throne. Invitations were sent to the Hague, messengers were despatched, all entreating him to come over and mediate between the king and his subjects, and if necessary, to employ more stringent measures. Having duly considered the various aspects of this great enterprise, and prepared for it, he sailed under the English banner, with the motto, "For the Protestant Religion and Liberties of England," and landed at Brixham, in Torbay, on the 5th of November, 1688. In the meantime James fled, being fully aware of the universal feeling of disaffection existing amongst his subjects. He scarcely made any show of opposition.

The Revolution of 1688

A national convention was summoned, the throne was declared vacant by the abdication of James, and the crown was settled on the Prince and Princess of Orange. "This was the triumph," says Wylie, "not of English Protestantism only; it was the triumph of the Protestantism of all Christendom.... It was the revival, not less of the Scotch Covenanters, whose torn and blood-stained flag, upheld at the latter end of their struggle by only a few laymen, was soon to be crowned with victory."*

{*History of Protestantism, vol. 3, p. 624; Universal History, vol. 6, p. 288.}

Thus was the great revolution of 1688 accomplished without tumult or bloodshed. The ignominious flight of James and his queen to France relieved the ruling powers from all perplexities, and facilitated the arrangement of affairs connected with the act of settlement. Bills were speedily passed for the relief of the Protestants, and for securing the civil and religious liberties of the English people. William, who had been brought up a Calvinist, was strongly inclined to favour dissenters; but several of the bishops and many of the clergy contending for the divine right of kings, refused to take the required oaths to the new government, and became a troublesome faction, afterwards known by the term-Non-jurors. In Catholic Ireland, and among the popish clans of the Highlands of Scotland, there were strong factions who favoured the house of Stuart.

In Ireland Tyrconnel raised an army of Catholics, and was joined by James from France with a fleet of fourteen vessels, and well supplied by Louis with men, money, and arms. Several battles were fought before the country was subdued. The siege of Derry is one of the most memorable in history; but the famous battle of the Boyne, fought on July 1st, 1690, closed the dispute. James, finding all was lost, escaped once more to France, where he solaced himself with a devotion almost monastic, and which made even his Catholic friends laugh at him, as a man who had thrown away three kingdoms for a mass.

In Scotland Viscount Dundee, the notorious Claverhouse, succeeded in raising a considerable body of Highlanders in favour of their dethroned monarch. The English army, under the command of General Mackay, met Dundee and the clans at the pass of Killiecrankie, where a serious engagement took place. The battle went against the army of William, but the cause of James suffered an irreparable loss in the death of Claverhouse. He was killed when on tip-toe in his stirrups urging on his men to the charge. The rallying power was now gone, and the popish clans laid down their arms, and gradually submitted to the authority of William.

The Protestant Succession

The reign of William is especially worthy of our notice, because he placed the throne of the United Kingdom on a thoroughly Protestant foundation. It was provided in the Bill of Rights, "not only that every person in communion with the church of Rome, or marrying a papist, shall for ever be incapable of the crown, but also that in case of any British sovereign's apostasy to popery, the people shall be absolved from their allegiance, and the next heir shall immediately succeed, if a Protestant, just as if the royal personage reconciled to the church of Rome, or marrying a papist, he actually died." This famous bill immediately followed the Act of Settlement in 1689.

The English church, we may say, is the same now as it was in the time of William. The Episcopalians are the reigning party, and number among their adherents the royal family, the principal part of the nobility, and the greatest part of the people. The foundation of the Presbyterian establishment in Scotland was also firmly laid about the same time, by an act of the Scottish Parliament which ratified the "Westminster Confession of Faith," as the creed of that church.*

{*Mosheim, vol. 4, pp. 297-378; Cunningham, vol. 2, p. 285; Universal History, vol. 6, p. 294.}

The unbounded liberty which the British subject enjoys of publishing his opinions without restraint, and of worshipping God according to the dictates of his own conscience, enlightened by the truth as it is in Jesus, naturally causes various sects to arise, and controversies respecting things pertaining to religion to be perpetuated. Many of these may be most interesting to the student of ecclesiastical history but we have already exceeded our limits, and can do little more than notice the names of the leading seceders whose followers now form large sections of the professing church, with whom we are familiar.

Ebenezer Erskine

The church of Scotland in her early days allowed no latitude of belief within her pale. We speak of what she was not alas! of what has disturbed her communion of late years. Her creed descends to the minutest particulars, and the slightest deviation from it was immediately canvassed and strictly dealt with according to that creed. The following remarks of Cunningham the historian, and one of her ministers, we fully accept as to what she has been, but not as to what she is at the present time. "All her ministers speak precisely the same things. The mind of each one presents a perfect impression of the Westminster divines. Notwithstanding the independence of the Scotch intellect, it has seldom been exercised upon forms of faith. Notwithstanding the free scope of its metaphysics, the region of theology has been carefully avoided. Notwithstanding the schisms which have taken place, heresy has never been able to lift up her head.... But notwithstanding this marvellous uniformity of faith, the church judicatories have required, in a few instances, to deal with heresy."

In the year 1732, a controversy arose about the settlement of ministers in vacant parishes. The assembly passed an act to the effect that, if the planting of a parish devolved upon the Presbytery, from the patron not availing himself of his right, the call was to proceed from the heritors and elders. Ebenezer Erskine, a grave and spiritual man, but energetic and always on the popular side of public questions, strongly opposed the act. He advocated the free choice and election of the minister by the members. "What difference," he exclaimed in the debate, "does a piece of land make between man and man in the affairs of Christ's kingdom which is not of this world? We must have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ without respect of persons." Many of the most spiritual sympathized with him, and several joined him in his protest. The case was carried from court to court; but the assembly would not yield, and the protectors would not yield, and so the secession took place. But the Lord overruled it for the revival of religion, the spread of the truth, and the blessing of precious souls.

These few seceders, four or five in number, immediately constituted themselves into a Presbytery, and commenced publishing and preaching in separation from the Established Church. This was the small beginning of the secession church, now United Presbyterian, which estimates its adherents at half a million.*

{*Cunningham, vol. 2, p. 383; Thomson's History of the Secession Church; Fraser's Life of Ebenezer Erskine.}

John Wesley

In England, things were in a very low condition in the establishment, as they were in Scotland. There had been a great reaction since the time of the Puritans. The people had thrown off the restraints of Puritanism, or, rather, of Christianity, and returned to their games and pleasures. They soon sank into their former ignorance and worldliness. But the Lord in great mercy, just about this time, was preparing His chosen servants for the revival of His work, for the spread of the truth, and for the preaching of His gospel, which would reach the hearts and consciences of men in every sphere of life.

Samuel Wesley, the father of the celebrated John and Charles Wesley, was of Puritanical descent, and, marrying a daughter of Dr. Annesley-one of the ejected ministers-the mother came from an eminent Nonconformist family. When the revolution was effected, Mr. Wesley was the first who wrote in favour of that great national change, and dedicated his work to Queen Mary, who rewarded him with the rectory of Epworth, in Lincolnshire. Here, John, their second son, the founder of the Methodists, was born in June, 1703. After receiving an early education at Charterhouse school, he proceeded to Christchurch, Oxford, where his brother Charles, who was several years younger, joined him in 1727. From reading such books as Thomas a Kempis' "Imitation of Christ," and Jeremy Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living and Dying," they became extremely troubled about the salvation of their souls, but were dark as midnight as to the simple gospel-the way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Having been baptized, and received the sacrament, they thought, as they had been taught, and as almost every one else believed at that time, that they could only hope to be saved by persisting in good works to the end of their days. This they tried, as Luther and Calvin had done before them; but, so far from being satisfied, they became every day more and more miserable. The God of all grace had touched their hearts, and created a void which nothing could fill but the knowledge of Christ in His Person and finished work.

In this troubled state of soul the Wesleys, with two or three others, held private meetings during the week for the promotion of personal piety, and rigidly observed all the rules prescribed by the University statutes. The strictness of their lives, and the regularity of their habits, brought down upon them the contempt and scorn of their godless fellow-students, who called them "Bible moths," "methodists," and "the holy club."

George Whitefield

Just about this time, a young man from Gloucester-as earnest and sincere as themselves, joined the little community-George Whitefield. He was descended from a respectable family; but his father, who was a wine merchant, ultimately kept the Bell Inn at Gloucester. There the future great preacher was born in 1714. For some time before meeting with the Wesleys, he had been the subject of much anxiety on matters of religion, and, like the Wesleys, he had been greatly perplexed by Thomas a Kempis, and also by Law's "Serious Call." But as we cannot pursue in detail the deep exercises through which they passed, and their subsequent course, we would only add that, ere long, they were led, by God's Holy Spirit and the plain truths of scripture, to know the gospel for their own peace and joy, and to preach it to others.

Being clergymen of the church of England, they were privileged to preach in the churches this new gospel-immediate pardon and salvation through faith in Christ, without works of human merit. But this was too simple and too scriptural to be tolerated, and in a short time almost every pulpit in England was closed against them. Thus driven outside, they were compelled to preach in the open air, and thereby inaugurated open-air preaching which has since become so common. In Moorfields, on Kennington Common, and such like places they preached in town and country to audiences numbering from ten to twenty thousand. By the grace of God these "twin apostles" of England-Wesley and Whitefield-continued faithful and devoted to the end of their career.

They were used of God to rescue the English people from the depths of moral darkness, leading thousands, both in this country and in America, to the feet of Jesus. Men of all ranks acknowledged the force of their appeals-colliers and carpenters, ploughmen and philosophers; and many of the nobility yielded their hearts to the power of the truth. But their record is on high, and there the fruits of their labours shall abide throughout eternity. Whitefield died in America in 1770; and Wesley in London in 1791, in the eighty-eighth year of his age.*

{*See, for details, The Story of John Wesley, by Frances Bevan, Holness, 21, Paternoster Row; Life and Labours of George Whitefield, Partridge and Co., 9, Paternoster Row.}

Revival at Cambuslang

The eighteenth century was the period of great awakenings and great revivals in different countries and of a different character in each place. In the spring of 1742 strange symptoms of a religious revival began to appear to Cambuslang, in Lanarkshire, Scotland. Mr. McCulloch, the parish minister, is spoken of as a godly man, but nothing remarkable as a preacher. Some of his parishioners began to call upon him at the manse, in deep concern about the state of their souls. This was something entirely new and unexpected. But there was evidently a growing desire for the word of God, which resulted in a number of the parishioners signing a request for a weekly lecture in addition to the usual sabbath-day services. One evening in the month of February, he happened to exclaim, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" upon which, some persons in the meeting cried aloud in great distress because of their sins. From this evening such scenes became common. And now the people desired to have preaching every evening. Other ministers came to assist, and crowds gathered round the preachers on every occasion. Men and women were violently agitated; clasping their hands, smiting their breasts in great agony of mind. Others, as in a transport of joy, shouting, "He is come! I have got Him, and will not let Him go!" And there were others who seemed to be so full of the Spirit, and so supremely happy, that they exclaimed, "Now, Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

As on all such marvellous visitations of the Holy Spirit, multitudes from all parts crowded to see the Lord's great work. During the month of August when the sacrament of the supper was dispensed, about thirty thousand people were gathered together, and fourteen ministers were engaged in preaching on the green, and in dispensing the elements to one company after another inside the church. George Whitefield was one of the ministers, and appointed to preach in the evening. The tent stood on the margin of a little stream; in front of this rose a green bank in the form of an amphitheatre. About ten o'clock at night Whitefield rose to give the last address for the day. It was indeed nature's temple, as the preacher observed, built by God Himself for so great a concourse to worship in. As his deep voice in impassioned eloquence rolled over the vast multitude, it was answered by sighs and sobs, and soon the tens of thousands were melted in tears.

The minister, Mr. McCulloch, in speaking of this gracious visitation nine years afterwards, had to lament many backsliders; but still he spoke of hundreds who had been truly converted.

At Kilsyth and other places the work of God's Spirit was very similar. We can only give one short extract of a letter under date May 16th, 1742. "The Lord has shot His arrows very thick into the hearts of His enemies this day, not for their destruction, but that they might fall under Him. There was a great cry of awakened sinners this day; there have been seven and twenty awakened; all of them under so great agonies as we conceive those mentioned in Acts 2; besides others who were carried away by their friends whose names I have not got; I have dealt with them all this evening, as also Mr. Oughterson for a while, having sent for him. O praise the Lord, and pray much for us, and tell everybody to praise Him for His mercy to us, and that He will stay a long time with us after this sort."*

{*The above sketch of the work at Cambuslang is taken from Cunningham's History of the Scotch Church, vol. 2, p. 460. For lengthy and minute details, see Historical Recollections of Revivals, etc., by Dr. Gillies. This book gives an account of the remarkable periods of the success of the gospel from the first to the nineteenth century.}

Sunday Schools

It is generally known that the vast operations of the Sunday-school system, which have been so beneficial in their results for nearly a hundred years, commenced with a young man in Gloucester. Robert Raikes, the founder of Sunday schools, was born in 1735. His father was a printer, and conductor of the Gloucester Journal, who, after giving his son a liberal education, brought him up to his own business in which after a time he succeeded his father. The events of his life present nothing beyond those of an industrious tradesman in general; and but for his benevolent pity for the prisoners in Gloucester jail, and for the ignorant and neglected children of his native city, his name and memory might have sunk into the grave with himself.

He was struck with the number of wretched children whom he found in the suburbs and in the streets, especially on Sunday, and determined to make an effort at some improvement. He first found three or four decent women in the neighbourhood, who were capable of teaching children to read, to each of whom he agreed to give a shilling for the day's employment, and then induced the children to come to the school. The success was great; many of the children were not only eager to learn to read, but, on being presented with New Testaments, they began of their own accord to frequent places of worship. At first he found many of the children were unwilling to come on account of their clothes not being good enough; but he assured such that "clean hands, clean faces, and combed hair," were all that was required at school. The good effects of this new work were so evident, that in a short time Sunday schools were established in all directions; and each succeeding generation has developed more fully the wide extent and the blessed results of the Sunday-school system.

Most probably, the thoughts of Mr. Raikes, in the good work he was doing, did not extend beyond the immediate objects of his benevolence. But great results in the things of God depend not upon our plans or human display. The man of faith reckons upon God, and he can afford to be unobtrusive, unostentatious, and quiet in his work, leaving consequences with Him. Mr. Raikes is a happy illustration of what may be done by personal influence, and by taking up the work which the Master may have placed before our eyes, instead of waiting for the sanction of others, or a formal introduction to what others are doing. Individual responsibility is the true principle of Christ's servant, and he must watch against every arrangement, or co-operation, that would take him off the ground of faith.

Mr. Raikes had the satisfaction before his death on April 5th, 1811, of seeing his first humble endeavours become the most efficient means of educating the children of the poor throughout the kingdom.*

{*Knight's Dictionary of Biography.}

Foreign Missions

At the Reformation in the sixteenth century, as we have already seen, the light of the gospel spread rapidly among the nations of Europe; and many at that time, fired with a holy zeal for the wider spread of the truth, sent missionaries to foreign parts. Among the first of these were the Swiss, the Swedes, the Dutch, and the Moravians. Many of them were exposed to great sufferings, and, in some instances, were very unsuccessful.

The Baptist Missionary Society seems to have taken the lead in the missionary enterprise in this country, and no doubt, by its example, aroused other churches to their responsibility in reference to the benighted heathen. In October, 1792, a few Baptist ministers assembled at Kettering, in Northamptonshire, united in constituting a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen. William Carey, then a Baptist minister in Leicestershire, was the chief mover in this new society. He afterwards went to India as a missionary and became famous for the acquisition of Eastern languages. Soon after the publication of the New Testament in the Bengali language, translated by Mr. Carey, he was appointed by the Marquis of Wellesley, the British Governor-general, teacher of the Bengali and Sanskrit languages in the new college of Fort William. The labours of Messrs. Carey, Marshman, and Ward, in India, have been often written, and are generally known. To Dr. Carey, it is said, belongs the honour of having awakened the zeal of the church in the important work of foreign missions.

In 1795 the London Missionary Society was formed. This Institution for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen, was composed of Christians of various denominations. The spread of the truth, irrespective of all denominational distinctions, was its motto. The institution of this society on so broad a scale was everywhere hailed as a new era in the christian church. Its attention was immediately fumed to the islands of the South Seas.

In 1799 the Church Missionary Society was formed, consisting of members of the church of England. It sent a mission to the Susoo country, in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone.

In 1796 the Scottish Missionary Society was formed in Edinburgh, and commenced its operations by a mission to the Foulah country in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone.

In 1812 the familiar names of Judson, Newell, Hull, and others, sailed under the auspices of "The American Board for Foreign Missions," for Calcutta. They laboured in many parts of the eastern world.

In 1786 several Wesleyan ministers sailed as missionaries from England for Nova Scotia, but, after encountering a succession of storms, the captain directed his course for the West Indies. Having reached Antigua, and finding the inhabitants favourable, they resolved to attempt the establishment of a mission in the West Indies. Such were the circumstances, under the overruling providence of God, which led the Methodists to turn their attention to the heathen, and to adopt measures for the diffusion of Christianity among them.*

{*For minute particulars and details of the formation and history of Missionary Societies, from the Reformation to the present time, see Dr. Brown's History, 3 vols. octavo.}

Surely we can thank God with full hearts for these societies, notwithstanding their many defects. For a number of years they have been scattering the blessings of Christianity among many tribes and tongues, where darkness reigned. The light and life of the gospel have been carried to millions who were sitting in the region and shadow of death. The rise and fall of empires, the achievement of great victories, the discovery and civilization of new countries, the improvements of the arts and sciences, are but as nothing compared with the diffusion of the gospel throughout the world, which brings "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luk 2:14)

May the Lord greatly bless both our home and foreign missions, and give good success to the arduous labours of the Sunday school, that His name may be glorified, and multitudes of precious souls eternally saved.

We have now reached, by the good providence of God, the nineteenth century. But before speaking of the fresh and distinct work of God's Spirit in the early part of it, we must refer to the last two churches-Philadelphia and Laodicea- which give us the Lord's mind as to the condition of the professing church before it is finally and for ever rejected by Him.

56 Philadelphia

Chapter 56

Philadelphia

In looking over the general course of the churches we find in Ephesus, declension; in Smyrna, persecution; in Pergamos, worldliness, in Thyatira, corruption, in Sardis, deadness; in Philadelphia we find the blessed Lord comforting a faithful remnant without characterizing their works, though well He knew them. He speaks not here, as in His address to the church in Sardis, of His authority in government, or of the plenitude of the Spirit in blessing, but of Himself in His moral glory. "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true." This is the grand feature of this epistle-personal communion with the Lord Himself, as the Holy One and the True. He thus reveals Himself to the feeble few who are witnessing for Him. He speaks not of what He has, but of what He is. Although they had but "a little strength," they were in close connection, in intimate communion with Himself.

Seeing the outward ruin of the church all around, and feeling that it is now a hopeless thing to expect its restoration to the principles of the word of God, they cleave to Him alone who changes not. Thankful, indeed, for the fellowship of saints who are walking in the truth, but all dogmas, theories, and mere prudential arrangements, are cold and heartless things to a true Philadelphian. Christ in the word, Christ in the glory-a written Christ and a living Christ-is alone appreciated by him. But would not this narrow his mind and his service? some may inquire. Just the opposite; we believe that it would separate him from the world and the world's religion. The great apostle of the Gentiles writes his life and service in one word-Christ. "For me to live is Christ." To have Christ as our object, our motive, and power, would be to extend our sphere of service by prayer and testimony to the wide circle of the Holy Spirit's action. John also, in his first epistle, when speaking to the "little children" in the family of God, says, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." And again, "We are in Him that is True, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols." If the Christian has not Christ before him as his all-governing object, he has an idol. Christ, in His moral glory, is the true object for our affections, and the only standard for service, fellowship, and discipline. Christ is "He that is holy, He that is true."

It is natural to many of us to shrink from the painful work of discipline, and to allow things to pass easily if we are not personally offended, or the respectability of the community not touched. But this is falling short of our standard. The question is not, as to church fellowship, what suits us, but what suits Christ. Is it holy? is it true? Holiness and truth should be the two great pillars of the church's practical ways. The question must always be-Will this suit Christ, according to the character in which He presents Himself? Christ is "He that is holy, He that is true."

There can be no doubt that the condition of the church in Philadelphia was entirely different from that of Sardis. The one was negative, the other positive. "I know thy works," says Christ speaking to Sardis, "that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain: . . . for I have not found thy works perfect before God." There was a fair outward appearance, but nothing was perfect, or complete. Their works fell short of the divine word; nothing was in full accordance with scripture. That which characterized the church in Philadelphia was keeping the word of Christ's patience, and not denying His name. And this is what characterizes a true Philadelphian, wherever he is found, from that day even until now. It is not a question of power, or of anything outwardly great, but of close, intimate, personal communion with Christ Himself, through the written word by the power of the Holy Spirit. All around may be going wrong, or going on with rites and ceremonies and worldly show. He walks with Christ through it all, and like the few names in Sardis, his garments are not defiled.

We further see here the grace of the Lord Jesus meeting the faithfulness of the Philadelphians with many privileges and blessings. "These things saith he that .... hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth. I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." Christ not only reveals Himself in His Personal glory to these faithful ones, but also in His divine power and authority, because of their "little strength." He has the key of David, according to the ancient prophecy -"And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." (Isa 22:22) Thus all the treasures of knowledge, all the riches of grace, all the power of the Spirit, all the resources of the royal house of David, are under His hand and at His disposal.

Should the preaching of the gospel be forbidden in any place, except according to canonical law, the preacher has only to wait on the Lord in the faith of a true Philadelphian. The key, he knows, is in the Master's hand. He must not seek to force the door open, the Lord's time may not be come. Paul was forbidden to speak in Asia at one time, but the door was afterwards opened to him, and he laboured there for years. It is said of the blessed Lord Himself, in John 10, "To him the porter openeth," and the scribes and Pharisees could not hinder the lost sheep of the house of Israel from hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd. The waiting one is in the sympathy of Jesus, and can count on His promise, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

Three things are here said of the Philadelphians, which are particularly to be noticed. "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." Their condition was not marked by any outward display of power; they were of little note in the sight of the world. There was no assumption of strength. They had not the "sign-gifts" of Corinth, which were a testimony to the unbelieving world, and we gather from the Lord's words that they were despised by Sardis-"Behold, I will make them to come and worship before Thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Weakness characterized them, but they were without reproach from the Lord. And this very weakness, when mixed with faith, is strength. "When I am weak, then am I strong." If outwardly weak, they were inwardly strong. The needed grace and inward power of life, which flows from the exalted Head in glory, for the nourishment of His members on earth, can never fail. And mark the emphasis on the word "My." It is personal association with Christ in the sweetest way. "And hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." -"My word," and "My name." The written word is Christ's own word, and is our only security and authority at all times, and is the means of direct communion with Himself. The name of the Lord means the revelation of what He is. We know Him as the Saviour, on whom the soul rests for salvation, and as the centre around whom we gather as the assembly of God by the power of the presence of the Holy Ghost. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mat 18:20)

The Lord, in verse 10, evidently looks forward to a period of seductive power, from which He will deliver His own. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." "Evil men and seducers," says the apostle, "shall wax worse and worse." The promise is, not that He will keep them when they pass through the tribulation-like Noah through the waters-but from it, like Enoch, who had been translated to heaven before the flood came. We are to hold fast the word of His patience, which is the hope of His return, and when He comes, He meets us with a crown. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." This is very different from His coming as represented to Sardis-as a thief in the night.

Then come the promises. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Here the promises are all connected with the glory, the New Jerusalem, the home, the rest, the dwelling-place-not only of the true Philadelphian, but of every true believer in Christ Jesus. Still, there appears to be an answer in the glory to what we were here. Those who have taken the place of weakness in themselves, but of holy firmness against evil, shall be made pillars there. And because they denied not His name here, He will write His own new name upon them there.

The blessed thought of association with Christ Himself is still kept up. And being associated with Him who is the object of the Father's infinite delight, we have this place of blessed nearness to Him in the temple, where He is worshipped in the beauty of holiness. Then these precious "Mys," which indicate the wondrous place we have in the temple-"My name," "My word," "My patience," "My God," and "My new name." Oh! what wondrous, marvelous, inconceivable, indescribable blessedness! To be pillars in the temple of God, and to go no more out! To have the name of God, the name of the city of God-the new Jerusalem-and the new name of Christ as the exalted Man in the glory, written upon us! A few moments' meditation of this scene of unmingled, unending, blessedness arrests the activity of our thoughts. We can only praise, wonder, adore, and long to be there.

"Lord of the worlds above

How pleasant and how fair,

The dwellings of Thy love

The heavenly mansions are!

To Thine abode our hearts aspire,

With warm desire, to see our God."

Laodicea

It is not without a measure of reluctance that we turn away from a picture so beautiful to look on one so painful. Laodicea is a perfect contrast to Philadelphia. In the latter, the Lord is seen as waiting on His feeble but faithful ones with the key of David, to supply their need, and reveal Himself to them as the object of their affections. This is perfectly beautiful, and perfectly blessed. But the former are threatened with utter rejection because of their unfaithfulness. There was no heart for Christ Himself as the Holy One and the True. "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth."

The unfaithfulness of the church of the Laodiceans to its heavenly calling, and as a witness for Christ at the right hand of God, had become so open and unblushing that it could no longer be borne with. And this alas! is a true picture of the sad condition which the professing church will have reached when the judgment here pronounced shall be executed, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." The church still subsists in form, we know, and the judgment lingers, but it is certain. When this is accomplished, Christ will take His place as the "faithful and true witness," the "Amen," the Verifier of all God's promises, and in relationship with the new creation. What the church should have done as a witness for God on the earth, Christ here presents Himself as doing, and secures every promise when all else had failed. "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

The failure, as we have seen, commenced in Ephesus; "thou hast left thy first love;" and Laodicea, the last of the seven, presents what Christendom will be when fully ripe for judgment. But, like the Amorites, her iniquity is not yet full. Grace still lingers; warnings are still given; the door still stands open; and whosoever will may enter in through faith in Christ Jesus, and find a refuge from the approaching judgments. Before a seal is broken, or a trumpet blown, or a vial poured out, the true church will have been caught up to heaven and will be peacefully worshipping in the temple of God.

What we have said of the successional character of these churches from the commencement of our history, seems fully proved by the Lord's own declaration to Laodicea of unconditional rejection. Though the professing church has not yet reached that state of entire failure, it is fast hastening towards it. It certainly grows worse and worse every year. There is not only a very general return to ritualism, and a refined character of rationalism almost everywhere but an open, an unblushing infidelity, even in our seats of learning and among the instructors of the young. And if the fountain be so corrupt, what must the streams soon be! Holding fast Christ's word, and not denying Christ's name, and looking for His return, or the Philadelphian state, forms a small part of Christendom in the present day.

Indifference to the truth, and to the glory of the Person of Christ, is the sin of Laodicea-lukewarmness or latitudinarianism. It is not ignorance that produces such a state of things, but cold indifference. The church says, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." There was great pretension to spiritual riches in the church itself mark, "I am rich;" but this was the sure sign of their poverty, because spiritual riches can only be found in Christ. Hence the Lord adds, "And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Such is Christ's estimate of the church which carries its head so high and boasts so loudly of riches within itself. It was without divine life, spiritual discernment, and destitute of the riches of Christ and the righteousness of God.

The application of the Laodicean state to the present time we think plain and easy. It is to be feared that there are many churches going on with no small show of spiritual riches, who care but little for the word and the name of the Lord Jesus. Where is the absolute authority of the word owned, and the name of Christ as the alone centre and power of the assembly? We speak not of individuals, but of churches so-called. And are there not many pulpits which go the length of calling in question the plenary inspiration of holy scripture? Where this is the case, there can be nothing for the hearers but human speculations, notwithstanding the great appearance of intelligence and of spiritual wealth that may be displayed. But we must leave the reader to make his own application of both Philadelphia and Laodicea in the present time; they go on with Thyatira and Sardis, until the Lord return. Let the children of God, however, watch against lukewarmness as to the state of things around them, and rather seek to imitate the example of Christ who still pleads with deceived souls; He does not give them up yet.

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear and-anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." The church was not looking to the Lord for these things, but boasting of riches within herself, as if she had been the vessel of grace instead of Christ. "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." But the gracious Lord knew her need, and counselled her to buy of Him without money and without price.

Gold is the symbol of divine righteousness-the righteousness of God which every Christian is made in Christ, hence it characterizes the standing and foundation of the saints. "The white raiment" is practical righteousness, the works of the saints, or first-fruits of the Spirit; such as "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Where do we see such fruits of the Spirit in the professing church? At the present moment we cannot say that she holds a place above the world around her. Then there is the eye-salve; for they were in the blindness of nature as to the things of God, notwithstanding all their pretensions to spiritual light. It could not be said of the Laodiceans, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Of whom could it be said in the present day? "Be zealous, therefore, and repent;" says the Lord. What grace, what patience, and what a needed word for today, and for all! His love lingers about the door; but alas! He is outside. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock!" Solemn position! Outside the door of His own house. But it is all individual here; the church is given up; still He perseveres. At length the knock is heard, the slumbering one awakes; the sheep know His voice; He gathers them out; the number of His people is accomplished; the body is complete, and caught up to His throne. And now, the end has come: the long threatened judgment is executed; the corrupt mass of Christendom is cast off for ever. Then follow the awful judgments of the earth, of apostate Christendom, and the day of Jacob's trouble; but the true church, the holy elect bride of Christ is with Himself in the Father's house of many mansions.

We hear no more of churches on the earth. All church history ends here. We have the first page of her wondrous history in Acts 2, and the last in Revelation 3. A door is opened in heaven: John is invited to come up hither, and see the things that follow the rapture of the saints. In chapter 1 he says, "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks." In chapter 4, he is invited not to turn, but to ascend to heaven's open door, and see what was passing within. And we, too, may look in and see, in vision, the living ones, and the four and twenty elders crowned, enthroned, and worshipping. Thunderings, lightnings, and voices proceed from the rainbow throne, but the saints are in a state of perfect, blessed, and eternal repose. Chapter 4 celebrates the glory of God in creation; chapter 5, in redemption: the proper action of the book, strictly speaking, begins with chapter 6.

May the Lord enable both reader and writer to keep the word of His patience, not to deny His name, and to hold fast that which we have, that no man take our crown.

If the exposition we have given of the epistle to Philadelphia and to Laodicea be correct, we may expect to find in the nineteenth century an entirely fresh work of God's Spirit; and chiefly in recovering many truths which have been long overlooked by the professing church; probably since the days of the apostles. Philadelphia is the only church that is without reproach from the Lord; and He commends them for holding fast His word, for not denying His name, and for keeping the word of His patience, which means the constant expectation of His coming. These characteristics of an assembly we have not yet met with in the history of the church.

Almost immediately after the days of the apostles, human inventions were substituted for the word of Christ, and human arrangements for the authority of His name. And little, if anything, seems to have been said or written on the subject of the Lord's return for the church as His bride, down to the present century. Doubtless there may have been at different periods, some loving hearts that sighed and longed for His coming; but it was no part of the truth taught, either during the middle ages, or at the Reformation. The doctrines of the unity of the church of God, of the coming of the Lord as the proper hope of the church, and of the Holy Spirit's presence on earth, while Christ is seated at the right hand of God, were almost entirely overlooked by the Reformers.

Prophetic Truth

The study of prophetic truth was greatly revived in the early part of this century. In the year 1821 a short treatise, entitled "The Latter Rain," by the Rev. Lewis Way, made its appearance. The main object of the writer is to prove from scripture the restoration of Israel, and the consequent glory in the land. His poem entitled, "Palingenesia," or "The World to Come," appeared in 1824. Thoughts on the "Scriptural Expectations of the Church," by Basilicus, followed it in 1826. The author takes a wider range in this book than in the former, though the kingdom of Israel occupies a prominent place. In 1827 the Rev. Edward Irving endeavoured to arouse the professing church, but especially his brethren in the ministry, to a sense of their responsibility as to the truth of prophecy. He translated the work of Ben Ezra, a converted Jew, on "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty," with a long preliminary discourse. This book was originally written in Spanish, and first published in Spain in the year 1812.

The circulation of these books, with some others that appeared about this time, and fresh articles constantly appearing in the magazines, awakened a deep interest in the prophetic scriptures, which became at that time an entirely new study, and led to the establishment of what were called "The Prophetic Meetings," in Great Britain and Ireland -they were held chiefly at Albury Park in England, and at Powerscourt in Ireland. Clergymen and private gentlemen attended those meetings for some time; but, in their reading, it does not appear that they saw much beyond the restoration of Israel, and the glory of the millennial kingdom. The relations of Christ to the church, as distinct from the destiny of Israel and the earth, were not then clearly seen.

Church Truth

Just about this time the Spirit of God was evidently working in many minds, and in different parts of the country, and awakening many of His children to the importance, not only of prophetic truth, but of what He has revealed in His word respecting the church as the body of Christ, formed and energized by the Holy Spirit. This was especially the case at that moment in Dublin. A few earnest christian men became deeply exercised in heart and conscience, as to the low condition of things in the several sections of professing Christendom, and as to the great contrast between the church of God, viewed in the light of His word, and that which man calls the church. These convictions resulted-though with deep searchings of heart, and many painful feelings-in a positive secession from the existing religious systems with which they had been severally connected.

This was a new thing in the history of the church. The best of the Reformers in all ages had no wish to leave the communion of the church of Rome, had she consented to the reform of abuses. Nearly all of them were excommunicated. Even the Puritans, and Wesley and Whitefield, were forced out of the establishment. But as many are still alive, of those who took this place of separation in the early part of this century, we shall do little more than state the origin of this community, and give a brief outline of its progress. We could not bring down the history of the church to the present time without giving it a place. But of that which has appeared in print, and been written by themselves, we may freely speak. Their writings, in tracts, books, and periodicals, are abundant and widely spread over the face of Christendom, so that they are well fitted to speak for themselves.

"The Brethren"

In the winter of 1827-8, four christian men who had for some time been exercised as to the condition of the entire professing church, agreed to come together on Lord's day mornings, for worship and communion in the breaking of bread, according to the word of the Lord; namely, Mr. Darby, Mr. [afterwards Dr.] Cronin, Mr. Bellett, and Mr. Hutchinson. Their first meeting was held in the house of Mr. Hutchinson, 9, Fitz-William Square, Dublin. They had for a considerable time been studying the scriptures-along with others who attended their reading meetings-and comparing what they found in the word of God with the existing state of things around them, they could find no expression of the nature and character of the church of God, either in the national establishment, or in the various dissenting bodies. This brought them into the place of separation from all these ecclesiastical systems, and led them to come together in the name of the Lord Jesus, owning the presence and sovereign action of the Holy Spirit in their midst, and thus endeavouring, according to their light, "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Mat 18:20; Eph 4:3-4) The brethren continued to meet for some time in Fitz-William Square, and others were gradually added to their number.

The Brethren's First Pamphlet

Here we have something most definite and positive as to their principles and starting-point: something more to be relied upon than general report or personal recollections.

In the year 1828 Mr. Darby published his first pamphlet, entitled, "The Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ." We may consider this tract as a statement of what the young community believed and practised, though not in the form of a confession, and further, as presenting the divine ground on which they acted. It may also be considered to contain nearly all the elements of those distinctive truths which have been held and unfolded by Brethren from that day even until now. Not that the writer thought anything of this at the time; he was simply making known for the help of others what he had learnt from the word of God for himself. But who could question the guidance of the Holy Spirit in such a production? Surely He was leading His chosen instruments by a way which they knew not, that the blessing which followed might be seen to be of His own grace and truth.*

{*See a Reprint of the Original in the Collected Writings of J.N. Darby, Ecclesiastical, vol. 1, G. Morrish, 20, Paternoster Square, also in the Christian Witness, vol. 1. and as a separate tract published by W.H. Broom, 25, Paternoster Square.}

As this paper was the first public testimony of a movement which was so rapidly to produce such great and blessed results in liberating souls, we will here give for the convenience of the reader a few extracts, chiefly as to the unity of the church.

"We know that it was the purpose of God in Christ to gather together in one all things in heaven and on earth; reconciled unto Himself in Him; and that the church should be, though necessarily imperfect in His absence, yet by the energy of the Spirit the witness of this on earth, by gathering the children of God which were scattered abroad. Believers know that all who are born of the Spirit have substantial unity of mind, so as to know each other, and love each other as brethren. But this is not all, even if it were fulfilled in practice, which it is not; for they were so to be all one, as that the world might know that Jesus was sent of God. In this we must all confess our sad failure. I shall not attempt so much to propose measures here for the children of God as to establish healthful principles, for it is manifest to me that it must flow from the growing influence of the Spirit of God and His unseen teaching: but we may observe what are positive hindrances, and in what that union consists....

"In the first place, it is not a formal union of the outward professing bodies that is desirable, indeed it is surprising that reflecting Protestants should desire it: far from doing good, I conceive it would be impossible that such a body could be at all recognized as the church of God. It would be a counterpart to Romish unity; we should have the life of the church and the power of the word lost, and the unity of spiritual life utterly excluded. Whatever plans may be in the order of Providence, we can only act upon the principles of grace; and true unity is the unity of the Spirit, and it must be wrought by the operation of the Spirit.... If the view that we have taken of the state of the church be correct, we may adjudge that he is an enemy to the work of the Spirit of God who seeks the interests of any particular denomination; and that those who believe in 'the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ' ought carefully to keep from such a spirit; for it is drawing back the church to a state occasioned by ignorance and non-subjection to the word, and making a duty of its worst and most anti-christian results. This is a most subtle and prevailing mental disease, 'he followeth not us;' even when men are really Christians....

"Christians are little aware how this prevails in their minds; how they seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ; and how it dries up the springs of grace and spiritual communion; how it precludes that order to which blessing is attached-the gathering together in the Lord's name. No meeting, which is not framed to embrace all the children of God in the full basis of the kingdom of the Son, can find the fulness of blessing, because it does not contemplate it-because its faith does not embrace it....

"Accordingly, the outward symbol and instrument of unity is the partaking of the Lord's supper, 'for we being many are . . . one body, for we are all partakers of that one breed.' And what does St. Paul declare to be the true intent and testimony of that rite? That whensoever 'we eat of that bread and drink of that cup, we do show the Lord's death till He come.' Here then are found the character and life of the church-that into which it is called-that in which the truth of its existence subsists, and in which alone is true unity....

"Am I desiring believers to correct the churches? I am beseeching them to correct themselves by living up, in some measure, to the hope of their calling. I beseech them to show their faith in the death of the Lord Jesus, and their boast in the glorious assurance which they have obtained by it, by conformity to it-to show their faith in His coming, and practically to look for it, by a life suitable to desires fixed upon it. Let them testify against the secularity and blindness of the church; but let them be consistent in their own conduct. 'Let their moderation be known unto all men.' While the spirit of the world prevails, spiritual union cannot subsist. Few believers are at all aware how the spirit which gradually opened the door to the dominion of apostasy, still sheds its wasting and baneful influence in the professing church.... I do believe that God is working, by means and in ways little thought of, in 'preparing the way, and making His paths straight'-doing by a mixture of providence and testimony the work of Elias. I am persuaded that He will put men to shame exactly in the things in which they have boasted. I am persuaded that He will stain the pride of human glory, 'and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be brought low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.' . . .

"But there is a practical part for believers to act. They can lay their hands upon many things in themselves practically inconsistent with the power of that day-things which show that their hope is not in it-conformity to the world, which shows that the cross has not its proper glory in their eyes.... Further, unity is the glory of the church; but unity to secure and promote our own interests is not the unity of the church, but confederacy and denial of the nature and hope of the church. Unity, that is of the church, is the unity of the Spirit, and can only be in the things of the Spirit, and therefore can only be perfected in spiritual persons.... But what are the people of the Lord to do? Let them wait upon the Lord, and wait according to the teaching of His Spirit, and in conformity to the image, by the life of the Spirit, of His Son....

"But if any will say, If you see these things, what are you doing yourself? I can only deeply acknowledge the strange and infinite shortcomings, and sorrow and mourn over them; I acknowledge the weakness of my faith, but I earnestly seek for direction. And let me add, when so many who ought to guide go their own way, those who would have gladly followed are made slow and feeble, lest they should in any wise err from the straight path, and hinder their service, though their souls may be safe. But I would earnestly repeat what I said before: the unity of the church cannot possibly be found till the common object of those who are members of it, is the glory of the Lord, who is the Author and Finisher of its faith-a glory which is to be made known in its brightness at His appearing, when the fashion of this world shall pass away.... The Lord Himself says, 'That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gayest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.' (John 17)

"Oh, that the church would weigh this word, and see if their present state does not preclude necessarily their shining in the glory of the Lord, or of fulfilling that purpose for which they were called. And I ask them, Do they at all look for or desire this? Or are they content to sit down and say that His promise is come utterly to an end for evermore? Surely if we cannot say, 'Arise, shine, for Thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee,' we should say, 'Awake, awake, put on Thy strength, arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, as in the generations of old.' . . . Will He give His glory to one division or another? Or where will He find a place for it to rest upon amongst us? . . .

"I have gone beyond my original intention in this paper. If I have in anything gone beyond the measure of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, I shall thankfully accept reproof, and pray God to make it forgotten."

The Brethren's First Public Room

The effect of these statements-so plain and scriptural- was immediate and great. They found an echo in many a heart. Earnest Christians, feeling and mourning over the low condition of the churches, welcomed the truth thus brought before them. Many left their respective denominations, and joined the new movement. The numbers so increased that in little more than a year, the house of Mr. Hutchinson was found to be unsuitable for their meetings. Mr. Parnell (afterwards Lord Congleton), who appears to have united with the Brethren in 1829, hired a large auction room in Aungier Street, for the use of the Brethren on the Lord's day. His idea was, that the Lord's table should be a public witness of their position. This was the Brethren's first public room. There they commenced breaking bread in the spring of 1830, and it may be taken as a sample of the rooms which Brethren have generally occupied in all parts of the country ever since. In order to make room for the Lord's day morning, three or four of the brothers were in the habit of moving the furniture aside on Saturday evening. Many, on their first visit, felt the place to be very strange, having been accustomed to all the propriety of churches and chapels. But the truths they heard were new in those days; such as, the efficacy of redemption, the knowledge of pardon and acceptance, the oneness of the body of Christ, the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly, and the Lord's second coming.

"There is some difficulty," says Mr. Marsden,* "in laying before the reader, in a simple form, the principles of this body. It puts forth no standards of faith, nor publishes any forms of worship or discipline. It professes to practise Christianity as Christianity was taught by our Lord and the apostles in the New Testament.... The Brethren equally object to the national church and to all forms of dissent. Of national churches, one and all of them, they say, 'that the opening of the door to receive into the most solemn acts of worship and christian fellowship the whole population of a country, is a latitudinarian error.' Dissenters, on the other hand, 'are sectarians, because they close the door on real Christians, who cannot utter the shibboleth of their party.' . . . The one system makes the church wider, the other narrower, than God's limits. Thus in either way, the proper scriptural idea of the church is practically destroyed-dissent virtually affirming that it is not one body, but many, while nationalism virtually denies that this one body is the body of Christ. That which constitutes a church is the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly. 'It is the owning of the Holy Ghost as the really present, sole, and sufficient sovereign in the church during our Lord's absence.' This is the leading feature in the testimony of Brethren."

{*See Dictionary of Christian Churches.}

Mr. Marsden further observes on the subject of ministry, quoting from their writings: "So far from supposing there is no such thing as ministry, Brethren hold, and have always held, from Eph 4:12-13, that Christ cannot fail to maintain and perpetuate a ministry so long as His body is here below. Their printed books and tracts, their teachings in private and in public affirm this as a certain settled truth; insomuch that it is as absurd to charge them with denying the permanent and divine place of ministry in the church on earth, as it would be to charge Charles I. with denying the divine right of kings. Wherever it has pleased God to raise up pastors after His own heart, they gladly, thankfully own His grace, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. "

In a paper lately written by Mr. Darby about the Brethren at the request of a French journalist, we have not only the facts, but the thoughts and feelings connected with their beginning. "We were only four men," he says, "who came together for the breaking of bread and prayer, on the authority of that word, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them' (Mat 18:20); and not, I hope, in a spirit of pride and presumption; but deeply humbled at the state of things around us, and praying for all Christians, and recognizing all those in whom the Spirit of God was found as true Christians, members of the body of Christ, wherever they were ecclesiastically. We thought of nothing else but satisfying the need of the soul according to the word of God; nor did we think of it going any farther. We proved the promised presence of the Lord; and others, feeling the same need, followed in the same path and the work spread in a way we never thought of in the least."

It is very apparent from this extract, that the Brethren had no thought of constructing a fresh system, or of reconstituting the church as God had constituted it at first-of restoring it to its Pentecostal glory. This was the snare into which Satan wiled that otherwise noble soul-Edward Irving. But the Brethren seemed to have had no plan, no system, no organization. They held the common faith of all orthodox Christians with regard to foundation truths; but, having received light from God's word as to what the calling, position, and hopes of the church are, they could no longer remain in what man and the world called "the church." These thoughts and searchings of heart issued, as we have seen, in the secession of many individuals from the various bodies of professing Christians, and in their coming together for worship and communion on the ground of the "one body," as formed and directed by the "One Spirit."

The Spread of the Truth

Mr. Darby, who seems from the first to have had a love for travelling, or rather for carrying the truth from place to place, soon after the formation of the meeting in Fitz-William Square, set out on his mission; and in a truly apostolic spirit he has steadily gone on for fifty years, and never more so than during the last ten or fifteen. Limerick was the first place he visited. He held reading meetings, to which some of the gentry and clergy came. Thomas Maunsell, who lived there, worked with him, and was the active labourer for a long time. Mr. Darby went on to Clare, which led to the Lord's work at Ennis, where Thomas Mahon went on with it. He then went over to Paris, saw some Christians there, and had readings in the same quiet way. On his return to England, he visited Cambridge and Oxford, and then went down to Plymouth at the request of Mr. Newton, where he met with Captain Hall, who was then preaching in the villages. Reading meetings were held, and ere long, a few began to break bread. This was about the year 1831.

The Origin of the Title-"Plymouth Brethren"

Their first public meeting-place in Plymouth was called "Providence Chapel," and, as they refused to give themselves any name, they were only known as "Providence people." But when the brothers began to go outside the town and preach the gospel in the villages-then a rare thing- they were spoken of as "Brethren from Plymouth," which naturally resulted in the designation, "The Plymouth Brethren." This new title rapidly spread over England and elsewhere. As the numbers increased, the little chapel was bought and enlarged considerably. The effect of the truth on the hearts and consciences of the Brethren was soon manifest. There was great freshness, simplicity, devotedness, and separation from the world. Such features of spirituality have always a great attraction for certain minds; and many, no doubt, who left their respective denominations and united with the Brethren had very undefined thoughts as to the nature of the step they were taking. But all was new: they flocked together, and gave themselves to the study of the word of God, and soon experienced the sweetness of christian communion, and found the Bible-as they said-to be a new book. It was, no doubt, in those days of virgin freshness a most distinct and blessed work of God's Spirit, the influence of which was felt not only throughout this Country, but on the continent, and in distant lands.

It was no uncommon thing at this time to find valuable jewelry in the collection boxes, which was soon turned into money, and given to the deacons for the poor. But the bloom of this new movement was soon to be blighted by the subtlety of Satan. Mr. Newton, though one of the earliest labourers in Plymouth, seems never to have entered into the truth of the position occupied by Brethren, but, almost from the first, to have pursued a course distinct from the others. The tendency of his teaching, though for a time most speciously disguised, was to undermine and neutralize those distinctive truths which the Lord was bringing out by the ministry of the Brethren, and to set up afresh, though in another form, all that had been renounced. His aim was clerical position and authority; and thus practically denying the first principles of the church of God, he fell into the snare of Satan. Several of the Brethren who had laboured much in Plymouth, not feeling happy with Mr. Newton's course, left to work elsewhere. Mr. Darby went abroad, Captain Hall to Hereford, Mr. Wigram to London; and Mr. Bellett, at this time, was ministering with great acceptance in Dublin.

False Doctrine Detected

Soon after the year 1845, when the numbers at Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse had reached about a thousand souls, troubles arose which caused the first breach among the Brethren; but it was not until 1848 that what had been strongly suspected by some came to the light and brought matters to a crisis at Plymouth. It was discovered by Mr. Harris-through copious notes of Mr. Newton's lectures accidentally falling into his hands-that he had been diligently and systematically teaching, not only that which is ecclesiastically, but that which is fundamentally heretical as to Christ. When this became known, Brethren in all parts were deeply affected by the sad tidings, and numerous meetings were held in different parts of the country to investigate the charges. Nearly all were agreed, after much prayer and confession, that the doctrines which Mr. Newton had been teaching were not only false, but utterly subversive of all that is essential to Christianity.

But though they were thus agreed as to the character of the heresy, they were divided in their judgment as to the principle of separation from it. One part thought that the poison of the doctrines-which had been insidiously taught for some years-might have infected more than were yet manifested; and, therefore, they could have no fellowship with any who sympathized with the doctrines, or had fellowship with their author at the breaking of bread. Others thought these terms of communion were too strict, that each one applying for fellowship should be examined, and if it were found that they neither understood nor had imbibed the false doctrines, they should be received, even though they came from Mr. Newton's meeting; that every true Christian should be received on the ground of his individual soundness in the faith, no matter from what meeting he came. But many strongly objected to this way of dealing with so grave a matter. They maintained that the glory of Christ was in question, as well as the purity of His assembly, that, on this principle, the door was left open for the heresy to come in and that it was giving up the unity of the church of God, as the ground of action, and going back to independency.

The Division

On this point the Brethren divided. The one part maintained, that, on the principle of the one body, a person coming from a meeting where false doctrine was known to be held, is tainted, though personally sound; and that in receiving one member of the community all are received. This they sought to prove by the divine principle which the apostle applies to the assemblies at Corinth and Galatia: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" The other part adhering to the open ground which they had adopted, the breach widened, and reconciliation became hopeless.

Thus the Brethren have stood from that day until now. Their history is well known. Only one thing further need be noticed. From this time, the term, "The Brethren," as found in statistics, or controversial and other writings, applies almost exclusively to those who adhered to the original principles of Brethren. In the census of 1851, three years after the division, the writer concludes his article by stating that "The number of places of worship which the census officers in England and Wales returned as frequented by the Brethren was 132; but probably this number is below the truth, in consequence of the objection which they entertain to acknowledge any sectarian appellation." In a list of meetings which they publish annually for the convenience of Brethren who may be travelling, they give the addresses of 523 in England, 48 in Ireland, and 75 in Scotland. There are also a goodly number on the Continent of Europe, in Australia and New Zealand, in the West Indies, in Canada, and in the United States. And indeed almost everywhere, if we may believe the testimony of The Southern Review, which says:

"The Society, or order of christian men, usually styled, 'The Plymouth Brethren,' has already, and almost without observation, spread over the face of the civilized world. It seems, in fact, to have stolen a march on Christendom, and must now-whether for good or for evil-be acknowledged as a power in the present awful crisis in the world's history, or tremendous conflict between the powers of light and darkness. That it is felt to be such a power, is evident, from the fact of the controversy about Plymouth Brethren coming up all over the Protestant world, just now, and by the innumerable articles, pamphlets, and volumes, which this widespread controversy has called forth. We have placed, at the head of this article, only three references to the literature connected with this controversy, but, if we had so chosen, we might easily have embraced in our list the titles of more than a hundred volumes of the same literature."*

{*See The Southern Review for April, 1877, published under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopalian church. South Baltimore: Bledsoe, and Herrick. London, Trubner.}

The above article is written with great vigour, extends to seventy-nine pages, and discusses the question of "Plymouth Brethrenism" more fully than any of the "hundred volumes" referred to that have come under our notice. The writer, being a Methodist, of course does not agree with all their doctrines, but he admires their zeal in spreading the work, admits that he has profited by their writings, and heartily rebukes their unfair critics.

The Free Church of Scotland

This large and influential section of the Scottish church was organized into a religious denomination, distinct from the Establishment, in the year 1843. The conflict between the "Evangelicals" and the "Moderates," which at length terminated in this great division, was chiefly on the long vexed question of patronage.

From the days of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine-whose secession from the Established church we have already noticed-the evangelical party had been opposed to the interference of patrons with the religious rights of congregations. But under the powerful ministry of Dr. Chalmers in Glasgow, and Dr. Thomson in Edinburgh, the tide of popular feeling was decidedly turned in favour of the anti-patronage movement. In the General Assembly of 1834, the evangelical party introduced the celebrated Veto Act, which was passed by a majority of forty-six. By this act, it was declared to be a fundamental law of the church, that no minister should be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the christian people; and the better to effect this, it enacted, that if a majority of male heads of families, being communicants, should object to any presentee, the presbytery, on that ground alone without inquiry into the reasons, should also reject him. The objectors, however, were required, if called upon, to declare solemnly before the presbytery that they were actuated by no malicious motives, but solely by a conscientious regard to their own spiritual interests, or those of the congregation. The legality, or rather the illegality of this act, which directly interfered with the civil rights of patrons, was soon put to the test.

In the course of a few months after the Veto Act had passed into ecclesiastical law, the Earl of Kinnoul presented Mr. Robert Young to the parish church of Auchterarder; but the presentee, not meeting with the approval of the congregation, was rejected, and the presbytery refused to ordain him. The earl, not willing to be deprived of his rights as a patron appealed to the civil tribunals; long law-suits followed, and the whole question was raised as to the terms of the connection between church and state.

The decision of the Court of Session not only went against the church party, but proceeded to enforce compliance with its decisions by pecuniary penalties, and awarding damages to the persons deprived of their churches, by the presbytery refusing to induct them. The protesters were now a large, popular, and influential body, they would admit of no compromise; they took the ground of martyrs, and maintained that they were contending for the "CROWN RIGHTS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE ALONE KING AND HEAD OF THE CHURCH." Public meetings were held in all parts of the country, and addressed by ministers in the most exciting style, until Scotland was in a state of religious agitation and ferment from one end to the other. Lay patronage was denounced, as contrary to the spirit, principles, and constitution of the Presbyterian church of Scotland and the Veto Act treated as of divine appointment. In place of submitting to the law as declared by the Court of Session the assembly of that year-1842-declared by a large majority, that lay patronage ought to be abolished, they also issued a "Claim of Rights" against the encroachments of the civil courts. A memorial to this effect was presented to the government, but with no favorable effect; and on the 9th of August, the House of Lords gave judgment against the majority of the presbytery of Auchterarder, finding them liable in damages to Mr. Young and the Earl of Kinnoul.

The Disruption

All hope of a pacific arrangement on the part of the government being now at an end, the momentous event, which many had for some time been dreading, seemed unavoidable. From the high and independent position which Dr. Chalmers and his followers had taken, they could not in honour draw back; therefore they nobly resolved to separate from the Established church. At the General Assembly which met in May, 1843, Dr. Welsh, the moderator, laid a protest on the table to this effect, and withdrew, followed by those who adhered to the protest, and proceeded in solemn silence to Tanfield Hall, Canonmills-a large building situated at the northern extremity of the city of Edinburgh. There they constituted themselves into the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, choosing Dr. Chalmers as their first moderator.

"On Tuesday, the 23rd of May, the ministers and professors, to the number of four hundred and seventy-four, solemnly subscribed the Deed of Demission, formally renouncing all claim to the benefices which they had held in connection with the establishment, declaring them to be vacant, and consenting to their being dealt with as such. Thus, by a regular legal instrument, the ministers completed their separation from the establishment, and the Free church of Scotland assumed the position of a distinct ecclesiastical denomination, holding the same doctrines, and observing the same forms of worship as had been received and observed in the National church."

Thus, in one day, these ordained ministers of the Scottish establishment gave up their manses, their churches, their benefices, and state support. Their wives and children had to leave their comfortable parsonages with their glebes and gardens. To many of these the new position wore a gloomy aspect, and they were ready to blame the leaders for having gone too far. But the zeal and sympathy of the people soon placed their ministers in finer buildings as churches than they had left, and abundantly met all their need. In a few years about eight hundred new churches were built by the liberality of the people, which must have cost nearly a million of money. Dr. Chalmers, foreseeing what must take place, had made arrangements some months before the disruption, for establishing associations throughout the country, with the view of collecting funds for the support of the ministry; and so successful was his plan that, before the day of trial came, six hundred and eighty-seven separate associations had been formed in all parts of the country, and at the close of the first year of the history of the Free Church, her income amounted to the munificent sum of three hundred and sixty thousand, seven hundred and nineteen pounds, fourteen shillings, and threepence.

Such was the sympathy felt with this movement in Scotland, that all contributed liberally to the various funds connected with the Free church. And even to this day, after the lapse of more than thirty years, the source of her supply, we are told, shows not the slightest symptoms of exhaustion.*

{*For full particulars as to this opulent church, see Appendix to the Scots' Worthies, Blackie, Glasgow; also Faiths of the World.}

The Awakening in 1859

The great awakening in 1859, which filled so many lands with the blessed fruits of salvation, being still fresh in many minds, we need do little more than notice its humble beginnings. It has been a point of special interest to us all through our history to know the beginning of things. When the Spirit of God works, and means to accomplish something great, either in individuals or in nations, He usually commences without observation: man sounds a trumpet before him.

The Origin of Noon-Day Prayer-Meetings

In September, 1857, a city missionary in New York, observing that masons and other workmen had some time for rest during their dinner hour, proposed to speak to them about the things of the Lord. The men being agreeable, they gathered around the missionary for about fifteen or twenty minutes. The interest increased, and as the winter drew near, the missionary applied for the loan of a schoolroom, connected with a chapel in Fulton Street, where the men were working. This being granted, the men assembled for their brief service. But the Lord had a great work to do there. Others were attracted to the little noon-day meeting; the unction of the Holy Spirit was felt; divine blessing was manifested, and it soon became a large meeting. Similar meetings sprang up in different places, and were commended and sanctioned by the presence of ministers, men of business, the gentry, and all classes. In a short time, noon-day prayer meetings spread over the United States, a great Revival followed, and thousands of precious souls were said to be converted.

The North of Ireland

In the same month of the same year, as if by concert, four young men, near Connor, county Antrim, were led by the same blessed Spirit to commence what was termed "The Believers' Fellowship Meeting." One main object of these young men, in connection with this meeting, was to pray to God that He would bless their labours, as Sunday-school teachers, and that He would revive by His Holy Spirit the churches around them, which they felt to be in a dull dead condition. This humble beginning, like the one on the other side of the Atlantic, was greatly blessed of God; numbers rapidly increased. The power of prayer was soon felt throughout the whole neighborhood. Souls were converted in the prayer-meeting, the Spirit of God was working mightily, and the spirit of prayer so prevailed, that in the following year-1858-prayer-meetings were almost innumerable. There were known to be in one district, about sixteen meetings for prayer every night in the week. These facts we learnt from living witnesses on the spot at the time.*

{*For particulars of the awakening, and the work of God in Ireland, see vols. 2 and 3 of Things New and Old.}

Thus were the foundations of the great Revival in the north of Ireland strengthening and deepening for about eighteen months before it burst forth to public view, and rose to such a glorious height in 1859. Conversion at that time was frequently accompanied with utter physical prostration for several hours. A similarly unpretending agency was employed in beginning the work of Revival in Greenock, Glasgow, and other parts of Scotland.

The Week of Prayer

Just about this time, a request was sent out by some missionaries in Lodiana, calling upon all Christendom to set apart the second week in January, 1860, as a week of prayer. The call was much talked of, and when the time came, it was most heartily responded to by all classes of Christians. It was a week of real, earnest prayer to God, that He would revive His own work, and bless the preaching of the gospel to the conversion of many, many, souls. This cry arose from every quarter of the globe, and was continued in many places far beyond the one week.

We can testify, as partakers of that marvellously gracious visitation of the Spirit, to the power of prayer which then prevailed, and to the abundant showers of blessing which fell on the church and on numberless precious souls. Meetings for prayer were held in the early morning, at noonday, and in the evening, so that all classes might be suited; and a spirit for gospel preaching, altogether unknown before, was then awakened. Preachers sprang up from the very lowest condition of society, as if by a miracle, and were possessed of such gifts as to attract thousands night after night. The grandees of the land, too, turned preachers of the gospel, and the poorest were privileged to hear the glad tidings from the lips of noble lords, and then to be shaken by the hand, and entreated in the most kindly loving way, to give their hearts to Jesus, and to be decided for Him. The great work of the gospel seemed to have passed entirely into the hands of laymen; but it was no time to find fault with that which was uncanonical. God was working, who is above the routine of traditional order; and thousands of souls were converted, from the poorest to the richest, with numbers of little children.

But this gracious visitation of the Spirit in special power was not of long continuance. In a few years man's bustling importance became more manifest than the Spirit's power. The meetings were kept up, and certain forms were introduced, to make them outwardly more orderly, but the vital power rapidly declined. It is one thing to accept the Spirit's order, and pray Him to work in His own way; it is quite another to set up our order, and then pray Him to work according to our arrangement. Still, the effects of the great Revival remain amongst us, even to this day. These, we think, may be summed up under three heads: 1, the great increase in the number of prayer meetings; 2, the growing activity in gospel work from that time, both in preaching and the circulation of tracts; 3, a more general interest in the Lord's second coming. The midnight cry-"Behold the Bridegroom cometh"-has spread over the face of Christendom since 1859. We have no doubt that the cry was raised in the early part of this century, but the Revival gave it eagles' wings.

Everything has been moving with great rapidity, both in the church and the world, since that period, as if to hasten the coming of the Lord. This has been the century of invention, and of the display of man's energy, as if he were approaching the highest pinnacle of human fame before his final overthrow. (Isaiah 2) There is also great activity in every section of the professing church. We are in that period spoken of by the Lord in the parable (Matt. 25)-"Then ALL those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." None are asleep now. The foolish are professedly trimming their lamps as well as the wise. Hence the activity of evil in the church along with that which is unquestionably good. Ritualism, Rationalism, and open infidelity, have made rapid strides of late years, and all so mixed up with science and the world.

Conclusion

uch alas! is the condition of what man and the world call the church at the close of our history. "The falling away" has commenced; "the strong delusion" may have set in; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. The Christian, in these last and closing days, is only safe in keeping the Lord Himself constantly before him, and daily looking for His return. He must not trust or follow entirely any community of Christians; there are none of one heart and one mind in the Lord. But this need not prevent him from breaking bread with those who are gathered to His name. We only mean that his Christianity must be intensely personal, intensely individual. He must maintain a holy walk with the Lord, and uninterrupted communion with Himself, in separation from the swelling tide of evil which is rising on every side. When the darkness thickens, and troubles arise, the soul's only refuge is in the secret of His presence. Nations may be quarrelling, the cry of war may be coming from all quarters, calamities of the most overwhelming character may be happening daily in our midst, the professing church may be passing through the several stages of departure, as "the way of Cain, . . . the error of Balaam, . . . the gainsaying of Core;" but the soul's hiding-place from the strife of nations and the divisions of Christendom is the unchanging and unchangeable love of the ever-blessed and all-adorable Lord.

We must leave the reader to apply the principles of Philadelphia and Laodicea to the professing church of the present day, according to his spiritual judgment. The Philadelphian period has not passed away, but we must be on our guard against the spirit of Laodiceanism which is spreading rapidly among all classes of professing Christians.

May the good Lord keep both reader and writer near Himself until we see His face, hear His voice, and be for ever in the full enjoyment of His love and His glory. Amen.