AN INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH HISTORY:
from THE BEGINNINGS to 1500

COURSE TEXTBOOK

This textbook is based principally on:
Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, (Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York 1918)

Also included herein are selections and material adapted from the following sources:
Chadwick, Henry The Early Church, Revised Edition. (Penguin, 1993)
Deansly, Margaret, A History of the Medieval Church, 590-1500. (Routledge. London. 1989)
Vauchez, Andre, The Spirit of the Medieval West from the 8th to the 12th Century, (Cistercian, 1993).
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1. **JESUS and the HELLENISTIC WORLD**

Walker, “Period I. From the Beginnings to the Gnostic Crisis”. 1.1-1.3, pp. 1-18:

[1].1. **THE GENERAL SITUATION**

The birth of Christ saw the lands which surrounded the Mediterranean in the possession of Rome. To a degree never before equalled, and unapproached in modern times, these vast territories, which embraced all that common men knew of civilized life, were under the sway of a single type of culture. The civilizations of India or of China did not come within the vision of the ordinary inhabitant of the Roman Empire. Outside its borders he knew only savage or semicivilized tribes. The Roman Empire and the world of civilized men were coextensive. All was held together by allegiance to a single Emperor, and by a common military system subject to him. The Roman army, small in comparison with that of a modern military state, was adequate to preserve the Roman peace. Under that peace commerce flourished, communication was made easy by excellent roads and by sea, and among educated men, at least in the larger towns, a common language, that of Greece, facilitated the interchange of thought. It was an empire that, in spite of many evil rulers and corrupt lower officials, secured a rough justice such as the world had never before seen; and its citizens were proud of it and of its achievements.

Yet with all its unity of imperial authority and military control, Rome was far from crushing local institutions. In domestic matters the inhabitants of the provinces were largely self-governing. Their local religious observances were generally respected. Among the masses the ancient languages and customs persisted. Even native rulers were allowed a limited sway in portions of the empire, as native states still persist under British rule in India. Such a land was Palestine at the time of Christ’s birth. Not a little of the success of Rome as mistress of its diverse subject population was due to this considerate treatment of local rights and prejudices. The diversity in the empire was scarcely less remarkable than its unity. This variety was nowhere more apparent than in the realm of religious thought.

Christianity entered no empty world. Its advent found men’s minds filled with conceptions of the universe, of religion, of sin, and of rewards and punishments, with which it had to reckon and to which it had to adjust itself. Christianity could not build on virgin soil. The conceptions which it found already existing formed much of the material with which it must erect its structure. Many of these ideas are no longer those of the modern world. The fact of this inevitable intermixture compels the student to distinguish the permanent from the transitory in Christian thought, though the process is one of exceeding difficulty, and the solutions given by various scholars are diverse.

Certain factors in the world of thought into which Christianity came belong to universal ancient religion and are of great antiquity. All men, except a few representatives of philosophical sophistication, believed in the existence of a power, or of powers, invisible, superhuman, and eternal, controlling human destiny, and to be worshipped or placated by prayer, ritual, or sacrifice. The earth was viewed as the center of the universe. Around it the sun, planets, and stars ran their courses. Above it was the heaven; below the abode of departed spirits or of the wicked. No conception of science or the laws of nature had penetrated the popular mind. All the ongoings of nature were the work of invisible powers of good and evil, who ruled arbitrarily. Miracles were, therefore, to be regarded not merely as possible; they were to be expected whenever the higher forces would impress men with the important or the unusual. The world was the abode of innumerable spirits, righteous or malevolent, who touched human life in all its phases, and who even entered into such possession of men as to control their actions for good or ill. A profound sense of unworthiness, of ill desert, and of dissatisfaction with the existing conditions of life characterized the mass of mankind. The varied forms of religious manifestation were evidences of the universal need of better relations with the spiritual and unseen, and of men’s longing for help greater than any they could give one another.

*Greek Philosophy*
Besides these general conceptions common to popular religion, the world into which Christianity came owed much to the specific influence of Greek thought. Hellenistic ideas dominated the intelligence of the Roman Empire, but their sway was extensive only among the more cultivated portion of the population. Greek philosophic speculation at first concerned itself with the explanation of the physical universe. Yet with Heraclitus of Ephesus (about B.C. 490), though all was viewed as in a sense physical, the universe, which is in constant flow, is regarded as fashioned by a fiery element, the all-penetrating reason, of which men’s souls are a part. Here was probably the germ of the Logos conception which was to play such a role in later Greek speculation and Christian theology. As yet this shaping element was undistinguished from material warmth or fire. Anaxagoras of Athens (about B.C. 500-428) taught that a shaping mind (νους) acted in the ordering of matter and is independent of it. The Pythagoreans, of southern Italy, held that spirit is immaterial, and that souls are fallen spirits imprisoned in material bodies. To this belief in immaterial existence they seem to have been led by a consideration of the properties of numbers—permanent truths beyond the realm of matter and not materially discerned.

**Socrates and Plato**

To Socrates (B.C. 470?-399) the explanation of man himself, not of the universe, was the prime object of thought. Man’s conduct, that is morals, was the most important theme of investigation. Right action is based on knowledge, and will result in the four virtues—prudence, courage, self-control, and justice—which, as the “natural virtues,” were to have their eminent place in mediaeval Christian theology. This identification of virtue with knowledge, the doctrine that to know will involve doing, was indeed a disastrous legacy to all Greek thinking, and influential in much Christian speculation, notably in the Gnosticism of the second century.

In Socrates’s disciple, Plato (B.C. 427-347), the early Greek mind reached its highest spiritual attainment. He is properly describable as a man of mystical piety, as well as of the profoundest spiritual insight. To Plato the passing forms of this visible world give no real knowledge. That knowledge of the truly permanent and real comes from our acquaintance with the “ideas,” those changeless archetypal, universal patterns which exist in the invisible spiritual world—the “intelligible” world, since known by reason rather than by the senses—and give whatever of reality is shared by the passing phenomena present to our senses. The soul knew these “ideas” in previous existence. The phenomena of the visible world call to remembrance these once known “ideas.” The soul, existing before the body, must be independent of it, and not affected by its decay. This conception of immortality as an attribute of the soul, not shared by the body, was always influential in Greek thought and stood in sharp contrast to the Hebrew doctrine of resurrection. All “ideas” are not of equal worth. The highest are those of the true, the beautiful, and especially of the good. A clear perception of a personal God, as embodied in the “idea” of the good, was perhaps not attained by Plato; but he certainly approached closely to it. The good rules the world, not chance. It is the source of all lesser goods, and desires to be imitated in the actions of men. The realm of “ideas” is the true home of the soul, which finds its highest satisfaction in communion with them. Salvation is the recovery of the vision of the eternal goodness and beauty.

**Aristotle**

Aristotle (B.C. 384-322) was of a far less mystical spirit than Plato. To him the visible world was an unquestioned reality. He discarded Plato’s sharp discrimination between “ideas” and phenomena. Neither exist without the other. Each existence is a substance, the result, save in the case of God, who is purely immaterial, of the impress of “idea,” as the formative force, on matter which is the content. Matter in itself is only potential substance. It has always existed, yet never without form. Hence the world is eternal, for a realm of “ideas” antecedent to their manifestation in phenomena does not exist. The world is the prime object of knowledge, and Aristotle is therefore in a true sense a scientist. Its changes demand the initiation of a “prime mover,” who is Himself unmoved. Hence Aristotle presents this celebrated argument for the existence of God. But the “prime mover” works with intelligent purpose, and God is, therefore, not only the beginning but the end of the process of the world’s development. Man belongs to the world of substances, but in him there is not merely the body and sensitive “soul” of the animal; there is also a divine spark, a Logos which he shares with God, and which is eternal, though, unlike Plato’s conception
of spirit, essentially impersonal. In morals Aristotle held that happiness, or well-being, is the aim, and is attained by a careful maintenance of the golden mean.

Greek philosophy did not advance much scientifically beyond Plato and Aristotle, but they had little direct influence at the time of Christ. Two centuries and a half after His birth, a modified Platonism, Neo-Platonism, was to arise, of great importance, which profoundly affected Christian theology, notably that of Augustine. Aristotle was powerfully to influence the scholastic theology of the later Middle Ages. Those older Greek philosophers had viewed man chiefly in the light of his value to the state. The conquests of Alexander, who died B.C. 323, wrought a great change in men’s outlook. Hellenic culture was planted widely over the Eastern world, but the small Greek states collapsed as independent political entities. It was difficult longer to feel that devotion to the new and vast political units that a little, independent Athens had, for instance, won from its citizens. The individual as an independent entity was emphasized. Philosophy had to be interpreted in terms of individual life. How could the individual make the most of himself? Two great answers were given, one of which was wholly foreign to the genius of Christianity, and could not be used by it; the other only partially foreign, and therefore destined profoundly to influence Christian theology. These were Epicureanism and Stoicism.

**Epicurianism**

Epicurus (B.C. 342-270), most of whose life was spent in Athens, taught that mental bliss is the highest aim of man. This state is most perfect when passive. It is the absence of all that disturbs and annoys. Hence Epicurus himself does not deserve the reproaches often cast upon his system. Indeed, in his own life, he was an ascetic. The worst foes of mental happiness he taught are groundless fears. Of these the chief are dread of the anger of the gods and of death. Both are baseless. The gods exist, but they did not create nor do they govern the world, which Epicurus holds, with Democritus (B.C. 470?-380?), was formed by the chance and ever-changing combinations of eternally existing atoms. All is material, even the soul of man and the gods themselves. Death ends all, but is no evil, since in it there is no consciousness remaining. Hence, as far as it was a religion, Epicureanism was one of indifference. The school spread widely. The Roman poet Lucretius (B.C. 98?-55), in his brilliant *De Rerum Natura*, gave expression to the worthier side of Epicureanism; but the influence of the system as a whole was destructive and toward a sensual view of happiness.

Contemporarily with Epicurus, Euhemerus (about B.C. 300) taught that the gods of the old religions were simply deified men, about whom myths and tradition had cast a halo of divinity. He found a translator and advocate in the Roman poet Ennius (B.C. 239?-170?). Parallel with Epicureanism, in the teaching of Pyrrho of Elis (B.C. 360?-270?), and his followers, a wholly sceptical point of view was presented. Not merely can the real nature of things never be understood, but the best course of action is equally dubious. In practice Pyrrho found, like Epicurus, the ideal of life one of withdrawal from all that annoys or disturbs. With all these theories Christianity could have nothing in common, and they in turn did not affect it.

**Stoicism**

The other great answer was that of Stoicism, the noblest type of ancient pagan ethical thought, the nearest in some respects to Christianity, and in others remote from it. Its leaders were Zeno (B.C.?-264?), Cleanthes (B.C. 301?-232?), and Chrysippus (B.C. 280?-207?). Though developed in Athens, it flourished best outside of Greece, and notably in Rome, where Seneca (B.C. 3?-A. D. 65), Epictetus (A.D. 60?-?), and the Emperor, Marcus Aurelius (A. D. 121-180), had great influence. It was powerfully represented in Tarsus during the early life of the Apostle Paul. Stoicism was primarily a great ethical system, yet not without claims to be considered a religion. Its thought of the universe was curiously materialistic. All that is real is physical. Yet there is great difference in the fineness of bodies, and the coarser are penetrated by the finer. Hence fine and coarse correspond roughly to the common distinctions between spirit and matter. Stoicism approximated, though it much modified, the view of Heraclitus. The source of all, and the shaping, harmonizing influence in the universe is the vital warmth, from which all has developed by differing degrees of tension, which interpenetrates all things, and to which all will return. Far more than Heraclitus’s fire, which it resembles, it is the intelligent, self-conscious world-soul,
an all indwelling reason, Logos of which our reason is a part. It is God, the life and wisdom of all. It is truly within us. We can “follow the God within”; and by reason of it one can say, as Cleanthes did of Zeus; “We too are thy offspring.” The popular gods are simply names for the forces that stream out from God.

Since one wisdom exists in all the world, there is one natural law, one rule of conduct for all men. All are morally free. ‘Since all are from God, all men are brothers. Differences in station in life are accidental. To follow reason in the place in which one finds oneself is the highest duty, and is equally praiseworthy whether a man is an Emperor or a slave. So to obey reason, the Logos, is the sole object of pursuit. Happiness is no just aim, though duty done brings a certain happiness purely as a by-product. The chief enemies of a perfect obedience are passions and lusts, which pervert the judgment. These must resolutely be put aside. God inspires all good acts, though the notion of God is essentially pantheistic.

The strenuous ascetic attitude of Stoicism, its doctrine of the all-pervading and all-ruling divine wisdom, Logos its insistence that all who do well are equally deserving, whatever their station, and its assertion of the essential brotherhood of all men, were profoundly to affect Christian theology. In its highest representatives the creed and its results were noble. It was, however, too often hard, narrow, and unsympathetic. It was for the few. It recognized that the many could never reach its standards. Its spirit was too often one of pride. That of Christianity is one of humility. Still it produced remarkable effects. Stoicism gave Rome excellent Emperors and many lesser officials. Though it never became a really popular creed, it was followed by many of high influence and position in the Roman world, and modified Roman law for the better. It introduced into jurisprudence the conception of a law of nature, expressed in reason, and above all arbitrary human statutes. By its doctrine that all men are by nature equal, the worst features of slavery were gradually ameliorated, and Roman citizenship widely extended.

**Popular Religion**

One may say that the best educated thought in Rome and the provinces, by the time of Christ, in spite of wide-spread Epicureanism and Scepticism, inclined to pantheistic Monotheism, to the conception of God as good, in contrast to the non-moral character of the old Greek and Roman deities, to belief in a ruling divine providence, to the thought that true religion is not ceremonies but an imitation of the moral qualities of God, and toward a humaner attitude to men. The two elements lacking in this educated philosophy were those of certainty such as could only be given by belief in a divine revelation, and of that loyalty to a person which Christianity was to emphasize.

The common people, however, shared in few of these benefits. They lay in gross superstition. If the grip of the old religions of Greece and Rome had largely relaxed, they nevertheless believed in gods many and lords many. Every town had its patron god or goddess, every trade, the farm, the spring, the household, the chief events of life, marriage, childbirth. These views, too, were ultimately to appear in Christian history transmuted into saint-worship. Spothsayers and magicians drove a thriving trade among the ignorant, and none were more patronized than those of Jewish race. Above all, the common people were convinced that the maintenance of the historic religious cult of the ancient gods was necessary for the safety and perpetuity of the state. If not observed, the gods wreaked vengeance in calamities—an opinion that was the source of much later persecution of Christianity. These popular ideas were not vigorously opposed by the learned, who largely held that the old religions had a police value. They regarded the state ceremonies as a necessity for the common man. Seneca put the philosophical opinion bluntly when he declared that “the wise man will observe all religious usages as commanded by the law, not as pleasing to the gods.” The lowest point in popular religious feeling in the Roman Empire corresponds roughly to the time of the birth of Christ.

**Worship of the State**

The abler Emperors strove to strengthen and modify the ancient popular worships, for patriotic reasons, into worship of the state and of its head. This patriotic deification of the Roman state began, indeed, in the days of the republic. The worship of the “Dea Roma” may be found in Smyrna as early as B. C. 195. This reverence was strengthened by the popularity of the empire in the provinces as securing them better
government than that of the republic. As early as B. C. 29, Pergamum had a temple to Rome and Augustus. This worship, directed to the ruler as the embodiment of the state, or rather to his “genius” or indwelling spirit, spread rapidly. It soon had an elaborate priesthood under state patronage, divided and organized by provinces, and celebrating not only worship but annual games on a large scale. It was probably the most highly developed organization of a professedly religious character under the early empire, and the degree to which it ultimately affected Christian institutions awaits further investigation. From a modern point of view there was much more of patriotism than of religion in this system. Christian missionaries in Japan have solved a similar, though probably less difficult, situation by holding reverence to the Emperor to be purely patriotic. But early Christian feeling regarded this worship of the Emperor as utterly irreconcilable with allegiance to Christ. The feeling is shown in the description of Pergamum in Revelation 2:13. Christian refusal to render the worship seemed treasonable, and was the great occasion of the martyrdoms.

Men need a religion deeper than philosophy or ceremonies. Philosophy satisfies only the exceptional man. Ceremonies avail far more, but not those whose thoughts are active, or whose sense of personal unworthiness is keen. Some attempt was made to revive the dying older popular paganism. The earlier Emperors were, many of them, extensive builders and patrons of temples. The most notable effort to effect a revival and purification of popular religion was that of Plutarch (A. D. 46?-120?), of Chersonea in Greece, which may serve as typical of others. He criticised the traditional mythology. All that implied cruel or morally unworthy actions on the part of the gods he rejected. There is one God. All the popular gods are His attributes personified, or subordinate spirits. Plutarch had faith in oracles, special providences, and future retribution. He taught a strenuous morality. His attempt to wake up what was best in the dying older paganism was a hopeless task and won few followers.

Mystery Religions

The great majority of those who felt religious longings simply adopted Oriental religions, especially those of a redemptive nature in which ‘mysticism or sacramentalism were prominent features. Ease of communication, and especially the great influx of Oriental slaves into the western portion of the Roman world during the later republic facilitated this process. The spread of these faiths independent of, and to a certain extent as rivals of, Christianity during the first three centuries of our era made that epoch one of deepening religious feeling throughout the empire, and, in that sense, undoubtedly facilitated the ultimate triumph of Christianity.

One such Oriental religion, of considerably extended appeal, though with little of the element of mystery, was Judaism, which because of its universally-acknowledged antiquity would be largely exempted from participation in the state and Imperial cults. The popular mind turned more largely to other Oriental cults, of greater mystery, or rather of larger redemptive sacramental significance. Their meaning for the religious development of the Roman world has been only recently appreciated at anything like its true value. The most popular of these Oriental religions were those of the Great Mother (Cybele) and Attis, originating in Asia Minor; of Isis and Serapis from Egypt; and of Mithras from Persia. At the same time there was much syncretistic mixture of these religions, one with another, and with the older religions of the lands to which they came. That of the Great Mother, which was essentially a primitive nature worship, accompanied by violent rites [the priests are said to have flagellated and castrated themselves during festal processions], reached Rome in B. C. 204, and was the first to gain extensive foothold in the West. That of Isis and Serapis, with its emphasis on regeneration and a future life, was well established in Rome by B. C. 80, but had long to endure governmental opposition. That of Mithras, the most widespread of all, though having an extended history in the East, did not become conspicuous at Rome till toward the year A. D. 100, and its great spread was in the latter part of the second and during the third centuries. It was especially beloved of soldiers. In the later years, at least of its progress in the Roman Empire, Mithras was identified with the sun—the Sol Invictus of the Emperors just before Constantine. Like other religions of Persian origin, its view of the universe was dualistic.

All these religions taught a redeemer-god. All held that the initiate shared in symbolic (sacramental) fashion the experiences of the god, died with him, rose with him, became partakers of the divine nature,
usually through a meal shared symbolically with him, and participated in his immortality. All had secret rites for the initiated. All offered mystical (sacramental) cleansing from sin. In the religion of Isis and Serapis that cleansing was by bathing in sacred water; in those of the Great Mother and of Mithras by the blood of a bull, the *taurobolium*, by which, as recorded in inscriptions, the initiate was “reborn forever.” All promised a happy future life for the faithful. All were more or less ascetic in their attitude toward the world. Some, like Mithraism, taught the brotherhood and 11 essential equality of all disciples. There can be no doubt that the development of the early Christian doctrine of the sacraments was affected, if not directly by these religions, at least by the religious atmosphere which they helped to create and to which they were congenial.

*The Situation in the Pagan World*

In summing up the situation in the pagan world at the coming of Christ, one must say that, amid great confusion, and in a multitude of forms of expression, some of them very unworthy, certain religious demands are evident. A religion that should meet the requirements of the age must teach one righteous God, yet find place for numerous spirits, good and bad. It must possess a definite revelation of the will of God, as in Judaism, that is an authoritative scripture. It must inculcate a world-denying virtue, based on moral actions agreeable to the will and character of God. It must hold forth a future life with rewards and punishments. It must have a symbolic initiation and promise a real forgiveness of sins. It must possess a redeemer-god into union with whom men could come by certain sacramental acts. It must teach the brotherhood of all men, at least of all adherents of the religion. However simple the beginnings of Christianity may have been, Christianity must possess, or take on, all these traits if it was to conquer the Roman Empire or to become a world religion. It came “in the fulness of time” in a much larger sense than was formerly thought; and no one who believes in an overruling providence of God will deny the fundamental importance of this mighty preparation, even if some of the features of Christianity’s early development bear the stamp and limitations of the time and have to be separated from the eternal.

2. THE JEWISH BACKGROUND

The external course of events had largely determined the development of Judaism in the six centuries preceding the birth of Christ. Judaea had been under foreign political control since the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar, B. C. 586. It had shared the fortunes of the old Assyrian Empire and of its successors, the Persian and that of Alexander. After the break-up of the latter it came under the control of the Ptolemies of Egypt and then of the Seleucid dynasty of Antioch. While thus politically dependent, its religious institutions were practically undisturbed after their restoration consequent upon the Persian conquest of Babylonia; and the hereditary priestly families were the real native aristocracy of the land. In their higher ranks they came to be marked by political interest and religious indifference. The high-priesthood in particular became a coveted office by reason of its pecuniary and political influence. With it was associated, certainly from the Greek period, a body of advisers and legal interpreters, the Sanhedrim, ultimately seventy-one in number. Thus administered, the temple and its priesthood came to represent the more formal aspect of the religious life of the Hebrews. On the other hand, the feeling that they were a holy people living under Yahwe’s holy law, their sense of religious separatism, and the comparative cessation of prophecy, turned the nation to the study of the law, which was interpreted by an ever-increasing mass of tradition. As in Muslim lands to-day, the Jewish law was at once religious precept and civil statute. Its interpreters, the scribes, became more and more the real religious leaders of the people. Judaism grew to be, in ever-increasing measure, the religion of a sacred scripture and its mass of interpretative precedent. For a fuller understanding and administration of the law, and for prayer and worship, the synagogue developed wherever Judaism was represented. Its origin is uncertain, going back probably to the Exile. In its typical form it was a local congregation including all Jews of the district presided over by a group of “elders,” having often a “ruler” at its head. These were empowered to excommunicate and punish offenders. The services were very simple and could be led by any Hebrew, though usually under “a ruler of the synagogue.” They included prayer, the reading of the law and the prophets, their translation and exposition (sermon), and the benediction. Because of the unrepresentative character of the priesthood, and the growing importance of the synagogues, the temple, though highly
regarded, became less and less vital for the religious life of the people as the time of Christ is approached, and could be totally destroyed in A.D. 70, without any overthrow of the essential elements in Judaism.

Under the Seleucid Kings Hellenizing influences came strongly into Judæa, and divided the claimants for the high-priestly office. The forcible support of Hellenism by Antiochus IV, Epiphanes (B.C. 175-164), and its accompanying repression of Jewish worship and customs, led, in B.C. 167, to the great rebellion headed by the Maccabees, and ultimately to a period of Judean independence which lasted till the conquest by the Romans in B.C. 63. This Hellenizing episode brought about a profound clefs in Jewish life. The Maccabean rulers secured for themselves the high-priestly office; but though the family had risen to leadership by opposition to Hellenism and by religious zeal, it gradually drifted toward Hellenism and purely political ambition. Under John Hyrcanus, the Maccabean ruler from B.C. 135 to 105, the distinction between the religious parties of later Judaism became marked. The aristocratic-political party, with which Hyrcanus and the leading priestly families allied themselves, came to be known as Sadducees—a title the meaning and antiquity of which is uncertain. It was essentially a worldly party without strong religious conviction. Many of the views that the Sadducees entertained were conservatively representative of the older Judaism. Thus, they held to the law without its traditional interpretation, and denied a resurrection or a personal immortality. On the other hand, they rejected the ancient notion of spirits, good or bad. Though politically influential, they were unpopular with the mass of the people, who opposed all foreign influences and stood firmly for the law as interpreted by the traditions. The most thoroughgoing representatives of this democratic-legalistic attitude were the Pharisees, a name which signifies the Separated, presenting what was undoubtedly a long previously existing attitude, though the designation appears shortly before the time of John Hyrcanus. With his reign the historic struggle of Pharisees and Sadducees begins.

As a whole, in spite of the fact that the Zealots, or men of action, sprang from them, the Pharisees were not a political party. Though they held the admiration of a majority of the people, they were never very numerous. The ordinary working Jew lacked the education in the minutiae of the law or the leisure to become a Pharisee. Their attitude toward the mass of Judaism was contemptuous. (John 7:49) They represented, however, views which were widely entertained and were in many respects normal results of Jewish religious development since the Exile. They represented that growth of a belief in the resurrection of the body, and in future rewards and punishments which had seen a remarkable development during the two centuries preceding Christ’s birth. They held, like the people generally, to the Messianic hope. The Pharisees, from many points of view, were deserving of no little respect. From the circle infused with these ideas Christ’s disciples were largely to come. The most learned of the Apostles had been himself a Pharisee, and called himself such years after having become a Christian. (Acts 23:6) Their earnestness was praiseworthy. The great failure of Pharisaism was twofold. It looked upon religion as the keeping of an external law, by which a reward was earned. Such keeping involved of necessity neither a real inward righteousness of spirit, nor a warm personal relation to God. It also shut out from the divine promises those whose failures, sins, and imperfect keeping of the law made the attainment of the Pharisaic standard impossible. It dis-inherited the “lost sheep” of the house of Israel. As such it received the well-merited condemnation of Christ.

The Messianic Hope

The Messianic hope, shared by the Pharisees and common people alike, was the outgrowth of strong national consciousness and faith in God. It was most vigorous in times of national oppression. Under the earlier Maccabees, when a Godfearing line had given independence to the people, it was little felt. The later Maccabees, however, deserted their family tradition. The Romans conquered the land in B.C. 63. Nor was the situation really improved from a strict Jewish standpoint, when a half-Jewish adventurer, Herod, the son of the Idumean Antipater, held a vassal kingship under Roman overlordship from B.C. 37 to B.C. 4. In spite of his undoubted services to the material prosperity of the land, and his magnificent rebuilding of the temple, he was looked upon as a tool of the Romans and a Hellenizer at heart. The
Herodians were disliked by Sadducees and Pharisees alike. On Herod’s death his kingdom was divided between three of his sons, Archelaus becoming “ethnarch” of Judaea, Samaria, and Idumea (B. C. 4-A. D. 6); Herod Antipas “tetrarch” of Galilee and Perea (B. C. 4-A. D. 39); and Philip “tetrarch” of the prevailing pagan region east and northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Archelaus aroused bitter enmity, was deposed by the Emperor Augustus, and was succeeded by a Roman procurator—the occupant of this post from A. D. 26 to 36 being Pontius Pilate. With such hopelessly adverse political conditions, it seemed as if the Messianic hope could be realizable only by divine aid. By the time of Christ that hope involved the destruction of Roman authority by supernatural divine intervention through a Messiah; and the establishment of a kingdom of God in which a freed and all-powerful Judaism should nourish under a righteous Messianic King of Davidic descent, into which the Jews scattered throughout the Roman Empire should be gathered, and by which a golden age would be begun. To the average Jew it probably meant little more than that, by divine intervention, the Romans would be driven out and the kingdom restored to Israel. A wide-spread belief, based on Malachi 3:1, held that the coming of the Messiah would be heralded by a forerunner.

Other Forces in Judaism

These hopes were nourished by a body of apocalyptic literature, pessimistic as to the present, but painting in brilliant color the age to come. The writings were often ascribed to ancient worthies. Such in the Old Testament canon is the prophecy of Daniel, such without are the Book of Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, and a number of others. A specimen of this class of literature from a Christian point of view, but with much use of Jewish conceptions, is Revelation in the New Testament. These nourished a forward-looking, hopeful religious attitude that must have served in a measure to offset the strict legalism of the Pharisaic interpretation of the law.

Other currents of religious life were moving also in Palestine, the extent of which it is impossible to estimate, but the reality of which is evident. In the country districts especially, away from the centers of official Judaism, there was a real mystical piety. It was that of the later Psalms and of the “poor in spirit” of the New Testament, and the “Magnificat” and “Benedictus” (Luke 1:46-55; 68-79) may well be expressions of it. To this mystic type belong also the recently discovered so-called Odes of Solomon. From this simpler piety, in a larger and less mystical sense, came prophetic appeals for repentance, of which those of John the Baptist are best known. It was not Pharisaic, but far more vital.

One further conception of later Judaism is of importance by reason of its influence on the development of Christian theology. It is that of “wisdom,” which is practically personified as existing side by side with God, one with Him, His “possession” before the foundation of the world, His agent in its creation. (Prov. 3:19; 8; Psalms 33:6) It is possible that the influence of the Stoic thought of the all-pervading divine Logos is here to be seen; but a more ethical note sounds than in the corresponding Greek teaching. Yet the two views were easy of assimilation.

Judaism Outside Palestine

Palestine is naturally first in thought in a consideration of Judaism. It was its home, and the scene of the beginnings of Christianity. Nevertheless the importance of the dispersion of the Jews outside of Palestine, both for the religious life of the Roman Empire as a whole, and for the reflex effect upon Judaism itself of the consequent contact with Hellenic thought, was great. This dispersion had begun with the conquests of the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs, and had been furthered by many rulers, notably by the Ptolemies of Egypt, and the great Romans of the closing days of the republic and the dawning empire. Estimates are at best conjectural, but it is not improbable that, at the birth of Christ there were five or six times as many Jews outside of Palestine as within its borders. They were a notable part of the population of Alexandria. They were strongly rooted in Syria and Asia Minor. They were to be found, if in relatively small numbers, in Rome. Few cities of the empire were without their presence. Clannish and viewed with little favor by the pagan population, they prospered in trade, were valued for their good qualities by the rulers, their religious scruples were generally respected, and, in turn, they displayed a missionary spirit which made their religious impress felt. As this Judaism of the dispersion presented itself to the surrounding pagan, it was a far simpler creed than Palestinian Pharisaism. It taught one God, who had revealed His will in
sacred Scriptures, a strenuous morality, a future life with rewards and punishments, and a few relatively simple commands relating to the Sabbath, circumcision, and the use of meats. It carried with it everywhere the synagogue, with its unelaborate and non-ritualistic worship. It appealed powerfully to many pagan s; and, besides full proselytes, the synagogues had about them a much larger penumbra of partially Judaized converts, the “devout men,” who were to serve as a recruiting ground for much of the early Christian missionary propaganda.

In its turn, the Judaism of the dispersion was much influenced by Hellenism, especially by Greek philosophy, and nowhere more deeply than in Egypt. There, in Alexandria, the Old Testament was given to the reading world in Greek translation, the so-called Septuagint, as early as the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (B. C. 285-246). This made the Jewish Scriptures, heretofore locked up in an obscure tongue, widely accessible. In Alexandria, also, Old Testament religious ideas were combined with Greek philosophical conceptions, notably Platonic and Stoic, in a remarkable syncretism. The most influential of these Alexandrian interpreters was Philo (B. C. 20?-A. D. 42?). To Philo, the Old Testament is the wisest of books, a real divine revelation, and Moses the greatest of teachers; but by allegorical interpretation Philo finds the Old Testament in harmony with the best in Platonism and Stoicism. The belief that the Old Testament and Greek philosophy were in essential agreement was one of far-reaching significance for the development of Christian theology. This allegorical method of Biblical explanation was greatly to influence later Christian study of the Scriptures. To Philo, the one God made the world as an expression of His goodness to His creation; but between God and the world the uniting links are a group of divine powers, viewed partly as attributes of God and partly as personal existences. Of these the highest is the Logos which flows out of the being of God Himself, and is the agent not merely through whom God created the world, but from whom all other powers, flow. Through the Logos God created the ideal man, of whom actual man is a poor copy, the work of lower spiritual powers as well as of the Logos. Even from his fallen state man may rise to connection with God through the Logos, the agent of divine revelation. Yet Philo’s conception of the Logos is far more philosophical than that of “wisdom” in Proverbs, of which mention has been made; and the source of the New Testament Logos doctrine is to be found in the Hebrew conception of “wisdom” rather than in the thought of Philo. He was, however, a great illustration of the manner in which Hellenic and Hebrew ideas might be united, and were actually to be united, in the development of later Christian theology. In no other portion of the Roman world was the process which Philo represented so fully developed as in Alexandria.

[1] JESUS and the DISCIPLES

The way was prepared for Jesus by John the Baptist, in the thought of the early Christians the “forerunner” of the Messiah. Ascetic in life, he preached in the region of the Jordan that the day of judgment upon Israel was at hand, that the Messiah was about to come; and despising all formalism in religion, and all dependence on Abrahamic descent, he proclaimed in the spirit of the ancient prophets their message: “repent, do justice.” His directions to the various classes of his hearers were simple and utterly non-legalistic. (Luke 3:2-14; Matt. 3:1-12) He baptized his disciples in token of the washing away of their sins; he taught them a special prayer. Jesus classed him as the last and among the greatest of the prophets. Though many of his followers became those of Jesus, some persisted independently and were to be found as late as Paul’s ministry in Ephesus (Acts, 191-4).

While the materials are lacking for any full biography of Jesus such as would be available in the case of one living in modern times, they are entirely adequate to determine His manner of life, His character, and His teaching, even if many points on which greater light could be desired are left in obscurity. He stands forth clearly in all His essential qualities. He was brought up in Nazareth of Galilee, in the simple surroundings of a carpenter’s home. The land, though despised by the more purely Jewish inhabitants of Judaea on account of a considerable admixture of races, was loyal to the Hebrew religion and traditions, the home of a hardy, self-respecting population, and particularly pervaded by the Messianic hope. Here Jesus grew to manhood through years of unrecorded experience, which, from His later ministry, must have been also of profound spiritual insight and “favor with God and man.”
From this quiet life He was drawn by the preaching of John the Baptist. To him He went, and by him was baptized in the Jordan. In connection with this baptism there came to Him the conviction that He was the Messiah of Jewish hope, the chosen of God, the appointed founder of the divine kingdom. A struggle with temptations to interpret this Messiahship in terms of ordinary Jewish expectation, resulted in His rejection of all political or self-seeking methods of its realization as unworthy, and the unshakable conviction that His Messianic leadership was purely spiritual, and the kingdom solely a kingdom of God, He began at once to preach the kingdom and to heal the afflicted in Galilee, and soon had great popular following. He gathered about Him a company of intimate associates—the Apostles—and a larger group of less closely attached disciples. How long His ministry continued is uncertain, from one to three years will cover its possible duration. Opposition was aroused as the spiritual nature of His message became evident and His hostility to the current Pharisaism was recognized. Many of His first followers fell away. He journeyed to the northward toward Tyre and Sidon, and then to the region of Caesarea Philippi, where He drew forth a recognition of His Messianic mission from His disciples. He felt, however, that at whatever peril He must bear witness in Jerusalem, and thither He went with heroic courage, in the face of growing hostility, there to be seized and crucified, certainly under Pontius Pilate (A. D. 26-36) and probably in the year 30. His disciples were scattered, but speedily gathered once more, with renewed courage, in the glad conviction that He still lived, having risen from the dead. Such, in barest outline, is the story of the most influential life ever lived. The tremendous impress of His personality was everywhere apparent.

In treating, however briefly, of the teaching and work of Jesus, it must be recognized, as Harnack has pointed out, that we have from the first a twofold Gospel—a Gospel of Jesus—His teachings; and a Gospel about Jesus—the impression that He made upon His disciples as to what He was. He began with what were the best possessions of contemporary Judaism, the kingdom of God and the Messianic hope. These had been the center of John’s message. The mysterious thing in Jesus’ experience is that He felt Himself to be the Messiah, and, as far as can be judged, this conviction was no matter of deduction. It was a clear consciousness. He knew Himself to be the Messianic founder of the kingdom of God. Yet that kingdom was not earthly, Maccabean. It was always spiritual. But His conception of it enlarged. At first He seems to have regarded it as for Jews only. (Mark 7:27; Matt. 10:5-7, 15:24) As He went on, His conception of its inclusiveness grew, and He taught not merely that many “shall come from the east and west and from the north and south,” (Luke 13:29) but that the kingdom itself will be taken from the unbelieving Jews. (Mark 12:1-12) Jesus held Himself in a peculiar degree the friend of the sons and daughters of the kingdom whom Pharisaism had disinherited, the outcasts, publicans, harlots, and the poor. Their repentance was of value in the sight of God.

The kingdom of God, in Jesus’ teaching, involves the recognition of God’s sovereignty and fatherhood. We are His children. Hence we should love Him and our neighbors. (Mark 12:28-34) All whom we can help are our neighbors. (Luke 10:25-37) We do not so love Hence we need to repent with sorrow for sin, and turn to God; and this attitude of sorrow and trust (repentance and faith) is followed by the divine forgiveness. (Luke 15:11-32) The ethical standard of the kingdom is the highest conceivable. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48.) It involves the utmost strenuousness toward self, (Mark 9:43-50) and unlimited forgiveness toward others. (Matt. 18:21. 22.) Forgiveness, of others is a necessary condition of God’s forgiving us. (Matt 11:25, 26) There are two ways in life: one broad and easy, the other narrow and hard. A blessed future or destruction are the ends. (Matt. 7:13, 14) Jesus was, like His age, strongly eschatological in His outlook. Though He felt that the kingdom is begun now, (Mark 4:1-32; Luke 17:21) it is to be much more powerfully manifested in the near future. The end of the present age seemed not far off. (Matt. 10:22, 19:26, 24:34; Mark 13:30)

Most of these views and sayings can doubtless be paralleled in the religious thought of the age; but the total effect was revolutionary. “He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.” (Mark 1:22) He could say that the least of His disciples is greater than John the Baptist ; (Matt. 11:11) and that heaven and earth should pass away before His words. (Mark 13:31) He called the heavy-laden to Him and offered them rest. (Matt. 11:26.) He promised to those who confessed Him before men that He would confess them before His Father. (Matt. 10:32.) He declared that none knew the Father but a Son, and He to
whom the Son should reveal the Father. (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22) He proclaimed Himself lord of the Sabbath, (Mark 2:23-28) than which, in popular estimate, there was no more sacred part of the God-given Jewish law. He affirmed that He had power to pronounce forgiveness of sins. (Mark 2:1-11) On the other hand, He felt His own humanity and its limitations no less clearly. He prayed, and taught His disciples to pray. He declared that He did not know the day or the hour of ending of the present world-age; that was known to the Father alone. (Mark 13:32) It was not His to determine who should sit on His right hand and His left in His exaltation. (Mark 10:40) He prayed that the Father’s will, not His own, be done. (Mark 14:36) He cried in the agony of the cross: “My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34) The mystery of His person is in these utterances. Its divinity is no less evident than its humanity. The how is beyond our experience, and therefore beyond our powers of comprehension; but the church has always busied itself with the problem, and has too often practically emphasized one side to the exclusion of the other.

Jesus substituted for the external, work righteous, ceremonial religion of contemporary Judaism, the thought of piety as consisting in love to God and to one’s neighbor—to a God who is a Father and a neighbor who is a brother—manifested primarily in an attitude of the heart and inward life, the fruit of which is external acts. The motive power of that life is personal allegiance to Himself as the revelation of the Father, the type of redeemed humanity, the Elder Brother, and the King of the kingdom of God.

What Jesus taught and was gained immense significance from the conviction of His disciples that His death was not the end—from the resurrection faith. The how of this conviction is one of the most puzzling of historical problems. The fact of this conviction is unquestionable. It seems to have come first to Peter, (1Cor. 15:5) who was in that sense at least the “rock” Apostle on whom the church was founded. All the early disciples shared it. It was the turning-point in the conversion of Paul. It gave courage to the scattered disciples, brought them together again, and made them witnesses. Henceforth they had a risen Lord, in the exaltation of glory, yet ever interested in them. The Messiah of Jewish hope, in a profounder spiritual reality than Judaism had ever imagined Him, had really lived, died, and risen again for their salvation.

These convictions were deepened by the experiences of the day of Pentecost. The exact nature of the pentecostal manifestation is, perhaps, impossible to recover. Certainly the conception of a proclamation of the Gospel in many foreign languages is inconsistent with what we know of speaking with tongues elsewhere (See 1 Cor. 14:2-19) and with the criticism reported by the author of Acts that they were “full of new wine,” (Acts 2:13) which Peter deemed worthy of a reply. But the point of significance is that these spiritual manifestations appeared the visible and audible evidence of the gift and power of Christ. (Acts 2:33) To these first Christians it was the triumphant inauguration of a relation to the living Lord, confidence in which controlled much of the thinking of the Apostolic Church. If the disciple visibly acknowledged his allegiance by faith, repentance, and baptism, the exalted Christ, it was believed, in turn no less evidently acknowledged the disciple by His gift of the Spirit. Pentecost was indeed a day of the Lord; and though hardly to be called the birthday of the church, for that had its beginnings in Jesus’ association with the disciples, it marked an epoch in the proclamation of the Gospel, in the disciples’ conviction of Christ’s presence, and in the increase of adherents to the new faith.

2. THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Walker, “Period I. From the Beginnings to the Gnostic Crisis” . 1.4-1.7, pp. 22-40.

[2]. I. THE PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

The Christian community in Jerusalem seems to have grown rapidly. It speedily included Jews who had lived in the dispersion as well as natives of Galilee and Judaea, and even some of the Hebrew priests. By the Christian body the name “church” was very early adopted. The designation comes from the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, where it had been employed to indicate the whole people of Israel as a divinely called congregation. As such it was a fitting title for the true Israel, the real people of God, and such the early Christians felt themselves to be. The early Jerusalem company were faithful in attendance at
the temple, and in obedience to the Jewish law, but, in addition, they had their own special services among themselves, with prayer, mutual exhortation, and “breaking of bread” daily in private houses. (1 Acts 2:46) This “breaking of bread” served a twofold purpose. It was a bond of fellowship and a means of support for the needy. The expectation of the speedy coming of the Lord made the company at Jerusalem a waiting congregation, in which the support of the less well-to-do was provided by the gifts of the better able, so that they “had all things common.” (1 Acts 2:44) The act was much more than that, however. It was a continuation and a reminder of the Lord’s Last Supper with His disciples before His crucifixion. It had, therefore, from the first, a sacramental significance.

Organization was very simple. The leadership of the Jerusalem congregation was at first that of Peter, and in a lesser degree of John. With them the whole apostolic company was associated in prominence, though whether they constituted so fully a governing board as tradition affirmed by the time that Acts was written may be doubted. Questions arising from the distribution of aid to the needy resulted in the appointment of a committee of seven, (Acts 6:1-6) but whether this action was the origin of the diaconate or a temporary device to meet a particular situation is uncertain. The utmost that can be said is that the duties thus intrusted resembled those later discharged by deacons in the Gentile churches. At an early though somewhat later period “elders” are mentioned, (4 Acts 11:30) though whether these were simply the older members of the church, (As Acts 15:23 might imply.) or were officers (Acts 14:23.) not improbably patterned after those of the Jewish synagogue, is impossible to determine.

The Congregation In Jerusalem

The Jerusalem congregation was filled with the Messianic hope, it would seem at first in a cruder and less spiritual form than Jesus had taught. (See Acts 1:6) Salvation it viewed as to be obtained by repentance, which included sorrow for the national sin of rejecting Jesus as the Messiah as well as for personal sins. This repentance and acknowledgment of loyalty was followed by baptism in the name of Christ, as a sign of cleansing and token of new relationship, and was sealed with the divine approval by the bestowment of spiritual gifts. (Acts 2:37, 38) This preaching of Jesus as the true Messiah, and fear of a consequent disregard of the historic ritual, led to an attack by Pharisaic Hellenist Jews, which resulted in the death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, by stoning at the hands of a mob. The immediate consequence was a partial scattering of the Jerusalem congregation, so that the seeds of Christianity were sown throughout Judaea, in Samaria, and even in as remote regions as Caesarea, Damascus, Antioch, and the island of Cyprus. Of the original Apostles the only one who is certainly known to have exercised a considerable missionary activity was Peter, though tradition ascribes such labors to them all. John may have engaged, also, in such endeavor, though the later history of this Apostle is much in dispute.

The comparative peace which followed the martyrdom of Stephen was broken for the Jerusalem church by a much more severe persecution about A. D. 44, instigated by Herod Agrippa I, who from 41 to his death in 44, was vassal-king over the former territories of Herod the Great. Peter was imprisoned, but escaped death, and the Apostle James was beheaded. In connection with the scattering consequent upon this persecution is probably to be found whatever truth underlies the tradition that the Apostles left Jerusalem twelve years after the crucifixion. At all events, Peter seems to have been only occasionally there henceforth; and the leadership of the Jerusalem church fell to James, “the Lord’s brother,” who even earlier had become prominent in its affairs. (Gal. 1:19, 2:9; Acts 21:18.) This position, which he held till his martyr’s death about 63, has often been called a “bishopric,” and undoubtedly it corresponded in many ways to the monarchical bishopric in the Gentile churches. There is no evidence, however, of the application to James of the term “bishop” in his lifetime. When the successions of religious leadership among Semitic peoples are remembered, especially the importance attached to relationship to the founder, it seems much more likely that there was here a rudimentary caliphate. This interpretation is rendered the more probable because James’s successor in the leadership of the Jerusalem church, though not chosen till after the conquest of the city by Titus in 70, was Simeon, esteemed Jesus’ kinsman.
Under the leadership of James the church in Jerusalem embraced two parties, both in agreement that the ancient law of Israel was binding on Christians of Jewish race, but differing as to whether it was similarly regulative for Christian converts from paganism. One wing held it to be binding on all; the other, of which James was a representative, was willing to allow freedom from the law to Gentile Christians, though it viewed with disfavor such a mingling of Jews and Gentiles at a common table as Peter was disposed, for a time at least, to welcome. (Gal. 2:12-16) The catastrophe which ended the Jewish rebellion in the year 70 was fateful, however, to all the Christian communities in Palestine, even though that of Jerusalem escaped the perils of the siege by flight. The yet greater overthrow of Jewish hopes under Hadrian, in the war of 132 to 135, left Palestinian Christianity a feeble remnant. Even before the first capture of the city, more influential foci of Christian influence were to be found in other portions of the empire. The Jerusalem church and its associated Palestinian’ communities were important as the fountain from which Christianity first flowed forth, and as securing the preservation of many memorials of Jesus’ life and words that would otherwise have been lost, rather than as influencing, by direct and permanent leadership, the development of Christianity as a whole.

[2]. PAUL and GENTILE CHRISTIANITY

As has already been mentioned, the persecution which brought about Stephen’s martyrdom resulted in the planting of Christianity beyond the borders of Palestine. Missionaries, whose names have perished, preached Christ to fellow Jews. In Antioch a further extension of this propaganda took place. Antioch, the capital of Syria, was a city of the first rank, a remarkably cosmopolitan meeting-place of Greeks, Syrians, and Jews. There the new faith was preached to Greeks. The effect of this preaching was the spread of the Gospel among those of Gentile antecedents. By the populace they were nicknamed “Christians”—a title little used by the followers of Jesus themselves till well into the second century, though earlier prevalent among the pagan. Nor was Antioch the farthest goal of Christian effort. By 51 or 52, under Claudius, tumults among the Jews consequent upon Christian preaching by unknown missionaries attracted governmental attention in Rome itself. At this early period, however, Antioch was the center of development. The effect of this conversion of those whose antecedents had been pagan was inevitably to raise the question of the relation of these disciples to the Jewish law. Should that rule be imposed upon Gentiles, Christianity would be but a Jewish sect; should Gentiles be free from it Christianity could become a universal religion, but at the cost of much Jewish sympathy. That this inevitable conflict was decided in favor of the larger doctrine was primarily the work of the Apostle Paul.

Paul, whose Hebrew name, Saul, was reminiscent of the hero of the tribe of Benjamin, of which he was a member, was born in the Cilician city of Tarsus, of Pharisaic parentage, but of a father possessed of Roman citizenship. Tarsus was eminent in the educational world, and at the time of Paul’s birth was a seat of Stoic teaching. Brought up in a strict Jewish home, there is no reason to believe that Paul ever received a formal Hellenic education. He was never a Hellenizer in the sense of Philo of Alexandria. A wide-awake youth in such a city could not fail, however, to receive many Hellenic ideas, and to become familiar, in a measure at least, with the political and religious atmosphere of the larger world outside his orthodox Jewish home. Still, it was in the rabbinical tradition that he grew up, and it was as a future scribe that he went, at an age now unknown, to study under the famous Gamaliel the elder, in Jerusalem. How much, if anything, he knew of the ministry of Jesus other than by common report, it is impossible to determine. His devotion to the Pharisaic conception of a nation made holy by careful observance of the Jewish law was extreme, and his own conduct, as tried by that standard, was “blameless.” Always a man of the keenest spiritual insight, however, he came, even while a Pharisee, to feel deep inward dissatisfaction with his own attainments in character. The law did not give a real inward righteousness. Such was his state of mind when brought into contact with Christianity. If Jesus was no true Messiah, He had justly suffered, and His disciples were justly objects of persecution. Could he be convinced that Jesus was the chosen of God, then He must be to him the first object of allegiance, and the law for opposition to the Pharisaic interpretation of which He died—and Paul recognized no other interpretation—must itself be abrogated by divine intervention.
Though the dates of Paul’s history are conjectural, it may have been about the year 35 that the great change came—journeying to Damascus on an errand of persecution he beheld in vision the exalted Jesus, who called him to personal service. What may have been the nature of that experience can at best be merely conjectured; but of its reality to Paul and of its transforming power there can be no question. Henceforth he was convinced not only that Jesus was all that Christianity claimed Him to be, but he felt a personal devotion to his Master that involved nothing less than union of spirit. He could say: “I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. 2:20) The old legalism dropped away, and with it the value of the law. To Paul henceforth the new life was one of a new friendship. Christ had become his closest friend. He now viewed man, God, sin, and the world as through his friend’s eyes. To do his friend’s will was his highest desire. All that his friend had won was his. “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold they are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17)

With an ardent nature such as Paul’s this transformation manifested itself at once in action. Of the story of the next few years little is known. He went at first into Arabia—a region in the designation of that age not necessarily far south of Damascus. He preached in that city. Three years after his conversion he made a flying visit to Jerusalem, where he sojourned with Peter and met James, “the Lord’s brother.” He worked in Syria and Cilicia for years, in danger, suffering, and bodily weakness. (e.g. 2 Cor. 11 and 12) Of the circumstances of this ministry little is known. He can hardly have failed to preach to Gentiles; and, with the rise to importance of a mixed congregation at Antioch, he was naturally sought by Barnabas as one of judgment in the questions involved. Barnabas, who had been sent from Jerusalem, now brought Paul from Tarsus to Antioch, probably in the year 46 or 47. Antioch had become a great focal point of Christian activity; and from it in obedience, as the Antiochian congregation believed, to divine guidance, Paul Barnabas set forth for a missionary journey that took them to Cyprus and thence to Perga, Antioch b Bisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe—the so-called first missionary journey described in Acts 13 and 14. Apparently the most fruitful evangelistic endeavor thus far in the history of the church, it resulted in the establishment of a group of congeegations in southern Asia Minor, which Paul afterward addressed as those of Galatia, though many scholars would find the Galatian churches in more northern and central regions of Asia Minor, to which no visit of Paul is recorded.

The growth of the church in Antioch and the planting of mixed churches in Cyprus and Galatia now raised the question of Gentile relation to the law on a great scale. The congregation in Antioch was agitated by visitors from Jerusalem who asserted: “Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses ye cannot be saved.”(Acts 15:1) Paul determined to make a test case. Taking with him Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile convert, as a concrete example of non-legalistic Christianity, he went with Barnabas to Jerusalem and met the leaders there privately. The result reached with James, Peter, and John was a cordial recognition of the genuineness of Paul’s work among the Gentiles, and an agreement that the field should be divided, the Jerusalem leaders to continue the mission to Jews, of course with maintenance of the law, while Paul and Barnabas should go with their free message to the Gentiles,(Gal. 2:1-10) It was a decision honorable to both sides; but it was impossible of full execution. What were to be the relations in a mixed church? Could law-keeping Jews and law-free Gentiles eat together? That further question was soon raised in connection with a visit of Peter to Antioch,(Gal. 2:11-6) It led to a public discussion in the Jerusalem congregation, probably in the year 49—the so-called Council of Jerusalem—and the formulation of certain rules governing mixed eating.(Acts 15:6-29) To Paul, anything but the freest equality of Jew and Gentile seemed impossible. To Peter and Barnabas the question of terms of common eating seemed of prime importance. Paul withstood them both. He must fight the battle largely alone, for Antioch seems to have held with Jerusalem in this matter of intercourse at table.

Then followed the brief years of Paul’s greatest missionary activity, and the period to which we owe all his epistles. Taking with him a Jerusalem Christian, of Roman citizenship, Silas by name, he separated from Barnabas by reason of disagreement regarding eating, and also by dissension regarding the conduct of Barnabas’s cousin, Mark.(Acts 15:36-40) A journey through the region of Galatia brought him Timothy as an assistant. Unable to labor in western Asia Minor, Paul and his companions now entered Macedonia, founding churches in Philippi and Thessalonica, being coldly received in Athens, and spending eighteen
months in successful work in Corinth (probably 51-53). Meanwhile the Judaizers had been undermining his apostolic authority in Galatia, and from Corinth he wrote to these churches his great epistle vindicating not merely his own ministry, but the freedom of Christianity from all obligation to the Jewish law. It was the charter of a universal Christianity. To the Thessalonians he also wrote, meeting their peculiar difficulties regarding persecution and the expected coming of Christ.

Taking Aquila and Priscilla, who had become his fellow laborers in Corinth, with him to Ephesus, Paul left them there and made a hurried visit to Jerusalem and Antioch. On his return to Ephesus, where Christianity had already been planted, he began a ministry there in 53?-56y). Largely successful, it was also full of opposition amid of such peril that Paul “despaired even of life” (2 Cor. 1:3) and ultimately had to flee. The Apostles’ burdens were but increased during this stay at Ephesus by moral delinquencies, party strife, and consequent rejection of his authority in Corinth. These led not merely to his significant letters to the Corinthians, but on departure from Ephesus, to a stay of three months in Corinth itself. His authority was restored. In this Corinthian sojourn he wrote the greatest of his epistles, that to the Romans.

Meanwhile Paul had never ceased to hope that the breach between him and his Gentile Christians and the rank and file of the Jerusalem church could be healed. As a thank-offering for what the Gentiles owed to the parent community, he had been collecting a contribution from his Gentile converts. This, in spite of obvious peril, he determined to take to Jerusalem. Of the reception of this gift and of the course of Paul’s negotiations nothing is known; but the Apostle himself was speedily arrested in Jerusalem and sent a prisoner of the Roman Government to Caesarea, doubtless as an inciter of rioting. Two years’ imprisonment (57?-59?) led to no decisive result, since Paul exercised his right of appeal to the imperial tribunal at Rome, and were followed by his adventurous journey to the capital as a prisoner. At Rome he lived in custody, part of the time at least in his own hired lodging, for two years (60?-62?). Here he wrote to his beloved churches our Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and briefer letters to Philemon and to Timothy (the second epistle). Whether he was released from imprisonment and made further journeys is a problem which still divides the opinion of scholars, but the weight of such slight evidence as there is appears to be against it. There is no reason to doubt the tradition that he was beheaded on the Ostian way outside of Rome; but the year is uncertain. Tradition places his martyrdom in connection with the great Neronian persecution of 64. It was not conjoined in place with that savage attack, and may well have occurred a little earlier without being dissociated in later view from that event.

Paul’s heroic battle for a universal, non-legalistic Christianity has been sufficiently indicated. His Christology will be considered in another connection. Was he the founder or the remaker of Christian theology? He would himself earnestly have repudiated these imputations. Yet an interpretation by a trained mind was sure to present the simple faith of primitive Christianity in somewhat altered form. Though Paul wrought into Christian theology much that came from his own rabbinic learning and Hellenic experience, his profound Christian feeling led him into a deeper insight into the mind of Christ than was possessed by any other of the early disciples. Paul the theologian is often at variance with the picture of Christ presented by the Gospels. Paul the Christian is profoundly at one.

Paul’s conception of freedom from the Jewish law was as far as possible from any antinomian undervaluation of morality. If the old law had passed away, the Christian is under “the law of the Spirit of life.” He who has the Spirit dwelling in him, will mind “the things of the Spirit,” and will “mortify the deeds of the body.” (Rom. 8:2, 5, 13) Paul evidently devoted much of his training of converts to moral instruction. He has a distinct theory of the process of salvation. By nature men are children of the first Adam, and share his inheritance of sin ; (Rom. 5:12-19) by adoption (a Roman idea) we are children of God and partakers of the blessings of the second Adam, Christ. (Rom. 8:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:45) These blessings have special connection with Christ’s death and resurrection. To Paul, these two events stand forth as transactions of transcendent significance. His attitude is well expressed in Gal. 6:14: “Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”; and the reason for this glorying is twofold, that sin is thereby forgiven and redemption wrought, (Rom. 3:24-26) and that it is the source and motive of the new life of faith and love. (Gal. 2:20) This degree of emphasis on Christ’s death was certainly new. To Paul the resurrection was no less important. It was the evidence that Jesus is the Son of God, (Rom. 1:4) the promise
of our own resurrection, (1Cor. 15:12-19) and the guarantee of men’s renewed spiritual life. (Rom. 6:4-11)

Hence Paul preached “Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” (1Cor. 2:2) or “Jesus and the resurrection.” (Acts 17:18)

The power by which men become children of the second Adam is a free gift of God through Christ. It is wholly undeserved grace. (Rom. 3:24) This God sends to whom He will, and withholds from whom He will. (Rom. 9:10-24) The condition of the reception of grace on man’s part is faith. (Rom. 3:25-28) “If you confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” (Rom. 10:9) This doctrine is of great importance, for it makes the essence of the Christian life not any mere belief about Christ, nor any purely forensic justification, as Protestants have often interpreted Paul, but a vital, personal relationship. The designation of Jesus as “Lord” was one, as Bousset has pointed out, (Kyrios Christos, Göttingen, 1913) which had its rise in the Gentile churches of Syria, not impossibly in Antioch, and was the natural expression of those who had long been accustomed to employ it regarding their highest objects of veneration for their devotion to their new “Master”. To Paul, it is an epitome of his faith. Christ is the “Lord,” himself the “slave.” Nor is confidence in the resurrection less necessary, as the crowning proof of Christ’s divine Sonship. (Rom. 1:4)

The Christian life is one filled with the Spirit. All graces are from Him, all gifts and guidance. Man having the Spirit is a new creature. Living the life of the Spirit, he no longer lives that of the “flesh.” But that all-transforming and indwelling Spirit is Christ Himself. “The Lord is the Spirit.” (2Cor. 3:17) If Christ thus stands in such relation to the individual disciple that union with Him is necessary for all true Christian life, He is in no less vital association with the whole body of believers—the church. Paul uses the word church in two senses, as designating the local congregation, Philippi, Corinth, Rome, “the church that is in their house,” and as indicating the whole body of believers, the true Israel. In the latter sense it is the body of Christ, of which each local congregation is a party. (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18) From Christ come all officers and helpers, all spiritual gifts. (Eph. 4:11) He is the source of the life of the church, and these gifts are evidence of His glorified lordship. (Eph. 4:7-10)

Like the early disciples generally, Paul thought the coming of Christ and the end of the existing world-order near; though his views underwent some modification. In his earlier epistles he evidently believed it would happen in his lifetime. (1Thess. 4:13-18) As he came toward the close of his work he felt it likely that he would die before the Lord’s coming. (Phil. 1:23,24; 2Tim. 4:6-8) Regarding the resurrection, Paul had the greatest confidence. Here, however, Hebrew and Greek ideas were at variance. The Hebrew conception was a living again of the flesh. The Greek, the immortality of the soul. Paul does not always make his position clear. Romans 8:11 looks like the Hebrew thought; but the great passage in 1 Cor. 15:35-54 points to the Greek. A judgment is for all, (2Cor. 5:10.) and even among the saved there will be great differences. (1Cor. 3:10-15) The end of all things is the subjection of all, even Christ, to God the Father. (1Cor. 15:20-28)

2.3. THE CLOSE OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE

The history and fate of most of the Apostles is unknown. Though Peter cannot have been in Rome while Paul was writing his letters to the Romans, the cumulative force of such intimations as have survived make the conclusion probable that Peter was in Rome for a short time at least, and that his stay ended in martyrdom by crucifixion in the Neronian persecutions. Such a stay, and especially such a death, would link him permanently with the Roman Church. On the other hand, a residence of John in Ephesus is much less certain.

The persecution under Nero was as fierce as it was local. A great fire in Rome, in July, 64, was followed by charges unjustly involving the Christians, probably at Nero’s instigation, to turn popular rumor from himself. Numbers suffered death by horrible torture in the Vatican gardens, where Nero made their martyrdom a spectacle. Thenceforth he lived in Christian tradition as a type of antichrist; but the Roman Church survived in strength. The destruction of Jerusalem at the close of the Jewish rebellion, in 70, was an event of more permanent significance. It almost ended the already waning influence of the Palestinian congregations in the larger concerns of the church. This collapse, and the rapid influx of converts from pagan antecedents soon made Paul’s battle for freedom from law no longer a living
question. Antioch, Rome, and before the end of the century, Ephesus, were now the chief centers of Christian development. The converts were mostly from the lower social classes, (1Cor. 1:26-28) though some of better position, notably women, were to be found among them. Such were Lydia of Philippi, (Acts 16:14) and, in much higher station, probably the consul, Flavius Clemens, and his wife, Flavia Domitilla, who suffered the one death and the other sentence of banishment in Rome under Domitian, in 95. To Domitilla, the Roman Church owed one of its oldest catacombs. Of this persecution under Domitian (81-96) few details are known, but it must have been of severity in Rome and in Asia Minor. (1 Clement, I; Rev. 2:10,13; 7:13,14)

Yet though some gleanings can be recovered from this period, the forty years from 70 to 110 remain one of the most obscure periods in church history. This is the more to be regretted because they were an epoch of rapid change in the church itself. When the characteristics of the church can once more be clearly traced its general conception of Christianity shows surprisingly little of the distinctive stamp of Paul. Not only must many now unknown missionaries have labored in addition to the great Apostle, but an inrush of ideas from other than Christian sources, brought undoubtedly by converts of pagan antecedents, modified Christian beliefs and practices, especially regarding the sacraments, fastings, and the rise of liturgical forms. The old conviction of the immediacy of the guidance of the Spirit faded, without becoming wholly extinguished. The constitution of the church itself underwent, in this period, a far-reaching development, of which some account will be given (§1.9).

An illustration of this non-Pauline Christianity, though without evidence of the infiltration of pagan ideas, is to be seen in the Epistle of James. Written late in the first century or early in the second, it [has often been regarded by Protestant – but generally not by Catholic - authors as] poor in theological content. Its directions are largely ethical. Christianity, in the conception of the writer, is a body of right principles duly practised. Faith is not, as with Paul, a new, vital, personal relationship. It is intellectual conviction which must be supplemented by appropriate action. It is a new and simple moral law. (James 1:25; 2:14-26)

The Gospels

To this obscure period is due the composition of the Gospels. No subject in church history is more difficult. It would appear, however, that at an early period, not now definitely to be fixed, a collection of the sayings of Christ was in circulation. Probably not far from 75-80, and according to early and credible tradition at Rome, Mark’s Gospel came into existence. Its arrangement was not purely historic, the selection of the materials being determined evidently by the importance attached to the doctrines and ecclesiastical usages which they illustrated. With large use of the collection of sayings and of Mark, Matthew and Luke’s Gospels came into being, probably between 80 and 95; the former probably having Palestine as its place of writing, and the latter coming, there is some reason to believe, from Antioch. The Johannine Gospel is distinctly individual, and may not unfairly be ascribed to Ephesus, and to the period 95-110. Other gospels were in circulation, of which fragments survive, but none which compare in value with the four which the church came to regard as canonical. There seems to have been little of recollections of Jesus extant at the close of the first century which was not gathered into the familiar Gospels. That this was the case may be ascribed to the great Jewish war and the decline of the Palestinian Hebrew congregations. To the Gospels the church owes the priceless heritage of its knowledge of the life of its Master, and a perpetual corrective to the one-sidedness of an interpretation, which, like even the great message of Paul, pays little attention to His earthly ministry

[2].4. THE INTERPRETATION OF JESUS

The Earliest Christologies

An inevitable question of the highest importance which arose with the proclamation of Christianity, and must always demand consideration in every age of the church, is: What is to be thought of the Founder? The earliest Christology, as has been pointed out, was Messianic. Jesus was the Messiah of Jewish hope, only in a vastly more spiritual sense than that hope commonly implied. He had gone, but only for a brief time. (Acts 3:21) He was now in exaltation, yet what must be thought of His earthly life, that had so little of “glory” in it, as men use that term? That life of humiliation, ending in a slave’s death, was but the
fulfilment of prophecy. God had foreshadowed the things that “His Christ should suffer. (Acts 3:13) Early Jewish Christian thought recurred to the suffering servant of Isaiah, who was “wounded for our transgressions.” (Isaiah 53:5) Christ is the “servant” or “child,” (παῖς Θεοῦ) in the early Petrine addresses. (Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30) The glorification was at the resurrection. He is now “by the right hand of God exalted.” (Acts 2:32, 33; 4:10,12) This primitive conception of the suffering servant exalted, persisted. It is that, in spite of a good deal of Pauline admixture, of the epistle known as 1 Peter. Clement, writing from Rome to the Corinthians, 93-97, also shares it. (1 Clement, 16), as does the Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Didache 9, 10) It does not necessarily imply pre-existence. It does not make clear the relationship of Christ to God. It had not thought that problem out.

An obvious distinction soon was apparent. The disciples had known Christ in His life on earth. They now knew Him by His gifts in His exaltation. They had known Him after the flesh; they now knew Him after the spirit (Rom. 1:3, 4)—that is as the Jesus of history and the Christ of experience. To superficial consideration, at least, these two aspects were not easy of adjustment. The Jesus of history lived in a definite land, under human conditions of space and time. The Christ of experience is Lord of all His servants, is manifested as the Spirit at the same moment in places the most diverse, is omnipresent and omniscient. Paul regards it as a mark of Christianity that men call upon Him everywhere.(1 Cor. 1:3) He prays to Him himself. (2 Cor. 12:8, 9) In his most solemn asseveration that his apostleship is not of any human origin, Paul classes God and Christ together as its source. (Gal. 1:1) These attributes and powers of the Christ of experience are very like divine, it is evident; and they inevitably raised the question of Christ’s relation to the Father as it had not been raised thus far, and in a mind of far subtler powers and greater training and education than that of any of the earlier disciples, that of Paul.

Paul knew Hebrew theology well, with its conception of the divine “wisdom” as present with God before the foundation of the world. (Prov. 8:22, 9) He also knew something of Stoicism, with its doctrine of the universal, omnipresent, fashioning divine intelligence, the Logos, that in many ways resembled the Hebrew wisdom. He knew the Isaian conception of the suffering servant. To Paul, therefore, the identification of the exalted Christ with the divine wisdom—Logos—was not only easy, but natural; and that wisdom—Logos—must be preexistent and always with God. He is “the Spirit of God,” (1 Cor. 1:24) “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. 2:9) Even more, as in the Stoic conception of the Logos, He is the divine agent in creation; “all things have been created through Him and unto Him.” (Col. 1:16) Though Paul probably never in set terms called Christ God,3 he taught Christ’s unity in character with God. He “knew no sin”; (2 Cor. 5:22) He is the full manifestation of the love of God, which is greater than any human love, and the motive spring of the Christian life in us. (Rom. 8:39, 5:7, 3; Gal. 2:20) It is plain, therefore, that though Paul often calls Christ man, he gives Him an absolutely unique position, and classes Him with God.

If the Christ of experience was thus pre-existent and post-existent in glory for Paul, how explain the Jesus of history? He was the suffering servant. (Phil. 2:6-11) His humble obedience was followed, as in the earlier Petrine conception, by the great reward. “Wherefore also God highly exalted Him and gave unto Him the name which is above every name . . . that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Paul looks upon the whole earthly life of Jesus as one of humiliation. It was indeed significant. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” (2 Cor. 5:19) Yet it was only “by the resurrection” that He was “declared to be the Son of God with power.” (Rom. 1:4) Paul’s Christology combines, therefore, in a remarkable manner, Hebrew and Gentile conceptions. In it appear the suffering and exalted servant, the pre-existent divine wisdom, the divine agent in creation, and the redeemer power who for man’s sake came down from heaven, died, and rose again.

**Christologies of the Gospels**

Within half a generation of Paul’s death, however, a differing interpretation appeared, probably representing an independent line of thought. It was that of the Gospel of Mark. The writer knew nothing of Paul’s view of Christ’s pre-existence. In his thought, Christ was from His baptism the Son of God by adoption. (Mark 1:9-11.) That He was the Son of God thenceforth, in all His earthly lot, is the evangelist’s endeavor to show. There was humiliation, indeed, but there was a glory also in His earthly life, of which
Paul gives no hint. He had not to wait for the demonstration of the resurrection. The voice from heaven declared Him the Son at baptism. The man with an unclean spirit saluted Him at His first preaching as “the Holy One of God” (1:24). The spirits of those possessed cried, “Thou art the Son of God” (3:12). He was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, while a heavenly voice proclaims: “This is my beloved Son” (9:2-3). The evangelist can only explain the lack of universal recognition in Christ’s lifetime on earth by the declaration that He charged spirits and disciples not to make Him known (eg., 1:34, 3:12, 5:43, 9:9). It is evident that this is a very different interpretation from that of Paul.

Mark’s view was evidently unsatisfactory to his own age. It had no real theory of the incarnation. It does not trace back the sonship far enough. If that sonship was manifested in a portion of Christ’s life, why not in all His life? That impressed the writers of the next two Gospels, Matthew and Luke. Like Mark, they have no trace of Paul’s doctrine of pre-existence—their authors did not move in Paul’s theological or philosophical realm. But they make the manifestation of Christ’s divine sonship date from the very inception of His earthly existence. He was of supernatural birth. Like Mark, both regard His life as other than one of humiliation only.

Yet for minds steeped in the thoughts of Paul even these could not be satisfying interpretations. A fourth Gospel appeared about 95-110, probably in Ephesus, which sprang into favor, not only on account of its profoundly spiritual interpretation of the meaning of Christ, but because it combined in one harmonious presentation the divided elements of the Christologies which had thus far been current. In the Gospel which bears the name of John, the pre-existence and creative activity of Christ is as fully taught as by Paul. Christ is the Logos, the Word who “was with God, and the Word was God”; “All things were made by Him” (1:1,3). There is no hint of virgin birth, as in Matthew and Luke, but a real, though unexplained, incarnation is taught: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (1:14). The tendency of the earlier Gos-pels to behold glory, as well as humiliation, in Christ’s earthly life is carried much further.

That life is one primarily in which He “manifested His glory” (2:11, see 1:14). He declares to the woman of Samaria that He is the Messiah (4:26). He is regarded as “making Himself equal with God” (5:18). He remembers the glory of His pre-existence (17:5). He walks through life triumphantly conscious of His high divine mission. In the account of the Garden of Gethsemane no note appears of the anguished prayer that this cup pass from Him. (18:1-11; compare Mark 14:32-42) In the story of the crucifixion there is no angusted cry: “My God, why hast thou forsaken me” (Mark 15:34); rather, as with a sense of a predetermined work accomplished, He dies with the words: “It is finished.” (John 19:30) Beyond question this Christology was eminently satisfactory to the second century. It gave an explanation, natural to the age, of that lordship which Christian feeling universally ascribed to Christ. It united the most valued portions of the older Christologies. Though much dissent from it was to appear, it was formative of what was to triumph as orthodoxy.

In spite of this Johannine Christology, traces of more naive and less philosophic interpretations survived. Such were those of the obscure relics of extreme Judaizing Christianity, known in the second century as Ebionites. To them, Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, who so completely fulfilled the Jewish law that God chose Him to be the Messiah. He improved and added to the law, and would come again to found a Messianic kingdom for the Jews. Such, in a very different way, was Hermas of Rome (115-140), who strove to combine Paul’s doctrine of “the holy pre-existent Spirit which created the whole creation” (Hermas, Sim., 5:6), with that of the suffering and exalted servant. The “servant,” pictured as a slave in the vineyard of God, is the “flesh in which the holy Spirit dwelt . . . walking honorably in holiness and purity, without in any way defiling the Spirit” (Hermas, Sim., 5:6). As a reward, God chose the “flesh,” i. e., Jesus, “as a partner with the holy Spirit”; but this recompense is not peculiar to Him. He is but a forerunner, “for all flesh, which is found undefiled and unspotted, wherein the holy Spirit dwelt, shall receive a reward” (Hermas, Sim., 5:6). This is, of course, in a sense adoptionist. It was not easy for unphilosophic minds to combine in one harmonious picture the Jesus of history and the Christ of experience; and even in philosophic interpretations this contrast had much to do with the rise and wide spread of Gnosticism in the second century.

The Nature of Salvation

23
The significance of the Gospel according to John in the development of Christology has been noted; its influence in the interpretation of salvation was no less important. With it are to be associated the Johannine Epistles. This literature probably had its rise in a region, Ephesus, where Paul long worked. Its position is Pauline, but developed in the direction of a much intenser mysticism. This mysticism centers about the thoughts of life and union with Christ, both of which are Pauline, and yet treated in a way unlike that of Paul. Life, is the great word of the Johannine literature. He who knows the Christ of present experience has life. “This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.” (1 John 17:3; see also 3:16, 36, 6:47, 10:27, 28, etc.) For the writer, the world is divisible into two simple classes; “He that hath the Son hath the life, he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.” (1 John 5:12; compare John 3:36) By life, the author does not mean simple existence. To him it is blessed, purified immortality. “Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested we shall be like Him.” (1 John 3:2.) This life is based on union with Christ, and this union is a real sacramental participation. One can but feel that there is here the influence of ideas - similar to those of the mystery religions. Paul had valued the Lord’s Supper. To him it was a “communion” of the body and blood of Christ, a “remembrance” of Christ, through which; “Ye proclaim the Lord’s death till He come.” (1 Cor. 10:16, 11:24, 26) The Johannine literature goes further; “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have not life in yourselves.” (John 6:53) The Lord’s Supper is already a mystical sacrament necessary for that union with Christ which is to procure a blessed immortality.

Ignatius

The Johannine literature stands on a spiritual plane of utmost loftiness. It is instructive to see how some of these problems looked to a contemporary of the same general school, an equally earnest Christian, but of far less spiritual elevation. Such a man is Ignatius of Antioch. Condemned as a Christian in his home city, in the last years of Trajan, 110-117, he was sent a prisoner to Rome to be thrown to the wild beasts. Of his history little is known, but from his pen seven brief letters exist, six of them written to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna; and one a personal note to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. They are full of gratitude for kindnesses shown on his journey, of warnings against spiritual perils, and of exhortations to unity. Their significance for the history of Christian institutions will be considered in Section IX. Ignatius has the same lofty Christology as the Johannine literature. Christ’s sacrifice is “the blood of God.” (Eph. I.) He greets the Romans in “Jesus Christ our God.” Yet he did not identify Christ wholly with the Father. “He is truly of the race of David according to the flesh, but Son of God by the divine will and power.” (Smyrn., I) As in the Johannine literature, Ignatius held union with Christ necessary for life; “Christ Jesus, apart from whom we have not true life” (Tral. 9.)—and that life is ministered through the Lord’s Supper. His conception of the Eucharist entails mystical – almost magical – transformation. He says of it: “ Breaking one bread which is the medicine of immortality and the antidote that we should not die but live forever in Jesus Christ.” (Eph. 20) Ignatius’s most original thought was that the incarnation was the manifestation of God for the revelation of a new humanity. Before Christ the world was under the devil and death’. Christ brought life and immortality. (Eph. 19, 20.)

In the Johannine and the Ignatian writings alike, salvation was life, in the sense of the transformation of sinful mortality into blessed immortality. This thought had roots in Paul’s teaching. Through the school of Syria and Asia Minor this became, in the Greek-speaking church, the conception of salvation. It was one that lays necessary emphasis on the person of Christ and the incarnation. The Latin conception, as will be seen, was that salvation consists in the establishment of right relations with God and the forgiveness of sins. This, too, had its Pauline antecedents. It necessarily lays prime weight on divine grace, the death of Christ, and the atonement. These conceptions are not mutually exclusive; but to these differences of emphasis is ultimately due much of the contrast in the later theological development of East and West.

3. GENTILE CHURCH and ROMAN EMPIRE

Walker, “Period I. From the Beginnings to the Gnostic Crisis”. 1.8-1.11, pp. 41-52.
GENTILE CHRISTIANITY of the SECOND CENTURY

The Apostolic Fathers

By the year 100 Christianity was strongly represented in Asia Minor, Syria, Macedonia, Greece, and Rome, and probably also in Egypt, though regarding its introduction into that land there is no certain knowledge. It had extended very slightly, if at all, to the more western portion of the empire. Asia Minor was more extensively Christianized than any other land. About 111-113 Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, could report to Trajan that it was affecting the older temple worship. It was strongly missionary in spirit, and constantly extending. Common Christianity, however, was far from representing, or even understanding, the lofty theology of Paul or of the Johannine literature. It moved in a much simpler range of thought. Profoundly loyal to Christ, it conceived of Him primarily as the divine revealer of the knowledge of the true God, and the proclaimer of a “new law” of simple, lofty, and strenuous morality. This is the attitude of the so-called “Apostolic Fathers,” with the exception of Ignatius, whose thought has already been discussed.

These Christian writers were thus named because it was long, though erroneously, believed that they were personal disciples of the Apostles. They include Clement of Rome (c. 93-97); Ignatius of Antioch (c. 110-117); Polycarp of Smyrna (c. 110-117); Hermas of Rome (c. 115-140); the author who wrote under the name of Barnabas, possibly in Alexandria (c. 131); and the anonymous sermon called Second Clement (c. 160-170). To this literature should be added the Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (c. 130-160, but presenting a survival of very primitive conditions). The anonymous Epistle to Diognetus, often included among the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, is probably later than their period.

Christians looked upon themselves as a separated people, a new race, the true Israel, whose citizenship was no longer in the Roman Empire, though they prayed for its welfare and that of its ruler, but in the heavenly Jerusalem. (1 Clem., 61; Hermas, Sim., 1.) They are the church “which was created before the sun and moon,” “and for her sake the world was framed.” (Hermas, Vis., 2, 4; 2 Clem., 14) The conception of the church was not primarily that of the aggregate of Christians on earth, but of a heavenly citizenship reaching down to earth, and gathering into its own embrace the scattered Christian communities. (Didache, 9) To this church the disciple is admitted by baptism. It is “built upon waters.” (Hermas, Vis., 3:3.) That baptism implied antecedent belief in the truth of the Christian message, engagement to live the Christian life, and repentance. Services were held on Sunday, and probably on other days. These had consisted from the Apostles’ time of two kinds: meetings for reading the Scriptures, preaching, song and prayer; and a common evening meal with which the Lord’s Supper was conjoined. By the time Justin Martyr wrote his Apology in Rome (153), the common meal had disappeared, and the Supper was joined with the assembly for preaching, as a concluding sacrament. The Supper was the occasion for offerings for the needy. The beginnings of liturgical forms are to be found before the close of the first century. Christian life was ascetic and legalistic. Wednesday and Friday were fasts, which were called “stations,” as of soldiers of Christ on guard. The Lord’s Prayer was repeated thrice daily. “Fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving than both.” Second marriage was discouraged. Simple repentance is not sufficient for forgiveness, there must be satisfaction. A Christian can even do more than God demands—works of supererogation—and will receive a corresponding reward. Great generosity was exercised toward the poor, widows, and orphans, some going so far as to sell themselves into slavery to supply the needy. The rich were felt to be rewarded and helped by the prayers of the poor. Wealthy congregations redeemed prisoners and sent relief to a distance, and in these works none was more eminent than that of Rome. On the other hand, though slaves were regarded as Christian brethren, their manumission was discouraged lest, lacking support, they fall into evil ways. There is evidence, also, that the more well-to-do and higher stationed found the ideal of brotherhood difficult to maintain in practice.

For Christians of pagan antecedents it was difficult to deny the existence of the old gods. They were very real to them, but were looked upon as demons, hostile to Christianity. The Christians of the second century explained the resemblance between their own rites and those of the mystery religions, of which they were aware, as a parody by demons. Fear, thus of demon influence was characteristic, and led to
much use of exorcism in the name of Christ. For all of humanity there is to be a resurrection of the flesh, and a final judgment.

[3]2. EARLY CLERICAL ORDERS

No question in church history has been more darkened by controversy than that of the origin and development of church officers, and none is more difficult, owing to the scantiness of the evidence that has survived. It is probable that the development was diverse in different localities. Not all early Christian congregations had identical institutions at the same time. Yet a substantial similarity was reached by the middle of the second century. Something has already been said of the constitution of the Jewish Christian congregations. The present discussion has to do with those on Gentile soil.

Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers

The earliest Gentile churches had no officers in the strict sense. Paul’s letters to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans make no mention of local officers. Those to the Corinthians could hardly have avoided some allusion, had such officers existed. Their nearest approach is only an exhortation to be in subjection to such as Stephanas, and does not imply that he held office. The allusion in 1 Thess. 5:12 to those that “are over you in the Lord” is, at best, very obscure. Paul’s earlier epistles show that all ministries in the church, of whatever sort, were looked upon as the direct gift of the Spirit, who inspires each severally for the service of the congregation. It is fair to conclude that these bearers of the gifts of the Spirit might be different at different times, and many in the church might equally become vehicles of the charismatic inspiration. Paul, however, specifies three classes of leaders as in particular the gift of the Spirit—Apostles, prophets, teachers. He himself regarded his Apostolate as charismatic. If the Apostles’ work was primarily that of founding Christian churches, those of the prophet and teacher were the proclamation or interpretation of the divinely inspired message. The exact shade of difference between prophet and teacher is impossible to discover. All, however, were charismatic men. The worst of sins was to refuse to hear the Spirit speaking through them. Yet Paul undoubtedly exercised a real missionary superintendence over the churches founded by him, and employed his younger assistants in the work. It is difficult to distinguish this from ordinary supervision such as any founder might employ. It was inevitable, however, that such unlimited confidence as the earliest congregations possessed in charismatic gifts should be abused. The Didache shows that self-seeking and fraudulent claimants to divine guidance were soon preying on the churches. Tests had to be found to discriminate the true from the false. In the Didache, and in Hermas the touchstone is character. In 1 John 4:1 it is orthodoxy of teaching.

Bishops and Presbyters

The prophets long continued. They are to be found in Rome as late as the time of Hermas (115-140), to say nothing of the claims of those whom the church judged heretical, like Montanus and his followers even later. Such uncertain leadership could not, in the nature of things, continue unmodified. For his farewell message Paul called to Miletus the “elders” of the church of Ephesus, exhorting them to “take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops”—overseers. These are in a certain sense charismatic men. They have been made bishops by the Holy Spirit. But they are recipients of a charism which makes them a definite group having particular duties to the congregation. In one of his latest letters Paul speaks of the “bishops and deacons” of the church in Philippi (11). Even if this be held to mean the discharge of functions only—“those who oversee and those who serve”—the advance beyond the conditions of the Corinthian epistles is apparent. The gifts may be charismatic, but the recipients are beginning to be holders of a permanent official relation.

Why these local officers developed is unknown; but the interests of good order and worship, and the example of the synagogue are probable suggestions. Absence of prophets and teachers by whom worship could be conducted and the congregation led was certainly a cause in some places. The Didache directs: “Appoint for yourselves, therefore, bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not; for they are your honorable men along with the prophets and
teachers” (15). At Philippi, Ephesus, and in the Didache, these “bishops” are spoken of in the plural. This is also true of Rome and of Corinth when Clement of Rome wrote in 93-97. 34 Clement speaks, also, of those against whom the church in Corinth had rebelled as its “appointed presbyters” (54); and of “those who have offered the gifts of the bishop’s office” as presbyters (44). Polycarp of Smyrna, writing to Philippi in 110-117, mentions only presbyters and deacons and their duties. Hennas, 115-140, would seem to imply that as late as his time there was this collegiate office at Rome. It is “the elders (presbyters) that preside over the church.” 35 He speaks only of the duties of “deacons” and “bishops.” 36

Ancient interpretation, such as that of Jerome, saw in these collegiate bishops and presbyters the same persons, the names being used interchangeably. That is the opinion of most modern scholars, and seems the probable conclusion. The view of the late Edwin Hatch, as developed by Harnack, holds, however, that presbyters were the older brethren in the congregation, from whom the collegiate bishops were taken. A bishop would be a presbyter, but a presbyter not necessarily a bishop. The subject is one of difficulty, the more so as the word “presbyter,” like the English “elder” is used in early Christian literature both as a general designation of the aged, and as a technical expression. Its particular meaning is hard always to distinguish. It is evident, however, that till some time after the year 100, Rome, Greece, and Macedonia had at the head of each congregation a group of collegiate bishops, or presbyter-bishops, with a number of deacons as their helpers. These were chosen by the church, 37 or at least “with the consent of the whole church.” 38

The Threefold Ministry

Contemporary with the later portion of the literature just described, there is another body of writings which indicates the existence of a threefold ministry consisting of a single, monarchical bishop, presbyters, and deacons in each congregation of the region to which it applies. This would appear to be the intimations of 1 Timothy and Titus, though the treatment is obscure. Whatever Pauline elements these much disputed letters contain, their sections on church government betray a development very considerably beyond that of the other Pauline literature, and can scarcely be conceived as belonging to Paul’s time. It is interesting to observe that the regions to which the letters are directed are Asia Minor and the adjacent island of Crete, the former being one of the territories in which the monarchical bishopric is earliest evident in other sources.

What is relatively obscure in these epistles is abundantly clear in those of Ignatius, 110-117. Himself the monarchical bishop of Antioch, 39 he exalts in every way the authority of the local monarchical bishop in the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, and Smyrna. In four of these churches he mentions the bishop by name. Only when writing to the Romans he speaks of no bishop, probably for the sufficient reason that there was as yet no monarchical bishop at Rome. The great value to Ignatius of the monarchical bishop is as a rallying-point of unity, and as the best opponent of heresy. “Shun divisions as the beginning of evils. Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles, and to the deacons pay respect.” 40 The monarchical bishopric is not yet diocesan, it is the headship of the local church, or at most of the congregations of a single city; but Ignatius does not treat it as a new institution. He accepts it as established, though it evidently did not always command the obedience which he desired. 41 It is evident, however, that the monarchical bishopric must have come into being between the time when Paul summoned the presbyter-bishops to Miletus 42 and that at which Ignatius wrote.

Apostolic Succession

How the monarchical bishopric arose is a matter of conjecture. Reasons that have been advanced by modern scholars are leadership in worship and the financial oversight of the congregation in the care of the poor and other obligations of charity. These are probable, the first-named perhaps the more probable. It is sufficient to observe, however, that leadership of a congregation by a committee of equals is unworkable for any protracted time. Some one is sure to be given headship.

One further observation of great importance is to be made. Clement of Rome (93-97), writing when Rome had as yet no monarchical bishop, traces the existence of church officers to apostolic succession. 43
It is no impeachment of the firmness of his conviction, though it militates against the historic accuracy of his view, that he apparently bases it on a misunderstanding of Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 16:15. On the other hand, Ignatius, though urging in the strongest terms the value of the monarchical episcopate as the bond of unity, knows nothing of an apostolic succession. It was the union of these two principles, a monarchical bishop in apostolic succession, which occurred before the middle of the second century, that immensely enhanced the dignity and power of the bishopric. By the sixth decade of the second century monarchical bishops had become well-nigh universal. The institution was to gain further strength in the Gnostic and Montanist struggles; but it may be doubted whether anything less rigid could have carried the church through the crises of the second century.

3. RELATIONS of CHRISTIANITY to the ROMAN GOVERNMENT

Christianity was at first regarded by the Roman authorities as a branch of Judaism, which stood under legal protection. The hostility of the Jews themselves must have made a distinction soon evident, and by the time of the Neronian persecution in Rome (64) it was plainly drawn. The Roman victims were not then charged, however, primarily with Christianity, but with arson—though their unpopularity with the multitude made them ready objects of suspicion. By the time that 1 Peter was written (c. 90), the mere fact of a Christian profession had become a cause for punishment (416). How much earlier “the name” had become a sufficient criminal charge it is impossible to say. Trajan’s reply to Pliny, the governor of Bithynia (111-113), presupposes that Christianity was already viewed as criminal. That already recognized, the Emperor orders what must be deemed mild procedure from his point of view. Christians are not to be hunted out, and, if willing to abjure by sacrifice, are to be acquitted. Only in case of persistence are they to be punished. From the standpoint of a faithful Christian profession this was a test which could only be met by martyrdom. Trajan’s immediate successors, Hadrian (117-138), and Antoninus Pius (138-161) pursued the same general policy, though discouraging mob accusations. Marcus Aurelius (161-180) gave renewed force to the law against strange religions (176), and initiated a sharper period of persecution which extended into the beginning of the reign of Commodus (180-192).

Commodus, however, treated Christianity, on the whole, with the toleration of indifference. Always illegal, and with extreme penalties hanging over it, the Christian profession involved constant peril for its adherents; yet the number of actual martyrs in this period appears to have been relatively small compared with those of the third and fourth centuries. No general persecution occurred before 250.

The charges brought against the Christians were atheism and anarchy. Their rejection of the old gods seemed atheism; their refusal to join in emperor-worship appeared treasonable. Popular credulity, made possible by the degree to which the Christians held aloof from ordinary civil society, charged them with crimes as revolting as they were preposterous. A misunderstanding of the Christian doctrine of Christ’s presence in the Supper must be deemed the occasion of the common accusation of cannibalism; and its celebration secretly in the evening of that of gross licentiousness. Much of the governmental persecution of Christianity in this period had its incitement in mob attacks upon Christians. That was the case at Smyrna when Polycarp suffered martyrdom in 156; while a boycott, on the basis of charges of immoral actions, was the immediate occasion of the fierce persecution in Lyons and Vienne in 177. It is not surprising, therefore, that the majority of judicial proceedings against Christians in this period seem rather to have been under the general police power of magistrates to repress disturbance than by formal trial on the specific criminal charge of Christianity. Both procedures are to be found. To all these accusations the best answer of the Christians was their heroic constancy in loyalty to Christ, and their superior morality as judged by the standards of society about them.

4. THE APOLOGISTS

These charges against Christians, and the hostile attitude of the Roman government, aroused a number of literary defenders, who are known as the Apologists. Their appearance shows that Christianity was making some conquest of the more intellectual elements of society. Their appeal is distinctly to
intelligence. Of these Apologists the first was Quadratus, probably of Athens, who about 125 presented a
defense of Christianity, now preserved only in fragments, to the Emperor Hadrian. Aristides, an Athenian
Christian philosopher, made a similar appeal, about 140, to Antoninus Pius. Justin wrote the most famous
of these defenses, probably in Rome, about 153. His disciple, Tatian, who combined the four Gospels into
his famous Diatessaron, also belonged to the Apologists. With them are to be reckoned Melito, bishop of
Sardis, who wrote between 169 and 180; and Athenagoras, of whom little is known personally, whose
defense, which survives, was made about the year 177. Here also belongs the Epistle to Diognetus, often
reckoned among the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

There is no evidence that any of these Apologists greatly influenced pagan opinion, or that their appeal
was seriously considered by the rulers whom it was their desire to persuade. Their work was deservedly
valued in Christian circles, however, and undoubtedly strengthened Christian conviction of the nobility of
the cause so earnestly defended. Several of the Apologists were from the ranks of the philosophers, and
their philosophical interpretation aided in the development of theology. The most significant was Justin,
and he may well stand as typical of the whole movement.

Justin Martyr

Justin, called the Martyr, from his heroic witness unto death in Rome under the prefect Rusticus, about
165, was born in Shechem, in the ancient Samaria, of pagan ancestry. He lived, for a time at least, in
Ephesus, and it was in its vicinity probably that the conversion of which he gives a vivid account took
place. An eager student of philosophy, he accepted successively Stoicism, Aristotelianism,
Pythagoreanism, and Platonism. While a Platonist his attention was directed to the Hebrew prophets, “men
more ancient than all those who are esteemed philosophers.” Theirs is the oldest and truest explanation “of
the beginning and end of things and of those matters which the philosopher ought to know,” since they
were “filled with the holy Spirit.” “They glorified the Creator, the God and Father of all things, and
proclaimed His Son, the Christ.” By his newly acquired conviction of the truth of their ancient prophetic
message, Justin says: “straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets and of those
men who are friends of Christ. ... I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable.” These
quotations show the character of Justin’s religious experience. It was not a profound and mystical union
with a risen Lord, as with Paul. It was not a sense of forgiveness of sin. It was a conviction that in
Christianity is the oldest, truest, and most divine of philosophies. Justin continued to look upon himself as
a philosopher. He made his home in Rome and there wrote, about 153, his Apology, addressed to the
Emperor Antoninus Pius and that sovereign’s adopted sons, defending Christianity from governmental
antagonism and pagan criticisms. A little later, perhaps on a visit to Ephesus, he composed his Dialogue
with Trypho, similarly presenting the Christian case against Jewish objections. A second sojourn in Rome
brought him to a martyr’s death.

Justin’s Apology (often called two Apologies, though the “second” is only an appendix) is a manly,
dignified, and effective defense. Christians, if condemned at all, should be punished for definite proved
crimes, not for the mere name without investigation of their real character. They are atheists only in that
they count the popular gods demons unworthy of worship, not in respect to the true God. They are
anarchists only to those who do not understand the nature of the kingdom that they seek. Justin then
argues the truth of Christianity, especially from the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and briefly
explains Christian sacraments and worship.

As a theologian, Justin’s convictions were the result of his own experience. His central belief was that
Christianity was the truest of philosophies, because taught by the prophets of the Old Testament, and by
the divine Logos “our Teacher . . . who is both Son and Apostle of God the Father.” This divine Logos
he conceives, in true Stoic fashion, as everywhere and always at work, teaching the Greeks, of whom he
cites Socrates and Heraclitus, and the “barbarians,” such as Abraham, so that these, and all who at any
time obeyed the same guidance were really Christians. His great advance on Stoicism is his conviction
that this all-illuminating divine Logos became definitely incarnate in Christ, so that in Him is the full
revelation of that which elsewhere is less distinctly seen. The content of the Christian message Justin
conceives in terms very similar to those of the best contemporary pagan philosophy—knowledge of God,
morality, the hope of immortality, and future rewards and punishments. Like common non-Pauline Christianity, he views the Gospel as a new law, teaching a somewhat ascetic moral life. Justin’s emphasis is on the divine Logos, subordinate to God the Father, yet His Son, His agent, and one with Him in some true, though rather indefinite, sense. This emphasis is really at the expense of the historic Jesus, for though both are identified, the earthly life of Jesus has little interest for Justin save as the great historic instance of the incarnation of the Logos, and therefore the occasion on which the divine philosophy was most fully revealed. He does, indeed, speak of Christ’s “cleansing by His blood those who believe on Him”\footnote{53} but such thoughts are not primary. Hence the theology of Justin, faithful martyr though he was, was essentially rationalizing, with little of the profoundly religious content so conspicuous in Paul, the Johannine literature, or even in Ignatius. It marks, however, a conscious union of Christian thought with the Gentile philosophy, and therefore the beginnings of a “scientific” theology.

**4. THE GNOSTIC CRISIS**


\[4.\]

1. **GNOSTICISM**

The later New Testament literature, and at least one of the Apostolic Fathers, strongly combat conceptions of Christ which it is evident must have been widely prevalent, especially in Asia Minor, in the opening years of the second century. These views denied His real humanity and His actual death. He had not come “in the flesh,” but in ghost-like, Docetic appearance.\footnote{54} These opinions have generally been regarded as the beginnings of Gnosticism. It is true that this Docetic conception of Christ was a feature of much Gnostic teaching. It is more probable, however, that these early teachings were more largely based on an attempt to explain a seeming contradiction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of experience, than on purely Gnostic speculations. That earthly life of humiliation was so contrasted with His pre-existent and post-existent glory, that the simplest solution of the Christological problem may well have seemed to some the denial of the reality of His earthly life altogether. Christ did, indeed, appear. He taught His disciples; but all the time as a heavenly being, not one of flesh and blood.

Gnosticism, properly speaking, was something much more far-reaching. The height of its influence was from about 135 to 160, though it continued a force long after the latter date. It threatened to overwhelm the historic Christian faith, and by so doing brought upon the Christian Church its gravest crisis since the Pauline battle for freedom from law. Its spread and consequent peril were made possible by the relatively weakly organized, and doctrinally undefined state of the church at its beginning. The church overcame the danger; but at the cost of the development of a rigidity of organization, creed, and government which rendered the condition of the church at the close of the second century a striking contrast to that of its beginning.\footnote{55}

Gnosticism professed to be based on “knowledge” but not as that word is now commonly understood. Its knowledge was always a mystical, supernatural wisdom, by which the initiates were brought to a true understanding of the universe, and were saved from this evil world of matter. It had a fundamental doctrine of salvation. In these respects it was akin to the mystery religions. Its most prominent characteristic, however, was its syncretism. It took unto itself many elements from many sources, and assumed many forms. It is, therefore, impossible to speak of a single type of Gnosticism. It was prevalingly mystical, magical, or philosophical according to the dominant admixture in its syncretism. Gnosticism was pre-Christian in its origin, and was in existence before Christianity came into the world. There were Jewish and pagan types. It is represented in the Hermetic literature of Egypt. It had astral elements which may be traced back to Babylonian religious conceptions, a dualistic view of the universe, Persian in origin, and a doctrine of emanations from God in the “pleroma” or realm of spirit, which was probably Egyptian. Perhaps its most fundamental conception, the wholly evil character of the phenomenal world, was due to a combination of the Platonic theory of the contrast between the real spiritual sphere of
“ideas,” and this visible world of phenomena, interpreted in terms of Persian dualism—the one good and that to which man strives to return, the other wholly bad and the place of his imprisonment. The world of matter is evil. Its creator and ruler is not, therefore, the high, good God, but an inferior and imperfect being, the demiurge. Man, to be saved, must be freed from this bondage to the visible world, and its rulers, the planetary spirits; and the means of his freedom is “knowledge” a mystical, spiritual enlightenment for the initiated which brings him into communion with the true realm of spiritual realities.

Strongly syncretistic already, Gnosticism found much in Christianity which it could use. In particular, the figure of Christ was especially adapted to give a definite and concrete center to its theory of a higher saving knowledge. He was the revealer of the hitherto unknown high and all-perfect God to men. By that illumination all “spiritual” men, who were capable of receiving it, would be led back to the realm of the good God. Since the material world is evil, Christ could not have had a real incarnation, and the Gnostics explained His appearance either as Docetic and ghostly or as a temporary indwelling of the man Jesus or as an apparent birth from a virgin mother without partaking of material nature. The God of the Old Testament, as the creator of this visible world, cannot be the high God whom Christ revealed, but the inferior demiurge. That all Christians did not possess the saving “knowledge,” the Gnostics explained by holding it to be a secret teaching imparted by the Apostles to their more intimate disciples, a speaking “wisdom among the perfect.”

It is true that while Paul was in no sense a Gnostic, there were many things in Paul’s teachings of which Gnostics availed themselves. His sharp contrast between flesh and spirit; his conception of Christ as victor over those “principalities and powers” which are the “world rulers of this darkness,” and his thought of Christ as the Man from Heaven, were all ideas which the Gnostics could employ. Paul was always to them the chief Apostle.

Gnosticism was divided into many sects and presented a great variety of forms. In all of them the high, good God is the head of the spiritual world of light, often called the “pleroma.” From that world fragments have become imprisoned in this visible world of darkness and evil. In later Gnosticism this fallen element from the pleroma is represented as the lowest of a series of aeons, or spiritual beings, emanating from the high God. To rescue this fallen portion, the seeds of light in the visible evil world, Christ came, bringing the true “knowledge.” By His teaching those capable of receiving it are restored to the pleroma. They are at best few. Most Gnostics divided mankind into “spiritual,” capable of salvation; and “material” who could not receive the message. Later Gnosticism, especially the school of Valentinus, taught a threefold division, “spiritual,” who alone could attain “knowledge”; “psychical,” capable of faith, and of a certain degree of salvation; and “material,” who were hopeless.

Christian tradition represented the founder of Christian Gnosticism to be Simon Magus, but of his real relations to it little is known. More clearly defined leaders are Sartorius of Antioch, who labored before 150; Basilides, who taught in Alexandria about 130; and, above all, Valentinus, who was active in Rome from about 135 to 165, and who must be regarded as one of the most gifted thinkers of the age.

Gnosticism was an immense peril for the church. It cut out the historic foundations of Christianity. Its God is not the God of the Old Testament, which is the work of an inferior or even evil being. Its Christ had no real incarnation, death, or resurrection. Its salvation is for the few capable of spiritual enlightenment. The peril was the greater because Gnosticism was represented by some of the keenest minds in the church of the second century. The age was syncretistic, and in some respects Gnosticism was but the fullest accomplishment of that amalgamation of Hellenic and Oriental philosophical speculation with primitive Christian beliefs which was in greater or less degree in process in all Christian thinking.

[4]2. MARCION

A special interest attaches to Marcion as one who was the first church reformer. Born in Sinope, in Asia Minor, where he was a wealthy ship-owner, he came to Rome about 139, and joined the Roman congregation, making it a gift for its benevolent work equivalent to ten thousand dollars. He soon came to feel that Christianity was under the bondage of legalism, and, under the light of the Gnostic teaching of Cerdo, he saw the root of this evil in acceptance of the Old Testament and its God. Never more than partially a Gnostic, his prime interest was in church reform. Salvation, with him, was by right faith rather
than by knowledge. To Marcion, Paul was the only Apostle who had understood the Gospel; all the rest had fallen into the errors of Judaism. The God of the Old Testament is a just God, in the sense of “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” He created the world and gave the Jewish law. Christ, who was a Docetic manifestation, revealed the heretofore unknown good God of mercy. The God of the Old Testament opposed Him; but in Christ the authority of the Jewish law was done away, and the “just God” became unjust because of this unwarranted hostility to the revealer of the “good God.” The Old Testament and its God are therefore to be rejected by Christians. Christ proclaimed a Gospel of love and of righteousness by faith, though, curiously enough, Marcion was extremely ascetic in his conception of the Christian life.

Marcion’s endeavor to call the Roman Church back to what he deemed the Gospel of Christ and of Paul resulted in his own excommunication about 144. He now gathered followers into a separated church. For their use he compiled a canon of sacred books, composed of the epistles of Paul (omitting the Pastorals), and the Gospel of Luke, shorn of all passages which implied that Christ regarded the God of the Old Testament as His Father, or was in any way related to Him. As far as is known, this was the first attempt to form an authoritative collection of New Testament writings.

Marcion’s movement was probably the most dangerous of those associated with Gnosticism. He sundered Christianity from its historic background as completely as had the more speculative Gnostic theories. He denied a real incarnation, and condemned the Old Testament and its God. All this was the more plausible because done in the name of a protest against growing legalism. For such a protest there was much justification. His churches spread extensively, in the Orient especially, and survived into the fifth century. His own later history is wholly unknown.

[4] 3. MONTANISM

Unlike Gnosticism, Montanism was a movement distinctly of Christian origin. In most of the churches of the second century the early hope of the speedy return of Christ was growing dim. The consciousness of the constant inspiration of the Spirit, characteristic of the Apostolic Churches, had also largely faded. With this declining sense of the immediacy of the Spirit’s present work came an increasing emphasis on His significance as the agent of revelation. Paul had identified the Spirit and Christ. That was not the general feeling half a century later. The Spirit had been the inspiration of prophecy in the Old Testament. He guided the New Testament writers. To Christian thought at the beginning of the second century the Holy Spirit was differentiated from Christ, but was classed, like Him, with God. This appears in the Trinitarian baptismal formula, which was displacing the older baptism in the name of Christ. Trinitarian formulae were frequently in use by the close of the first and beginning of the second century. The Johannine Gospel represented Christ as promising the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples; “When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear Witness of Me,” (1526). The second century was convinced, therefore, not only that the Holy Spirit was in peculiar association with God the Father and Christ; but that Christ had promised the Spirit’s coming in more abundant measure in the future.

It was this thought of the special dispensation of the Holy Spirit, combined with a fresh outburst of the early prophetic enthusiasm, and a belief that the end of the world-age was close at hand, that were represented in Montanism. To a considerable extent Montanism was, also, a reaction from the secular tendencies already at work in the church. Montanus, from whom the movement was named, was of Ardashanu, near the region of Asia Minor known as Phrygia—long noted for its ecstatic type of religion. A tradition, recorded by Jerome, affirmed that, before conversion, he had been a priest of Cybele. About 156 Montanus proclaimed himself the passive instrument through whom the Holy Spirit spoke. In this new revelation Montanus declared the promise of Christ fulfilled, and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit begun. To him were soon joined two prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla. They now affirmed, as mouthpieces of the Spirit, that the end of the world was at hand, and that the heavenly Jerusalem was about to be established in Phrygia, whither believers should betake themselves. In preparation for the fast-approaching consummation the most strenuous asceticism should be practised, celibacy, fastings, and
abstinence from meat. This vigorous attitude won response as a protest against the growing worldliness of the church at large, and to many was the most attractive feature of Montanism.

The movement speedily attained considerable proportions. By the bishops of Asia Minor, who felt their authority threatened, one or more synods were held soon after 160, which have the distinction of being the earliest synods of church history, and in which Montanism was condemned. Its progress was not easily checked, even by the death of the last of its original prophets, Maximilla, in 179. Soon after 170 it was represented in Rome, and for years the Roman church was more or less agitated by it. In Carthage it won Tertullian, about 207, attracted chiefly by its ascetic demands, who thenceforth was the most eminent Montanist. Though gradually driven out of the dominant church, Montanism continued to be represented in the Orient till long after the acceptance of Christianity by the imperial government. In Carthage the followers of Tertullian persisted till the time of Augustine. In its ascetic demands Montanism represented a wide-spread tendency, and an asceticism as strict as anything Montanism taught was later to find a place in the great church in monasticism.

[4]. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Neither Gnosticism nor Montanism, though extremely perilous, were ever embraced by a majority of Christians. The large church remained faithful to historic Christianity. By the latter third of the second century it was calling itself the Catholic Church. The word Catholic is first used of the church by Ignatius, 69 who employed it in the wholly untechnical sense of “universal.” It is next to be found in the letter of the Church of Smyrna, describing the martyrdom of Polycarp (156), where it is difficult to decide whether the use is technical or not. Its employment as a technically descriptive adjective gradually became common, so that the strongly consolidated church that came out of the Gnostic and Montanist crises is now usually described as the “Catholic.” This Catholic Church developed its distinguishing characteristics between 160 and 190. The hitherto relatively independent congregations were now knit into an effective union. The power of the bishops was greatly strengthened, a collection of authoritative New Testament Scripture recognized, and a creed formulated. Comparatively loosely organized Christianity now became a rigid corporate body, having recognized official leaders and capable not merely of defining its faith, but of shutting out from its communion all who did not accept its creed or its officers. As a recent German writer has epitomized the change: “About 50, he was of the church who had received baptism and the Holy Spirit and called Jesus, Lord; about 180, he who acknowledged the rule of faith (creed), the New Testament canon, and the authority of the bishops.”

In a measure, the beginnings of this great change may be seen before the Gnostic and Montanist crises; but it was those struggles that brought it effectively into being. The characteristic answer of the Catholic Church to the Gnostics may be seen in the argument of Irenæus of Lyons. 71 Against Gnostic claims Irenæus, writing about 185, held that the Apostles did not preach before they had “perfect knowledge” of the Gospel. That preaching they recorded in the Gospels—Matthew and John, were written by Apostles themselves; while Mark reproduced the message of Peter and Luke that of Paul. Nothing Gnostic, Irenæus declares, is found in any of them. But the Gnostic may object that, besides this public apostolic teaching in the Gospels, there was a viva voce instruction, a speaking “wisdom among the perfect,” 72 of which Gnosticism was the heir. This Irenæus denied. He argued that, had there been such private teaching, the Apostles would have intrusted it to those, above all others, whom they selected as their successors in the government of the churches. In these churches of apostolic foundation the apostolic teaching had been fully preserved, and its transmission had been guaranteed by the orderly succession of their bishops. Go therefore to Rome, or to Smyrna, or Ephesus, and learn what is there taught, and nothing Gnostic will be found. Every church must agree with that of Rome, for there apostolic tradition has been faithfully preserved as in other Apostolic Churches.

It is difficult to see what more effective argument Irenæus could have advanced in the peculiar situation which confronted him; but it was an answer which greatly increased the significance of the churches of real or reputed apostolic foundation, and of their heads, the bishops. Irenæus went further. The church
itself is the depository of Christian teaching: "Since the Apostles, like a rich man in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth." This deposit is especially intrusted to "those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth," i.e. to the heads of the churches. To agree with the bishops is therefore a necessity. This argument was not peculiar to Irenæus, it was that of the leaders of Catholic teaching generally.

Apostolic Tradition and Creed

While the power of the episcopate and the significance of churches of apostolic foundation was thus greatly enhanced, the Gnostic crisis saw a corresponding development of creed, at least in the West. Some form of instruction before baptism was common by the middle of the second century. At Rome this developed, apparently, between 150 and 175, and probably in opposition to Marcionite Gnosticism, into an explication of the baptismal formula of Matt. 28:19—the earliest known form of the so-called Apostles’ Creed. What antecedents in Asia Minor, if any, it may have had is still a question in scholarly dispute. Without symbolic authority in the Orient, all the Western churches received this creed from Rome, and it was regarded, by the time of Tertullian at least, as having apostolic authority, that is as a summary of apostolic teaching.

In its original form it read;

“I believe in God the Father Almighty; and in Christ Jesus, His only begotten Son, our Lord, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried; the third day He rose from the dead, ascended into the heavens, being seated at the right hand of the Father, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Spirit, holy church, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the flesh.”

The development of a canon of New Testament books was, also, the work of this period. By the church from the beginning the Old Testament was reckoned as Scripture. The Gospels and the letters of Paul were doubtless highly valued, but they did not, at first, have Scriptural authority. Clement of Rome (93-97), though constantly quoting the Old Testament as the utterance of God, was very free in his use of the words of the New Testament, and nowhere styled them divine.

The New Testament Canon

The earliest designation of a passage from the Gospels as “Scripture” was about 131, by the so-called Barnabas, and of a quotation from Paul about 110-117, by Polycarp. By the time of Justin (153), the Gospels were read in the services in Rome, together with the Old Testament prophets. The process by which the New Testament writings came to Scriptural authority seems to have been one of analogy. The Old Testament was everywhere regarded as divinely authoritative. Christians could think no less of their own fundamental books. The question was an open one, however, as to which were the canonical writings. Works like Hermas and Barnabas were read in churches. An authoritative list was desirable. Marcion had prepared such a canon for his followers. A similar enumeration was gradually formed, probably in Rome, by the Catholic party. Apparently the Gospels were the first to gain complete recognition, then the letters of Paul. By about 200, according to the witness of the Muratorian fragment, Western Christendom had a New Testament canon embracing Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Romans, Philemon, Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy, Jude, 1 and 2 John, Revelation, and the so-called Apocalypse of Peter. In the Christian East the development of a canon was not quite so rapid. Certain books, like Hebrews and Revelation were disputed. The whole process of canonical development into its precise present form was not completed in the West till 400, and in the East till even later.

By the year 200 the church of the western portion of the empire had, therefore, an authoritative collection of New Testament books, in the main like our own, to which to appeal. The East was not much behind. The formation of the canon was essentially a process of selection from the whole mass of Christian literature, made originally by no council, but by the force of Christian opinion—the criterion being that the books accepted were believed to be either the work of an Apostle or of the immediate disciple of an Apostle, and thus to represent apostolic teaching.
Thus out of the struggle with Gnosticism and Montanism came the Catholic Church, with its strong episcopal organization, credal standard, and authoritative canon. It differed much from the Apostolic Church; but it had preserved historic Christianity and carried it through a tremendous crisis. It may be doubted whether a less rigid organization than that developed in this momentous second half of the second century could have achieved as much.

5. THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF ROME

The Roman Church had been of prominence since the time of Paul. To it that Apostle wrote his most noteworthy letter. At Rome Paul, and probably Peter, died. The church endured the severest of early persecutions under Nero, and survived in vigor. Situated in the capital of the empire, it early developed a consciousness of strength and authority, which was doubtless increased by the fact that, by 100, it was, it would appear, the largest single congregation in Christendom. Even before the close of the first century Clement, writing anonymously to the Corinthians in the name of the whole Roman congregation (93-97), spoke as for those who expected to be obeyed. The tone, if brotherly, was big-brotherly. This influence was increased by the well-known generosity of the Roman congregation. Ignatius addressed it as “having the presidency of love.”

The destruction of Jerusalem in the second Jewish war (135) ended any possible leadership of Christianity that might there have been asserted. The successful resistance to Gnosticism and Montanism strengthened it; and it reaped in abundance the fruits of that struggle. There the creed was formulated, there the canon formed. Above all, it was advantaged by the appeal of the opponents of Gnosticism to the tradition of the Apostolic churches, for Rome was the only church in the western half of the empire with which Apostles had had anything to do. Irenæus of Lyons, writing about 185, represented the general Western feeling of his time, when he not only pictures the Roman Church as founded by Peter and Paul, but declares “it is a matter of necessity that every church should agree with this church.” It was leadership in the preservation of the apostolic faith, not judicial supremacy, that Irenæus had in mind; but with such estimates widespread, the door was open for a larger assertion of Roman authority. Rather late in developing the monarchical episcopate, since Anicetus (154-165) seems to have been the first single head of the Roman Church, the prominence of its bishop grew rapidly in the Gnostic struggle, and with this growth came the first extensive assertion of the authority of the Roman bishop in the affairs of the church at large.

The Easter Controversy

While Rome was thus gaining in strength Asia Minor was relatively declining. At the beginning of the second century Asia Minor and the adjacent portion of Syria had been the most extensively Christianized sections of the empire. That was probably, also, true at the century’s close. Ephesus and Antioch had been, and were still, great Christian centers. Asia Minor had resisted Gnosticism, but it had been torn by Montanism and other sources of controversy, though the Montanists had been rejected. There is reason to think, however, that these disputes had borne hard on the united strength of its Christianity. The quarrel between Asia Minor and Rome arose over the time of the observance of Easter. While there is reason to suppose that Easter had been honored from early in Christian history, the first definite record of its celebration is in connection with a visit of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, to Anicetus, bishop of Rome, in 154 or 155. At that time the practice of Asia Minor, probably the more ancient, was to observe Easter with the Lord’s Supper on the evening of the fourteenth of the month Nisan, like the Jewish Passover, regardless of the day of the week on which it might fall. The Roman custom, and that of some parts of the East, was to hold the Easter feast always on Sunday. The question was, therefore, should the day of the week or that of the month be the norm. Polycarp and Anicetus could not agree, but parted with mutual good-will, each adhering to his own practice. The problem was further complicated by a dispute, about 167, in Laodicea, in Asia Minor itself, as to the nature of the celebration on the fourteenth of Nisan, some holding that Christ died on the fourteenth, as the fourth Gospel intimates, and others placing His death, as do the other Gospels, on the fifteenth. The latter treated the commemoration of the fourteenth of Nisan, therefore, as a Christian continuation of the Hebrew Passover.
About 190 the problem became so acute that synods were held in Rome, Palestine, and elsewhere which decided in favor of the Roman practice. The churches of Asia Minor, led by Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, refused conformity. Thereupon Victor, bishop of Rome (189-198), excommunicated the recalcitrant congregations. This high-handed action met with much protest, notably from Irenaeus of Lyons, but it was a marked assertion of Roman authority.

These embittered controversies were costly to Asia Minor, and any possible rivalry on equal terms of Ephesus and Rome was out of the question. The collapse of Jewish Christian leadership, the apparent lack at Antioch of men of eminence in the second century, and the decline of the influence of Asia Minor left Rome, by 200, the most eminent and influential center of Christianity—a position of which the Roman bishops had the will and the ability to make full use. The rise of Alexandria and of Carthage to importance in the Christian thought and life of the third century could not rob Rome of its leadership. Their attainment of Christian significance was far younger than that of the capital of the empire.

[4].6. IRENÆUS

The earliest theological leader of distinction in the rising Catholic Church was Irenaeus. His argument in defense of traditional Christianity against Gnosticism has already been outlined (§ 2.4). Born in Asia Minor, he was brought up in Smyrna, where he saw and heard Polycarp. The date of his birth has been most variously placed by modern scholars from about 115 to about 142, chiefly in the light of its possible bearing on traditions as to the authorship of the fourth Gospel. The later part of the period indicated has more probability than the earlier. From Asia Minor he removed to Lyons in what is now France, where he became a presbyter. The great persecution of 177, at Lyons, found him, fortunately, on an honorable mission to Rome; and, on his return, he was chosen bishop of Lyons, in succession to the martyred Pothinus. That post he continued to hold till his death (c. 200). Not far from 185 he wrote his chief work, Against Heresies, primarily to refute the various Gnostic schools, but incidentally revealing his own theology.

Brought up in the tradition of Asia Minor and spending his later life in Gaul, Irenaeus was a connecting-link not merely between distant portions of the empire, but between the older theology of the Johannine and Ignatian literature and the newer presentations which the Apologists and the Catholic movement of his own day were introducing. A man of deeply religious spirit, his interest was in salvation. In its explication he developed the Pauline and Ignatian conceptions of Christ as the new man, the renewer of humanity, the second Adam. God created the first Adam, He made him good and immortal; but both goodness and immortality were lost by Adam’s disobedience. What man lost in Adam is restored in Christ, the incarnate Logos, who now completes the interrupted work. “I have shown that the Son of God did not then begin to exist [i.e. at Jesus’ birth], being with the Father from the beginning; but when He became incarnate and was made man, He commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus.” The work of Christ, thus described, Irenaeus characterizes in a noble phrase. We follow “the only true and steadfast Teacher, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did through His transcendent love become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.” Christ is also the full revelation of God. Our union with Him, following the teaching of Asia Minor and of Justin, Irenaeus views as in some sense physical, through the Supper. Irenæus’s theory of Christ’s new headship of humanity had added to it a suggestion of His mother as the second Eve. “The knot of Eve’s disobedience was loosened by the obedience of Mary. For what the Virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the Virgin Mary set free through faith.” In this curious ascription is one of the earliest evidences of that exaltation of the Virgin which was to play so large a part in Christian history. In some ways, even for his time, Irenaeus was an old-fashioned man. The belief in Christ’s speedy second coming had been growing faint, and the contest with Montanism was to extinguish it almost entirely With Irenaeus it still burned brightly, and he looked eagerly for the time when the earth would be marvellously renewed. For Irenaeus the New Testament is as fully sacred Scripture as the Old.
5. CARTHAGE and ALEXANDRIA

Walker, “Period II. The Gnostic Crisis,” 2.7-2.10, pp. 67-86.

[5] 1. TERTULLIAN and CYPRIAN

Tertullian was one of the most individual and remarkable personalities of the ancient church. Born (c. 150-155) of well-to-do pagan parentage in Carthage, he studied law and practised his profession in Rome. He was exceedingly well read in philosophy and history. Greek he had thoroughly mastered. About 190 to 195, he was converted to Christianity, probably in Rome, and now devoted himself with equal eagerness to the study of Christian literature, orthodox and heretical. Shortly after he returned to Carthage where he became a presbyter, and remained till his death (c. 222-225). At first in fellowship with the Roman Church, a wave of persecution that broke over North Africa in 202 under the Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211), strengthened his native Puritanism and brought him into sympathy with Montanism. Its ascetic and unworldly aspects most appealed to him. About 207 he broke with the Catholic Church, which he thenceforth bitterly criticised, and died in continuing protest, apparently, as the founder of a little sect of his own.

In 197 Tertullian began a career of literary activity in defense and explication of Christianity which lasted till 220. He was the first ecclesiastical writer of prominence to use Latin. Even the leaders of the Roman Church wrote in Greek till after his time. His style was vivid, satirical, readable. His method was often that of an advocate in the court-room. He was frequently unfair to opponents. He was not always consistent with himself. But he was of a fiery earnestness of spirit that makes what he wrote always impressive. He well deserves the title of father of Latin theology.

Tertullian was, primarily, no speculative theologian. His own thought was based on that of the Apologists, Irenæus, and to some extent on other bearers of the tradition of Asia Minor, and quite as much on Stoic teaching and legal conceptions. He had the Roman sense of order and authority. All that he touched, however, he formulated with the clearness of definition of a trained judicial mind, and hence he gave precision, as none had before him, to many theological conceptions that had heretofore been vaguely apprehended.

For Tertullian Christianity was a great divine foolishness, wiser than the highest philosophical wisdom of men, and in no way to be squared with existing philosophical systems. In reality he looked upon it largely through Stoic spectacles. Christianity is primarily knowledge of God. It is based on reason—“the soul by nature Christian”—and authority. That authority is seated in the church, and only in the orthodox church, which alone has the truth, expressed in the creed, and alone has a right to use the Scriptures. As with Irenæus, these valid churches are those that agree in faith with those founded by the Apostles, wherein the apostolic tradition has been maintained by the succession of bishops. These are utterances of the still Catholic Tertullian. As with Justin and common Gentile Christianity of the second century, Christianity for Tertullian is a new law. “Jesus Christ...preached the new law and the new promises of the kingdom of heaven.” Admission to the church is by baptism, by which previous sins are removed. It is “our sacrament of water, in that by washing away the sins of our early blindness we are set free into eternal life.” Those who have received it are thenceforth “competitors for salvation in earning the favor of God.”

Tertullian had a deeper sense of sin than any Christian writer since Paul, and his teachings greatly aided the development of the Latin conceptions of sin and grace. Though not clearly worked out, and inconsistent with occasional expressions, Tertullian possessed a doctrine of original sin. “There is, then, besides the evil which supervenes on the soul from the intervention of the evil spirit, an antecedent, and in a certain sense natural evil, which arises from its corrupt origin.” But “the power of the grace of God is more potent indeed than nature.” The nature of grace he nowhere fully explains. It evidently included, however, not only “forgiveness of sins,” but also “the grace of divine inspiration,” by which power to do right is infused to give force to man’s feeble, but free, will. Loofs has shown that this latter
conception, of the utmost significance for the theology of Western Christendom, is of Stoic origin. But though salvation is thus based on grace, man has much to do. Though God forgives previous sins at baptism, satisfaction must be made for those committed thereafter by voluntary sacrifices, chiefly ascetic. The more a man punishes himself, the less God will punish him.

Christology

Tertullian’s most influential work was the definition of the Logos Christology, though he preferred to use the designation Son rather than Logos. If he advanced its content little beyond what had already been presented by the theologians of Asia Minor, and especially by the Apologists, his legal mind gave a clearness to its explanation such as had not before existed. Here his chief work was one written in his Montanist period—Against Praxeas. He defines the Godhead in terms which almost anticipate the Nicene result of more than a century later. “All are of one, by unity of substance; while the mystery of the dispensation is still guarded which distributes the unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; three, however . . . not in substance but in form; not in power but in appearance, for they are of one substance and one essence and one power, inasmuch as He is one God from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” He describes these distinctions of the Godhead as “persons,” meaning by the word not our usage in the sense of personalities, but forms of manifestation. This unity of substance in Tertullian’s thought is material, for he was sufficiently a Stoic to hold that “God is a body ... for spirit has a bodily substance of its own kind.” With a similar precision, Tertullian distinguished between the human and divine in Christ. “We see His double state, not intermixed but conjoined in one person, Jesus, God and man.” Since both Son and Spirit are derived from the Father by emanation, both are subordinate to Him. This doctrine of subordination, already taught in the Apologists, was to remain characteristic of the Logos Christology till the time of Augustine. These definitions were far more the work of a lawyer-like, judicial interpretation, than of philosophical consideration. As the first, also, to give technical usage to such expressions as trinitas, subatantia, sacramentum, satisfacere, meritum, Tertullian left his permanent impress on Latin theology.

Cyprian

Cyprian was, in many ways, the intellectual heir of Tertullian, whom he called master. Born probably in Carthage, about 200, he spent all his life in that city. A man of wealth and education, he won distinction as a teacher of rhetoric. About 246 he was converted to the Christian faith, and two or three years later was chosen to the bishopric of Carthage. Here he showed high executive ability, and much practical good sense and kindliness of spirit without the touch of genius that characterized Tertullian. The persecution of 250 he escaped by flight; but in that of 258 he stood boldly forth and suffered as a martyr by beheading. Few leaders of the ancient church have been more highly regarded by subsequent ages.

Cyprian’s Ecclesiology

In Cyprian’s teaching the tendencies illustrated in the development of the Catholic Church received their full expression. The church is the one visible orthodox community of Christians. “There is one God, and Christ is one, and there is one church, and one chair (episcopate) founded upon the rock by the word of the Lord.” “Whoever he may be and whatever he may be, he who is not in the church of Christ is not a Christian.” He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the church for his mother.” There is no salvation out of the church.” The church is based on the unity of its bishops, “whence ye ought to know that the bishop is in the church and the church in the bishop; and if any one be not with the bishop, that he is not in the church.” The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one in its entirety.” This last quotation has its bearing on a controversy still alive as to whether Cyprian regarded all bishops as equal sharers in a common episcopal authority, the possession of each and of all; or held to the superiority of the bishop of Rome. He certainly quoted Matt. 16:18–19. He looked upon Peter as the typical bishop. He referred to Rome as “the chief church whence priestly unity takes its source.” Rome was to him evidently the highest church in dignity; but Cyprian was not ready to admit a judicial authority over others in the Roman bishop, or to regard him as more than the first among equals. Cyprian’s significance as a witness to the full development of the doctrine that the Lord’s Supper is a
sacrifice offered by the priest to God will be considered in Section XIV. His conception of the Christian
life, like that of Tertullian, was ascetic. Martyrdom is bringing forth fruit an hundredfold; voluntary
celibacy, sixtyfold.\footnote{119}

\section*{\textbf{2. The Triumph of the Logos Christology in the West}}

Though the Catholic Church was combating successfully the Gnostics, and though the Logos
Christology was that of such formative minds as those of the writer of the fourth Gospel, Justin, Irenaeus,
and Tertullian, that Christology was not wholly regarded with sympathy by the rank and file of believers.
Hermas had taught an adoptionist Christology at Rome as late as 140. The Apostles’ Creed has no
reference to any Logos doctrine. Tertullian says significantly of his own time (213-218): “The simple—I
will not call them unwise or unlearned—who always constitute the majority of believers, are startled at the
dispensation of the three in one, on the ground that their very rule of faith withdraws them from the
world’s plurality of gods to the one only true God.”\footnote{120} It was difficult for them to see in trinitarian
conceptions aught else but an assertion of tritheism. The last decade of the second and the first two of the
third centuries were an important epoch, therefore, in Christological discussion, especially in Rome, where
the question was in the balance.

To some extent this new Christological discussion seems to have been the indirect result of Montanism.
That movement had made much of the fourth Gospel, proclaiming itself the inauguration of the
dispensation of the Spirit, therein promised. Some opponents of Montanism in Asia Minor, in their
reaction from its teachings, went so far as to reject the fourth Gospel and its doctrine of the Logos. Of
these “Alogoi,” as Epiphanius (?-403), writing much later, nicknamed them, little is known in detail, but
some of the critics of the Logos Christology who now came into prominence were apparently
influenced by them. To these opponents in general the name Monarchians is usually given—a title coined by
Tertullian\footnote{121}—since they asserted the unity of God. The Monarchians fell into two very unlike classes,
those who held that Jesus was the Son of God by adoption, the so-called Dynamic Monarchians: and those
who held that Christ was but a temporary ‘form of manifestation of the one God, the party known as the
Modalistic Monarchians. Thus, with the supporters of the Logos view, three Christologies were contesting
in Rome at the beginning of the third century.

\textit{The Dynamic Monarchians}

The first Dynamic Monarchian of prominence was Theodotus, called the currier, or tanner, from
Byzantium. He was a man of learning, and is said to have been a disciple of the Alogoi, though, unlike
them, he accepted in some sense the fourth Gospel. About 190 he came to Rome, and there taught that
Jesus was a man, born of the Virgin, of holy life, upon whom the divine Christ (or the Holy Spirit)
descended at His baptism. Some of Theodotus’s followers denied to Jesus any title to divinity; but others
held that He became in some sense divine at His resurrection.\footnote{122} One is reminded of the Christology of
Hermas (\textit{Ante}, p. 39). Theodotus was excommunicated by Bishop Victor of Rome (189-198); but his work
there was continued by Theodotus, “the money-changer,” and Asclepiodorus, like their master, probably
from the Orient; but their effort to found a rival communion outside the Catholic Church amounted to
little. The last attempt to present a similar theology in Rome was that of a certain Artemon (230-40-270),
but Dynamic Monarchianism in the West was already moribund. Yet it undoubtedly represented a type of
Christology that was one of the oldest in the Christian Church.

The Dynamic Monarchian party was stronger and more persistent in the East. There it had its most
famous representative in Paul of Samosata, the able and politically gifted bishop of Antioch from \textit{c.} 260 to
272. He represented the Logos, which he also described as the Son of God, as an impersonal attribute of
the Father. This Logos had inspired Moses and the prophets. Jesus was a man, unique in that He was born
of the Virgin, who was filled with the power of God, \textit{i. e.}, by God’s Logos. By this indwelling inspiration
Jesus was united in will by love to God, but did not become in substance one with God. That union is
moral, but inseparable. By reason of it Christ was raised from the dead, and given a kind of delegated

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divinity. Between 264 and 269 three synods considered Paul of Samosata’s views, by the last of which he was excommunicated; but he kept his place till driven out by the Emperor Aurelian (§ 2.18).

The Modalistic Monarchians

Much more numerous than the Dynamic Monarchians were the Modalistic Monarchians, who made an appeal to the many for the reason already quoted from Tertullian (§ 2.8), that in the presence of pagan polytheism, the unity of God seemed a prime article of the Christian faith, and any Logos conception or Dynamic Monarchianism seemed to them a denial of that unity. Cyprian coined for these Modalistic Monarchians the nickname Patrispassians. The leader of Modalistic Monarchianism was, like that of Dynamic Monarchianism, an Oriental Christian, Noetus, probably of Smyrna. The same controversies in Asia Minor may well have called forth both interpretations. Of Noetus little is known save that he taught in his native region in the period 180 to 200, “that Christ was the Father Himself, and that the Father Himself was born and suffered and died.”

These views were transplanted to Rome, about 190, by a certain Praxeas, a follower of Noetus and an opponent of the Montanists, regarding whom Tertullian, then a Montanist and always a defender of the Logos Christology, said; “Praxeas did two works of the devil in Rome. He drove out prophecy and introduced heresy. He put to flight the Holy Spirit and crucified the Father.” A little later two other disciples of Noetus, Epigenus and Cleomenes, came to Rome and won, in large measure, the sympathy of Bishop Zephyrinus (198-217) for the Modalistic Monarchian position.

The most noted leader of the Modalistic school, whose name became permanently associated with this Christology, was Sabellius, of whose early life little is known, but who was teaching in Rome about 215. His theology was essentially that of Noetus, but much more carefully wrought out, especially in that it gave a definite place to the Holy Spirit as well as to the Son. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all one and the same. Each is a prosopon—a (word of large later orthodox use), that is a character or form of manifestation, of the one God, who showed Himself in His character of creator as the Father, in that of redeemer as the Son, and now as the Holy Spirit. Sabellius, though soon excommunicated at Rome, found large following for his views in the East, especially in Egypt and Libya. Nor was he without considerable influence on the development of what became the orthodox Christology. His absolute identification of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was rejected; but it implied an equality which ultimately, as in Augustine, triumphed over the subordination of Son and Spirit characteristic of the Logos Christology both of Tertullian and Athanasius.

Hippolytus

The great advocate of the Logos Christology at this juncture in Rome was Hippolytus (160-170—c. 235), the most learned Christian writer then in the city, and the last considerable theologian there to use Greek rather than Latin as his vehicle of expression. As a commentator, chronicler, calculator of Easter dates, Apologist, and opponent of heretics, he was held in such high repute that his followers erected after his death the earliest Christian portrait statue known. He opposed vigorously the Monarchians of both schools. The fight in Rome waxed hot. Bishop Zephyrinus (198-217) hardly knew what to do, though he leaned toward the Monarchian side. On his death he was succeeded by Kallistos (Calixtus, 217-222), the most energetic and assertive bishop that Rome had yet seen—a man who had been born a slave, had engaged unsuccessfully in banking, and had, for a time, been a sufferer for his Christian faith in the mines of Sardinia. Over Zephyrinus he acquired great influence, and on his own attainment of the bishopric, issued in his own name certain regulations as to the readmission to the church of those repentant of sins of licentiousness, which show higher ecclesiastical claims than any heretofore advanced by a Roman bishop (§ 2.6). Kallistos saw that these disputes were hurting the Roman Church. He therefore excommunicated Sabellius (c. 217), and charged Hippolytus with being a worshipper of two gods. Hippolytus now broke with Kallistos, on this ground and on questions regarding discipline, and became the head of a rival communion in Rome—the first “counter-pope”—a position which he maintained till his banishment in the persecution of 235.

Kallistos tried to find a compromise formula in this Christological confusion. Father, Son and Logos, he held, are all names of “one indivisible spirit.” Yet Son is also the proper designation of that which was visible, Jesus; while the Father was the spirit in Him. This presence of the Father in Jesus is the Logos.
Kallistos was positive that the Father did not suffer on the cross, but suffered with the sufferings of the Son, Jesus; yet the Father “after He had taken unto Himself our flesh, raised it to the nature of deity, by bringing it into union with Himself, and made it one, so that Father and Son must be styled one God.”

This is, indeed, far from logical or clear. One cannot blame Hippolytus or Sabellius for not liking it. Yet it was a compromise which recognized a pre-existent Logos in Christ, even if it identified that Logos with the Father; it insisted on the identity of that which indwelt Jesus with God; and it claimed a human Jesus, raised to divinity by the Father, and made one with Him, thus really showing a distinction between the Father and the Son, while denying in words that one exists. This compromise won the majority in Rome, and opened the door for the full victory of the Logos Christology there. That victory was determined by the able exposition of that Christology which came at the turning-point in this conflict (213-218) from the pen of Tertullian of Carthage—Against Praxeas (see ante, p. 69), with its clear definitions of a Trinity in three persons and of a distinction between the divine and human in Christ.

**Victory of the Logos Christology**

How completely this Christology won its way in Western Christendom is shown by the treatise on the Trinity, written by the Roman presbyter, Novatian, between 240 and 250. That eminent scholar was the first in the local Roman communion to use Latin rather than Greek. His quarrel with the dominant party in the church will be described later (§ 2.16). Novatian did little more than reproduce and expand Tertullian's views. But it is important that he treated this exposition as the only normal and legitimate interpretation of the “rule of truth”—the “Apostles’ Creed.” That symbol had been silent regarding the Logos Christology. To Novatian the Logos Christology is its only proper meaning. Between Father and Son a “communion of substance” exists. The Latin equivalent of the later famous Nicene Homoousion - ὁμοούσιον - was therefore current in Rome before 250. Novatian has even a social Trinity. Commenting on John 10:30, “I and the Father are one,” he declares that Christ “said one thing (unum). Let the heretics understand that He did not say one person. For one placed in the neuter intimates the social concord, not the personal unity.” The most valuable thing in Novatian is that he emphasized what was the heart of the conviction of the church in all this involved Christological controversy, that Christ was fully God and equally fully man.

Finally, about 262, the Roman bishop, Dionysius (259-268), writing against the Sabellians, expressed the Logos Christology in terms more nearly approximating to what was to be the Nicene decision of 325 than any other third-century theologian. Thus the West had reached conclusions readily harmonizable with the result at Nicaea, more than sixty years before that great council. The East had attained no such uniformity.

[5].3. THE ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL

Alexandria was, for more than six centuries, the second city of the ancient world, surpassed only by Rome, and later by Constantinople, in importance. Founded by Alexander the Great in B. C. 332, it was primarily a trading community, and as such, attracted numbers of Greeks and Jews. Its intellectual life was no less remarkable. Its library was the most famous in the empire. In its streets East and West met. There Greek philosophy entered into association, or competed in rivalry, with Judaism and many other Oriental cults, while the influence of ancient Egyptian thought persisted. It was the most cosmopolitan city of the ancient world. There the Old Testament was translated into Greek, and there Philo interpreted Judaism in terms of Hellenic philosophy. There Neo-Platonism was to arise in the third century of our era. Of the introduction of Christianity into Alexandria, or into Egypt generally, nothing is known, but it must have been early, since when the veil of silence was lifted Christianity was evidently strongly rooted there. The Gnostic, Basilides, taught in Alexandria in the reign of Hadrian (117-138). There the various philosophical systems had their “schools,” where instruction could be obtained by all inquirers, and it was but natural that Christian teachers should imitate this good example, though it would appear that the beginnings of this work were independent of the Alexandrian Church authorities.

_Clement of Alexandria_
By about 185 a famous catechetical school existed in Alexandria, then under the leadership of a converted Stoic philosopher, Pantaenus. Whether it originated with him, or what his own theological position may have been, it is impossible to determine. With Clement of Alexandria (?-c. 215), Pantaenus’s pupil and successor, it comes into the light. The course of religious development in Alexandria had evidently differed from that in Asia Minor and the West. In the latter regions the contest with Gnosticism had bred a distrust of philosophy such that Tertullian could declare that there was no possible connection between it and Christianity. That contest had, also, immensely strengthened the appeal to apostolic tradition and consolidated organization. In Alexandria these characteristics of the Catholic Church had not so fully developed, while philosophy was regarded not as inconsistent with Christianity, but as its handmaid. Here a union of what was best in ancient philosophy, chiefly Platonism and Stoicism, was effected to a degree nowhere else realized in orthodox circles, and the result was a Christian Gnosticism. Clement of Alexandria was typical of this movement. At the same time he was a presbyter in the Alexandrian Church, thus serving as a connecting-link between the church and the school.

The more important of the works of Clement which have survived are three: his *Exhortation to the Pagan*, an apologetic treatise, giving incidentally no little information as to the mystery religions; his *Instructor*, the first treatise on Christian conduct, and an invaluable mine of information as to the customs of the age; and his *Stromata, or Miscellanies*, a collection of profound thoughts on religion and theology, arranged without much regard to system. Throughout he shows the mind of a highly trained and widely read thinker. Clement would interpret Christianity as Philo did Judaism, by philosophy, into scientific dogmatics. To him, as to Justin, whom he far surpassed in clearness of intellectual grasp, the divine Logos has always been the source of all the intelligence and morality of the human race—the teacher of mankind everywhere. “Our instructor is the holy God, Jesus, the Word who is the guide of all humanity.” He was the source of all true philosophy. “God is the cause of all good things; but of some primarily, as of the Old and the New Testament; and of others by consequence, as of philosophy. Perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks. For this was a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind, as the law the Hebrews, to Christ.”

This training of humanity by the Logos has been, therefore, a progressive education. So it is, also, in the Church. “Faith,” that is simple, traditional Christianity, is enough for salvation; but the man who adds to his faith “knowledge,” has a higher possession. He is the true, Christian Gnostic. “To him that hath shall be given; to faith, knowledge; to knowledge, love; and to love, the inheritance.” The highest good to which knowledge leads—a good even greater than the salvation which it necessarily involves—is the knowledge of God. “Could we then suppose any one proposing to the Gnostic whether he would choose the knowledge of God or everlasting salvation; and if these, which are entirely identical, were separable, he would without the least hesitation choose the knowledge of God.” That highest good brings with it an almost Stoic absence of feeling, either of pleasure or of pain—a condition of blessedness in which Clement believes Christ stood, and to which the Apostles attained through His teaching. One can readily comprehend that Clement, like Justin, had no real interest in the earthly life of Jesus. The Logos then became incarnate, indeed, but Clement’s view of Christ’s life is almost Docetic, certainly more so than that of any teacher of orthodoxy standing in the church of his own day.

Origen

Clement wrought out no complete theological system. That was to be the task of his even more celebrated successor in the headship of the Alexandrian catechetical school—Origen [n.b although Origen is often called Clement’s “pupil”, there is no clear evidence that their relationship was ever that of teacher and student]. Born of Christian parentage, probably in Alexandria, between 182 and 185, Origen grew up there into a familiarity with the Scriptures that was to render him the most fully acquainted with the Bible of any of the writers in the early church. His study of philosophy must also have been early begun. A youth of intense feeling and eager mental curiosity, he was as remarkable for his precocity as for the later ripeness of his scholarship. The persecution under Septimius Severus, in 202, cost the life of Origen’s father, and he would have shared the same fate had not his mother frustrated his wishes by a stratagem. This persecution had driven Clement, from the city; and now, in 203, in spite of his youth, he gathered
round himself inquirers with whom he reconstituted the catechetical school. This position he held with great success and with the approval of Bishop Demetrius, till 215, when the Emperor Caracalla drove all teachers of philosophy from Alexandria. His instruction had before been interrupted by visits to Rome (c. 211-212), where he met Hippolytus, and to Arabia (c. 213-214). His manner of life was ascetic in the extreme: later biographers [basing themselves on hostile reports of dubious value] accused Origen of having himself castrated in order to avoid slander arising out of his relations with his numerous students, taking Matt. 19:12 as a counsel of perfection. The year 215 saw Origen in Caesarea in Palestine, where he made friends of permanent value. Permitted to return to Alexandria, probably in 216, he resumed his instruction, and began a period of scholarly productivity the results of which were little short of marvellous.

Origen’s labors in Alexandria were broken by a journey to Greece and Palestine in 230 or 231. He was still a layman; but, by friendly Palestinian bishops he was ordained a presbyter, in Caesarea, probably that he might be free to preach. This ordination of an Alexandrian layman, Bishop Demetrius of Alexandria not unnaturally viewed as an intrusion on his jurisdiction, and jealousy of the successful teacher may have added to his resentment. At all events, Demetrius held synods by which Origen was banished from Alexandria, and as far as was in their power, deposed from the ministry. He now found a congenial home in friendly Caesarea. Here he continued his indefatigable studies, his teaching, and to them he added frequent preaching. He made occasional journeys. He was surrounded by friends who held him in the highest esteem. With the great Decian persecution (see p. 86) of 250, this period of peace ended, He was imprisoned and tortured, and died either in Caesarea or Tyre, probably in 251 (254?) as a consequence of the cruelties he had undergone. No man of purer spirit or nobler aims ornaments the history of the ancient church.

**Origen’s Theology**

Origen was a man of many-sided scholarship. The field to which he devoted most attention was that of Biblical text-criticism and exegesis. Here his chief productions were his monumental *Hexapla*, giving the Hebrew and four parallel Greek translations of the Old Testament; and a long series of commentaries and briefer notes treating nearly the entire range of Scripture. It was the most valuable work that had yet been done by any Christian scholar. In the field of theology his *De Principiis*, written before 231, was not merely the first great systematic presentation of Christianity, but its thoughts and methods thenceforth controlled Greek dogmatic development. His *Against Celsus*, written between 246 and 248, in reply to the ablest criticism of Christianity that paganism had produced—that of the Platonist Celsus (c. 177)—was the keenest and most convincing defense of the Christian faith that the ancient world brought forth, and one fully worthy of the greatness of the controversy. Besides these monumental undertakings he found time for the discussion of practical Christian themes, such as prayer and martyrdom, and for the preparation of many sermons. His was indeed a life of unwearied industry.

In Origen the process was complete which had long been interpreting Christian truths in terms of Hellenic thinking. He gave to the Christian system the fullest scientific standing, as tested by the science of that age, which was almost entirely comprised in philosophy and ethics. His philosophic standpoint was essentially Platonic and Stoic, with a decided leaning toward positions similar to those of the rising Neo-Platonism, the lectures of whose founder, Ammonius Saccas, he is said to have heard. These philosophic principles he sought to bring into harmony with the Scriptures, as his great Hebrew fellow townsman, Philo, had done, by allegorical interpretation of the Bible. All normal Scripture, he held, has a threefold meaning. “The simple man may be edified by the ‘flesh’ as it were of the Scriptures, for so we name the obvious sense; while he who has ascended a certain way may be edified by the ‘soul’ as it were; the perfect man . . may receive edification from the spiritual law, which has a shadow of good things to come. For as man consists of body and soul and spirit, so in the same way does Scripture.” This allegorical system [was of great value in expressing mystical experience; however, it had the negative effect of permitting exegetes to discover practically anything they wished in the Scriptures].

As a necessary foundation for his theological system, Origen posited that “which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition.” These fundamentals of traditional Christianity include
belief (1) “in one God . . the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, [who] Himself gave the law and the prophets and the Gospels, being also the God of the Apostles and of the Old and New Testaments”; (2) “that Jesus Christ Himself . . was born of the Father before all creatures . . became a man, and was incarnate although God, and while made a man remained the God which He was . . was born of a Virgin . . was truly born and did truly suffer and . . . did truly die . . . did truly rise from the dead “; (3) “that the Holy Spirit was associated in honor and dignity with the Father and the Son”; (4) in the resurrection and in future rewards and punishments; (5) in free will; (6) in the existence and opposition of the devil and his angels; (7) that the world was made in time and will “be destroyed on account of its wickedness”; (8) “that the Scriptures were written by the Spirit of God”; (9) “that there are certain angels of God, and certain good influences which are His servants in accomplishing the salvation of men.” 141 These are essential beliefs for all Christians, learned and unlearned, as taught by the church; and on them Origen proceeded to erect his mighty fabric of systematic theology—that explanation of Christianity for him who would add to his faith knowledge.

Origen’s conception of the universe was strongly Platonic. The real world is the spiritual reality behind this temporary, phenomenal, visible world. In that world great transactions have had their place. There, as with Plato, our spirits existed. There sin first entered. There we fell, and thither the redeemed will return. God, the uncreated, perfect Spirit, is the source of all. From Him the Son is eternally generated. “His generation is as eternal and everlasting as the brilliancy which is produced from the sun.” 142 Yet Christ is “a second God.” 143 A “creature.” Christ’s position, as Loofs has pointed out, was viewed by Origen as the same as that of the nous—mind, thought—in the Neo-Platonic system. He is the “mediator” between God and His world of creatures, the being through whom they were made. Highest of these creatures is the Holy Spirit, whom Origen reckons to the Godhead, by reason of churchly tradition, but for whom he has no real necessity in his system.

All spiritual beings, including the spirits of men, were made by God, through the Son, in the true spiritual world. “He had no other reason for creating them than on account of Himself, i.e. His own goodness.” 144 All were good, though their goodness, unlike that of God, was “an accidental and perishable quality.” 145 All had free will. Hence some fell by sin in the invisible spiritual world. It was as a place of punishment and of reform that God created this visible universe, placing fallen spirits therein in proportion to the heinousness of their sins. The least sinful are angels and have as bodies the stars. Those of greater sinfulness are on the face of the earth, with animal souls, also, and mortal bodies. They constitute mankind. The worst are the demons, led by the devil himself.

Salvation was wrought by the Logos-Son becoming man, by uniting with a human soul that had not sinned in its previous existence and a pure body. While here Christ was God and man; but at the resurrection and ascension Christ’s humanity was given the glory of His divinity, and is no longer human but divine. 146 That transformation Christ effects for all His disciple a “From Him there began the union of the divine with the human nature, in order that the human, by communion with the divine, might rise to be divine, not in Jesus alone, but in all those who not only believe but enter upon the life which Jesus taught.” 147 Origen, more than any theologian since Paul, emphasized the sacrificial character of Christ’s death; but he interpreted it in many ways, some of which were not very consistent with others. Christ suffered what was “for the good of the human race” as a representative and an example. 148 He was in some sense a propitiatory offering to God. He was a ransom paid to the powers of evil. 149 He conquered the demons. 150 He frustrated their expectation that they could hold Him by the bonds of death and brought their kingdom to an end. 151 Those of mankind who are His disciples are received at death into Paradise; the evil find their place in hell. Yet, ultimately, not only all men, but even the devil and all spirits with him will be saved. 152 This will be the restoration of all things, when God will be all in all.

Origen’s theological structure is the greatest intellectual achievement of the ante-Nicene Church. It influenced profoundly all after-thinking in the Orient. Yet it is easy to see how he could be quoted on either side in the later Christological controversies, and to understand, in the light of a later rigid orthodoxy, how he came to be regarded as a heretic, whose views were condemned by a synod in his native Alexandria in 399 or 400, by the Emperor Justinian in 443, and by the Fifth General Council in
553. His work was professedly for the learned, not for the common Christian. Because its science is not our science it [can seem] strange to us. But it gave to Christianity full scientific standing in that age. In particular, the teachings of Clement and Origen greatly advanced the dominance of the Logos Christology in the Orient, though Sabellianism was still wide-spread there, and an adoptionist Christology had an eminent representative in the bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, as late as 272.

Yet Origen was not without serious critics in the century in which he lived. Of these the most important, theologically, was Methodius, bishop of Olympus, in Lycia, who died about 311. Taking his stand on the tradition of Asia Minor, Methodius denied Origen’s doctrines of the soul’s pre-existence and imprisonment in this world, and affirmed the resurrection of the body. In ability he was not to be compared with Origen.

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4. CHURCH and STATE from 180 to 260

Decline of Empire, Growth of Church

The visible decline of the Roman Empire is usually reckoned from the death of Marcus Aurelius (180), though its causes go back much further. Population was diminishing. Trade and industry were fettered by heavy taxation. The leadership passed more and more from the hands of the cultivated classes. The army was largely recruited from the outlying provinces of the empire, and even from tribes beyond its borders. From the death of Commodus (192), it dictated the choice of Emperors, who, in general, were very far from representing the higher type of Graeco-Roman culture, as had the Antonines. The whole administrative machinery of the empire was increasingly inefficient, and the defense of its borders inadequate. From a military point of view, conditions grew steadily worse till the time of Aurelian (270-275), and were hardly securely bettered till that of Diocletian (284-305). In other respects no considerable pause was achieved in the decline. Yet this period was also one of increasing feeling of popular unity in the empire. The lines of distinction between the races were breaking down. In 212 the Roman citizenship was extended by Caracalla, not wholly from disinterested motives, to all free inhabitants of the empire. Above all, from a religious point of view, the close of the second and the whole of the third centuries were an age of syncretism, a period of deepening religious feeling, in which the mystery religions of the Orient—and Christianity also—made exceedingly rapid increase in the number of their adherents.

This growth of the church was extensive as well as intensive. To near the close of the second century it had penetrated little beyond those whose ordinary tongue was Greek. By the dawn of the third century the church was rapidly advancing in Latin-speaking North Africa and, though more slowly, in Spain and Gaul, and reaching toward, if it had not already arrived in, Britain. In Egypt Christianity was now penetrating the native population, while by 190 it was well represented in Syriac-speaking Edessa. The church was also reaching more extensively than earlier into the higher classes of society. It was being better understood; and though Tertullian shows that the old popular slanders of cannibalism and gross immorality were still prevalent in 197, as the third century went on they seem to have much decreased, doubtless through growing acquaintance with the real significance of Christianity.

The Attitude of the Emperors

The relations of the state to the church during the period from 180 to 260 were most various, depending on the will of the several Emperors, but, on the whole, such as to aid rather than to hinder its growth till the last decade of this period. Legally, Christianity was condemned. It had no right to exist. Practically, it enjoyed a considerable degree of toleration during most of this epoch. The persecution which had been begun under Marcus Aurelius continued into the reign of Commodus, but he soon neglected the church as he did about everything else not connected with his own pleasures. This freedom from persecution continued till well into the reign of Septimius Severus (193-211); but was broken in 202 by a persecution of considerable severity, especially in Carthage and Egypt. Under Caracalla (211-217), persecution again raged in North Africa. Elagabalus (218-222), though an ardent supporter of sun-worship, was disposed to a syncretism which was not openly hostile to Christianity. Alexander Severus (222-235) was distinctly favorable. A syncretist who would unite many religions, he placed a bust of Christ in his private chapel along with images of leaders of other faiths; while his mother, Julia Mamæa, under whose influence he
stood, heard lectures by Origen. He even decided a dispute as to whether a piece of property in Rome should be used by its Christian claimants, doubtless as a place of worship, or by their opponents as a cook-shop, in favor of the Christians. A change of policy came under Maximinus (235-238), by whom an edict against the Christians was issued, which, though not extensively enforced, thrust both the Catholic bishop, Pontianus, and his schismatic rival Hippolytus from Rome into the cruel slavery of the mines, where they soon lost their lives. In eastern Asia Minor and Palestine this persecution made itself felt. Under Gordian (238-244) and till near the end of the reign of Philip the Arabian (244-249) the church had rest. For that new outbreak Philip was in no way responsible. Indeed, an erroneous rumor declared him to be secretly a Christian. The number of martyrs in these persecutions was not large, as Origen testified, writing between 246 and 248, and these outbreaks were local, if at times of considerable extent. Though Christians were deprived of all legal protection, the average believer must have thought that the condition of the church was approaching practical safety.

The Decian and Valerian Persecutions

This growing feeling of security was rudely dispelled. The year 248 saw the celebration of the thousandth anniversary of the founding of Rome. It was a time of revival of ancient traditions and of the memories of former splendors. The empire was never more threatened by barbarian attack or torn by internal disputes. The populace attributed these troubles to the cessation of persecution. A fierce mob attack broke out in Alexandria before the death of Philip the Arabian. To the more observant pagan the growth of a rigidly organized church might well seem that of a state within the state, the more dangerous that Christians still largely refused army service or the duties of public office. Nearer at hand lay the plausible, though fallacious, argument that as Rome had grown great when the old gods were worshipped by all, so now their rejection by a portion of the population had cost Rome their aid, and had caused the calamities evident on every hand. This was apparently the feeling of the new Emperor, Decius (249-251), and of a conservative Roman noble, Valerian, with whom Decius was intimately associated. The result was the edict of 250, which initiated the first universal and systematic persecution of Christianity.

The Decian persecution was by far the worst trial that the church as a whole had undergone—the more severe because it had principle and determination behind it. The aim was not primarily to take life, though there were numerous and cruel martyrdoms, but rather to compel Christians by torture, imprisonment, or fear to sacrifice to the old gods. Bishops Fabian of Rome and Babylas of Antioch died as martyrs. Origen and hosts of others were tortured. The number of these “confessors” was very great. So, also, was the number of the “lapsed”—that is, of those who, through fear or torture, sacrificed, burned incense, or procured certificates from friendly or venal officials that they had duly worshipped in the form prescribed by the state. Many of these lapsed, when the persecution was over, returned to seek in bitter penitence readmission to the church. The question of their treatment caused a long, enduring schism in Rome, and much trouble elsewhere (see p. 101). Fierce as it was, the persecution under Decius and Valerian was soon over; but only to be renewed in somewhat milder form by Decius’s successor, Gallus (251-253). In 253 Decius’s old associate in persecution, Valerian, obtained possession of the empire (253-260). Though he at first left the Christians undisturbed, in 257 and 258 he renewed the attack with greater ferocity. Christian assemblies were forbidden; Christian churches and cemeteries confiscated; bishops, priests, and deacons ordered to be executed, and lay Christians in high places disgraced, banished, and their goods held forfeited. Under this persecution Cyprian died in Carthage, Bishop Sixtus II and the Deacon Laurentius in Rome, and Bishop Fructuosus in Tarragona in Spain. It was a fearful period of trial, lasting, with intermissions indeed, from 250 to 259. In 253 Decius’s old associate in persecution, Valerian, obtained possession of the empire (253-260). Though he at first left the Christians undisturbed, in 257 and 258 he renewed the attack with greater ferocity. Christian assemblies were forbidden; Christian churches and cemeteries confiscated; bishops, priests, and deacons ordered to be executed, and lay Christians in high places disgraced, banished, and their goods held forfeited. Under this persecution Cyprian died in Carthage, Bishop Sixtus II and the Deacon Laurentius in Rome, and Bishop Fructuosus in Tarragona in Spain. It was a fearful period of trial, lasting, with intermissions indeed, from 250 to 259. In 260 Valerian became a prisoner in the hands of the victorious Persians. His son, associate Emperor and successor, Gallienus (260-268), a thoroughly weak and incompetent ruler, promptly gave up the struggle with Christianity. Church property was returned, and a degree of favor shown that has sometimes, though erroneously, been interpreted as a legal toleration. That the act of Gallienus was not. The old laws against Christianity were unrepealed. Practically, however, a peace began which was to last till the outbreak of the persecution under Diocletian, in 303, though probably threatened by Aurelian just before his death in 275. The church had come out of the struggle stronger than ever before.
6. LEADERSHIP and LITURGY

Walker, “Period II. The Gnostic Crisis,” 2.11-2.16, pp. 87-103.

[6].1. THE HIERARCHICAL DEVELOPMENT of the CHURCH

Growing Authority of the Bishops

The effect of the struggle with Gnosticism and Montanism upon the development of the bishoprics as centers of unity, witnesses to apostolic tradition, and bearers of an apostolic succession, has already been seen (Section IV). The tendencies then developed continued to work in increasing power, with the result that, between 200 and 260, the church as an organization took on most of the constitutional features which were to characterize it throughout the period of the dominance of Graeco-Roman culture. Above all, this development was manifested in the increase of the power of the bishops. The circumstances of the time, the contests with Gnostics and Montanists, the leadership of increasing masses of ignorant recent converts from paganism, the necessities of uniformity in worship and discipline, all tended to centralize in the bishop the rights and authority which, in the first half of the second century had been the possession of the Christian congregation as a whole. The “gifts of the Spirit,” which had been very real to the thought of Christians of the apostolic and subapostolic ages, and which might be possessed by any one, were now a tradition rather than a vital reality. The contest with Montanism, among other causes, had led such claims to be regarded with suspicion. The tradition, however, remained, but it was rapidly changing into a theory of official endowment. These “gifts” were now the official possession of the clergy, especially of the bishops. The bishops were the divinely appointed guardians of the deposit of the faith, and therefore those who could determine what was heresy. They were the leaders of worship—a matter of constantly increasing importance with the growing conviction, wide-spread by the beginning of the third century, that the ministry is a priesthood. They were the disciplinary officers of the congregation—though their authority in this respect was not firmly fixed—able to say when the sinner needed excommunication and when he showed sufficient repentance for restoration. As given full expression by Cyprian of Carthage, about 250 (§ 2.7), the foundation of the church is the unity of the bishops.

The Christians of a particular city had been regarded, certainly from the beginning of the second century, as constituting a single community, whether meeting in one congregation or many. As such they were under the guidance of a single bishop. Ancient civilization was strongly urban in its political constitution. The adjacent country district looked to its neighboring city. Christianity had been planted in the cities. By efforts going out from them, congregations were formed in the surrounding villages, which came at first into the city for their worship; but as they grew larger must increasingly have met by themselves. Planted by Christians from the cities, they were under the oversight of the city bishop, whose immediate field of superintendence was thus growing, by the third century, into a diocese. In some rural portions of the East, notably Syria and Asia Minor, where city influence was relatively weak, country groups of congregations developed before the end of the third century, headed by a rural bishop, a chorepiskopos — χωρεπίσκοπος — but this system was not of large growth, nor were these country bishops deemed the equals in dignity of their city brethren. The system did not spread to the West at this time, though introduced there in the Middle Ages, only to prove unsatisfactory.

To Cyprian, the episcopate was a unit, and each bishop a representative of all its powers, on an equality with all other bishops. Yet even in his time this theory was becoming impracticable. The bishops of the great, politically influential cities of the empire were attaining a superiority in dignity over others, which those of Rome even more than the rest were striving to translate into a superiority of jurisdiction. Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage, and Ephesus, with Jerusalem by reason of religious sentiment, had an outstanding eminence, and Rome most of all. Besides these greater posts, the bishop of the capital city of each province was beginning to be looked upon as having a certain superiority to those of lesser towns in his region; but the full development of the metropolitan dignity was not to come till the fourth century, and earlier in the East than in the West.
Clergy and Laity

By the beginning of the third century clergy were sharply distinguished from laity. The technical use of the words laikos — λαικός — and kleros — κλῆρος — was a gradual development, as was the distinction which they implied. The earliest Christian employment of the former was by Clement of Rome. The latter occurs in 1 Peter 53, in wholly untechnical usage. But and its Latin equivalent, ordo, were the common expressions for the “orders” of magistrates and dignitaries of the Roman Empire. It is probably from such popular usage that they came into Christian employment. The letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne, giving a description of the persecution of 177, spoke of the “order” of the martyrs— κλῆρον. Tertullian wrote of “clerical order” and “ecclesiastical orders.” By his time the distinction had become practically fixed; even if Tertullian himself could recall, for purposes of argument, the early doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, “are not even we laics priests? 

Major and Minor Orders

Admission to clerical office was by ordination, a rite which certainly goes back to the earliest days of the church, at least as a sign of the bestowal of charismatic gifts, or separation for a special duty. The ordinary process of the choice of a bishop by the middle of the third century was a nomination by the other clergy, especially the presbyters, of the city; the approval of neighboring bishops, and ratification or election by the congregation. Ordination followed at the hands of at least one already a bishop—a number of episcopal ordainers which had become fixed at a normal minimum of three by the end of the third century. The control of the choice of the presbyters, deacons, and lower clergy lay in the hand of their local bishop, by whom they were ordained. The presbyters were the bishop’s advisers. With his consent they administered the sacraments. They preached. As congregations grew more numerous in a city, a presbyter would be placed in immediate charge of each, and their importance thereby enhanced, from its relative depression, immediately after the rise of the monarchical episcopate. There was no fixed limit to their number. The deacons were immediately responsible to the bishop, and were his assistants in the care of the poor and other financial concerns, in aiding in the worship and discipline. They often stood in closer practical relations to him than the presbyters. At Rome, the number of the deacons was seven, in remembrance of Acts 65. When Bishop Fabian (236-250) adopted the civil division of the city as its fourteen charity districts, he appointed seven subdeacons in addition to the seven deacons, that the primitive number might not be surpassed. Sub-deacons also existed in Carthage in the tune of Cyprian, and quite generally at a little later period. In many parts of the church there was no fixed rule as to the number of deacons.

The Lesser Clergy

Bishops, presbyters, and deacons constituted the major orders. Below them there stood in the first half of the third century, the minor orders. In the general absence of all statistical information as to the early church, a letter of Bishop Cornelius of Rome, written about 251, is of high value as showing conditions in that important church. Under the single bishop in Rome there were forty-six presbyters and seven deacons. Below them, constituting what were soon to be known as the minor orders, were seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolytes, and fifty-two exorcists, readers, and door-keepers. More than fifteen hundred dependents were supported by the church, which may have included thirty thousand adherents. Some of these offices were of very ancient origin. Those of readers and exorcists had originally been regarded as charismatic. Exorcists continued to be so viewed in the Orient, and were not there properly officers. By the time of Cyprian the reader’s office was thought a preparatory step toward that of presbyter. The exorcist’s task was to drive out evil spirits, in whose prevalent working the age firmly believed. Of the duties of acolytes little is known save that they were assistants in service and aid. They were not to be found in the Orient. The door-keepers were especially important when it became the custom to admit none but the baptized to the more sacred parts of the service.

In the East, though not in the West, deaconesses were to be found who were reckoned in a certain sense as of the clergy. Their origin was probably charismatic and was of high antiquity. Their tasks were those of care for women, especially the ill [and to assist at the baptism of women]. Besides these
deaconesses there were to be found in the churches, both East and West, a class known as “widows,” whose origin was likewise ancient. Their duties were prayer and aid to the sick, especially of their own sex. They were held in high honor, though hardly to be reckoned properly as of the “clergy.” All these were supported, in whole or in part, by the gifts of the congregation, which were of large amount, both of eatables and of money. These gifts were looked upon, by the time of Cyprian, as “tithes,” and were all at the disposal of the bishop. By the middle of the third century the higher clergy were expected to give their whole time to the work of the ministry; yet even bishops sometimes shared in secular business, not always of a commendable character. The lower clergy could still engage in trades. It is evident, however, that though the ancient doctrine of the priesthood of all believers might still occasionally be remembered, it had a purely theoretical value. In practical Christian life the clergy, by the middle of the third century were a distinct, close-knit spiritual rank, on whom the laity were religiously dependent, and who were in turn supported by laymen’s gifts.

2. PUBLIC WORSHIP AND SACRED SEASONS

Already, by the time of Justin (153), the primitive division of worship into two assemblies, one for prayer and instruction and the other for the Lord’s Supper in connection with a common meal had ceased. The Lord’s Supper was now the crowning act of the service of worship and edification. Its separation from the common meal was now complete. The course of development during the succeeding century was determined by the prevalence of ideas drawn from the mystery religions. There is no adequate ground to believe that there was intentional imitation. Christians of the last half of the second and the third centuries lived in an atmosphere highly charged with influences sprung from these faiths. It was but natural that they should look upon their own worship from the same point of view. It is probable that already existing tendencies in this direction were strongly reinforced by the great growth of the church by conversion from paganism in the first half of the third century.

The church came to be more and more regarded as possessed of life-giving mysteries, under the superintendence and dispensation of the clergy. Inquirers were prepared for initiation by instruction—the catechumens. Such preparation, in some degree, had existed from the apostolic days. It was now systematized. Origen taught in an already celebrated school in Alexandria in 203. Cyprian shows that in Carthage, by about 250, such instruction was in charge of an officer designated by the bishop. Instruction was followed by the great initiatory rite of baptism (see Section XIII), which granted admission to the propitiatory sacrifice of the life-giving mystery of the Lord’s Supper (see Section XIV). As in the time of Justin, the other elements of worship consisted of Scripture reading, preaching, prayers, and hymns. These were open to all honest inquirers. The analogy of the mystery religions barred all but those initiate or about to be initiate from presence at baptism or the Lord’s Supper, and led to a constant augmentation of the valuation placed on these rites as the most sacred elements of worship. Whether the custom had arisen by the third century of regarding these sacraments as a secret discipline, in which the exact words of the Creed and of the Lord’s Prayer were for the first time imparted to the baptized, and of which no mention was to be made to the profane, is uncertain. Such usages were wide-spread in the fourth and fifth centuries. Already in the third the forces were at work which were to lead to the practices.

Sacred Seasons

Sunday was the chief occasion of worship, yet services were beginning to be held on week-days as well. Wednesday and Friday, as earlier (§1.8), were days of fasting. The great event of the year was the Easter season. The period immediately before was one of fasting in commemoration of Christ’s sufferings. Customs differed in various parts of the empire. In Rome a forty hours’ fast and vigil was held in remembrance of Christ’s rest in the grave. This was extended, by the time of the Council of Nicaea (325) to a forty-days’ Lent. All fasting ended with the dawn of Easter morning, and the Pentecostal period of rejoicing then began. In that time there was no fasting, or kneeling in prayer in public worship. Easter eve was the favorite season for baptism, that the newly initiate might participate in the Easter joy. Beside these fixed seasons, the martyrs were commemorated with celebration of the Lord’s Supper annually on the days of their deaths. Prayers for the dead in general, and their remembrance by offerings on the anniversaries of their decease, were in use by the early part of the third century. Relics of martyrs had
been held in high veneration since the middle of the second century. The full development of saint-veneration had not yet come; but the church was honoring with particular devotion the memory of the athletes of the Christian race who had not counted their lives dear unto themselves.

[6]. 3. BAPTISM

Baptism is older than Christianity. The rite gave to John, the “Forerunner,” his name. He baptized Jesus. His disciples and those of Jesus baptized, though Jesus Himself did not. The origin of the rite is uncertain; but it was probably a spiritualization of the old Levitical washings. Jewish teaching, traceable probably to a period as early as the time of Christ, required proselytes to the Hebrew faith not merely to be circumcised, but to be baptized. It seems probable that John did not invent the rite, and simply used contemporary practice. It was a fitting symbol of the spiritual purification that followed the repentance that he preached. The mystery religions had equivalent rites; but so purely Jewish was that primitive Christianity to which baptism belongs, that it is inconceivable that they should have had any effect on the origin of the practice, though they were profoundly to influence its development on Gentile soil. Peter represents baptism as the rite of admission to the church, and to the reception of the Holy Spirit. As the sacrament of admission baptism always stood till the religious divisions of post-Reformation days. It so stands for the vast majority of Christians at present.

With Paul, baptism was not merely the symbol of cleansing from sin, it involved a new relation to Christ, and a participation in His death and resurrection. Though Paul apparently did not think baptism essential to salvation his view approached that of the initiations of the mystery religions and his converts in Corinth, at least, held an almost magical conception of the rite, being baptized in behalf of their dead friends, that the departed might be benefited thereby. Baptism soon came to be regarded as indispensable. The writer of the fourth Gospel represented Christ as declaring: “Verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” The appendix to Mark pictured the risen Christ as saying: “ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” This conviction but deepened. To Hermas (115-140), baptism was the very foundation of the church, which “is built upon waters.” Even to the philosophical Justin (153) baptism effected “regeneration” and “illumination.” In Tertullian’s estimate it conveyed eternal life itself.

Baptismal Regeneration; Infant Baptism

By the time of Hermas and of Justin the view was general that baptism washed away all previous sins. As in the mystery religions it had become the great rite of purification, initiation, and rebirth into the eternal life. Hence it could be received but once. The only substitute was martyrdom, “ which stands in lieu of the fontal bathing, when that has not been received, and restores it when lost.” With the early disciples generally baptism was “ in the name of Jesus Christ.” There is no mention of baptism in the name of the Trinity in the New Testament, except in the command attributed to Christ in Matt. 28:19. That text is early, however. It underlies the Apostles’ Creed, and the practice recorded in the Didache and by Justin. The Christian leaders of the third century retained the recognition of the earlier form, and, in Rome at least, baptism in the name of Christ was deemed valid, if irregular, certainly from the time of Bishop Stephen.

Regarding persons baptized, the strong probability is that, till past the middle of the second century, they were those only of years of discretion. The first mention of infant baptism, and an obscure one, was about 185, by Irenæus. Tertullian spoke distinctly of the practice, but discouraged it as so serious a step that delay of baptism was desirable till character was formed. Hence he doubted its wisdom for the unmarried. Less earnest men than Tertullian felt that it was unwise to use so great an agency of pardon till one’s record of sins was practically made up. A conspicuous instance, by no means solitary, was the Emperor Constantine, who postponed his baptism till his death-bed. To Origen infant baptism was an apostolic custom. Cyprian favored its earliest possible reception. Why infant baptism arose there is no certain evidence. Cyprian, in the letter just cited, argued in its favor from the doctrine of original sin.

Yet the older general opinion seems to have held to the innocency of childhood. More probable explanations are the feeling that outside the church there is no salvation, and the words attributed to...
Christ in *John 3:5*. Christian parents would not have their children fail of entering the Kingdom, of God.

Infant baptism did not, however, become universal till the sixth century, largely through the feeling already noted in Tertullian, that so cleansing a sacrament should not be lightly used.

**Mode of Baptism**

As to the method of baptism, it is probable that the original form was by immersion, complete or partial. That is implied in *Romans* 6:4 and *Colossians* 2:12. Pictures in the catacombs would seem to indicate that the submersion was not always complete. The fullest early evidence is that of the *Didache*: “Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living [running] water. But if thou hast not living water, then baptize in other water; and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, then pour water upon the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Affusion (i.e. pouring) was, therefore, a recognized form of baptism. Cyprian cordially upheld it.

Immersion continued the prevailing practice till the late Middle Ages in the West; in the East it so remains. The *Didache* and Justin show that fasting and an expression of belief, together with an agreement to live the Christian life were necessary prerequisites. By the time of Tertullian an elaborate ritual had developed. The ceremony began with the formal renunciation by the candidate of the devil and all his works. Then followed the threefold immersion. On coming from the fount the newly baptized tasted a mixture of milk and honey, in symbolism of his condition as a new-born babe in Christ. To that succeeded anointing with oil and the laying on of the hands of the baptizer in token of the reception of the Holy Spirit. Baptism and what was later known as confirmation were thus combined. Tertullian also shows the earliest now known existence of Christian sponsors, *i.e.*, godparents.

**Valid Baptism**

In the apostolic age baptism was administered doubtless not only by Apostles and other leaders, but widely by those charismatically eminent in the church. By 110-117 Ignatius, in the interest of unity, was urging, “it is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or to hold a love-feast.” In Tertullian’s time, “of giving it, the chief priest, who is the bishop, has the right; in the next place the presbyters and deacons . . . besides these even laymen have the right, for what is equally received can be equally given.” In the Greek and Roman Churches baptism still continues the only sacrament which any Christian, or indeed any seriously intending person, can administer in case of necessity.

The middle of the third century saw a heated discussion over the validity of heretical baptism. Tertullian had regarded it as worthless; and his was undoubtedly the prevalent opinion of his time. After the Novatian schism (see §2.16) Bishop Stephen of Rome (254-257) advanced the claim that baptism, even by heretics, was effectual if done in proper form. His motives seem to have been partly the growing feeling that sacraments are of value in themselves, irrespective of the character of the administrant, and partly a desire to facilitate the return of the followers of Novatian. This interpretation was energetically resisted by Cyprian of Carthage, and Firmilian “of Caesarea in Cappadocia,” and led to certain important assertions of the authority of the Roman bishop. The deaths of Stephen and Cyprian gave a pause to the dispute; but the Roman view grew into general acceptance in the West. The East reached no such unanimity of judgment.

[6]. 4. THE EUCHARIST (THE LORD’S SUPPER)

**Christ’s Presence in the Supper**

Some account has been given of the early development of the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper (§1.5, 1.8). It has been seen that “breaking of bread,” in connection with a common meal, was a Christian practice from the beginning. From the time of Paul, certainly, it was believed to be by command of Christ Himself, and in peculiar remembrance of Him and of His death. Outside the New Testament three writers refer to the Lord’s Supper before the age of Irenæus. Of these the account in the *Didache* reflects the most primitive Christian conditions. It provides a simple liturgy of gratitude. Thou “didst bestow upon us spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Thy Son.” From Christ come “life and knowledge.” A more mystical explanation of the Supper, however, began early. *John 6:47-58* teaches the necessity of
eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ to have “life.” To Ignatius the Supper “is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote that we should not die but live forever.” Justin affirmed, “for not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His Word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.”

By Justin’s time (153) the Lord’s Supper was already separated from the common meal. Irenaeus continued and developed the thought of the fourth Gospel and of Ignatius that the Supper confers “life.” “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” In how far these conceptions were influenced by the mystery religions, with their teaching that sharing a meal with the god is to become a partaker of the divine nature, is difficult to decide; but they undoubtedly grew out of the same habit of thought. It may be said that, by the middle of the second century, the conception of a real presence of Christ in the Supper was widespread. It was stronger in the West than in the East, but ultimately it won its way also there.

The Eucharist a Sacrifice

In early Christian thought not only were believers themselves “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,” but all actions of worship were sacrificial. The leaders of the church “offered the gifts of the bishop’s office.” All its membership could “do good and communicate,” “for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” In particular, the Lord’s Supper was a “sacrifice,” and this feeling was doubtless strengthened by the circumstance that it was the occasion of the gifts of the congregation for those in need. As late a writer as Irenaeus, while viewing the Lord’s Supper as pre-eminently a “sacrifice,” still held that all Christian actions are also of a sacrificial character. Christianity, however, was in a world where sacrificial conceptions of a much more definite nature were familiar in the religions on every hand. Sacrifice demands a priest. With Tertullian the term sacerdos first comes into full use.

With Cyprian the developed doctrine of the Lord’s Supper as a sacrifice offered to God by a priest has been fully reached. “For if Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is Himself the chief priest of God the Father, and has first offered Himself a sacrifice to the Father, and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of Himself, certainly that priest truly discharges the office of Christ, who imitates that which Christ did; and he then offers a true and full sacrifice in the church when he proceeds to offer it according to what he sees Christ Himself to have offered.” The business of the Christian priest is “to serve the altar and to celebrate the divine sacrifices.” Already by Tertullian’s time the Lord’s Supper was held in commemoration of the dead. Cyprian shows such “sacrifices” for martyrs. The sense of the life-giving quality of the Supper led, also, to the custom of infant communion, of which Cyprian is a witness. Here, as in the doctrine of Christ’s physical presence, the conception of the Supper as a sacrifice to God was earlier in the West than in the East. It did not become general in the Orient much before 300. With it the Catholic conception of the Supper was evident as (a) a sacrament in which Christ is really present (the how of that presence was not to be much discussed till the Middle Ages), and in which the believer partakes of Christ, being thereby brought into union with Him and built up to the immortal life; and (b) a sacrifice offered to God by a priest and inclining God to be gracious to the living and the dead. Much was still left obscure, but the essentials of the Catholic view were already at hand by 253.

What Sins Can Be Forgiven

The general view of early Christianity was that “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins.” But there were sins so bad that they could not be forgiven, they were “unto death.” Just what this “sin unto death” might be, was uncertain. It was one opinion that it was rejection of the Holy Spirit. Mark represents Christ as saying: “Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit

[6].5. FORGIVENESS of SINS
hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” (329). The Didache held that “any prophet speaking in the Spirit, ye shall not try neither discern; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven.”233 The general feeling was, however, that the unforgivable sins were idolatry or denial of the faith, murder, and gross licentiousness. The first-named was specially hopeless. No severer denunciations can be found in the New Testament than those directed by the writer of Hebrews toward such as “crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh” (64'8, 1026-31). To Tertullian the “deadly sins” were seven, “idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, fornication, false-witness and fraud.”234

While, by the time of Hermas (115-140), baptism was regarded as cleansing all previous sins, those committed after it, of the class just described, were “deadly.” But the tendency was toward some modification of this strictness. The burden of Hermas was that, by exception, in view of the near end of the world, one further repentance had been granted after baptism.235 This extended even to adultery.236 Yet church practice was elsewhere milder, in the second century, than church theory. Irenæus gives an account of the reclaiming of an adulteress, who “spent her whole time in the exercise of public confession.”237 In Tertullian’s time the feeling was that there was one repentance possible for deadly sins after baptism—“a second reserve of aid against hell”—“now once for all, because now for the second time, but never more.”238 Restoration was to be, if at all, only after a humiliating public confession, an “exomologesis,” “to feed prayers on fastings, to groan, to weep and make outcries unto the Lord your God; to bow before the feet of the presbyters, and kneel to God’s dear ones.”239 Yet practice was far from universally as rigorous as Tertullian would imply.

Penance and Restoration

The question inevitably arose as to when a sinner had done enough to be restored. The feeling appeared early that the absolving power was divinely lodged in the congregation.240 This authority was also regarded as directly committed to Peter, and, by implication, to church officers, when such developed.241 But, curiously, a double practice prevailed. About to be martyrs and confessors, i. e., those who endured tortures or imprisonment for their faith, were deemed also able to absolve because filled with the Spirit.242 This twofold authority led to abuse. Many of the confessors were lax. Cyprian, in particular, had trouble on this score.243 Naturally bishops tried to repress this right of confessors; but it remained a popular opinion till the cessation of persecution. Absolution ultimately raised the question of a scale of penance, a standard as to when enough had been done to justify forgiveness, but that development is beyond the limits of the present period. It is not to be found till about 300.

These restorations, which were particularly of the licentious,244 were deemed exceptional, however common; and it came as a shock, at least to a rigid Montanist ascetic like Tertullian, when the aggressive Roman bishop, Kallistos (217-222), (§), who had himself been a confessor, issued a declaration in his own name, which is a landmark in the development of papal authority, that he would absolve sins of the flesh on a proper repentance.245 This was an official breach in the popular list of “sins unto death,” whatever actual breach earlier practice may have made.

All Sins may be Forgiven

In common judgment, denial of the faith was the worst of these offenses, and not even Kallistos had promised pardon for that. The question was raised on a tremendous scale by the Decian persecution. Thousands lapsed and sought restoration after the storm was over. In Rome, Bishop Fabian died a martyr in 250. The Roman Church was rent on the question of their treatment. A dispute beginning in personal antipathies, not at first involving the lapsed, resulted in the choice by the majority of Cornelius, a comparative nobody, as bishop over Novatian, the most distinguished theologian in Rome (§ 2.8). The minority supported Novatian. The majority soon advocated the milder treatment of the lapsed, while Novatian advanced to the rigorist position. Novatian began a schism that lasted till the seventh century, and founded protesting churches wide-spread in the empire. He renewed the older practice and denied restoration to all guilty of “sins unto death.” His was a lost cause. Synods in Rome and Carthage in 251 and 253, representative of the majority, permitted the restoration of the lapsed, under strict conditions of penance. Though the question was to arise again in the persecution under Diocletian, which began in 303,246 and though varied practice long continued in different parts of the church, the decision in Rome in
251 was ultimately regulative. All sins were thereby forgivable. The old distinction continued in name, but it was henceforth only between great sins and small.

[6]. 6. SINNERS in the CHURCH

In apostolic times the church was undoubtedly conceived as composed exclusively of experiential Christians.\(^{247}\) There were bad men who needed discipline in it,\(^{248}\) but Paul could paint an ideal picture of the church as “not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.”\(^{249}\) It was natural that this should be so. Christianity came as a new faith. Those who embraced it did so as a result of personal conviction, and at the cost of no little sacrifice. It was long the feeling that the church is a community of saved men and women. Even then, it was true that many were unworthy. This is Hermas’s complaint. The oldest sermon outside the New Testament has a modern sound. “For the Gentiles when they hear from our mouth the oracles of God, marvel at them for their beauty and greatness; then, when they discover that our works are not worthy of the words which we speak, forthwith they betake themselves to blasphemy, saying that it is an idle story and a delusion.”\(^{250}\) Yet, in spite of the recognition of these facts the theory continued. But the increasing age of Christianity forced a change of view. By the beginning of the third century there were many whose parents, possibly remoter ancestors, had been experiential Christians, but who, though they attended public worship, were Christians in little more than in name. What were they? They did not worship with the pagan. The public regarded them as Christians. Some of them had been baptized in infancy. Had the church a place for them? Their numbers were such that the church was compelled to feel that it had. Its own conception of itself was altering from that of a communion of saints to that of an agency for salvation. This change was evident in the teaching of Bishop Kallistos of Rome (217-222). He cited the parable of the tares and the wheat,\(^{251}\) and compared the church to the ark of Noah in which were “things clean and unclean.”\(^{252}\) The earlier and later theories thus indicated divide the allegiance of modern Christendom to this day.

The rejection of the Montanists and the decay of the expectation of the speedy end of the world undoubtedly greatly favored the spread of worldliness in the church—a tendency much increased by its rapid growth from pagan converts between 202 and 250. As common Christian practice became less strenuous, however, asceticism grew as the ideal of the more serious. Too much must not be expected of common Christians. The Didache, in the first half of the second century, had exhorted: “If thou art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou shalt be perfect; but if thou art not able, do that which thou art able” (6). Hermas (115-140) had taught that a man could do more than God commanded, and would receive a proportionate reward.\(^{253}\) These tendencies but increased. They were, however, greatly furthered by a distinction between the “advice” and the requirements of the Gospel, which was clearly drawn by Tertullian\(^{254}\) and Origen.\(^{255}\)

While the requirements of Christianity are binding on all Christians, the advice is for those who would live the holier life. On two main phases of conduct the Gospel was thought to give such counsels of perfection. Christ said to the rich young man: “If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.”\(^{256}\) He also declared that some are “eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake,” and that, “in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels.”\(^{257}\) Paul said “to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I.”\(^{258}\) Voluntary poverty and voluntary celibacy were, therefore, deemed advice impossible of fulfilment by all Christians, indeed, but conferring special merit on those who practised them. About these two conceptions all early Christian asceticism centred, and they were to be the foundation stones of monasticism when that system arose at the close of the third century. As the clergy should set a specially good example, not only was second marriage discouraged from the sub-apostolic age;\(^{259}\) but, by the beginning of the third century, marriage after entering on office was deemed unallowable.\(^{260}\) The life of celibacy, poverty, and contemplative retirement from the activities of the world was admired as the Christian ideal, and was widely practised, though as yet without separation from society. The road to full monasticism had been fairly entered. Probably the most unfortunate aspect of this double ideal was that it tended to discourage the efforts of the ordinary Christian.
7. PERSECUTION and TRANSFORMATION


[7].1. REST AND GROWTH, 260-303

The end of the period of persecution affected by the edict of Gallienus, in 260, was followed by more than forty years of practical peace. Legally, the church had no more protection than before, and the able Emperor Aurelian (270-275) is said to have intended a renewal of persecution when prevented by death. Even with him it apparently did not come to the proclamation of a new hostile edict. The chief feature of this epoch was the rapid growth of Christianity. By 300 Christianity was effectively represented in all parts of the empire. Its distribution was very unequal, but it was influential in the central provinces of political importance, in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Syria, Egypt, northern Africa, central Italy, southern Gaul and Spain. Nor was its upward progress in the social scale less significant. During this period it won many officers of government and imperial servants. Most important of all, it began now to penetrate the army on a considerable scale. As late as 246-248 the best that Origen could say in reply to Celsus’s criticism that Christians failed of their duty to the state by refusal of army service, was that Christians did a better thing by praying for the success of the Emperor. 261 Origen also expresses and defends Christian unwillingness to assume the burdens of governmental office. 262 Even then Christians had long been found in the Roman armies; 263 but Origen undoubtedly voiced prevalent Christian feeling in the middle of the third century. By its end both Christian feeling and practice had largely changed.

This period of rapid growth was one of greatly increasing conformity to worldly influences also. How far this sometimes went a single illustration may show. The Council of Elvira, now Granada, in Spain (c. 313), provided that Christians who as magistrates wore the garments of pagan priesthood could be restored after two years’ penance, provided they had not actually sacrificed or paid for sacrifice. 264

As compared with the first half of the third century, its latter portion was a period of little literary productivity or theological originality in Christian circles. No names of the first rank appeared. The most eminent was that of Dionysius, who held the bishopric of Alexandria (247-264), a pupil of Origen and like him for a time head of the famous catechetical school. Through his writings the influence of Origen was extended, and the great theologian’s thoughts were in general dominant in that period in the East. Dionysius combated the widespread Eastern Sabellianism. He also began the practice of sending letters to his clergy, notifying them of the date of Easter—a custom soon largely developed by the greater bishoprics, and made the vehicle of admonition, doctrinal definition, and controversy. Beside the Sabellianism, which Dionysius combated, Dynamic Monarchianism was vigorously represented in Antioch by Paul of Samosata till 272 (ante, p. 72). This administratively gifted bishop held a high executive position under Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, to whom Antioch belonged for a period before her overthrow by the Emperor Aurelian. Paul’s opponents, being unable to deprive him of possession of the church building, appealed to Aurelian, who decided that it rightfully belonged to “those to whom the bishops of Italy and of the city of Rome should adjudge it.” 265 Doubtless Aurelian was moved by political considerations in this adjudication, but this Christian reference to imperial authority, and the Emperor’s deference to the judgment of Rome were significant.

With Antioch of this period is to be associated the foundation of a school of theology by Lucian, of whom little is known of biographical detail, save that he was a presbyter, held aloof from the party in Antioch which opposed and overcame Paul of Samosata, taught there from c. 275 to c. 303, and died a martyr’s death in 312. Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia were his pupils, and the supposition is probable that his views were largely reproduced in them. Like Origen, he busied himself with textual and exegetical labors on the Scriptures, but had little liking for the allegorizing methods of the great Alexandrian. A simpler, more grammatical and historical method of treatment both of text and doctrine characterized his teaching.

[7].2. RIVAL RELIGIOUS FORCES
Neoplatonism

The latter half of the third century was the period of the greatest influence of Mithraism in the empire. As the Sol Invictus, Mithras was widely worshipped, and this cult was popular in the army and favored by the Emperors who rose from its ranks. Two other forces of importance arose in the religious world. The first was Neo-Platonism. Founded in Alexandria by Ammonius Saccas (?-c. 245), its real developer was Plotinus (205-270), who settled in Rome about 244. From him, the leadership passed to Porphyry (233-304). Neo-Platonism was a pantheistic, mystical interpretation of Platonic thoughts. God is simple, absolute existence, all perfect, from whom the lower existences come. From Him the Nous (νοûς) emanates like the Logos in the theology of Origen. From the Nous the world-soul derives being, and from that individual souls. From the world-soul the realm of matter comes. Yet each stage is inferior in the amount of being it possesses to the one above—has less of reality—reaching in gradations from God, who is all-perfect, to matter which, as compared with Him, is negative. The morals of Neo-Platonism, like those of later Greek philosophy generally, were ascetic, and its conception of salvation was that of a rising of the soul to God in mystic contemplation, the end of which was union with the divine.

Manicheism

Neo-Platonism was much to influence Christian theology, notably that of Augustine. Its founders were not conspicuously organizers, however, and it remained a way of thinking for the relatively few rather than an inclusive association of the many. Far otherwise was it with a second movement, that of Manicheism. Its founder, Mani, was born in Persia in 215 or 216, began his preaching in Babylon in 242, and was crucified in 276 or 277. Strongly based on the old Persian dualism, Manicheism was also exceedingly syncretistic. It received elements from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity. Light and darkness, good and evil are eternally at war. Its conception of the relations of spirit and matter, and of salvation, in many ways resembled those of Gnosticism. Man is essentially a material prison house of the realm of evil, in which some portion of the realm of light is confined. Hence salvation is based on right knowledge as to the nature of this bondage, and desire to return to the realm of light, coupled with extreme ascetic rejection of all that belongs to the sphere of darkness, especially the physical appetites and desires. Its worship was as simple as its asceticism was strict. Its membership was in two classes, the perfect, always relatively few, who practised its full austerities; and the hearers, who accepted its teachings, but with much less strictness of practice—a distinction not unlike that between monks and ordinary Christians in the church. Its organization was fairly centralized and rigid. In Manichaeism Christianity had a real rival. Its spread was rapid in the empire, and it absorbed not only many of the followers of Mithraism, but the remnants of Christian-Gnostic sects, and other early heresies. Its great growth was to be in the fourth and fifth centuries, and its influence was to be felt till the late Middle Ages through sects which were heirs of its teachings, like the Cathari.

[7]. 3. THE FINAL STRUGGLE

Diocletian Strengthens The Empire

In 284 Diocletian became Roman Emperor. A man of the humblest origin, probably of slave parentage, he had a distinguished career in the army, and was raised to the imperial dignity by his fellow soldiers. Though a soldier-emperor, he was possessed of great abilities as a civil administrator, and determined to reorganize the empire so as to provide more adequate military defense, prevent army conspiracies aiming at a change of Emperors, and render the internal administration more efficient. To these ends he appointed an old companion-in-arms, Maximian, regent of the West, in 285, with the title of Augustus, which Diocletian himself bore. In further aid of military efficiency he designated, in 293, two “Caesars”—one, Constantius Chlorus, on the Rhine frontier, and the other, Galerius, on that of the Danube. Each was to succeed ultimately to the higher post of “Augustus.” All was held in harmonious working by the firm hand of Diocletian.

In internal affairs the changes of Diocletian were no less sweeping. The surviving relics of the old republican empire, and of senatorial influence, were now set aside. The Emperor became an autocrat in the
later Byzantine sense. A new division of provinces was effected; and Rome was practically abandoned as the capital, Diocletian making the more conveniently situated Nicomedia, in Asia Minor, his customary residence. Crippling inflation was countered by legislation that fixed prices for all items throughout the empire – with violation punishable by death. To insure adequate services, certain professions were made hereditary. In character Diocletian was a rude but firm supporter of pagan ism of the cruder camp type.

To such a man of organizing abilities, the closely knit, hierarchically ordered church presented a serious political problem. It must have seemed a state within the state over which he had no control. Though there had never been a Christian uprising against the empire, and Christianity had held aloof from politics to a remarkable degree, the church was rapidly growing in numbers and strength. Two courses lay open for a vigorous ruler, either to force it into submission and break its power, or to enter into alliance with it and thus secure political control of the growing organism. The latter was to be the method of Constantine; the former the attempt of Diocletian. No other course could be expected from a man of his religious outlook.

The Eastern Caesar, Galerius, was even more hostile to Christianity, and had much influence over Diocletian. To him the suggestions of persecution may have been due. The growth of Christianity, moreover, was uniting all the forces of threatened pagan ism against it; while Christianity was rapidly growing in numbers and strength.

Persecution Under Diocletian

Diocletian moved slowly, however. A cautious effort to rid the army and the imperial palace service of Christians was followed, beginning in February, 303, by three great edicts of persecution in rapid succession. Churches were ordered destroyed, sacred books confiscated, clergy imprisoned and forced to sacrifice by torture. In 304 a fourth edict required all Christians to offer sacrifices. It was a time of fearful persecution. As in the days of Decius there were many martyrs, and many who “lapsed.” Popular feeling was, however, far less hostile than in previous persecutions. The severity of the persecution varied with the attitude of the magistrates by whom its penalties were enforced. Cruel in Italy, North Africa, and the Orient, the friendly “Caesar,” Constantius Chlorus, made apparent compliance in Gaul and Britain by destroying church edifices, but left the Christians themselves unharmed. He thereby gained a popularity with those thus spared that was to redound to the advantage of his son.

The voluntary retirement of Diocletian, and the enforced abdication of his colleague, Maximian, in 305, removed the strong hand of the only man able to master the complex governmental situation. Constantius Chlorus and Galerius now became “Augusti,” but in the appointment of “Caesars,” the claims of the sons of Constantius Chlorus and Maximian were passed over in favor of two protégés of Galerius, Severus and Maximinus Daia. Persecution had now practically ceased in the West. It continued in increased severity in the East. Constantius Chlorus died in 306, and the garrison in York acclaimed his son Constantine as Emperor. On the strength of this army support, Constantine forced from Galerius his own recognition as “Caesar,” with charge of Gaul, Spain, and Britain. Soon after Maximian’s son, Maxentius, defeated Severus and made himself master of Italy and North Africa. The next trial of strength in the struggle for the empire to which Constantine had set himself must be with Maxentius. Its outcome would determine the mastery of the whole West. Licinius, a protégé of Galerius, succeeded to a portion of the former possessions of Severus.

Before the decisive contest for the West took place, however, Galerius, in conjunction with Constantine and Licinius, issued in April, 311, an edict of toleration to Christians “on condition that nothing is done by them contrary to discipline.” This was, at best, a grudging concession, though why it was granted at all by the persecuting Galerius, who was its main source, is not wholly evident. Perhaps he had become convinced of the futility of persecution. Perhaps the long and severe illness which was to cost him his life a few days later may have led him to believe that some help might come from the Christians’ God. The latter supposition is given added probability because the edict exhorts Christians to pray for its authors.

Constantine A Christian
The death of Galerius in May, 311, left four contestants for the empire. Constantine and Licinius drew together by mutual interest; while Maximinus Daia and Maxentius were united by similar bonds. Daia promptly renewed persecution in Asia and Egypt. Maxentius, while not a persecutor, was a pronounced partisan of paganism. Christian sympathy naturally flowed toward Constantine and Licinius. Constantine availed himself to the full of its advantages. To what extent he was now a personal Christian it is impossible to say. He had inherited a kindly feeling toward Christians. He had joined in the edict of 311. His forces seemed scarcely adequate for the great struggle with Maxentius. He doubtless desired the aid of the Christians’ God in the none too equal conflict—though it is quite probable that he may not then have thought of Hun as the only God. Constantine’s later affirmation that he saw a vision of a Christian symbol (a cross? A chi-rho?) with the inscription, “in this sign conquer,” was a conscious or unconscious legend. But that he invaded Italy, as in some sense a Christian, is a fact. A brilliant march and several successful battles in northern Italy brought him face to face with Maxentius at Saxa Rubra, a little to the north of Rome, with the Mulvian bridge across the Tiber between his foes and the city. There, on October 28, 312, occurred one of the decisive struggles of history, in which Maxentius lost the battle and his life. The West was Constantine’s. The Christian God, he believed, had given him the victory, and every Christian impulse was confirmed. He was, thenceforth, in all practical respects a Christian, even though pagan emblems still appeared on coins, and he retained the title of Pontifex Maximus.

Equal Rights For Christianity

Probably late in 312 Constantine and Licinius published in Milan the great edict which gave complete freedom to Christianity, though it has been preserved only in the form addressed by Licinius to the Eastern officers. It was no longer, as in 311, one of toleration; nor did it make Christianity the religion of the empire. It proclaimed absolute freedom of conscience, placed Christianity on a full legal equality with any religion of the Roman world, and ordered the restoration of all church property confiscated in the recent persecution. A few months after the edict was issued, in April, 313, Licinius decisively defeated the persecutor, Maximinus Daia, in a battle not far from Adrianople, which seemed to the Christians a second Mulvian bridge. Two Emperors were, however, one too many. Licinius, defeated by Constantine in 314, held scarcely more than a quarter of the empire. Estranged from Constantine, the favor shown by the latter to Christianity Licinius increasingly resented. His hostility grew to persecution. It was, therefore, with immense satisfaction that the Christians witnessed his final defeat in 323. Constantine was at last sole ruler of the Roman world. The church was everywhere free from persecution. Its steadfastness, its faith, and its organization had carried it through its perils. But, in winning its freedom from its enemies, it had come largely under the control of the occupant of the Roman imperial throne. A fateful union with the state had begun.

[7.] 4. THE CHANGED SITUATION

To Constantine’s essentially political mind Christianity was the completion of the process of unification which had long been in progress in the empire. It had one Emperor, one law, and one citizenship for all free men. It should have one religion. Constantine moved slowly, however. Though the Christians were very unequally distributed and were much more numerous in the East than in the West, they were but a fraction of the population when the Edict of Milan granted them equal rights. The church had grown with great rapidity during the peace in the last half of the third century. Under imperial favor its increase was by leaps and bounds. That favor Constantine promptly showed. By a law of 319 the clergy were exempted from the public obligations that weighed so heavily on the well-to-do portion of the population. In 321 the right to receive legacies was granted, and thereby the privileges of the church as a corporation acknowledged. The same year Sunday work was forbidden to the people of the cities. In 319 [it is possible – but not certain – that] private pagan sacrifices were prohibited. Gifts were made to clergy, and great churches erected in Rome, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and elsewhere under imperial auspices. Above all, Constantine’s formal transferrence of the capital to the rebuilt Byzantium, which he called New Rome, but which the world has named in his honor, Constantinople, was of high significance.
Undoubtedly political and defensive in its motives, its religious consequences were far-reaching. From its official foundation, in 330, it established the seat of empire in a city of few pagan traditions or influences, situated in the most strongly Christianized portion of the world. It left the bishop of Rome, moreover, the most conspicuous man in the ancient capital, to which the Latin-speaking West still looked with reverence—in a conspicuous which was the more possible of future importance because it was wholly unintended by Constantine, and was spiritual rather than political. Great as were the favors which Constantine showed to the church, they were only for that strong, close-knit, hierarchically organized portion that called itself the “Catholic.” The various “heretical” sects, and they were still many, could look for no bounty from his hands.

**Constantine’s Policy**

If Christianity was to be a uniting factor in the empire, the church must be one. Constantine found that unity seriously threatened. In North Africa the persecution under Diocletian had led to a schism, somewhat complicated and personal in its causes, but resembling that of Novatian in Rome, half a century earlier (ante, § 2.16). The church there was divided. The strict party charged that the new bishop of Carthage, Cæcilian, had received ordination in 311, from the hands of one in mortal sin, who had surrendered copies of the Scriptures in the recent persecution. That ordination it held invalid, and chose a counter-bishop, Majorinus. His successor, in 316, was the able Donatus the Great, from whom the schismatics received the name, Donatists. In 313 Constantine made grants of money to the Catholic clergy of North Africa. In these the Donatists did not share, and appealed to the Emperor. A synod held in Rome the same year decided against them, but the quarrel was only the more embittered. Constantine thereupon mapped out what was to be henceforth the imperial policy in ecclesiastical questions. He summoned a synod of his portion of the empire to meet, at public expense, in Arles, in southern Gaul. The church itself should decide the controversy, but under imperial control. Here a large council assembled in 314. The Donatist contentions were condemned. Ordination was declared valid even at the hands of a personally unworthy cleric. Heretical baptism was recognized, and the Roman date of Easter approved. The Donatists appealed to the Emperor, who once more decided against them, in 316; and as they refused to yield, now proceeded to close their churches and banish their bishops. The unenviable spectacle of the persecution of Christians by Christians was exhibited. North Africa was in turmoil. Constantine was, however, dissatisfied with the results, and in 321 abandoned the use of force against these schismatics. They grew rapidly, claiming to be the only true church possessed of a clergy free from “deadly sins” and of the only valid sacraments. Not till the Muslim conquest did the Donatists disappear.

**8. THE ARIAN EMPIRE**

[8].1. THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY to the DEATH of CONSTANTINE

A much more serious danger to the unity of the church than the Donatist schism which Constantine encountered was the great Arian controversy. It has already been pointed out that while the West, thanks to the work of Tertullian and Novatian, had reached practical unanimity regarding the unity of substance between Christ and the Father (ante, 2.8-2.9), the East was divided. Origen, still its most dominating theological influence, could be quoted in opposing senses. If he had taught the eternal generation of the Son, he had also held Him to be a second God and a creature (ante, 2.9). Adoptionist tendencies persisted, also, about Antioch; while Sabellianism was to be found in Egypt. The East, moreover, was vastly more interested in speculative theology than the West, and therefore more prone to discussion; nor can there be any doubt that, in the fourth century, much more of intellectual ability was to be found in the Greek-speaking than in the Latin-speaking portion of the empire.

The real cause of the struggle was these varying interpretations; but the actual controversy began in Alexandria, about 320, in a dispute between Arius and his bishop, Alexander (312 ?-328). Arius, a pupil
of Lucian of Antioch (ante, 2.18), was presbyter in charge of the church known as Baucalis. He was advanced in years and held in high repute as a preacher of learning, ability, and piety. Monarchian influences imbibed in Antioch led him to emphasize the unity and self-contained existence of God. In so far as he was a follower of Origen, he represented the great Alexandrian’s teaching that Christ was a created being. As such He was not of the substance of God, but was made like other creatures from “nothing.” Though the first-born of creatures, and the agent in fashioning the world, He was not eternal. “The Son has a beginning, but . . . God is without beginning.” Christ was, indeed, God in a certain sense to Arius, but a lower God, in no way one with the Father in essence or eternity. In the incarnation, this Logos entered a human body, taking the place of the human reasoning spirit. To Arius’s thinking, Christ was neither fully God nor fully man, but a tertium quid between. This is what makes his view wholly unsatisfactory.

Bishop Alexander was influenced by the other side of Origen’s teaching. To him the Son was eternal, like in essence to the Father, and wholly uncreated. His view was, perhaps, not perfectly clear, but its unlikeness to that of Arius is apparent. Controversy arose between Arius and Alexander, apparently on Arius’s initiative. It soon grew bitter, and about 320 or 321 Alexander held a synod in Alexandria by which Arius and a number of his sympathizers were condemned. Arius appealed for help to his fellow pupil of the school of Lucian, the powerful bishop, Eusebius of Nicomedia, and soon found a refuge with him. Alexander wrote widely to fellow bishops, and Arius defended his own position, aided by Eusebius. The Eastern ecclesiastical world was widely agitated.

Such was the situation when Constantine’s victory over Licinius made him master of the East as well as of the West. The quarrel threatened the unity of the church which he deemed essential. Constantine therefore sent his chief ecclesiastical adviser, Bishop Hosius of Cordova, in Spain, to Alexandria with an imperial letter, counselling peace and describing the issue involved as “an unprofitable question.” The well-meant, but bungling effort was vain. Constantine, therefore, proceeded to employ the same device he had already made use of at Aries in the Donatist dispute. He called a council of the entire church. That of Arles had been representative of all the portion of the empire then ruled by Constantine. Constantine was now master of all the empire, and therefore bishops of all the empire were summoned. The principle was the same, but the extent of Constantine’s enlarged jurisdiction made the gathering in Nicaea the First General Council of the church.

The Council Of Nicaea

The council, which assembled in Nicsea in May, 325, has always lived in Christian tradition as the most important in the history of the church. To it the bishops were summoned at government expense, accompanied by lower clergy, who did not, however, have votes in its decisions. The East had the vast preponderance. Of about three hundred bishops present only six were from the West. It included three parties. A small section, led by Eusebius of Nicomedia, were thoroughgoing Arians. Another small group were equally strenuous supporters of Alexander. The large majority, of whom the church historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, was a leader, were not deeply versed in the question at issue. Indeed, the majority, as a whole, were described by an unsympathetic writer as “simpletons.” As far as they had any opinion, they stood on the general basis of the teachings of Origen. Conspicuous in the assembly was the Emperor himself, who, though not baptized, and therefore not technically a full member of the church, was far too eminent a personage not to be welcomed enthusiastically.

Almost at the beginning of the council a creed presented by the Arians was rejected. Eusebius of Caesarea then offered the creed of his own church. It was a sweet-sounding confession, dating from before the controversy, and was, therefore, wholly indefinite as to the particular problems involved. This Caesarean creed was now amended most significantly by the insertion of the expressions, “begotten, not made, “of one essence (homoousion ομοούσιον, with the Father”), and by the specific rejection of Arian formulæ such as “there was when He was not” and “He was made of things that were not.” The later technically unlike words essence, substance (ousia/ουσια) and hypostasis (υποστάσις) were here used as equivalent expressions. Loofs has shown conclusively that the influences which secured these changes were Western, doubtless above all that of Hosius of Cordova, supported by the Emperor. In particular, the
test word, *homoousion*, had long been orthodox in its Latin equivalent (“consubstantial”), and had been in philosophic usage in the second century, though rejected by a synod in Antioch in the proceedings against Paul of Samosata (*ante*, §2.8). Indeed, it was used very sparingly by Athanasius himself in his earlier defense of the Nicene faith. It is easy to understand Constantine’s attitude. Essentially a politician, he naturally thought a formula that would find no opposition in the Western half of the empire, and would receive the support of a portion of the East, more acceptable than one which, while having only a part of the East in its favor, would be rejected by the whole West. To Constantine’s influence the adoption of the Nicene definition was due. That he ever understood its shades of meaning is more than doubtful; but he wanted a united expression of the faith of the church on the question in dispute, and believed that he had found it. Under his supervision all but two of the bishops present signed it. These, and Arius, Constantine sent into banishment. The imperial polities had apparently secured the unity of the church, and had given it what it had never before possessed, a statement which might be assumed to be a universally recognized creed.

Besides this action in thus formulating the creed, the Council of Nicaea issued a number of important canons regulating church discipline, paved the way for the return of those in Egypt who had joined the Melitian schism over the treatment of the lapsed, made easy the readmission of Novatians, and ordered a uniform date in the observation of Easter.

It is not strange, in view of the manner in which the Nicene creed was adopted, that soon after the council ended great opposition to its test word, *homoousion*, was manifested in the East. To the defeated Arians it was, of course, obnoxious. They were few. To the large middle party of disciples of Origen it was scarcely less satisfactory, for to them it seemed Sabellian. Though Eusebius of Nicomedia and his Arian sympathizer, Theognis of Nicaea, had signed, their evident hostility was such that Constantine sent both bishops into exile. By 328, however, they were home again, possibly through the favor of the Emperor’s sister, Constantia. Eusebius soon acquired a greater influence over Constantine than any other ecclesiastic of the East, and used it to favor the cause of Arius. With such elements of opposition to the Nicene result, the real battle was not in the council but in the more than half a century which followed its conclusion.

*Athanasius*

Meanwhile the great defender of the Nicene faith had come fully on the scene. Athanasius was born in Alexandria about 295. In the early stages of the Arian controversy he was a deacon, and served as private secretary to Bishop Alexander. As such he accompanied his bishop to Nicaea, and on Alexander’s death, in 328, was chosen in turn to the Alexandrian bishopric —a post which he was to hold, in spite of attack and five banishments, till his own demise in 373. [Although not universally regarded] as a great speculative theologian, Athanasius was a great character. In an age when court favor counted for much, he stood like a rock for his convictions, and that the Nicene theology ultimately conquered was primarily due to him, for the Nicene West possessed no able theologian. To him, the question at issue was one of salvation, and that he made men feel it to be so was a main source of his power. The Greek conception of salvation had been, since the beginnings of the tradition of Asia Minor, the transformation of sinful mortality into divine and blessed immortality (*theosis/divinization*) —the impartation of “life” (*ante*, §1.7). Only by real Godhead coming into union with full manhood in Christ could the transformation of the human into the divine be accomplished in Him, or be mediated by Him to His disciples. As Athanasius said: “He [Christ] was made human that we might be made divine.” 279 To his thinking the great error of Arianism was that it gave no basis for a real salvation. Well was it for the Nicene party that so moderate, yet determined, a champion stood for it, since the two other prominent defenders of the Nicene faith, Bishops Marcellus of Ancyra and Eustathius of Antioch, were certainly far from theologically impeccable, and were accused, not wholly rightly, of opinions decidedly Sabellian.

*The Arian Reaction*

Eusebius of Nicomedia soon saw in Athanasius the real enemy. Constantine would not desert the Nicene decision, but the same practical result could be achieved, Eusebius thought, by striking its defenders. Political and theological differences were cleverly used to secure the condemnation of
Eustathius in 330. The Eusebians determined to secure the discomfiture of Athanasius and the restoration of Arius. The latter, who had returned from banishment even before Eusebius, now presented to Constantine a creed carefully indefinite on the question at issue. To Constantine’s untheological mind this seemed a satisfactory retraction, and an expression of willingness to make his peace. He directed Athanasius to restore Arius to his place in Alexandria. Athanasius refused. Charges of overbearing and disloyal conduct were brought against Athanasius. Constantine was finally persuaded that the main obstacle in the path of peace was Athanasius’s stubbornness. The bishops assembled for the dedication of Constantine’s just completed church in Jerusalem, met in Tyre, and then in Jerusalem, under Eusebian influences, and decided in favor of Arius’s restoration in 335, and near the end of the year Constantine banished Athanasius to Gaul. Shortly after the same forces procured the deposition of Marcellus of Ancyra for heresy. The leading defenders of the Nicene creed being thus struck down, the Eusebians planned the restoration of Arius himself to church fellowship; but on the evening before the formal ceremony should take place Arius suddenly died (336). An aged man, the excitement may well have been fatal.

The Nicene faith seemed thus not officially overthrown, but practically undermined, when Constantine died on May 22, 337. Shortly before his demise he was baptized at the hands of Eusebius of Nicomedia. The changes which his life had witnessed, and he had largely wrought, in the status of the church were enormous; but they were not by any means wholly advantageous. If persecution had ceased, and numbers were rapidly growing under imperial favor, doctrinal discussions that earlier would have run their course were now political question of the first magnitude, and the Emperor had assumed a power in ecclesiastical affairs which was ominous for the future of the church. Yet in the existing constitution of the Roman Empire such results were probably inevitable once the Emperor himself should become, like Constantine, an adherent of the Christian faith.

2. CONTROVERSY UNDER CONSTANTINE’S SONS

The death of Constantine was succeeded by the division of the empire among his three sons, with some intended provisions for other relatives that were frustrated by a palace intrigue and massacre. Constantine II, the eldest, received Britain, Gaul, and Spain; Constantius, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt; while the intermediate portion came to the youngest, Constans. Constantine II died in 340, so that the empire was speedily divided between Constans in the West, and Constantius in the East. Both Emperors showed themselves, from the first, more partisan in religious questions than their father had been. A joint edict of 346 ordered temples closed, and forbade sacrifice on pain of death. The law was, however, but slightly enforced. The Donatist controversy in North Africa had greatly extended, and that land, in consequence, was the scene of much agrarian and social agitation. The Donatists were, therefore, attacked in force by Constans, and though not wholly crushed, were largely rooted out.

The most important relationship of the sons of Constantine to the religious questions of the age was to the continuing Nicene controversy. Under their rule it extended from a dispute practically involving only the East, as under Constantine, to an empire-wide contest. At the beginning of their joint reigns the Emperors permitted the exiled bishops to return. Athanasius was, therefore, once more in Alexandria before the close of 337. Eusebius was, however, still the most influential party leader in the East, and his authority was but strengthened when he was promoted, in 339, from the bishopric of Nicomedia to that of Constantinople, where he died about 341. Through the influence of Eusebius Athanasius was forcibly driven from Alexandria in the spring of 339, and an Arian bishop, Gregory of Cappadocia, put in his place by military power. Athanasius fled to Rome, where Marcellus of Ancyra soon joined him.

The Council of Sardica

East and West were now under different Emperors, and Constans held to the Nicene sympathies of his subjects. Not merely was the empire divided, but Bishop Julius of Rome could now interfere from beyond the reach of Constantius. He welcomed the fugitives and summoned their opponents to a synod in Rome, in 340, though the Eusebians did not appear. The synod declared Athanasius and Marcellus unjustly deposed. The Eastern leaders replied not merely with protests against the Roman action, but with an
attempt to do away with the Nicene formula itself, in which they had the support of Constantius. Two synods in Antioch, in 341, adopted creeds, far, indeed, from positively Arian in expression, but from which all that was definitely Nicene was omitted. In some respects they represented a pre-Nicene orthodoxy. The death of Eusebius, now of Constantinople, at this juncture cost the opponents of the Nicene decision his able leadership. The two brother Emperors thought that the bitter quarrel could best be adjusted by a new General Council, and accordingly such a body gathered in Sardica, the modern Sofia, in the autumn of 343. General Council it was not to be. The Eastern bishops, finding themselves outnumbered by those of the West, and seeing Athanasius and Marcellus in company with them, withdrew. By the Westerners Athanasius and Marcellus were once more approved, though the latter was a considerable burden to their cause by reason of his dubious orthodoxy. East and West seemed on the point of ecclesiastical separation.

The Council of Sardica had completely failed in its object of healing the quarrel, but the Westerners there assembled passed several canons, under the leadership of Hosius of Cordova, that are of great importance in the development of the judicial authority of the bishop of Rome. What they did was to enact the actual recent course of proceedings regarding Athanasius and Marcellus into a general rule. It was decided that in case a bishop was deposed, as these had been, he might appeal to Bishop Julius of Rome, who could cause the case to be retried by new judges, and no successor should be appointed till the decision of Rome was known. They were purely Western rules and seem to have aroused little attention, even in Rome, at the time, but were important for the future.

The two imperial brothers were convinced that the controversy was assuming too serious aspects. At all events, Constans favored Athanasius, and the rival bishop, Gregory, having died, Constantius permitted Athanasius to return to Alexandria in October, 347, where he was most cordially welcomed by the overwhelming majority of the population, which had always heartily supported him. The situation seemed favorable for Athanasius, but political events suddenly made it worse than it had ever been. A rival Emperor arose in the West in the person of Magnentius, and in 350 Constans was murdered. Three years of struggle brought victory over the usurper to Constantius, and left him sole ruler of the empire (353).

The Homoion Formula

Constantius, at last in full control, determined to end the controversy. To his thinking Athanasius was the chief enemy. The leadership against Athanasius was now in the hands of Bishops Ursacius of Singidunum, and Valens of Mursa. At synods held in Arles in 353, and in Milan in 355, Constantius forced the Western bishops to abandon Athanasius, and to resume communion with his Eastern opponents. For resistance to these demands Liberius, bishop of Rome, Hilary of Poitiers, the most learned bishop of Gaul, and the aged Hosius of Cordova were sent into banishment. Athanasius, driven from Alexandria by military force in February, 356, began his third exile, finding refuge for the next six years largely among the Egyptian monks. At a synod held in Sirmium, the Emperor’s residence, in 357, *ousia* (substance) in any of its combinations was forbidden as unscriptural. This, so far as the influence of the synod went, was an abolition of the Nicene formula. Hosius signed it, though he absolutely refused to condemn Athanasius. The declaration of Sirmium was strengthened by an agreement secured by Constantius at the little Thracian town of Nice, in 359, in which it was affirmed “we call the Son like the Father, as the holy scriptures call Him and teach.” The Emperor and his episcopal favorites, notably Valens of Mursa, now secured its acceptance by synods purporting to represent East and West, held in Rimini, Seleucia, and Constantinople. The Old-Nicene formula was set aside, and the whole church had, theoretically, accepted the new result. The proper term, the only one allowed in court circles, was “the Son is like the Father”—homoios—hence those who supported its use were known as the Homoion (“like”) party. Apparently colorless, the history of its adoption made it a rejection of the Nicene faith, and opened the door to Arian assertions. The Arians had triumphed for the time being, and that success was largely aided by the fact that its Homoian formula appealed to many who were heartily tired of the long controversy.

A Middle Party

Really, however, the Arian victory had prepared the way for the ruin of Arianism, though that result was not immediately apparent. The opposition to the Nicene formula had always been composed of two
elements: a small Arian section, and a much larger conservative body, which stood mainly on positions reached by Origen, to which Arianism was obnoxious, but which looked upon *homoousios*, the Nicene phrase, as an unwarranted expression already condemned in Antioch, and of Sabellian ill-repute. Both elements had worked together to resist the Nicene formula, but their agreement went no further. Extreme Arians were raising their heads in Alexandria and elsewhere. The conservatives were even more hostile to them than to the Nicene party. They would not say *homoousios*—of one substance—but they were willing to say *homoiousios*—not in the sense of like substance, as the natural translation would be, but of equality of attributes. They were also beginning to draw a distinction between *ousia*—substance, essence—and *hypostasis*—now using the latter in the sense of “subsistence,” instead of making them equivalent, as in the Nicene symbol. This enabled them to preserve the Origenistic teaching of “three hypostases,” while insisting on the community of attributes. The newly formed middle party came first into evidence with a synod at Ancyra, in 358, and its chief early leaders were Bishops Basil of Ancyra, and George of Laodicea. They have usually been called the Semi-arians, but the term is a misnomer. They rejected Arianism energetically. They really stood near to Athanasius. He recognized this approach, and Hilary of Poitiers furthered union by urging that the conservatives meant by *homoiousios* what the Nicene party understood by *homoousios*.  

The ultimate Nicene victory was to come about through the fusion of the Nicene and the “Semi-Arian” parties. In that union the tradition of Asia Minor, and the interpretations of Origen were to combine with those of Alexandria. It was a slow process, however, and in its development the earlier Nicene views were to be considerably modified into the New-Nicene theology.

**[8]** 3. **THE LATER NICENE STRUGGLE**

Constantius died in 361 as he was preparing to resist his cousin, Julian, whom the soldiers in Paris had declared Emperor. His death left the Roman world to Julian. Spared on account of his youth at the massacre of his father and other relatives on the death of Constantine, he looked upon Constantius as his father’s murderer. Brought up in peril of his life, and forced to strict outward churchly observance, he came to hate everything which Constantius represented, and was filled with admiration for the literature, life, and philosophy of the older Hellenism. He was not an “apostate,” in the sense of a turncoat. Though necessarily concealed from the public, his pagan ism had long been real, when his campaign against Constantius enabled him publicly to declare it. It was pagan ism of a mystical, philosophical character. On his accession he attempted a pagan revival. Christianity was everywhere discouraged, and Christians removed from office. Bishops banished under Constantius were recalled, that the quarrels of Christians might aid in the pagan reaction. Athanasius was thus once more in Alexandria in 362, but before the year was out was exiled for the fourth time by Julian, who was angered by his success in making converts from pagan ism. Julian’s reign was soon over. In 363 he lost his life in a campaign against the Persians. In him Rome had its last pagan Emperor.

**Athanasius’ Growing Strength**

The reign of Julian showed the real weakness of the Arianizing elements which Constantius had supported. Athanasians and Semi-Arians drew together. Furthermore, the Nicene debate was broadening out to include a discussion of the relations of the Holy Spirit to the Godhead. Since the time of Tertullian, in the West, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had been regarded as three “persons,” of one substance (ante, p. 69). The East had reached no such unanimity. Even Origen had been uncertain whether the Spirit was “created or uncreated,” or “a son of God or not.” 286 There had not been much discussion of the theme. Now that it had come forward, the *homoousia* of the Holy Spirit with the Father, seemed to Athanasius and his friends a corollary from the *homoousia* of the Son. At a synod held in Alexandria in 362, by the just returned Athanasius, terms of union were drawn up for rival parties in Antioch. It would be sufficient “to anathematize the Arian heresy and confess the faith confessed by the holy Fathers at Nicaea, and to anathematize also those who say that the Holy Ghost is a creature and separate from the essence of Christ.” 287 The employment of the terms “three hypostases” and “one hypostasis” the synod regarded as indifferent, provided “three” was not used in the sense of “alien in essence,” and “one” in that of Sabellian unity. The door was thus opened by Athanasius himself not only for the full definition of the doctrine of
the Trinity, but for the New-Nicene orthodoxy, with its Godhead in one essence (substance) and three hypostases.

The death of Julian was succeeded by the brief reign of Jovian. The empire had once more a Christian ruler, and happily, one who interfered little in ecclesiastical politics. Athanasius promptly returned from his fourth exile. Jovian’s rule ended in 364, and he was succeeded by Valentinian I (364-375), who, finding the imperial defense too great a task, took charge of the West, giving to his brother, Valens (364-378) the sovereignty of the East. Valentinian interfered little with churchly affairs. Valens came under the influence of the Arian clergy of Constantinople, and both Homooousian and Homoiousian sympathizers shared his dislike—a situation which helped to bring these parties nearer together. He condemned Athanasius to a fifth and final exile, in 365; but it was brief, and the aged bishop did not have to go far from the city. Valens was, however, no such vigorous supporter of Arianism as Constantius had been. Athanasius died in Alexandria, in 373, full of years and honors.

The Great Cappadocians

At the death of Athanasius the leadership in the struggle was passing into the hands of new men, of the New-Nicene party. Chief of these were the three great Cappadocians, Basil of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. Born of a prominent Cappadocian family about 330, Basil received the best training that Constantinople and Athens could yield, in student association with his lifelong friend Gregory of Nazianzus. About 357 he yielded to the ascetic Christian tendencies of the age, and gave up any idea of a career of worldly advancement, living practically as a monk. He visited Egypt, then the home of the rising monastic movement, and became the great propagator of monasticism in Asia Minor. He was, however, made for affairs and not for the cloister. Deeply versed in Origen, and in sympathy with the Homooiousian party, he belonged to the section which gradually came into fellowship with Athanasius, and like Athanasius he supported the full consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit. To the wing of the Homooiousian party which refused to regard the Spirit as fully God—the so-called Macedonians—he offered strenuous opposition. It was a far-reaching victory for his cause when Basil became bishop of the Cappadocian Caesarea, in 370. The post gave him ecclesiastical authority over a large section of eastern Asia Minor, which he used to the full till his early death, in 379, to advance the New-Nicene cause. He sought also to promote a good understanding between the opponents of Arianism in the East and the leaders of the West.

Gregory of Nyssa was Basil’s younger brother. An orator of ability, and a writer of even greater skill and theological clearness than Basil; he had not Basil’s organizing and administrative gifts. His title was derived from the little Cappadocian town—Nyssa—of which he became bishop in 371 or 372. He lived till after 394, and ranks among the four great Fathers of the Oriental Church.

Gregory of Nazianzus (329?-389?) had his title from the town of his birth, where his father was bishop. Warmly befriended with Basil from student days, like Basil he felt strongly the monastic attraction. His ability as a preacher was greater than that of either of his associates, but was exercised in most varying stations. As a priest he aided his father, from about 361. By Basil he was made bishop of the village of Sasima. About 378 he went to Constantinople to oppose the Arianism which was the faith of the vast majority of its inhabitants. The accession of the zealously Nicene Emperor, Theodosius, in 379, gave him the needed support, and he preached with such success that he gained the repute of having turned the city to the Nicene faith. By Theodosius he was made bishop of Constantinople in 381. But the frictions of party strife and the inclination to ascetic retirement which had several times before driven him from the world, caused him speedily to relinquish this most exalted ecclesiastical post. As a writer he ranked with Gregory of Nyssa. Like him he is reckoned one of the Eastern Fathers, and the later Orient has given him the title, the “Theologian.”

To the three Cappadocians, more than to any others, the intellectual victory of the New-Nicene faith was due. To the men of that age their work seemed the triumph of the Nicene formula. What modifications they really made have been well expressed by a recent German writer: 
Athanasius (and Marcellus) taught the one God, leading a threefold personal life, who reveals Himself us such. The Cappadocians think of three divine hypostases, which, as they manifest the same activity, are recognized as possessing one nature and the same dignity. The mystery for the former lay in the trinity; for the latter, in the unity. . . . The Cappadocians interpreted the doctrine of Athanasius in accordance with the conceptions and underlying principles of the Logos-Christology of Origen. They paid, however, for their achievement a high price, the magnitude of which they did not realize—the idea of the personal God. Three personalities and an abstract, impersonal essence, are the resultant.

The New-Nicene Orthodoxy

The original Nicene success and the temporary triumph of Arianism had been made possible by imperial interference. The same force was to give victory to the New-Nicene orthodoxy. The death of Valens in the great Roman defeat by the West Goths, near Adrianople, in 378, left his nephew, Gratian, the sole surviving ruler. Gratian preferred the care of the West, and wisely appointed as Emperor for the East an able general and administrator, Theodosius, who became ultimately, for a brief period, the last sole ruler of the Roman Empire. Born in Spain, he grew up in full sympathy with the theology of the West, and shared to the utmost its devotion to the Nicene faith. In 380, in conjunction with Gratian, he issued an edict that all should “hold the faith which the holy Apostle Peter gave to the Romans,” which he defined more particularly as that taught by the existing bishops, Damasus of Rome, and Peter of Alexandria. 289 This edict constitutes a reckoning point in imperial politics and ecclesiastical development. Henceforth there was to be but one religion in the empire, and that the Christian. Moreover, only that form of Christianity was to exist which taught one divine essence in three hypostases, or, as the West would express it in supposedly similar terms, one substance in three persons.

In 381 Theodosius held an Eastern synod in Constantinople, which ultimately gained repute as the Second General Council, and obtained an undeserved credit as the supposed author of the creed which passed into general use as “Nicene.” Of its work little is known. It undoubtedly rejected, however, that wing of the Homoiousian party—the Macedonian—which refused to accept the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit, and approved the original Nicene creed. Personal differences continued between East and West, and between Eastern parties; but the forcible way in which the Emperor now drove out the Arians decided the fate of Arianism in the empire, in spite of a brief toleration of Arianism in northern Italy by Gratian’s successor, Valentinian II, influenced by his mother, against which Ambrose of Milan had to strive. Here, too, the authority of Theodosius was potent after her death, about 388. Arianism in the empire was a lost cause, though it was to continue for several centuries among the Germanic invaders, thanks to the missionary work of Ulfila.

Yet even when the synod of 381 met, the Nicene creed, as adopted in 325, failed to satisfy the requirements of theological development in the victorious party. It said nothing regarding the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit, for instance. A creed more fully meeting the state of discussion was desirable, and actually such a creed came into use, and by 451 was regarded as adopted by the General Council of 381. It ultimately took the place of the genuine Nicene creed, and is that known as the “Nicene” to this day. Its exact origin is uncertain, but it is closely related to the baptismal creed of Jerusalem, as reconstructible from the teaching of Cyril, afterward bishop of that city, about 348; and also to that of Epiphanius of Salamis, about 374. 290

On reviewing this long controversy, it may be said that it was a misfortune that a less disputed phrase was not adopted at Nicaea, and doubly a misfortune that imperial interference played so large a part in the ensuing discussions. In the struggle the imperial church came into existence, and a policy of imperial interference was fully developed. Departure from official orthodoxy had become a crime.

Theodosius’s attitude was no less strenuous toward remaining pagan ism than in regard to heretical Christian parties. In 392 he forbade pagan worship under penalties similar to those for treason and sacrilege. 291 It was the old weapon of pagan ism against Christianity now used by Christian hands against pagan ism. Constantine’s toleration had fully disappeared. Nevertheless, pagan worship persisted, and only slowly died out.
9. THE ORTHODOX EMPIRE

[9].1. ARIAN MISSIONS and the GERMANIC INVASIONS

The Germanic Tribes

Throughout the history of the empire the defense of the frontiers of the Rhine and the Danube against the Teutonic peoples beyond had been an important military problem. Under Marcus Aurelius a desperate, but ultimately successful war had been waged by the Romans on the upper Danube (167-180). Considerable shifting of tribes and formations of confederacies took place behind the screen of the Roman frontier; but by the beginning of the third century the group known as the Alemans had formed across the upper Rhine, and half a century later, that of the Franks on the lower right side of that river. Between these two developments, about 230-240, the Goths completed their settlement in what is now southern Russia. In 250 and 251 the Roman hold in the Balkans was seriously threatened by a Gothic invasion, in which the persecuting Emperor, Decius, lost his life. The Goths effected a settlement in the region north of the lower Danube. They invaded the empire, and the peril was not stayed till the victories of Claudius (269), from which he derived his title, “Gothicus.” The stronger Emperors, Aurelian, Diocletian, and Constantine, held the frontiers of the Rhine and the Danube effectively; but the danger of invasion was always present. By the fourth century the Goths north of the Danube, who were most in contact with Roman civilization of any of the Germanic tribes, were known as the Visigoths, while their kinsmen in southern Russia were called Ostrogoths. The exact meaning of these names is uncertain, though they are generally regarded as signifying West and East Goths.

The Work of Ulfila

There was, indeed, much interchange between Romans and Germans, especially from the time of Aurelian onward. Germans served, in increasing numbers, in the Roman armies. Roman traders penetrated far beyond the borders of the empire. Germans settled in the border provinces and adopted Roman ways. Prisoners of war, taken probably in the raid of 264, from Cappadocia, had introduced the germs of Christianity among the Visigoths before the close of the third century, and even a rudimentary church organization in certain places. The Visigoths, as a nation, had not been converted. To that work Ulfila was to contribute. Born about 310, of parentage sprung, in part at least, from the captives just mentioned, he was of Christian origin, and became a “reader” in the services of the little Christian Gothic circle. In 341 he accompanied a Gothic embassy, and was ordained bishop by the Arian Eusebius of Nicomedia, then bishop of Constantinople, whether in the latter city, or in Antioch where the synod (ante, 3.4) was then sitting, is uncertain. His theology, which seems to have been very simple, was thenceforth anti-Nicene, and after the formation of the Homoioussian party he was to be reckoned one of its adherents. For the next seven years he labored in his native land, till persecution compelled him and his fellow Christians to seek refuge on Roman soil, living and laboring for many years near the modern Plevna, in Bulgaria. His great work was the translation of the Scriptures, or at least of the New Testament, into the Gothic tongue. In 383 he died on a visit to Constantinople. Unfortunately, the complete oblivion into which these Arian labors fell, owing to their unorthodox character in the view of the following age, allows no knowledge of Ulfila’s associates, nor a judgment as to how far the credit of turning the Visigoths to Christianity belonged to him, or to the Gothic chieftain Fritigern, about 370.

But, however brought about, the Visigoths, in spite of pagan persecution, rapidly accepted Arian Christianity. Not only they, but their neighbors the Ostrogoths, the Vandals in part, and remoter Germanic tribes, such as the Burgundians and Lombards, had embraced the Arian faith before invading the empire. Indeed, so widely had Christianity penetrated that it seems not improbable that, had the invasions been a couple of generations delayed, all might have entered the empire as Christians. As it was, those tribes only which were the farthest removed from the influences going out from the Visigoths —those of northwestern Germany, of whom the chief were the Franks and the Saxons—remained overwhelmingly
pagan at the time of the invasions. Such rapid extension of Christianity shows that the hold of native paganism must have been slight, and that many, whose names have utterly perished, shared in the work of conversion. It was of the utmost significance that when the walls of the empire were broken the Germans came, for the most part, not as enemies of Christianity. Had the Western empire fallen, as well it might, a century before, the story of Christianity might have been vastly different. [N.B it is now regarded as unlikely that the majority of Goths were Christian prior to entering the Roman Empire: conversion to Christianity was a precondition for entry, and it was this that likely spurred the conversions to Arian Christianity]

**The German Invasions**

Pressed by an invasion of Huns from western Central Asia, the Visigoths sought shelter across the frontier of the lower Danube in 376. Angered by ill-treatment from Roman officials, they crossed the Balkans and annihilated the Roman army near Adrianople, in 378, in a battle in which the Emperor Valens lost his life. The strong hand of Theodosius (379-395) restrained their further attacks; but on his death the empire, divided between his son of eighteen, Arcadius, in the East, and his eleven-year-old son, Honorius, in the West, was no longer able to resist the attack. Under Alaric, the Visigoths undertook raids from the Balkans almost to the walls of Constantinople, and thence moved into Greece, penetrating as far as Sparta. By 401 the Visigoths were pressing into northern Italy, but were resisted for the next few years by Theodosius’s able Vandal general, Stilicho, whom he had left as guardian for the young Honorius. Stilicho’s murder, in 408 [orchestrated by anti-barbarian senators], opened the road to Rome, and Alaric promptly marched thither. It was not till 410, however, that the Visigothic chieftain actually captured the city. The popular impression of this event was profound. The old mistress of the world had fallen before the barbarians. Alaric, desirous of establishing a kingdom for himself and of securing Roman Africa, the granary of Italy, marched at once for southern Italy, and there died before the close of 410. Under Ataulf the Visigothic host marched northward, entering southern Italy in 412. Here the Goths settled by 419, developing ultimately a kingdom that included half of modern France, to which they added most of Spain by conquest during the course of the century. The Roman inhabitants were not driven out, but they were subjected to their Germanic conquerors, who appropriated much of the land, and placed its older occupants in a distinctly inferior position. [The older local Roman bureaucracy was often left intact, although it has traditionally been claimed that ] commerce was hampered, the life of the cities largely broken down, and civilization crippled.

While these events were in progress, the tribes across the Rhine had seen their opportunity. The Arian Vandals and pagan Alans and Suevi invaded Gaul at the close of 406, ultimately pushing their way into Spain, where they arrived before the Visigoths. The Franks had pressed into northern Gaul and the Burgundians conquered the region around Strass- burg, and thence gradually the territory of eastern Gaul which still bears their name. Britain, involved in this collapse of Roman authority, was increasingly invaded by the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, who had been attacking its coasts since the middle of the fourth century. There Roman civilization had a weaker grasp than on the continent, and as Germanic conquest slowly advanced, it drove the Celtic element largely westward, and made much of Britain a pagan land. The Vandals from Spain, having entered Africa by 425, invaded it in full force in 429, under Gaiseric. They soon established there the most powerful of the early Germanic kingdoms, whose piratical ships speedily dominated the western Mediterranean. A Vandal raid sacked Rome in 455. A fearful invasion of Gaul in 451, by the Huns under Attila, was checked in battle near Troyes by the combined forces of the Romans and Visigoths. The next year Attila carried his devastations into Italy, and was barely prevented from taking Rome by causes which are now obscure, but among which the efforts of its bishop, Leo I, were believed to have been determinative.

Though the rule of the Emperors was nominally maintained in the West, and even the Germanic conquerors, who established kingdoms in Gaul, Spain, and Africa were professedly their dependents, the Emperors became the tools of the chiefs of the army. On the death of Honorius, in 423, the empire passed to Valentinian III. His long reign, till 455, was marked by the quarrels of Boniface, count of Africa, and Aetius, the count of Italy, which permitted the Vandal conquest of North Africa. Aetius won, indeed,
about the last victory of the empire when, with the Visigoths, he defeated Attila in 451. Between 455 and 476 no less than nine Emperors were set up and deposed in the West. The real ruler of Italy was the head of the army. From 456 to 472 this post was held by Ricimer, of Suevic and Visigothic descent. After his death the command was taken by a certain Orestes, who conferred the imperial title on his son, Romulus, nicknamed Augustulus. The army in Italy was recruited chiefly from smaller Germanic tribes, among them the Rugii and Heruli. It now demanded a third of the land. Orestes refused, and the army rose in mutiny in 476 under the Germanic general Odovakar, who, in order to establish his own rule as king, deposed the nominal Western Emperor. This date has usually been taken as that of the close of the Roman Empire. In reality it was without special significance. Romulus Augustulus was deposed and his imperial regalia sent to Constantinople by Odovakar. There was no further Emperor in the West till Charlemagne. But Odovakar and his contemporaries had no thought that the Roman Empire was at an end. He ruled in Italy as the Visigoths ruled in southern France and Spain, a nominal subject of the Roman Emperor, who sat on the throne in Constantinople.

Orovakar’s sovereignty in Italy was ended in 493 in the struggle against new Germanic invaders of Italy, the Ostrogoths, led by Theodoric. Under that successful conqueror a really remarkable amalgamation of Roman and Germanic institutions was attempted. His capital was Ravenna, whence he ruled till his death in 526. The Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy was brought to an end by the long wars under the Emperor Justinian, which were fought, from 535 to 555, by Belisarius and Narses, who restored a ravaged Italy to the empire. Contemporaneously (534) the imperial authority was re-established in North Africa and the Vandal kingdom brought to an end. Italy was not long at peace. Between 568 and 572 a new Germanic invasion, that of the Lombards, founded a kingdom that was to last for two centuries. Masters of northern Italy, to which region they gave their name, the Lombards did not, however, win Rome and the southern part of the peninsula, nor did they gain Ravenna, the seat of the imperial exarch, till the eighth century. Rome remained, therefore, connected with the empire which had its seat in Constantinople, but so distant and so close to the Lombard frontier that effective control from Constantinople was impossible—a condition extremely favorable for the growth of the political power of its bishop.

The Conversion of the Franks

Contemporaneously with the earlier of the events just described, changes of the utmost significance were in process in Gaul. The Franks, of whom mention has been made, had long been pressing into the northern part of the ancient provinces. Divided into several tribes, the King of the Salic Franks, from about 481, was Clovis. A chieftain of great energy, he soon extended his sovereignty as far as the Loire. He and his people were still pagan, though he treated the church with respect. In 493 he married Clotilda, a Burgundian, but, unlike most of her fellow countrymen, a Catholic, not an Arian. After a great victory over the Alemans, in 496, he declared for Christianity, and was baptized with three thousand of his followers in Rheims, on Christmas of that year. His was the first Germanic tribe, therefore, to be converted to the orthodox faith. Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Burgundians, and Lombards were Arians. This agreement in belief won for Clovis not only the good-will of the old Roman population and the support of the bishops whom he, in turn, favored but, added to his own abilities, enabled him before his death, in 511, to take from the Visigoths most of their possessions north of the Pyrenees and to become so extensive a ruler that he may well be called the founder of France, his territories stretching even beyond the Rhine. That the Franks were Catholic was ultimately, though not immediately, to bring connections between them and the papacy of most far-reaching consequences.

The conversion of the Franks had also much influence on the other Germanic invaders, though the example of the native population among whom they were settled worked even more powerfully. The Burgundians abandoned Arianism in 517, and in 532 became part of the Frankish kingdom. The imperial conquests of Justinian ended the Arian kingdoms of the Vandals and Ostrogoths. The rivalry of the creeds was terminated in Spain by the renunciation of Arianism by the Visigothic King, Recared, in 587, and confirmed at the Third Council of Toledo, in 589. About 590 the gradual conversion of the Lombards to Catholicism began—a process not completed till about 660. Thus all Arianism ultimately disappeared.
To the distinction already attaching to the Roman Church and its bishop the period of the invasions brought new eminence. Believed to be founded by Peter, situated in the ancient capital, the guardian of apostolic tradition, the largest and most generous church of the West, it had stood orthodox in the Arian controversy, and in the ruin of the Germanic invasions it seemed the great surviving institution of the ancient world which they were unable to overthrow. While most of the bishops of Rome in this period were men of moderate abilities, several were the strongest leaders of the West, and to them great advancement in the authority of the Roman bishop — the development of a real papacy — was due. Such a leader of force was Innocent I (402-417). He claimed for the Roman Church not only custody of apostolic tradition and the foundation of all Western Christianity, but ascribed the decisions of Sardica (ante, 3.4) to the Council of Nicaea, and based on them a universal jurisdiction of the Roman bishop. Leo I (440-461) greatly served Rome, in the judgment of the time, during the invasions of the Huns and Vandals, and largely influenced the result of the Council of Chalcedon (§3.9). He emphasized the primacy of Peter among the Apostles, both in faith and government, and taught that what Peter possessed had passed to Peter’s successors. These claims Leo largely made good. He ended the attempt to create an independent Gallic see in Arles; he exercised authority in Spain and North Africa. In 445 he procured an edict from the Western Emperor, Valentinian III, ordering all to obey the Roman bishop, as having the “primacy of Saint Peter.” On the other hand, the Council of Chalcedon, in 451, by its twenty-eighth canon placed Constantinople on a practical equality with Rome. Against this action Leo at once protested; but it foreshadowed the ultimate separation, far more political than religious, between the churches of East and West.

In the struggle with Monophysitism (§3.10), the bishops of Rome resisted the efforts of the Emperor Zeno (474-491) and the Patriarch Acacius of Constantinople to modify the results of Chalcedon by the so-called Henoticon, with the result that Pope Felix III (483-492) excommunicated Acacius, and a schism began between East and West which ended in 519 in a papal triumph. During this controversy Pope Gelasius (492-496) wrote a letter to Zeno’s successor, the Eastern Emperor Anastasius, in which he declared “there are . . . two by whom principally this world is ruled; the sacred authority of the pontiffs and the royal power. Of these the importance of the priests is so much the greater, as even for Kings of men they will have to give an account in the divine judgment.” In 502 Bishop Ennodius of Pavia urged that the Pope can be judged by God alone. The later claims of the mediaeval papacy were, therefore, sketched by the beginning of the sixth century. Circumstances prevented their development in full practice in the period immediately following. The rise of the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy and the reconquest of Italy by the Eastern empire, diminished the independence of the papacy. Outside of Italy the growth of a new Catholic power, the Franks, and the gradual conversion of Arian Germanic rulers, brought about a harmony between the new sovereigns and their bishops that gave to the latter extensive independence of Roman claims, though accompanied by great dependence on the Germanic sovereigns. The full realization of the papal ideal, thus early established, was to be a task of centuries, and was to encounter many vicissitudes.

Ambrose and Chrysostom

The contrast between East and West is in many ways illustrated by the unlike qualities and experiences of Chrysostom and Ambrose. Ambrose was born in Trier, now in western Germany, where his father held the high civil office of praetorian prefect of Gaul, about 337-340. Educated in Rome for a civil career, his talents, integrity, and likableness led to his appointment, about 374, as governor of a considerable part of northern Italy, with his residence in Milan, then practically an imperial capital. The death of the Arian bishop, Auxentius, in 374, left the Milanese see vacant. The two factions were soon in bitter struggle as to the theological complexion of his successor. The young governor entered the church to quiet the throng, when the cry was raised, “Ambrose Bishop!” and he found himself, though unbaptized, elected bishop of Milan. To Ambrose, this was a call of God. He gave up his wealth to the poor and the church. He studied
theology. He became a most acceptable preacher. Above all, he possessed to the full the Roman talent for administration, and he soon became the first ecclesiastic of the West.

Strongly attached to the Nicene faith, Ambrose would make no compromise with the Arians, and resisted all their attempts to secure places of worship in Milan—an effort in which they were aided by the Empress Justina, mother of the youthful Valentinian II. In the same spirit he opposed successfully the efforts of the pagan party in Rome to obtain from Valentinian II the restoration of the Altar of Victory in the Senate chamber, and other privileges for the older worship. His greatest triumph was in the case of the Emperor Theodosius. That quick-tempered ruler, angered by the murder of the governor of Thessalonica, in 390, caused a punitive massacre of its inhabitants. Ambrose, with rare moral courage, called on the Emperor to manifest his public repentance. It throws pleasing light on the character of Theodosius that he obeyed the admonition.

Ambrose was a theological writer of such reputation that the Roman Church reckons him as one of its “Doctors”—or authoritative teachers. His work, however, in this field was largely a reproduction of the thoughts of Greek theologians, though with a deeper sense of sin and grace than they. "I will not glory because I am righteous, but I will glory because I am redeemed. I will not glory because I am free from sin, but because my sins are forgiven." Ambrose’s bent was practical. He wrote on Christian ethics, in full sympathy with the ascetic movement of the time. He contributed much to the development of Christian hymnology in the West. Forceful and sometimes overbearing, he was a man of the highest personal character and of indefatigable zeal—a true prince of the church. Such men were needed in the shock of the collapsing empire if the church was to survive in power. He died in 397.

Chrysostom

Very different was the life of Chrysostom. John, to whom the name Chrysostom, “golden-mouthed,” was given long after his death, was born of noble and well-to-do parents in Antioch about 345-347. Losing his father shortly after his birth, he was brought up by his religious-minded mother, Anthusa, and early distinguished himself in scholarship and eloquence. About 370, he was baptized and probably ordained a “reader.” He now practised extreme asceticism, and pursued theological studies under Diodorus of Tarsus, one of the leaders of the later Antiochian school. Not satisfied with his austerities, he became a hermit (c. 375), and so remained till ill-health compelled his return to Antioch, where he was ordained a deacon (c. 381). In 386 he was advanced to the priesthood. Then followed the happiest and most useful period of his life. For twelve years he was the great preacher of Antioch—the ablest that the Oriental Church probably ever possessed. His sermons were exegetical and eminently practical. The simple, grammatical understanding of the Scriptures, always preferred in Antioch to the allegorical interpretation beloved in Alexandria, appealed to him. His themes were eminently social—the Christian conduct of life. He soon had an enormous following.

Such was Chrysostom’s fame that, on the see of Constantinople falling vacant, he was practically forced by Eutropius, the favorite of the Emperor Arcadius, to accept the bishopric of the capital in 398. Here he soon won a popular hearing like that of Antioch. From the first, however, his way in Constantinople was beset with foes. The unscrupulous patriarch of Alexandria, Theophilus, desired to bring Constantinople into practical subjection. Himself the opponent of Origen’s teaching, he charged Chrysostom with too great partiality for that master. Chrysostom’s strict discipline, for which there was ample justification, was disliked by the loose-living clergy of Constantinople. Worst of all, he won the hostility of the vigorous Empress Eudoxia, by reasons of denunciations of feminine extravagance in dress, which she thought aimed at herself. Chrysostom was certainly as tactless as he was fearless in denouncing offenses in high places. All the forces against him gathered together. A pretext for attack soon arose. In his opposition to Origen, Theophilus had disciplined certain monks of Egypt. Four of these, known as the “tall brothers,” fled to Chrysostom, by whom they were well received. Theophilus and Chrysostom’s other enemies now secured a synod, at an imperial estate near Constantinople known as “The Oak,” which, under the leadership of Theophilus, condemned and deposed Chrysostom in 403.

The Empress was as superstitious as she was enraged, and an accident in the palace—later tradition pictured it probably mistakenly as an earthquake—led to Chrysostom’s recall shortly after he had left the
capital. Peace was of brief duration. A silver statue of the Empress, erected near his cathedral, led to
denunciations by Chrysostom of the ceremonies of its dedication. The Empress saw in him more than ever
a personal enemy. This time, in spite of warm popular support, he was banished to the miserable town of
Cucusus, on the edge of Armenia. Pope Innocent I protested, but in vain. Yet from this exile Chrysostom
continued so to influence his friends by letter that his opponents determined to place him in deeper
obscurity. In 407 he was ordered to Pityus, but he never reached there, dying on the journey.

The fate of this most deserving, if not most judicious, preacher of righteousness illustrates the seamy
side of imperial interference in ecclesiastical affairs, and the rising jealousies of the great sees of the East,
from whose mutual hostility the church and the empire were greatly to suffer.

10. CHRISTIAN MONASTICISM

[10] 1 THE ASCETIC MOVEMENT

By the end of the fourth century the Church had virtually captured society. In worldly terms of status and
social influence, the episcopate of even moderately important cities had become an established career to
which a man might aspire for reasons not exclusively religious. Many local churches had become
substantial landowners, supporting numerous poor folk. A bishop was expected by his people to be the
advocate of their secular interests as well as their spiritual pastor. In ancient society success depended
much on possessing a patron whose word to the right official could obtain for one a well paid post, or
secure one’s liberty when there was trouble with the police or the tax authorities, or even influence the
courts if one was a litigant. The development, from the third century onwards, of the veneration of the
saints as ‘patrons’ whose ‘suffrage’ would be influential in heaven, was a natural transfer to the celestial
sphere of the social situation on earth. The intercessions that bishops were expected to make for accused
persons sometimes passed into interference with justice if the magistrate was weak and the bishop strong.
A substantial part of the surviving correspondence of Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and their
pagan contemporary Libanius, consists of recommendations and requests to powerful officials on behalf
of some individual in need. When in Libya in 410 the Neoplatonic poet and orator Synesius of Cyrene was
elected metropolitan of Ptolemais, his election was in part the consequence of his success eleven years
earlier in obtaining tax remissions for his province at a time of economic depression; and he hesitated for
six months before accepting an office that meant the abandonment of learned reflection and gentlemanly
pursuits because of the endless burden (of which Augustine constantly complained) of arbitrations and
letters of intercession. Admittedly, Synesius’ reluctance was reinforced by other reasons: he did not desire
the separation from his wife which church custom by 400 had come to expect of bishops (though not, in
the Greek East, of inferior clergy), and he had hesitations about the doctrine of the resurrection which to
him was a valuable symbol but impossible as plain prose.

From the third century the question was being put with steadily increasing pressure whether the Church
could occupy a position of influence in high society without losing something of its moral power and
independence. Several circumstances contributed to the growing prominence of this issue.

The primitive Church had imposed high demands and strict discipline – so strict that in the second century
it had to face painful controversy about the very possibility of repentance for sins committed after
baptism. The debates about the holiness of the Church as an empirical society ended in the defeat of
rigorism when Novatian was rejected at Rome in 251. But the old ideal was never lost, and could be
reasserted without creating a schism.

Detachment from valiity fair was easier to those who expected the end of the world in the imminent future
than to those who expected the historical process to roll on and who possessed some modest property to
pass on to their children. St Paul had opposed at Corinth any rejection of marriage on the ground of a
Gnostic dualism of spirit and matter, but had freely allowed that because the time was short those who had
wives should be as though they had not. When it became apparent that the time would not be as short as
the apostle supposed, the precariousness of life under the persecutions kept vividly alive the martyr’s
sense that true values did not consist in this world’s goods.

During the second century there were individual Christians in local communities who renounced marriage
and all but the minimum of possessions. They held before themselves and the local congregation the ideal
of renunciation with devotion to prayer and to works of mercy. These ascetics were not organized in
communities under rule with special clothing or a common purse — though there would have been good
precedent for property-sharing in the communities on the edge of Judaism like the Essenes or the group at
Qumran from which the Dead Sea Scrolls come, or the Therapeutae of Egypt described by Philo of
Alexandria. The rapidity of church expansion in the third century greatly accelerated the acceptance of a
double ethical standard: ordinary Christians living in the world might not keep the counsels of perfection,
but would at least observe the precepts of Christ, and might hope to aspire to higher reward hereafter if
they did more than the minimum that was actually commanded. Acute theological problems were raised
by this doctrine of two types of Christian life and ethic. It long remained obscure[30] whether the
distinction was merely a way of expressing the idea that there are at least two stages in a progress of moral
and spiritual understanding and practice open to all, or whether the distinction meant that married people,
living an active life in this world, constitute an inherently inferior type of Christian excluded as such from
the highest reaches of prayer and from aspiring to the vision of God. In Origen, for example, passages
suggesting the former interpretation are very common, but there are other places where the latter view
seems to be dangerously implied. In one sermon he speaks of Christ’s army as having a small élite of
combatant troops and a multitude of camp-followers who assist the soldiers fighting against evil but do
not actually fight themselves.

Once the camp-followers had become a flood, the combatants began to feel that they could not do their
work effectively. It was a matter of time before the ascetics withdrew to live separately from the ordinary
congregations, while still continuing to do works of mercy in caring for prisoners, sick, orphans, and
widows. The ascetics badly needed order and discipline to concentrate on their objective without the pull
of worldly distractions. But their withdrawal unquestionably weakened the ordinary congregations, and
was regarded by many bishops with a misgiving that individual extravagances could do much to justify.
Throughout the fourth century the monastic movement was straining to overcome the deep distrust of
many of the bishops. Its spirit seemed too individualistic and separatist, critical of the town clergy.

Many of the ascetics may have been fairly simple folk, but it was not long before the movement possessed
a coherent theological basis. In the writings of Clement of Alexandria and especially of Origen all the
essential elements of an ascetical theology may already be found. It was a theology dominated by the ideal
of the martyr who hoped for nothing in this world but sought for union with the Lord in his passion. Just
as the cross was God’s triumph over the powers of evil, so the martyr shared in this triumph in his own
death. The ascetics continued this spirit after the persecutions were past. They strove to achieve the same
self-sacrificing detachment from the world. The evangelical demand for sacrifice, however, was fused
with attitudes towards simplicity and frugality inherited from the classical past. The monastic movement
had room not only for simple folk but also for men educated in the tradition of Plato and his ideal martyr
Socrates, in the Cynic principle of self-sufficiency, and in the Stoic doctrine that happiness consists in
suppressing the desire for anything one cannot both get and keep, and therefore demands the suppression
of the passions for a life of right reason.

The classical Greek influences increased the tendency for the ascetic movement to be individualistic. In
Origen’s commentary on the Song of Songs the bride of Christ is primarily the church, as in St Paul; but
there is a yet more intimate interpretation according to which the bride is the individual soul united to the
divine Word in a sacred marriage. The imagery, which owed something to Plato’s Symposium, helped to
foster the conception that the existence, or at least the presence, of other persons is an embarrassing
distraction and hindrance to the soul’s elevation to the bliss of union with God. Neoplatonic ideals of the
‘flight of the alone to the alone’ encouraged renunciation not merely of unnecessary bodily indulgences
but even of human society.
In popular estimation the hermit in his solitude was accorded intense respect. The desert fathers in Egypt in the second half of the fourth century were constantly visited by individuals who used to ask according to the regular formula: ‘Speak to me a word, father, that I may live.’ The records of their answers were collected in writing to form the *Paradise or Apophthegms* of the Fathers. It was axiomatic that the words of one who lived so close to God would be inspired.

[10] **Egyptian, Byzantine, and Palestinian Monasticism**

Early in the fourth century the models for future development were provided by two Egyptian ascetics, Antony and Pachomius. Antony, made famous by Athanasius’ biography, renounced the property inherited from his parents and gradually moved farther from society until he finally retreated to inaccessible tombs to fight the devils out in the desert. Roughly contemporary with him, but far to the south in the Thebaid, Pachomius started a community of ascetics by the Nile at Tabennisi, where great numbers were set to strenuous manual labour under strict discipline; obedience in Pachomius’ organization was military and complete. There was an ideological tension between the hermit-ideal and the belief that the monastic life required a community under rule with obedience to a superior as an essential principle. In practice, there long continued to be numerous ascetics who were neither solitaries nor incorporated in a community (coenobium), but wandered from place to place, and were regarded as an irresponsible, disturbing element.

The basic problem raised by the enthusiasm of the monks was the separatist and individualist character of the movement. Was the monk pursuing only his own salvation? Or had the movement a social purpose? Insistence on the primacy of the social purpose of the ascetic movement was the central feature of Basil of Caesarea’s organization in Asia Minor, and made his achievement epoch-making. Whether Basil had heard anything of Pachomius is very doubtful. He rejected the hermit-ideal as a private and personal quest, divorced from the Gospel demand of love and service to one’s neighbour. Basil was the first to give institutional form to the novitiate and the solemn profession, and to insist on obedience as a means of restraining the excess, the competitiveness, and the ostentation of histrionic individuals who were bringing the monastic movement into disrepute. Before Basil monks had understood poverty and chastity better than obedience. Severe penalties were prescribed by Basil for monks who set themselves austere fasts without leave. In his continual emphasis on restraint Basil anticipated the spirit of the Benedictine Rule.

A painful practical problem was to keep the ascetics from passing wholly outside the local church under its bishop. A prominent motive underlying Athanasius’ *Life of Antony* was to show how devoted the saint was to orthodoxy. A synod at Gangra in Asia Minor about 340–41 expressed strong disapproval of monks who entirely abandoned church attendance. In some forms of the ascetic movement the sacraments were regarded as secondary or even indifferent. One pietistic mendicant sect, the Messalians or Euchites, who spread from Mesopotamia into Asia Minor in the middle of the fourth century, held that in each man there is an in-dwelling devil who can be ejected not by any sacramental grace but exclusively by intense prayer and ascetic contemplation sufficient to produce palpable inward feelings. It was easy for even the most orthodox monks to become indifferent not merely to the calls of secular society and civilization but also to the normal worshipping life of the Church. Basil of Caesarea sought to check this by instituting monastic communities with a Rule under which the authority of the local bishop was safeguarded. His principle of episcopal control worked admirably as long as the bishop was good. But within thirty years of Basil’s death the bishop of Caesarea was using his monks to terrorize the city militia when it was protecting the exiled John Chrysostom. In Egypt the successors of Athanasius did not take long to discover that a force of peasant monks was an ideal instrument for destroying pagan temples and for conflicts with heresy. To the second and third generation of the monastic movement it was clear that the ascetic life had special problems of its own. It might easily provide a home for people wanting to contract out of responsibilities in civil society, for those bankrupted by oppressive taxation, sometimes for criminals on the run, sometimes for homosexuals, rather more often for people with compulsions to make some striking gesture and urges to be selfassertive in their mortifications. It was always likely, even at its best, to be a movement dependent upon striking leaders and personalities. Sometimes monks were tempted to claim
that they were entitled to do no work and to live on alms. Augustine in 401 had to write On the Work of Monks to explode this error.

In the fifth century the Judean desert became a favoured locality for a new type of organization, the ‘Lavra’, where a number of individual monks would have their cells in proximity to an outstanding leader, and would meet for common prayers and common meals, but would still preserve more solitariness than was common in a coenobium. In the sixth century under Justinian the lavras of Palestine became divided by doctrinal controversy about the orthodoxy of Origen.

In Syria and Mesopotamia asceticism occasionally took bizarre forms. The majority of the monks were very simple Syriac-speaking people, ignorant of Greek. Their recorded mortifications make alarming reading. A heavy iron chain as a belt was a frequent austerity. A few adopted the life of animals and fed on grass, living in the open air without shade from the sun and with the minimum of clothing, and justifying their method of defying society by claiming to be ‘fools for Christ’s sake’. At the monastery of Telanissos (Deir Sem’an) in Syria, Symeon the Stylite (c. 390-459) practised his idiosyncratic austerity of living on top of a column. Attacked at the time as mere vainglory, Symeon’s austerity was real enough, and won the deep reverence of the country people. He attracted many disciples to the monastery and inspired later imitators like Daniel (409—93) who spent thirty-three years on a column near Constantinople (at the modern Rumeli-Hisar). Symeon’s prestige was so great that the assent of the illiterate stylite was required by the government to the councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).

At the opposite end of the intellectual scale from Symeon stood the ascetics influenced by Origen, among whom Basil of Caesarea was distinguished, though he did not accept the speculative propositions that had made Origen’s theology suspected of heresy. In Egypt, on the other hand, there were those who continued to think well even of the more speculative side of Origen’s thought. It was expounded at Alexandria by Didymus the blind (at whose feet Jerome sat for a while) and at Constantinople by the archdeacon Evagrius, a close friend of Gregory of Nazianzus. A love affair led Evagrius to leave the capital for Jerusalem and finally the Egyptian desert where he became one of the most influential writers on the spiritual life. Evagrius introduced order and method not merely into the institutional organization but into the innermost processes of contemplation. He classified the principal or root sins as being eight in number, his list being gluttony, fornication, avarice, dejection (or ‘lack of pleasure’), anger, weariness (accidie), vainglory, and pride. He divided them among the different parts of the soul as distinguished by Plato. He differentiated types of contemplation arranged in a scale of advancing apprehension, from corporeal to incorporeal and so upward to the Holy Trinity. At the highest level, he taught, prayer was a wordless, mental act, and must be free of any physical pictures of God that the imagination, prompted by evil powers, might form. Evagrius loved sharp, pregnant, obscure maxims. Much in his language about the mystery of prayer entered permanently into the stream of Greek ascetical theology and, through John Cassian, passed to the West.

Cassian was a monk of Scythian origin who had undergone a long ascetic training in Palestine and Egypt before undertaking his pioneer work in the West. His sympathies were with Evagrius and his Origenist friends, so that he could not stay after 400 in the Egypt of Theophilus of Alexandria. He moved to Constantinople where John Chrysostom made him deacon, then to Rome after John’s fall in 404, and finally about 415 to Marseilles where he organized monastic communities of men and women after Eastern models. In his Institutes he described the external order: the correct kind of habit, the proper liturgical offices, and the eight principal sins of Evagrius’ catalogue. In his Conferences he expounded the inwardness of the desert tradition in the form of a series of discourses put into the mouths of famous Egyptian ascetics. Cassian’s criticism of Augustine’s doctrine of grace in the thirteenth Conference drew a counter-attack from the hyper-Augustinian Prosper of Aquitaine, and the polemic threw lasting doubt on Cassian’s orthodoxy. Nevertheless, it would be hard to exaggerate how much later Western monasticism owed to Cassian’s moderation and insight. He arrived on the Western scene at a critical moment. Western
Christians, moved by Latin translations of Athanasius’ Life of Antony and Rufinus’ account of the desert fathers in Egypt, wanted to have saints of their own. A zealous publicist from Aquitaine, Sulpicius Severus, writing about 403, achieved popular success with a largely fictitious biography of the ascetic bishop Martin of Tours, designed to show that Gaul could produce a saint superior even to the Egyptian ascetics. Martin was credited with extraordinary miracles and prodigies, and thanks to Sulpicius’ historical novel became one of the most popular saints in the barbarian West, principally as a soldier-saint and patron of military virtues. But Cassian regarded this type of miracle-mongering with distaste, and repeatedly deplored the popular demand for it. It was not, he thought, the authentic ascetic tradition, of which the true end was simply prayer out of a pure heart.

By his moderation and restraint Cassian did for the West much that Basil had done for the Greek East, though without ever questioning the ultimate superiority of the solitary life to membership of a coenobium. Cassian’s achievement is evident in the sixth century Rule of St Benedict and the closely related ‘Rule of the Master’, an anonymous abbot writing perhaps a few years before Benedict, some of whose work was freely incorporated in the Benedictine Rule. Benedict directed that Cassian’s Conferences (collations) were to be read before compline. Later a light meal was taken during the reading; whence modern Italian derives its everyday word for luncheon (colazione) and English the term ‘collation’ for a light meal at an unusual hour.

By the accidents of history the name Benedictine has become associated with austerity and learning. Benedict himself had no special interest in either matter. His rule was one of simplicity and self-discipline, not of penitential austerity and self-inflicted mortification. There is not the least hint that he expected his monks to be recruited from those who had failed in the world or who, having soiled their conscience, came to make reparation. He did not think of founding monasteries to perform a special service to the Church or to Society. His monks were not clergy, but simple people, Italian peasants and rustic Goths. They needed to learn letters for their duty of devotional reading (nothing is said of learned study) and for the daily offices, ‘the work of God’ (opus Dei), which Benedict regarded as central to the life of the community. They were to be a family with the abbot as their father, to whom each was an equal care. Above all, they must stay in their monastery and not move from house to house. Although the Rule was intended for more than one monastery, it is clear that Benedict had no notion of founding a religious Order. When he prescribed that a substantial number of hours each day were to be devoted to work, he did not foresee the astonishing achievements of medieval and modern Benedictine scholars in the field of education and research. He wished rather to preserve his monks from the corrosion of character that results from idleness. He had no end in view other than that his monks should live in the presence of God and should get to heaven.

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[10.4] A SUMMARY of EARLY CHRISTIAN MONASTICISM
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This is an expanded version of an article written for the Encyclopedia of Ancient History in 2010.

[10.4.] 1. BEGINNINGS

Christian monasticism, understood as a way of life characterized by prayer, withdrawal from society, celibacy, and dispossession of goods, first attains prominence in Egypt toward the end of the third century. Earlier antecedents certainly existed but are only faintly discernible in patristic allusions and early monastic biographies. Ignatius of Antioch (d.c. 107) sent greetings to a community of “virgins called widows” in Smyrna (Let. Sm. 6.13), reminiscent of the community of widows mentioned in the pastoral epistles (1 Tim. 5). The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (c. 215) highlights the commitment of these women to prayer, while insisting that they are not to be reckoned among the clergy (Ap.Trad. 10). All that is known of these primordial communities of consecrated virgins (parthenoi) is that they were sufficiently organized and established by the middle of the third century that Antony of Egypt (c. 251-356) revered as the founder and “father of monks” could entrust his young sister to their care before embarking on his own ascetical career around the year 270 (Vit.Ant. 3).
Male ascetics living in the outskirts of Antony’s village in the Fayum served as his role models and teachers (Vit.Ant. 3). Their asceticism was strict but not overly severe, emphasizing fasting, prayer, kindness, and many of the classical virtues. Less is known of these earliest male apotaktikoi (“renouncers”) than of their feminine counterparts. It is tempting to speculate, but impossible to prove, that they may have been influenced by non-Christian forms of asceticism, such as: the Roman otium; the withdrawal from society advocated by some Greek and Roman philosophers; the Jewish hermit-colonies in Egypt and communities in Palestine described by Philo; or even Hindu and Buddhist ascetics resident in Alexandria. It is certain, however, that the earliest Christian monks and nuns were powerfully influenced by the heroism of martyrs who were revered as intercessors and spiritual guides, and by the teachings Clement of Alexandria (d.215), and Origen (d.254), who encouraged both asceticism and the study of sacred scripture.

Antony’s extraordinarily popular biography by Athanasius (d. 373) depicts him as a model of perseverance and virtue in whom the struggle against temptation yields inner harmony and balance. Athanasius portrays him as the chief exemplar of the hermit life, withdrawing deeper into the desert by successive stages, eventually finding peace around the year 311 in a mountain cave near the Red Sea, where he settled with a few disciples and lived in semi-solitude until his death in 356. Antony was not a complete recluse, however; and even in extreme old age he would return at irregular intervals to his former hermitage, an abandoned fort near the Nile, where he would offer spiritual advice to pilgrims.

Various forms of cenobitic (communal) monasticism also emerged in fourth-century Egypt. In Nitria, thirty miles southeast of Alexandria, monks lived alone in small houses or in groups varying in size from two or three to over two hundred. Founded around 330 by the monk Amoun, Nitria included a more remote hermit-colony fifteen miles to the southwest called Kellia, “The Cells”. According to Palladius by the end of the fourth century these two communities comprised more than five thousand monks. A third monastic settlement called Scetis was founded by Macarius the Egyptian at roughly the same time as Nitria, thirty-six miles to the southwest in the Wadi Natrun. The history and practices of these three communities are known chiefly through the Lausiac History of Palladius, the anonymous History of the Monks of Egypt, the Apophthegmata, or teachings of the abbas (fathers) and ammas (mothers). The monks lived as disciples of a chosen geron (elder) whose discipline they imitated, but they followed no fixed rule. On Saturday night and Sunday they gathered in large groups for common prayer and a eucharistic celebration. During the fourth century the practice of psalmody, reciting or chanting the psalms, was increasingly emphasized in monastic literature and ritual. This preference for the Book of Psalms radiated outward from the monasteries into the liturgical practice of Christian cathedrals and parishes.

A more structured and regulated form of monasticism was introduced in Southern Egypt around 320 by Pachomius, whose monastic rules echo the hierarchical organization of the Roman army in which he unwillingly served for a brief time. He established four large communities near Tabennesi (Nag Hammadi) in Southern Egypt, each with its own leader who acknowledged Pachomius as general superintendent. The monasteries were walled enclosures containing dormitories for the monks, a guesthouse, infirmary, kitchen, refectory, and church. The monks raised their own food and practiced a variety of handicrafts that rendered the monasteries self-sufficient. They also provided social services, such as care of the sick and poor, to surrounding villages. The ideal of Pachomian koinonia (community) is depicted in a collection of biographies, sermons, and rules that were translated into Latin by Jerome and thus influenced later monastic founders in the West.

A theoretical framework for monastic ascesis and contemplation was provided by Evagrius Ponticus (245-399) a disciple, first of Basil in Caesarea, then of Gregory Nazianzen in Constantinople, of Rufinus and Melania in Jerusalem, and finally of Macarius of Alexandria and Macarius of Egypt in Kellia and Scetis. He systematized the insights of his Cappadocian and Egyptian teachers by employing terminology drawn from of Clement of Alexandria and Origen. He recast Aristotle’s distinction between the active and contemplative life into a method of spiritual progress. The first level, praktiké, entails vigilant
watchfulness over thoughts and actions so that the struggle against vice, considered according to eight principal *logismoi* (tempting-thoughts), facilitates the quest for virtue, especially love and *apatheia* (freedom from obsessions and compulsions). As mastery over sin and compulsions is attained, the ascetic progresses to *gnostikê*, contemplation of the deeper meanings of scripture and the natural world (*physikê*), that leads in turn to wordless prayer and imageless contemplation of God (*theologia*). Growing disapproval of Origen’s theology, especially his doctrine of *apokatastasis* (universal salvation) cast suspicion on Evagrius’ writings, which effectively went underground, acquiring a large readership in East and West under the pseudonyms of Nilus and Athanasius. In 399, a few weeks after Evagrius’ death, the “first Origenist crisis” precipitated the expulsion and exile of many of Egypt’s most gifted and articulate monks: although a “golden age” thus ended, Egyptian monastic theory and practice was disseminated throughout the Roman Empire through the example and teaching of the exiles.

[10.4.] 3. CAPPADOCIAN MONASTICISM

Around 357 Basil of Caesarea visited the Northern Egyptian monasteries, then lived briefly as a monk with friends on his family estate in Cappadocia. After his ordination as bishop in 370 he adapted what he had experienced as an ascetic for use in his diocese of Caesarea. He proposed an organized form of communal life that placed less emphasis on solitude and withdrawal from society than on imitation of Christ and compassion in interpersonal relationships. Around 360 he compiled the *Moral Rules*, an arrangement of over fifteen-hundred New Testament texts illustrating principles for Christian life. He avoided the technical term “monks”, preferring to describe as “servants of God” those who lived according to the rules he elaborated in his Greater and Lesser Ascetikon. Basil encouraged the servants of God to support the local Christian community through prayer and material support of charitable institutions such as hospitals.

[10.4.] 4. SYRIAN MONASTICISM

Syrian Christianity had a strong ascetical character that favored the growth of monasticism. Celibacy was highly regarded, and had even been considered a prerequisite for baptism in the late third century. By the early fourth century an indigenous proto-monasticism emerged, the “Sons and Daughters of the Covenant”, young celibate men and women who lived singly, in small groups, or with their parents, offering social and liturgical service to the churches in their villages. The Syrian church slowly adopted the forms and spirituality of Egypt monasticism; but it retained an independent spirit, sometimes expressed in exotic forms such as the styliotes who lived atop pillars, dendrites who made their homes in trees, and *boskoi* (browsers) who foraged with beasts in the wild. The more moderate norm of Syrian proto-monasticism is expressed in the ascetical exhortations and homilies of the *Book of Steps* and the hymns and poetry of Ephrem (d. 373); while its later, mature spirit is conveyed in the writings of Philoxenus of Mabug (d. 523) and Isaac of Ninevah (d.c. 700)

[10.4.] 5 PALESTINIAN MONASTICISM

Tradition associates the introduction of monasticism into Gaza and Palestine with the names of Hilarion, a disciple of Antony, and Chariton, one of Antony’s predecessors. In Judea a preferred form of communal life was the lavra, a closely-grouped community of hermits who gathered weekly for prayer in a common church and lived in cells or caves, often hollowed out of cliff faces. Among the more famous Palestinian monasteries are those of Euthymius (d. 473) and Sabbas (d. 532) whose lives and virtues are extolled in John Moschus’ *Spiritual Meadow* and in the histories of Cyril of Scythopolis (d. 558). The monasteries of Gaza produced monks and authors renowned for their sound spiritual advice. The 850 responses of Barsanuphius and John (d.c. 540) to questions posed by monks and pilgrims, as well as the writings of Dorotheus of Gaza (d.c. 560) reflect a mature, balanced approach to spiritual direction. The most famous eastern monastic treatise on the spiritual life is the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* by John
Climacus (d.c. 649), a monk of the monastery of St. Katherine in Sinai who compiled the insights of his predecessors into a manual of spiritual progress that has remained a perennial spiritual classic.

[10.4.] 6. WESTERN MONASTICISM

The development of monasticism in the West was significantly influenced by the brief admonitions now compiled as Augustine’s Letter 211. Written around 397, it is a composite of instructions for a monastery of virgins together with recommendations for the “servants of God” Augustine had established as a community in Hippo. Earlier in his life Augustine had undertaken the Roman otium together with friends and family in Cassiciacum; based on this experience he later insisted on an exclusively cenobitic model of monastic life based on Acts 4:32-35, emphasizing common ownership of goods as a visible sign of unity. Unlike the Egyptians, Augustine emphasized neither apprenticeship to a charismatic abba or amma, nor the value of the solitary life: the communities were closely supervised by the bishop, who appointed as leader a presbyter, assisted by a praepositus (prior). Although widely-read and often quoted in the West, Letter 211 would not be followed as The Rule of St. Augustine until the rise of the canons in the ninth century.

Like Augustine, bishops in Italy, Gaul, and Spain supported and founded ascetical communities of men and women. Early episcopal patrons of Western monasticism include Martin of Tours (d.397), Ambrose of Milan (d.397), Eusebius of Vercelli (d. 371), and Victricius of Rouen (d.c. 407). By the mid-fourth century Rome possessed both traditional monasteries of widows and virgins and new experimental celibate communities of educated aristocratic women. Among the advisors of these well-to-do circles was Jerome, who was able to convince several aristocratic patronesses to support his monastic foundation in Bethlehem, and even to join him there. His letters and translations of eastern monastic biographies and rules were widely read. Even more influential for the development of Western monasticism was John Cassian (360-435), a Romanian who travelled to Egypt during his youth and became a disciple of Evagrius Ponticus during the last decade of the fourth century. Cassian accompanied the exiled Origenist monks to Constantinople, then travelled to Rome and Gaul where he settled near Marseilles around 415 and founded monasteries for both men and women. For these communities he wrote the Institutes, in which describes and adapts Egyptian ascetical practices to the climate and social conditions of Gaul. At the urging of the superior of the monastery of Lerins near Cannes he later wrote the Conferences, advanced treatises on spirituality and prayer intended primarily for hermits, whom he regarded as the summit of monastic perfection.

The monastery of Lerins, an Island near Cannes in France, was founded by Honoratus in 410 and became famous as a “nursery of bishops”, including Vincent of Lerins (d. 445) Honoratus (d. 449), Faustus of Riez (d. 495), and Caesarius of Arles (d. 542). Patrick may have spent time there before being sent as a bishop to Ireland around the year 431. In Ireland a unique form of monasticism flourished from the late fifth century, embracing both solitary and cenobitic forms. The local church formed around Celtic clans, often taking on a monastic character with the local chieftain assuming the title of abbot. A strict, penitential asceticism prevailed, combined with an esteem for literacy and scholarship. Since exile was considered one of the severest of penalties, it was sometimes embraced voluntarily by enthusiastic ascetics who became wandering monastic missionaries. Through their efforts Celtic monasticism was introduced in Scotland (on Iona by Columba in 563), northern England (on Lindesfarne by Aiden in 635), and on the continent, chiefly through the labors of Columbanus (c.543-615) and his successors. The penitential code of Celtic monasticism required regular confession of sins, but permitted the commutation of severe, protracted punishments into easier practicable penances. In both East and West the monastic practice of confession facilitated a shift from the penitential discipline of late antiquity, under the exclusive control of the bishop, to that of the early middle ages where the authority to remit sins came to be exercised by a local priest-confessor, or even in exceptional circumstances (especially in the East) by a non-ordained monastic abba or amma.

The Rule of Benedict was composed around the middle of the sixth century, when the fortunes of the West were at a low ebb. The deposition of Romulus, the last Emperor of the West, by the Germanic
chieftain Odoacer in 476 had delivered a stunning blow to the collective western psyche. During the relatively benign period of Ostrogothic rule that followed, two succinct attempts at monastic legislation appeared: the *Rule of the Four Fathers* and the *Second Rule of the Fathers* condensed Cassian’s prolix *Institutes* into succinct maxims. During the devastation and depopulation that accompanied Justinian’s Gothic wars of 535-554 another series of monastic rules were composed in Gaul and Northern Italy that attempted to reconcile Cassian’s idealization of the hermit life with Augustine’s and Basil’s more sober emphasis on cenobitic community. These include Caesarius of Arles’ *Rule for Monks* and *Rule for Virgins*, and the anonymous *Regula Orientalis, Rule of Tarn, Rule of Ferreolus* and the *Rule of the Master*. Benedict (c.480-c.550) borrowed from many of these sources, but especially from the Rule of the Master, in composing his own rule, which struck an effective balance between traditional asceticism and the need for charitable mitigation of strictness. He envisioned a monastery that would elect its own abbot, who would rule with the assistance of appointed officers, taking regular advice from the whole community. Liturgical prayer eight times a day was the principal monastic work; but the times of prayer were not unduly long, and the monks’ manual labor afforded economic self-sufficiency. Literacy (and thus teaching) was required, and care of the sick and hospitality to travellers was particularly emphasized.

A more erudite vision of monasticism was proposed by Benedict’s contemporary, Cassidorus Senator (d. 585), an Italian public servant who retired to his estate in Calabria around 540 to found the monastery of Vivarium. The central feature of his monastery was an extensive library where Cassidorus encouraged literacy, the copying of manuscripts, and an intellectual program of study, the *Institutiones divinarum et saecularum litterarum*. Although Vivarium existed as a monastery for less than a century, his *Institutiones* continued to be read and used as a model of studies throughout the West. During the seventh and eighth centuries the practice of *regula mixta* (combined rules) often paired stricter codes such as the Rule of Columbanus with Benedict’s more moderate approach; but by the early ninth century the Rule of Benedict had proved to be the most adaptable form of monastic legislation in the West, so that the early middle ages can with justice be described as the “Benedictine centuries.”

[10.4.] 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF EARLY MONASTICISM

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11. CHRISTOLOGY and DIVISIONS


The Nicene result determined that Christ is fully God, and “was made man.” On the common basis of Nicene orthodoxy, however, the further question arose as to the relations of the divine and human in Him. Regarding that problem the Nicene creed was silent, and even the great Nicene champion, Athanasius, had not paid much attention to it. Only in the West had a general formula come into extensive use. As the Nicene decision had been largely anticipated by Tertullian, with the result that the West had been united when the East was divided, so thanks to the clear definitions of that great African writer, the West had a conception of full deity and full manhood existing in Christ, without confusion, and without diminution of the qualities appropriate to each. In the new struggle, as in that of Nicaea, the Western view was to triumph. Yet neither in its conception of “one substance in three persons,” nor in that of “one person, Jesus, God, and man” (ante, 2.8), had the West any wrought-out philosophical theory. What Tertullian had given it were clear-cut judicial definitions of traditional beliefs rather than philosophically thought-out theology. It was the advantage of the West once more, as in the Nicene struggle, that it was now united, even if its thought was not so profound as that of the divided East, when the East fairly began to wrestle with the intellectual problems involved.

It was possible to approach the Christological problem from two angles. The unity of Christ might be so emphasized as to involve a practical absorption of His humanity into divinity; or the integrity of each element, the divine and the human, maintained in such fashion as to suggest that in Him were two separate beings. Both tendencies were manifested in the controversy—the first being that toward which the theological leaders of Alexandria leaned, and the latter being derivable from the teachings of the school of Antioch.

Apollinaris

The first and one of the ablest of those who undertook a really profound discussion of the relation of the human and the divine in Christ was Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea in Syria (?-c. 390). A hearty supporter of the Nicene decision, he enjoyed for a considerable time at least the friendship of Athanasius, His intellectual gifts were such as to command even from his opponents. Moreover, as with Athanasius, Apollinaris’s interest was primarily religious. To both, Christ’s work for men was the transformation of our sinful mortality into divine and blessed immortality. This salvation, Apollinaris thought with Athanasius, could be achieved only if Christ was completely and perfectly divine. But how, Apollinaris argued, could Christ be made up of a perfect man united with complete God? Was that not to assert two Sons, one eternal, and the other by adoption? Nor could Apollinaris explain Christ’s sinlessness or the harmony of His wills, if Christ was complete man joined with full God. To him, the best solution seemed akin to that of Arius, whom he otherwise opposed, that in Jesus the place of the soul was taken by the Logos, and only the body was human. That view having been condemned, though without mention of his name, by a synod in Alexandria in 362, Apollinaris apparently altered his theory so as to hold that Jesus had the body and animal soul of a man, but that the reasoning spirit in Him was the Logos. At the same time he held that the divine so made the human one with it—so absorbed it—that “God has in His own flesh suffered our sorrows.” These opinions seemed to do special honor to Christ’s divinity, and were destined to be widely and permanently influential in Oriental Christian thinking, but they really denied Christ’s true humanity, and as such speedily called down condemnation on their author. Rome decided against him in 377 and 382, Antioch in 378, and finally the Second Ecumenical Council—that of Constantinople—in 381.

The School of Antioch

Apollinaris was strongly opposed by Gregory of Nazianzus and by the school of Antioch. The founder of the latter, in its later stage, was Diodorus (?-394), long a presbyter of Antioch, and from 378 to his death bishop of Tarsus. Its roots, indeed, ran back into the earlier teaching of Paul of Samosata (ante, p.
72) and Lucian (ante, p. 106); but the extreme positions which they represented, and their leadership, were rejected, and the school stood on the basis of the Nicene orthodoxy. It was marked by a degree of literalism in its exegesis of Scripture quite in contrast to the disproportionate use of allegory by the Alexandrians. Its philosophy showed the influence of Aristotle as theirs that of Plato. Its thought of Christ was more influenced by the tradition of Asia Minor, of the “second Adam,” and by the ancient distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of experience than was Alexandria. Antioch, therefore, laid more weight of teaching on the earthly life and human nature of Jesus than was the tendency in Alexandria. In this attempt to give true value to Christ’s humanity, Diodorus approached the view that in Christ were two persons in moral rather than essential union. Since the Logos is eternal and like can only bear like, that which was born of Mary was the human only. The incarnation was the indwelling of the Logos in a perfect man, as of God in a temple. These views are reminiscent of the adoptionist Christology, which had found one of its latest avowed defenders in Paul of Samosata in Antioch a century earlier. They were out of touch with the Greek conception of salvation—the making divine of the human.

Among the disciples of Diodorus were Chrysostom (ante, 3.8), Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Nestorius. Theodore, a native of Antioch, who held the bishopric for which he is named for thirty-six years, till his death in 428, was the ablest exegete and theologian of the Antiochian school. Though he maintained that God and man in Christ constituted one person—prosopon,—he had difficulty in making that contention real, and held theories practically identical with those of Diodorus.310

Nestorius, a presbyter and monk of Antioch, held in high repute there as a preacher, was made patriarch of Constantinople in 428. Recent discoveries, especially of his own autobiographical work, The Treatise of Heraclides of Damascus, have immensely broadened knowledge of his real theological position, as well as of the facts of his later life. His dogmatic standpoint was essentially that of the school of Antioch; yet he would not admit that there were in Christ two persons—the doctrine with which he was charged. “With the one name Christ we designate at the same time two natures. . . . The essential characteristics in the nature of the divinity and in the humanity are from all eternity distinguished.” 311 Perhaps his furthest departure from the current Greek conception of salvation is to be seen in such an expression as: “God the Word is also named Christ because He has always conjunction with Christ. And it is impossible for God the Word to do anything without the humanity, for all is planned upon an intimate conjunction, not on the deification of the humanity.” 312 Nestorius would emphasize the reality and completeness of the human in the Christian’s Lord.

The Alexandrian Interpretation

Opposed to Nestorius, and to be his bitterest enemy, was Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria (412-444), the nephew and successor of the patriarch who had had so unworthy a part in the downfall of Chrysostom. In him unscrupulous ambition combined with the jealousy of Constantinople long entertained in Alexandria—and it must be admitted, reciprocated—and with the hostility of the rival schools of Alexandria and Antioch. Yet it is but just to Cyril to note that there was more in his opposition to Nestorius than mere jealousy and rivalry, however prominent those unlovely traits may have been. Cyril, following the Alexandrian tradition, and in consonance with the Greek conception of salvation, saw in Christ the full making divine of the human. Though he rejected the view of Apollinaris and held that Christ’s humanity was complete in that it possessed body, soul, and spirit, he really stood very near to Apollinaris. His emphasis on the divine in Christ was such that, though he described the union in Him as that of “two natures,” the only personality in Christ was that of the Logos. The Logos “took flesh,” He clothed Himself with humanity. The human element had no personality apart from the Logos. Jesus was not an individual man. Yet while Cyril held to an interchange of qualities between the divine and the human, each is a complete nature. “From two natures, one”; and that one personality is the divine. For Cyril it was, therefore, God made flesh, who was born, who died, of whom we partake in the Supper, and whose making divine of humanity is the proof and means that we, too, shall be made partakers of the divine nature.313 If the school of Antioch came near such a separation of the divine and the human as to leave Christ only the Son of God by adoption, that of Cyril allowed Him little more than an impersonal humanity absorbed in divinity.
The “Mother of God”

An ancient designation of the Mother of Jesus was “Mother of God”—*Theotokos*. It had been used by Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius, Apollinaris, and Gregory of Nazianzus. To Cyril it was, of course, a natural expression. Everywhere in the East it may be said to have been in good usage, save where the school of Antioch had influence, and even Theodore of Mopsuestia of that school was willing to employ the expression, if carefully guarded. Nestorius found it current coin in Constantinople. To his thinking it did not sufficiently distinguish the human from the divine in Christ. He therefore preached against it, at the beginning of his bishopric, declaring the proper form to be “Mother of Christ”—“for that which is born of flesh is flesh.” Yet even he expressed himself a little later as willing to say *Theotokos*, in the guarded way in which Theodore would employ it. “It can be endured in consideration of the fact that the temple, which is inseparably united with God the Word, comes of her.” In preaching against this expression Nestorius had infuriated popular piety and the rising religious reverence for the Virgin. Cyril saw his opportunity to humiliate the rival see of Constantinople and the school of Antioch at one blow, while advancing his own Christology. Cyril promptly wrote to the Egyptian monks defending the disputed phrase, and there soon followed an exchange of critical letters between Cyril and Nestorius. It speedily came to an open attack on the patriarch of Constantinople.

Cyril now brought every influence at his command to his aid in one of the most repulsive contests in church history. He appealed to the Emperor and Empress, Theodosius II and Eudoxia, and to the Emperor’s sister, Pulcheria, representing that Nestorius’s doctrines destroyed all basis of salvation. He presented his case to Pope Celestine I (422-432). Nestorius, in his turn, also wrote to the Pope. Celestine promptly found in favor of Cyril, and ordered, through a Roman synod in 430, that Nestorius recant or be excommunicated. The action of the Pope is hard to understand. The letter of Nestorius agreed more nearly in its definition of the question at issue with the Western view than did the theory of Cyril. Nestorius declared his faith in “both natures which by the highest and unmixed union are adored in the one person of the Only Begotten.” Politics were probably the determining factor. Rome and Alexandria had long worked together against the rising claims of Constantinople. Nestorius was less respectful in his address to the Pope than Cyril. Moreover, without being a Pelagian, Nestorius had given some degree of favor to the Pelagians whom the Pope opposed (see p. 187). Nestorius’s attack on the much-prized *Theotokos* was also displeasing to Celestine.

*The Council of Ephesus*

The empire being now widely involved in the dispute, the two Emperors, Theodosius II of the East, and Valentinian III in the West, called a general council to meet in Ephesus in 431. Cyril and his followers were early on hand, as was Nestorius, but the friends of Nestorius were slow in arriving. Cyril and Memnon, bishop of Ephesus promptly organized such of the council as were present and they could secure. Nestorius was condemned and deposed in a single day’s session. A few days later Nestorius’s friends, led by John, the patriarch of Antioch, arrived. They organized and, in turn, condemned and deposed Cyril and Memnon. Cyril’s council, meanwhile, had been joined by the papal delegates, and added John to its list of deposed, at the same time condemning Pelagianism (see p. 188), doubtless to please the West. The Emperor Theodosius II was at a loss as to what course to pursue. Nestorius retired to a monastery. Theodosius imprisoned Cyril and Memnon as trouble-makers, but politics inclined to their side and they were soon allowed to return to their sees. The real victim was Nestorius, and worse was to follow.

Antioch and Alexandria were now in hostility more than ever, but both, under imperial pressure, were made willing to compromise. Antioch would sacrifice Nestorius, and Cyril concede something to Antioch in creedal formula. Accordingly, in 433, John of Antioch sent to Cyril a creed composed, it is probable, by Theodoret of Cyprus, then the leading theologian of the school of Antioch. This creed was more Antiochian than Alexandrian, though it could be interpreted in either direction. “We therefore acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ... complete God and complete man... A union of the two natures has been made, therefore we confess one Christ... The holy Virgin is *Theotokos*, because God the Word was made flesh and became man, and from her conception united with Himself the temple received from her.”
Cyril now signed this creed, though without retracting any of his former utterances. By so doing he made irrevocable the overthrow of Nestorius. Yet Nestorius could have signed it even more willingly than he. This agreement enabled Cyril to secure general recognition in the East for his council of 431, in Ephesus—in the West the participation of papal representatives had always accredited it as the Third General Council.

Nestorius himself was banished to upper Egypt. There he lived a miserable existence, and there he wrote, certainly as late as the autumn of 450, his remarkable *Treatise of Heraclides of Damascus*. Whether he survived the Council of Chalcedon is uncertain. There is some reason to think that he did. At all events he rejoiced in the steps which led to it, and felt himself in sympathy with the views which were then proclaimed orthodox.

Not all of Nestorius’s sympathizers shared in his desertion. Ibas, the leading theologian of the Syrian school of Edessa, supported his teaching. Persecuted in the empire, Nestorianism found much following even in Syria, and protection in Persia. There it developed a wide missionary activity. In the seventh century it entered China, and about the same time southern India. Nestorian churches still exist in the region where Turkey and Persia divide the territory between Lake Urumia and the upper Tigris, and also in India.

*Dioscurus, Flavian, and Leo*

The agreement of 433 between Antioch and Alexandria was, in reality, but a truce. The division of the two parties but increased. Cyril undoubtedly represented the majority of the Eastern Church, with his emphasis on the divine in the person of Christ, at the expense of reducing the human to an impersonal humanity. Though he vigorously rejected Apollinarianism, his tendency was that of Apollinaris. It had the sympathy of the great party of monks; and many, especially in Egypt, went further than Cyril, and viewed Christ’s humanity as practically absorbed in His divinity, so that He possessed one nature only, and that divine. Cyril died in 444, and was succeeded as patriarch of Alexandria by Dioscurus, a man of far less intellectual acumen and religious motive, but even more ambitious, if possible, to advance the authority of the Alexandrian see. Two years later, 446, a new patriarch, Flavian, took the bishop’s throne in Constantinople. Though little is known of his early history, it seems probable that his sympathies were with the school of Antioch. From the first, Flavian’s course promised to be stormy. He had the opposition not only of Dioscurus, but of the imperial favorite minister, Chrysaphius, who had supplanted Pulcheria in the counsels of Theodosius II. Chrysaphius was a supporter of the Alexandrians.

Occasion for quarrel soon arose. Dioscurus planned an attack on the remaining representatives of the Antiochian school as Nestorian heretics. In sympathy with this effort, and as a leader of the monastic party, on the help of which Dioscurus counted, stood the aged abbot or “archimandrite,” Eutyches of Constantinople, a man of little theological ability, a partisan of the late Cyril, and influential not only by reason of his popularity, but by the friendship of Chrysaphius. Eutyches was now charged with heresy by Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum. Flavian took up the case with reluctance, evidently knowing its possibilities of mischief; but at a local synod in Constantinople, late in 448, Eutyches was examined and condemned. His heresy was that he affirmed; “I confess that our Lord was of two natures before the union [i. e., the incarnation], but after the union one nature.”

Rome had now one of the ablest of its Popes in the person of Leo I (440–461) (see *ante*, 3.6), and to Leo both Eutyches and Flavian speedily presented the case. To Flavian, whom he heartily supported, Leo wrote his famous letter of June, 449, usually called the *Tome,* in which the great Pope set forth the view which the West had entertained since the time of Tertullian, that in Christ were two full and complete natures, which, “without detracting from the properties of either nature and substance, came together in one person.” What may be said, chiefly in criticism of Leo’s letter is that, while representing clearly and truly the Western tradition, it did not touch the intellectual depths to which the subtler Greek mind had carried its speculations. Probably it was well that it did not.

*The Council of Chalcedon*
Meanwhile Dioscurus was moving actively in Eutyches’s defense and the extension of his own claims. At his instance the Emperor called a general council to meet in Ephesus in August, 449. At Ephesus Dioscurus was supreme. Eutyches was rehabilitated, Flavian and Eusebius of Doryleum condemned. Leo’s Tome was denied a reading. It was a stormy meeting, but probably not more so than that of Ephesus, in 431, or Chalcedon, in 451. Flavian died shortly after, and rumor had it in consequence of physical violence at the council. The report seems unfounded. Dioscurus had achieved a great victory, but at the fatal cost of a rupture of the ancient alliance between Alexandria and Rome. Leo promptly denounced the council as a “synod of robbers”; but the Emperor, Theodosius II, gave it his hearty support and a sympathizer with Dioscurus became patriarch of Constantinople.

Leo had no success with Theodosius II, but much with the Emperor’s sister, Pulcheria; and the situation was profoundly altered when the accidental death of Theodosius in July, 450, put Pulcheria and her husband, Marcian, on the throne. The new sovereigns entered at once into relations with Leo. The Pope wished a new council in Italy, where his influence would have been potent, but this did not satisfy imperial politics. The new General Council was called to meet in Nicaea, in the autumn of 451. Imperial convenience led to the change of place to Chalcedon, opposite Constantinople, and there some six hundred bishops, all but the papal delegates and two others from the Orient, assembled in what has ever since been known as the Fourth Ecumenical Council (that of Ephesus, in 449, being rejected).

The council proceeded rapidly with its work. Dioscurus was deposed and sent into exile by imperial authority, where he died three years later. After imperial pressure had been exerted, a commission was appointed, of which the papal delegates were members, to draw up a creed. Its production was promptly ratified by the council. The result was, indeed, a Western triumph. Rome had given the decision to the question at issue, and in so doing had made a compromise between the positions of Antioch and Alexandria that was wholly satisfactory to neither. The result was a lengthy document, reciting the so-called Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan creed (§ 3,4), approving Leo’s Tome, and condemning previous heresies. Its essential part—the creed of Chalcedon—is as follows;

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the manhood, in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God (Theotokos), according to the manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person (prosopon) and one subsistence (hypostasis), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the creed of the holy Fathers has taught us, and the creed of the holy Fathers has hands down to us.

Such is the creed that has ever since been regarded in the Greek, Latin, and most Protestant Churches as the “orthodox” solution of the Christological problem. It is easy to criticise it. Its adoption was greatly involved in ecclesiastical politics. It solved few of the intellectual difficulties regarding Christology which had been raised in the East. It did not even heal the Christological quarrels. But, when all is admitted, it must be said that its formulation was fortunate and its consequences useful. It established a norm of doctrine in a field in which there had been great confusion. More important than that, it was true to the fundamental conviction of the church that in Christ a complete revelation of God is made in terms of a genuine human life.

If a coincidence of imperial and Roman interests had secured a great dogmatic victory for Rome, the imperial authority was determined that the victory should not be one of Roman jurisdiction. By a canon, against which Leo protested, the council exalted the claims of Constantinople to a dignity like that of Rome (ante, p. 135). Nor was the downfall of Alexandria less damaging. Alexandrian rivalry of Constantinople had been Rome’s advantage in the East. Now successful rivalry was at an end, for the
consequences of the Chalcedonian decision crippled Alexandria permanently. By the council the historic distribution of the Orient was completed, Jerusalem being given the patriarchal standing which it had long claimed, side by side with the three older patriarchates, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch.

[11.] 2. THE EAST DIVIDED

The creed of Chalcedon was now the official standard of the empire. Its Western origin and spirit made it unacceptable, however, to a large portion of the East. To many Orientals it seemed “Nestorian.” This was especially true in those regions which shared most strongly in the Alexandrian tendency to emphasize the divine in Christ at the expense of the fully human, and these elements of opposition included most of the monks, the old native stock of Egypt generally, and a large portion of the population of Syria and Armenia. Undoubtedly the tendencies which the “orthodox” Cyril and his heretical successor, Dioscurus, had represented were consonant with the Greek conception of salvation, and seemed to do special honor to Christ. These rejecters of the creed of Chalcedon included many shades of opinion, but as a whole they showed little departure from Cyril. Their chief difference from Chalcedon and the East was one of emphasis. They rejected Eutyches, yet most of them would say “of two natures,” provided it was understood that the human and divine were united in the incarnation into one nature, and that essentially divine, with human attributes. As with Cyril, this humanity was impersonal, and, perhaps, even more than with him it was transformed into divinity, so that without ceasing, in a certain sense, to be human, it was properly describable as one divine nature. Hence the opponents of Chalcedon were called Monophysites—believers in one nature.

Compromise Efforts

Immediately after the Council of Chalcedon Palestine and, next, Egypt were in practical revolution, which the government was able only slowly to master. By 457 the see of Alexandria was in possession of a Monophysite, Timothy, called by his enemies the Cat; by 461, Peter the Fuller, of the same faith, held that of Antioch. These captures were not to be permanent, but the native populations of Egypt and Syria were throwing off the dominance of Constantinople and largely sympathized with the Monophysite protest. In Antioch Peter the Fuller caused fresh commotion by adding to the Trisagion, so that the ascription ran; “Holy God, holy Strong, holy Immortal, who was crucified for us.”

The empire found itself grievously threatened, politically no less than religiously, by these disaffections; and much of the imperial policy for more than two centuries was devoted to their adjustment, with slight permanent success. In the contest between Zeno and Basilicus for the imperial throne, the latter made a direct bid for Monophysite support by issuing, in 476, an Encyclion, in which he anathematized “the so-called Tome of Leo, and all things done at Chalcedon “in modification of the Nicene creed.” For such a reversal the East was not yet ready, and this action of Basilicus was one of the causes that led to his overthrow by Zeno. Zeno, however, probably induced by the patriarch Acacius of Constantinople, made a new attempt to heal the schism. In 482 he published his famous Henoticon. In it the results of the Councils of Nicée and Constantinople were confirmed, Nestorius and Eutyches condemned, and Cyril’s “twelve chapters” approved. It gave a brief Christological statement, the exact relationship of which to that of Chalcedon was not, and was not intended to be, clear. Its chief significance was in the declaration; “These things we write, not as making an innovation upon the faith, but to satisfy you; and every one who has held or holds any other opinion, whether at Chalcedon or in any synod whatever, we anathematize.” This left it free to hold the Chalcedonian creed to be erroneous. The consequence was not peace but confusion. While many Monophysites accepted it, the Monophysite extremists would have nothing to do with the Henoticon. On the other hand, the Roman see, feeling its honor and its orthodoxy attacked by this practical rejection of Chalcedon, excommunicated Acacius and broke off relations with the East, the schism continuing till 519, when the Emperor Justin renewed the authority of Chalcedon, under circumstances that increased the prestige of the papacy, but only alienated Egypt and Syria the more.

Justinian’s Policy
Justin’s successor, the great Justinian (527-565), more fully than any other of the Eastern Emperors, succeeded in making himself master of the church. His conspicuous military successes restored to the empire for a time control of Italy and North Africa. The church was now practically a department of the state. Heathenism was suppressed and persecuted as never before. While Justinian himself was, at first, strongly Chalcedonian in his sympathies, his Empress, Theodora, leaned to the Monophysite side. He soon gave up the persecution of Monophysites with which his reign began. Himself one of the ablest theological minds of the age, he sought to develop an ecclesiastical policy that would so interpret the creed of Chalcedon that, while leaving it technically untouched, would exclude any possible Antiochian or “Nestorian” construction, thus bringing its significance fully into accord with the theology of Cyril of Alexandria. By this means he hoped to placate the Monophysites, and also to satisfy the wishes of the East generally, whether “orthodox” or Monophysite, without offending Rome and the West too deeply by an actual rejection of the Chalcedonian decision. Hence the establishment of a Cyrillic-Chalcedonian orthodoxy was Justinian’s aim. It was a difficult task. As far as concerned a satisfaction of the Monophysites in general it failed. In its effort to render the Cyrillic interpretation of the creed of Chalcedon the only “orthodox” view it succeeded. Any form of Antiochianism was permanently discredited. By this result Justinian undoubtedly satisfied the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the “orthodox” East.

Justinian as a Theological Politician

Justinian was greatly aided in his task by the rise of a fresh interpretation of the Chalcedonian creed, in the teaching of a monastic theologian, Leontius of Byzantium (c. 485-543). The age was witnessing a revival of the Aristotelian philosophy, and Leontius applied Aristotelian distinctions to the Christological problems. The feeling of much of the East, both “orthodox” and Monophysite, was that the affirmation of two natures in Christ could not be interpreted without involving two hypostases—subsistences—and therefore being “Nestorian.” An explanation without these “Nestorian” consequences was what Leontius now gave. The natures might be “intra-hypostatic”—that is, there might be such a hypostatic union that while the peculiarities of one nature remained, it might find its hypostasis in the other. In Christ this one hypostasis, which is that of both natures, is that of the Logos. Thus Leontius would interpret the creed of Chalcedon in terms wholly consonant with the aim, if not with the exact language, of Cyril. The human in Christ is real, but is so subordinated that the ultimate reality is the divine.

Such an interpretation seemed, at the time, a quite possible basis of reunion with the more moderate Monophysites, who constituted their majority. The large section led by Severus, Monophysite patriarch of Antioch (512-518), who, till his death in 538, found a refuge in Egypt, held essentially the same position as Leontius. Their chief difference was that they regarded the Chalcedonian Council and its creed with greater suspicion. With the more radical Monophysites, led by Julian of Halicarnassus (d. after 518), the prospect of union was less auspicious. They went so far as to hold that Christ’s body was incorruptible from the beginning of the incarnation, and incapable of suffering save so far as Christ Himself permitted it. Its enemies charged the theory of Julian with Docetic significance.

To meet this situation by establishing an anti-Antiochian, Cyrillic interpretation of the creed of Chalcedon, and winning, if possible, the moderate Monophysites, was the aim of Justinian. He came to favor the so-called “Theopaschite” (i.e. “suffering God”) formula of the Scythian monks, “one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh,” after a controversy lasting from 519 to 533. Because of monastic quarrels in Palestine, and also because the Emperor’s theological sympathies, like those of his age, were exceedingly intolerant, Justinian condemned the memory and teachings of Origen in 543. 329

Justinian as a Theological Politician

Justinian’s great effort to further his theological policy was the occasion of the discussion known as that of the “Three Chapters.” In 544 Justinian, defining the issue by his own imperial authority, condemned the person and writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, now more than a century dead, but once the revered leader of the school of Antioch (ante, p. 145), the writings of Theodoret of Cyrus in criticism of Cyril (ante, p. 148), and a letter of Ibas of Edessa to Maris the Persian (ante, p. 149). Theodoret and Ibas had been approved by the Council of Chalcedon. The action of the Emperor nominally left the creed of Chalcedon untouched,
but made it impossible of interpretation in any but a Cyrillic sense, condemned the school of Antioch, and greatly disparaged the authority of the Council of Chalcedon. The edict aroused not a little opposition. Pope Vigilius (537-555) disliked it, but the imperial reconquest of Italy had placed the Popes largely in the power of the Emperor. Between his knowledge of the feeling of the West and his fear of Justinian, Vigilius’s attitude was vacillating and utterly unheroic. To carry out his will, Justinian now convened the Fifth General Council, which met in Constantinople in 553. By it the “Three Chapters,” i.e., Theodore and the writings just described, were condemned, the “Theopaschite” formula approved, and Origen once more reckoned a heretic. Pope Vigilius, though in Constantinople, refused to share in these proceedings, but such was the imperial pressure that within less than a year he acceded to the decision of the council. The Cyrillic interpretation of the creed of Chalcedon was now the only “orthodox” understanding. The action of the council was resisted for a few years in North Africa; and the yielding attitude of the Pope led to a schismatic separation of northern Italy from Rome which lasted till the time of Gregory the Great, and in the neighboring Illyricum and Istria even longer. One main purpose of the condemnation of the “Three Chapters”—the reconciliation of the Monophysites—failed. In Egypt and Syria Monophysitism remained the dominant force, the real reason being that these provinces were developing a native national consciousness antagonistic to the empire, for which theological differences were the excuse more than the cause.

**Egypt, Abyssinia, Syria, and Armenia**

Under Justinian’s successors, Justin II (565-578), and Tiberius II (578-582), alternate severe persecution of the Monophysites and vain attempts to win them occurred. These efforts were now of less significance as the Monophysite groups were now practically separated national churches. The native Monophysite body of Egypt can hardly be given a fixed date for its origin. From the Council of Chalcedon the land was increasingly in religious rebellion. That church, the Coptic, is still the main Christian body of Egypt, numbering more than six hundred and fifty thousand adherents, strongly Monophysite to this day in doctrine, under the rule of a patriarch who still takes his title from Alexandria, though his seat has long been in Cairo. Its services are still chiefly in the ancient Coptic, though Arabic has to some extent replaced it. The most conspicuous daughter of the Coptic Church is the Abyssinian. When Christianity was introduced into “Ethiopia” is uncertain. There is some reason to think that its first missionary was Frumentius, ordained a bishop by Athanasius, about 330. The effective spread of Christianity there seems to have been by Egyptian monks, about 480. The Abyssinian Church stands to the present day in dependent relations to that of Egypt, its head, the *Abuna*, being appointed by the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria. It is Monophysite, and differs little from that of Egypt, save in the backwardness of its culture, and the great extent to which fasting is carried. It is probably the lowest in civilization of any existing church.

While Egypt presented the spectacle of a united Monophysite population, Syria was deeply divided. Part of its inhabitants inclined to Nestorianism (ante, p. 149). Some were orthodox, and many Monophysite. The great organizer of Syrian Monophysitism, after its persecution in the early part of the reign of Justinian, was Jacob, nicknamed Baradæus (?-578). Born near Edessa, he became a monk and enjoyed the support of Justinian’s Monophysite-disposed Empress, Theodora. In 541 or 543 he was ordained bishop of Edessa, and for the rest of his life served as a Monophysite missionary, ordaining, it is said, eighty thousand clergy. To him Syrian Monophysitism owed its great growth, and from him the Syrian Monophysite Church, which exists to the present day, derives the name given by its opponents, Jacobite. Its head calls himself patriarch of Antioch, though his seat has for centuries been in the Tigris Valley, where most of his flock are to be found. They number about eighty thousand.

Armenia during the first four centuries of the Roman Empire was a vassal kingdom, never thoroughly Romanized, maintaining its own language and peculiarities under its own sovereigns. Christian beginnings are obscure; but the great propagator of Christianity in the land was Gregory, called the Illuminator, who labored in the closing years of the third century. By him King Tiridates (c. 238-314) was converted and baptized—Armenia thus becoming the first country to have a Christian ruler, since this event antedated the Christian profession of Constantine. Armenian Christianity grew vigorously. Never very closely
bound to the Roman world, Armenia was in part conquered by Persia in 387. In the struggles of the next century hatred of Persia seems to have turned Armenia in the Monophysite direction, since Persia favored Nestorianism (ante, p. 149). By an Armenian council, held in Etchmiadzin (Valarshabad), in 491, the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo were condemned, and the Armenian or Gregorian Church—so named from its founder—has been ever since Monophysite. Armenians at present are wide-spread throughout the Turkish empire and the adjacent portions of Russia. Armenians are believed to number not less than two millions nine hundred thousand, of whom the greater part are Gregorians. The Gregorian Church is now far the most important and vigorous of these ancient separated churches of the East.

The Christological Controversies

The effect of the Christological controversies was disastrous to church and state. By the close of the sixth century the Roman state church of the East had been rent, and separated churches, Nestorian and Monophysite had been torn from it. Egypt and Syria were profoundly disaffected toward the government and religion of Constantinople—a fact that largely accounts for the rapid conquest of those lands by Mohammedanism in the seventh century.

[11.] 3. CATASTROPHES and FURTHER CONTROVERSIES in the EAST

Justinian’s brilliant restoration of the Roman power was but of brief duration. From 568, the Lombards were pressing into Italy. Without conquering it wholly, they occupied the north and a large portion of the centre. The last Roman garrisons were driven out of Spain by the Visigoths in 624. The Persians gained temporary control of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt between 613 and 629, and overran Asia Minor to the Bosphorus. On the European side the Avars, and the Slavic Croats and Serbs, conquered the Danube lands and most of the Balkan provinces, largely annihilating Christianity there, penetrating in 623 and 626 to the defenses of Constantinople itself. That the empire did not then perish was due to the military genius of the Emperor Heraclius (610-642), by whom the Persians were brilliantly defeated, and the lost eastern provinces restored. Before his death, however, a new power, that of Mohammedanism, had arisen. Its prophet died in Medina in 632, but the conquest which he had planned was carried out by the Caliphs Omar and Othman. Damascus fell in 635, Jerusalem and Antioch in 638, Alexandria in 641. In 651, the Persian kingdom was brought to an end. By 711, the Mohammedan flood crossed the Strait of Gibraltar into Spain, bringing the Visigothic monarchy to a close, and swept forward into France, where its progress was permanently checked by the Franks, under Charles Martel, in the great battle of 732, between Tours and Poitiers. In the East, Constantinople successfully resisted it, in 672-678, and again in 717-718. Syria, Egypt, and North Africa were permanently taken by the Mohammedans.

The Monothelite Controversy

Under such circumstances, before the final catastrophe, efforts were naturally made to secure unity in the threatened portions of the empire. After negociations lasting several years, in which the patriarch Sergius of Constantinople was the leader, a union policy was inaugurated by the Emperor Heraclius, on the basis of a declaration that in all that He did Christ acted by “one divine-human energy.” Cyrus, the “orthodox” patriarch of Alexandria, set up a formula of union, of which this was the substance, in Egypt, in 633, with much apparent success in conciliating Monophysite opinion. Opposition arose, led by a Palestinian monk, Sophronius, soon to be patriarch of Jerusalem. Sergius was alarmed and now tried to stop any discussion of the question. He now wrote, in that sense, to Pope Honorius (625-638), who advised against the expression “energy” as unscriptural, and said, rather incidentally, that Christ had one will. Heraclius now, in 638, issued his Ekthesis, composed by Sergius, in which he forbade discussion of the question of one or two energies and affirmed that Christ had one will.

The Sixth General Council

It was easier to start a theological controversy than to end it. Pope John IV (640-642) condemned the doctrine of one will in Christ—or Monothelite heresy as it was called—in 641. Heraclius died that year, and was succeeded by Constans II (642-668), who issued, in 648, a Typos, in which he forbade discussion of the question of Christ’s will or wills. The holder of the papacy was the ambitious Martin I (649-
655), who saw in the situation an opportunity not only to further an interpretation of the theological problem consonant with the views of the West, which had always held that Christ’s natures were each perfect and entire, but also to assert papal authority in the Orient. He therefore assembled a great synod in Rome in 649, which proclaimed the existence of two wills in Christ—human and divine—and not only condemned Sergius and other patriarchs of Constantinople, but the *Ekthesis* and the *Typos*. This was flat defiance of the Emperor. Constans had Pope Martin arrested and brought a prisoner to Constantinople in 653, where he was treated with great brutality. Martin had the courage of his convictions. He was exiled to the Crimea, where he died. Strained relations between Rome and Constantinople followed. Constans II was succeeded by Constantine IV (668-685). By that time, the Monophysite provinces, the retention of which had been the source of the discussion, had been taken by the Mohammedans. It was more important to placate Italy than to favor them. The Emperor entered into negotiations with Pope Agatho (678-681), who issued a long letter of definition as Leo I had once set forth his *Tome*. Under imperial auspices a council, the Sixth General Council, was held in Constantinople in 680 and 681. By it Christ was declared to have “two natural wills or willings . . . not contrary one to the other . . . but His human will follows, not as resisting or reluctant, but rather as subject to His divine and omnipotent will.” It also condemned Sergius and other of his successors in the patriarchate of Constantinople, Cyrus of Alexandria and Pope Honorius. For the third time Rome had triumphed over the divided East in theological definition. Nicæa, Chalcedon, and Constantinople had all been Roman victories. It must be said, also, that a human will was necessary for that complete and perfect humanity of Christ as well as perfect divinity, for which the West had always stood. The doctrine, thus defined, was the logical completion of that of Chalcedon. With its definition, the Christological controversies were ended in so far as doctrinal determination was concerned.

While the Sixth General Council was thus a Western success, it had a sort of appendix which was, in a sense, a Western defeat. Like the council of the “Three Chapters” (553), it had formulated no disciplinary canons. A council to do this work was summoned by Justinian II (685-695, 704-711), to meet in Constantinople in 692, and is called from the domed room in which it assembled—which was that in which the council of 680 and 681 had met—the Second Trullan Council, or *Concilium Quinisextum*, as completing the Fifth and Sixth General Councils. It was entirely Eastern in its composition, and is looked upon by the Oriental Church as the completion of the council of 680 and 681, though its validity is not accepted by that of Rome. Many ancient canons were renewed; but several of the new enactments directly contradicted Western practice. It enacted, in agreement with Chalcedon, that “the see of Constantinople shall enjoy equal privilege with the see of Old Rome.” It permitted marriage to deacons and presbyters, and condemned the Roman prohibition of such marriages. The Greek Church still maintains this permission. It forbade the Roman custom of fasting on Saturdays in Lent. It prohibited the favorite Western representation of Christ under the symbol of a lamb, ordering instead the depiction of a human figure. Though not very important in themselves, these enactments are significant of the growing estrangement in feeling and practice between East and West.

12. WORSHIP and PIETY

[Walker, 3.12-3.14, pp. 164-172]

[12.] I. DEVELOPING HIERARCHIES

The acceptance of Christianity as the religion of the empire gave to the Emperors a practical authority over the church. By the time of Justinian, the Emperor declared, on his own initiative, what was sound doctrine, and to a considerable extent regulated churchly administration. The Emperors largely controlled appointment to high ecclesiastical office, especially in the East. This imperial power was limited, however, by the necessity, which even Emperors as powerful as Justinian felt, of securing the approval of the church through general councils for statements of faith and canons of administration. The imperial support of these edicts and decisions of general councils made heresy a crime, and must seriously have limited freedom of Christian thought. It was a very narrow path both in doctrinal opinion and in administration, that a bishop of Constantinople, for instance, had to walk. If conditions were more
favorable for the papacy (*ante*, pp. 134-136), it was largely a consequence of the general ineffectiveness of imperial control in Italy, though cases were not lacking where the Popes felt the heavy hands of the Emperors.

*The Clergy*

As in the third century, the bishops continued to be the centres of local ecclesiastical administration, and their power tended to increase. By them the other clergy were not merely ordained, but the pay of those below them was in their hands. The First Council of Nicea provided that other clergy should not remove from a diocese without the bishop’s consent. In each of the provinces the bishop of the capital city was the metropolitan, who, according to the synod of Antioch (341), should “have precedence in rank . . . that the other bishops do nothing extraordinary without him.” The ancient custom of local synods, for the consideration of provincial questions was extended, the First Council of Nicea requiring them to be held twice a year. This metropolitan arrangement was fully introduced into the East by the middle of the fourth century. In the West it was about half a century later in development, and was limited in Italy by the dominance of the papacy. Nevertheless it won its way in northern Italy, Spain, and Gaul. Above the metropolitans stood the bishops of the great capitals of the empire, the patriarchs, whose prominence antedated the rise of the metropolitan system. These were the bishops, or patriarchs, of Rome, Constantinople (by 381), Alexandria, Antioch, and, by 451, Jerusalem.

By Constantine, the clergy were made a privileged class and exempted from the public burdens of taxation (319). The government, anxious not to lose its revenues through the entrance into clerical office of the well-to-do, ordered that only those “of small fortune” should be ordained (326). The result of this policy was that, though the ordination of slaves was everywhere discouraged, and was forbidden in the East by the Emperor Zeno in 484, the clergy were prevailingly recruited from classes of little property or education. The brilliant careers of some men of talent and means, of whom Ambrose is an example, show the possibilities then before those of high ability who passed these barriers. The feeling, which had long existed, that the higher clergy, at least, should not engage in any worldly or gainful occupation, grew, and such works were expressly forbidden by the Emperor Valentinian III in 452. Such exclusive devotion to the clerical calling demanded an enlarged support. The church now received not merely the gifts of the faithful, as of old; but the income of a rapidly increasing body of landed estates presented or bequeathed to it by wealthy Christians, the control of which was in the hands of the bishops. An arrangement of Pope Simplicius (468-483) provided that ecclesiastical income should be divided into quarters, one each for the bishop, the other clergy, the upkeep of the services and edifices, and for the poor.

The feeling was natural that the clergy should be moral examples to their flocks. Celibacy had long been prized as belonging to the holier Christian life. In this respect the West was stricter than the East. Pope Leo I (440-461) held that even sub-deacons should refrain from marriage, though it was to be centuries before this rule was universally enforced in the Western Church. In the East, the practice which still continues was established by the time of Justinian, that only celibates could be bishops, while clergy below that rank could marry before ordination. This rule, though not without advantages, has had the great disadvantage of blocking promotion in the Eastern Church, and leading to the choice of bishops prevailingly from the ranks of the monks.

*Catechumens, Confirmation*

While the bishop’s power was thus extensive, the growth of the church into the rural districts about the cities, and of many congregations in the cities themselves, led to the formation of congregations in charge of presbyters, and thus to a certain increase in the importance of the presbyterial office. These congregations still belonged, in most regions, to the undivided city church, ruled by the bishop; but by the sixth century the parish system made its appearance in France. There the priest (presbyter) in charge received two-thirds of the local income, paying the rest to the bishop.

The incoming of masses from heathenism into the church led, at first, to an emphasis on the catechumenate. Reception to it, with the sign of the cross and laying on of hands, was popularly regarded as conferring membership in the church, and was as far as the great multitude of less earnest Christians
went in Christian profession, save in possible danger of death. The growth of generations of exclusively Christian ancestry, and, in the West, the spread of Augustinian doctrines of baptismal grace, brought this half-way attitude to an end. The catechumenate lost its significance when the whole population had become supposedly Christian.

In one important respect East and West fell asunder in this period regarding rites connected with baptism. As already described, by the time of Tertullian (ante, p. 96), baptism proper was followed by anointing and laying on of hands in token of the reception of the Holy Spirit. In Tertullian’s age both baptism and laying on of hands were acts of the bishop, save in case of necessity, when baptism could be administered by any Christian (ante, p. 97). With the growth of the church, presbyters came to baptize regularly in East and West. With regard to the further rite the two regions differed. The East saw its chief significance in the anointing, and allowed that to be performed, as it does to-day, by the presbyter with oil consecrated by the bishop. The West viewed the laying on of hands as the all-important matter, and held that that could be done by the bishop alone344 as successor to the Apostles. The rites therefore became separated in the West. “Confirmation” took place often a considerable time after baptism, when the presence of the bishop could be secured, though it was long before the age of the candidate was fixed in the Western Church.

[12.] 2. PUBLIC WORSHIP AND SACRED SEASONS

Public worship in the fourth and fifth centuries stood wholly under the influence of the conception of secret discipline, the so-called disciplina arcani, derived, it is probable, from conceptions akin to or borrowed from the mystery religions. Its roots run back apparently into the third century. Under these impulses the services were divided into two parts. The first was open to catechumens and the general public, and included Bible reading, singing, the sermon, and prayer. To the second, the true Christian mystery, none but the baptized were admitted. It had its crown in the Lord’s Supper, but the creed and the Lord’s Prayer were also objects of reserve from those uninitiated by baptism. With the disappearance of the catechumenate in the sixth century, under the impression that the population was all now Christian, the secret discipline came to an end.

The public portion of Sunday worship began with Scripture reading, interspersed with the singing of psalms. These selections presented three passages, the prophets, i. e., Old Testament, the epistles, the Gospels, and were so read as to cover the Bible in the course of successive Sundays. The desirability of reading appropriate selections at special seasons, and of some abbreviation led, by the close of the fourth century, to the preparation of lectionaries. In the Arian struggle the use of hymns other than psalms grew common, and was furthered in the West with great success by Ambrose of Milan.

The latter part of the fourth and the first half of the fifth centuries was above all others an age of great preachers in the ancient church. Among the most eminent were Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria in the East, and Ambrose, Augustine, and Leo I in the West. This preaching was largely expository, though with plain application to the problems of daily life. In form it was often highly rhetorical, and the hearers manifested their approval by applause. Yet, while this preaching was probably never excelled, preaching was by no means general, and in many country districts, or even considerable cities, few sermons were to be heard. Prayer was offered before and after the sermon in liturgical form. The benediction was given by the bishop, when present, to the various classes for whom prayer was made, and the non-baptized then dismissed.

The Lord’s Supper

The private portion of the service—the Lord’s Supper—followed. Both East and West held that, by divine power, the miracle of the presence of Christ was wrought, but differed as to when in the service it took place. In the judgment of the East it was during the prayer known as the invocation, epiklesis. This was undoubtedly the view in the West till late in the sixth century. There, however, it was replaced, probably under Roman influence, by the conviction that the Eucharistic miracle occurred when the words of institution were recited, culminating in “This is My body . . . this is the new covenant in My blood.” To
Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria the Supper is the repetition of the incarnation, wherein Christ takes the elements into union with Himself as once He did human flesh. The Lord’s Supper was at once a sacrifice and a communion. It was possible to emphasize one aspect or the other. The East put that of communion in the foreground. Consonant with its theory of salvation, the Supper was viewed as primarily a great, life-giving mystery, wherein the partaker received the transforming body and blood of His Lord, and thereby became, in a measure at least, a partaker of the divine nature, built up to the immortal and sinless life. This view was far from denied in the West. It was held to be true. But the Western conception of salvation as coming into right relations with God, led the West to emphasize the aspect of sacrifice, as inclining God to be gracious to those in whose behalf it was offered. The Western mind did not lend itself so readily as the Eastern to mysticism. In general, the Oriental administration of the Lord’s Supper tended to become a mystery-drama, in which the divine and eternal manifested itself in life-giving energy.

Beside the Sunday worship, daily services of a briefer character were now very common, and had widely developed into morning and evening worship.

Christmas
The older festivals of the Christian year, Easter and Pentecost, were, as earlier, great periods of religious observance. Easter was preceded by a forty days’ fast, though the method of reckoning this lenten period varied. The Roman system became ultimately that of the whole West, and continues to the present. The whole of Holy Week was now a time of special penitential observance, passing over to the Easter rejoicing. By the fourth century the observance of Ascension was general. The chief addition to the festivals of the church which belongs to this period is that of Christmas. Apparently no feast of Christ’s nativity was held in the church till into the fourth century. By the second century, January 6 had been observed by the Gnostic disciples of Basilides as the date of Jesus’ baptism. At a time not now apparent, but probably about the beginning of the fourth century, this was regarded in the East as the time of Christ’s birth also, by reason of an interpretation of Luke 3:23, which made Him exactly thirty years old at His baptism. Other factors were at work, however. It was an opinion in the third century that the universe was created at the vernal equinox, reckoned in the Julian calendar as March 25. Similar habits of thought would make the beginning of the new creation, the inception of the incarnation, fall on the same day, and therefore Christ’s birth on the winter solstice, December 25. That that date, when the sun begins to turn, was the birthdate of the Mithraic Sol Invictus, was not probably the reason of the choice, though it may well have commended it as substituting a great Christian for a popular heathen festival. At all events, the celebration of December 25 as Christmas appears first in Rome, apparently in 353 or 354, though it may date from 336. From Rome it spread to the East, being introduced into Constantinople, probably by Gregory of Nazianzus, between 378 and 381. A sermon of Chrysostom, preached in Antioch in 388, declares that the celebration was then not ten years old in the East, and the discourse was delivered, it would appear, on the first observance of December 25 in the Syrian capital. It reached Alexandria between 400 and 432. From its inauguration, Christmas became one of the great festivals of the church, comparable only with Easter and Pentecost.

THE DEVELOPING EUCHARISTIC LITURGY
Chadwick, ch. 18, “Worship and Art”, pp. 258-272

THE early Christians shared with the Jews the conviction that ‘religion’ included an interpretation of the whole of life, and was very far from being limited to a matter of cultic acts and ceremonies. But they also shared with the Jews the idea that God had given certain covenant signs of his grace. The Christians regarded circumcision as a particular form limited to Judaism and not intended to be binding on Gentile Christians; but they kept the washing of baptism which had been an important constituent in the ceremonies of the admission of a Gentile proselyte to the Jewish synagogue. The bread and wine of the Jewish passover and other sacred meals were invested for the Church with an intense significance by their association with the Last Supper and the Crucifixion when, as St Paul put it, ‘Christ our passover was sacrificed for us’ (I Cor. v, 7). One stream of language in early Christian literature used to contrast
Judaism as a religion of externals with Christianity as a worship of God ‘in spirit and in truth’. But the Christians were well aware that if they were to be a society with a coherent community life they could not live on a purely individualistic inwardness. They needed form and order, and they knew that the visible signs of baptism and eucharist were *dona data*, God’s gifts to his church, *verba visibilia*, a visible actualization of the very substance of the gospel.

As early as St Paul’s time it was customary for the Christians to meet for worship on Sunday in commemoration of the Lord’s resurrection; and this weekly association of ‘the Lord’s day’ with the resurrection led in time to the transfer of the annual celebration of Easter from the date of the Jewish passover (Pascha) on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan to the Sunday following it. Soon other observances of Jewish origin were general in the Church, such as Pentecost. By the fourth century the calendar included Ascension Day, and the nativity of Christ which the Greek East celebrated on 6 January, the West on 25 December.

Like the Jews, the early Christians kept certain days for fasting. Jewish custom kept Mondays and Thursdays as fast days (cf. Luke xviii, 12 ‘I fast twice in the week’). By the end of the first century at least, the Christian fast days were Wednesdays and Fridays. A fast day was soon called a ‘station’, or day of military duty on the watch. In the ‘Shepherd of Hernias’ Christians were warned that on station days the fasting God required was abstinence from evil acts and desires. From the text of Mark ii, 20 it appeared that Christians should specially fast on the day ‘when the bridegroom was taken away’, i.e. in commemoration of the Passion. The fast immediately preceding the Easter festival became increasingly important, and included an all night vigil, soon with special Paschal candles. The pre-Paschal fast tended to lengthen. By the beginning of the fourth century the fast before Easter lasted seven days in the Greek East but forty days in the West. The forty-day Lent was first introduced to the Greek churches in 337 by Athanasius after his exile to the West in which he felt put to shame by the seriousness of Western austerity. As Easter was especially associated with baptism the period of Lent was used as a period of instruction during which the bishop would give lectures for catechumens. From the fourth century onwards the ceremonial structure of Holy Week evolved, first with the special observance of Maundy Thursday, then (by the sixth century) Palm Sunday, though a form of blessing of palms is not found before the ninth century. The custom of holding no celebration of the eucharist on Good Friday is found as early as 416 in Pope Innocent I’s letter to the bishop of Gubbio.

The form and pattern of the actual rites used in the period before Constantine and the Nicene council can be known only very imperfectly from scraps and fragments of evidence often contained in casual passing allusions or in illustrations of an argument about other matters. The practice of baptism in North Africa in 200 is described by Tertullian. After a preparatory fast the ceremony began with an act of renunciation of the devil and his works and with a declaration of faith. It appears from other third-century evidence (Hippolytus, Cyprian) that this declaration took the form not of a declaratory creed but of a repeated answer ‘I believe’ to three interrogations concerning belief in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively. At each answer the candidate was dipped in the water. After coming up from the font the candidate was anointed with oil and hands were laid on him with prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit. He received milk and honey as tokens of his entry into the promised land. (There is evidence that a similar ceremony with milk and honey occurred in some pagan mystery rites, but the biblical typology dominated the Christian understanding of its meaning.) The sacrament was normally administered by a bishop or, with his leave, by a presbyter, or deacon, or exceptionally by a layman. At Rome, as in Africa, at this time the anointing was given after baptism in water. But this order was not universal. In third-century Syria, according to a church order entitled Didascalia Apostolorum, the anointing came before the baptismal washing. Or there might be two anointings, both before and after; or even three as in Hippolytus. The variation is no doubt evidence of hesitation about the status of the rite. But the oil as a sign of the gift of the Spirit was quite natural within a semitic framework, and therefore the ceremony is probably very early. Some Gnostic sects disparaged water baptism, and laid all the stress on ‘the baptism of the Spirit’ conferred by the holy anointing. In time the biblical meaning became obscured: Ambrose explained it to his catechumens as like the anointing of an athlete before running a race.
Although it was regarded, e.g. by the author of the Didache, as in principle desirable for baptism to take place at a river or lake, in practice well before the end of the first century it had become customary to baptize simply by pouring water on the candidate’s head three times. The symbolism of partial immersion in running water, however, was preserved by constructing special baptisteries in the house churches or, after the fourth century, adjacent to the main church building. The candidates would descend a few steps and stand in water. The ceremony was one of the most intense solemnity, made more formidable by exorcisms. When baptism was given to the sick or to infants, care was necessary not to risk health, and accordingly water was poured on in very small quantities. Third-century evidence in the letters of Cyprian and elsewhere shows that some over-anxious believers were not quite sure of the true validity of sickbed baptism, but Cyprian regarded such scruples as mistaken and superstitious. Baptism meant dying to sin and rising again to newness of life with Christ; therefore it was specially associated with Easter and Pentecost. For the same reason baptisteries were often octagonal, symbolizing ‘the Lord’s resurrection on the ‘eighth day’. (For this number symbolism cf. 1 Peter iii, 20.)

The earliest second-century texts (Didache, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr) agree that the regular Sunday worship of the Christians was first and foremost ‘thanksgiving’, eucharistia, a term which gradually replaced the more primitive term ‘breaking of bread’. The Greek word eucharistia became so technical a word for the service that it passed into Christian Latin in transliteration, though the Latin Christians also spoke of it as a giving of thanks, gratiarum actio, and agere came to mean ‘celebrate’. Hence the Western title for the great eucharistic prayer, canon actionis or ‘rule of celebrating’.

Except among the Gnostic sects who were notoriously casual about such matters, only the baptized were admitted to the sacred meal. The Roman eucharist of 150 is described by Justin Martyr in a passage intended to reassure pagan readers that Christian rites are not black magic. After readings from ‘the memoirs of the apostles’ and from the Old Testament prophets, the president (evidently the bishop) preached a sermon, at the end of which everyone stood for a solemn prayer ending in the kiss of peace. Then bread and ‘a cup of water and of wine mixed with water’ were brought to the president who ‘to the best of his ability’ offered a prayer of thanks to the Father through the Son and Holy Spirit, concluding with the people signifying their ratification by the word Amen. Justin parenthetically explains for his uninitiated readers that the Christians are accustomed to use this Hebrew word meaning So be it. The communion followed at which each person partook of the bread and wine distributed to them by deacons, and received it not as common food for satisfying hunger and thirst, but as the flesh and blood of Christ. Finally pieces of the sacred bread were taken round to the sick and those in prison. It is clear that, although attending the service meant risking one’s life or liberty, all Christians regarded it as an absolute obligation to be present each Sunday if it was in their power. Justin saw in the universal Christian custom of a weekly eucharist a direct fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi i, to that in every place a pure sacrifice would be offered to the Lord from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Justin’s presiding bishop was entirely free in the wording he chose for the great prayer of thanksgiving. There was no prescribed form of words. Nevertheless there was evidently an expected pattern of themes which were going to crystallize out into prepared forms. As early as the Didache such forms, no doubt intended to serve as models, were being provided. After the Didache the earliest extant forms of prayer, other than the briefest fragments, are preserved in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, a church order specifically mentioned on the statue erected in his honour (above p. 8g). The text of this work does not survive exactly as Hippolytus wrote it, and has to be painfully reconstructed from later compilations which drew upon it, in particular from a Latin version of about 400 preserved in a manuscript at Verona written c. 494, from Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic adaptations which used an early (lost) Coptic translation, and from later church orders, written in the name of the Lord or the apostles, which borrowed material from it (notably the late fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions and the fifth-century Testament of the Lord).

Hippolytus begins the Apostolic Tradition by explaining that because of certain grave irregularities on the part of an irresponsible authority (probably Callistus is in mind) he has felt it urgently necessary to lay down norms of usage for church practice. Even so, Hippolytus does not expect a celebrant at the eucharist
to adhere rigidly to his form of words:

It is not at all necessary for the bishop in giving thanks to recite the same words as we have given as if they were to be learnt by heart. But let each pray according to his capacity. If he can pray in a long and solemn prayer, it is good. But if in his prayer he prays at modest length, no one may prevent him, provided only that his prayer is orthodox.

Certain fixed forms were a necessity if the congregation was to join in, as in the prefatory dialogue between celebrant and people immediately preceding the great prayer of thanks-giving. As Hippolytus’ prayer is so early an example, it deserves to be quoted in full:

BISHOP: The Lord be with you.
PEOPLE: And with your spirit.
BISHOP: Lift up your hearts.
PEOPLE: We lift them to the Lord.
BISHOP: Let us give thanks to the Lord.
PEOPLE: It is meet and right.
BISHOP: We give you thanks, O God, through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, whom in the last times you sent to us as saviour and redeemer and as angel [i.e. messenger] of your will, through whom you made all things, and whom by your good pleasure you sent from heaven to a Virgin’s womb, who was conceived and was made flesh and was manifested as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin;
Who, fulfilling your will and procuring for you a holy people, stretched out his hands when he suffered that he might free from suffering those who have believed in you;
Who, when he was betrayed to a voluntary passion to destroy death and break the devil’s chains, to tread down hell and lead the just to light, to fix hell’s limit and to manifest the resurrection, took bread and gave thanks to you and said: Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. Likewise also the cup, saying: This is my blood which is shed for you. When you do this, do it in remembrance of me.
Remembering therefore his death and resurrection, we offer you this bread and cup, giving you thanks that you have counted us worthy to stand before you and minister to you as priests.
And we beseech you to send your Holy Spirit on the offering of the Holy Church. Gather them together and grant that all who partake of the holy things may be filled with the Holy Spirit for the confirmation of their faith in the truth, that we may laud and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and honour to you, Father and Son with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both now and for ever, Amen.

The invocation of the Spirit in the final paragraph has been much debated, and this is one of the points where it has been argued that Hippolytus could not have written this and that the wording of the invocation reflects fourth-century developments. For in the Greek churches of the fourth century the invocation of the Spirit (or epičelsen) became very prominent, and any eucharistic prayer that lacked such an invocation would be likely to have one inserted. There are, however, weighty arguments to counter these sceptical doubts. First, the Latin and Ethiopic versions are unanimous witnesses to the text; and while the crucial sentence, ‘we beseech you to send your Holy Spirit on the offering’, is absent from the fifth century Testament of the Lord which in all other respects incorporates Hippolytus’ prayer, the author of the Testament may have had special motives for omitting the clause. Secondly, the words are more an invocation of the Spirit on the action of the church in making the offering than an invocation on the bread and wine in themselves, and contain nothing that a theologian of 200-220 could not have said. Twenty years before, Irenaeus had written of the invocation of the divine Word by which the bread and wine ceased to be ordinary food and drink. Thirdly, when the late fourth-century author of the Apostolic Constitutions drew on Hippolytus, he took over much of the prayer but felt it necessary to modernize it at precisely this place, adding the supplement: ‘And we beseech you to look kindly on the gifts placed before you, O God in need of nothing . . . and send down your Holy Spirit on the sacrifice, the witness of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, that he [i.e. the Spirit] may make this bread the body of your Christ and this cup the blood of your Christ’. The fact that he had to abandon the original formula of Hippolytus at the critical moment is significant; it brings out the point that no fourth-century reviser or interpolator would
have composed an epiclesis in a form that to his age would have seemed very inadequate and old-fashioned theology.

The importance of the invocation of the Spirit in the great eucharistic prayer or anaphora is mentioned by several Greek writers of the latter half of the fourth century as being the principal moment in the action of the service (e.g. Cyril of Jerusalem, Basil of Caesarea, and Theophilus of Alexandria). An unusual instance occurs in an anaphora ascribed by the manuscript tradition (viz. an eleventh-century codex on Mount Athos) to Serapion bishop of Thmuis, friend and correspondent of Athanasius of Alexandria, and certainly belonging to some church in fourth-century Egypt, where neither Arianism nor Nicene theology had influenced the language of worship. Here the prayer is, first, that the divine Word may come upon the elements ‘that the bread may become the body of the Word’ and ‘that the cup may become the blood of the Truth’, and, secondly, that all the communicants may receive the medicine of life to their benefit and not to their condemnation.

Besides the invocation of the Spirit there are several other points worthy of notice in Hippolytus’ eucharistic prayer. There is the direct link with the Last Supper made by the recital of the words of institution, which occur in a relative clause, a formal feature which recurs in both Eastern and Western liturgies and was a mark of deep solemnity. Hippolytus has no Sanctus. The three-fold angelic hymn is quoted from Isaiah in the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians to illustrate the harmony of the heavenly host which the Corinthians are enjoined to imitate, but there is no evidence that for either Clement or Hippolytus the Sanctus was a necessary constituent of the Roman liturgy. As late as 400 the use of the Sanctus was much less widespread in the West than in the East, and the later Roman tradition marked the canon of the mass as beginning after the Sanctus, which might be taken to suggest that it was an addition to a previously composed structure. Hippolytus also makes repeated statements that the sacred bread and wine are ‘antitypes’ or figures of the body and blood of the Lord – language also found in Tertullian. Hippolytus accordingly enjoins on the faithful intense reverence for the eucharist. It should be received early before any other food, and the greatest care should be taken to see that nothing was dropped or spilt. At this period it was common for pieces of the eucharistic bread to be taken home and received privately, after daily prayers, during the week. Hippolytus had to warn communicants against leaving the sacred bread about the house where an unbaptized person, or even a mouse, might accidentally eat it.

As the congregations swelled in size during the fourth century, so the liturgy tended to be extended. Sometimes these enlargements could go to enormous lengths, as in the eucharistic formulas provided in the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions. Often older prayers were expanded by inserting biblical quotations – so that it is a paradoxical law of early liturgical study that the greater the biblical element in any given prayer the less primitive it is likely to be. In the Greek East in the second half of the fourth century ceremonial began to become quite elaborate. Greek clergy began to wear ornate clothes, and the ritual acquired a high dramatic splendour. At the same time the pressure of the multitude joining the church, and perhaps also the struggle against Arianism, led to a marked insistence on holy awe and on the transcendent wonder of the eucharistic action. The catechetical lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem, about 350, show both the beginnings of elaboration in ceremonial and also the emphasis on the intense awe appropriate for the rite. Cyril provides the earliest evidence for the introduction of the symbolic washing of the celebrant’s hands (lavabo), and for the use of the Lord’s Prayer at the conclusion of the great eucharistic prayer (a use which in Augustine’s time was almost universal). Cyril gives elaborate instructions to prevent any irreverent dropping at the communion: the communicants are directed to receive the bread in hollowed palms, the left hand supporting the right. Above all, Cyril repeatedly mentions the solemn invocation of the Spirit by which, to faith, the bread and wine become Christ’s body and blood, and speaks several times of the ‘fearful’ presence upon the holy Table.

This attitude of fear and trembling is even more prominent in Basil of Caesarea and especially in John Chrysostom who speaks of the Lord’s Table as a place of ‘terror and shuddering’. The eucharistic rite described in the recently discovered catechetical lectures of Theodore of Mopsuestia was marked by the most advanced ritual splendour. Important consequences followed from these developments. Before the end of the fourth century in the East it began to be thought necessary to screen off the holy Table by
curtains. When Justinian’s great church of Sancta Sophia was built in the sixth century, there was not only a gorgeous curtain before the canopied altar, embroidered in gold with a figure of Christ Pantokrator blessing his people and holding the gospel book in his left hand, but also a screen with three doors on which were figures of angels and prophets and the monograms of Justinian and Theodora over the central door. This was the first iconostasis, so copied elsewhere that it became a necessary feature of all Greek churches. The doors in the screen were used for ceremonial ‘Entrances’ at the reading of the Gospel and the Offertory.

The later fourth century also saw great enrichment in the ornaments and vessels. At Antioch in John Chrysostom’s time the church possessed finely wrought chalices, candelabra, silk veils, white vestments, and sometimes silverwork decorating the altar itself. At Thessalonica early in the fifth century a church was built, dedicated to St Demetrius, with a fine silver canopy over the altar.

In the West liturgical elaboration proceeded considerably more slowly. Moreover, it was not until the latter part of the fourth century that the Western liturgy began to develop a life of its own; for until the time of Damasus the eucharist at the city of Rome had continued to be celebrated in Greek, so great was the influence of conservatism from the days when the Roman community had been wholly Greek-speaking. The earliest evidence for the order and formulae of the early Latin mass, apart from a few allusions in Tertullian and Cyprian, is found in Ambrose of Milan, whose lectures to catechumens ‘On the Sacraments’ were preserved by the private enterprise of an anonymous stenographer. In this work Ambrose quotes the principal eucharistic prayer in customary use at Milan in his time. It is noteworthy that, in contrast to Cyril of Jerusalem with his emphasis on the invocation of the Holy Spirit as the decisive moment of consecration when the elements of bread and wine were transformed, Ambrose places all his stress upon the effect of the recitation of the dominical words of institution. As Ambrose’s formulae are akin to those which later became a fixed part of the canon of the Latin mass, they deserve quotation.

After praises to God and’ intercessions for the people, for kings, and the rest’, the celebrant continues:

Grant to us that this offering be approved, spiritual, and acceptable, as the figure of the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ; who the day before he suffered took bread in his holy hands, looked up to heaven, to you, holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God; giving thanks he blessed, broke, and gave the broken bread to his apostles and disciples saying, All of you take and eat this; for this is my body which is broken for many. Likewise also after supper the day before he suffered he took the cup, looked up to heaven, to you holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God; giving thanks he blessed and gave it to his apostles and disciples saying, All of you take and drink of this, for this is my blood. As often as you do this, so often will you make my memorial until I come again.

Therefore remembering his most glorious passion and resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven, we offer to you this unspotted victim, a spiritual victim, an unbloody victim, this holy bread and the cup of eternal life.

And we pray and beseech you to accept this oblation by the hand of your angels, as you deigned to accept the gifts of your servant, righteous Abel, and the offering made to you by the high priest Melchizedek.

Ambrose’s prayer corresponds in plan and partly even in actual wording to the central core of the later Roman mass as it appears in the eighth century, which contains an expanded and modified version of the same basic formulae in the QFam oblationem, Qyi pridie, Unde et memores, Supra quae, and Supplices. But his prayer that the offering be approved was expanded into a longer form in the Te igitur with which the Roman canon begins, a restatement of the offertory in which the priest asks that God will accept and bless the gifts offered and will grant peace and unity to the church.

Although Ambrose goes on to expound the Lord’s Prayer in what follows, he does not make it explicit whether this had its place at the conclusion of the great eucharistic prayer. But since Augustine records that this practice was almost universal in his time, and since Augustine was very familiar with Milanese use, it is as good as certain that Ambrose was familiar with this custom. Two allusions in Jerome and Augustine strongly suggest that the Lord’s Prayer was commonly introduced by the words ‘... we are bold to say’ (audemus dicere).

Accordingly the basic elements and structure of the Roman liturgy were fixed in the period from Damasus...
to Leo the Great. But the earlier part of the service was still fluid. Two notable modifications to this introductory part, before the dismissal of the catechumens, were made under Eastern influence. By 500 the Kyrie Eleison, which formed a regular part of Greek litanies in the time of Egeria’s pilgrimage to the Holy Places about 384, had been incorporated in the first part of the Latin mass, and, curiously, kept as a Greek formula, untranslated. The Gloria in excelsis was a Greek hymn, first attested in the Apostolic Constitutions, which had long been in use in the East without forming part of the eucharistic liturgy (like the Te Deum in the West); it began to find its way into the text of the mass on special occasions by 500, though it did not achieve universal use in the West for another six hundred years.

The Creed properly belonged to baptism and made a late appearance in the eucharistic liturgy. In any event the Western baptismal creed was the so-called ‘Apostles’ Creed’, while the Greek East used for baptism the Nicene creed of 325. Local baptismal creeds in the Greek East long continued to be used after 325, but orthodox bishops inserted the principal Nicene terms. So it was that at Constantinople in 381 there lay before the council called by Theodosius a formula which was called Nicene, because it contained the assertion that the Son is identical in substance with the Father, but had in fact derived its basic structure from a local baptismal creed perhaps already in use. This Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed first entered the eucharistic liturgy in unusual circumstances. The fifth-century Monophysites inserted it as a dramatic public protest against the ‘innovations’ of the council of Chalcedon. The Chalcedonians simply answered this exclusive claim to a monopoly of orthodoxy by making the same insertion. Gradually the custom of including the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed in the eucharist spread to the West, but it only began to become important under Charlemagne who was anxious to lay great emphasis on the Western Filioque. At this time the creed found its central position after the reading of the Gospel.

Two other late additions to the Latin mass were the appending of the Benedictus to the Sanctus during the sixth century, and the Agnus Dei which appeared by the end of the seventh century.

The early Western liturgy owed something to Greek models, which was natural enough. For example, the Supra quae and Supplices of the Roman canon and the closely related formula of Ambrose asking that God would accept the sacrifice brought by his holy angel, as he had once accepted the gifts of Abel and Abraham, are very closely paralleled in the Alexandrian Liturgy of St Mark (which also places the formula immediately before the commemoration of the faithful departed). But it was likewise very natural that there should be wide varieties of regional usage. There is no reason to suppose that such varieties had not always existed from the beginning – the quest for an original, universally observed ‘apostolic liturgy’ is a mirage. Yet in both East and West diversity of custom in such sacred matters was felt by some to be a difficulty. By the seventh century it had become usual to employ unleavened bread for the Western eucharist, while the Greek East (except for the Armenians, whose history on this point is lost in obscurity) used ordinary leavened bread. In time this diversity was to become a matter of controversy. Another difference of practice was that in the East it was usual to have only one celebration of the eucharist under the bishop on a Sunday; in the West there gradually spread from the city of Rome the practice of holding celebrations taken by presbyters in suburban parish churches, which in fourth-century Rome were called ‘title-churches’ because they bore the names of the original donors of the title to the property and provided for the maintenance of the clergy by their endowments.

Beside the main Sunday eucharist it was customary by 400, at least in important cities, for the eucharist to be celebrated daily. From the third century the anniversary of a martyr’s death, called his ‘birthday’, was commemorated at his grave by a celebration. At first the veneration of the majority of the martyrs was a matter of private devotion which was then taken over by central authority as it became popular. Special prayers began to be composed for these lesser feasts, and were collected. An early seventh-century manuscript in the Verona Cathedral library contains the earliest extant collection of Latin prayers, the compiler of which seems to have had at least two earlier collections before him originating in the city of Rome. The modern ascription of this sacramentary to Leo the Great is unsupported by the Verona manuscript and is impossible; but some of the liturgical material it contains certainly goes back to the time of Leo, since one of his Embertide sermons (no. 78) contains numerous allusions to formulas of prayer found in the later sacramentary. Leo may have written some of these prayers.
Daily Prayer

In addition to the Sunday eucharist, participation in which was an indispensable sign of church membership, and the special celebrations on the days of saints and martyrs usually supported by smaller groups, there were also daily private prayers. Hippolytus in the Apostolic Tradition directed that Christians should pray seven times a day – on rising, at the lighting of the evening lamp, at bedtime, at midnight, and also, if at home, at the third, sixth and ninth hours of the day, being hours associated with Christ’s Passion. Prayers at the third, sixth, and ninth hours are similarly mentioned by Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and must have been very widely practised. These prayers were commonly associated with private Bible reading in the family. Of these times of private prayer two gradually became more corporate in character, so that by 400 it became common, at least on certain days in the week, for the morning and evening prayers to be taken by the clergy in the church building. Egeria vividly describes the solemnity and large attendance at daily morning and evening prayers in Jerusalem.

In ascetic communities the cycle of offices was fuller. The hours of prayer were shaped into an obligatory and institutional system in the rules for ascetic communities. In Basil the Great’s Rule there were eight offices; but John Cassian had only seven at Marseilles – in accordance with the Psalmist’s practice, ‘Seven times a day will I praise thee’. At Rome about 500 the daily offices numbered six. The basic material for the monastic office was provided by the Psalter, and the clergy in Rome developed a system whereby the Psalter was recited in full once a week, with Psalm 19 (118) providing for Terce, Sext, and None. They also had an ordered cycle of lections. This Roman system was taken over in the Benedictine Rule, but Benedict added the dawn office of Prime and the final office at the completion of the day (Compline, Completorium). It was usual to begin the night office with ‘O God make speed to save me, O Lord make haste to help me’, with the Gloria Patri, and with ‘O Lord open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise’. Benedict also added the hymns of Ambrose as insertions in the offices, and prescribed the Te Deum for the vigil of the Lord’s Day and the Benedictus and Benedicite for Lauds. The widespread use of the Benedictine in the devotions of the Greek East is attested in John Chrysostom. The Greek use of the Nunc Dimittis for evening prayers is mentioned in the fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions, but it did not form a part of Benedict’s Compline and only later found its way into the Roman office. At Arles in the time of bishop Caesarius early in the sixth century the Magnificat was being used at matins, and appears there also in seventh-century Ireland in the Book of Mulling, an Irish gospel book now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. It is probable that Benedict’s monks used the Magnificat at Vespers for which his Rule prescribes a ‘Gospel Canticle’.

Early Church Music

Twice in the letters of St Paul (Col. 3, 16, Eph. 5, 19) we find allusions to the use of singing in worship. As singing and chanting were already the custom of the synagogue there can be no surprise here. Philo of Alexandria describes the developed musical life of the ascetic community, the Therapeutae, near Alexandria. He says that they wrote hymns in all manner of metres and tunes, with notation to indicate that the rhythm was to be of a solemn character fitting for sacred music. They had choirs of both men and women, chanting sometimes in harmony, sometimes antiphonally. It is likely enough that the first Christian chants were simply taken over from synagogue usage. This helps to explain, for example, the continued use of the untranslated Hebrew word ‘Alleluia’ for a chant of praise. A passing hostile comment in the second-century pagan critic Celsus shows that the chants used in Christian worship (which he seems to have heard) were not only unusual to his pagan ears but so beautiful that he actually resented their emotive effect as an instrument for dulling the critical faculty.

A few Greek hymns survive from the period before Constantine (besides a special hymn by Clement of Alexandria, which may not have been intended for liturgical use). One is a rollicking second-century
hymn of joy, which may well have been sung at the Paschal vigil since it takes the form of a wedding hymn of exultation that the lost bridegroom has been found. It runs:

V. Praise the Father, you holy ones. Sing to the Mother, you virgins.
R. We praise. We the holy ones extol them.
V. Be exalted, brides and bridegrooms; for you have found your bridegroom, Christ. Drink your wine, brides and bridegrooms.

Secondly, there is a mutilated strip of third-century papyrus from Egypt on which is preserved an anapaestic hymn where, all the creation joins the church in praising the Trinity: ‘While we hymn Father, Son and Holy Spirit, let all creation sing Amen, Amen. Praise, power to the sole giver of all good things. Amen, Amen.’ This papyrus is of quite exceptional interest since the scribe noted down the music of the chant and provided dynamic signs which can be deciphered with the help of analogies in later Byzantine texts.

A third early example is the evening hymn, established in general use in the time of Basil the Great and still forming a part of Greek Vespers, sung at the lighting of the evening lamp. John Keble’s translation is remarkably literal and accurate:

Hail, gladdening Light, of his pure glory poured Who is the immortal Father, heavenly, blest, Holiest of Holies, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now we are come to the sun’s hour of rest, The lights of evening round us shine,
We hymn the Father, Son and Holy Spirit divine. Worthiest art thou at all times to be sung
With undefiled tongue,
Son of our God, giver of life, alone:
Therefore in all the world thy glories, Lord, they own.

Clement of Alexandria is the earliest Christian writer to discuss what kind of music is appropriate for Christian use. He directs that it should not be the kind associated with erotic dance music; the melodies should avoid chromatic intervals and should be austere. Perhaps he had in mind some of the Gnostic sects among whom there would probably have been much less sense of inhibition and restraint. The second-century Acts of John preserve a Gnostic hymn intended to be chanted during a ritual dance (familiar to modern English choirs as providing the words for Gustav Holst’s Hymn of Jesus); but in orthodox eyes dancing did not succeed in becoming a natural and approved vehicle of religious expression, except in Ethiopia.

As choirs grew in size, it became possible to have two groups of singers chanting alternately. This practice of antiphonal singing came in during the second half of the fourth century. It spread across from Mesopotamia and Syria, and may perhaps have owed something to synagogue precedents. One of Basil the Great’s letters is devoted to a defence of his boldness in introducing the practice at Cappadocian Caesarea in face of outraged conservatism. It is very possible that Ambrose’s hymns at Milan were sung antiphonally.

The use of music in worship was not quite universally approved. In the fourth century a few strong-minded puritans wanted to exclude it altogether, and found a measure of support from those who felt that the chanting obscured the meaning of the words. Athanasius of Alexandria tried to meet the difficulty by demanding speech rhythm in chanting the psalms. On the other hand, the musicians had their chance with the singing of the Alleluia, the performance of which became quite long and elaborate. In his Confessions Augustine records how moving he found the psalm chants in use at Milan, observing that, while he felt guilty of a grave fault if he found the music more important to him than the words, he knew that the words were invested with a far greater power to come home to the mind when they were associated with music of haunting beauty. Augustine observes that there is no emotion of the human spirit which music is incapable of expressing, and that it is excessive austerity to exclude it from church services.

What music the early Christians sang can hardly be told. Only a solitary specimen, the third-century Egyptian papyrus already mentioned, has been preserved. The surviving Greek and Latin manuscripts containing musical notation belong to the medieval period. It is highly probable that the singing in the
great centres like Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome, provided a model for the imitation of smaller towns. By the end of the sixth century the chanting practised at the city of Rome had become a model for other Western churches; and by the ninth century responsibility for the invention of the Roman system came to be ascribed to Pope Gregory the Great, so that the local Roman chants were known as ‘Gregorian’.

By a comparable process many of the hymns used in the Western churches quietly became ascribed to Ambrose. There were also other poets whose hymns achieved wide recognition. Venantius Fortunatus (540-600), bishop of Poitiers, wrote hymns of genuine sensitivity and pathos – Vexilla Regis, Pange Lingua, and Salve Festa Dies remain in use today. Rather earlier in the sixth century at Constantinople there lived the greatest hymn-writer of the Eastern churches, Romanos, who died soon after 555. A converted Jew, he came to Constantinople from Syria and wrote hymns for Justinian’s splendid foundations in the capital. He created the Kontakion, an acrostic verse sermon of many stanzas, each stanza being sung from the pulpit by a soloist with an answering refrain from the choir. Romanos partly inspired the author of the most famous of Greek Lenten hymns, the so-called Akathistos (i.e. to be sung standing) in honour of the Blessed Virgin.

[12.] 5. POPULAR CHRISTIAN PIETY

Martyrs and Relics

The beginnings of veneration of martyrs and of their relics run back to the middle of the second century. Their deaths were regularly commemorated with public services (ante, p. 93). With the conversion of Constantine, however, and the accession to the church of masses fresh from heathenism, this reverence largely increased. Constantine himself built a great church in honor of Peter in Rome. His mother, Helena, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where the true cross was thought to be discovered. Men looked back on the time of persecution with much reason, as a heroic age, and upon its martyrs as the athletes of the Christian race. Popular opinion, which had long sanctioned the remembrance of the martyrs in prayer and worship, had passed over, before the close of the fourth century, to the feeling that they were to be prayed to as intercessors with God, and as able to protect, heal, and aid those who honored them. There arose thus a popular Christianity of the second rank, as Harnack has well called it. The martyrs, for the masses, took the place of the old gods and heroes. To the martyrs, popular feeling added distinguished ascetics, church leaders, and opponents of heresy. There was, as yet, no regular process of weighing claims to sainthood. Inclusion in its ranks was a matter of common opinion. They were guardians of cities, patrons of trades, curers of disease. They were omnipresent. As Jerome expressed it; “They follow the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth. If the Lamb is present everywhere, the same must be believed respecting those who are with the Lamb.” They were honored with burning tapers.

The Virgin Mary

Chief of all these sacred personages was the Virgin Mary. Pious contemplation concerned itself with her early. To Irenæus she was the second Eve (ante, p. 66). Yet, curiously enough, she did not stand out pre-eminent till well into the fourth century, at least in the teaching of the intellectual circles in the church, though popular tradition, as reflected for instance in the apocryphal Protevangelium of James, had made much of her. Ascetic feeling, as illustrated in Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, asserted her perpetual virginity. With the rise of monasticism, the Virgin became a monastic ideal. The full elevation of Mary to the first among created beings came with the Christological controversies, and the complete sanction of the description “Mother of God,” in the condemnation of Nestorius and the decision of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Thenceforth the Virgin was foremost among all saints in popular and official reverence alike. To her went out much of that feeling which had found expression in the worship of the mother goddesses of Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor, though in a far nobler form. Above that was the reverence rightfully her due as the chosen vehicle of the incarnation. All that martyr or Apostle could do for the faithful as intercessor or protector, she, as blessed above them, could dispense in yet more abundant measure. In proportion, also, as the Cyrillic interpretation of the Chalcedonian creed and
Monophysitism tended to emphasize the divine in Christ at the expense of the human, and therefore, however unintentionally, put Him afar from men, she appeared a winsome sympathizer with our humanity. In a measure, she took the place of her Son, as mediator between God and man.

**Angels, Relics, [Images]**

The roots of angel-[veneration] are to be found in apostolic times, yet though made much of in certain Gnostic systems, and playing a great role, for instance, in the speculations of an Origen, angels were not conspicuously objects of Christian reverence till late in the fourth century. They were always far less definite and graspable by the common mind than the martyrs. Reverence for angels was given great furtherance by the Neo-Platonic Christian mystic work composed in the last quarter of the fifth century in the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, and called that of Pseudo-Dionysius. Of all angelic beings, the Archangel Michael was the most honored. A church in commemoration of him was built a few miles from Constantinople by Constantine, and one existed in Rome early in the fifth century. When the celebration of his festival on Michaelmas, September 29—one of the most popular of mediæval feast-days in the West—was instituted, is uncertain.

It has already been pointed out that reverence for relics began early. By the fourth century it was being developed to an enormous extent, and included not merely the mortal remains of martyrs and saints, but all manner of articles associated, it was believed, with Christ, the Apostles, and the heroes of the church. Their wide-spread use is illustrated by the statute of the Seventh General Council (787); “If any bishop from this time forward is found consecrating a temple without holy relics, he shall be deposed as a transgressor of the ecclesiastical traditions.” (Canon 7) Closely connected with this reverence for relics was the valuation placed on pilgrimages to places where they were preserved, and above all to the Holy Land, or to Rome.

Reverence for icons was slower in gaining a foothold. It seemed too positively connected with the ancient idolatry. By the time of Cyril of Alexandria, however, it was rapidly spreading in the Eastern Church, where it became, if anything, more prevalent than in the West. The struggles ending in the full authorization of icons by the Seventh General Council have already been narrated (ante, p. 163). [Later] Christian opinion [in the East] was that representation on a flat surface only, paintings, and mosaics, not statues, should be allowed, at least in the interior of churches, and this remains the custom of the Greek Church to the present, though this restriction was not a matter of church law.

This Christianity of the second rank profoundly affected the life of the people, but it had also its heartiest supporters in the monks, and it was furthered rather than resisted by the great leaders of the church, certainly after the middle of the fifth century. It undoubtedly made the way from heathenism to Christianity easier for thousands, but [if carried too far it held the potential of] heathenizing the church itself.

13. **WESTERN THEOLOGY and ISOLATION**

Walker, 3.14, 3.6-3.20, pp. 172-195

[13.] 1. **SOME WESTERN CHARACTERISTICS**

While East and West shared in the theological development already outlined, and Western influences contributed much to the official decisions in the Arian and Christological controversies, there was a very appreciable difference in the weight of theological interest in the two portions of the empire. The West produced no really conspicuous theological leader between Cyprian (d. 258) and Ambrose (340?-397). Even Hilary of Poitiers (300?-367) was not sufficiently eminent as an original thinker to make a real exception. Both Hilary and Ambrose were devoted students of the Greek Fathers—the latter especially of the great Cappadocians. Though Tertullian was personally discredited by his Montanism, his influence lived on in the greatly valued Cyprian. While, therefore, Greek elements entered largely into Western thinking, it developed its own peculiarities.

The western part of the empire was disposed, like Tertullian, to view Christianity under judicial rather
than, like the East, under philosophical aspects. Its thought of the Gospel was that primarily of a new law. While the West did not deny the Eastern conception that salvation is a making divine and immortal of our sinful mortality, that conception was too abstract for it readily to grasp. Its own thought was that salvation is getting right with God. Hence, in Tertullian, Cyprian, and Ambrose there is a deeper sense of sin, and a clearer conception of grace than in the East. Religion in the West had a closer relation to the acts of every-day life than in the East. It was more a forgiveness of definitely recognized evil acts, and less an abstract transformation of nature, than in the East —more an overcoming of sin, and less a rescue from earthiness and death. In the West, through the teaching of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Ambrose, sin was traced to an inherited vitiation of human nature in a way that had no corresponding parallel in the East. There can be no doubt, also, that this Western estimate of sin and grace, imperfectly worked out though it yet was, combined with the firmer ecclesiastical organization of the West, gave the Western Church a stronger control of the daily life of the people than was achieved by that of the East. All these Western peculiarities were to come to their full fruition in the work of Augustine.

[13.] 2. JEROME

Jerome was the ablest scholar that the ancient Western Church could boast. Born about 340 in Strido in Dalmatia, he studied in Rome, where he was baptized by Pope Liberius in 360. Aquileia he made his headquarters for a while, where he became the friend of Rufinus (?-410), the translator of 174 Origen, like Jerome to be a supporter of monasticism and a monk in Palestine, but with whom he was to quarrel over Origen’s orthodoxy. Jerome had a restless desire to know the scholarly and religious world. From 366 to 370 he visited the cities of Gaul. The next three years saw him again in Aquileia. Then came a journey through the Orient to Antioch, where he was overtaken with a severe illness in which he believed Christ Himself appeared and reproached him for devotion to the classics. He now turned to the Scriptures, studying Hebrew, and living as a hermit from 373 to 379, not far from Antioch. Ordained a presbyter in Antioch, in 379, he studied in Constantinople under Gregory Nazianzus. The year 382 saw him in Rome, where he won the hearty support of Pope Damasus (366-384), and preached in season and out of season the merits of the monastic life. Soon he had a large following, especially among Roman women of position; but also much enmity, even among the clergy, for monasticism was not as yet popular in the West, and Jerome himself was one of the most vindictive of disputants. The death of Damasus made Jerome’s position so uncomfortable in Rome that he retired, in 385, to Antioch, whither a number of his Roman converts to monastic celibacy, led by Paula and her daughter, Eustochium, soon followed him. With them he journeyed through Palestine and to the chief monastic establishments of Egypt, returning to Bethlehem in 386, where Paula built nunneries and a monastery for men. Here, as head of the monastery, Jerome made his headquarters till his death, in 420.

Jerome’s best use of his unquestionable learning was as a translator of the Scriptures. The older Latin versions were crude, and had fallen into much corruption. Pope Damasus proposed to Jerome a revision. That he completed for the New Testament about 388. The Old Testament he then translated in Bethlehem, with the aid of Jewish friends. It is a proof of Jerome’s soundness of scholarship that, in spite even of the wishes of Augustine, he went back of the Septuagint to the Hebrew. The result of Jerome’s work was the Vulgate, still in use in the Roman Church. It is his best monument. Jerome had, also, no small deserts as a historian. He continued the Chronicle of Eusebius. His De Viris Inlustribus is a biographical dictionary of Christian writers to and including himself. He was an abundant commentator on the Scriptures.

He urged by treatise and by letter the advantages of celibacy and of the monastic life. As a theologian he had little that was original to offer. He was an impassioned defender of tradition and of Western popular usage. A controversialist who loved disputation, he attacked opponents of asceticism like Jovinianus, critics of relic-reverence like Vigilantius, and those who, like Helvidius, held that Mary had other children than our Lord. He condemned Origen, whom he had once admired. He wrote in support of Augustine against the Pelagians. In these controversial writings Jerome’s littleness of spirit is often painfully manifest. Though deserving to be reckoned, as he is by the Roman Church, one of its “Doctors,” by reason of the greatness of his learning and the use which he made of it, the title “saint” seems more a tribute to the scholar than to the man.
In Augustine the ancient church reached its highest religious attainment since apostolic times. Though his influence in the East was to be relatively slight, owing to the nature of the questions with which he was primarily concerned, all Western Christianity was to become his debtor. Such superiority as Western religious life came to possess over that of the East was primarily his bequest to it. He was to be the father of much that was most characteristic in mediaeval Roman Catholicism. He was to be the spiritual ancestor, no less, of much in the Reformation. His theology, though buttressed by the Scriptures, philosophy, and ecclesiastical tradition, was so largely rooted in his own experience as to render his story more than usually the interpretation of the man.

Augustine’s Youth

Africa gave three great leaders to Latin Christianity, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine. Augustine was born in Tagaste, in Numidia, now Suk Ahras in the Department of Constantine in Algeria, on November 13, 354. His father, Patricius, was a heathen of good position but of small property, an easy-going, worldly character, who did not embrace Christianity till near the end of life. His mother, Monnica, was a Christian woman of high worth, eagerly ambitious for her son, though the full radiance of her Christian life was to be manifested in her later years, developed through Ambrose and Augustine himself. In Augustine there were two natures, one passionate and sensuous, the other eagerly high-minded and truth-seeking. It may not be wrong to say that father and mother were reflected in him. From Tagaste he was sent for the sake of schooling to the neighboring Madaura, and thence to Carthage, where he pursued the study of rhetoric. Here, when about seventeen, he took a concubine, to whom he was to hold for at least fourteen years, and to them a son, Adeodatus, whom he dearly loved, was born in 372. If the sensuous Augustine was thus early aroused, the truth-seeking Augustine was speedily awakened. When nineteen, the study of Cicero’s now almost completely lost Hortensius “changed my affections, and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord.” This imperfect conversion caused Augustine to desire to seek truth as that alone of value. He began to study the Scriptures, “but they appeared to me unworthy to be compared with the dignity of Cicero.” He now turned for spiritual and intellectual comfort to the syncretistic, dualistic system known as Manichæism (ante, p. 107). He was willing to pray “Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet.”

For nine years Augustine remained a Manichæan, living partly in Carthage and partly in Tagaste, engaged in study and teaching. He was crowned at Carthage for a theatrical poem. He gathered friends about him, of whom Alypius was to prove the closest. As he went on he began to doubt the intellectual and moral adequacy of Manichæism. His associates urged him to meet the highly respected Manichæan leader, Faustus. The inadequacy of Faustus’s expositions completed his mental disillusion. Though he remained outwardly a Manichæan, Augustine was now inwardly a sceptic. By the advice of Manichæan friends Augustine removed to Rome in 383, and by their aid, in 384, he obtained from the prefect, Symmachus, a government appointment as teacher of rhetoric in Milan—then the Western capital of the empire.

Here in Milan, Augustine came under the powerful preaching of Ambrose, whom he heard as an illustration of pulpit eloquence rather than with approval of the message, since he was now under the sway of the sceptical philosophy of the New Academy. Here Monnica and Alypius joined him. At his mother’s wish he now became betrothed as befitted his station in life, though marriage was postponed on account of the youth of the woman. He dismissed regretfully his faithful concubine and entered on an even less creditable relation with another. It was the lowest point of his moral life. At this juncture Augustine came in contact with Neo-Platonism, (ante, p. 106), through the translations of Victorinus. It was almost a revelation to him. Instead of the materialism and dualism of Manichæism, he now saw in the spiritual world the only real world, and in God the source not only of all good, but of all reality. Evil was no positive existence, as with the Manichæans. It was negative, a lack of good, an alienation of the will from God. To know God is the highest of blessings. This new philosophy, which always colored Augustine’s teachings, made it possible for him to accept Christianity. He was impressed by the authority of the church, as a hearer of Ambrose might well have been. As he said later, “I should not believe the Gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church.”
Augustine’s Conversion

A crisis in Augustine’s experience was now at hand. He had never felt more painfully the cleft between his ideals and his conduct. He was impressed by learning of the Christian profession made in old age, some years before, by the Neo-Platonist Victorinus, whose writings had so recently influenced him.366 A travelled African, Pontitianus, told him and Alypius of the monastic life of Egypt. He was filled with shame that ignorant men like these monks could put away temptations which he, a man of learning, felt powerless to resist.367 Overcome with self-condemnation, he rushed into the garden and there heard the voice of a child from a neighboring house, saying: “Take up and read.” He reached for a copy of the epistles that he had been reading, and his eyes fell on the words: “Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.” 368 From that moment Augustine had the peace of mind and the sense of divine power to overcome his sins which he had thus far sought in vain. It may be that it was, as it has been called, a conversion to monasticism. If so, that was but its outward form. In its essence it was a fundamental Christian transformation of nature.

Augustine’s Later Life

Augustine’s conversion occurred in the late summer of 386. He resigned his professorship partly on account of illness, and now retired with his friends to the estate named Cassisiacum, to await baptism. He was far from being the master in theology as yet. His most characteristic tenets were undeveloped. He was still primarily a Christianized Neo-Platonist; but the type of his piety was already determined. At Cassisiacum the friends engaged in philosophical discussion, and Augustine wrote some of the earliest of his treatises. At the Easter season of 387 he was baptized, with Adeodatus and Alypius, by Ambrose in Milan. Augustine now left Milan for his birthplace. On the journey Monnica died in Ostia. The story of her death, as told by Augustine, is one of the noblest monuments of ancient Christian literature.369 His plans thus changed, he lived for some months in Rome, but by the autumn of 388 was once more in Tagaste. Here he dwelt with a group of friends, busied in studies much as at Cassisiacum. During this period in Tagaste his brilliant son, Adeodatus, died. Augustine thought to found a monastery, and to further this project went to Hippo, near the modern Bona, in Algeria, early in 391. There he was ordained to the priesthood, with Adeodatus and Alypius, by Ambrose in Milan. Augustine now left Milan for his birthplace. On the journey Monnica died in Ostia. The story of her death, as told by Augustine, is one of the noblest monuments of ancient Christian literature. 369 His plans thus changed, he lived for some months in Rome, but by the autumn of 388 was once more in Tagaste. Here he dwelt with a group of friends, busied in studies much as at Cassisiacum. During this period in Tagaste his brilliant son, Adeodatus, died. Augustine thought to found a monastery, and to further this project went to Hippo, near the modern Bona, in Algeria, early in 391. There he was ordained to the priesthood, almost forcibly. Four years later he was ordained colleague-bishop of Hippo. When his aged associate, Valerius, died is unknown, but Augustine probably soon had full episcopal charge. In Hippo he founded the first monastery in that portion of Africa, and made it also a training-school for the clergy. He died on August 28, 430, during the siege of Hippo by the Vandals.

Augustine’s Theology

Almost from the time of his baptism Augustine wrote against the Manichaëans. With his entrance on the ministry, and especially as bishop, he was brought into conflict with the Donatists (ante, p. 113), then widespread in northern Africa. This discussion led Augustine to a full consideration of the church, its nature and its authority. By the early years of his episcopate he had reached his characteristic opinions on sin and grace. They were not the product of the great Pelagian controversy which occupied much of his strength from 412 onward, though that struggle clarified their expression.

The secret of much of Augustine’s influence lay in his mystical piety. Its fullest expression, though everywhere to be found in his works, is perhaps in the remarkable Confessions, written about 400, in which he gave an account of his experiences to his conversion. No other similar spiritual autobiography was written in the ancient church, and few at any period in church history. It has always stood a classic of religious experience. “Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee” (1.1). “It is good, then, for me to cleave unto God, for if I remain not in Him, neither shall I in myself; but He, remaining in Himself, reneweth all things. And Thou art the Lord my God, since Thou standest not in need of my goodness” (7.11). “I sought a way of acquiring strength sufficient to enjoy Thee; but I found it not until I embraced that ‘Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,’ ‘who is over all God blessed forever’ calling me” (7.18). “My whole hope is only in Thy exceeding great mercy. Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt” (10.29). “I will love Thee, O Lord, and thank Thee, and confess unto Thy name, because Thou hast put away from me these so wicked and
Augustine’s first thought of God was thus always one of personal connection with a being in whom man’s only real satisfaction or good is to be found; but when he thought of God philosophically, it was in terms borrowed from Neo-Platonism. God is simple, absolute being, as distinguished from all created things which are manifold and variable. He is the basis and source of all that really exists. This conception led Augustine to emphasize the divine unity, even when treating of the Trinity. His doctrine he set forth in his great work On the Trinity. It became determinative henceforth of Western thinking. “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, alone, great, omnipotent, good, just, merciful, creator of all things visible and invisible.”  

Augustine was not satisfied with the distinction “persons”; but it was consecrated by usage, and he could find nothing more fitting; “When it is asked, what are the three? human language labors under great poverty of speech. Yet we say, three ‘persons,’ not in order to express it, but in order not to be silent.” It is evident that, though Augustine held firmly to the ecclesiastical tradition, his own inclinations, and his Neo-Platonic philosophy inclined toward the Modalistic Monarchian position. It would, however, be wholly unjust to call him a Modalist. He attempted to illustrate the Trinity by many comparisons, such as memory, understanding, will, or the even more famous lover, loved, and love.

This sense of unity and equality made Augustine hold that “God the Father alone is He from whom the Word is born, and from whom the Holy Spirit principally proceeds. And therefore I have added the word principally, because we find that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son also.” Eastern remains of subordinationism and feeling that the Father is the sole source of all, taught that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, but Augustine had prepared the way for that filioque, which, acknowledged in Spain, at the Third Council of Toledo, in 589, as a part of the so-called Nicene creed, spread over the West, and remains to this day a dividing issue between the Greek and Latin Churches.

In the incarnation Augustine emphasized the human as strongly as the divine. “Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is both God and man; God before all worlds; man in our world. Wherefore, so far as He is God, He and the Father are one; so far as He is man, the Father is greater than He.” He is the only mediator between God and man, through whom alone there is forgiveness of sins. “It [Adam’s sin] cannot be pardoned and blotted out except through the one mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus.” Christ’s death is the basis of that remission. As to the exact significance of that death, Augustine had not thought to consistent clearness. He viewed it sometimes as a sacrifice to God, sometimes as an endurance of our punishment in our stead, and sometimes as a ransom by which men are freed from the power of the devil. To a degree not to be found in the Greek theologians, Augustine laid stress on the significance of the humble life of Jesus. That humility was in vivid contrast to the pride which was the characteristic note in the sin of Adam. It is an example to men. “The true mediator, whom in Thy secret mercy Thou hast pointed out to the humble, and didst send, that by His example also they might learn the same humility.”

[Humankind’s Fallen State]

Man, according to Augustine, was created good and upright, possessed of free will, endowed with the possibility of not sinning and of immortality. There was no discord in his nature. He was happy and in communion with God. From this state Adam fell by sin, the essence of which was pride. Its consequence was the loss of good. God’s grace was forfeited, the soul died, since it was forsaken of God. The body, no longer controlled by the soul, came under the dominion of “concupiscence,” of...
which the worst and most characteristic manifestation is lust. Adam fell into a state of total and hopeless ruin, of which the proper ending is eternal death. This sin and its consequences involved all the human race; “for we were all in that one man [Adam] when we were all that man who fell into sin.” The Apostle, however, has declared concerning the first man that ‘in him all have sinned.’ Not only were all men sinners in Adam, but their sinful state is made worse since all are born of “concupiscence.” The result is that the whole human race, even to the youngest infant is a “mass of perdition,” and as such deserves the wrath of God. From this hopeless state of original sin “no one, no, not one, has been delivered, or is being delivered, or ever will be delivered, except by the grace of the Redeemer.”

**Grace and Salvation**

Salvation comes by God’s grace, which is wholly undeserved, and wholly free. “Wages is paid as a recompense for military service. It is not a gift; wherefore he says ‘the wages of sin is death,’ to show that death was not inflicted undeservedly, but as the due recompense of sin. But a gift, unless it is wholly unearned, is not a gift at all. We are to understand, then, that man’s good deserts are themselves the gift of God, so that when these obtain the recompense of eternal life, it is simply grace given for grace.”

This grace comes to those to whom God chooses to send it. He therefore predestinates whom He will, “to punishment and to salvation.” The number of each class is fixed. Augustine had held, in the period immediately following his conversion, that it is in man’s power to accept or reject grace, but even before the Pelagian controversy, he had come to the conclusion that grace is irresistible. The effect of this saving grace is twofold. Faith is instilled, and sins, both original and personal, are forgiven at baptism; “The faith by which we are Christians is the gift of God.” As such it is immediate justification. But grace does much more. As with Tertullian (ante, p. 69), it is the infusion of love by the Holy Spirit. It frees the enslaved will to choose that which is pleasing to God, “not only in order that they may know, by the manifestation of that grace, what should be done, but moreover in order that, by its enabling, they may do with love what they know.” It is a gradual transformation of nature, a sanctification. Through us, God does good works, which He rewards as if they were men’s own and to which He ascribes merit. No man can be sure of his salvation in this life. He may have grace now, but, unless God adds the gift of perseverance, he will not maintain it to the end.

**The Church and the Sacraments**

This doctrine of grace was coupled in Augustine with a high valuation of the visible Catholic Church, as that only in which the true infusion of love by the Holy Spirit may be found. Replying to the Donatists, who were thoroughly “orthodox” in doctrine and organization, and yet rejected the Catholic Church as impure, because allowing the sacraments to be administered by men who may have been guilty of “deadly” sins, Augustine said; “Those are wanting in God’s love who do not care for the unity of the Church; and consequently we are right in understanding that the Holy Spirit may be said not to be received except in the Catholic Church . . . whatever, therefore, may be received by heretics and schismatics, the charity which covereth the multitude of sins is the especial gift of Catholic unity.”

Sacraments are the work of God, not of men. They do not, therefore, depend on the character of the administrator. Hence baptism or regular ordination need not be repeated on entering the Catholic Church. But while those outside have thus the true and valid form of the sacraments, it is only in the Catholic Church that the sacraments attain their appropriate fruition, for there only can that love be found to which they witness, and which is of the essence of the Christian life. Even in the Catholic Church, not all are in the way of salvation. That is a mixed company, of good and bad. “It is not by different baptisms, but by the same, that good Catholics are saved, and bad Catholics or heretics perish.” To Augustine, sacraments include all the holy usages and rites of the church. They are the visible signs of the sacred things which they signify. Thus, he names as sacraments, exorcism, ordination, marriage, and even the salt given to catechumens. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are pre-eminently sacraments. By the sacraments the church is knit together. “There can be no religious society, whether the religion be true or false, without some sacrament or visible symbol to serve as a bond of union.” Furthermore, the sacraments...
are necessary for salvation. “The churches of Christ maintain it to be an inherent principle, that without baptism and partaking of the Supper of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the kingdom of God or to salvation and everlasting life.” Yet, by reason of his doctrines of grace and predestination, the sacraments for Augustine are signs of spiritual realities, rather than those realities themselves. They are essential; but the verities to which they witness are, whenever received, the work of divine grace. He who does not “obstruct faith “may expect, however, to receive the benefit of the sacrament. The problem was not yet wrought out as it was to be in the Middle Ages; but Augustine may be called the father of the doctrine of the sacraments in the Western Church.

*The City Of God*

Augustine’s greatest treatise was his *City of God*, begun in 412, in the dark days after the capture of Rome by Alaric, and finished about 426. It was his philosophy of history, and his defense of Christianity against the heathen charge that neglect of the old gods under whom Rome had grown great was the cause of its downfall. He showed that the worship of the old gods had neither given Rome strength, virtue, nor assurance of a happy future life. The loss of the old gods, that the worship of the one true God should come, was not a loss, but a great gain. Augustine then discusses the creation and the origin and consequences of evil. That brings him to his great theory of history. Since the first rebellion against God “two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self.” These had their representatives in Cain and Abel. Of the City of God, all have been members who have confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. The Earthly City has as its highest representatives heathen Babylon and Rome, but all other civil states are its embodiment. It is a relative good. To it peace and civil order are due. In a world of sin, though having love of self as its principle, it represses disorder and secures to each his own. But it must pass away as the City of God grows. Those who make up the City of God are the elect whom God has chosen to salvation. These are now in the visible church, though not all in that church are elect. “Therefore the church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter; and yet, though the tares grow in the church along with the wheat, they do not reign with Him.” The visible, hierarchically organized church it is, therefore, that is the City of God, and must more and more rule the world. In this teaching of Augustine lay much of the philosophic basis of the theory of the mediaeval papacy.

It is evident that, clear as was the system of Augustine in many respects, it contained profound contradictions, due to the intermingling of deep religious and Neo-Platonic thoughts and popular ecclesiastical traditionalism. Thus, he taught a predestination in which God sends grace to whom He will, yet he confined salvation to the visible church endowed with a sacramental ecclesiasticism. He approached the distinction made at the Reformation between the visible and the invisible church, without clearly reaching it. His heart piety, also, saw the Christian life as one of personal relation to God in faith and love, yet he taught no less positively a legalistic and monastic asceticism. The Middle Ages did not advance in these respects beyond Augustine. It did not reconcile his contradictions. It is by reason of them that most various later movements could draw inspiration from him.

**[13.] 4. THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY**

Augustine’s most famous controversy, and that in which his teachings on sin and grace came to clearest expression, was with Pelagius and that teacher’s disciples. Pelagius was a British, or perhaps an Irish monk, of excellent repute, much learning, and great moral earnestness, who had settled in Rome about the year 400, when probably well on in years. He seems to have been shocked at the low tone of Roman morals and to have labored earnestly to secure more strenuous ethical standards. Instead of being an innovator, his teaching in many ways represented older views than those of Augustine. With the East generally, and in agreement with many in the West, he held to the freedom of the human will. “If I ought, I can,” well expresses his position. His attitude was that of the popular Stoic ethics. “As often as I have to speak of the principles of virtue and a holy life, I am accustomed first of all to call attention to the capacity and character of human nature and to show what it is able to accomplish; then from this to arouse the feelings of the hearer, that he may strive after different kinds of virtue.” He, therefore, denied any
original sin inherited from Adam, and affirmed that all men now have the power not to sin. Like the Stoics generally, he recognized that the mass of men are bad. Adam’s sin set them an ill example, which they have been quick to follow. Hence they almost all need to be set right. This is accomplished by justification by faith alone, through baptism, by reason of the work of Christ. No man between Paul and Luther so emphasized justification by faith alone. After baptism, man has full power and duty to keep the divine law.

Pelagius’ Teachings

Pelagius won a vigorous follower in the much younger Cælestius, a lawyer, and possibly a Roman though he has been claimed as an Irishman. About 410, the two went to North Africa and called on Augustine in Hippo, without finding him. Pelagius then journeyed to the East, while Cælestius remained in Carthage and sought to be ordained a presbyter by Bishop Aurelius. That bishop now received from Paulinus, a deacon of Milan, a letter charging Cælestius with six errors. (1) “Adam was made mortal and would have died whether he had sinned or had not sinned. (2) The sin of Adam injured himself alone, and not the human race. (3) New-born children are in that state in which Adam was before his fall. (4) Neither by the death and sin of Adam does the whole race die, nor by the resurrection of Christ does the whole race rise. (5) The law leads to the kingdom of heaven as well as the Gospel. (6) Even before the coming of the Lord there were men without sin.” 405 This was an unfriendly statement, but Cælestius did not reject it; and it probably represents his views, which may have been somewhat more radical than those of Pelagius. An advisory synod in Carthage, in 411, decided against his ordination. Cælestius then journeyed to Ephesus, where he apparently received the desired consecration.

Augustine Against Pelagius

Augustine had not been present in Carthage, but he soon heard of the matter, and at once began his long-continued literary polemic against Pelagianism, which he found had many supporters. Augustine’s own religious experience was deeply wounded. He believed that he had been saved by irresistible divine grace from sins which he could never have overcome by his own strength. He held Pelagius in error as denying original sin, rejecting salvation by infused grace, and affirming human power to live without sin. Pelagius did not reject grace, but to him grace was remission of sins in baptism and general divine teaching. To Augustine the main work of grace was that infusion of love by which character is gradually transformed. Pelagius found support in the East. Early in 415, Augustine sent Orosius to Jerome, then in Palestine, to interest him in the Augustinian cause. By Jerome, Pelagius was accused before Bishop John of Jerusalem, but was approved by the bishop; and before the year was out, a synod held in Diospolis (Lydda in Palestine) declared Pelagius orthodox.

In this situation Augustine and his friends caused two North African synods to be held in 416, one for its local district in Carthage and the other for Numidia in Mileve. These condemned the Pelagian opinions and appealed to Pope Innocent I (402-417) for confirmation. Innocent was undoubtedly pleased at this recognition of papal authority, and did as the African synods wished. Innocent died shortly after, and was succeeded by Zosimus (417-418), a Greek, and therefore naturally no special sympathizer with the distinctive Augustinian positions. To Zosimus, Cælestius now appealed in person. The new Pope declared that the African synods had been too hasty, and seems to have regarded Cælestius as orthodox. A new synod met in Carthage early in 418, but the Africans made a more effective move. In April, 418, at their instance the Western Emperor, Honorius, issued a rescript condemning Pelagianism and ordering the exile of its adherents. In May a large council was held in Carthage, which held that Adam became mortal by sin, that children should be baptized for the remission of original sin, that grace was necessary for right living, and that sinlessness is impossible in this life. Moved by these actions, Zosimus now issued a circular letter condemning Pelagius and Cælestius.

Dissent From Augustine

Pelagius now disappears. He probably died before 420. A new and able champion of his opinions now appeared in the person of Bishop Julian of Eclanum, in southern Italy. An edict of the Emperor Honorius, in 419, required the bishops of the West to subscribe a condemnation of Pelagius and Cælestius. Julian
and eighteen others in Italy refused. Several of them were driven into exile and sought refuge in the East. In Julian, Augustine found an able opponent, and Pelagianism its chief systematizer; but a defender who was much more of a rationalist than Pelagius. About 429 Julian and Coelestius found some support from Nestorius in Constantinople, though Nestorius was not a Pelagian. This favor worked to Nestorius’s disadvantage in his own troubles, and together with the wish of the Pope led to the condemnation of Pelagianism by the so-called Third General Council in Ephesus in 431 (ante, p. 148). Pelagianism, thus officially rejected in the West and the East, nevertheless lived on in less extreme forms, and has always represented a tendency in the thinking of the church.

[13.] 5. SEMI-PELAGIANISM

Augustine’s fame as the great teacher of the Western Church was secure even before his death in 430. But by no means all accepted, however, the more peculiar portions of his theology, even where Pelagianism was definitely rejected. Thus, Jerome ascribed to the human will a share in conversion, and had no thought of an irresistible divine grace, though deeming grace essential to salvation. Northern Africa, which had led the Western Church intellectually since the time of Tertullian, was now devastated by the Vandals. Its pre-eminence in leadership now passed to southern France, and it was there that the chief controversy over Augustinian principles arose. John Cassianus, probably from Gaul, but who had journeyed to the East, visited Egypt, and had served as deacon under Chrysostom, founded a monastery and a nunnery in Marseilles about 415, and died there about 435. Not far from 429 he wrote his Collationes, in the form of conversations with Egyptian monks. In his opinion “the will always remains free in man, and it can either neglect or delight in the grace of God.”

In 434 Vincent, a monk of Lérins, wrote a Commonitorium, in which, without attacking Augustine by name, his design was to do so really, by representing Augustine’s teachings on grace and predestination as novelties without support in Catholic tradition. “Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself all possible care should be taken that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always and by all.” These men and their associates were called in the sixteenth century “Semi-Pelagians,” though Semi-Augustinians would be more correct, since they agreed in most points with Augustine, though rejecting his essential doctrines of predestination and irresistible grace. These were earnest men who sincerely feared that Augustine’s doctrines would cut the nerve of all human effort after righteousness of life, especially that righteousness as sought in monasticism. Predestination and irresistible grace seemed to deny human responsibility.

This dissent from Augustine appeared in still more positive form in the writings of Faustus, abbot of Lérins, and afterward bishop of Riez. In his treatise on Grace, of about 474, he recognized original sin, but held that men still have “the possibility of striving for salvation.” Grace is the divine promise and warning which inclines the weakened but still free will to choose the right rather than, as with Augustine, an inward transforming power. God foresees what men will do with the invitations of the Gospel. He does not predestinate them. Though Faustus rejected Pelagius, he really stood closer to him than to Augustine.

A more Augustinian direction was given to the thought of southern France by the able and devoted Caesarius (469?-542), for a time a monk of Lérins, and from 502 onward bishop of Aries. In 529 he held a little synod in Orange, the canons of which received a much larger significance because approved by Pope Boniface II (530-532). They practically ended the Semi-Pelagian controversy, though Semi-Pelagian positions have always largely been maintained in the church. It was affirmed by this synod that man is not only under original sin, but has lost all power to turn to God, so that “it is brought about by the infusion of the Holy Spirit and His operation in us that we wish to be set free.” It is “by the free gift of grace, that is, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,” that we have “the desire of believing” and “come to the birth of holy baptism.” All good in man is the work of God. Thus many of the main thoughts of Augustine were approved; but with a decided weakening of emphasis. The irresistibility of grace is nowhere affirmed. On the contrary, those in error are said to “resist that same Holy Spirit.” Predestination to evil is condemned. But, most marked of all, the reception of grace is so bound to baptism that the sacramental quality of grace and the merit of good works are put in the foreground. “We also believe this to be according to the Catholic faith, that grace having been received in baptism, all who have been
baptized, can and ought, by the aid and support of Christ, to perform those things which belong to the salvation of the soul, if they labor faithfully.”

Augustinianism was approved, but with undoubted modification in the direction of popular “Catholic” religious conceptions. Its sharp points were blunted.

[13.] 6. GREGORY THE GREAT

The tendencies toward a simplified, ecclesiastically and sacramentally emphasized presentation of Augustinianism, which have already been noted, characterized the thinking of Gregory the Great, the interpreter of Augustine to the Middle Ages. A teacher who borrowed from revered sources, rather than speculating, he presented the theological system already developed in the West, in essential harmony with the popular Christianity of his age. His influence was thus far-reaching. He is reckoned with Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome one of the Doctors of the Latin Church. In administrative abilities and achievements Gregory was one of the greatest of the Popes, and Latin Christianity generally had in him a leader of broad vision and permanent accomplishment.

Gregory was born in Rome of a senatorial Christian family about 540. Before 573 he was made prefect, or governor, of the city by the Emperor Justin II. The monastic life attracted him from civil distinctions, and by 574 he had devoted his wealth to the founding of monasteries and to the poor, and become a member of the monastery of St. Andrew in what had formerly been his own home on the Cælian hill. Gregory always retained his interest in monasticism, and did much for the regulation and extension of the monastic life. His own temperament was too active for the cloister, and in 579 Pope Pelagius II (579-590) sent him as papal ambassador to the court of Constantinople, where he served with ability, though, curiously, without acquiring a knowledge of Greek. About 586 he was once more in Rome as the abbot of St. Andrew. In 590 he was chosen Pope, being the first monk to attain that office. He died on March 12, 604.

The time of Gregory’s papacy was propitious for an able Pope. The papacy, which had risen high under Innocent I (402-417) and Leo I (440-461), had sunk in power after Justinian had conquered the Ostrogoths and restored the imperial authority in Italy. Since 568, however, the control of the Emperors in Italy had more and more waned before the Lombards, who threatened Rome itself. Though nominally subject to the Emperor, Gregory was the real leader against Lombard aggression. He raised troops, defended Rome by force and by tribute, even made a peace with the Lombards on his own authority, and succeeded, after infinite effort and confused struggles both with the Lombards and the imperial representatives, in keeping Rome unconquered throughout his pontificate. He was the strongest man in Italy, and must have seemed to the Romans and to the Lombards alike far more a real sovereign than the distant and feeble Emperor.

The support of the papacy as well as the source of much of the food of Rome was in its large estates, the Patrimony of Peter, in Sicily, Italy, and even in southern France and northern Africa. Of these Gregory showed himself an energetic but kindly landlord. Their management took much of his attention. Their revenues increased, and Gregory employed this income liberally not only in the maintenance of the clergy and public worship, and in the defense of Rome, but in charitable foundations and good works of all kinds.

Gregory’s Theology

Gregory was convinced that “to all who know the Gospel it is apparent that by the Lord’s voice the care of the whole church was committed to the holy Apostle and prince of all the Apostles, Peter.” 410 He would exercise a jurisdiction over the church as Peter’s successor. As such, he protested against certain acts of ecclesiastical discipline inflicted by the patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster; and announced that he would receive an appeal. In the acts sent for his inspection Gregory found John described as “universal bishop.” Against this claim for Constantinople he raised vigorous protest. 411 His own practice was the employment of the title still borne by the Roman bishops, “servant of the servants of God.” He exercised judicial authority with greater or less success in the affairs of the churches of Ravenna and Illyria. He attempted to interfere in the almost independent life of the church of France, re-establishing the papal vicariate in Aries, in 595, coming into friendly relations with the Frankish court, and
attempting to remove abuses in French ecclesiastical administration. Here his success was small. With some good fortune he asserted the papal authority in Spain, where the Visigothic sovereign, Recared, had renounced Arianism in 587.

Even more significant for the future was Gregory’s far-reaching missionary campaign for the conversion of England, inaugurated in 596, of which some account will be given (p. 198). It not only advanced markedly the cause of Christianity, but was the initiation of a closer relationship of England, and ultimately of Germany, with the papacy than had yet been achieved elsewhere. Nearer home, among the Arian Lombards, Gregory inaugurated ultimately successful efforts to turn them to the Catholic faith, especially through the aid of Theodelinda, who was successively the Queen of Kings Authari (584-591) and Agilulf (592-615).

Tradition has ascribed to Gregory a great work in the reformation of church music—the “Gregorian chants”—and in the development of the Roman liturgy; but the absence of contemporary reference makes it probable that his services in both these respects were confined to establishing a schola (choir) and encouraging Church music. On the other hand, his abilities as a preacher were undoubted. As a writer three of his works maintained high popularity throughout the Middle Ages—his exposition of Job, or Moralia, his treatise on the character and duties of the pastoral office, the Regula Pastoralis, and his credulous Dialogues on the Life and Miracles of the Italian Fathers.

**Purgatory**

Gregory’s theology is Augustinian, but with another emphasis than that of Augustine. He developed all of Augustine’s ecclesiastical tendencies, and elements from popular Christianity which Augustine took up into his system. Miracles, angels, and the devil have an even greater part in Gregory’s system than in that of Augustine. While Gregory held that the number of the elect is fixed, and depends upon God, he had no such interest in predestination as had Augustine. He often speaks as if predestination is simply divine foreknowledge. His interests were practical. Man is fettered in original sin, the evidence of which is his birth through lust. From this condition he is rescued by the work of Christ, received in baptism; but sins committed after baptism must be satisfied. Works of merit wrought by God’s assisting grace make satisfaction. “The good that we do is both of God and of ourselves; of God by prevenient grace, our own by good will following.” Penance is the proper reparation for sins after baptism. It involves recognition of the evil of the sin, contrition, and satisfaction. The church has many helps for him who would seek merit or exercise penance. Of these the greatest is the Lord’s Supper, which Gregory viewed as a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, available for the living and the dead. There is also the aid of the saints. “Those who trust in no work of their own should run to the protection of the holy martyrs.” For those who, while really disciples of Christ, make an insufficient use of these opportunities to achieve works of merit, fail to do penance, or avail themselves inadequately of the helps offered in the church, there remain the purifying fires of purgatory.

The thought of purgatory was not new with Gregory. The first faint intimation may be found in Hermas of Rome. With Cyprian it is more evident, and he cites in this connection Matt. 5.26. Augustine, on the basis of 1 Cor. 3.11-15, argued that purgatory was not improbable, though he felt no absolute certainty regarding it. Cæsarius of Arles held more definitely to the conception. To him it was a fact. Gregory now taught purgatory as a matter essential to the faith. “It is to be believed that there is a purgatorial fire before the judgment for certain light sins.” Though the Eastern Church held that an intermediate state exists between death and the judgment, and souls can be helped therein by prayer and sacrifice, its conception of purgatory has always been vague compared with that of the West.

Thus, in all departments of ecclesiastical activity Gregory stood forth the most conspicuous leader of his time. In him the Western Church of the Middle Ages already exhibited its characteristic traits, whether of doctrine, life, worship, or organization. Its growth was to be in the directions in which Gregory had moved.

Contemporary with Gregory in part, and of significance as the transmitter of much of the theological leaning of the ancient church to the Middle Ages, was Isidore, the head of the Spanish church from about
600 to 636, as bishop of Seville. His *Book of Sentences*—brief statements of doctrine—was to be the theological text-book of the Western Church till the twelfth century. His *Origins or Etymologies* embraced well-nigh the round of learning of his age, ecclesiastical and secular, and was a main source of knowledge in the Middle Ages of the thought of antiquity. His value as a historian of the Goths and Vandals was great. In him, as the most learned man of his age, all the earlier Middle Ages were to find a teacher of little originality but of remarkable breadth of learning.

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**THE PATRICISTIC ERA – A SUMMARY**

[adapted from Chadwick, *Conclusion*]

The first historian of the Church, Eusebius of Caesarea early in the fourth century, saw the story of the emergent Christian society as one of successive conquests over obstacles and attacks — over government persecution, over heretical deviation, over paganism. He was tempted to see evidence of the power of Christianity in its social or worldly triumphs, expressed in the favour of sympathetic emperors, or in the construction of splendid church buildings, or in the adherence of distinguished intellectuals like Origen. Towards such triumphalist assumptions a twentieth-century Christian is likely to be cool and reserved. But Eusebius was no doubt right in seeing the successive controversies as making much of the stuff of church history, and most of the main issues then faced by the church in its formative period have remained virtually permanent questions in Christian history — questions which receive an answer but are then reiterated in a modified shape in each age.

The central questions of the apostolic age turned on the continuity or discontinuity of the church with Israel. Those who wanted to assert the continuing validity of the Mosaic Law, and Gentiles who, at the opposite extreme, urged the radical abandonment of the Old Testament were alike rejected. The accepted way became St Paul’s *Via media*. The Old Testament retained a permanent place in the Christian Bible as the history of a divine education of the race, a tutor to bring men to Christ, and a book to be interpreted in the light of Christ. In consequence the Church may never have felt completely at home with the Old Testament, but it has never been able to do without it.

With the sub-apostolic age (roughly 70—140) the Gentile mission, for whose liberty St Paul had fought successfully but painfully, passed through a vigorous expansion. The Roman siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the final destruction of the city as a Jewish capital in 135 ended the importance of the old Jewish Christian congregations, and the centre of gravity passed to the Gentile churches in the great cities, in Antioch, in Alexandria, and especially in Rome, where both St Peter and St Paul had died a martyr’s death under Nero. But the passing of the apostles left huge questions of authority to be determined: the second century was accordingly the age when the basic pattern of Christian doctrine began to be tersely summarized in embryonic creeds, when the ministry achieved its universal threefold shape of bishop, presbyter, and deacon, and when finally the canon of the New Testament came to be formed. Order and unity were urgently needed, especially because of the centrifugal tendency of Gnostic syncretism. The conquest of Gnosticism may be counted the hardest and most decisive battle in church history.

The way in which the second-century Church solved the questions of authority, however, produced its own problems. Emphasis on the local bishop as the fundamental principle of unity (Ignatius) and on the sacredness of the ‘tradition’ (Irenaeus) was necessary enough for survival, but had its by-product in a measure of clericalization of the Church. The part of the people in the sacraments began to become less important than the acts of the priest in the mystery; and the priest became rather more remote, especially after the fourth century, when the Greeks started to veil the altar from the congregation’s view. At least by the eighth century, probably earlier, the canon of the Latin mass was commonly said in a low voice not audible to the congregation.

The Gnostic crisis was already beginning to pass its zenith when the debate with educated pagan critics...
began to be taken seriously. Justin Martyr and his successors who wrote in defence and vindication of the faith marked out the path for Clement of Alexandria and Origen in making common cause between Christianity and the highest aspirations of classical religious and ethical philosophy. To claim Socrates as a ‘Christian before Christ’, or to speak with Tertullian of man’s natural intuition for Christianity, was to see in the gospel a fulfilment of the moral potentiality of man as the creation of God.

In the next generation Irenaeus of Lyons and Tertullian at Carthage began the systematic and coherent statement of Christian doctrine, which they put forward in conscious opposition to heretical deviations. As the first Christian to write his theology in Latin, Tertullian played a part of epoch-making importance in working out a convenient vocabulary for the purpose.

By the middle of the third century (it is presupposed in both Cyprian and Origen) the church was living its life much more in the public eye, and Christianity was making deep penetration among the educated and governing causes. As the old paganism receded, its adherents were thrown on to the defensive and were made conscious of their need to think out a positive alternative in face of the Christian onslaught. The barbarian attacks of the middle years of the third century threatened the survival of the empire for a time, and for a few years persecution fell sharply upon the Christians. But the great persecution under Diocletian was long, unpleasant and much more thorough; it left an unhappy legacy of internal schism, above all in North Africa where the Donatists lived in bitter coexistence with their Catholic brethren until the Islamic invasions of the seventh century.

The conversion of Constantine did not make Christianity the formal religion of the empire. This was first established at the end of the century by Theodosius. The fourth century was the great age of the Greek churches, and later Eastern Christians looked back on Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and John Chrysostom as teachers possessing a classical status and authority. In a preeminent degree these were ‘the Fathers’ – the acknowledged interpreters of an authoritative tradition. The episode of Julian’s pagan revival was too individual and too short to mark a serious recession in progress. The Christians of the age were more disturbed by the storm of the long Arian controversy. But even the fourth century was not all tears. That the importance of the Arian controversy can be exaggerated is evident from the catechetical lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem (350) whose pastoral instruction is almost wholly untouched by the factious slogans of the rival parties of the age. Ordinary church life went on in tranquillity, largely indifferent to the theologians and the schemes devised by church politicians.

The flood of new adherents to the church during the fourth century was an element in the withdrawal of the ascetics into separate communities, the relation of which to the regular life of the church was a problem not settled in a day. Without having any such intentions the world-renouncing monks became, in the West, important transmitters of culture and education through the chaotic disturbance of the barbarian invasions. The disintegration of the Western empire into separate barbarian kingdoms left the church, especially as represented by the leading Western bishop in Rome, the only effective instrument of European unity, while in the writings of Augustine of Hippo the West possessed an intellectually coherent system of thought with intense power.

Once the papacy in the person of Gregory the Great had recognized that its vocation lay more with the Western barbarians than with the old empire at Constantinople, the process of widening the gulf between Greek and Latin churches was accelerated. The sense of tension between East and West goes back to an early stage in church history, and understanding was not furthered by the fact that they spoke different languages and had different social and ecclesiastical customs. But relations were made particularly difficult by a succession of failures in mutual comprehension, such as the attitude of the West during the ecumenical council of Constantinople (381), or Pope Leo’s dealings with the council of Chalcedon (451), or the quiet assumption of virtually all Greek bishops that the dignity and jurisdiction of the bishops of Rome were simply analogous to those of an Eastern patriarch as at Antioch or Constantinople.

The popes turned their gaze westwards at just about the time when the Greek churches were to face the impact of the Islamic conquest and to be racked with internal controversy about the legitimate use of icons. The consequences of these events mark an epoch in the history of the church, and there is reason in the convention by which the age of the church fathers is commonly reckoned to conclude with Gregory
the Great in the West and with John of Damascus in the East. For thereafter it is much more difficult to write the history of both Eastern and Western Christendom as if it were a single story.

Tension between Latin West and Greek East is pre-Christian. Divergent paths, ranging from the mystery of the Trinity to the date of Easter, took Eastern and Western Christians different ways, and the legacy of that remains. An initially conciliar understanding of synodical authority yielded in the West to a mounting concentration of jurisdiction at Rome in the see of Peter and Paul, especially when there ceased to be a Western Emperor uniting the provinces. Only the papacy represented universality and independence from a secular power. The Greek East continued to think of authority as synodical, under the leadership of the patriarchs, among whom Rome should preside in love. The orthodox emperor acted as a linchpin. The Augustinian Filioque was and remains in Greek or Russian ears an irreverent addition to the ecumenical faith of the Council of 381, weakening the claim for Rome to be a touchstone of authenticity for the universal Church. At the political level, East–West relations became prickly as Rome and Constantinople competed for possession of the Balkan peninsula. The frontier of jurisdiction shifted in Constantinople’s favour, especially with the Slav immigration into Balkan lands. East of the Adriatic, Rome could keep its influence only with the help of medieval Venice, and Slav tribes, Croats and Serbs, were to find themselves on opposite sides of an uneasy ecclesiastical frontier, sharing the same interest only to the degree that both would resent the Islamic Turkish empire. Painful rivalries and unreconciled memories tend to produce exaggerated sensitivity to differences, obscuring the vast area of shared doctrine, institutional structure, and devotional practice common to sister Churches. Even at moments when relationships were to be most problematic, both East and West knew that, in the phrase of Anselm of Canterbury, despite differences they enjoyed ‘substantial agreement’.

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SELECT DOCUMENTS


GENERAL SURVEYS


JUSTINIAN AND MOHAMMED

Two external forces served to shape the Middle Ages: the Byzantine Empire and Islam. More than merely defining the geographical borders of the medieval world, they interacted with it, producing, at times, friction and, at other times, great achievements. As much as any two individuals can effect movements and institutions containing their own inner dynamics, the emperor Justinian and the prophet Mohammed can be said to have shaped the Middle Ages by establishing contexts, limits and opposition to the European West. It was once said (by Henri Pirenne) that ‘without Mohammed Charlemagne would have been inconceivable’. Taking a broader view, it may be said that without Justinian and Mohammed there would never have been a Frederick II and Innocent III, i.e., there never would have been a medieval empire and a medieval papacy. It is a proposition worth examining.

Justinian’s achievement

Few perhaps expected it at the time, but Justinian (527-65) was the last in a centuries-long line of native Latin-speaking emperors. Although his uncle Justin (518-27) rose to the purple as a military commander, Justinian, Illyrian-born, was educated at Constantinople and played a substantial policy-making role in his uncle’s reign. Among the most intellectual of Roman emperors and perhaps the hardest working, Justinian, judged in terms of his territorial aims, must be seen as a failure. His overarching aim was to preserve and perfect the Roman Empire, and, if preservation required restoration, so be it.

The territorial integrity of the traditional empire required Justinian to undertake the reconquest of the West from the German tribes that now ruled those imperial lands. It was a reconquest that was to prove expensive, partial and short-lived. Britain was recognized as lost for ever, but Justinian’s ambitions saw North Africa, Italy, Spain and perhaps even Gaul under his effective authority, with the Mediterranean once again an inland Roman sea. Twice his general, Belisarius, returned to Constantinople, bringing defeated German kings with him: the Vandal Gelimer (534) and the Ostrogoth Witgis (540). And when the dust raised by the imperial armies (always containing large numbers of mercenaries) finally settled, Belisarius and other generals had conquered North Africa, most of Italy and a swath across south-eastern Spain. This arrangement was far from permanent and was, at the best of times, tenuous. Although Justinian’s armies consigned the Vandals to historical oblivion, the indigenous Berbers by guerilla warfare almost constantly kept imperial rule in North Africa off-balance. The costly and devastating Italian campaigns—Rome was thrice besieged and Milan razed, its entire male population massacred—contained the seeds of its own ultimate failure, for the imperial general Narses recruited forces from the Lombards to fight the Ostrogoths. Within three years after Justinian’s death, these same Lombards invaded Italy and seized control over much of the north. And, in Spain, the empire was but one of the players in the century or so before Islam was to transform the history of that peninsula. The reconquest was far from complete and, in the event, short-lived.

Justinian’s attempted reconquest of the western provinces was more than a geopolitical move: it was also a religious statement. The term ‘crusade’, coming as it does from the Latin word for ‘cross’, belongs to a later period, but, at the risk of anachronism, it may be applied to Justinian’s efforts. The Vandals in North Africa, the Ostrogoths in Italy and the Visigoths in Spain were all heretics, whose removal from power the emperor, never having relinquished total claim over the West, saw as a religious act. Justinian viewed his empire as a Christian society and his role as ruler of that Christian society. In 545 he decreed that the canons of the church councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and Chalcedon (451) were imperial laws. The locus classicus of his view of the place of religion in the empire is found in Novella 6:
The greatest gifts God has bestowed upon man are the priesthood (sacerdotium) and the imperial dignity (imperium). The former looks after divine matters and the latter presides watchfully over human affairs. Both proceed from one and the same principle and govern human life.

The word ‘caesaro-papism’—the ruler (caesar) as also head of the church (papa)—has frequently been applied to Justinian’s rule, but he would find its usually invidious connotation wholly inappropriate. Justinian did not dabble in theology: he was a trained and exceptionally able theologian. In the East theology was seen as too important to leave solely to the clergy. The many religious divisions in the empire needed remedy, and the taking of the West from heretics was but one means to do this. Justinian, in his own view, was not interfering in ecclesiastical matters: he was merely doing his duty as he saw it.

In the East religious divisions were pronounced and profound. Justinian considered most of Syria and Egypt heretical. Never having fully accepted the pronouncements of the Council of Chalcedon (451), many in those lands professed a belief in the nature of Christ which contemporaries called ‘Monophysite’. Rather than believing that the one person, Christ, has two natures, one divine and one human, they believed that Christ has only one nature (monophusus). Justinian’s extraordinary wife, Theodora, was their partisan, and, whatever rumour and snobbery have done to defame her, she stands apart as one of the outstanding persons of the age. Even the fault-picking, salacious Procopius in his Secret History, yellow-dog journalism of the time, described dinner-time conversation at the palace, where the fine points of Christological theology were discussed by emperor and empress. Justinian certainly made conciliatory efforts to reconcile the Monophysites to orthodoxy, but, in the end, Monophysite churches endured in Syria, Egypt and Armenia.

A word must be said about the place of the pope—by now the word ‘pope’ applied only to the bishop of Rome—in the Christian world. From an early date the bishop of Rome claimed a primacy over the other churches not, as one might suspect, because Rome was the capital of the empire but because Rome was the church of Peter, chief among the apostles, to whom Christ entrusted the power of the keys (Matt. 16, 18). From sub-apostolic times, acknowledged with Rome among the great churches of the Catholic world were Alexandria in Egypt and Antioch in Syria. The establishment of a New Rome at Byzantium in 330 meant that the church of Constantinople was to take its place with these others. The Council of Constantinople (381) asserted that Constantinople should be accorded precedence of honour after Rome. Thus, the four great churches (later called ‘patriarchates’) in the Catholic world were Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch. (Jerusalem’s rank as a ‘patriarchate’ had little practical impact and, in fact, was not granted until 451). Justinian in 545 provided his view of church polity:

The most holy pope of the Old Rome is first of all priests. The most blessed archbishop of Constantinople, the New Rome, has second place after the holy and apostolic see of Old Rome and is to be honoured above all others.

Such a statement did not mean that the emperor held himself above manipulating the pope or, indeed, selecting the pope. At a crucial moment in the Monophysite controversy Justinian sought to replace Pope Silverius with the pope’s nuncio in Constantinople, a certain Vigilius. Belisarius, then in control of Rome, had Silverius deposed and reduced to the state of simple monk (537), exiled to an island off Gaeta, where soon he died probably of starvation and mistreatment. Pope Vigilius could not afford to offend his new masters: on one dramatic occasion Justinian’s men hauled him from the altar, as he clung to the altar cloth. Thereafter, he echoed the theological views of the emperor. In all this, it should be remembered that the see of Rome was not subordinate to any other see—it was acknowledged as prior to all others—but that the bishop of Rome in the mid-sixth century came close to being a puppet of the Roman emperor, as, similarly, he had been to the Gothic kings and was fairly soon to be to local Roman aristocratic families. The break between East and West—schism, to use the Greek-derived word for ‘break’—was in the future, but from the perspective of the sixth century the break is not entirely surprising. The two churches were set on two separate courses: the Greek-speaking East with its future clearly connected with the fortunes of the Byzantine Empire and the Latin-speaking West with its future connected with the Christian descendants of once barbarian invaders.

Justinian and the law
How better to solidify the Roman accomplishment than to reduce to manageable order the unwieldy bulk of laws and legal opinions? Justinian accomplished this task, and it is arguably the crowning achievement of the Roman Empire. The task of codifying existing laws into a systematic body produced in 529 a code, now lost, and, in 534, a revised code, which we have as the Code of Justinian in twelve books, containing 4,652 laws. Book one begins with the title *De summa trinitate (On the high trinity)*, and the next dozen titles all deal with ecclesiastical matters. Further, Justinian ordered the jurisprudence—the opinions of the learned jurists of the second and third centuries—together with imperial edicts likewise to be organized. In fifty books the best opinions were gathered and given the force of law in the book called the *Digest* (or *Pandects*), issued in 533. Thus, the great wealth of Roman law was contained in the *Code of Justinian* and the *Digest*: they were exclusive collections, which abrogated all other, earlier laws. The later laws of Justinian (and others) were collected in the *Novels*. A textbook for students, the *Institutes*, completed the work of Justinian. These five law books are known collectively as the *Corpus Iuris Civilis (Body of Civil Law)*, one of the greatest achievements of human civilization.

What strikes the student of the medieval church is the afterlife of the Justinian *Corpus*. Its immediate impact in the West was short-lived, for it perished with the unravelling of the reconquest. Not until the eleventh century did the works of Justinian resurface in the West. The great schools of law that emerged, first at Bologna and later at Montpellier and elsewhere, were essentially based on the great *Corpus*. And, as the church at the same time was devising its own system of laws (canons), it used Roman law as its model. The great collections of canon law issued by the medieval popes bore clear resemblance to the Justinian model, and canon law as studied at the medieval universities relied on the principles of Roman law. Canon law, with its enormous impact on the medieval church, took its shape and, indeed, much of its substance from the law reforms of Emperor Justinian.

**Justinian and church buildings**

If Justinian had done nothing more than build Santa Sophia (*Hagia Sophia*), he would have had an enduring place in human history. Every subsequent age has sung the glories of this building whether as Christian church, Islamic mosque or, now, state museum. It stands today as Justinian's greatest visible achievement. In the Nika revolt of 532 the previous church, built by Theodosius (376-95), was destroyed. Justinian commissioned Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus, who, in the amazingly short time of five years—Notre-Dame of Paris took nearly two hundred years—completed their task. Neither Justinian nor we know if their building surpassed in beauty the great temple of Solomon—since the latter was destroyed in AD 70—yet he may have spoken accurately when at Santa Sophia's dedication (27 December 537) Justinian reportedly said, ‘Solomon, I have surpassed you.’ Problems with supports combined with a minor earthquake in 558 to cause the original dome to collapse. The structure was quickly rebuilt, and it is this rebuilt Santa Sophia of 562-63 that the visitor to Istanbul sees today. The description of the contemporary Procopius hardly exaggerates:

...a spectacle of marvellous beauty, overwhelming to those who see it, but to those who know it by hearsay altogether incredible. For it soars to a height to match the sky, and, as if surging up from amongst the other buildings, it stands on high and looks down upon the remainder of the city, adorning it, because it is a part of it, but glorying in its own beauty, because, though a part of the city and dominating it, at the same time it towers above it to such a height that the whole city is viewed from there as from a watch-tower.

The floor plan shows Santa Sophia rectangular in shape, yet, subtracting the two side aisles, what is revealed is virtually a square area with adjacent areas to the east and west creating an oval shape. The dome—by definition a segment of a sphere—had for some time been used by architects, perhaps the best-known example being the Pantheon in Rome—but these domes covered a round floor area and simply placed the dome atop a drum-like wall built along the perimeter of the circle. The vaulting of a square area with a dome was first accomplished by Justinian's architects. They constructed four large piers at the four corners of the square and joined them with semicircular arches, thus forming four arches above the sides of the square. They then filled in the spaces between the arches, creating pendentives, which were shaped like inverse spherical triangles, rising from each pier to the height of the tops of the arches. The
pendentives, of necessity, were somewhat concave. The tops of the four pendentives, when joined, formed a perfect circle, upon which the dome could rest. External buttressing towers on the north and south as well as interior half-domes to the east and west (vaulting high above the floor) served to carry the downward thrust of the dome. In diameter 107 feet, the dome at its centre point reaches a height of 184 feet above the floor. Near its lower part the dome has forty small windows, spaced so closely together that, looking up from the floor, one almost thinks the dome suspended in air. Procopius commented, It seems not to rest upon solid masonry, but this golden dome appears as if suspended from heaven. God holding a golden chain that suspends the dome in air above Santa Sophia: it is an image often repeated through the ages.

Not comparable with Santa Sophia architecturally but significant in other ways were the churches built by Justinian in Ravenna in Italy. Situated near the Adriatic Sea south of the mouth of the Po River, Ravenna had become an imperial centre in the West in 402. Belisarius recaptured it from the Ostrogoths in 540, restoring it to its vice-regal status. The church of Sant’Apollinare in Classe, the port of Ravenna, although begun earlier, was now completed and dedicated in 549. The church in Ravenna then called St Martin (but later, as now, called Sant’ Apollinare nuovo) had its mosaic decorations completed under Justinian. Also, Ravenna’s church of San Vitale, begun before the reconquest, was largely built under Justinian and was consecrated in 547. Octagonal in shape, it contains a programme of mosaics outstanding even in a city renowned for its mosaics. On facing north and south walls above the altar are the figures of Justinian and Theodora, each surrounded by courtiers, each carrying a gift for the Eucharist. The imperial presence in this reconquered city could scarcely be more prominent than in these realistic, non-idealized portraits.

[14.] 2 THE LOMBARDS

In a sense, the depiction of emperor and empress at Ravenna captured the imperial couple at their most famous moment in time. It was a fleeting moment. A few scant decades later much of Italy fell to the Lombards. In their expansion south these barbarian people bypassed Ravenna, which was virtually an island in a Lombard sea. In 568, less than three years after Justinian’s death, the Lombard king, Alboin, led this fierce people from the lower Austrian Danube region into an Italy still suffering the consequences of almost two decades of war. Most of Italy north of the Po River fell to them within a year. They soon crossed the Apennines into the north-western part of the Italian boot. Soon they were in northern Tuscany, and before long duchies were established in the south at Spoletto and Benevento. Shifting territorial boundaries were to occur, but from the time of the Lombard invasions of the late sixth century Italy was divided and remained divided until 1870. The conquering Lombards, as they entered Italy, were largely pagan. The Bavarian princess Theodolinda, a Catholic, became queen to two successive Lombard kings. She and her husband King Agilulf (590-616) made important contacts with the Irish monk Columbanus, to whom they gave land for a monastery at Bobbio. How quickly the Lombards became Catholic, at this distance in time, it is not possible to say, but it seems clear that there was no instant conversion to Catholic orthodoxy, rather, a slow process, mostly hidden from our sight. Paul the Deacon’s account of the Lombard conversion is not a particularly reliable source, since he wrote his History of the Lombards at the end of the eighth century about events two centuries earlier and he wished to stress the Catholic victory. The conquest of these people by the Franks at papal invitation belongs to the time of Paul and his patron Charlemagne.

The Italy of the end of the sixth century had a Lombard north and also Lombard lands north-east of Rome at Spoletto and south of Rome at Benevento. The remainder—roughly lands around Rome and Ravenna as well as the Greek-speaking deep south (Nova Graecia)—were the only places where Justinian’s successors could exercise effective control. Viewed from Constantinople, Italy was121 seen as a remote province at the periphery of their world. Effective imperial power in Italy, now weak where it existed, was soon to disappear and with it the last vestiges of the ancient political structures in Italy. The West and the Western church were to continue on their way now with little reference to the empire to its east, whose people still called themselves Romans. Schism and crusades shall bring the East into our focus in later periods, but these were to be but episodes in medieval history. A wall severely limiting contacts was up between East and West, and it is an irony of some relevance that the great thinkers of classical Greece
only came to the West in the twelfth century and then not directly but through an intermediary, Islam. It is to Islam that we must now turn.

[14.] 3 THE RISE of ISLAM

In the seventh century a religion of a simple but compelling doctrine took root beyond the edges of the Roman world in Arabia. It was to have a profound influence not only on European history but, indeed, on world history. Mohammed died in 632, and within a hundred years his followers had conquered a wide swath from the Atlantic to the Indian Oceans and far into the Asian interior. The rise of Islam was as unexpected as it was successful. From the desert seas of the Arabian peninsula came a religion, a movement, a political and spiritual force that transformed the context in which the Christian religion lived and developed.

The land of Mohammed

The Arabian peninsula is part of the desert lands which form the Sahara desert and which become the Asian steppeland. The rift valley that created the Red Sea gave Arabia its western border. The Persian Gulf forms its eastern border. Where the Arabian peninsula ends in the north and the Asian mainland begins is not susceptible to precise definition, but the Fertile Crescent and its hinterland (ancient Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia, the modern states of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq) can be used conveniently for this purpose. The largest peninsula in the world—one-third the size of the Continental United States and almost nine times the size of the British Isles—the Arabian peninsula was and remains not very congenial for human habitation. Only the southern regions (Yemen) between the coastal mountains and the sea receive enough rain for agriculture. The remainder is chiefly arid steppeland and desert. Two vast areas of shifting sanddunes, the Great Nefud in the north and Rub al-Khali’ in the south, the two joined by a ribbon of sandy desert, comprise about one-third of the peninsula’s land area. Deep wells helped to create the occasional oasis in this dry land, and desiccated riverbeds called wadis were and are used for overland travel.

The Bedouin people, to survive in the interior of Arabia, had to be nomadic, living in tribes or kinship clans, relying on the pasturing of camels and, to a lesser extent, other animals. A life lived vulnerable to the harsh forces of nature led these peoples to stress loyalty within their group and enmity to other groups. Raids were almost a way of life. Bedouin gods were many, usually heavenly bodies thought to inhabit places like trees and rocks. Yet demons, threatening the Bedouins at any moment, perhaps played a larger role in their lives. The town of Mecca, midway along the peninsula’s western side, had a special place in the life of the Arabs. The caravan route from Yemen north to the Fertile Crescent was organized at Mecca, and Meccans ran it. The holy place at Mecca, the Kaaba, a shrine for many of their gods, was the centre of a peace zone, where tribal hostilities were put aside. Such a peaceful place provided an ideal climate for commerce. It was into the mercantile class at Mecca in the late sixth century that the future Prophet was born.

The Prophet

For the historian no subject in the history of Islam is more challenging than the life of Mohammed, chiefly because of the nature of the surviving sources. The Koran itself was not gathered together in its present form until many years after the Prophet’s death. The hadith, traditions accepted by Muslims about the life of Mohammed and the early years of Islam, present more formidable problems for the modern Western historian, who tends towards caution in accepting tradition literature as history. While respecting the religious sensibilities of Muslims who, for reasons that transcend scientific historical methodology, may have deep convictions about these matters, the historian as historian can merely adopt a cautious but not irreverent attitude towards the hadith evidence. What, then, can be said of the historic person who is the Prophet to about 750,000,000 of our contemporaries?

Mohammed was born about 570 at Mecca. He may have been involved in the caravan trade, though we know that less certainly than that he married the widow of a wealthy merchant. At some point, at age forty according to tradition, he felt a call to preach the message of a single, transcendent God. Gaining some converts, he felt that opposition in Mecca required him to leave. This he did in 622, when he went to
Medina, 220 miles to the north, and this date of the *hejira* (‘flight’) marks the point at which the Islamic calendar begins. The warring clans at Medina had called Mohammed to mediate. The resulting ‘Constitution of Medina’ brought peace to Medina and converts to Mohammed, although Jewish groups were to suffer. The refusal of Jews to follow the religion of Mohammed, it is said, led the Prophet to cease facing Jerusalem at prayer and to begin facing Mecca. In 630 Mohammed and his followers marched on Mecca, and the Meccans with little resistance capitulated. Mecca became what it is today the spiritual centre of Islam, its holiest place and the centre of pilgrimage, and the Kaaba became the greatest shrine of Islam. In 632 Mohammed died at Medina.

The central teaching of Mohammed, repeated millions of times daily by pious Muslims, is ‘There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet’. Belief in but one God—Allah being the Arabic word for God used by Muslims and Christians alike—is the core belief. The so-called Satanic verses of the Koran—which may have once followed sura 53,19-20—derive their controversial nature from their being interpreted to mean that Mohammed, in a moment of weakness, allowed rich Meccan merchants to practise polytheism. The opening sura of the Koran provides an exact theological statement of Muslim belief:

> In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
> Praise be to God, the Lord of all beings,
> the All-compassionate, the All-merciful,
> the Master of the Day of Judgement.
> Thee alone do we serve; to Thee alone do we pray
> Guide us in the straight way,
> the way of those whom Thou hast blessed,
> not of those who have incurred Thy anger,
> nor of those who are now astray.

The only God is the God of all peoples, not merely the national god of their own people (as the early Hebrews believed their god Yahweh to be only their god). The two qualities, mentioned in this sura and repeated before the recitation of each sura, were compassion and mercy. On the Day of Judgement God’s justice will separate the good and the evil. It is to this God, merciful yet just, to whom humans should turn for help and guidance so that they may live holy lives.

Throughout the Koran the word ‘unbelievers’ means those who refuse to believe in the one God. The people of the book—Jews and Christians—are not unbelievers, but the Jews have been unheeding of their prophets and the Christians seem to believe in three gods. Unlike the Christian belief in Jesus—that he is the Son of God—the Muslims steadfastly refused to make any claims of divinity for Mohammed: he is human like other men. He traced himself in a line of prophets that included Jesus and Moses and, ultimately, Abraham. Later Muslims were to call him prophet and seal, meaning that he was the last of the prophets.

Life after death and a redressing of the balance of justice, so obviously unbalanced in this life, are essential features of Islamic theology. The evil will be punished by eternal fire in Gehenna and the good will live in a verdant paradise where there flow cooling streams that will never dry up. What a most inviting prospect paradise must have held out for desert nomads. The bearing of life’s transitory troubles in submission to God would lead believers to a most rewarding heaven where life’s deficiencies will be fully compensated for—and then some—by a merciful and just God. It was a potent message, which in human terms—the historian has no other—proved compelling, first to the tribesmen of Arabia and then to millions elsewhere.

**The Koran**

To the Muslim, the Koran was not written by Mohammed: he was merely the voice that recited—Koran means recitation—the word of God as revealed to him through the Angel Gabriel. In trance-like states Mohammed spoke, and his words were written down by others on whatever was at hand, even a mere scrap. The process whereby these recitations were collected to form this holy book is largely hidden from
our eyes. In a pre-literate culture memorizers played a prominent role, and memorizers committed to memory with an exactness that amazes us in the twenty-first century. In Arabia we may assume that memorizers knew and repeated Mohammed’s recitations and taught others. A network of reciters might soon have appeared. By the time of Mohammed’s death in 632 it is just possible that there was a written collection of this oral tradition. Accounts vary about what happened next. It was once widely held that an official version was produced within two years of the Prophet’s death, during the time of the Caliph Abu-Bakr (632-34). More likely, the next Caliph but one, Uthman (644-56), was responsible for the collection of the recitations in the number and order of the received text. Even allowing for the possibility of later insertions, the text of the Koran as we have it is substantially a very early witness of Islamic belief. It is more reliably closer to the time of Mohammed than the earliest Christian gospel is to the time of Christ.

The first-time and, indeed, the many-time Western reader of the Koran is struck by the frequency of biblical references. We meet Adam, Noah and Abraham as well as Moses, Saul, David, Solomon and several of the Old Testament prophets. John the Baptist, Jesus and Mary (conflated with Miriam, sister of Moses) appear frequently. Questions arise about the Koran’s dependence on the Bible or, at least, on biblical stories. Since Islam was not a rejection of Judaism or Christianity but saw itself in the line of Abraham and acknowledged the prophets, including Jesus, the inclusion of familiar biblical incidents and characters should not be such a great surprise. Traditions about the young Mohammed meeting Jews and Christians along caravan routes do not command historical assent. Indirect rather than direct access to biblical accounts should probably be assumed, and attempts to identify the sources tend to point to Jews and dissident Christian people living in Arabia.

The arrangement of the 114 suras of the Koran, ordered by Uman, follow no chronological order. After the opening sura (quoted above), there follows the longs sura (‘Cattle’), which, in turn, is followed by suras in declining length, with the shortest suras coming at the end. Official translations of the Arabic Koran have not been permitted until the twentieth century and then only in favour of Turkish. The language of the Koran—its cadences and sonorities—are integral to its understanding. Westerners can gain some small sense of this by listening to recordings. That the language of the Muslim holy book was so integral to Islamic religion meant that converts would learn Arabic. In time, they would become Arabic speaking. The Arabization of the conquered peoples owed much to the language of the Book.

The Koran became a code of living, reflecting the total integration of life. Religion was not compartmentalized, even if that compartment had the loftiest place: nothing could be more antithetical to the Muslim view of life. ‘Islam’ means submission, a total submission, to God. Hence, social behaviour and customs are spelled out. Rules of inheritance are given in some detail (e.g., sura 4, 8-16). Dietary regulations introduce a sense of restraint and discrimination:

Forbidden you are to eat
putrifying flesh, blood, the flesh of pigs,
what has been offered to other than God,
the flesh of animals strangled, beaten down,
animals dead from a fall or from being gored,
animals disturbed by beasts of prey
and also food sacrificed to idols.
(Sura 5, 4)

Slavery was not forbidden (nor was it forbidden in the West for well over a millennium later), but to free slaves pleases God:

Emancipate those you own
who wish to be free,
if you see good in them,
and give them of the riches God
has given you. And force not
your slave girls into prostitution for your profit, if they
The status of women was greatly elevated by the Koran, their protection from the injustices of society a frequent theme in its pages. Polygamy (four wives) was allowed, among other reasons, to give a place in society to spinsters and widows, who were among the most vulnerable persons in society. Divorce was allowed, but a woman could not be merely ejected from her husbands household. She was entitled to the wedding gifts without deduction. The mandatory three-month waiting period would determine if she was pregnant, in which case divorce could not occur until after birth of the child; the waiting period also gave scope for a possible reconciliation. A divorced woman was free to marry and even to remarry her former husband. Women could also hold property. The improvement in the status of women is one of the greatest achievements of the teachings of the Koran. Modern critics who ahistorically impose modern ideals on early history and, thus, harshly criticize these provisions of the Koran rip history from context and would do well to reflect on the fact that in the seventh century the most enlightened attitudes towards women and slavery were among the followers of Mohammed. Christian Europe lagged behind.

The high ethic of the Koran may be best seen in a passage reminiscent of the Christian gospels (Matt. 25, 34-46):

Be kind to your parents and your kinsmen,
to orphans and to the needy,
to neighbours who are of family and those who are not,
to those who travel with you and to the traveller you meet on the
way
and to your slaves.
God has no love
for the arrogant and boastful,
who are miserly and encourage others
also to be miserly, while themselves concealing
the wealth with which God has favoured them.

(Sura 4, 40-1)

It was this book the men from the Arabian peninsula took with them as warriors.

Conquests

The prophet died in 632, and a hundred years later the religion of Islam stretched from the Atlantic coasts of North Africa and Spain in the west to the area beyond the Oxus River in central Asia. History knows no equal to the extraordinary spread of Islam, not even Christianity, which for several hundred years after its founder s death was still a minority religion in the Roman world. The stages in the remarkable expansion of Islam can be easily sketched, although tantalizing gaps exist in our knowledge.

The death of Mohammed left a leadership vacuum. No provisions had been made for his succession. He had no surviving sons, but, even if he had, tribal chiefdoms were not necessarily hereditary. Whatever the exact nature of the consultation, Abu-Bakr, father-in-law of Mohammed and an early convert, was chosen. He was called ‘Caliph’, i.e., deputy or successor, but not successor to Mohammed’s prophetic office; the caliph served as a political leader, one might say, as sheik of the ‘Islamic tribe’. First of the four Orthodox Caliphs, Abu-Bakr, who ruled for less than two years, did so from Medina as did his successors: Umar (634-44), Uthman (644-56) and Ali (656-61), husband of Mohammed’s daughter Fatima. The immediate need after Mohammed’s death was to recover so-called apostate peoples, those who had withdrawn their loyalty and their tax payments. Abu-Bakr recovered the secessionist tribes and also succeeded in bringing other Arabic peoples under the sway of Medina. By the time of his death Abu-Bakr controlled the entire peninsula. The second phase, the breaking out of the Arabian peninsula, took place under his successor Umar. A powerful military force was in place and, having succeeded in internal conquest, was restless. The largely Bedouin army craved the rich lands of the Fertile Crescent. Mass movements have their own inner dynamic, that mixture of greed and idealism and shifting ambitions born of events as they occur. The
great Muslim expansion was no exception. Whatever else it was, this great expansion was not a religious movement intent on converting the world to Islam. (The process of conversion will be seen shortly.) Historians, looking for causes which they can analyse, cannot affirm the providential workings of God but can only see human beings moved by forces complex and largely hidden from us. And booty was clearly among them.

The second step, then, in the expansion of Islam saw the Fertile Crescent and Egypt submit to the Arabs. Raiding attacks in the time of Abu-Bakr revealed lands militarily weak and peoples with little loyalty to their Byzantine masters. These lands were ruled by the emperor at Constantinople, but poor administration, overburdening taxation, strong local loyalties and theological differences had drained the populations of any sense of allegiance to their foreign oppressors. To say the Arabs were viewed as liberators would overstate the case, yet a later Christian writer in Syria was to say, ‘The God of vengeance has delivered us from the hands of the Romans by means of the Arabs.’ In 635 Damascus (Islam’s future capital) and in 637 Jerusalem (from which Muslims believe the Prophet ascended to heaven) were in their hands. The Persian Empire lay to their east, a once mighty empire, now weak and vulnerable to the attacks of Arab warriors. Soon Ctesiphon fell (637), and in a great battle in 642 the Persians were defeated, and with them fell their ancient empire. In 639 under other generals Arab armies entered Egypt. Their success was quick and with it the rich valley of the Nile and the great harbour of Alexandria as their prizes. They controlled Egypt by 642 and built a navy, which soon challenged the great Byzantine fleet and, in 649, captured Cyprus.

After these immediate conquests, the third stage could occur. To the east from the Taurus Mountains at the northern edge of Syria they could raid and conquer Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Then on to the Oxus River in central Asia, the border between Persians and Turks. These events and their consequences go well beyond the confines of this book, yet they signal to us the breadth and depth of the neighbour of medieval Europe to its south and south-east. More relevantly, the Arab armies in Egypt found no opposition to their immediate west in the vast Western Desert and along the Libyan coast beyond Tripoli. They halted at the border of Tunisia, short of Carthage. By now the Orthodox Caliphs had passed from the scene after serious civil wars at home, and the Umayyad Caliphs (616-750) soon moved the capital from Arabia to Damascus, where it was to remain until it was moved to Baghdad in 762. When the campaigns continued, the Muslims took Carthage and, with the support of the North African Berbers, made their way across modern Morocco to the Atlantic.

Standing at Africa’s northernmost point, they could see Spain a scant eight miles across the straits. In the spring of 711 Tariq Ibn Ziyad landed at the massive rock jutting into the Mediterranean Sea, a pillar of Hercules, and gave it his name ‘Jabal Tariq’ (i.e., Tariq’s mountain), which by corruption became ‘Gibraltar’. At a crucial battle on 19 July 711, Tariq and his Berber warriors defeated the Visigothic forces of King Roderick. The country lay before them. Bypassing Seville, the Muslims headed north for Toledo, the Visigoths’ capital, which they quickly took. By summer’s end Tariq controlled half of Spain, including the towns of Archidona, Elvira, Malaga and Cordova, their future capital. Musa, the Arab general who had led the recent African campaigns, arrived with 10,000 Arab troops to join the Berbers. He besieged Seville, which, in June 713, succumbed. With the fall of Saragossa in that same year, the conquest was virtually complete, and Musa, accompanied by Tariq, led a triumphal procession with eighty Visigothic princes and thousands of other prisoners across North Africa and entered Damascus in February 715. The mopping-up continued and in 719 the conquest was complete save for a Visigothic Christian enclave in the north-west (Asturias). A small splinter group of the Muslim army crossed the Pyrenees and was defeated by Charles Martel near Tours in 732, a minor incident in this whole story and, in no way, the turning point in European history as it has sometimes been portrayed. The lines were too long, and a major Muslim assault north of the Pyrenees was impossible. In a brief eight years the great Visigothic kingdom had fallen and Spain was now ruled by Muslims. It was not till 1492 that the last vestige of Muslim rule disappeared, when Catholic monarchs entered Granada.

In Spain and elsewhere the Muslim conquerors did not convert the defeated peoples by the sword. Unlike Charlemagne, the Christian king of the Franks (768-814), who gave Saxons the choice between baptism
and death, the Arabs allowed their subjects the tolerance necessary to practise their religions. The non-Muslims paid a tribute, but often considerably less than what they had paid to the Byzantine emperor. The process of conversion to Islam was a slow process, taking several hundred years and even then leaving pockets of Christians.

For the student of the medieval church what Islam accomplished was to demarcate the southern boundary of medieval Christian Europe. The world of Islam began at the Pyrenees and extended far to the east. Even Sicily and parts of southern Italy came under Muslim rule. Two walls now existed. The Mediterranean was a wall which separated Christian Europe on its north from an alien culture to its south. Another wall, this a north-south wall, separated Latin Christians from Greek Christians. To the north and west of these walls Europe of the Middle Ages was to live its life. It is this European world of Latin Christianity, often called Western Europe, whose story we now follow.

Further reading


[14.4]. THE CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT of the CHURCH
[adapted from Walker, 3.12]

The acceptance of Christianity as the religion of the empire gave to the Emperors a practical authority over the church. By the time of Justinian, the Emperor declared, on his own initiative, what was sound doctrine, and to a considerable extent regulated churchly administration. The Emperors largely controlled appointment to high ecclesiastical office, especially in the East. This imperial power was limited, however, by the necessity, which even Emperors as powerful as Justinian felt, of securing the approval of the church through general councils for statements of faith and canons of administration. The Emperors largely controlled appointment to high ecclesiastical office, especially in the East. This imperial power was limited, however, by the necessity, which even Emperors as powerful as Justinian felt, of securing the approval of the church through general councils for statements of faith and canons of administration. The imperial support of these edicts and decisions of general councils made heresy a crime, and must seriously have limited freedom of Christian thought. It was a very narrow path both in doctrinal opinion and in administration, that a bishop of Constantinople, for instance, had to walk. If conditions were more favorable for the papacy (ante, pp. 134-136), it was largely a consequence of the general ineffectiveness of imperial control in Italy, though cases were not lacking where the Popes felt the heavy hands of the
Emperors.

The Clergy

As in the third century, the bishops continued to be the centres of local ecclesiastical administration, and their power tended to increase. By them the other clergy were not merely ordained, but the pay of those below them was in their hands. The First Council of Nicæa provided that other clergy should not remove from a diocese without the bishop’s consent. In each of the provinces the bishop of the capital city was the metropolitan, who, according to the synod of Antioch (341), should “have precedence in rank . . . that the other bishops do nothing extraordinary without him.” The ancient custom of local synods, for the consideration of provincial questions was extended, the First Council of Nicæa requiring them to be held twice a year. This metropolitan arrangement was fully introduced into the East by the middle of the fourth century. In the West it was about half a century later in development, and was limited in Italy by the dominance of the papacy. Nevertheless it won its way in northern Italy, Spain, and Gaul. Above the metropolitans stood the bishops of the great capitals of the empire, the patriarchs, whose prominence antedated the rise of the metropolitan system. These were the bishops, or patriarchs, of Rome, Constantinople (by 381), Alexandria, Antioch, and, by 451, Jerusalem.

By Constantine, the clergy were made a privileged class and exempted from the public burdens of taxation (319). The government, anxious not to lose its revenues through the entrance into clerical office of the well-to-do, ordered that only those “of small fortune” should be ordained (326). The result of this policy was that, though the ordination of slaves was everywhere discouraged, and was forbidden in the East by the Emperor Zeno in 484, the clergy were prevalingly recruited from classes of little property or education. The brilliant careers of some men of talent and means, of whom Ambrose is an example, show the possibilities then before those of high ability who passed these barriers. The feeling, which had long existed, that the higher clergy, at least, should not engage in any worldly or gainful occupation, grew, and such works were expressly forbidden by the Emperor Valentinian III in 452. Such exclusive devotion to the clerical calling demanded an enlarged support. The church now received not merely the gifts of the faithful, as of old; but the income of a rapidly increasing body of landed estates presented or bequeathed to it by wealthy Christians, the control of which was in the hands of the bishops. An arrangement of Pope Simplicius (468-483) provided that ecclesiastical income should be divided into quarters, one each for the bishop, the other clergy, the up-keep of the services and edifices, and for the poor.

The feeling was natural that the clergy should be moral examples to their flocks. Celibacy had long been prized as belonging to the holier Christian life. In this respect the West was stricter than the East. Pope Leo I (440-461) held that even sub-deacons should refrain from marriage, though it was to be centuries before this rule was universally enforced in the Western Church. In the East, the practice which still continues was established by the time of Justinian, that only celibates could be bishops, while clergy below that rank could marry before ordination. This rule, though not without advantages, has had the great disadvantage of blocking promotion in the Eastern Church, and leading to the choice of bishops prevalingly from the ranks of the monks.

Catechumens, Confirmation

While the bishop’s power was thus extensive, the growth of the church into the rural districts about the cities, and of many congregations in the cities themselves, led to the formation of congregations in charge of presbyters, and thus to a certain increase in the importance of the presbyterial office. These congregations still belonged, in most regions, to the undivided city church, ruled by the bishop; but by the sixth century the parish system made its appearance in France. There the priest (presbyter) in charge received two-thirds of the local income, paying the rest to the bishop.

The incoming of masses from heathenism into the church led, at first, to an emphasis on the catechumenate. Reception to it, with the sign of the cross and laying on of hands, was popularly regarded as conferring membership in the church, and was as far as the great multitude of less earnest Christians went in Christian profession, save in possible danger of death. The growth of generations of exclusively Christian ancestry, and, in the West, the spread of Augustinian doctrines of baptismal grace, brought this
half-way attitude to an end. The catechumenate lost its significance when the whole population had become supposedly Christian.

In one important respect East and West fell asunder in this period regarding rites connected with baptism. As already described, by the time of Tertullian (ante, p. 96), baptism proper was followed by anointing and laying on of hands in token of the reception of the Holy Spirit. In Tertullian’s age both baptism and laying on of hands were acts of the bishop, save in case of necessity, when baptism could be administered by any Christian (ante, p. 97). With the growth of the church, presbyters came to baptize regularly in East and West. With regard to the further rite the two regions differed. The East saw its chief significance in the anointing, and allowed that to be performed, as it does to-day, by the presbyter with oil consecrated by the bishop. The West viewed the laying on of hands as the all-important matter, and held that that could be done by the bishop alone as successor to the Apostles. The rites therefore became separated in the West. “Confirmation” took place often a considerable time after baptism, when the presence of the bishop could be secured, though it was long before the age of the candidate was fixed in the Western Church.

15. MONASTIC MISSION and THE SPREAD of LEARNING
[adapted from Walker, 4.1-4.2]

[15.1] MISSIONS in the BRITISH ISLANDS

The spread of Arianism among the Germanic tribes, the conversion of the Franks to the Roman faith, and the gradual acceptance of Catholic orthodoxy by the Germanic invaders have already been noted. Much, however, remained to be done. There is no more striking proof of the vitality of the church in the collapsing empire and the opening Middle Ages than the vigor and success with which it undertook the extension of Christianity.

Ireland and Scotland

Christians had some foothold in the British Isles before the conversion of Constantine. Bishops of York, London, and probably Lincoln, were present at the Council of Arles in 314. Yet it survived the downfall of the Roman Empire but feebly among the Celtic population, while much of the soil of southern and eastern England was won for heathenism by the Anglo-Saxon invaders. Some slight Christian beginnings were to be found chiefly in the south of Ireland before the time of Patrick; but he so advanced the cause of the Gospel in that island and so organized its Christian institutions, that he deserves the title of the Apostle of Ireland.

Born about 389, possibly in southern Wales, Patrick was the son of a deacon and the grandson of a priest. His training was therefore Christian. Seized in a raid about 405, he was for six years a slave in Ireland. Escaped to the Continent, Patrick was for a considerable time an inmate of the monastery of Lérins, off the southern coast of France. In 432 he was ordained a missionary bishop by Bishop Germanus of Auxerre, and began the work in Ireland which ended with his death in 461. Most of Patrick’s missionary labors were in northeastern Ireland, though not without some efforts in the south and wilder west. Few facts survive; but of his zeal there can be no question, and as little of his conspicuous abilities as an organizer under whom the hitherto scattered Christianity of Ireland was systematized and made great advance. He brought the island in some measure into association with the Continent and with Rome.

It seems certain that Patrick introduced the diocesan episcopate into Ireland; but that institution was soon modified by the clan system of the island, so that there were, instead, many monastic and tribal bishops. Monasticism was favored by Patrick; but the great developer of the peculiar Irish monasticism was Finian of Clonard (470?–548), under whose leadership a strongly missionary and, for the time, a notably learned group of Irish monasteries came into being. The monastic schools of Ireland were justly famous in the sixth and seventh centuries. The glory of this Irish monasticism was its missionary achievement.

The beginnings of Christianity in Scotland are very obscure. Ninian is said to have labored there in the
fourth century and the early years of the fifth, but of his date and real work little can be said. Kentigern, or Mungo (527?-612?), who spread Christianity in the neighborhood of Glasgow, is almost as dim a figure. It would seem probable that the northern Irish settlers who founded, about 490, the kingdom of Dalriada, embracing the modern Argyleshire, came as Christians. The great missionary to Scotland was Columba (521-597), a man closely related with some of the most powerful tribal families of Ireland, and a pupil of Finian of Clonard. Distinguished already as a monk and a founder of monasteries in Ireland, he transferred his labors, in 563, to Scotland, establishing himself with twelve companions on the island of Iona or Hy, under the protection of his fellow countryman and relative, the King of Dalriada. There Columba developed a most flourishing monastery, and thence he went forth for missionary labors among the Picts, who occupied the northern two-thirds of Scotland. By Columba and his associates the kingdom of the Picts was won for the Gospel. As in Ireland, Christian institutions were largely monastic. There were no dioceses, and even the bishops were under the authority, save in ordination, of Columba, who was a presbyter, and of his successors as abbots of Iona.

Missionaries on the Continent

These Irish missionary efforts were carried to northern England, among the Anglo-Saxons of Northumbria. There, on the island of Lindisfarne, off the extreme northeastern coast of England, a new Iona was established by Aidan, a monk from Iona, in 634. Thence Christianity was “widely spread in the region by him till his death in 651, and afterward by his associates. Nor was the missionary zeal of these Celtic monks by any means confined to the British Islands. Columbanus, or Columba the Younger (543?-615), became a monk of the celebrated Irish monastery of Bangor, which was founded in 558 by Comgall, a leader in learning and missionary zeal. From Bangor, Columbanus set forth, about 585, with twelve monastic companions, and settled in Anegray, in Burgundy, near which he planted the monastery of Luxeuil. Driven forth about 610, in consequence of his prophet-like rebuke of King Theuderich II and the King’s grandmother, Brunhilda, Columbanus worked for a brief time in northern Switzerland, where his Irish companion and disciple, Callus, was to live as an anchorite, and to give his name to, rather than to found, the later monastery of St. Gall. Columbanus made his way to northern Italy, and there established in 614, in the Appenines, the monastery of Bobbio, in which he died a year later.

Columbanus was only one of the earlier of a number of Irish monks who labored on the Continent—many of them in what is now central and southern Germany. Thus, Kilian wrought in Würzburg and Virgil in Salzburg. One modification of Christian practice, of great later importance, was introduced on the Continent by these Irish monks, notably by Columbanus. The entrance of thousands into the church when Christianity was accepted by the state had largely broken down the old public discipline. There had grown up the custom of private confession among the monks of East and West. Basil had strongly favored it in the East. Nowhere had it more hearty support than among the Irish monks, and by them it was extended to the laity, as was indeed the case, to some extent, by the monks of the East. The Irish on the Continent were the introducers of private lay confession. In Ireland, also, grew up the first extensive penitential books, in which appropriate satisfactions were assessed for specific sins—though these books had their antecedents in earlier canons of councils. These penitential treatises the Irish monks made familiar on the Continent.

Roman Missionaries in England

Meanwhile, a work of the utmost significance for the religious history of Britain and the papacy had been undertaken by Pope Gregory the Great. Moved by a missionary impulse which he had long felt, and taking advantage of the favorable situation afforded by the marriage of Æthelberht, “King” of Kent and overlord of much of southeastern England, to a Frankish Christian princess, Bertha, Gregory sent a Roman friend, Augustine, the prior of his beloved monastery on the Cælian hill, with a number of monastic companions, to attempt the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. The expedition left Rome in 596, but its courage was small, and all the persuasive power of Gregory was required to induce it to proceed. It was not till the spring of 597 that the party, reinforced by Frankish assistants, reached Canterbury. Æthelberht and many of his followers soon accepted Christianity. Gregory looked upon the struggle as already won. Augustine received episcopal consecration from Vergilius of Arles in November, 597, and, by 601, Gregory appointed Augustine metropolitan with authority to establish twelve bishops under his
jurisdiction. When northern England should be converted a similar metropolitanate was to be established in York. London and York were to be the ecclesiastical capitals. The British bishops, over whom Gregory had no recognized jurisdiction, the Pope committed to the superintendency of Augustine. The task in reality was to prove much more arduous than it seemed to Gregory’s sanguine vision, and the greater part of a century was to pass, before Christianity was to be dominant in England. Yet the movement, thus inaugurated, was vastly to strengthen the papacy. The Anglo-Saxons owed their conversion chiefly to the direct efforts of Rome, and they in turn displayed a devotion to the papacy not characteristic of the older lands, like France and Spain, where Christianity had been otherwise introduced. Anglo-Saxon Christianity was to produce, moreover, some of the most energetic of missionaries by whom the Gospel and papal obedience were alike to be advanced on the Continent.

England was not brought to the acceptance of Christianity without much vicissitude. The hegemony of Kent was waning before the death of Ethelberht, and with it the first Christian triumphs were eclipsed. Northumbria gradually gained leadership. It was a success when Edwin, King of Northumbria, was converted through the work of Paulinus, soon to be bishop of York, in 627. The heathen King, Penda of Mercia, however, defeated and slew Edwin in 633, and a heathen reaction followed in Northumbria. Under King Oswald, who had become a Christian when an exile in Iona, Christianity was re-established in Northumbria, chiefly through the aid of Aidan (ante, p. 197). It was of the Irish, or as it is often called, the “Old British” type. Penda once more attacked, and in 642 Oswald was killed in battle. Oswald’s brother, Oswy, like him a convert of Iona, after much struggle secured all of Northumbria by 651, and a widely recognized overlordship besides. English Christianity was becoming firmly established.

Roman Authority Triumphs

From the first coming of the Roman missionaries there had been controversy between them and their Irish or Old British fellow Christians. The points of difference seem of minor importance. An older system of reckoning, discarded in Rome, resulted in diversity as to the date of Easter. The forms of tonsure were unlike. Some variations, not now recoverable, existed in the administration of baptism. Furthermore, as has been pointed out, Roman Christianity was firmly organized and diocesan, while that of the Old British Church was monastic and tribal. While the Old British missionaries looked upon the Pope as the highest dignitary in Christendom, the Roman representatives ascribed to him a judicial authority which the Old British did not fully admit. Southern Ireland accepted the Roman authority about 630. In England the decision came at a synod held under King Oswy at Whitby in 664. There Bishop Colman of Lindisfarne defended the Old British usages, while Wilfrid, once of Lindisfarne, but won for Rome on a pilgrimage, and soon to be bishop of York, opposed. The Roman custom regarding Easter was approved, and with it the Roman cause in England won the day. By 703 northern Ireland had followed the same path, and by 718, Scotland. In Wales the process of accommodation was much slower, and was not completed till the twelfth century. In England this strengthening of the Roman connection was much furthered by the appointment, in 668, by Pope Vitalian, of a Roman monk, Theodore, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, as archbishop of Canterbury. An organizer of ability, he did much to make permanent the work begun by his predecessors.

The two streams of missionary effort combined to the advantage of English Christianity. If that from Rome contributed order, the Old British gave missionary zeal and love of learning. The scholarship of the Irish monasteries was transplanted to England, and was there strengthened by frequent Anglo-Saxon pilgrimages to Rome. Of this intellectual movement a conspicuous illustration was Bede, generally called the “Venerable” (672?-735). An almost life-long member of the joint monastery of Wearmouth and Jarrow in Northumbria, his learning, like that of Isidore of Seville, a century earlier, embraced the full round of knowledge of his age, and made him a teacher of generations to come. He wrote on chronology, natural phenomena, the Scriptures, and theology. Above all, he is remembered for his Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation, a work of great merit and the chief source of information regarding the Christianization of the British Islands.

[15.2] CONTINENTAL MISSIONS AND PAPAL GROWTH

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With the conversion of Clovis to orthodox Christianity (496) (ante, p. 133), a close relationship of church and state began in the Frankish dominions. To a large extent it was true that Frankish conquest and Christianization were two sides of the same shield. Under the descendants of Clovis—the Merovingian Kings—the internal condition of the Frankish church sank, however, to a low ebb. Bishops and abbots were appointed for political considerations, much church land was confiscated or put in secular hands. Even the efforts of Gregory I to gain more effective papal control in France and to effect reform had little lasting result.

The political collapse of the Merovingians, led to the rise to power of the Carolingian house, originally “mayors of the palace,” which was accomplished when Pippin, called, not wholly correctly, of Heristal, won the battle of Tertry in 687. The Merovingian Kings continued in name, but the real authority was exercised by Pippin as “duke of the Franks.” After his death in 714, his illegitimate son Charles Martel (715-741) exercised all the powers of a King. By him the Mohammedan advance in western Europe was permanently stayed, by the great battle between Tours and Poitiers in 732. He saw the advantage of churchly aid, and supported missionary effort in western Germany and the Netherlands, where he wished to extend his political control. Yet neither Pippin “of Heristal” nor Charles Martel were more helpful to the church of their own territories than the Merovingians. They exploited it for political reasons, secularized its lands, and did little to check its disorders. Nevertheless, under Charles Martel a great missionary and reformatory work was initiated that was to Christianize large sections of western Germany, reform the Frankish church, and bring the papacy and the Franks into relations of the utmost consequence to both.

**Boniface as a Missionary**

Willibrord (657?-739), a Northumbrian, began missionary work in Frisia with the support of Pippin of Heristal, and, in 695, was consecrated a missionary bishop by Pope Sergius I— an action which resulted in the establishment of the see of Utrecht. His work had scanty success, and was taken up by one of the ablest and most remarkable men of the period— Winfrid or Boniface (680?-754). An Anglo-Saxon of Devonshire by birth, Winfrid became a monk of Nutcell near Winchester. In 716, he began missionary labors in Frisia, but with such ill success that he returned to England. In 718 and 719, he was in Rome, where he received from Pope Gregory II (715-731) appointment to labor in Germany. From 719 to 722, he worked in Frisia and Hesse, going once more to Rome in the year last named, and receiving consecration as a missionary bishop, swearing allegiance to the Pope. The next ten years witnessed a great success in Hesse and Thuringia. Not only were heathen converted, but the Irish monks were brought largely into obedience to Rome. Gregory III (731-741) made Boniface an archbishop in 732, with authority to found new sees. After a third journey to Rome, in 738, he thus organized the church of Bavaria, and a little later that of Thuringia. In 744, he aided his disciple, Sturm, in the foundation of the great Benedictine monastery of Fulda, destined to be a centre of learning and priestly education for all western-central Germany. Between 746 and 748, Boniface was made archbishop of Mainz, which thus became the leading German see. In all this Boniface strengthened the causes of order and discipline and increased papal authority. His work was greatly aided by the considerable numbers of men and women who came as fellow workers from his native England, and for whom he found place in monastic and other Christian service.

**Boniface’s Reforms**

The death of Charles Martel in 741 saw his authority divided between his sons Carloman (741-747), and Pippin the Short (741-768). Both were far more churchly than their father, and Carloman ultimately retired from power to become a monk. While neither would abandon authority over the Frankish church, both supported Boniface in the abolition of its worst irregularities and abuses, and in a closer connection with Rome. In a series of synods held under Boniface’s leadership, beginning in 742, the worldliness of the clergy was attacked, wandering bishops censured, priestly marriage condemned, and stricter clerical discipline enforced. At a synod held in 747 the bishops assembled recognized the jurisdiction of the papacy, though, as the civil rulers were not present, these conclusions lacked the force of Frankish law.
The Frankish church, thanks to the work of Boniface, was vastly bettered in organization, character, and discipline, while, what was equally valued by him, the authority of the papacy therein was very decidedly increased, even though that of the mayor of the palace continued the more potent.

As Boniface drew toward old age his thoughts turned toward the mission work in Frisia, with which he had begun. He secured the appointment of his Anglo-Saxon disciple, Lull, as his successor in the see of Mainz. In 754 he went to Frisia, and there was murdered by the heathen, thus crowning his active and widely influential life with a death of witness to his faith. His work had been one for order, discipline, and consolidation, as well as Christian advancement, and these were the chief needs of the age.

[15.3] THE TRANSMISSION of LEARNING

[adapted from Walker, 4]

In 782, Charlemagne, king of the Franks and soon to be ‘emperor’, invited to join his court and to advise him on educational matters the deacon Alcuin from York in the far-away English kingdom of Northumbria at the edge of the known world. Why did Charlemagne turn to Northumbria? What events lay behind this extraordinary selection? How to explain that, within two hundred years of the advent of Christianity among the English, their school at York helped to reintroduce learning to the European mainland?

When Augustine arrived at Canterbury in 597, he came as a missionary of the Christian gospel, not as a scholar intent on establishing a school. He and his fellow monks brought very few books with them, and these almost certainly were liturgical books needed to conduct ceremonies of Christian worship: Mass books, psalters, etc. His mission, it is widely agreed, was purely evangelical in nature and did not advance the cause of learning. From where did the learning of the West come to the English?

There were two distinct streams meeting to make England one of the foremost centres of scholarly learning in eighth-century Europe, although we may not be able with precision to weigh their relative contributions. Both were significant, and the diminution of one or the other imperils our historical understanding. One stream came from Ireland, the other from the Continent, particularly from Rome. Together they produced a vibrant intellectual climate that fostered serious learning, making England, particularly Northumbria, arguably the pre-eminent centre of scholarship in Western Europe and creating a decisive moment in the history of the Christian church. The details need to be seen.

The most obvious line of development came from Rome to Canterbury and thence to Northumbria. In 669, the new archbishop of Canterbury, Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek biblical scholar, arrived from Rome, with the learned Hadrian, a North African abbot, who like Theodore had long lived in Italy, and the Northumbrian noble Benedict Biscop, who had been a monk on the island of Lerins off the south coast of Gaul. A school in the sense of a centre of learning was quickly established at Canterbury. No inventory of books survives for any of the English centres of learning tracing their descent from Theodore’s Canterbury, but the library at Canterbury must have contained the Bible, works of grammar and rhetoric as well as epitomes of classical and patristic learning. Aldhelm, one of his students at Canterbury, complained that, as a student, he had not enough time to learn everything he wanted to learn: law, prose and poetic literature, music, arithmetic and the mysteries of the heavens. He described Theodore ‘like an angry boar surrounded by a pack of smirking hounds’. More measuredly, Bede wrote of the school of Theodore and Hadrian at Canterbury:

They were both extremely learned in both secular and sacred literature and thus attracted a crowd of students into whose minds they daily poured the streams of wholesome learning. They gave their hearers instruction not only in the books of Holy Scripture but also in the art of metre, astronomy and ecclesiastical computation. As evidence of this, some of their students still survive who know Latin and Greek just as well as they know their native tongue.

(Bede, Ecclesiastical History, bk 4, ch. 2)
Eradicate teachers, a broad curriculum, eager students and learned books provide the essentials of any school, and these were all present at Canterbury in the last decades of the seventh century.

His name ‘Biscop’ might suggest that Benedict Biscop was of a priestly family, but, in any case, he was certainly from a noble, wealthy Northumbrian family. During the course of his life he travelled six times to Rome, the latter four journeys while he was involved with establishing new English schools. Among the founders of the school at Canterbury in 669, Biscop, after perhaps three winters there, undertook a journey to Rome: it was to set in motion events of far-reaching significance. Unlike his previous journeys, this was a journey in search of books, pictures and relics, but mostly books. At Rome he acquired a substantial number of books and, on his return journey, he collected a large number of books at Vienne, which he had asked friends to collect for him. His intentions seem clear: to return to England and establish a new monastery with relics for its altar, pictures for devotion and books for learning and liturgy. It was to his native Northumbria, from which he had been absent for twenty years, that Biscop went to found his monastery on land given him by the king of Northumbria on the north banks of the Wear River near its mouth. The Wearmouth foundation, in 673, was followed by a foundation, in 681, at Jarrow, overlooking the mud flats where the Don enters the Tyne, only a few miles from Wearmouth. Dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul and for some time a single community under one abbot, Wearmouth and Jarrow became key centres of learning in Western Europe, producing in the first generation the Venerable Bede, considered the most learned man of his times.

Often forgotten in this run of events from Biscop to Bede was the great figure of Ceolfrid, who became first abbot of the combined monasteries in 688. Ten years earlier he had accompanied Biscop on the latter’s last trip to Rome. During his abbotsip the library collection was doubled, and the number of monks, almost incredibly, rose to over 600. It was a long abbotsip of twenty-eight years and ended not with Ceolfrid’s death but with his retirement in June 716, when, laden with gifts, he left for Rome, never to see his native land again. He never arrived in Rome. Age and a difficulty journey combined to weaken his physical strength, and in Burgundy on 25 September 716 Ceolfrid died. Some of his companions continued their way to Rome, where they presented Pope Gregory II with their gifts from Tyneside. Among them was a truly exceptional book: the Codex Amiatinus, so-called from the monastery of Monte Amiata, where it resided in the early modern period before finding its present home in the Laurentian Library in Florence. It is considered one of the most important manuscripts surviving from early medieval Europe. To the paleographer, who studies handwriting, it may provide links between the scriptoria of southern Italy and northern England, but to the cultural historian it is more: it is the earliest surviving complete Latin Bible and a clear window into the age in which it was made. The dedication reveals much. It is a poem in praise of the Petrine headship of the church written by Ceolfrid, this abbot from remotest Northumbria. He called himself ‘Ceolfridus Anglorum extremis de fimibus abbas’ (‘Ceolfrid, abbot, from the outermost parts of the English’). An enormous book (or codex) for its time and, indeed, for most times, it has over 1,000 folios (i.e., leaves), and each folio measures about 20 inches high by about 13 inches wide. Some consider that this book represents the greatest achievement of Northumbrian learning.

The other towering achievement of Northumbrian scriptoria, the Lindisfarne Gospels, was a very near contemporary of the Codex Amiatinus. There may be some doubt whether this book of the gospels was produced at the island monastery of Lindisfarne, yet its Northumbrian origin is assured. It rivals the later Book of Kells for the splendour of its artistic decoration. Each of the four gospels is preceded by a ‘carpet page’ (a full page of decoration, carpet-like, fashioned largely of skilfully interlaced coloured ribbons) and a page with a portrait of the evangelist. Besides, virtually every page has decorated initial letters and border designs, and many pages contain miniatures, so called not because they are small but because they are coloured (from miniare, to colour). The Lindisfarne Gospels is now on permanent display at the British Library in London.

While these two great books were being fashioned, the north of England produced the greatest scholar of the age. Bede (c.672-735) was born on the estates of Wearmouth and at age seven was presented by his parents to the monastic community. When Jarrow was founded in 681, he went there, and there he remained for the rest of his life, using the library developed by Biscop and Ceolfrid. Travelling little if at
all outside his monastery, Bede composed a flood of works: twenty books of scriptural exegesis and six works on chronology as well as homilies, saints’ lives, histories, hymns, prayers, letters and much more. In short, he was a genius. The great twentieth-century historian Sir Richard Southern observed that Bede was ‘the first scientific intellect produced by the German peoples of Europe’ and that in Bede’s lifetime Jarrow had become ‘the chief centre of Roman civilization in Europe’. Bede is best known—perhaps unfairly to his other works—for his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Its preface has almost a modern ring to it, as he describes there his efforts to get reliable evidence for his historical account. For him history is not the retelling of old stories, the passing along of traditional accounts. For Bede history is the attempt to recount the past as accurately as possible, acknowledging that to do so is the essential task of the historian.

The line which we are tracing from Theodore and Hadrian and Biscop and Ceolfrid does not end with Bede. Among Bede’s students was the son of the Northumbrian royal family, Egbert, who about 732 became archbishop of York. There at York he established a school, which would surpass even the school of his own training. To it would come the sons of the great northern families and books and even more books. Under Aethelbert (c.766-79), Egbert’s successor, the school at York had probably the best library in Western Europe. Also under Aethelbert the school had its greatest student, Alcuin. Hence, it was in light of these events of a century or more in England that we should see Charlemagne in 781 inviting Alcuin from York in the north of England to the royal palace at Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen).

This line of descent, just described, from the coming of Theodore to Canterbury in 669 to the going of Alcuin to the Frankish court in 783 might seem clear enough and might even be drawn as follows:

Theodore/Hadrian > Benedict Biscop > Ceolfrid > Bede > Aegbert > Ethelbert > Alcuin.

Yet such a straight, unambiguous line gives an inaccurate picture, for it tells only part of the story and assumes (wrongly) a single line of cultural transmission. There was another line that originated in Ireland, which is overlooked at the peril of historical distortion. From the early days of Christianity in Ireland an emphasis was placed on the value of learning, and great efforts were made to introduce biblical, patristic and even secular works into Irish monasteries. The influence of the Irish foundation at Lindisfarne in 635 continued long after the withdrawal of Colman in 664. The foundation at (Old) Melrose by Eata, a pupil of Aidan, was Irish in culture, and it was there that Cuthbert entered as a novice. When, in 664, Eata came to replace Colman as abbot of Lindisfarne, he brought with him Cuthbert as his prior. There they continued the Irish monastic traditions of Aidan and Colman. In a curious twist, when Colman left Lindisfarne after the ‘Synod’ of Whitby, thirty English monks went with him and soon established their own monastery on an island off the west coast of Ireland, which, when Bede wrote his *Ecclesiastical History* (731), was a flourishing community of English monks following the Irish ways. Yet they were not the first English monks to make such a journey. A large number (*multi*) of English monks in search of learning and an ascetical life had already gone to Irish monasteries, where, in Bede’s words, ‘they were most gladly welcomed by the Irish and given food, books and instruction without any payment’. Bede names eleven of these; other sources name still others. There was, for example, the young Northumbrian noble Aethelwine, who after studying in Ireland returned to England and became a bishop. A brother of the great Abbot Ceolfrid of Wearmouth-Jarrow went to Ireland to study the scriptures, and he was among the many English monks in Ireland who fell victim to the plague of 664. Other English monks formed a community at Clonmelsh (in modern Co. Carlow), from which the successful mission of Willibrord to the Frisians set out.

Moreover, Irish influences were not limited to Northumbria. In East Anglia (c.630), the Irish monk Fursey established a monastery, again in Bede’s words, ‘in order to devote himself more freely to sacred studies’. In Wessex, Aldhelm, whom we have already met at Canterbury, had been taught by the Irish masters at Malmesbury, where he later (c.675) became abbot. Sir Frank Stenton has called him ‘the most learned and ingenious western scholar of the late seventh century’. At about the same time that Aldhelm was studying at Malmesbury, there came to Wessex Agilbert, who, although born in Gaul, had studied the scriptures in Ireland; he soon became bishop. And, again, in the 650s, Diuna, an Irish monk from Lindisfarne, became the first bishop of the Mercians. His successor was Irish born and trained. His successor, in turn, was
English but Irish-trained. There, among the Mercians, in three generations the process of assimilation can be seen taking place.

The Irish line, in all this, is clearly unmistakable. The historical reality reveals that the glory of late seventh-and eighth-century English learning derived from two sources: one continental and one Irish. The two combined like the interlacing in the manuscript illuminations, the two so closely interwoven that one attempts to separate them at one’s peril. The historian, faced with this complexity, should perhaps be content to describe this culture and learning as ‘insular’, thus giving credit to undoubted Irish and continental influences and to native English genius. The further danger is that the historian, trying to separate these strands, might lose sight of what truly happened in England in the seventh and eighth centuries: the civilizing of the barbarian English by reason of their conversion to the Christian religion. It was the Christian missionaries, whatever their origins, who brought literacy, book learning, scholarship—the framework for a civilized society—to England. As it was to be elsewhere, Christianity was in England the means of introducing barbarian peoples to the civilizing effects of learning.

[15.]

ART AND ICONOCLASM


The second of the Ten Commandments forbade the making of any graven image. Both Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria regarded this prohibition as absolute and binding on Christians. Images and cultic statues belonged to the demonic world of paganism. In fact, the only second-century Christians known to have had images of Christ were radical Gnostics, the followers of the licentious Carpocrates. If the emperor Alexander Severus actually had a private chapel with statues of Orpheus, Abraham, Apollonius and Christ, as he is uncertainly reported to have done, it must have given a bitter-sweet gratification to his Christian subjects. Yet before the end of the second century Christians were freely expressing their faith in artistic terms. Tertullian mentions cups on which there were representations of the Good Shepherd carrying his sheep. Clement of Alexandria gives instruction about the picture appropriate for a Christian’s signet ring. In antiquity signet rings were not a luxury, but indispensable for correspondence. Clement recommends that Christians should use seals with representations that, without being specifically Christian, are readily capable of a Christian interpretation, such as a dove, a fish, a ship, a lyre, or an anchor. They should avoid seals with symbols suggesting idolatry or drink or erotic passion. It is noteworthy that Clement’s suggestions for appropriate seals are all types that a pagan might use; that is, they are neutral from a religious or moral point of view, and either pagans or Christians could happily use them. Likewise the Good Shepherd carrying his sheep was a conventional pagan symbol of humanitarian concern, philanthropia. The Christians were taking a common type and investing it with a new meaning possibly with reference to Christ the good shepherd of his sheep (John x). Another conventional type which the Christians soon began to use was the ‘Orans’, the figure with hands uplifted in prayer.

It was the same story with church buildings. The first Christian churches were ordinary private houses, and remained so until the time of Constantine. When the time came for the church building to acquire a ‘public’ character, the architects used existing forms, such as the rectangular basilica with an apse. The conventional form was so filled with new content that an optical illusion was created that the basilica, or the Good Shepherd, or the Orans type was distinctively Christian. But this was not at first the case at all. Early Christian paintings first appear not in churches but as funerary decoration in the Roman catacombs. The style of painting is not dissimilar to that found on many ordinary pagan houses at Pompeii. Human beings are in nothing so conservative as in funeral customs, and in the decoration of tombs and sarcophagi many of the conventions of the pagan workshop were simply continued. It would be extremely surprising if anything else had happened. Catacomb art is full of old motifs and, since the technique and style are popular, no large aesthetic claims can be made for it. The content, however, is of much greater interest than the form. The motifs of pagan convention which the Christians used were symbols which were capable of Christian reinterpretation. The four seasons might suggest life from death. The peacock symbolized immortality, the dove peace hereafter; above all the fish, the Greek word for which (IXOYC)
formed an acrostic ‘Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour’, was a favourite Christian emblem, especially of the eucharist. About 182 the Phrygian bishop Abercius (or Avircius) of Hierapolis wrote his own epitaph containing his autobiography. ‘A disciple of the pure Shepherd’, he explains, he had visited the Roman church, ‘a golden-robed and golden-sandalled queen’, and had also travelled through Syria to Nisibis; everywhere he had found brethren – ‘with Paul before me I followed, and faith everywhere led the way and served food everywhere, the Fish from the spring, immense, pure, which the pure Virgin caught and gave to her friends to eat for ever, with good wine, giving the cup with the loaf’. It was part of the same group of angling or nautical symbols when the Christians used anchors in paintings or in the design of sarcophagi. The epistle to the Hebrews had spoken of hope as the anchor of the soul. Or the journey through life could naturally be compared to a storm-tossed voyage ending in the heavenly harbour.

But besides these themes and symbols which a Christian would understand but which a pagan would not read with the same meaning, there were certainly paintings with biblical scenes: Adam and Eve, Noah’s ark, the sacrifice of Isaac, Moses striking water from the rock, Jonah and the great fish, Daniel in the lion’s den, the three young men in the burning fiery furnace, and others. The favourite New Testament themes were the baptism of the Lord, the Paralytic carrying his bed or being let down through the roof of the house to Jesus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the raising of Lazarus, and Peter walking on the water. The earliest known example of a church with such pictures on the walls is the third-century house church at Dura on the Euphrates, where a private house built in the first century A.D. was adapted for Christian use in the year 232. This little house church was rather overshadowed at Dura by a large and opulent Jewish synagogue nearby, the walls of which were splendidly decorated with Old Testament scenes and figures. The Dura synagogue proves conclusively that the Jews could have elaborate decoration in their synagogues if they wished, and probably early Christian representations of biblical scenes owed much to Jewish models. It is probably significant that in the choice of biblical scenes favoured by the early Christian artists Old Testament subjects outnumber New Testament scenes in the period before Constantine. One particular example of Jewish precedent may be given. The Phrygian town of Apamea had a Jewish population which disregarded the claims of Ararat to be the site where Noah’s ark ran aground and affirmed that on a hill near their city they had the very remains of the ark itself. (The place was among the sites visited by that curious traveller and antiquarian, Julius Africanus – above, p. 103). Late in the second century and early in the third, the town mint of Apamea issued a series of coins portraying Noah and his ark. The type so very closely resembles the manner in which Noah is portrayed in Christian catacomb art that it is very difficult to deny a connexion. Probably, therefore, other Old Testament scenes in early Christian art were taken from Jewish models.

With the conversion of Constantine the Church no longer had to be reticent in expressing its faith. Churches became public buildings. In architecture, sculpture, mosaic decoration, and in paintings the symbols of Christianity and the themes of the gospel provided a rich material for artistic expression, and some of the greatest achievements in the civilization of late antiquity lie in the realm of art. But the process had already begun within the church even before Constantine appeared. The Spanish council of Elvira recorded its shocked disapproval of some churches with paintings on the walls, but the fact that such places existed was not suppressed, and the tide became a flood in the course of the fourth century.

Nevertheless, the older puritanism was not stifled or killed. About 327 the learned historian Eusebius of Caesarea received a letter from the emperor’s sister Constantia asking him for a picture of Christ. She evidently supposed that an authentic likeness was more likely to be obtainable in Palestine than elsewhere. Eusebius wrote her a very stern reply. He was well aware that one could find pictures of Christ and of the apostles. They were for sale in the bazaars of Palestine, and he had himself seen them. But Eusebius did not think the painters and shopkeepers selling these mementoes to pilgrims were Christians at all. Similarly at Caesarea Philippi he had seen a group of bronze statuary in which a woman bending on one knee stretched out her hand as a suppliant to a standing man whose hand reached towards her. From Eusebius’ description the group was evidently a type familiar on Hadrian’s coins, showing the emperor restoring rights to his provinces. By 300, however, Hadrian was forgotten. The citizens of Caesarea Philippi were now interpreting the bronze pair to represent Jesus healing the woman with the issue of
blood, and could even show visitors the house where she lived. (This interpretation of the Hadrianic statues, which adorned a fountain in a public square, was so widely accepted that under Julian they were damaged by pagan vandals.) The story told by Eusebius has an incidental interest in marking the first step towards the creation of the medieval legend of Veronica. His own attitude to the statues is one of sympathetic interest, but takes it for granted that only pagan artists would dream of making such representations.

A similarly iconoclastic view was taken by Epiphanius of Salamis (p. 184) who was horrified to find in Palestine a curtain in a church porch with a picture of Christ or some saint. He tore it down and lodged a vehement protest with the bishop of Jerusalem. Though Epiphanius did all he could to prevent the introduction of pictures in churches, he was fighting a losing battle. By 403, when he died, portrayals of Christ and the saints were widespread. It was a move of popular devotion roughly contemporaneous with the rise in the veneration of the Blessed Virgin who, by 400, was occupying a mounting place in private devotion that was soon to pass into the official liturgy. The first known church dedicated to her is that at Ephesus where the council of 431 was held (p. 598). In the next decade Pope Sixtus III (432—40) built the great church of St Mary Major in Rome with its superb mosaics on the walls and the triumphal arch. The mosaics on the side walls portray Old Testament scenes. Those on the triumphal arch show the Annunciation, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the Magi offering gifts and visiting Herod, Herod ordering the massacre of the Innocents, and an apocryphal story of Christ in Egypt. At one time the walls also showed mosaics with a line of martyrs offering their crowns to the Virgin and Child, as in the extant Arian mosaics at S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna; but these have entirely perished. The mosaics of St Mary Major mark a watershed in the development of Mariology. They remain largely within the older tradition in which the Virgin appears in the context of representations of Christ’s birth at Bethlehem and is subordinate to Christ. But at the same time the mosaics are the earliest evidence in art for the tendency to accord her an independent position. This independence was accelerated by the popular Monophysite Christology of the fifth century which transferred to St Mary the redemptive value that had been attributed to the humanity of Christ. In a Monophysite devotion Christ as man ceased to be very important; his resurrection was that of a God. Because of this loss of a sense of solidarity between Christ and the rest of the human race, the faithful increasingly looked towards Mary as the perfect representative of redeemed humanity. This theme was powerfully portrayed in Christian art from the sixth century onwards, and was much enhanced by the growing popular belief that the Virgin either had not died or had already been granted resurrection and admission to heaven.

A considerable body of Christian art of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries has survived, and illustrates the very high quality of artistic achievement that characterized the age. The splendid mosaics of the churches at Ravenna or Rome, the Rossano codex of the gospels, the Syriac gospel book written in 586 by the Mesopotamian monk Rabula (now in Florence), the doors of Santa Sabina in Rome, and many other examples, witness to an artistic renaissance of the first distinction, devoted to the expression of Christian themes and unrestrained by any inhibitions about portraying Christ and the saints. Yet these representations of Christ caused pain to those who remembered an older austerity and reserve. The icons were the object of an undercurrent of mistrust which emerged in the eighth century as the bitter iconoclastic controversy, when the emperor Leo the Isaurian in 726 initiated by edict a full-scale programme of destroying all such pictures. The icons had become an accepted and loved part of church decoration, and were deeply valued by devout souls. The controversy grew into a major conflict between church and State in the Byzantine empire lasting over a century, and (since the emperors were iconoclast and the papacy was not) contributed to a still further widening of the estrangement between Rome and Byzantium.

The Image Controversy
[Walker, 3.11, pp. 162-164]

The apparent collapse of the Eastern empire in the seventh century was followed by a very considerable renewal of its strength under the able Leo III, the Isaurian (717-740), to whose military and administrative talents its new lease of life was due. A forceful sovereign, he would rule the church in the spirit of
Justinian. He desired to make entrance as easy as possible for Jews, Moslems, and the representatives of the stricter Christian sects, such as the remaining Montanists. They charged the church with idolatry, by reason of the widespread veneration of icons. In 726, Leo forbade their further employment in worship. The result was religious revolt. The monks and common people resisted, partly from veneration of images, partly in the interest of the freedom of the church from imperial dictation. Leo enforced his decree by the army. In most of the empire he had his will. Italy was too remote, and there Popes and people resisted him. Under Pope Gregory III (731-741), a Roman synod of 731 excommunicated the iconoclasts. The Emperor answered by removing all of Sicily and such portions of Italy as he could from the Pope’s jurisdiction. Leo’s able and tyrannous son, Constantine V (740-775), pursued the same policy even more relentlessly. A synod assembled by him in Constantinople in 754 condemned icons and approved his authority over the church. In this struggle the papacy sought the help of the Franks and tore itself permanently from dependence on the Eastern Emperors. A change of imperial policy came, however, with the accession of Constantine VI (780-797), under the dominance of his mother, Irene, a partisan of icons. By imperial authority, and with the presence of papal delegates, the Seventh and, in the estimate of the Greek Church, the last, General Council now assembled in Nicea in 787. By its decree icons, the cross, and the Gospels “should be given due salutation and honorable reverence, not indeed that true worship, which pertains alone to the divine nature... For the honor which is paid to the image passes on to that which the image represents, and he who shows reverence to the image shows reverence to the subject represented in it.”

The council seems to have been unconscious that much the same thing could have been said by heathenism for its images. John of Damascus

Among the vigorous supporters of image-reverence was John of Damascus (700?-753?), the most honored of the later theologians of the Eastern portion of the ancient church. Born in the city from which he took his name, the son of a Christian high-placed in the civil service of the Mohammedan Caliph, he succeeded to his father’s position, only to abandon it and become a monk of the cloister of St. Sabas near Jerusalem. His chief work, The Fountain of Knowledge, is a complete, systematic presentation of the theology of the church of the East. With little of originality, and much use of extracts from earlier writers, he presented the whole in clear and logical form, so that he became the great theological instructor of the Greek Church, and, thanks to a Latin translation of the twelfth century, influenced the scholasticism of the West. His philosophical basis is an Aristotelianism largely influenced by Neo-Platonism. In the Christological discussion he followed Leontius (ante, p. 155), in an interpretation of the Chalcedonian symbol consonant with the views of Cyril. To him the death of Christ is a sacrifice offered to God, not a ransom to the devil. The Lord’s Supper is fully the body and blood of Christ, not by transubstantiation, but by a miraculous transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit. John of Damascus summed up the theological development of the Orient, and beyond the positions which he represented the East made practically no progress. Its contribution to the intellectual explanation of Christianity was completed.

Summary of the Iconoclastic Controversy

The strength of the iconoclasts lay less in their theological arguments, which were too technical to be in the long run persuasive, than in their instinct that images were associated with the idolatry Christianity had come to destroy, and that the representations of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints, owed too much to pagan precedents. In this instinct there was a measure of truth. The representation of Christ as the Almighty Lord on his judgement throne owed something to pictures of Zeus. Portraits of the Mother of God were not wholly independent of a pagan past of venerated mother-goddesses. In the popular mind the saints had come to fill a role that had been played by local heroes and deities.

But it was inevitable that iconoclasm should be understood as an attack on aids to devotion which frail mortals needed, and to which they had become accustomed by tolerably long use over more than a century before the outbreak of the controversy. John of Damascus saw iconoclasm as implying a pessimistic, Manichee view of matter. The charge was no doubt very unfair. The exquisite cross in the mosaic of the apse at St Irene in Istanbul, the decoration of which belongs to the iconoclastic period, is in itself
sufficient to refute the notion that the eighth-century iconoclasts were utterly indifferent or hostile to aesthetic values. They were not Philistines but conservatives wanting their religion the old way, as it had been in their grandfather’s time before the artists had been encouraged to let themselves go. But they were also unconsciously repeating in a new form and a new idiom something of the old attack of the spiritualizing Origenists upon the ‘Anthropomorphites’ who needed to picture the God to whom they prayed.

The decision to restore icons was taken by the empress Irene (780-90). In face of strong hostility in both Church and army her firm hand led the second Council of Nicaea (787) formally to condemn the iconoclasts. The failure of Irene and her successors to achieve prosperity for the empire brought a reaction in favour of iconoclasm again from 814 until 843, the iconophile cause being maintained meanwhile by the monks of Studios at Constantinople under their abbot Theodore. But on the first Sunday in Lent 843 the empress Theodora restored the icons for the last time with a procession that in the eyes of posterity marked ‘the triumph of Orthodoxy’, and made possible the gradual redecoration of the churches under the patriarch Photius from 858 onwards.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:


16. THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE

[adapter from Walker, 4.3-4.6]

[16.] 1. THE FRANKS and the PAPACY

It has already been pointed out (ante, p. 162) that the papacy, and Italy generally, opposed the iconoclastic efforts of the Emperor Leo III, going so far as to excommunicate the opponents of icons in a Roman synod held under Gregory III, in 731. The Emperor answered by removing southern Italy and Sicily from papal jurisdiction, and placing these regions under the see of Constantinople—a matter long a thorn in the side of the papacy. In Rome and northern Italy the imperial power exercised from Constantinople was too feeble to control papal action. The imperial representative was the exarch of Ravenna, under whom stood a duke of Rome for military affairs, though the Pope was in many respects the Emperor’s representative in the civil concerns of the city. The papacy was now in practical rebellion against the rulers who had their seat in Constantinople. It was, however, in a most dangerous position. The Lombards were pressing, and were threatening the capture of Rome. The disunion consequent on the iconoclastic dispute made it necessary, if the papacy was to maintain any considerable independence in Rome, to find other protection against the Lombards than that of the Emperor. This the Popes sought, and at last obtained, from the Franks.

Coronation of Pippin

In 739 Gregory III appealed to Charles Martel for aid against the Lombards, but in vain. With Pippin the Short it was otherwise. He was more ecclesiastically minded, and greater plans than even his father had entertained now moved him. Pippin and the papacy could be of mutual assistance each to the other. The new Lombard King, Aistulf (749-756), conquered Ravenna from the Emperor in 751 and was grievously pressing Rome itself. Pippin desired the kingly title as well as the kingly power in France. He
had determined upon a revolution which should relegate the last of the feeble Merovingians, Childeric III, to a monastery, and place Pippin himself on the throne. For this change he desired not only the approval of the Frankish nobility, but the moral sanction of the church. He appealed to Pope Zacharias (741-752). The Pope’s approval was promptly granted, and before the close of 751, Pippin was formally in the kingly office. To this he was anointed and crowned, but whether by Boniface, as has usually been supposed, is uncertain.

This transaction, which seems to have been simple at the time, was fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. From it might be drawn the conclusion that it was within the Pope’s power to give and withhold kingdoms. All unseen in it, were wrapped up the re-establishment of the empire in the West, the Holy Roman Empire, and that interplay of papacy and empire which forms so large a part of the history of the Middle Ages. From this point of view it was the most important event of mediæval history.

The States of the Church

If the Pope could thus help Pippin, the latter could be no less serviceable to the Pope. Aistulf and his Lombards continued to press Rome. Stephen II, therefore, went to Pippin himself, crowning and anointing Pippin and his sons afresh in the church of St. Denis near Paris, in 754, and confirming to them the indefinite title of “Patricians of the Romans”—all the more useful, perhaps, because implying a relation to Rome that was wholly undefined. It had been borne by the imperial exarch in Ravenna. Soon after this crowning, Pippin fulfilled his reciprocal obligation. At the head of a Frankish army, late in 754, or early in 755, he invaded Italy and compelled Aistulf to agree to surrender to the Pope Ravenna and the other recent Lombard conquests. A second campaign, in 756, was necessary before the Lombard King made good his promise. The Exarchate of which Ravenna was the capital and the Pentapolis were now the possessions of the Pope. The “States of the Church” were begun—that temporal sovereignty of the papacy which was to last till 1870. Yet, as far as can now be judged, in thus granting the Exarchate to Pope Stephen, Pippin regarded himself as overlord. Rome itself, Pippin did not give to the Pope. It was not his to give. Legally, the status of Rome would have been hard to define. Though the Popes had practically broken with the Emperor at Constantinople, Rome had not been conquered from him. Indeed the papacy recognized the sovereignty of the Eastern Emperor in the style of its public documents till 772. Pippin had the wholly nebulous rights that might be included in the title “Patrician of the Romans.” Actually, Rome was in the possession of the Pope.

Though the Pope was thus now a territorial ruler, the extent of his possessions was far from satisfying papal ambition, if one may judge by a curious forgery, the authorship of which is unknown, but which seems to date from this period—the so-called “Donation of Constantine.” In charter form, and with an expression of a creed, and a fabulous account of his conversion and baptism, Constantine ordered all ecclesiastics to be subject to Pope Sylvester and successive occupants of the Roman see, and transferred to them “the city of Rome and all the provinces, districts, and cities of Italy or of the Western regions.” This meant a sovereignty over the Western half of the empire—at least an overlordship. Discredited by a few of the wiser men of the Middle Ages, the “Donation” was generally believed, till its falsity was demonstrated by Nicholas of Cues in 1433 and Lorenzo Valla in 1440.

[16.2] CHARLEMAGNE

Pippin the Short died in 768. A strong ruler, his fame has been unduly eclipsed by that of his greater son, who, in general, simply carried further what the father had begun. Pippin had divided his kingdom between his two sons, Charles and Carloman. Ill will existed between the brothers, but the situation was relieved by the death of Carloman in 771. With that event the real reign of Charles, to whom the world has so ascribed the title “Great” as to weave it indissolubly with his name—Charlemagne—began.

Charlemagne, perhaps more than any other sovereign in history, was head over all things to his age. A warrior of great gifts, he more than doubled his father’s possessions. When he died his sway ruled all of modern France, Belgium, and Holland, nearly half of modern Germany and Austria-Hungary, more than half of Italy, and a bit of northeastern Spain. It was nearer imperial size than anything that had been seen.
since the downfall of the Western Roman Empire. Conquest was but part of his work. His armies, by extending the frontier, gave rest and time for consolidation to the central portion of his territories. He was the patron of learning, the kindly master of the church, the preserver of order, to whom nothing seemed too small for attention or too great for execution.

A quarrel with Desiderius, King of the Lombards, resulted in the conquest and extinction of that kingdom by Charlemagne in two campaigns in the years 774 to 777. Pippin’s grants to the papacy were renewed, but the situation was practically altered. The papacy was no longer separated as it had been from the main Frankish territories by the intervening Lombard kingdom. Charlemagne’s connection with Rome was a much more effective overlordship than that of his father, and he thenceforth treated the Pope as the chief prelate of his realm, rather than as an independent power, though he did not go so far as to dictate the choice of the Popes, as he did that of the bishops of his kingdom.

Highly important for the extension of Christianity was Charlemagne’s conquest of the Saxons, then occupying what is now northwestern Germany—a result achieved only after a series of campaigns lasting from 772 to 804. His forcible imposition of Christianity was made permanent by the more peaceful means of planting bishoprics and monasteries throughout the Saxon land. By this conversion the last considerable Germanic tribe, and one of the most gifted and energetic, was brought into the Christian family of Europe to its permanent advantage. Frisia, also, now became a wholly Christian land. Charlemagne’s contests with the rebellious duke, Tassilo, of already Christianized Bavaria, led not only to the full absorption of the Bavarian bishoprics in the Frankish ecclesiastical system, but to successful wars against the Avars and the extension of Christianity into much of what is now Austria.

Charlemagne Crowned Emperor

Such a ruler, devoted equally to the extension of political power and of Christianity, and controlling the greater part of Western Christendom, was, indeed, a figure of imperial proportions. It is not surprising, therefore, that Pope Leo III (795-816), who was greatly indebted to Charlemagne for protection from disaffected Roman nobles, placed on the head of the Frankish King the Roman imperial crown as the latter knelt in St. Peter’s Church on Christmas day, 800. To the thinking of the Roman populace who applauded, as to the West generally, it was the restoration of the empire to the West, that had for centuries been held by the ruler in Constantinople. It placed Charlemagne in the great succession from Augustus. It gave a theocratic stamp to that empire. Unexpected, and not wholly welcome at the time to Charlemagne, it was the visible embodiment of a great ideal. The Roman Empire, men thought, had never died, and now God’s consecration had been given to a Western Emperor by the hands of His representative. It was not, necessarily, a rejection of the imperial title of the ruler in Constantinople. It placed Charlemagne in the great succession from Augustus. It gave a theocratic stamp to that empire. Unexpected, and not wholly welcome at the time to Charlemagne, it was the visible embodiment of a great ideal. The Roman Empire, men thought, had never died, and now God’s consecration had been given to a Western Emperor by the hands of His representative. It was not, necessarily, a rejection of the imperial title of the ruler in Constantinople. The later empire had frequently seen two Emperors, East and West. Leo V (813-820), the Emperor in Constantinople, later, formally recognized the imperial title of his Western colleague. For the West and for the papacy the coronation was of the utmost consequence. It raised questions of imperial power and of papal authority that were to be controverted throughout the Middle Ages. It emphasized the feeling that church and state were but two sides of the same shield, the one leading man to temporal happiness, the other to eternal blessedness, and both closely related and owing mutual helpfulness. It made more evident than ever the deep-seated religious and political cleavage between East and West. To the great Emperor himself it seemed the fulfilment of the dream of Augustine’s *City of God* (ante, p. 184)—the union of Christendom in a kingdom of God, of which he was the earthly head. His power was never greater than when he died, in 814.

EUROPE IN THE TIME OF CHARLEMAGNE.
Learning Revived Under Charlemagne

At Charlemagne’s accession no schools were so flourishing in Western Europe as those to be found in connection with the monasteries of the British Islands. It was from England that this many-sided monarch procured his chief intellectual and literary assistant. Alcuin (735?-804) was probably a native, and certainly a student of York. From 781 to his death, with some interruptions, he was Charlemagne’s main aid in a real renaissance of classical and Biblical learning, that rendered the reign bright compared with the years before, and raised the intellectual life of the Frankish state. Charlemagne himself, though without becoming much of a scholar, set the example as an occasional pupil in this “school of the palace.” In 796 Charlemagne made Alcuin the head of the monastery of St. Martin in Tours, which now became under his leadership a centre of learning for the whole Frankish realm. Others helped in this intellectual revival, like the Lombard, Paul the Deacon (720?-795), the Frank, Einhard (770?-840), or the Visigoth, Theodulf (760?-821). The mere mention of these various national relationships shows the care which Charlemagne exhibited to secure from any portion of Western Europe those who could raise the intellectual standards of his empire.

With this growth of learning came theological discussion. The Spanish bishops, Elipandus of Toledo and Felix of Urgel, taught an adoptionist Christology—that Christ, though in His divine nature the Son of God, was in His human nature only a son by adoption. Under Charlemagne’s leadership these opinions were condemned in synods held in Regensburg (792) and Frankfort (794). In this work Charlemagne regarded himself as the theological guide no less than the protector of the church. In similar fashion, at the synod of Frankfort just mentioned, Charlemagne had the conclusions of the General Council of 787, in Nicea (ante, p. 163), condemned, rejected its approval of icon reverence, and caused the Libri Carolini, defending his position, to be issued. In 809, at a synod in Aachen, Charlemagne approved the Spanish addition filioque (ante, p. 180) to the so-called Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed. All these acts were in consultation with the bishops and theologians of his realm, but with no special deference to the Pope or
reference of the matters to papal judgment.

[16.3] ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONS

Roman political institutions were based on the cities, on which the surrounding country was dependent, and Christian organization followed the same rule. The country districts were dependent upon and were cared for by the city bishops and their appointees, save where, in the East, there were “country bishops.” The Germanic invasions altered this situation. By the sixth century the beginnings of the parish system were to be found in France (ante, p. 166). There it rapidly grew, and it was stimulated by the custom of the foundation of churches by large landowners. The founders and their heirs retained the right of nominating the incumbent. This situation left episcopal control uncertain. Charlemagne, therefore, provided that besides the right of ordination of all parish priests, the bishop should have visitatorial and disciplinary power throughout his diocese. The churchly status was further strengthened by the full legal establishment of tithes. Long favored by the clergy through Old Testament example, they were demanded by a Frankish synod in Macon, in 585. By Pippin they were treated as a legal charge, and full legal sanction was given them by Charlemagne. They were to be collected not only by bishops, but by and for the use of the incumbent of each parish. Moreover, constant gifts of lands to the church had raised ecclesiastical possessions, by the time of the early Carolingians, to a third of the soil of France. The great holdings were a constant temptation in the financial need of a Charles Martel, who secularized much, but under the friendly government of Charlemagne they were respected, if earlier confiscations were not restored.

Under Charlemagne, preaching was encouraged and books of sermons prepared. Confession was favored, though not-yet obligatory. Every Christian was expected to be able to repeat the Lord’s Prayer and the Apostles’ Creed.

Metropolitans and Archbishops

Charlemagne renewed and extended the metropolitan system, which had fallen into abeyance. At the beginning of his reign there was but one metropolitan in the Frankish kingdom. At its end there were twenty-two. These were now generally known as archbishops—a title which goes back to the time of Athanasius, though long loosely used. In Carolingian theory the archbishop was the judge and disciplinary officer of the bishops of his province, possessed of powers which the growth of papal jurisdiction was soon to curtail. It was also his duty to call frequent synods to consider the religious problems of the archdiocese, or as it was usually styled, the province.

For the better regulation of his immediate clerical assistants, Bishop Chrodegang of Metz introduced, about 760, a semi-monastic life in common, which was favored and spread by Charlemagne. From the designation of this life as the vita canonica, the name “canons” for the clergy attached to a cathedral or collegiate church arose. Their place of meeting was called the capitulum, or chapter—a title soon applied to the canons themselves. By this means the life and work of the bishop and his immediately associated clergy was largely regulated. Charlemagne himself designated the bishops of his realm.

In all these changes, save that of personal authority over episcopal appointments, Charlemagne was but carrying further the reforms begun by Boniface. Much that he completed his father, Pippin, had commenced. At Charlemagne’s death, the Frankish church was in a far better state of education, discipline, and efficiency than it had been under the later Merovingians and early Carolingians.

[16.4] COLLAPSING EMPIRE and RISING PAPACY

The Collapse of the Empire

Charlemagne’s great power was personal. Scarcely had he died when the rapid decline of his empire began. His son and successor, Louis the Pious (814-840), was of excellent personal character, but wholly unequal to the task left by Charlemagne, or even to the control of his own sons, who plotted against him and quarrelled with one another. After his death they divided the empire between them by the Treaty of Verdun in 843. To Lothair (843-855) came Frankish Italy and a strip of territory including the valley of the Rhone and the region lying immediately west of the Rhine, together with the imperial title. To Louis
(843-875) was given the region east of the Rhine, whence he acquired the nickname, “the German.” To Charles the Bald (843-877) came most of modern France and ultimately the imperial crown. This Treaty of Verdun is usually regarded as the point whence France and Germany go their separate ways.

These rulers proved utterly inadequate for unity or defense. France suffered grievously from attacks by the Scandinavian Normans, who pushed up its rivers and burned its towns, ultimately (911) establishing themselves permanently in Normandy. Italy was a prey to Saracen raids, in one of which (841) St. Peter’s itself, in Rome, was plundered. A little later, with the beginning of the tenth century, the raids of the Hungarians brought devastation to Germany and Italy. Under these circumstances, when national unity or defense was impossible, feudalism developed with great rapidity. Its roots run back to the declining days of the Roman Empire, but with the death of Charlemagne it was given great impetus. It was intensely divisive, substituting for any strong central government many local seats of authority, jealous one of another and engaged in constant struggle. Churches and monasteries became largely the prey of local nobles, or defended their rights with difficulty as parts of the feudal system. This social and political form of organization was to dominate Europe till the thirteenth century, and largely to make possible the growth of the medæval papacy.

The impulse given to learning by Charlemagne did not immediately die. At the court of Charles the Bald, John Scotus (?-877?), to whom the name Erigena was much later added, held somewhat the same position that Alcuin had occupied under Charlemagne. He translated the much admired writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius (ante, p. 171), and developed his own Neo-Platonic philosophy, which his age was too ignorant to judge heretical or orthodox. In Germany, Hrabanus Maurus (776?-856), abbot of Fulda and archbishop of Mainz, a pupil of Alcuin, attained a deserved reputation as a teacher, commentator on the Scriptures, furtherer of clerical education and author of what was well-nigh an encyclopaedia. In Hincmar (805?-882), archbishop of Rheims, France possessed not only a prelate of great assertiveness and influence, but a theological controversialist of decided gift.

**Doctrinal Controversies**

The renewed study of Augustine which this intellectual revival effected led to two doctrinal controversies. The first was regarding the nature of Christ’s presence in the Supper. About 831 Paschasius Radbertus, a monk of the monastery of Corbie, near Amiens, of remarkable learning in Greek as well as in Latin theology, set forth the first thoroughgoing treatise on the Lord’s Supper, *De corpora et sanguine Domini*. In it he taught with Augustine, that only those who partake in faith receive the virtue of the sacrament, and with the Greeks, that it is the food of immortality; and also, that by divine miracle the substance is made the very body and blood of Christ. That was transubstantiation, though the word was not to be coined before the twelfth century. To Radbertus, Hrabanus Maurus replied; but a more elaborate answer was that of a fellow monk of Corbie, Ratramnus, about 844. Yet his view agreed in much with that of Radbertus. The body and blood of Christ are mysteriously present; yet they are not identical with the body that suffered on the cross. The controversy was not decided at the time, but the future, in the Roman Church, was with Radbertus.

The second controversy was aroused by Gottschalk (808?-868?). A monk of Fulda, made so by parental dedication, his efforts for release from his bonds were frustrated by Hrabanus Maurus. He then turned to the study of Augustine, and his hard fate, perhaps, led him to emphasize a double divine predestination—to life or to death. He was attacked by Hrabanus Maurus and Hincmar, but found vigorous defenders. Condemned as a heretic at a synod in Mainz in 848, he spent the next twenty years in monastic imprisonment, persecuted by Hincmar, and refusing to retract. The controversy was a fresh flaring up of the old dispute between thoroughgoing Augustinianism and the semi-Pelagianism which was the actual theory of a large portion of the church.

As the collapse of Charlemagne’s empire grew more complete, however, these controversies and the intellectual life out of which they sprang faded. By 900 a renewed barbarism had largely extinguished the light which had shone brightly a century before. One great exception to this general condition existed. In England, Alfred the Great (871-901?), distinguished as the successful opponent of the Danish conquerors, in a spirit like that of Charlemagne gathered learned men about him, and encouraged the education of the
clergy.

*The Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals*

The collapsing empire of Charlemagne led to the rise of a churchly party in France, which despairing of help from the state, looked toward the papacy as the source of unity and hope. This party regarded with suspicion also any control of the church by the sovereigns or nobility, and it represented the jealousy of the ordinary bishops and lower clergy toward the great archbishops with their often arbitrary assertions of authority, of whom Hincmar was a conspicuous example. The aim of the movement was not the exaltation of the papacy for its own sake; rather its exaltation as a means of checking secular control and that of the archbishops, and of maintaining ecclesiastical unity. From this circle, between 847 and 852, and probably from Hincmar’s own region of Rheims, came one of the most remarkable of forgeries—the so-called Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals—purporting to be collected by a certain Isidore Mercator, by whom Isidore of Seville (*ante*, p. 193) and Marius Mercator were doubtless intended. It consisted of decisions of Popes and councils from Clement of Rome in the first century to Gregory II in the eighth, part genuine and part forged. The “Donation of Constantine” (*ante*, p. 204) is included. The early Popes therein claim for themselves supreme jurisdiction. All bishops may appeal directly to papal authority. Intervening archiepiscopal rights are limited, and neither papacy nor bishops are subject to secular control. With its origin the papacy had nothing to do; but it was to be used mightily to the furtherance of papal claims. The age was uncritical. It passed immediately as genuine, and was not exposed till the Reformation had awakened historical study.

*Papacy Advanced by Nicholas I*

With the decline of imperial power, the independence of the papacy rapidly rose. The Popes showed themselves the strongest men in Italy. Leo IV (847-855), aided by south Italian cities, defeated the Saracens and surrounded the quarter of St. Peter’s in Rome with a wall—the “Leonine City.” In Nicholas I (858-867) the Roman see had its ablest and most assertive occupant between Gregory the Great and Hildebrand. He sketched out a programme of papal claims, hardly surpassed later, but which the papacy was to be centuries in achieving. Nicholas attempted to realize the ideals of Augustine’s *City of God*. In his thought, the church is superior to all earthly powers, the ruler of the whole church is the Pope, and the bishops are his agents. These conceptions he was able to make effective in two notable cases, in which he had also the advantage of choosing the side on which right lay. The first was that of Thietberga, the injured wife of Lothair II of Lorraine. Divorced that that sovereign might marry his concubine, Waldrada, she appealed to Nicholas, who declared void the sanctioning decision of a synod held in Metz, in 863, and excommunicated the archbishops of Trier and Cologne who had supported Lothair. The Pope had defended helpless womanhood, he none the less humbled two of the most powerful German prelates and thwarted a German ruler. In the second case, Nicholas received the appeal of the deposed Bishop Rothad of Soissons, who had been removed by the overbearing Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, and forced his restoration. Here Nicholas appeared as the protector of the bishops against their metropolitans and the defender of their right to appeal to the Pope as the final judge. In this quarrel the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals were first employed in Rome.

In a third case, Nicholas, though having right on his side, was less successful. The Emperor in Constantinople, Michael III, “the Drunkard,” was ruled by his uncle, Bardas, a man of unsavory reputation. The patriarch, Ignatius, refused Bardas the sacrament, and was deposed. In his place, Bardas procured the appointment of one of the most learned men of the later Greek world, Photius (patriarch 858-867, 878-886), then a layman. Ignatius, thus injured, appealed to Nicholas, who sent legates to Constantinople. They joined in approval of Photius. The Pope repudiated their action, and, in 863, declared Photius deposed. Photius now accused the Western Church of heresy for admitting the *filioque* clause to the creed, fasting on Saturdays, using milk, butter, and cheese in Lent, demanding priestly celibacy, and confining confirmation to the bishops. At a synod under his leadership in Constantinople, in 867, the Pope was condemned. Nicholas failed in his attempt to exercise his authority over the Eastern Church. The ill feeling between East and West was but augmented, which was to lead, in 1054, to the complete separation of the churches.

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Missions in Europe

During this period following the death of Charlemagne important missionary efforts were begun. Ansgar (801?–865), a monk of Corbie, entered Denmark in 826, but was driven out the next year. In 829 and 830 he labored in Sweden. In 831 he was appointed archbishop of the newly constituted see of Hamburg, with prospective missionary jurisdiction over Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The destruction of Hamburg by the Danes, in 845, resulted in Ansgar’s removal to Bremen, which was united ecclesiastically with Hamburg. Ansgar’s efforts were backed by no Frankish military force, and his patient labors accomplished little. The full Christianization of Scandinavia was yet in the future.

Larger success attended missions in the East. The Bulgars, originally a Turanian people, from eastern Russia, had conquered a large territory in the Balkan region in the seventh century, and, in turn, had adopted the manners and speech of their Slavic subjects. Under their King, Boris (852-884), Christianity was introduced, Boris being baptized in 864. For some time undecided between Constantinople and Rome, Boris finally chose spiritual allegiance to the former, since the patriarch of Constantinople was willing to recognize a self-governing Bulgarian church. This adhesion was of immense consequence in determining the future growth of the Greek Church in Eastern Europe. The most celebrated missionaries among the Slavs were, however, the brothers Cyril (?–869) and Methodius (?–885). Natives of Thessalonica, they had attained high position in the Eastern empire. On the request of Rostislav, duke of Moravia, the Eastern Emperor, Michael III, sent the brothers thither in 864. There they labored with great success. A struggle of several years between the papacy and Constantinople for possession of this new-won territory resulted in the ultimate victory of Rome. The use of a Slavic liturgy was permitted by Pope John VIII (872-882), though soon withdrawn, but from this source its worship came ultimately to the Russian church. From Moravia, Christianity in its Roman form came to Bohemia about the close of the ninth century.

17. INVASION, DECAY, and REFORM
[adapted from Walker 4 and Logan 5, pp. 80-88.]

[17.1] VIKING INVASIONS
[adapted from Logan 5]

A profound influence on historical Christianity was had by the warrior-seamen who left the islands and peninsulas of Scandinavia for overseas adventures and who gave their name to an epoch, the Viking Age. Out of fjords and viks (inlets) in their homelands, they sailed westward to the British Isles and further west to Iceland and Greenland and the shores of North America. They sailed southward, coursing through the river systems of the modern Low Countries and France. And they sailed eastward across the Baltic Sea and by river and portage reached deep into Russia. They sailed as pagans, as worshippers of anthropomorphic deities like Thor, the thunder god, Odin, the god of the spear, and Frey, the god of sexual pleasure. Unexpectedly, in the years surrounding 800, Vikings first appeared, raiding the coast of the British Isles and the north-western continental mainland. The reasons lying behind this sudden eruption of these forces from the far north still divide historians, but an explanation that includes a population factor has much to commend it. In a culture with massive polygamy a crisis of population can occur within even one generation. Much evidence exists that at this time land in Scandinavia was being used increasingly for crops intended for human consumption and that marginal lands were being cultivated, both fairly clear indications of a growing human population. A population crunch may have occurred at the turn into the ninth century. Whatever the reasons, these peoples of the sea soon took to the seas in search of land. Except in Iceland and Greenland, it was already largely occupied land which they wanted and which they took only after violent encounters with native inhabitants, who were almost invariably Christians.
It is not without significance that among the very first known attacks was the fierce Viking raid on the monastery at Lindisfarne in Northumbria, defenceless and open to the seas. Under the year 793 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports:

Dire portents appeared over Northumbria and sorely frightened the people. They consisted of immense whirlwinds and flashes of lightning, and fiery dragons were seen in the air. A great famine immediately followed these signs, and later in the same year, on 8th June, the ravages of heathen men miserably destroyed God’s church on Lindisfarne with plunder and slaughter.

A later writer, using near contemporary sources, likened this attack on Lindisfarne to ‘stinging hornets’ and ‘ravenous wolves’ and recounted that the Vikings slew priests and nuns and destroyed everything in sight, including holy relics, and took with them some monks as slaves. Even the far-off Alcuin, the native Northumbrian by then in Francia, wrote seven letters in response to news of this raid. In the following year the Vikings were at Jarrow. Yet these were but incidents in larger movements. The Vikings were soon in the Orkney and Shetland islands and sailed down the west coast of Britain. In 794 they attacked the Hebrides and the famous island monastery at Iona. In the next year—these were summer raids—they attacked Iona again and the island of Skye and, across the Irish Sea, the island of Lambay, just north of Dublin, and even islands off the west coast of Ireland. Iona was attacked yet again in 802 and 806, and in the latter raid sixty-eight Irish monks were slain and the survivors abandoned Columba’s monastery for Kells on the Irish mainland. And so the raids on Ireland continued not always against monastic sites but with a chilling regularity. In 823 they attacked Skellig Michael, the monastic sanctuary perched on rocks eight miles off the Kerry coast, and, at the other end of the island, the monastery at Bangor, Co. Down, where the relics of St Comgall were desecrated. In 832 alone the monastery at Armagh was attacked three times in one month. At about this same time Vikings gained access to the Irish heartland, sailing up the River Shannon, attacking the monastery at Clonmacnois. In 839 they burned the monastery at Cork. Such raids—and many others could be added to this litany of devastating attacks—were not against monasteries as monasteries (i.e., as places of Christian worship) but against monasteries as keepers of gold and silver vessels and as places containing prominent men, who could be held for ransom. Undefended monasteries were obvious targets. Both in Ireland and in England the Vikings were frequently referred to simply as ‘heathens’.

Attacks by these ‘heathens’ were not confined to the British Isles. By 834 they were attacking in large numbers at Dorestad, the great entrepot situated where the Rhine and Lek then met, at the modern Wijk in the Netherlands, and they were there again in each of the next three years. The Vikings were soon penetrating the river systems of modern France and the Low Countries. Viking ships sailed up the Schelde in 836 and set fire to Antwerp. Their ships sailed into the Loire in 834, attacking the monastic island of Noirmoutier at the river mouth. They then used it as a base for raids upriver: in 843 they reached Nantes, where, on the feast of St John the Baptist (24 June), they seized the bishop and slew him at the altar of his cathedral. And it was at Nantes, if we can believe later chronicles, that a scene of utter barbarity ensued. The Vikings killed whom they willed in a butchery of epic proportions, stopping only when, dripping with blood and laden with bloodied jewels, they returned to Noirmoutier. Other Vikings sailed up the Seine, where, in 841, they attacked Rouen and then the monastery of Jumièges, before seizing the monastery of St Wandrille and holding it for ransom. They harassed Paris and, later, in the 880s, besieged the town for a full year. And they were in other rivers: the Meuse, Scheldt, Somme and Dordogne. One contemporary lamented

The fleets grow larger and the Vikings themselves grow and grow in number. On all sides Christian people suffer massacre and burning and plunder… The Vikings crush everything in their path: there is no defense. They capture Bordeaux, Périgueux, Limoges, Angoulême and Toulouse. They destroy Angers, Tours and Orléans… Ships beyond counting sail up the Seine, where evil prevails. Rouen is attacked, pillaged and burnt; Paris, Beauvais and Meaux are seized; the stronghold of Melun is razed; Chartres is occupied; Evreux and Bayeux are pillaged; and all the towns are attacked.

Monks, unprepared for such attacks, fled from such monasteries as St Maixent, Charroux, St Maur-sur-Loire and St Martin of Tours. For two generations fleeing monks could be seen on the roads leading to
Burgundy, the Auvergne and Flanders, taking with them their ‘saints’, the canons of Tours carrying away the body of St Martin at least four times from the attacking heathens.

When peace was made with the Vikings, it was everywhere accompanied by the conversion of the heathens to Christianity. After the defeat of the Danes by King Alfred at Edington in 878, Guthrum, the Viking leader, whose army was still intact and still a threat, accepted baptism, and the conversion of his followers no doubt followed. When, in the following year, these Vikings crossed the country to ‘share’ out East Anglia, they did so as Christians. And, in the north of England, when the Viking king Guthfrith died c.895, he was buried beneath York Minster with full Christian rites. Integration in England was fairly swift. For example, Oda, archbishop of Canterbury (941-48), was the son of a Danish settler who had converted to Christianity. Thus Oda’s nephew, St Oswald, the great monastic reformer, was the grandson of a pagan Viking. Three generations from hammer to cross: by any measure a rapid assimilation.

In Ireland, the tale that Brian Boru’s Irish Christian army defeated the Viking pagan army at the Battle of Clontarf on Good Friday, 1014, and that the defeated Vikings accepted Christian baptism has much of fancy about it. There was a Battle of Clontarf on that day, but it was not between the Irish and the Vikings, between the Christians and the heathens: the battle was between two Irish factions, each of which had Viking contingents in its army. The process of assimilation in Ireland had already begun in the late ninth century with the intermarriage of some Viking leaders and Irish princesses, accompanied by the Vikings’ conversion. Such marriages became more frequent from c.950 and continued apace both before and after Clontarf. In 1169, when other strangers came, they could not identify the Vikings, so complete was their assimilation: they were indistinguishable from the native Irish Catholics.

The situation in Francia warrants close examination. At least three attempts were made by the Vikings to establish permanent settlements. Only one was successful, in the lower Seine, and it is this part of Francia that still bears their name, Normandy. The exact date is not clear, but it was probably in 911 that the West Frankish king, Charles the Simple, made an agreement with the Viking leader, Rollo. The latter was allowed to settle that probably underpopulated region, and, in return, he became a Christian and promised to defend the lower Seine from future attacks, apparently from the Bretons and from other Vikings. Intermarriage between newly baptized Viking men and Christian Frankish women must have quickly followed. The Vikings took new, Christian names: Rollo became Robert; his daughter Geloc became Adèle; Thurstein of the Contentin became Richard; Stigand of Mézidon became Odo; and so forth. The son of Rollo, William Longsword, became so fervent a Christian that he had to be restrained from becoming a monk so that he could succeed his father. He married a Christian princess and his sister married a Christian prince. So swift was this integration that Williams son (Rollos grandson) had to be sent from Rouen to Bayeux to learn Viking ways. Thus in less than twenty-five years the Viking capital at Rouen was a French-speaking city. The younger sons of Norman lords who were to land in southern Italy and Sicily in the decades after 1016 were French, as was the Norman duke who was to sail with his army to England in 1066. The lords of Normandy were to establish monasteries, to lead the reforming movements of the eleventh century and, later, to be in the front ranks of Christian warriors who went to the Holy Land on crusade. The conversion and assimilation of the northmen in Francia proved to have a significant impact on the future of the medieval church.

An appraisal of the Vikings that stops here would tell only part of the story. Perhaps the most fascinating aspects of their achievements took place far, far west from the Seine estuary. Beyond Ireland and Scotland and the islands to the north, Viking sailors discovered the empty land they called Iceland, empty, that is, except for Irish monks who lived in the south-west during summer seasons. Settlement on this land, the size of Ireland, followed almost immediately, and in the sixty years from 870 to 930 a substantial migration took place, principally from Norway itself but also from Norse settlements in the nearer Celtic lands, including some Celts, many of them slaves. It was a migration numbering in the tens of thousands, perhaps near 30,000. There was no assimilation needed, and their Christianization came from their Norse homeland. Tales were told that a sudden volcanic eruption in the year 1000 led the settlers to accept Christianity. More prosaically, mass conversion did take place in the year 1000 but came through two Icelandic chieftains, who had been converted at the court of King Olaf, who, as a Christian, had become
king of Norway in 995. They were sent back to Iceland to establish Christianity as the official religion of the land. And, so, Gizur, a converted chieftain missionary, attended the general assembly held at their outdoor meeting place, the Law Rock. He and his supporters demanded official acceptance of the Christian religion. For twenty-four hours the Law Speaker pondered the issues and decreed that there should be but one religion in Iceland. All people should be baptized and should publicly be Christians, but, if they wished, they could privately be heathen. Heathenism soon faded away. Bishops were appointed at Skalholt (1056) and at Holar (1106). A codification of canon law was made in 1123, seventeen years before Gratian produced his Decretum at Bologna.

Beyond Iceland to the west the Vikings sailed, and not far behind them came the Christian religion. From western Iceland in 985 Eric the Red set sail westward for almost 450 miles, when he caught sight of an enormous land mass with imposing glaciers reaching to a height of 1,900 metres. He turned south, following the coast around Cape Farewell, east of which he found green, rich-looking land on deep fjords, reaching out from the mountains, a sight clearly reminiscent of Norway. Two settlements were made: one in the extreme south-west (the Eastern Settlement) and the other four hundred miles further north along the western coast (the Western Settlement). In a practice not unknown to modern land developers, Eric called this glaciered land ‘Greenland’. In truth, the land in the south-west where the settlements lay was verdant and warmer than now. Greenland’s conversion to Christianity came as a result of the conversion of Iceland and, also, about the year 1000. The Eric Saga relates, Eric was loath to leave the old religion, but his wife, Thjodhild, was converted at once and had a church built at a distance from the farmstead, which was called Thjodhild’s church. It was there that she and other converts would go to pray. Thjodhild refused to live with her husband after her conversion, and this greatly displeased him.

His displeasure might have abated as, in time, Eric too probably became a Christian. The Christian church flourished in Greenland. A diocese with a cathedral and a resident bishop was established at Gardar near Eiriksfjord in 1126, and bishops from Greenland travelled to Europe for ecumenical councils. A monastery of Augustinian canons and a nunnery of Benedictine nuns were both founded in the twelfth century. A total of twelve parish churches in the Eastern Settlement and four parish churches in the Western Settlement are signs of a vital, if small, Christian community. A thirteenth-century Norse book (King’s Mirror) commented,

The peoples in Greenland are few in number, since only part of the land is free enough from ice for human habitation. They are a Christian community with their own churches and priests. By comparison to other places it would form probably a third of a diocese; yet the Greenlanders have their own bishop owing to their distance from other Christian people.

For over four hundred years these two settlements were the westernmost part of the medieval, European, Christian world. And it ended sometime before 1500 without witnesses, its demise a historical puzzle. An explanation stressing severe climatic cooling and hostile relations with displaced native peoples might be near the mark. Writing in 1492, Pope Alexander VI spoke of a dimly remembered outpost of Christendom:

The diocese of Gardar lies at the ends of the earth in the land called Greenland… It is reckoned that no ship has sailed there for eighty years and that no bishop or priest has resided there during this period. As a result, many inhabitants have abandoned the faith of their Christian baptism: once a year they exhibit a sacred linen used by the last priest to say Mass there about a hundred years ago.

The Vikings also reached into areas to the east of their northern homelands, but that story runs beyond the limits of this book.

Ironically more is known about the conversion process of Vikings who journeyed abroad than about the conversion of their kinsmen who stayed home. A few mileposts can be seen, but much of the northern landscape lies in a historical mist. Denmark was visited in the eighth century by Willibrord (above, pp. 65-6) with no success and in the ninth century by Ansgar only with limited success. The conversion of the Danish people occurred through the conversion of their king, Harald Bluetooth (c.960-c.987). His mother
was Christian but his father a resolute pagan. It was probably upon becoming king that Harold accepted baptism. An early legend has it that a German missionary came to his court and a debate ensued. The Danes would accept Christ in their pantheon of God, it was argued, but just as one of many gods and as a god decidedly inferior to the chief gods. The missionary asserted one God and three divine persons. One might wonder how the theological subtleties of the doctrine of the Trinity sounded to Danish ears. In any case, the story runs that the missionary would be believed if he could pass the ordeal of fire. He placed his bare hand in a glove heated by fire. When he withdrew his hand, it was seen to have been unaffected by the ordeal, and Harald thereupon took baptism and decreed that Christianity was to be the sole religion of his kingdom. It is not only the cynical who can see here in the conversion of Harald a possible political motivation—a smoother relationship with the German emperor Otto. At Jelling, midway up the Danish peninsula, two remarkable stones stand as witnesses to the conversion of Denmark. One, the smaller, was erected by Gorm (Harald’s father) to his wife; it bears the inscription: ‘King Gorm did this in memory of his wife, Thyri, glory of Denmark.’ No mention of her being a Christian and certainly no Christian symbols. The other, a larger stone about eight feet tall, contains a large figure of Christ and this inscription: ‘King Harold had this stone made in memory of his father, Gorm, and his mother, Thyri, the same Harald who conquered all Denmark and Norway and who made the Danes Christian.’ A simple act of state and the Danes were officially Christian, but the pastoral process of instruction in the new ways lies beyond our view.

Norway’s conversion followed in the first third of the eleventh century, and, again, a king was involved or, rather, two kings, each called Olaf. The first, Olaf Tryggvason, fought in England in the last wave of Viking attacks, which began in the 990s. There in England, in 994, he became a Christian, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us, as part of a peace settlement after extensive raids in south-eastern England, and the English King Etheldred stood sponsor at Olaf’s confirmation. Olaf returned home, probably in 995, intent on seizing the crown of Norway and converting his people to the Christian faith. He succeeded in the former and ruled Norway until 1000, but he only partially succeeded in the latter, and this success, as we have seen, was felt as far west as Iceland and Greenland. It was another Olaf—Olaf Haraldsson (1025-30), known to history as St Olaf—who made Norway Christian. Saint though he may be, his methods were far from benign: in Professor Jones’s words, ‘he executed the recalcitrant, blinded or maimed them, drove them from their homes, cast down their images and marred their sacred places.’ Olaf organized a church which, at first, was to have bishops subject to the archbishop of Bremen, but, in time, Norway had its own archbishop at Trondheim, site of St Olaf’s tomb, and the archbishop’s jurisdiction extended as far west as the tiny diocese of Gardar in Greenland.

What happened in Sweden cannot be described in terms similar to those used to describe the conversion process in Denmark and Norway, namely, a king’s conversion followed by his people’s conversion. Sweden was different. It is true that a Swedish king called Olaf received baptism at the hands of an English missionary in 1008 and that his daughter married the converted King Olaf of Norway. Yet the conversion of the Swedish people did not follow. A long process of at least a century followed. Large areas of Sweden remained loyal to old gods and old ways. At Uppsala, site of a great pagan temple, worship and sacrifice (even human sacrifice) continued into the next century. Writing c.1075, Adam of Bremen recounts,

> It is customary to solemnize in Uppsala, at nine-year intervals, a general feast of all the provinces of Sweden. From attendance at this festival no one is exempted. Kings and people all and singly send their gifts to Uppsala and, what is more distressing than any kind of punishment, those who have already adopted Christianity redeem themselves through these ceremonies.

A diocese was established at Sigtuna, but in 1060 the bishop was driven out. Twenty years later the Christian King Inge refused to worship at Uppsala and had to flee for his life. In the opening years of the twelfth century the temple of Uppsala was destroyed and a Christian church, still surviving, rose on its site at what is now Old Uppsala.
Our story has taken us far into the future, beyond our general narrative. It is time now to return there to look at the state of the Christian religion more generally at the time of the break-up and, indeed, breakdown of the Carolingian synthesis and after. Back to Europe of the mid-ninth century.

Further reading


It may seem strange that the papacy which showed such power under Nicholas I should within twenty-five years of his death have fallen into its lowest degradation. The explanation is the growing anarchy of the times. Up to a certain point the collapse of the empire aided the development of papal authority; that passed, the papacy became the sport of the Italian nobles and ultimately of whatever faction was in control of Rome, since the Pope was chosen by the clergy and people of the city. The papacy could now appeal for aid to no strong outside political power as Zacharias had to Pippin against the Lombards.

At the close of the ninth century the papacy was involved in the quarrels for the possession of Italy. Stephen V (885–891) was overborne by Guido, duke of Spoleto, and compelled to grant him the empty imperial title. Formosus (891-896) was similarly dependent, and crowned Guido’s son, Lambert, Emperor in 892. From this situation Formosus sought relief in 893 by calling in the aid of Arnulf, whom the Germans had chosen King in 887. In 895 Arnulf captured Rome, and was crowned Emperor by Formosus the next year. A few months later Lambert was in turn master of Rome, and his partisan, Stephen VI (896-897), had the remains of the lately deceased Formosus disinterred, condemned in a synod, and treated with extreme indignity. A riot, however, thrust Stephen VI into prison, where he was strangled.

Papal “Pornocracy”

Popes now followed one another in rapid succession, as the various factions controlled Rome. Between the death of Stephen VI (897) and the accession of John XII (955) no less than seventeen occupied the papal throne. The controlling influences in the opening years of the tenth century were those of the Roman noble Theophylact, and his notorious daughters, Marozia and Theodora. The Popes were their creatures. From 932 to his death in 954 Rome was controlled by Marozia’s son Alberic, a man of strength, ability, and character, who did much for churchly reforms in Rome, but nevertheless secured the appointment of his partisans as Popes. On his death he was succeeded as temporal ruler of Rome by his son Octavian, who had few of the father’s rough virtues. Though without moral fitness for the office, Octavian secured his own election as Pope in 955, choosing as his name in this capacity John XII (955-964), being one of the earliest Popes to take a new name on election. He altered the whole Roman situation and introduced a new chapter in the history of the papacy, by calling for aid upon the able German sovereign, Otto I, against the threatening power of Berengar II, who had gained control of a large part of Italy.

The Regeneration of Germany

The line of Charlemagne came to an end in Germany, in 911, with the death of Louis the Child. With the disintegration of the Carolingian empire and the growth of feudalism, Germany threatened to fall into its tribal divisions, Bavaria, Swabia, Saxony, Franconia, and Lorraine. The most powerful men were the tribal dukes. The necessities of defense from the Northmen and Hungarians forced a degree of unity, which was aided by the jealousy felt by the bishops of the growing power of the secular nobility. In 911 the German nobles and great clergy, therefore, chose Conrad, duke of Franconia, as King (911-918). He proved inadequate, and in 919 Henry the Fowler, duke of Saxony, was elected his successor (919-936).
His ability was equal to the situation. Though having little power, save in Saxony, he secured peace from the other dukes, fortified his own territories, drove back the Danes, subdued the Slavs east of the Elbe, and finally, in 933, defeated the Hungarian invaders. The worst perils of Germany had been removed, and the foundations of a strong monarchy laid, when he was succeeded as King by his even abler son, Otto I (936-973).

Otto’s first work was the consolidation of his kingdom. He made the semi-independent dukes effectively his vassals. In this work he used above all the aid of the bishops and great abbots. They controlled large territories of Germany, and by filling these posts with his adherents, their forces, coupled with his own, were sufficient to enable Otto to control any hostile combination of lay nobles. He named the bishops and abbots, and under him they became, as they were to continue to the Napoleonic wars, lay rulers as well as spiritual prelates. The peculiar constitution of Germany thus arose, by which the imperial power was based on control of ecclesiastical appointments—a situation which was to lead to the investiture struggle with the papacy in the next century. As Otto extended his power he founded new bishoprics on the borders of his kingdom, partly political and partly missionary in aim, as Brandenburg and Havelberg among the Slavs, and Schleswig, Ripen, and Aarhus for the Danes. He also established the archbishopric of Magdeburg.

The Holy Roman Empire

Had Otto confined his work to Germany it would have been for the advantage of that land, and for the permanent upbuilding of a strong central monarchy. He was, however, attracted by Italy, and established relations there of the utmost historic importance, but which were destined to dissipate the strength of Germany for centuries. A first invasion in 951 made him master of northern Italy. Rebellion at home (953) and a great campaign against the Hungarians (955) interrupted his Italian enterprise; but in 961 he once more invaded Italy, invited by Pope John XII, then hard pressed by Berengar II (ante, p. 215). On February 2, 962, Otto was crowned in Rome by John XII as Emperor—an event which, though in theory continuing the succession of the Roman Emperors from Augustus and Charlemagne, was the inauguration of the Holy Roman Empire, which was to continue in name till 1806. Theoretically, the Emperor was the head of secular Christendom, so constituted with the approval of the church expressed by coronation by the papacy. Practically, he was a more or less powerful German ruler, with Italian possessions, on varying terms with the Popes.

John XII soon tired of Otto’s practical control, and plotted against him. Otto, of strong religious feeling, to whom such a Pope was an offense, doubtless was also moved by a desire to strengthen his hold on the German bishops by securing a more worthy and compliant head of the church. In 963 Otto compelled the Roman people to swear to choose no Pope without his consent, caused John XII to be deposed, and brought about the choice of Leo VIII (963-965). The new Pope stood solely by imperial support. On Otto’s departure John XII resumed his papacy, and on John’s death the Roman factions chose Benedict V. Once more Otto returned, forced Benedict into exile, restored Leo VIII, and after Leo’s speedy demise, caused the choice of John XIII (965-972). Otto had rescued the papacy, for the time being, from the Roman nobles, but at the cost of subserviency to himself.

The Emperors and the Papacy

Otto’s son and successor, Otto II (973-983), pursued substantially the same policy at home, and regarding the papacy, as his father, though with a weaker hand. His son, Otto III (983-1002), went further. The Roman nobles had once more controlled the papacy in his minority, but in 996 he entered Rome, put them down, and caused his cousin Bruno to be made Pope as Gregory V (996-999)—the first German to hold the papal office. After Gregory’s decease Otto III placed on the papal throne his tutor, Gerbert, archbishop of Rheims, as Silvester II (999-1003)—the first French Pope, and the most learned man of the age.

The death of Otto III ended the direct line of Otto I, and the throne was secured by Henry II (1002-1024), duke of Bavaria and great-grandson of Henry the Fowler. A man filled with sincere desire to improve the state of the church, he yet felt himself forced by the difficulties in securing and maintaining
his position to exercise strict control over ecclesiastical appointments. His hands were too fully tied by
German affairs to interfere effectually in Rome. There the counts of Tusculum gained control of the
papacy, and secured the appointment of Benedict VIII (1012-1024), with whom Henry stood on good
terms, and by whom he was crowned. Henry even persuaded the unspiritual Benedict VIII at a synod in
Pavia in 1022, at which both Pope and Emperor were present, to renew the prohibition of priestly marriage
and favor other measures which the age regarded as reforms.

With the death of Henry II the direct line was once more extinct, and the imperial throne was secured
by a Franconian count, Conrad II (1024-1039), one of the ablest of German rulers, under whom the empire
gained great strength. His thoughts were political, however, and political considerations determined his
ecclesiastical appointments. With Rome he did not interfere. There the Tusculan party secured the papacy
for Benedict VIII’s brother, John XIX (1024-1032), and on his death for his twelve-year-old nephew,
Benedict IX (1033-1048), both unworthy, and the latter one of the worst occupants of the papal throne. An
intolerable situation arose at Rome, which was ended by Conrad’s able and far more religious son, Henry
III, Emperor from 1039 to 1056.

[17.3] REFORM MOVEMENTS

Benedict of Aniane

Charlemagne himself valued monasticism more for its educational and cultural work than for its ascetic
ideals. Those ideals appealed, however, in Charlemagne’s reign to a soldier-nobleman of southern France,
Witiza, or as he was soon known, Benedict (750?-821) called of Aniane, from the monastery founded by
him in 779. Benedict’s aim was to secure everywhere the full ascetic observation of the “Rule” of
Benedict of Nursia (ante, p. 139). The educational or industrial side of monasticism appealed little to him.
He would raise monasticism to greater activity in worship, contemplation, and self-denial. Under Louis
the Pious Benedict became that Emperor’s chief monastic adviser, and by imperial order, in 816 and 817,
Benedict of Aniane’s interpretation of the elder Benedict’s Rule was made binding on all monasteries of
the empire. Undoubtedly a very considerable improvement in their condition resulted. Most of these
benefits were lost, however, in the collapse of the empire, in which monasticism shared in the common
fall.

Cluny

The misery of the times itself had the effect of turning men’s minds from the world, and of magnifying
the ascetic ideal. By the early years of the tenth century a real ascetic revival of religion was beginning
that was to grow in strength for more than two centuries. Its first conspicuous illustration was the
foundation in 910 by Duke William the Pious, of Aquitaine, of the monastery of Cluny, not far from
Macon in eastern France. 434 Cluny was to be free from all episcopal or worldly jurisdiction, self-
governing, but under the protection, of the Pope. Its lands were to be secure from all invasion, or
secularization, and its rule that of Benedict, interpreted with great ascetic strictness. Cluny was governed
by a series of abbots of remarkable character and ability. Under the first and second of these, Berno (910-
927) and Odo (927-942), it had many imitators, through their energetic work. Even the mother
Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino, in Italy, was reformed on Cluny lines, and, favored by Alberic,
a monastery, St. Mary on the Aventine hill, was founded which represented Cluny ideas in Rome. By the
death of Odo the Cluny movement was wide-spread in France and Italy.

The Cluniac Reform

It was no part of the original purpose of Cluny to bring other monasteries into dependence on it, or to
develop far-reaching churchly political plans. Its aim was a monastic reformation by example and
influence. Yet even at the death of the first abbot five or six monasteries were under the control of the
abbot of Cluny. Under the fifth abbot, Odilo (994-1048), however, Cluny became the head of a
“congregation,” since he brought all monasteries founded or reformed by Cluny into dependence on the
mother house, their heads being appointed by and responsible to the abbot of Cluny himself.
This was new in monasticism, and it made Cluny practically an order, under a single head, with all the strength and influence that such a constitution implies. It now came to have a force comparable with that of the Dominicans or Jesuits of later times. With this growth came an enlargement of the reformatory aims of the Cluny movement. An illustration is the “Truce of God.” Though not originated by Cluny, it was taken up and greatly furthered by Abbot Odilo from 1040 onward. Its aim was to limit the constant petty wars between nobles by prescribing a closed season in memory of Christ’s passion, from Wednesday evening till Monday morning, during which acts of violence should be visited with severe ecclesiastical punishments. Its purpose was excellent; its success but partial.

As the Cluny movement grew it won the support of the clergy, and became an effort, not for the reform of monasticism, as at first, but for a wide-reaching betterment of clerical life. By the first half of the eleventh century the Cluny party, as a whole, stood in opposition to “Simony” and “Nicolaitanism.” By the former was understood any giving or reception of a clerical office for money payment or other sordid consideration. By the latter, any breach of clerical celibacy, whether by marriage or concubinage. These reformers desired a worthy clergy, appointed for spiritual reasons, as the age understood worthiness. While many of the Cluny party, and even abbots of Cluny itself, had apparently no criticism of royal ecclesiastical appointments, if made from spiritual motives, by the middle of the eleventh century a large section was viewing any investiture by a layman as simony, and had as its reformatory ideal a papacy strong enough to take from the Kings and princes what it deemed their usurped powers of clerical designation. This was the section that was to support Hildebrand in his great contest.

**Hermits**

Elsewhere than in the Cluny movement ascetic reform was characteristic of the tenth and eleventh centuries. In Lorraine and Flanders a monastic revival of large proportions was instituted by Gerhard, abbot of Brogne (?-959). In Italy, Romuald of Ravenna (950?-1027) organized settlements of hermits, called “deserts,” in which the strictest asceticism was practised, and from which missionaries and preachers went forth. The most famous “desert,” which still exists and gave its name to the movement, is that of Camaldoli, near Arezzo. Even more famous was Peter Damian (1007?-1072), likewise of Ravenna, a fiery supporter of monastic reform, and opponent of simony and clerical marriage, who was, for a time, cardinal bishop of Ostia, and a leading ecclesiastical figure in Italy in the advancement of Hildebrandian ideas, preceding Hildebrand’s papacy.

**Henry III Rescues the Papacy**

It is evident that before the middle of the eleventh century a strong movement for churchly reform was making itself felt. Henry II had, in large measure, sympathized with it (ante, p. 218). Henry III (1039-1056) was even more under its influence. Abbot Hugh of Cluny (1049-1109) was a close friend of that Emperor, while the Empress, Agnes, from Aquitaine, had been brought up in heartiest sympathy with the Cluny party, of which her father had been a devoted adherent. Henry III was personally of a religious nature, and though he had no hesitation in controlling ecclesiastical appointments for political reasons as fully as his father, Conrad II, he would take no money for so doing, denounced simony, and appointed bishops of high character and reformatory zeal. The situation in Rome demanded Henry III’s interference, for it had now become an intolerable scandal. Benedict IX, placed on the throne by the Tusculan party, had proved so unworthy that its rivals, the nobles of the Crescenzio faction, were able to drive him out of Rome, in 1044, and install their representative as Silvester III in his stead. Benedict, however, was soon back in partial possession of the city, and now, tiring temporarily of his high office, and probably planning marriage, he sold it in 1045 for a price variously stated as one or two thousand pounds of silver. The purchaser was a Roman archpriest of good repute for piety, John Gratian, who took the name Gregory VI. Apparently the purchase was known to few. Gregory was welcomed at first by reformers like Peter Damian. The scandal soon became public property. Benedict IX refused to lay down the papacy, and there were now three Popes in Rome, each in possession of one of the principal churches, and each denouncing the other two. Henry III now interfered. At a synod held by him in Sutri in December, 1046, Silvester III was deposed, and Gregory VI compelled to resign and banished to Germany. A few days later, a synod in Rome, under imperial supervision,
deposed Benedict IX. Henry III immediately nominated and the overawed clergy and people of the city elected a German, Suidger, bishop of Bamberg, as Clement II (1046-1047). Henry III had reached the high-water mark of imperial control over the papacy. So grateful did its rescue from previous degradation appear that the reform party did not at first seriously criticise this imperial domination; but it could not long go on without raising the question of the independence of the church. The very thoroughness of Henry’s work soon roused opposition.

Henry III had repeated occasion to show his control of the papal office. Clement II soon died, and Henry caused another bishop of his empire to be placed on the papal throne as Damasus II. The new Pope survived but a few months. Henry now appointed to the vacant see his cousin Bruno, bishop of Toul, a thoroughgoing reformer, in full sympathy with Cluny, who now journeyed to Rome as a pilgrim, and after merely formal canonical election by the clergy and people of the city—for the Emperor’s act was determinative—took the title of Leo IX (1049-1054).

Leo IX set himself vigorously to the task of reform. His most effective measure was a great alteration wrought in the composition of the Pope’s immediate advisers—the cardinals. The name, cardinal, had originally been employed to indicate a clergyman permanently attached to an ecclesiastical position. By the time of Gregory I (590-604), its use in Rome was, however, becoming technical. From an uncertain epoch, but earlier than the conversion of Constantine, in each district of Rome a particular church was deemed, or designated, the most important, originally as the exclusive place for baptisms probably. These churches were known as “title” churches, and their presbyters or head presbyters were the “cardinal” or leading priests of Rome. In a similar way, the heads of the charity districts into which Rome was divided in the third century were known as the “cardinal” or leading deacons. At a later period, but certainly by the eighth century, the bishops in the immediate vicinity of Rome, the “suburbicarian” or suburban bishops, were called the “cardinal bishops.” This division of the college of cardinals into “cardinal bishops,” “cardinal priests,” and “cardinal deacons” persists to the present day. As the leading clergy of Rome and vicinity, they were, long before the name “cardinal” became exclusively or even primarily attached to them, the Pope’s chief aids and advisers.

On attaining the papacy Leo IX found the cardinalate filled with Romans, and so far as they were representative of the noble factions which had long controlled the papacy before Henry III’s intervention, with men unsympathetic with reform. Leo IX appointed to several of these high places men of reformatory zeal from other parts of Western Christendom. He thus largely changed the sympathies of the cardinalate, surrounded himself with trusted assistants, and in considerable measure rendered the cardinalate thenceforth representative of the Western Church as a whole and not simply of the local Roman community. It was a step of far-reaching consequence. Three of these appointments were of special significance. Humbert, a monk of Lorraine, was made cardinal bishop, and to his death in 1061 was to be a leading opponent of lay investiture and a force in papal politics. Hugh the White, a monk from the vicinity of Toul, who was to live till after 1098, became a cardinal priest, was long to be a supporter of reform, only to become for the last twenty years of his life the most embittered of opponents of Hildebrand and his successors. Finally, Hildebrand himself, who had accompanied Leo IX from Germany, was made a sub-deacon, charged with the financial administration, in some considerable measure, of the Roman see. Leo IX appointed other men of power and reformatory zeal to important, if less prominent, posts in Rome and its vicinity.

Hildebrand, who now came into association with the cardinalate, is the most remarkable personality in mediaeval papal history. A man of diminutive stature and unimpressive appearance, his power of intellect, firmness of will, and limitlessness of design made him the outstanding figure of his age. Born in humble circumstances in Tuscany, not far-from the year 1020, he was educated in the Cluny monastery of St. Mary on the Aventine in Rome, and early inspired—with the most radical of reformatory ideals. He accompanied Gregory VI to Germany on that “unlucky Pope’s banishment (ante, 224 p. 221), and thence
Leo IX. East and West Divided

Leo IX entered vigorously on the work of reform. He stood in cordial relations with its chief leaders, Hugo, abbot of Cluny, Peter Damian, and Frederick of Lorraine. He made extensive journeys to Germany and France, holding synods and enforcing papal authority. At his first Easter synod in Rome, in 1049, he condemned simony and priestly marriage in the severest terms. A synod held under his presidency in Rheims the same year affirmed the principle of canonical election, “no one shall be promoted to ecclesiastical rulership without the choice of the clergy and people.” By these journeys and assemblies the influence of the papacy was greatly raised.

In his relations with southern Italy and with Constantinople Leo IX was less fortunate. The advancing claims of the Normans, who since 1016 had been gradually conquering the lower part of the peninsula, were opposed by the Pope, who asserted possession for the papacy. Papal interference with the churches, especially of Sicily, which still paid allegiance to Constantinople, aroused the assertive patriarch of that city, Michael Cerularius (1043-1058), who now, in conjunction with Leo, the metropolitan of Bulgaria, closed the churches of the Latin rite in their regions and attacked the Latin Church in a letter written by the latter urging the old charges of Photius (ante, p. 213), and adding a condemnation of the use of unleavened bread in the Lord’s Supper—a custom which had become common in the West in the ninth century. Leo IX replied by sending Cardinal Humbert and Frederick of Lorraine, the papal chancellor, to Constantinople in 1054, by whom an excommunication of Michael Cerularius and all his followers was laid on the high altar of St. Sofia. This act has been usually regarded as the formal separation of the Greek and Latin Churches. In 1053 Leo’s forces were defeated and he himself captured by the Normans. He did not long survive this catastrophe, dying in 1054.

On the death of Leo IX, Henry III appointed another German, Bishop Gebhard of Eichstadt, as Pope. He took the title of Victor II (1055-1057). Though friendly to the reform party, Victor II was a devoted admirer of his imperial patron, and on the unexpected death of the great Emperor in 1156, did much to secure the quiet succession of Henry III’s son Henry IV, then a boy of six, under the regency of the Empress Mother, Agnes. Less than a year later Victor II died.

18. MEDIEVAL CHURCH and STATE in CONFLICT
[adapted from Walker, 4]

[18.1] THE PAPACY BREAKS with the EMPIRE

Henry III’s dominance was undoubtedly displeasing to the more radical reformers, who had endured it partly of necessity, since it was not apparent how the papacy could otherwise be freed from the control of the Roman nobles, and partly because of Henry’s sympathy with many features of the reform movement. Henry himself had been so firmly intrenched in his control of the German church, and of the papacy itself, that the logical consequences of the reform movement appear not to have been clear to him. Now he was gone. A weak regency had taken his place. The time seemed ripe to the reformers for an advance which should lessen imperial control, or, if possible, end it altogether.

On Victor II’s death the Romans, led by the reform clergy, chose Frederick of Lorraine Pope as Stephen IX (1057-1058) without consulting the German regent. A thoroughgoing reformer, the new Pope was the brother of Duke Godfrey of Lorraine, an enemy of the German imperial house, who by his marriage with the Countess Beatrice of Tuscany had become the strongest noble in northern Italy. Under Stephen, Cardinal Humbert now issued a programme for the reform party in his Three Books Against the Simoniacs, in which he declared all lay appointment invalid and, in especial, attacked lay investiture, that is the gift by the Emperor of a ring and a staff to the elected bishop in token of his induction into office.
The victory of these principles would undermine the foundations of the imperial power in Germany. Their strenuous assertion could but lead to a struggle of gigantic proportions. Nevertheless, Stephen did not dare push matters too far. He, therefore, sent Hildebrand and Bishop Anselm of Lucca, who secured the approval of the Empress Agnes for his papacy. Scarcely had this been obtained when Stephen died in Florence.

Hildebrand’s Leadership

Stephen’s death provoked a crisis. The Roman nobles reasserted their old authority over the papacy and chose their own partisan, Benedict X, only a week later. The reform cardinals had to flee. Their cause seemed for the moment lost. The situation was saved by the firmness and political skill of Hildebrand. He secured the approval of Godfrey of Tuscany and of a part of the people of Rome for the candidacy of Gerhard, bishop of Florence, a reformer and, like Godfrey, a native of Lorraine. A representative of this Roman minority obtained the consent of the regent, Agnes. Hildebrand now gathered the reform cardinals in Siena, and Gerhard was there chosen as Nicholas II (1058-1061). The military aid of Godfrey of Tuscany soon made the new Pope master of Rome. Under Nicholas II the real power was that of Hildebrand, and in lesser degree of the cardinals Humbert and Peter Damian.

The problem was to free the papacy from the control of the Roman nobles without coming under the overlordship of the Emperor. Some physical support for the papacy must be found. The aid of Tuscany could be counted as assured. Beatrice and her daughter, Matilda, were to be indefatigable in assistance. Yet Tuscany was not sufficient. Under the skilful guidance of Hildebrand, Nicholas II entered into cordial relations with the Normans, who had caused Leo IX so much trouble, recognized their conquests, and received them as vassals of the papacy. With like ability, intimate connections were now established, largely through the agency of Peter Damian and Bishop Anselm of Lucca, with the democratic party in Lombardy known as the Pataria, opposed to the anti-reformatory and imperialistic higher clergy of that region. Strengthened by these new alliances, Nicholas II at the Roman synod of 1059 expressly forbade lay investiture under any circumstances.

Reform in Papal Elections

The most significant event of the papacy of Nicholas II was the decree of this Roman synod of 1059 regulating choice to the papacy—the oldest written constitution now in force, since, in spite of considerable modification, it governs the selection of Popes to this day. In theory, the choice of the Pope had been, like that of other bishops, by the clergy and people of the city of his see. This was termed a canonical election. In practice, such election had meant control by whatever political power was dominant in Rome. The design of the new constitution was to remove that danger. In form, it put into law the circumstances of Nicholas’s own election. Its chief author seems to have been Cardinal Humbert. It provided that, on the death of a Pope, the cardinal bishops shall first consider as to his successor and then advise with the other cardinals. Only after their selection has been made should the suffrages of the other clergy and people be sought. In studiously vague language, the document guards “the honor and reverence due to our beloved son Henry”—that is the youthful Henry IV—but does not in the least define the Emperor’s share in the choice. The evident purpose was to put the election into the hands of the cardinals, primarily of the cardinal bishops. It was, furthermore, provided that the Pope might come from anywhere in the church, that the election could be held elsewhere than in Rome in case of necessity, and that the Pope chosen should possess the powers of his office immediately on election wherever he might be. This was, indeed, a revolution in the method of choice of the Pope, and would give to the office an independence of political control not heretofore possessed.

Scarcely had these new political and constitutional results been achieved than they were imperilled by the death of Nicholas II in 1061. That of the energetic Cardinal Humbert also occurred the same year. Hildebrand became more than ever the ruling force in the reform party. Within less than three months of Nicholas’s death, Hildebrand had secured the election of his friend Anselm, bishop of Lucca, as Alexander II (1061-1073). The German bishops were hostile, however, to the new method to papal election, the Lombard prelates disliked the papal support of the Pataria, and the Roman nobles resented their loss of control over the papacy. These hostile elements now united, and at a German assembly held
in Basel in 1061 procured from the Empress-regent the appointment as Pope of Cadalus, bishop of Parma, who took the name of Honorius II. In the struggle that followed, Honorius nearly won; but a revolution in Germany in 1062 placed the chief power in that realm and the guardianship of the young Henry IV in the hands of the ambitious Anno, archbishop of Cologne. Anno wished to stand well with the reform party, and threw his influence on the side of Alexander, who was declared the rightful Pope at a synod of German and Italian prelates held in Mantua in 1064. Thus Hildebrand’s bold policy triumphed over a divided Germany.

Alexander II, with Hildebrand’s guidance, advanced the papal authority markedly. Anno of Cologne and Siegfried of Mainz, two of the most powerful prelates of Germany, were compelled to do penance for simony. He prevented Henry IV from securing a divorce from Queen Bertha. He lent his approval to William the Conqueror’s piratical expedition which resulted in the Norman conquest of England in 1066, and further aided William’s plans by the establishment of Norman bishops in the principal English sees. He gave his sanction to the efforts of the Normans of southern Italy which were to result in the conquest of Sicily. Meanwhile Henry IV came of age in 1065. Far from being a weak King, he soon showed himself one of the most resourceful of German rulers. It was inevitable that the papal policy regarding ecclesiastical appointments should clash with that historic control by German sovereigns on which their power in the empire so largely rested. The actual dispute came over the archbishopric of Milan—a post of the first importance for the control of northern Italy. Henry had appointed Godfrey of Castiglione, whom Alexander had charged with simony. The Pataria of Milan chose a certain Atto, whom Alexander recognized as rightful archbishop. In spite of that act, Henry now secured Godfrey’s consecration, in 1073, to the disputed post. The struggle was fully on. The contest involved the power of the imperial government and the claims of the radical papal reform party. Alexander looked upon Henry as a well-intentioned young man, misled by bad advice, and he therefore excommunicated not Henry himself, but Henry’s immediate counsellors as guilty of simony. Within a few days thereafter Alexander II died, leaving the great dispute to his successor.

Hildebrand’s election came about in curious disregard of the new constitution established under Nicholas II. During the funeral of Alexander II, in St. John Lateran, the crowd acclaimed Hildebrand Pope, and carried him, almost in a riot, to the church of St. Peter in Chains, where he was enthroned. He took the name of Gregory VII (1073-1085). In his accession the extremest interpretation of the principles of Augustine’s City of God had reached the papal throne. The papacy he viewed as a divinely appointed universal sovereignty, which all must obey, and to which all earthly sovereigns are responsible, not only for their spiritual welfare, but for their temporal good government. Though Cardinal Deusdedit, rather than Hildebrand, was probably the author of the famous Dictatus, it well expresses Hildebrand’s principles: “That the Roman Church was founded by God alone.” “That the Roman pontiff alone can with right be called ‘universal.’” “That he alone can dispose or reinstate bishops.” That he alone may use [i.e. dispose of the; imperial insignia.” “That it may be permitted him to depose Emperors.” “That he himself may be judged of no one.” “That he may absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked men,” etc. It was nothing less than an ideal of world-rulership. In view of later experience it may be called impracticable and even unchristian; but neither Hildebrand nor his age had had that experience. It was a great ideal of a possible regenerated human society, effected by obedience to commanding spiritual power, and as such was deserving of respect in those who held it, and worthy of that trial which alone could reveal its value or worthlessness.

The opening years of Hildebrand’s pontificate were favorable for the papacy. A rebellion against Henry IV by his Saxon subjects, who had many grievances, and the discontent of the nobles of other regions kept Henry fully occupied. In 1074 he did penance in Nuremberg before the papal legates, and promised obedience. At the Easter synod in Rome in 1075, Hildebrand renewed the decree against lay investiture, denying to Henry any share in creating bishops. A few months later Henry’s fortunes changed. In June, 1075, his defeat of the Saxons made him apparently master of Germany, and his attitude toward the
papacy speedily altered. Henry once more made an appointment to the archbishopric of Milan. Hildebrand replied, in December, 1075, with a letter calling Henry to severe account. On January 24, 1076, Henry, with his nobles and bishops, held a council in Worms, at which the turncoat cardinal, Hugh the White, was forward with personal charges against Hildebrand. There a large portion of the German bishops joined in a fierce denunciation of Hildebrand and a rejection of his authority as Pope—an action for which the approval of the Lombard prelates was speedily secured.

Hildebrand’s reply was the most famous of mediaeval papal decrees. At the Roman synod of February 22, 1076, he excommunicated Henry, forbade him authority over Germany and Italy, and released all Henry’s subjects from their oaths of allegiance. It was the boldest assertion of papal authority that had ever been made. To it Henry replied by a fiery letter addressed to Hildebrand, “now no pope, but a false monk,” in which he called on Hildebrand to “come down> to be damned throughout all eternity.”

Had Henry IV had a united Germany behind him the result might easily have been Hildebrand’s overthrow. Germany was not united. The Saxons and Henry’s other political enemies used the opportunity to make him trouble. Even the bishops had regard for the authority of a Pope they had nominally rejected. Henry was unable to meet the rising opposition. An assembly of nobles in Tribur, in October, 1076, declared that unless released from excommunication within a year he would be deposed, and the Pope was invited to a new assembly to meet in Augsburg, in February, 1077, at which the whole German political and religious situation should be considered. Henry was in great danger of losing his throne. It became a matter of vital importance to free himself from excommunication. Hildebrand refused all appeals; he would settle the questions at Augsburg.

Henry IV now resolved on a step of the utmost dramatic and political significance. He would meet Hildebrand before the Pope could reach the assembly in Augsburg and wring from him the desired absolution. He crossed the Alps in the winter and sought Hildebrand in northern Italy, through which the Pope was passing on his way to Germany. In doubt whether Henry came in peace or war, Hildebrand sought refuge in the strong castle of Canossa, belonging to his ardent supporter, the Countess Matilda of Tuscany, the daughter of Beatrice (ante, p. 226). Thither Henry went, and there presented himself before the castle gate on three successive days, barefooted as a penitent. The Pope’s companions pleaded for him, and on January 28, 1077, Henry IV was released from excommunication. In many ways it was a political triumph for the King. He had thrown his German opponents into confusion. He had prevented a successful assembly in Augsburg under papal leadership. The Pope’s plans had been disappointed. Yet the event has always remained in men’s recollection as the deepest humiliation of the mediæval empire before the power of the church.

Apparent Defeat but Work Continued

In March, 1077, Henry’s German enemies, without Hildebrand’s instigation, chose Rudolf, duke of Swabia, as counter-King. Civil war ensued, while the Pope balanced one claimant against the other, hoping to gain for himself the ultimate decision. Forced at last to take sides, Hildebrand, at the Roman synod in March, 1080, a second time excommunicated and deposed Henry. The same political weapons can seldom be used twice effectively. Sentiment had crystallized in Germany, and this time the Pope’s action had little effect. Henry answered by a synod in Brixen in June, 1080, deposing Hildebrand, and choosing one of Hildebrand’s bitterest opponents, Archbishop Wibert of Ravenna, as Pope in his place. Wibert called himself Clement III (1080-1100). The death of Rudolf in battle, in October following, left Henry stronger in Germany than ever before. He determined to be rid of Hildebrand. In 1081 Henry invaded Italy, but it was three years before he gained possession of Rome. Pressed upon by the overwhelming German and Lombard forces, Hildebrand’s political supporters proved too weak to offer permanently effective resistance. The Roman people, and no less than thirteen of the cardinals, turned to the victorious German ruler and his Pope. In March, 1084, Wibert was enthroned, and crowned Henry Emperor. Hildebrand, apparently a beaten man, still held the castle of San Angelo, and absolutely refused any compromise. In May a Norman army came to Hildebrand’s relief, but these rough supporters so burned and plundered Rome, that he had to withdraw with them, and after nearly a year of this painful exile, he died in Salerno, on May 25, 1085.
Hildebrand’s relations to other countries have been passed by in the account of his great struggle with Germany. It may be sufficient to say that his aims were similar, though so engrossed was he in the conflict with Henry IV that he never pushed matters to such an extreme with the Kings of England and France. He attempted to bring the high clergy everywhere under his control. He caused extensive codification of church law to be made. He enforced clerical celibacy as not only the theoretical but the practical rule of the Roman Church. If his methods were worldly and unscrupulous, as they undoubtedly were, no misfortune ever caused him to abate his claims, and even in apparent defeat he won a moral victory. The ideals that he had established for the papacy were to live long after him.

[18.3] THE STRUGGLE ENDS in COMPROMISE

On the death of Hildebrand, the cardinals faithful to him chose as his successor Desiderius, the able and scholarly abbot of Monte Cassino, who took the name of Victor III (1086-1087). So discouraging was the outlook that he long refused the doubtful honor. When at last he accepted it, he quietly dropped Hildebrand’s extremer efforts at world-rulership, though renewing the prohibition of lay investiture with utmost vigor. He was, however, able to be in Rome but a few days. That city remained in the hands of Wibert, and before the end of 1087 Victor III was no more. The situation of the party of Hildebrand seemed well-nigh hopeless. After much hesitation, a few of the reform cardinals met in Terracina, and chose a French Cluny monk, who had been appointed a cardinal bishop by Hildebrand, Odo of Lagary, as Pope Urban II (1088-1099). A man of Hildebrandian convictions, without Hildebrand’s genius, Urban was far more conciliatory and politically skilful. He sought with great success to create a friendly party among the German clergy, aided thereto by the monks of the influential monastery of Hirschau. He stirred up disaffection for Henry IV, often by no worthy means. Yet it was not till the close of 1093 that Urban was able to take effective possession of Rome and drive out Wibert. His rise in power was thence rapid. At a great synod held in Piacenza in March, 1095, he sounded the note of a crusade. At Clermont in November of the same year he brought the Crusade into being (p. 239). On the flood of the crusading movement Urban rose at once to a position of European leadership. Henry IV and Wibert might oppose him, but the papacy had achieved a popular significance compared with which they had nothing to offer.

Though men were weary of the long strife, the next Pope, Paschal II (1099-1118), made matters worse rather than better. Henry IV’s last days were disastrous. A successful rebellion, headed by his son, Henry V (1106-1125), forced his abdication in 1105. His death followed the next year. Henry V’s position in Germany was stronger than his father’s ever had been, and he was more unscrupulous. His assertion of his rights of investiture was as insistent as that of his father. In 1110 Henry V marched on Rome in force. Paschal II was powerless and without the courage of a Hildebrand. The Pope and Henry now agreed (1111) that the King should resign his right of investiture, provided the bishops of Germany should relinquish to him all temporal lordships. That would have been a revolution that would have reduced the German church to poverty, and the protest raised on its promulgation in Rome, in February, 1111, showed it impossible of accomplishment. Henry V then took the Pope and the cardinals prisoners. Paschal weakened. In April, 1111, he resigned to Henry investiture with ring and staff, and crowned him Emperor. The Hildebrandian party stormed in protest. At the Roman synod of March, 1112, Paschal withdrew his agreement, which he could well hold was wrung from him by force. A synod in Vienne in September excommunicated Henry and forbade lay investiture, and this action the Pope approved.

Yet the basis of a compromise was already in sight. Two French church leaders, Ivo, bishop of Chartres, and Hugo of Fleury, in writings between 1099 and 1106, had argued that church and state each had their rights of investiture, the one with spiritual, the other with temporal authority. Anselm, the famous archbishop of Canterbury, a firm supporter of reform principles (1093-1109), had refused investiture from Henry I of England (1100-1135), and led to a contest which ended in the resignation by the King of investiture with ring and staff, while retaining to the crown investiture with temporal possession by the reception of an oath of fealty. These principles and precedents influenced the further course of the controversy. The compromise came in 1122, in the Concordat of Worms, arranged between Henry V and Pope Calixtus II (1119-1124). By mutual agreement, elections of bishops and abbots in Germany were to
be free and in canonical form, yet the presence of the Emperor at the choice was allowed, and in case of disputed election he should consult with the metropolitan and other bishops of the province. In other parts of the empire, Burgundy and Italy, no mention was made of the imperial presence. The Emperor renounced investiture with ring and staff, i. e., with the symbols of spiritual authority. In turn, the Pope granted him the right of investiture with the temporal possessions of the office by the touch of the royal sceptre, without demand of payment from the candidate. This imperial recognition was to take place in Germany before consecration, and in the other parts of the empire within six months thereafter. The effect was that in Germany at least a bishop or abbot must be acceptable both to the church and to the Emperor. In Italy the imperial power, which had rested on control of churchly appointments, was greatly broken. It was an outcome of the struggle which would but partially have satisfied Hildebrand. Yet the church had won much. If not superior to the state, it had vindicated its equality with the temporal power.

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19. EXPANSION AND CONFLICT

[adapted from Walker, 4]

[19.1] THE GREEK CHURCH after the ICONOCLASTIC CONTROVERSY

The Isaurian dynasty in Constantinople (717-802), witnessed the severe internal conflicts caused by the iconoclastic controversy, which was in a measure a struggle for the freedom of the church from imperial control (ante, p. 162). It beheld the loss of Rome and of the Exarchate, and the rise of the renewed Western empire under Charlemagne. The periods of the Phrygian (820-867) and Macedonian dynasties (867-1057) were marked by a notable revival of learning, so that, intellectually, the East was decidedly superior to the West. The patriarch, Photius, whose quarrel with Nicholas I has already been noted, was of eminent scholarship. His Myriobiblon is of permanent worth, as preserving much of ancient classical authors otherwise lost. Symeon “Metaphrastes” compiled his famous collection of the lives of the Eastern saints in the tenth century. In Symeon, “the New Theologian” (?-1040?), the Greek Church had its noblest mystic, who believed that the revelation of the divine light—the very vision of God—is possible of attainment and is of grace, bringing peace, joy, and justification. Theologically, the Greek world had nothing new to offer. It held with intensity to the traditions of the past.

The Paulicians

The chief religious controversy in the East of this epoch was that caused by the Paulicians. The origin and history of the movement is obscure. They called themselves Christians simply, their nickname being apparently due to their reverence for Paul the Apostle, rather than as sometimes claimed to any real connection with Paul of Samosata. The movement appears to have begun with a Constantine-Silvanus, of Mananalis, near Samosata, about 650-660. In it ancient heretical beliefs, akin to and perhaps derived from the Marcionites and Gnostics, reappeared. Though the Paulicians repudiated Manichæism, they were dualists, holding that this world is the creation of an evil power, while souls are from the kingdom of the good God. They accepted the New Testament, with the possible exception of the writings ascribed to Peter, as the message of the righteous God. They viewed Christ as an angel sent by the good God, and hence Son of God by adoption. His work was primarily that of instruction. They, rejected monasticism, the external sacraments, the cross, images, and relics. Their ministry was that of wandering preachers and “copyists.” The Catholic hierarchy they repudiated. They opposed the externalism of current orthodox religious life.

The Paulicians seem to have spread rapidly in the Eastern empire, and to have taken strong root in Armenia. Persecuted by the orthodox, their military powers procured them considerable respect. Constantine V transplanted colonies of them to the Balkan peninsula in 752, as a defense against the Bulgarians—a process which was repeated on a larger scale by the Emperor, John Tzimiskes, in 969.
There they seem to have given origin to the very similar Bogomiles, who in turn were to be influential in the development of the Cathari of southern France (p. 249). Driven to seek refuge among the Saracens, some sections of the Paulicians harassed the borders of the empire in the ninth century, and even penetrated deeply into it, till their military success, though not their religious activity, was permanently checked by the Emperor, Basil I, in 871.

The latter half of the ninth and the tenth centuries was a period of revived military power for the Eastern empire, especially under John Tzimiskes (969-976) and Basil II (976-1025). By the latter, Bulgaria and Armenia were conquered. Internal dissensions and a fear of usurping militarism weakened the empire in the eleventh century, so that the rise of the Seljuk Turks found it unprepared. In 1071 the Turks conquered a large part of Asia Minor, and in 1080 established themselves in Nicæa, less than a hundred miles from Constantinople. This great loss to Christianity was to be one of the causes leading to the Crusades.

[19.2] SECTION XIV. THE SPREAD OF THE CHURCH

Scandinavia

The tenth and eleventh centuries were an epoch of large extension of Christianity. Ansgar’s work in the Scandinavian lands (ante, p. 213) had left few results. Scandinavian Christianization was a slow and gradual process. Unni, archbishop of Hamburg (918-936), imitated Ansgar, but without great success. The work was carried forward by Archbishop Adaldag (937-988). Under his influence, King Harold Bluetooth of Denmark accepted Christianity, and Danish bishoprics were established. Under Harold’s son, Sweyn, heathenism was again in power; but he was brought to favor the church in 995, and the work was completed in Denmark by King Canute the Great (1015-1035), who also ruled England and, for a time, Norway.

The story of Norway is similar. Some Christian beginnings were made under Hakon I (935-961), and missionaries were sent by Harold Bluetooth of Denmark. Christianity in Norway was not permanently established till the time of Olaf I (995-1000), who brought in English preachers. The work was now extended to the Orkneys, Shetland, Hebrides, Faroe, Iceland, and Greenland, then in Scandinavian possession. Olaf II (1015-1028) enforced Christianity in Norway with such extreme measures that he was deposed and Canute gained control; yet he lives in tradition as St. Olaf. Magnus I (1035-1047) completed the work.

In Sweden, after many beginnings from the time of Ansgar, Christianity was effectively established by King Olaf Skötkonung (994-1024), who was baptized in 1008. Yet the work was slow, and heathenism was not fully overthrown till about 1100. Finland and Lapland were not reached till two centuries later.

Hungary, Poland, and Russia

After various efforts in the tenth century, Christianity was effectively established in Hungary by King Stephen I (997-1038), the organizer of the Hungarian monarchy, who lives in history as St. Stephen. The Polish duke, Mieczyslaw, accepted Christianity in 967, and in 1000 King Boleslaus I (992-1025) organized the Polish church with an archbishopric in Gnesen. Pomerania was not Christianized till 1124-1128.

The movements just considered were the work of the Latin Church. The great extension of the Greek Church lies in this period and was accomplished by the conversion of Russia. Its beginnings are obscure. Efforts for the spread of Christianity in Russia seem to have been made as early as the time of the patriarch of Constantinople Photius (866). The Russian Queen, Olga, received baptism on a visit to Constantinople in 957. The work was at last definitely established by Grand- duke Vladimir I (980-1015), who received baptism in 988, and compelled his subjects to follow his example. A metropolitan, nominated by the patriarch of Constantinople, was placed at the head of the Russian church, with his see speedily in Kiev, from which it was transferred in 1299 to the city of Vladimir, and in 1325 to Moscow.
20. NEW MOVEMENTS AND SECTS

[20.1] THE CRUSADES

Causes of the Crusades

The Crusades are in many ways the most remarkable of the phenomena of the Middle Ages. Their causes were many. The historian who emphasizes economic influences may well claim the unusually trying conditions of the eleventh century as a main source. Between 970 and 1040 forty-eight famine years were counted. From 1085 to 1095 conditions were even worse. Misery and unrest prevailed widely. The more settled conditions of the age made impossible such migrations of nations as had been exhibited in the Germanic invasions at the downfall of the Western empire. The same desire to change environment was, however, felt.

Stimulated by these economic conditions, doubtless, the whole eleventh century was a period of deepening religious feeling. Its manifestations took monastic and ascetic forms. It was characterized by a strong sense of “other-worldliness,” of the misery of earth and the blessedness of heaven. This increasing religious zeal had been the force which had reformed the papacy, and had supported antagonism to simony and Nicolaitanism, and nerved the long struggle with the empire. Those regions where the reform movement had shone brightest, or which had come into closest relations with the reforming papacy, France, Lorraine, and southern Italy, were the recruiting-grounds of the chief crusading armies. The piety of the time placed great value on relics and pilgrimages, and what more precious relic could there be, or what nobler pilgrimage shrine, than the land hallowed by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ? That land had been an object of pilgrimage since the days of Constantine. Though Jerusalem had been in Moslem possession since 638, pilgrimages had been, save for brief intervals, practically uninterrupted. They had never been more numerous than in the eleventh century, till the conquest of much of Asia Minor, from 1071 onward, and the capture of Jerusalem, by the Seljuk Turks, made pilgrimages almost impossible and desecrated the holy places.

It was to an age profoundly impressed with the spiritual advantage of pilgrimages that the news of these things came. The time, moreover, was witnessing successful contests with Mohammedanism. Between 1060 and 1090 the Normans of southern Italy had wrested Sicily from the Moslems. Under Ferdinand I of Castile (1028-1065) the effective Christian reconquest of Spain from the Mohammedans had begun. The later eleventh century is the age of the Cid (1040?-1099). The feeling was wide-spread that Christianity could dispossess Mohammedanism. Love of adventure, hopes for plunder, desire for territorial advancement and religious hatred, undoubtedly moved the Crusaders with very earthly impulses. We should wrong them, however, if we did not recognize with equal clearness that they thought they were doing something of the highest importance for their souls and for Christ.

The first impulse to the Crusades came from an appeal of the Eastern Emperor, Michael VII (1067-1078), to Hildebrand for aid against the Seljuks. That great Pope, to whom this seemed to promise the reunion of Greek and Latin Christendom, took the matter up in 1074, and was able to report to Henry IV of Germany that fifty thousand men were ready to go under the proper leadership. The speedy outbreak of the investiture struggle frustrated the plan. It was effectively to be revived by Urban II, the heir in so many directions of Hildebrand.

The First Crusade

Alexius I (1081-1118), a stronger ruler than his immediate predecessors in Constantinople, felt unable to cope with the perils which threatened the empire. He, therefore, appealed to Urban II for assistance. Urban received the imperial messengers at the synod in Piacenza, in northern Italy, in March, 1095, and promised his help. At the synod held in Clermont, in eastern France, in the following November, Urban now proclaimed the Crusade in an appeal of almost unexampled consequence. The enterprise had magnified in his conception from that of aid to the hard-pressed Alexius to a general rescue of the holy places from Moslem hands. He called on all Christendom to take part in the work, promising forgiveness
of sins to all and eternal life to those who should fall in the enterprise. The message found immediate and enthusiastic response. Among the popular preachers who took it up none was more famous than Peter the Hermit, a monk from Amiens or its vicinity. Early legend attributed to him the origin of the Crusade itself, of which he was unquestionably one of the most effective proclaimers. He does not deserve the distinction thus attributed to him, nor was his conduct on the Crusade, once it had started, such as to do credit to his leadership or even to his courage.

Such was the enthusiasm engendered, especially in France, that large groups of peasants, with some knights among them, set forth in the spring of 1096, under the lead of Walter the Penniless; a priest, Gottschalk, and Peter the Hermit himself. By some of these wild companies many Jews were massacred in the Rhine cities. Their own disorderly pillage led to savage reprisals in Hungary and the Balkans. That under Peter reached Constantinople, but was almost entirely destroyed by the Turks in an attempt to reach Nicaea. Peter himself did not share this catastrophe, joined the main crusading force, and survived the perils of the expedition.

The real work of the First Crusade was accomplished by the feudal nobility of Europe. Three great armies were raised. That from Lorraine and Belgium included Godfrey of Bouillon, the moral hero of the Crusade, since he commanded the respect due to his single-minded and unselfish devotion to its aims, though not its ablest general. With Godfrey were his brothers, Baldwin and Eustace. Other armies from northern France were led by Hugh of Vermandois and Robert of Normandy. From southern France came a large force under Count Raimond of Toulouse, and from Norman Italy a well-equipped army led by Bohemund of Taranto and his nephew Tancred. The earliest of these forces started in August, 1096. No single commander led the hosts. Urban II had appointed Bishop Ademar of Puy his legate; and Ademar designated Constantinople as the gathering place. Thither each army made its way as best it could, arriving there in the winter and spring of 1096-1097, and causing Alexius no little difficulty by their disorder and demands.
In May, 1097, the crusading army began the siege of Nicæa. Its surrender followed in June. On July 1 a great victory over the Turks near Dorylæum opened the route across Asia Minor, so that Iconium was reached, after severe losses through hunger and thirst, by the middle of August. By October the crusading host was before the walls of Antioch. That city it captured only after a difficult siege, on June 3, 1098. Three days later the Crusaders were besieged in the city by the Turkish ruler Kerbogha of Mosul. The crisis of the Crusade was this time of peril and despair; but on June 28 Kerbogha was completely defeated. Yet it was not till June, 1099, that Jerusalem was reached, and not till July 15 that it was captured and its inhabitants put to the sword. The complete defeat of an Egyptian relieving army near Ascalon on August 12, 1099, crowned the success of the Crusade.

On the completion of the work, Godfrey of Bouillon was chosen Protector of the Holy Sepulchre. He died in July, 1100, and was succeeded by his abler brother, who had established a Latin county in Edessa, and now took the title of King Baldwin I (1100-1118). The Crusaders were from the feudal West, and the country was divided and organized in full feudal fashion. It included, besides the Holy Land, the principality of Antioch, and the counties of Tripoli and Edessa, which were practically independent of the King of Jerusalem. In the towns important Italian business settlements sprang up; but most of the knights were French. Under a patriarch of the Latin rite in Jerusalem, the country was divided into four archbishoprics and ten bishoprics, and numerous monasteries were established.

The Military Orders

The greatest support of the kingdom soon came to be the military orders. Of these, that of the Templars was founded by Hugo de Payens in 1119, and granted quarters near the site of the temple—hence their name—by King Baldwin II (1118-1131). Through the hearty support of Bernard of Clairvaux the order
received papal approval in 1128, and soon won wide popularity in the West. Its members took the usual monastic vows and pledged themselves, in addition, to fight for the defense of the Holy Land and to protect pilgrims. They were not clergy, but laymen. In some respects the order was like a modern missionary society. Those who sympathized with the Crusade, but were debarred by age or sex from a personal share in the work, gave largely that they might be represented by others through the order. Since property was mostly in land, the Templars soon became great landholders in the West. Their independence and wealth made them objects of royal jealousy, especially after their original purpose had been frustrated by the end of the Crusades, and led to their brutal suppression in France in 1307 by King Philip IV (1285-1314). While the Crusades lasted they were a main bulwark of the kingdom of Jerusalem.

Much the same thing may be said of the great rivals of the Templars, the Hospitallers or Knights of St. John. Charlemagne had founded a hospital in Jerusalem, which was destroyed in 1010. Refounded by citizens of Amalfi, in Italy, it was in existence before the First Crusade, and was named for the church of St. John the Baptist, near which it stood. This foundation was made into a military order by its grand master, Raymond du Puy (1120-1160?), though without neglecting its duties to the sick. After the crusading epoch it maintained a struggle with the Turks from its seat in Rhodes (1310-1523), and then from Malta (1530-1798). A third and later order was that of the Teutonic Knights, founded by Germans in 1190. Its chief work, however, was not to be in Palestine but, from 1229 onward, in Prussia, or as it is now known, East Prussia, where it was a pioneer in civilization and Christianization.

Later Crusades

In spite of feudal disorganization the kingdom of Jerusalem was fairly successful till the capture of Edessa by the Mohammedans in 1144 robbed it of its northeastern bulwark. Bernard of Clairvaux, now at the height of his fame, proclaimed a new Crusade and enlisted Louis VII of France (1137-1180) and the Emperor Conrad III (1138-1152) from Germany in 1146. In 1147 the Second Crusade set forth; but it showed little of the fiery enthusiasm of its predecessor, its forces largely perished in Asia Minor, and such as reached Palestine were badly defeated in an attempt to take Damascus, in 1148. It was a disastrous failure, and its collapse left a bitter feeling in the West toward the Eastern empire, to whose princes that failure, rightly or wrongly, was charged.

One reason of the success of the Latin kingdom had been the quarrels of the Mohammedans. In 1171 the Kurdish general, Saladin, made himself master of Egypt; by 1174 he had secured Damascus, and by 1183 Saladin’s territories surrounded the Latin kingdom on the north, east, and south. A united Mohammedanism had now to be met. Results soon followed. At Hattin the Latin army was defeated in July, 1187. The loss of Jerusalem and of most of the Holy Land speedily followed. The news of this catastrophe roused Europe to the Third Crusade (1189-1192). None of the Crusades was more elaborately equipped. Three great armies were led by the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1152-1190), the first soldier of his age, by King Philip Augustus of France (1179-1223), and by King Richard “Coeur de Lion” of England (1189-1199). Frederick was accidentally drowned in Cilicia. His army, deprived of his vigorous leadership, was utterly ineffective. The quarrels between the Kings of France and England, and Philip’s speedy return to France to push his own political schemes, rendered the whole expedition almost abortive. Acre was recovered, but Jerusalem remained in Moslem possession.

The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) was a small affair as far as numbers engaged, but of important political and religious consequences. Its forces were from the districts of northern France known as Champagne and Blois, and from Flanders. Men had become convinced that the true route to the recovery of Jerusalem was the preliminary conquest of Egypt. The Crusaders therefore bargained with the Venetians for transportation thither. Unable to raise the full cost, they accepted the proposition of the Venetians that, in lieu of the balance due, they stop on their way and conquer Zara from Hungary for Venice. This they did. A much greater proposal was now made to them. They should stop at Constantinople, and assist in dethroning the imperial usurper, Alexius III (1195-1203). Alexius, son of the deposed Isaac II, promised the Crusaders large payment and help on their expedition provided they would overthrow the usurper, and crafty Venice saw bright prospects of increased trade. Western hatred of the Greeks contributed. Though Pope Innocent III forbade this division of purpose, the Crusaders were
persuaded. Alexius III was easily driven from his throne; but the other Alexius was unable to keep his promises to the Crusaders, who now with the Venetians, in 1204, captured Constantinople, and plundered its treasures. No booty was more eagerly sought than the relics in the churches, which now went to enrich the places of worship of the West. Baldwin of Flanders was made Emperor, and a large portion of the Eastern empire was divided, feudal fashion, among Western knights. Venice obtained a considerable part and a monopoly of trade. A Latin patriarch of Constantinople was appointed, and the Greek Church made subject to the Pope. The Eastern empire still continued, though it was not to regain Constantinople till 1261. This Latin conquest was disastrous. It greatly weakened the Eastern empire, and augmented the hatred between Greek and Latin Christianity.

A melancholy episode was the so-called "Children’s Crusade" of 1212. A shepherd boy, Stephen, in France, and a boy of Cologne, in Germany, Nicholas, gathered thousands of children. Straggling to Italy, they were largely sold into slavery in Egypt. Other crusading attempts were made. An expedition against Egypt, in 1218-1221, had some initial success, but ended in failure. It is usually called the Fifth Crusade. The most curious was the Sixth (1228-1229). The free-thinking Emperor Frederick II (1212-1250), had taken the cross in 1215, but showed no haste to fulfil his vows. At last, in 1227, he started, but soon put back. He seems to have been really ill, but Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241), believing him a deserter, and having other grounds of hostility, excommunicated him. In spite of the ban, Frederick went forward in 1228, and the next year secured, by treaty with the Sultan of Egypt, possession of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and a path to the coast. Jerusalem was once more in Christian keeping till 1244, when it was permanently lost. The crusading spirit was now well-nigh spent, though Louis IX of France (St. Louis, 1226-1270) led a disastrous expedition against Egypt in 1248-1250, in which he was taken prisoner, and an attack on Tunis in 1270, in which he lost his life. The last considerable expedition was that of Prince Edward, soon to be Edward I of England (1272-1307), in 1271 and 1272. In 1291, the last of the Latin holdings in Palestine was lost. The Crusades were over, though men continued to talk of new expeditions for nearly two centuries more.

Results of the Crusades

Viewed from the aspect of their purpose the Crusades were failures. They made no permanent conquest of the Holy Land. It may be doubted whether they greatly retarded the advance of Mohammedanism. Their cost in lives and treasure was enormous. Though initiated in a high spirit of devotion, their methods at best were not those which modern Christianity regards as illustrative of the Gospel, and their conduct was disgraced throughout by quarrels, divided motives, and low standards of personal conduct. When their indirect results are examined, however, a very different estimate is to be made of their worth. Civilization is the result of so complex factors that it is hard to assign precise values to single causes. Europe would have made progress during this period had there been no Crusades. But the changes wrought are so remarkable that the conclusion is unavoidable that the largest single influence was that of the Crusades.

By the commerce which the Crusades stimulated the cities of northern Italy and of the great trade route over the Alps and down the Rhine rose to importance. By the sacrifices of feudal lands and property which they involved, a new political element, that of the towns—a "third estate"—was greatly stimulated, especially in France. The mental horizon of the Western world was immeasurably extended. Thousands who had grown up in the densest ignorance and narrow-mindedness were brought into contact with the splendid cities and ancient civilization of the East. Everywhere there was intellectual awakening. The period witnessed the highest theological development of the Middle Ages—that of Scholasticism. It beheld great popular religious movements, in and outside of the church. It saw the development of the universities. In it the study of Roman law became a transforming influence. Modern vernacular literature began to flourish. A great artistic development, the national architecture of northern France, misnamed the Gothic, now ran its glorious career. The Europe of the period of the Crusades was awake and enlightened compared with the centuries which had gone before. Admitting that the Crusades were but one factor in this result, they were worth all their cost.
The epoch of the First Crusade was one of increasing religious earnestness, manifesting itself in other-worldliness, asceticism, mystical piety, and emphasis on the monastic life. The long battle against simony and Nicolaitanism had turned popular sympathies from the often criticised “secular,” or ordinary clergy, to the monks as the true representatives of the religious ideal. Cluny had, in a measure, spent its force. Its very success had led to luxury of living. New religious associations were arising, of which the most important was that of the Cistercians—an order which dominated the twelfth century as Cluny had the eleventh.

The Cistercians

Like Cluny, the Cistercians were of French origin. A Benedictine monk, Robert, of the monastery of Montier, impressed with the ill-discipline of contemporary monasticism, founded a monastery of great strictness in Citeaux, not far from Dijon, in 1098. From the first, the purpose of the foundation of Citeaux was to cultivate a strenuous, self-denying life. Its buildings, utensils, even the surroundings of worship, were of the plainest character. In food and clothing it exercised great austerity. Its rule was that of Benedict, but its self-denial was far beyond that of Benedictines generally. Under its third abbot, Stephen Harding (1109-1134), an Englishman, the significance of Citeaux rapidly grew. Four affiliated monasteries were founded by 1115, under his leadership. Thenceforth its progress was rapid throughout all the West. By 1130, the Cistercian houses numbered thirty; by 1168, two hundred and eighty-eight, and a century later six hundred and seventy-one. Over all these the abbot of Citeaux had authority, assisted by a yearly assembly of the heads of the affiliated monasteries. Much attention was devoted to agriculture, relatively little to teaching or pastoral work. The ideals were withdrawal from the world, contemplation, and imitation of “apostolic poverty.”

Bernard

Not a little of the early success of the Cistercians was due to the influence of Bernard (1090-1153), the greatest religious force of his age, and, by common consent, deemed one of the chief of mediæval saints. Born of knightly ancestry in Fontaines, near Dijon, he inherited from his mother a deeply religious nature. With some thirty companions, the fruit of his powers of persuasion, he entered the monastery of Citeaux, probably in 1112. Thence he went forth in 1115 to found the Cistercian monastery of Clairvaux, abbot of which he remained, in spite of splendid offers of ecclesiastical preferment, till his death. A man of the utmost self-consecration, his prime motive was a love to Christ, which in spite of extreme monastic self-mortification, found so evangelical an expression as to win the hearty approval of Luther and Calvin. The mystic contemplation of Christ was his highest spiritual joy. It determined not merely his own type of piety, but very largely that of the age in its nobler expressions. Above all, men admired in Bernard a moral force, a consistency of character, which added weight to all that he said and did.

Bernard was far too much a man of action to be confined to the monastery. The first preacher of his age, and one of the greatest of all ages, he moved his fellows profoundly, from whatever social class they might come. He conducted a vast correspondence on the problems of the time. The interests of the church, of which he was regarded as the most eminent ornament, led to wide journeyings. In particular, the healing of the papal schism which resulted in the double choice by the cardinals in 1130 of Innocent II (1130-1143) and Anacletus II (1130-1138) was Bernard’s work. His dominating part in organizing the unfortunate Second Crusade has already been considered (ante, p. 242) His influence with the papacy seemed but confirmed when a former monk of Clairvaux was chosen as Eugene III (1145-1153), though many things that Eugene did proved not to Bernard’s liking. Convinced that his own views were the only orthodox conceptions, he persuaded others, also, and secured the condemnation of Abelard (p. 265) by the synod of Sens in 1141, and its approval by the Pope. In 1145 Bernard preached, with some temporary success, to the heretics of southern France. In 1153 he died, the best known and the most widely mourned man of his age.

Radical Reformers

Bernard’s ascetic and other-worldly principles were represented, curiously, in a man whom he bitterly
opposed—Arnold of Brescia (?-1155). With all his devotion to “apostolic poverty,” Bernard had no essential quarrel with the hierarchical organization of his day, or hostility to its exercise of power in worldly matters. Arnold was much more radical. Born in Brescia, a student in France, he became a clergyman in his native city. Of severe austerity, he advanced the opinion that the clergy should abandon all property and worldly power. So only could they be Christ’s true disciples. In the struggle between Innocent II and Anacletus II he won a large following in Brescia, but was compelled to seek refuge in France, where he became intimate with Abelard, and was joined with him in condemnation, at Bernard’s instigation, by the synod of Sens (1141). Bernard secured Arnold’s expulsion from France. In 1143 the Roman nobles had thrown off the temporal control of the papacy and established what they believed to be a revival of the Senate. To Rome Arnold went. He was not a political leader so much as a preacher of “apostolic poverty.” In 1145 Eugene III restored Arnold to church fellowship, but by 1147, Arnold and the Romans had driven Eugene out of the city. There Arnold remained influential till the accession of the vigorous Hadrian IV (1154-1159)—the only Englishman who has ever occupied the papal throne. Hadrian, in 1155, compelled the Romans to expel Arnold by proclaiming an interdict forbidding religious services in the city; and bargained with the new German sovereign, Frederick Barbarossa (1152-1190), for the destruction of Arnold as the price of imperial coronation. In 1155 Arnold was hanged and his body burned. Though charged with heresy, these accusations are vague and seem to have had little substance. Arnold’s real offense was his attack upon the riches and temporal power of the church.

Far more radical had been a preacher in southern France, in the opening years of the twelfth century—Peter of Bruys, of whose origin or early life little is known. With a strict asceticism he combined the denial of infant baptism, the rejection of the Lord’s Supper in any form, the repudiation of all ceremonies and even of church buildings, and the rejection of the cross, which should be condemned rather than honored as the instrument through which Christ had suffered. Peter also opposed prayers for the dead. Having burned crosses in St. Gilles, he was himself burned by the mob at an uncertain date, probably between 1120 and 1130. Reputed to be Peter’s disciple, but hardly so to be regarded was Henry, called “of Lausanne,” once a Benedictine monk, who preached, with large following, from 1101 till his death after 1145, in western and especially southern France. Above all, a preacher of ascetic righteousness, he denied in ancient Donatist spirit the validity of sacraments administered by unworthy priests. His test of worthiness was ascetic life and apostolic poverty. By this standard he condemned the wealthy and power-seeking clergy. Arnold, Peter, and Henry have been proclaimed Protestants before the Reformation. To do so is to misunderstand them. Their conception of salvation was essentially mediaeval. They carried to a radical extreme a criticism of the worldly aspects of clerical life which was widely shared and had its more conservative manifestation in the life and teachings of Bernard.

The Cathari

The Manichæism of the later Roman Empire, of which Augustine was once an adherent (ante, pp. 107, 176), seems never absolutely to have died out in the West. It was stimulated by the accession of Paulicians and Bogomiles (ante, p. 235) whom the persecuting policy of the Eastern Emperors drove from Bulgaria, and by the new intercourse with the East fostered by the Crusades. The result was a new Manichæism. Its adherents were called Cathari, as the “Pure,” or Albigenenses, from Albi, one of their chief seats in southern France. With the ascetic and enthusiastic impulse which caused and accompanied the Crusades, the Cathari rose to great activity. Though to be found in many parts of Europe, their chief regions were southern France, northern Italy, and northern Spain. In southern France, Bernard himself labored in vain for their conversion. With the criticism of existing churchly conditions consequent upon the disastrous failure of the Second Crusade (ante, p. 242), they multiplied with great rapidity. In 1167 they were able to hold a widely attended council in St. Felix de Caraman, near Toulouse; and before the end of the century they had won the support of a large section, possibly a majority, of the population of southern France and the protection of its princes. In northern Italy they were very numerous. The Cathari in Florence alone in
1228 counted nearly one-third of the inhabitants. By the year 1200 they were an exceeding peril for the
Roman Church. In the movement the ascetic spirit of the age found full expression, and criticism of the
wealth and power of the church saw satisfaction in complete rejection of its clergy and claims.
Like the ancient Manichæans, the Cathari were dualists. The Bogomiles and many of the Cathari of Italy
held that the good God had two sons, Satanel and Christ—of whom the elder rebelled and became the
leader of evil. The Cathari of France generally asserted two eternal powers, the one good, the other
malign. All agreed that this visible world is the work of the evil power, in which souls, taken prisoners
from the realm of the good God, are held in bondage. The greatest of sins, the original sin of Adam and Eve, is human reproduction, whereby the number of prison-houses is increased. Salvation is by
repentance, asceticism, and the “consolation.” This rite, like baptism in the church, works forgiveness of
sins and restoration to the kingdom of the good God. It is conferred by laying on of hands by one who has
received it, together with placing the Gospel of John on the head of the candidate. It is the true apostolical
succession. One who has received the “consolation” becomes perfect, a perfectus; but lest he lose the
grace, he must henceforth eschew marriage, avoid oaths, war, possession of property, and the eating of
meat, milk, or eggs, since they are the product of the sin of reproduction. The “perfect,” or, as they were
called in France, the bone hommes—good men—were the real clergy of the Cathari, and there are notices
of “bishops” and even of a “Pope” among them, though exactly what the gradations in authority were it is
impossible to say. By a convenient belief the majority of adherents, the credenti or “believers,” were
allowed to marry, hold property, and enjoy the good things of this world, even outwardly to conform to
the Roman Church, assured that, should they receive the “consolation” before death, they would be saved.
Those who died unconsolated would, in the opinion of most of the Cathari, be reincarnated in human, or
even animal, bodies till at last they, too, should be brought to salvation. The “believers” seem not always
to have been fully initiated into the tenets of the system.
The Cathari made great use of Scripture, which they translated and in which they claimed to find their
 teachings. Some rejected the Old Testament entirely as the work of the evil power, others accepted the
Psalms and the prophets. All believed the New Testament to come from the good God. Since all things
material are of evil, Christ could not have had a real body or died a real death. They therefore rejected the
cross. The sacraments, with their material elements, were evil. The good God is dishonored by the
erection of churches built and ornamented with material creations of the evil power. The services of the
Cathari were simple. The Scriptures were read, especially the Gospel of John, as the most spiritual of all.
A sermon was preached. The “believers” then knelt and adored the “perfect” as those indwelt with the
divine Spirit. The “perfect,” in turn, gave their blessing. Only the Lord’s Prayer was used in the service. A
common meal, at which the bread was consecrated, was held in many places once a month, as a kind of
Lord’s Supper. The student of the movement will find in it extremely interesting survivals of ancient
Christian rites and ceremonies, orthodox and heretical. In general, the “perfect” seem to have been men
and women of uprightness, moral earnestness, and courageous steadfastness in persecution. Of their
effectiveness in gaining the allegiance of thousands, especially from the humbler walks of life, there can
be no question.

The Waldenses

Unlike the Cathari, the Waldenses originated in no conscious hostility to the church and, had they been
treated with skill, would probably never have separated from it. In 1176 Valdez, or Waldo, a rich
merchant of Lyons, impressed by the song of a wandering minstrel recounting the sacrifices of St. Alexis,
asked a master of theology “the best way to God.” The clergyman quoted that golden text of monasticism:
“If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in
heaven; and come, follow Me.” Valdez put this counsel literally into practice. Providing modestly for
his wife and daughters, he gave the rest of his means to the poor. He determined to fulfill the directions of
Christ to the Apostles absolutely. He would wear the raiment there designated. He would live by what
was given him. To know his duty better he procured a translation of the New Testament. His action made
a deep impression on his friends. Here, they thought, was true “apostolic poverty.” By 1177 he was joined
by others, men and women, and the little company undertook to carry further Christ’s directions by
preaching repentance. They called themselves the “Poor in Spirit.” They now appealed to the Third
Lateran Council, in 1179, for permission to preach. The council did not deem them heretical. It thought
them ignorant laymen, and Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) refused consent. This led to decisive action.
Valdez, who appears in what is known of his later history as determined, not to say obstinate, felt that this
refusal was the voice of man against that of God. He and his associates continued preaching. As
disobedient, they were, therefore, excommunicated, in 1184, by Pope Lucius III (1181-1185).
These unwise acts of the papacy not only forced the Waldenses out of the church against their will, they
brought to them a considerable accession. The Humiliati were a company of lowly folk who had
associated themselves for a common life of penance in and about Milan. These, too, were forbidden to
hold separate meetings, or to preach, by Alexander III, and were excommunicated in 1184 for
disobedience. A very considerable part of these Lombard Humiliati now joined the Waldenses, and came
under the control of Valdez. The early characteristics of the Waldenses now rapidly developed. Chief of
all was the principle that the Bible, and especially the New Testament, is the sole rule of belief and life.
Yet they read it through thoroughly mediæval spectacles. It was to them a book of law—of minute
prescriptions, to be followed to the letter. Large portions were learned by heart. In accordance with what
they believed to be its teachings they went about, two by two, preaching, clad in a simple woollen robe,
barefooted or wearing sandals, living wholly on the gifts of their hearers, fasting on Mondays,
Wednesdays, and Fridays, rejecting oaths and all shedding of blood, and using no prayers but the Lord’s
and a form, of grace at table. They heard confessions, observed the Lord’s Supper together, and ordained
their members as a ministry. As unbiblical, they rejected masses and prayers for the dead, and denied
purgatory. They held the sacraments invalid if dispensed by unworthy priests. They believed prayer in
secret more effective than in church. They defended lay preaching by men and women. They had bishops,
priests, and deacons, and a head, or rector, of the society. The first was Valdez himself; later appointment
was by election. Besides this inner circle, the society proper, they soon developed a body of sympathizers,
“friends” or “believers,” from whom the society was recruited, but who remained outwardly in
communion with the Roman Church. Most of this development seems to have been immediately
subsequent to their excommunication in 1184. Much of it was due to Catharite example, yet they opposed
the Cathari and justly regarded themselves as widely different.

Certain conflicts of opinion, and a feeling that the government of Valdez was arbitrary, led to the
secession of the Lombard branch by 1210—a breach that attempts at reunion in 1218, after Valdez’s
death, failed to heal. The two bodies remained estranged. The able Pope, Innocent III (1198-1216),
improved these disputes by countenancing in 1208 the organization of pauperes catholici, which allowed
many of the practices of the Waldenses under strict churchly oversight. Considerable numbers were thus
won back to the church. Nevertheless, the Waldensian body spread. Waldenses were to be found in
northern Spain, in Austria and Germany, as well as in their original homes. They were gradually
repressed, till their chief seat came to be the Alpine valleys southwest of Turin, where they are still to be
found. At the Reformation they readily accepted its principles, and became fully Protestant. Under modern
religious freedom they are laboring with success in many parts of Italy. Their story is one of heroic
endurance of persecution—a most honorable history—and they are the only mediæval sect which still
survives, though with wide modification of their original ideals and methods.

Crusade Against the Cathari

By the opening of the thirteenth century the situation of the Roman Church in southern France, northern
Italy, and northern Spain was dubious. Missionary efforts to convert Cathari and Waldenses had largely
failed. It was felt that sharper measures were needed. A crusade was ordered as early as 1181 by Pope
Alexander III (1159-1181), against the viscount of Beziers as a supporter of the Cathari, but it
accomplished little. Under Innocent III (1198-1216) the storm broke. After having vainly tried missionary
efforts, the murder of the papal legate, Peter of Castelnau, in 1208, induced Innocent to proclaim a crusade
against the heretics of southern France. The attack was agreeable to the French monarchy, which had
found the nobles of the region too independent vassals. These combined interests of Pope and King led to
twenty years of destructive warfare (1209-1229), in which the power of the southern nobles was shattered.
and cities and provinces devastated. The defenders of the Cathari were rendered impotent or compelled to join in their extermination.

The termination of the struggle was followed by a synod of much importance held in Toulouse in 1229. The Cathari and Waldenses had made much use of the Bible. The synod, therefore, forbade the laity to possess the Scriptures, except the psalter and such portions as are contained in the breviary, and especially denounced all translations. The decree was, indeed, local, but similar considerations led to like prohibitions in Spain and elsewhere. No universal denial of Bible reading by the laity was issued during the Middle Ages.

The Inquisition

A second act significance which marked the synod of Toulouse was the beginning of a systematic inquisition. The question of the punishment of heretics had been undetermined in the earlier Middle Ages. There had been a good many instances of death, generally by fire, at the hands of rulers, churchmen, or the mob, but ecclesiastics of high standing had opposed. The identification of the Cathari with the Manicheans, against whom the later Roman Emperors had denounced the death penalty, gave such punishment the sanction of Roman law. Peter II of Aragon, in 1197, ordered the execution of heretics by fire. Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) held that heresy, as treason against God, was of even greater heinousness than treason against a King. The investigation of heresy was not as yet systematized. That task the synod of Toulouse undertook. Its work was speedily perfected by Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241), who intrusted the discovery of heresy to inquisitors chosen chiefly from the Dominican order—a body formed with very different aims. As speedily developed, the inquisition became a most formidable organ. Its proceedings were secret, the names of his accusers were not given to the prisoner, who, by a bull of Innocent IV, in 1252, was liable to torture. The confiscation of the convict’s property was one of its most odious and economically destructive features, and, as these spoils were shared by the lay authorities, this feature undoubtedly kept the fires of persecution burning where otherwise they would have died out. Yet, thanks to the inquisition, and other more praiseworthy means shortly to be described, the Cathari were utterly rooted out in the course of a little more than a century, and the Waldenses greatly repressed. This earlier success accounts, in large measure, for the tenacity with which the Roman Church clung to the inquisition in the Reformation age.

21. FRIARS AND LEARNING

[adapted from Walker, 5]

[21.1] THE DOMINICANS AND FRANCISCANS

The Cathari and Waldenses profoundly affected the mediaeval church. Out of an attempt to meet them by preachers of equal devotion, asceticism, and zeal, and of greater learning, grew the order of the Dominicans. In the same atmosphere of “apostolic poverty” and literal fulfilment of the commands of Christ in which the Waldenses flourished, the Franciscans had their birth. In these two orders mediaeval monasticism had its noblest exemplification. In Francis of Assisi mediaeval piety had its highest and most inspiring representative.

Dominic And The Dominicans

Dominic was a native of Calaroga, in Castile, and was born in 1170. A brilliant student in Palencia, and a youth of deep religious spirit, he became a canon of Osma, about ninety miles northeast of Madrid. From 1201 he enjoyed the friendship of a kindred spirit, Diego of Acevedo, the bishop of Osma. The two journeyed on political business in 1203 through southern France, where the Cathari were then in the height of their power. There they found the Roman missionaries treated with contempt. At a meeting with these missionary leaders in Montpellier, in 1204, Diego urged a thorough reform of method. Only by missionaries as self-denying, as studious of “apostolic poverty,” and as eager to preach as the “perfect” of
the Cathari, could these wanderers be won back to the Roman fold. Moved by the bishop’s exhortation, the missionaries endeavored to put his advice into practice. A nunnery, chiefly for converted Catharite women, was established in 1206, in Prouille, not far from Toulouse. Thus far Diego seems to have been the leader, but he had to return to his diocese, and died in 1207. Thenceforward Dominic carried on the work. The storm of the great anti-Cathari war made it most discouraging. Dominic was tempted by the offer of bishoprics to leave so thankless a task, but he persisted. He would take the Apostle Paul as his model. He would win the people by preaching. Gradually he gathered like-minded men about him. In 1215 friends presented them a house in Toulouse. The same year Dominic visited the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome, seeking papal approval for a new order. It was refused, though his efforts were commended, and he now adopted the so-called “Rule” of St. Augustine. Recognition amounting to the practical establishment of the order was, however, obtained from Pope Honorius III (1216-1227) in 1216.

Even in 1217, when the new association numbered but a few, Dominic determined to send his preachers widely. With a view to influencing future leaders, he directed them first to the great centres of education, Paris, Rome, and Bologna. The order grew with amazing rapidity. Its first general chapter was held in Bologna in 1220. Here, under the influence of Franciscan example, it adopted the principle of mendicancy—the members should beg even their daily food. By this chapter, or that of the following year, the constitution of the “Order of Preachers,” or Dominicans, as they were popularly called, was developed. At the head was a “master-general,” chosen by the general chapter, originally for life. The field was divided into “provinces,” each in charge of a “provincial prior,” elected for a four-year term by the provincial chapter. Each monastery chose a “prior,” also for four years. The general chapter included the “master-general,” the “provincial priors,” and an elected delegate from each province. The system was one, therefore, that combined ingeniously authority and representative government. It embraced monasteries for men, and nunneries for women, though the latter were not to preach, but ultimately developed large teaching activities.

Dominic died in 1221. The order then numbered sixty houses, divided among the eight provinces of Provence, Toulouse, France, Lombardy, Rome, Spain, Germany, and England, and for years thereafter it increased rapidly. Always zealous for learning, it emphasized preaching and teaching, sought work especially in university towns, and soon became widely represented on the university faculties. Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, the theologians; Eckhart and Tauler, the mystics; Savonarola, the reformer, are but a few of the great names that adorn the catalogue of Dominicans. Their learning led to their employment as inquisitors—a use that formed no part of Dominic’s ideal. The legends which represent him as an inquisitor are baseless. He would win men, as did his example, Paul, by preaching. To achieve that result he would undergo whatever sacrifice or asceticism that would make his preachers acceptable to those whom they sought. Yet it is evident that lowly, self-sacrificing and democratic as were Dominic’s aims, the high intellectualism of his order tended to give it a relatively aristocratic flavor. It represented, however, an emphasis on work for others, such as had appeared in the Waldenses. Its ideal was not contemplation apart from the world, but access to men in their needs.

Francis of Assisi

Great as was the honor paid to Dominic and the Dominicans, it was exceeded by the popular homage given to the Franciscans, and especially to their founder. The austere preacher, of blameless youth, planning how he may best reach men, and adopting poverty as a means to that end, is not so winsome a figure as that of the gay, careless young man who sacrifices all for Christ and his fellows, and adopts poverty not as a recommendation of his message, but as the only means of being like his Master. In Francis of Assisi is to be seen not merely the greatest of mediaeval saints, but one, who through his absolute sincerity of desire to imitate Christ in all things humanly possible, belongs to all ages and to the church universal.

Giovanni Bernadone was born in 1181 or 1182, the son of a cloth merchant of Assisi, in central Italy. To the boy the nickname Francesco—Francis—was given, and soon supplanted that bestowed on him in baptism. His father, a serious man of business, was little pleased to see the son leading in the mischief and revelry of his young companions. A year’s experiences as a prisoner of war in Perugia, following a defeat
in which he had fought on the side of the common people of Assisi, against the nobles, wrought no change in his life. A serious illness began to develop another side of his character. He joined a military expedition to Apulia, but withdrew, for what reason is not evident. His conversion was a gradual process. “When I was yet in my sins it did seem to me too bitter to look upon the lepers, but the Lord Himself did lead me among them, and I had compassion upon them. When I left them, that which had seemed to me bitter had become sweet and easy.” This note of Christ-like compassion was that to which Francis’s renewed nature first responded. On a pilgrimage to Rome he thought he heard the divine command to restore the fallen house of God. Taking it literally, he sold cloth from his father’s warehouse to rebuild the ruined church of St. Damian, near Assisi. Francis’s father, thoroughly disgusted with his unbusinesslike ways, now took him before the bishop to be disinherited; but Francis declared that he had henceforth no father but the Father in heaven. This event was probably in 1206 or 1207. For the next two years Francis wandered in and about Assisi, aiding the unfortunate, and restoring churches, of which his favorite was the Portiuncula, in the plain outside the town. There, in 1209, the words of Christ to the Apostles, read in the service, came to him, as they had to Valdez, as a trumpet-call to action. He would preach repentance and the kingdom of God, without money, in the plainest of garments, eating what might be set before him. He would imitate Christ and obey Christ’s commands, in absolute poverty, in Christ-like love, and in humbled deference to the priests as His representatives. “The Most High Himself revealed to me that I ought to live according to the model of the holy Gospel.” Like-minded associates gathered about him. For them he drafted a “Rule,” composed of little besides selections from Christ’s commands, and with it, accompanied by eleven or twelve companions, he applied to Pope Innocent III for approval. It was practically the same request that Valdez had preferred in vain in 1179. But Innocent was now trying to win some of the Waldenses for the church, and Francis was not refused. The associates now called themselves the Penitents of Assisi, a name for which, by 1216, Francis had substituted that of the Minor, or Humbler, Brethren, by which they were henceforth to be known.

The Franciscans

Francis’s association was a union of imitators of Christ, bound together by love and practising the utmost poverty, since only thus, he believed, could the world be denied and Christ really followed. Two by two, they went about preaching repentance, singing much, aiding the peasants in their work, caring for the lepers and outcasts. “Let those who know no trade learn one, but not for the purpose of receiving the price of their toil, but for their good example and to flee idleness. And when we are not given the price of our work, let us resort to the table of the Lord, begging our bread from door to door.” Soon wide-reaching missionary plans were formed, which the rapid growth of the association made possible of attempting. Francis himself, prevented by illness from reaching the Mohammedans through Spain, went to Egypt in 1219, in the wake of a crusading expedition, and actually preached before the Sultan.

Francis himself was little of an organizer. The free association was increasing enormously. What were adequate rules for a handful of like-minded brethren were soon insufficient for a body numbering several thousands. Change would have come in any event. It was hastened, however, by the organizing talents of Cardinal Ugolino of Ostia, the later Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241), who had befriended Francis, and whose appointment Francis secured as “protector” of the society. Under Ugolino’s influence, and that of Brother Elias of Cortona, the transformation of the association into a full monastic order went rapidly forward. From the time of Francis’s absence in Egypt and Syria in 1219 and 1220, his real leadership ceased. A new rule was adopted in 1221, and a third in 1223. In the latter, emphasis was no longer laid on preaching, and begging was established as the normal, not the exceptional, practice. Already, in 1219, provinces had been established, each in charge of a “minister.” Papal directions, in 1220, had prescribed obedience to the order’s officers, established a novitiate, a fixed costume, and irrevocable vows. Probably most of these changes were inevitable. They were unquestionably a grief to Francis, though whether so deeply as has often been contended is doubtful. He was always deferential to ecclesiastical authority, and seems to have regarded these modifications more with regret than with actual opposition. He withdrew increasingly from the world. He was much in prayer and singing. His love of nature, in which he was far in advance of his age, was never more manifest. Feeble in body, he longed to be present.
with Christ. He bore what men believed to be the reproduction of Christ’s wounds. How they may have been received is an unsolved, and perhaps insoluble, problem. On October 3, 1226, he died in the church of Portiuncula. Two years later he was proclaimed a saint by Pope Gregory IX. Few men in Christian history have more richly deserved the title.

In organization, by Francis’s death, the Franciscans were like the Dominicans. At the head stood a “minister general” chosen for twelve years. Over each “province” was a “provincial minister,” and over each group a “custos,” for, unlike the Dominicans, the Franciscans did not at first possess houses. As with the Dominicans, provincial and general chapters were held by which officers were chosen and legislation achieved. Like the Dominicans, also, the Franciscans had almost from the first, their feminine branch—the so-called “second order.” That of the Franciscans was instituted by Francis himself, in 1212, through his friend and disciple, Clara Sciffi of Assisi (1194-1253). The growth of the Franciscans was extremely rapid, and though they soon counted many distinguished scholars, they were always more democratic, more the order of the poor, than the Dominicans.

The Tertiaries

The Dominicans and Franciscans, known respectively as Black Friars and Gray Friars in England, soon exercised an almost unbounded popular influence. Unlike the older orders, they labored primarily in the cities. There can be no doubt that their work resulted in a great strengthening of religion among the laity. At the same time they undermined the influence of the bishops and ordinary clergy, since they were privileged to preach and absolve anywhere. They thus strengthened the power of the papacy by diminishing that of the ordinary clergy. One chief influence upon the laity was the development of the “Tertiaries” or “third orders”—a phenomenon which first appeared in connection with the Franciscans, though the tradition which connects it with Francis himself is probably baseless. The “third order” permitted men and women, still engaged in ordinary occupations, to live a semi-monastic life of fasting, prayer, worship, and benevolence. A conspicuous illustration is St. Elizabeth of Thuringia (1207-1231). Ultimately all the mendicant orders developed Tertiaries. As time went on the system tended to become an almost complete monasticism, from which the married were excluded. It must be regarded as a very successful attempt to meet the religious ideals of an age which regarded the monastic as the true Christian life.

Beguines and Beghards

The piety of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries found many expressions other than through the Dominicans and Franciscans. One important manifestation, especially in the Netherlands, Germany, and France, was through the Beguines—associations of women living in semi-monastic fashion, but not bound by irrevocable vows. They seem to have received their name from those hostile to them in memory of the preacher of Liège, Lambert le Begue, who was regarded as having been a heretic; and the Beguine movement undoubtedly often sheltered anti-churchly sympathizers. It was in the main orthodox, however, and spread widely, existing in the Netherlands to the present. Its loose organization made effective discipline difficult, and, in general, its course was one of deterioration. A parallel, though less popular, system of men’s associations was that of the Beghards.

Divisions Among the Franciscans

The divisions in the Franciscan order, which had appeared in Francis’s lifetime between those who would emphasize a simple life of Christ-like poverty and those who valued numbers, power, and influence, were but intensified with his death. The stricter party found a leader in Brother Leo, the looser in Elias of Cortona. The papal policy favored the looser, since ecclesiastical politics would be advanced by the growth and consolidation of the order along the lines of earlier monasticism. The quarrel became increasingly embittered. The use of gifts and buildings was secured by the laxer party on the claim that they were held not by the order itself but by “friends.” Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254), in 1245, allowed such use, with the reservation that it was the property of the Roman Church, not of the order. These tendencies the stricter party vigorously opposed. But that party itself fell into dubious orthodoxy. Joachim of Floris, in extreme southern Italy (1145?-1202), a Cistercian abbot who had been reputed a prophet, had
divided the history of the world into three ages, those of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That of the Spirit was to come in full power in 1260. It was to be an age of men who understood “the eternal Gospel”—not a new Gospel, but the old, spiritually interpreted. Its form of life was to be monastic. In the sixth decade of the thirteenth century many of the stricter Franciscans adopted these views and were persecuted not merely by the laxer element, but by the moderates, who obtained leadership when Bonaventura was chosen general minister in 1257. These stricter friars of prophetic faith were nicknamed “Spirituals.” Under Pope John XXII (1316-1334) some of the party were burned by the inquisition in 1318. During his papacy a further quarrel arose as to whether the poverty of Christ and the Apostles was complete. John XXII decided in 1322 in favor of the laxer view, and imprisoned the great English schoolman, William of Occam, and other asserters of Christ’s absolute poverty. The quarrel was irreconcilable, and finally Pope Leo X (1513-1521) formally recognized the division of the Franciscans in 1517 into “Observant,” or strict, and “Conventual,” or loose sections, each with its distinct officers and general chapters.

[21.2] EARLY SCHOLASTICISM

The Beginnings of Scholasticism

The educational work of cathedral and monastic schools has already been noted in connection with Bede, Alcuin, and Hrabanus Maurus (ante, pp. 200, 207, 210). It was long simply imitative and reproductive of the teaching of the Church Fathers, especially of Augustine and Gregory the Great. Save in the case of John Scotus Erigena (ante, p. 210), it showed little that was original. Schools, however, increased, especially in France in the eleventh century, and with their multiplication came an application of the methods of logic, or of dialectics, to the discussion of theological problems which resulted in fresh and fertile intellectual development. Since it originated in the schools, the movement was known as “Scholasticism.” Most of the knowledge of dialectic method was at first derived from scanty translations of portions of Aristotle’s writings and of Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, both the work of Boethius (480?-524).

The development of Scholasticism was inaugurated and accompanied by a discussion as to the nature of “universals”—that is as to the existence of genera and species—a debate occasioned by Porphyry’s *Isagoge*. Three positions might be taken. The extreme “realists,” following Platonic influences, asserted that universals existed apart from and antecedent to the individual objects—ante rem, i. e., the genus man was anterior to and determinative of the individual man. The moderate “realists,” under the guidance of Aristotle, taught that universals existed only in connection with individual objects—in re. The “nominalists,” following Stoic precedent, held that universals were only abstract names for the resemblances of individuals, and had no other existence than in thought—post rem. The only real existence for them was the individual object. This quarrel between “realism” and “nominalism” continued throughout the scholastic period and profoundly influenced its theological conclusions.

The first considerable scholastic controversy was a renewal of the dispute once held between Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus as to the nature of Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper (ante, p. 211). Berengar (?-1088), head of the cathedral school in Tours about 1049, attacked the prevalent conception that the elements are changed as to substance into the actual body and blood of Christ. His position was essentially nominalist. Berengar was immediately opposed by Lanfranc (?-1089), then prior of the monastery of Bee in Normandy, and to be William the Conqueror’s celebrated archbishop of Canterbury. Berengar was condemned at the Roman synod of 1050. He conformed and was restored in 1059. About ten years later he reasserted his opinions, but once more withdrew them in 1079, only to declare them again. The discussion showed that the view soon to be known as “transubstantiation” had become the dominant opinion in Latin Christendom. It was to have full approval at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, where it was given the highest dogmatic standing.

Anselm

Berengar’s dialectic methods were employed, with very dissimilar results, by Anselm, who has often been called the Father of the Schoolmen. Born in Aosta in northern Italy about 1033, Anselm became a monk
under Lanfranc in Bee, whom he succeeded as prior. Under him the school of Bee attained great distinction. In 1093 he became archbishop of Canterbury—having a stormy episcopate by reason of his Hildebrandian principles. He died in office in 1109. As a theologian, Anselm was an extreme realist, and was moreover convinced of the full capacity of a proper dialectic to prove the truths of theology. His famous ontological demonstration of the existence of God is at once realistic and Neo-Platonic. As set forth in his *Proslogion*, God is the greatest of all beings. He must exist in reality as well as in thought, for if He existed in thought only, a yet greater being, existing in reality as well as in thought, could be conceived; which is impossible. This proof, which aroused the opposition of Gaunilo, a monk of Marmoutiers, in Anselm’s lifetime, seems to most a play on words, though its permanent validity has not lacked defenders.

Anselm next directed his attention to Roscelin, a canon of Compiègne, who, under nominalistic influence, had asserted that either the Father, Son, and Spirit are identical or are three Gods. At a synod held in Soissons in 1092 Roscelin was compelled to abjure tritheism. Anselm now declared that nominalism was essentially heretical, and that view was the prevalent one for the next two centuries.

Anselm’s most influential contribution to theology was his discussion of the atonement in his *Cur Deus-homo*, the ablest treatment that had yet appeared. Anselm totally rejected any thought, such as the early church had entertained, of a ransom paid to the devil. Man, by sin, has done dishonor to God. His debt is to God alone. Anselm’s view is feudal. God’s nature demands satisfaction. Man, who owes obedience at all times, has nothing wherewith to make good past disobedience. Yet, if satisfaction is to be made at all, it can be rendered only by one who shares human nature, who is Himself man, and yet as God has something of infinite value to offer. Such a being is the God-man. Not only is His sacrifice a satisfaction, it deserves a reward. That reward is the eternal blessedness of His brethren. Anselm’s widely influential theory rests ultimately on the realistic conviction that there is such an objective existence as humanity which Christ could assume.

Anselm was of devout spirit, fully convinced that dialectic explanation could but buttress the doctrines of the church. “I believe, that I may understand,” is a motto that expresses his attitude. The same high realist position was maintained by William of Champeaux (1070?-1121), who brought the school of St. Victor, near Paris, into great repute, and died as bishop of Chalons.

*Abelard*

The ablest use of the dialectic method in the twelfth century was made by Abelard (1079-1142), a man of irritating method, vanity, and critical spirit, but by no means of irreligion. Born in Pallet, in Brittany, he studied under Roscelin and William of Champeaux, both of whom he opposed and undoubtedly far surpassed in ability. On the vexed question of the universals he took a position intermediate between the nominalism of one teacher and the realism of the other, though leaning rather to the nominalist side. Only individuals exist, but genera and species are more than names. Hence he is usually called a “conceptualist,” though he gave universals greater value than mere mental conceptions.

Abelard’s life was stormy. By the age of twenty-two he was teaching with great following in Melun, near Paris. By 1115 he was a canon of Notre Dame, with a following in Paris such as no lecturer had yet enjoyed. He fell in love with Heloise—the niece of his fellow canon, Fulbert—a woman of singular devotion of nature. With her he entered into a secret marriage. The enraged uncle, believing his niece deceived, revenged himself by having Abelard emasculated, and thus barred from clerical advancement. Abelard now became a monk. To teach was his breath of life, however, and he soon resumed lecturing. A reply to Roscelin’s tritheism leaned so far in the other direction that his enemies charged him with Sabellianism, and his views were condemned at a synod in Soissons in 1121. His criticisms of the traditional career of St. Denis made the monastery of St. Denis an uncomfortable place of abode, and he now sought a hermit’s life. Students gathered about him and founded a little settlement which he called the Paraclete. His criticisms had aroused, however, the hostility of that most powerful religious leader of the age, the orthodox traditionalist Bernard, and he now sought refuge as abbot of the rough monastery in Rhuys, in remote Brittany. Yet he left this retreat to lecture for a while in Paris, and engaged in a correspondence with Heloise, who had become the head of a little nunnery at the Paraclete, which is the
most interesting record of affection—especially on the part of Heloise—which the Middle Ages has preserved. Bernard procured his condemnation at the synod of Sens in 1141, and the rejection of his appeal by Pope Innocent II. Abelard was now a broken man. He made submission and found a friend in Peter, the abbot of Cluny. In 1142 he died in one of the monasteries under Cluny jurisdiction.

Abelard’s spirit was essentially critical. Without rejecting the Fathers or the creeds, he held that all should be subjected to philosophical examination, and not lightly believed. His work, *Sic et non—Yes and No*—setting against each other contrary passages from the Fathers on the great doctrines, without attempt at harmony or explanation, might well arouse a feeling that he was a sower of doubts. His doctrine of the Trinity was almost Sabellian. His teaching that man has inherited not guilt but punishment from Adam was contrary to the Augustinian tradition. His ethical theory that good and evil inhere in the intention rather than in the act, disagreed with current feeling. His belief that the philosophers of antiquity were sharers of divine revelation, however consonant with ancient Christian opinion, was not that of his age. Nor was Abelard less individual, though decidedly modern, in his conception of the atonement. Like Anselm, he rejected all ransom to the devil; but he repudiated Anselm’s doctrine of satisfaction no less energetically. In Abelard’s view the incarnation and death of Christ are the highest expression of God’s love to men, the effect of which is to awaken love in us. Abelard, though open to much criticism from the standpoint of his age, was a profoundly stimulating spirit. His direct followers were few, but his indirect influence was great, and the impulse given by him to the dialectic method of theological inquiry far-reaching.

*Hugh and Peter Lombard*

A combination of a moderate use of the dialectic method with intense Neo-Platonic mysticism is to be seen in the work of Hugh of St. Victor (1097?-1141). A German by birth, his life was uneventful. About 1115 he entered the monastery of St. Victor, near Paris, where he rose to be head of its school. A quiet, modest man, of profound learning and piety, his influence was remarkable. He enjoyed the intimate friendship of Bernard. Probably his most significant works were his commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (ante, p. 171) and his treatise *On the Mysteries of the Faith*. In true mystic fashion he pictured spiritual progress as in three stages—cogitation, the formation of sense-concepts; meditation, their intellectual investigation; contemplation, the intuitive penetration into their inner meaning. This last attainment is the true mystical vision of God, and the comprehension of all things in Him.

No original genius, like Abelard and Hugh, but a man of great intellectual service to his own age, and held in honor till the Reformation, was Peter Lombard, “the Master of the Sentences” (?-1160?). Born in humble circumstances in northern Italy, Peter studied in Bologna and Paris, in part at least aided by the generosity of Bernard. In Paris he became ultimately teacher of theology in the school of Notre Dame, and near the close of his life, in 1159, bishop of the Parisian see. Whether he was ever a pupil of Abelard is uncertain; but he was evidently greatly influenced by Abelard’s works. Under Hugo of St. Victor he certainly studied, and owed that teacher much. Between 1147 and 1150 he wrote the work on which his fame rests—the *Four Books of Sentences*. After the well-acustomed fashion, he gathered citations from the creeds and the Fathers on the several Christian doctrines. What was fresh was that he proceeded to explain and interpret them by the dialectic method, with great moderation and good sense, and with constant reference to the opinions of his contemporaries. He showed the influence of Abelard constantly, though critical of that thinker’s extreme positions. He was even more indebted to Hugo of St. Victor. Under the four divisions, God, Created Beings, Salvation, Sacraments and the Last Things, he discussed the whole round of theology. The result was a handbook which so fully met the needs of the age that it remained till the Reformation the main basis of theological instruction.

With the middle of the twelfth century the first period of Scholasticism was over. The schools continued in increasing activity, but no creative geniuses appeared. The last half of the century was distinguished, however, by the introduction to the West, which had thus far had little of Aristotle, of the greater part of his works and of much Greek philosophy besides, by the Jews of Spain and southern France, who, in turn, derived them from the Arabs. The Latin conquest of Constantinople, in 1204 (ante, p. 243), led ultimately to
direct translations from the originals. The result was to be a new and greater outburst of scholastic activity in the thirteenth century.

[21.3] THE UNIVERSITIES

Cathedral and monastic schools were never more flourishing than in the twelfth century. Teachers were multiplying and gathering about them students. Anselm, Abelard, William of Champeaux, Hugo of St. Victor, and Peter Lombard were simply the most eminent of a host. Students flocked to them in large numbers from all parts of Europe. Paris and Oxford were famed for theology, Bologna for church and civil law, Salerno for medicine. Under these circumstances the universities developed in a manner which it is difficult exactly to date. The change which they implied was not the establishment of teaching where none had been before, but the association of students and teachers into a collective body, after the fashion of a trade guild, primarily for protection and good order, but also for more efficient management and the regulation of admission to the teaching profession. In its educational capacity such a group was often called a studium generale. The beginnings of university organization—which must be distinguished from the commencement of teaching—may be placed about the year 1200.

By the close of the twelfth century there were in Bologna two “universities,” or mutual protective associations of students. The organization in Paris became normal, however, for northern Europe. Its earliest rules date from about 1208, and its recognition as a legal corporation from a letter of Pope Innocent III of about 1211. In Paris there was a single “university,” originally formed by the union of the cathedral school and the more private schools of the city, and divided for instruction into four faculties—one preparatory, that of the “arts,” in which the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the quadrivium (astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and music) were taught; and the three higher faculties of theology, canon law, and medicine. Over each faculty a dean presided. Besides this educational organization students and professors were also grouped, for mutual aid, in “nations,” each headed by a proctor. These varied in number in the several institutions. In Paris they were four—the French, the Picards, the Normans, and the English.

Teaching was principally by lecture and by constant debate, a method which, whatever its shortcomings, rendered the student ready master of his knowledge, and brought talent to light. The first degree, that of bachelor, was similar to an admission to apprenticeship in a guild. The second degree, that of master or doctor, resembling the master workman in a guild, carried with it full authority to teach in the institution where it was conferred, and soon, for the graduates of the larger universities, to teach anywhere. The use of Latin as the sole language of the classroom made possible the assembly of students from all parts of Europe, and they flocked to the more famous universities in immense numbers.

The needs of these students, many of whom were of extreme poverty, early aroused the interest of benefactors. One of the most influential and oldest foundations thus established was that formed in Paris by Robert de Sorbon (1201-1274) in 1252. It provided a home and special teaching for poor students, under the guidance of “fellows” of the house. Such establishments, soon known as “colleges,” rapidly multiplied, and gave shelter to the great majority of students, rich and poor. The system still survives in the English universities. So prominently was the Sorbonne identified with theological instruction that its name came to be popularly, though erroneously, attached to the faculty of theology in Paris. That university ranked till the Reformation as the leader of Europe, especially in the theological studies.

Universities, many of which were short-lived, sprang up with great rapidity. In general, they were regarded as ecclesiastical—authorization by the Pope being almost essential. The most conspicuous early lay approval was that of Naples, in 1225, by the Emperor Frederick II.

[21.4] HIGH SCHOLASTICISM AND ITS THEOLOGY

The recovery of the whole of Aristotle, the rise of the universities, and the devotion of the mendicant orders to learning, ushered in a new period of Scholasticism in the thirteenth century, and marked the
highest intellectual achievement of the Middle Ages. The movement toward this “modern theology,” as it was called, was not without much opposition, especially from traditionalists and adherents to the Augustinian Neo Platonic development. Aristotle met much hostility. A series of great thinkers, all from the mendicant orders, made his victory secure. Yet even they, while relying primarily on Aristotle, made much use of Plato as reflected in Augustine and the Pseudo-Dionysius (ante, pp. 171, 266).

To Alexander of Hales (?-1245), an Englishman and ultimately a Franciscan, who taught in Paris, was due the treatment of theology in the light of the whole of Aristotle. Yet to him the Scripture is the only final truth. With this new period of Scholasticism a broader range of intellectual interest is apparent than in the earlier, though the old problem between realism and nominalism continued its pre-eminence. Alexander was a moderate realist. Universals exist ante rem in the mind of God, in re in the things themselves, and post rem in our understanding. In this he was followed by Albertus Magnus and Aquinas.

Albertus Magnus (1206?-1280), a German and a Dominican, studied in Padua, and taught in many places in Germany, but principally in Cologne. He served as provincial prior for his order, and was, for a few years, bishop of Regensburg. The most learned man of his age, his knowledge of science was really remarkable. His acquaintance not merely with Aristotle, but with the comments of Arabian scholars, was profounder than that of Alexander of Hales. He was, however, a great compiler and commentator rather than an original theological genius. That which he taught was brought to far clearer expression by his pupil, Thomas Aquinas.

**Thomas Aquinas**

Thomas Aquinas (1225?-1274) was a son of Landulf, count of Aquino, a small town about half-way between Rome and Naples. Connected with the German imperial house of Hohenstaufen and with that of Tancred, the Norman Crusader, it was against the wishes of his parents that Thomas entered the Dominican order in 1243. His spiritual superiors were aware of his promise, and sent him to Cologne to study under Albertus Magnus, who soon took his pupil to Paris. On receiving the degree of bachelor of divinity, Thomas returned to Cologne in 1248, and now taught as subordinate to Albertus Magnus. These were years of rapid intellectual growth. Entrance into the Paris faculty was long refused him on account of jealousy of the mendicant orders, but in 1257 he was given full standing there. From 1261 for some years he taught in Italy, then once more in Paris, and finally, from 1272, in Naples. He died, on his way to the Council of Lyons, in 1274. In these crowded years of teaching Thomas was constantly consulted on important civil and ecclesiastical questions, and was active in preaching; yet his pen was busy with results as voluminous as they were important. His great *Summa Theologiae* was begun about 1265, and not fully completed at his death. Personally he was a simple, deeply religious, prayerful man. Intellectually his work was marked by a clarity, a logical consistency, and a breadth of presentation that places him among the few great teachers of the church. In the Roman communion his influence has never ceased. By declaration of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), in 1879, his work is the basis of present theological instruction.

Closely associated with Aquinas in friendship and for a time in teaching activities in the University of Paris, was John Fidanza (1221-1274), generally known as Bonaventura. Born in Bagnorea, in the States of the Church, he entered the Franciscan order in 1238, rising to become its “general” in 1257. A year before his death he was made a cardinal. Famed as a teacher in Paris, he was even more distinguished for his administration of the Franciscan order and for his high character. Much less an Aristotelian than Aquinas, he was especially influenced by the Neo-Platonic teachings of Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius. He was essentially a mystic. By meditation and prayer one may rise into that union with God which brings the highest knowledge of divine truth. Yet, though a mystic, Bonaventura was a theologian of dialectic ability whose work, more conservative and less original than that of Aquinas, nevertheless commanded high respect.

**Aquinas’ Theology**

According to Aquinas, in whom Scholasticism attained its noblest development, the aim of all theological investigation is to give knowledge of God and of man’s origin and destiny. Such knowledge comes in part
by reason—natural theology—but the attainments of reason are inadequate. They must be augmented by
divine revelation. That revelation is contained in the Scriptures, which are the only final authority; but they are to
be understood in the light of the interpretations of the councils and the Fathers—in a word, as
comprehended by the church. The truths of revelation cannot be attained by reason, but they are not
counter to reason, and reason can show the inadequacy of objections to them. Aquinas is thus far from
sharing Anselm’s conviction that all truths of Christianity are philosophically demonstrable; but he holds
that there can be no contradiction between philosophy and theology, since both are from God.

In treating of God Aquinas combined Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic conceptions. He is the first cause. He
is pure activity. He is also the most real and perfect of existences. He is the absolute substance, the source
and end of all things. As perfect goodness, God does always that which He sees to be right. Regarding the
Trinity and the person of Christ, Aquinas stood essentially on the basis of Augustine and the Chalcedonian
formula (ante, p. 151).

God needs nothing, and therefore the creation of the world was an expression of the divine love which He
bestows on the existences He thus called into being. God’s providence extends to all events, and is
manifested in the predestination of some to everlasting life, and in leaving others to the consequences of
sin in eternal condemnation. Aquinas’s position is largely determinist. Man has, indeed, in a certain sense,
freedom. His will acts; but that does not preclude the determining or permissive providence of God. The
divine permission of evil results in the higher good of the whole. Though sin is no less sinful, its existence
permits the development of many virtues which go to make strength of character in those who resist.

Aquinas abandoned the ancient distinction between “soul” and “spirit.” The soul of man is a unit,
possessing intellect and will. It is immaterial. Man’s highest good is the vision and enjoyment of God. As
originally created man had, in addition to his natural powers, a superadded gift which enabled him to seek
that highest good and practise the three Christian virtues—faith, hope, and love. This Adam lost by sin,
which also corrupted his natural powers, so that his state became not merely a lack of original
righteousness, but a positive turning toward lower aims. Sin is, therefore, more than merely negative. In
this fallen state it was impossible for Adam to please God, and this corruption was transmitted to all his
posterity. Man still has the power to attain the four natural virtues, prudence, justice, courage, and self-
control; but these, though bringing a certain measure of temporal honor and happiness, are not sufficient
to enable their possessor to attain the vision of God.

Man’s restoration is possible only through the free and unmerited grace of God, by which man’s nature is
changed, his sins forgiven, and power to practise the three infused Christian virtues. No act of his can win
this grace. While God could conceivably have forgiven man’s sins and granted grace without the sacrifice
of Christ—here Aquinas differed from Anselm—the work of Christ was the wisest and most efficient
method God could choose, and man’s whole redemption is based on it. That work involved satisfaction for
man’s sin, and Christ won a merit which deserves a reward. It also moves men to love. Aquinas thus
developed and combined views presented by Anselm and Abelard. Christ’s satisfaction superabounds
man’s sin, and the reward which Christ cannot personally receive, since as God He needs nothing, comes
to the advantage of His human brethren. Christ does for men what they cannot do for themselves.

Once redeemed, however, the good works that God’s grace now enables man to do deserve and receive a
reward. Man now has power to fulfil not only the precepts but the counsels of the Gospel (ante, p. 103). He
can do works of supererogation, of which the chief would be the faithful fulfilment of the monastic life.
He can not merely fit himself for heaven; he can add his mite to the treasury of the superabundant merits
of Christ and the saints. Yet all this is made possible only by the grace of God. Aquinas thus finds full
room for the two dominating conceptions of mediaeval piety—grace and merit.

Grace does not come to men indiscriminately. It has its definite channels and these are the sacraments, and
the sacraments alone. Here Scholasticism attained far greater clearness of definition than had previously
existed. The ancient feeling that all sacred actions were sacraments was still alive in the twelfth century,
but Hugo of St. Victor and Abelard clearly placed five in a more conspicuously sacramental category than
others, and Peter Lombard defined the sacraments as seven. Whether this reckoning was original with him
is still an unsolved problem; nor was it at once universally accepted. The influence of his Sentences

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ultimately won the day. As enumerated by Peter Lombard, the sacraments are baptism, confirmation, the Lord’s Supper, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony. All were instituted by Christ, directly or through the Apostles, and all convey grace from Christ the head to the members of His mystical body, the church. Without them there is no true union with Christ.

Every sacrament consists of two elements which are defined in Aristotelian terms of form and matter (ante, p. 4)—a material portion (water, bread, and wine, etc.); and a formula conveying its sacred use (“I baptize thee,” etc.). The administrant must have the intention of doing what Christ and the church appointed, and the recipient must have, at least in the case of those of years of discretion, a sincere desire to receive the benefit of the sacrament. These conditions fulfilled, the sacrament conveys grace by the fact of its reception—that is *ex opere operato*. Of this grace God is the principal cause; the sacrament itself is the instrumental cause. It is the means by which the virtue of Christ’s passion is conveyed to His members.

By baptism the recipient is regenerated, and original and previous personal sins are pardoned, though the tendency to sin is not obliterated. Man is now given the grace, if he will use it, to resist sin, and the lost power to attain the Christian virtues. Infant baptism had become the universal practice, but in the time of Aquinas immersion was still the more prevalent form, and had his approval.

The sole recognized theory regarding Christ’s presence in the Supper was that which had been taught by Paschasius Radbertus (ante, p. 211) and Lanfranc (ante, p. 262), and had been known since the first half of the twelfth century as transubstantiation. It had been given full dogmatic authority by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Aquinas but added clearness of definition. At the words of consecration by the priest the miracle is wrought by the power of God, so that while the “accidents” (shape, taste, and the like) remain unaltered, the “substance” is transformed into the very body and blood of Christ. Aquinas also accepted and developed the view that the whole body and blood of Christ is present in either element. It was far from original with him, but had grown with the increasing custom of the laity to partake of the bread only. A withdrawal of the cup instigated by the clergy did not take place. The abandonment of the cup was rather a layman’s practice due to fear of dishonoring the sacrament by misuse of the wine. Such anxiety had manifested itself as early as the seventh century in the adoption of the Greek custom of dipping the bread in the wine—a practice repeatedly disapproved by ecclesiastical authority, but supported by lay sentiment. By the twelfth century the laity were avoiding the use of the wine altogether, apparently first of all in England. By the time of Aquinas lay communion in the bread alone had become prevalent. Similar considerations led to the general abandonment by the Western Church, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the practice of infant communion, which had been universal, and which continues in the Greek Church to the present.

Mediæval piety and worship reach their highest point in the Lord’s Supper. It is the continuation of the incarnation, the repetition of the passion, the source of spiritual upbuilding to the recipient, the evidence of his union with Christ, and a sacrifice well pleasing to God, inclining Him to be gracious to those in need on earth and in purgatory.

Penance, though not reckoned a sacrament of equal dignity with baptism or the Lord’s Supper, was really of great, if not prime, importance in mediæval practice. Mediæval thought regarding the personal religious life centred about the two conceptions of grace and merit. Baptism effected the forgiveness of previous sins; but for those after baptism penance was necessary. The Latin mind has always been inclined to view sin and righteousness in terms of definite acts rather than as states, and therefore to look upon man’s relations to God under the aspects of debt and credit—though holding that the only basis of credit is the effect of God’s grace. These tendencies were never more marked than in the scholastic period. They represented wide-spread popular views which the schoolmen explained theologically, rather than originated.

According to Aquinas, penance involves four elements, contrition, confession, satisfaction, and absolution. Contrition is sincere sorrow for the offense against God and a determination not to repeat it. Yet Aquinas holds that, as all sacraments convey grace, a penance begun in “attrition,” that is, in fear of
punishment, may by infused grace become a real contrition.

Private confession to the priest had made gradual progress since its advocacy by the old British missionaries (ante, p. 197). Abelard and Peter Lombard were of opinion that a true contrition was followed by divine forgiveness, even without priestly confession, though they thought such confession desirable. The Fourth Lateran Council, in 1215, required confession to the priest at least once a year of all laymen of age of discretion. Such confession thereby became church law. Alexander of Hales argued its necessity, and Aquinas gave it more logical exposition. It must be made to the priest as the physician of the soul, and include all “deadly” sins—the catalogue of which was now much larger than in the early church (ante, p. 100).

Though God forgives the eternal punishment of the penitent, certain temporal penalties remain as a consequence of sin. This distinction was clearly made by Abelard and became the current property of the schoolmen. These temporal penalties satisfy the sinner’s offense against God so far as it is in his power to do so. They also enable him to avoid sin in the future. They are the “fruits of repentance.” It is the business of the priest to impose these satisfactions, which, if not adequate in this life, will be completed in purgatory.

On evidence thus of sorrow for sin, confession, and a willingness to give satisfaction, the priest, as God’s minister or agent, pronounces absolution. Here, then, was the great control of the priesthood over the laity till the Reformation, and in the Roman Church to the present. Without priestly pardon no one guilty after baptism of a “deadly” sin has assurance of salvation.

A great modification of these satisfactions was, however, rapidly growing in the century and a half before Aquinas. A remission of a portion or of all of these “temporal” penalties could be obtained. Such remission was called an “indulgence.” Bishops had long exercised the right to abridge satisfactions in cases where circumstances indicated unusual contrition. Great services to the church were held to deserve such consideration. Peter Damian (1007?-1072) regarded gifts of land for a monastery or a church as affording such occasions. These did not constitute the full indulgence system, however. That seems to have originated in southern France, and the earliest, though not undisputed, instance is about the year 1016. Their first conspicuous employment was by a French Pope, Urban II (1088-1099), who promised full indulgence to all who engaged in the First Crusade, though Pope Alexander II had given similar privileges on a smaller scale for battle against the Saracens in Spain about 1063. Once begun, the system spread with great rapidity. Not only Popes but bishops gave indulgences, and on constantly easier terms. Pilgrimages to sacred places or at special times, contributions to a good work, such as building a church or even a bridge or a road, were deemed deserving of such reward. The financial possibilities of the system were soon perceived and exploited. Since “temporal” penalties included those of purgatory, the value of an indulgence was enormous, though undefined, and the tendency to substitute it for a real penance was one to which human nature readily responded.

Such was the practice to which Aquinas now gave the classic interpretation. Following Alexander of Hales, he taught that the superabundant merits of Christ and of the saints form a treasury of good works from which a portion may be transferred by the authority of the church, acting through its officers, to the needy sinner. It can, indeed, avail only for those who are really contrite, but for such it removes, in whole or in part, the “temporal” penalties here and in purgatory. Indulgences were never a license to commit sin. They were an amelioration of penalties justly due to sins already committed and regretted. But, however interpreted, there can be no doubt as to the moral harmfulness of the system, or that it grew worse till the Reformation, of which it was an immediately inducing cause.

At their deaths, according to Aquinas, the wicked pass immediately to hell, which is endless, and from which there is no release. Those who have made full use of the grace offered in the church go at once to heaven. The mass of Christians who have but imperfectly availed themselves of the means of grace must undergo a longer or shorter purification in purgatory.

The church is one, whether in heaven, on earth, or in purgatory. When one member suffers, all suffer; when one does well, all share in his good work. On this unity of the church Aquinas bases prayers to the
saints and for those in purgatory. The visible church requires a visible head. To be subject to the Roman Pontiff is necessary for salvation. To the Pope, also, belongs the right to issue new definitions of faith, and Aquinas implies the doctrine of papal infallibility.

It was Aquinas’s good fortune that his philosophy and his theology alike found a hearty disciple in the greatest of medieval poets, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), whose *Divina Commedia* moves, in these respects, almost wholly in Aquinas’s realm of thought.

*Duns Scotus*

Aquinas was a Dominican, and their natural rivalry soon drew upon his system the criticism of Franciscan scholars, many of whom were of English birth. Such a critic was Richard of Middletown (?-1300?); but the most famous of all, and one of the greatest of the schoolmen, was John Duns Scotus (1265?-1308). In spite of his name he appears to have been an Englishman. Educated in Oxford, where he became its most famous teacher, he removed to Paris in 1304. Four years later the general of the order sent him to Cologne, where he died just as his work there had begun. The keenest critic and the ablest dialectician of all the schoolmen, he attacked the work of Aquinas with the utmost acumen. He attained a position as authoritative teacher in the Franciscan order similar to that of Aquinas in the Dominican, and the theological rivalries of the Thomists and Scotists continued to rage till the Reformation.

Aquinas had held that the essence of God is being. To Scotus, it is free [*"arbitrary"] will. The will in God and man is free. Aquinas held that God did what He saw to be right. To Scotus what God wills is right by the mere fact of willing. Though, like Aquinas, Scotus was a modified realist, he laid emphasis on the individual rather than on the universal. To him the individual is the more perfect form.

Since God is absolute will, the sacrifice of Christ has the value which God puts upon it. Any other act would have been sufficient for salvation had God seen fit so to regard it. Nor can we say, with Aquinas, that Christ’s death was the wisest way of salvation. That would be to limit God’s will. All we can affirm is that it was the way chosen by God. Similarly, Scotus minimized the repentance necessary for salvation. Aquinas has demanded contrition or an “attrition”—fear of punishment—that by the infusion of grace became contrition. Scotus held that “attrition” is sufficient by divine appointment to secure fitness for pardon. It is followed by forgiveness, and that by the infusion of grace by which a man is enabled to do certain acts to which God has been pleased to attach merit. The sacraments do not of themselves convey grace, but are the conditions appointed by God upon which, if fulfilled, grace is bestowed.

The most fundamental difference between Aquinas and Scotus is one of attitude. To Aquinas there could be no real disagreement between theology and philosophy, however inadequate the latter to reach all the truths of the former. To Duns much in theology is philosophically improbable, yet must be accepted on the authority of the church. The breakdown of Scholasticism had begun, for its purpose had been to show the reasonableness of Christian truth.

The dispute which roused the loudest controversy between Thomists and Scotists was regarding the “immaculate conception” of the Virgin Mary. Aquinas had taught that she shared in the original sin of the race. Scotus held that she was free from it—a doctrine that was to be declared that of the church by Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) in 1854.

*William of Occam*

Yet more radical in his divorce of philosophy from theology was Scotus’s pupil, William of Occam (?-1349?). An English Franciscan of the most earnest type, he studied in Oxford, taught in Paris, defended the complete poverty of Christ and the Apostles against Pope John XXII (*ante*, p. 261), suffered imprisonment, only to escape in 1328 and find refuge with Louis of Bavaria, then in quarrel with the Pope. For the rest of his life he defended the independence of the state from ecclesiastical authority with the utmost steadfastness.

Occam attacked any form of “realism” fiercely. Only individual objects exist. Any association in genera or species is purely mental, having no objective reality. It is simply a use of symbolic “terms.” Hence, Occam was called a “terminist.” His system was a far more vigorous and destructive nominalism than that.
of Roscelin (ante, p. 263). Yet actual knowledge of things in themselves men do not have, only of mental concepts. This denial led him to the conclusion that no theological doctrines are philosophically provable. They are to be accepted—and he accepted them—simply on authority. That authority he made in practice that of the church; though in his contest with what he deemed a derelict papacy he taught that Scripture, and not the decisions of councils and Popes, is alone binding on the Christian. No wonder that Luther, in this respect, could call him “dear master.”

Occam’s philosophical views gained increasing sway after his death. From thence onward till just before the Reformation nominalism was the dominant theological position. It was the bankruptcy of Scholasticism. While it undoubtedly aided investigation by permitting the freest (philosophical) criticism of existing dogma, it based all Christian belief on arbitrary authority. That was really to undermine theology, for men do not long hold as true what is intellectually indefensible. It robbed of interest the great speculative systems of the older Scholasticism. Men turned increasingly, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, to mysticism, or returned to Augustine for the intellectual and religious comfort which Scholasticism was unable longer to afford.

22. MYSTIC AND SPIRITUAL WRITERS
[adapted from Vauchez, 4 and Walker, 5.8]

[22.1] MEDIEVAL SPIRITUALITY

Art and Spirituality
The Church was truly striving to lift a coarse and poorly educated people beyond purely material demands by leading it to sense the existence of a higher reality. To this end, it did not hesitate to use the resources of art, both as the expression of an intense spiritual life - that of the clerics--and as a means of giving the laity a glimpse of the greatness and infinite wealth of the divine mystery. We will not study here the difficult problem of the religious formation, or rather permeation, which the faithful received through cycles of frescos or liturgical singing, or through the sculptured groups which proliferated, from the late eleventh century onward, on the porches of abbeys and cathedrals. A great deal has been said about the ‘stone Bible’ which these works offered to the gaze of simple folk. It is not certain that educational intentions were paramount in the minds of those who had them produced; they seem rather to have been aimed at making an emotional impact liable to extend into spiritual insight. In a religion in which worship remained the essential act, the main function of God’s house was to offer the divine mysteries a setting worthy of their greatness. But beauty in form was not appropriate only to the sacred nature of liturgical services. The stone church, a symbol of the Church itself, of the redeemed people, was to give the faithful a foretaste of the beauty of heaven. Suger, the great abbot of Saint-Denis (1080-1151), is one of the few clerics of the time who defined with precision the religious aims which inspired the building and decoration of places of worship. In his autobiography, he developed a symbolism of light strongly influenced by the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius the areopagite. According to dionvsian doctrine, every creature receives and transmits divine illumination according to its capacity, and beings as well as things are ordered in a hierarchy according to their degree of participation in the divine essence. The human soul, enveloped in the opaqueness of matter, longs to return to God. It can succeed in doing so only through visible things which, at succeeding levels of the hierarchy, reflect His light better and better. Through created reality, the mind can thus rise again to the uncreated. In the field of art, such a concept of the relationship between the human and the divine led to the proliferation inside churches of objects made of silver and gold or adorned with precious stones, which, because of their radiance, could be regarded as symbols of the virtues and help man rise to the splendor of the Creator. Likewise, the light filtering through stained glass windows supported the flights of meditation and led the mind back to God, whose reflection it was. To quote the inscription which Suger had engraved on the bronze door of Saint-Denis:
By means of perceptible beauty, the numbed soul rises to true Beauty and, from the place where it lay
engulfed, it rises again to heaven when it sees the light of these splendors.’

Renewed monasticism declared war on these aesthetics which were also those of Cluny in the name of a
rigoristic spirituality. Though Saint Bernard allowed rich decorations in churches designed for the faithful,
he was opposed to them in abbatial churches and, generally speaking, among religious. Thus the statutes
of Citeaux, like those of the Carthusians, forbid placing gold crucifixes or silk hangings in conventual
churches and adorning them with sculptures and stained glass windows. ‘Let us leave painted images to
simple folk’, wrote the regular canon Hugh of Fouilloy. In Saint Bernard’s opinion, all this luxury was not
only useless but dangerous. First of all, the concern for a rich setting prevented clerics from giving alms to
the poor. More especially, by cultivating the arts in a disorderly fashion, man ran the risk of coming to
love pleasure for its own sake and of multiplying superfluous stimulations for the purpose of pure
enjoyment. Did wealth and abundance of ornament not lead, in the last instance, to a search for sensual
delight, with the mind dissipating itself in outer sensations and letting itself be distracted by shimmering
impressions? In the eyes of the abbot of Clairvaux, all this contradicted the requirements of’ the spiritual
life. For the soul needed inner concentration so as to be able to know itself and become unified iii
humility; introspection conflicted with empty curiosity, which threatened the religious spirit. But let us
make no mistake! Saint Bernard and the supporters of ascetic rigorism were not enemies of art, and in a
cistercian nave purity of line and simplicity of form amply make up for lack of ornament. But the
irrationality and rich exuberance of romanesque art contrasted with an aesthetics of poverty which chose
to restrict itself to what was necessary and retained only simple, functional shapes. Cistercian art is
austere, disciplined, and based on a search for purity. It is no less steeped in spirituality than that of Cluny.
But whereas, in the latter the joyful abundance and wealth of forms aimed at dazzling the mind and giving
it a foretaste of everlasting festivities, the new art saw an obstacle to contemplation in such material
realities. For the supporters of asceticism and voluntary poverty, only through bareness could man attain
spiritual love, which made vital necessities into a springboard toward God.

Thus not one but two spiritualities of art existed during the medieval period: one accepted and even
sought the mediation of perceptible things; the other rejected the analogy between the beauty of the world
and the splendor of the Beyond. For supporters of the latter, the ascent toward God implied humility and
renunciation of the carnal use of the senses. The role of art was then restricted to favoring man’s return to
his inmost self, which awakened him to the inner life.

A Conquest: The Inner Life

As piety underwent a process of individualization and religion became more personal, the life of the spirit
ceased to be the privilege of monks. In a society which was beginning to free itself from outward
constraints and to curb blind violence, a growing number of clerics and lay persons acquired that
minimum amount of leisure and distance from instinct which makes meditation and reflection possible:
‘Inside western man a new pioneer front opened up, that of conscience.’3 it is certainly not by chance that
this new awareness—in the full meaning of the term4 coincided with a certain lapse in eschatological
prospects. While the masses untiringly persisted in pursuing the niilleniuni and transferred their hopes,
which had been disappointed by the mediocre result of the crusades, to successive messiahs, the best
minds rediscovered the truth of the Gospel maxim: ‘The kingdom of God is within you’. A change took
place at the level of religious mentalities: the last judgment still figured among the essential concerns of
the faithful, but it lost its character of harrowing imminence. It would soon be regarded only as ‘the distant
sanction of the judgment of one’s conscience in inner dialogue with Christ’.5

Such a development resulted in enhancing yet more the importance of the sacrament of penance in
Christian life and in modifying its form. The essential stage of the penitential process shifted from
atonement to confession. Until the eleventh century, indeed, sin was not deemed to have been remitted
until the penalty inflicted for it had been entirely accomplished. From the twelfth century onward, the
generally accepted notion was that confession was the essential gesture and that absolution was an
accomplished fact as soon as confession had been made, for the Church acknowledged that it was such a
humiliating and difficult act that in itself it possessed expiatory value. It is therefore not surprising that from then on the sacrament of penance was referred to as ‘confession’. The mind’s turning back toward itself, its becoming conscious of its misdeed and of the offence given God were henceforth more important than the increasingly easy actions which penitents continued to carry out by way of satisfaction. More generally speaking, the twelfth century was marked in the spiritual sphere by an attitude which has been called ‘Christian socratism’. Men of such different temperaments as Abelard, Saint Bernard, and Hugh of Saint Victor shared the conviction that in order to know heaven and earth it was first of all necessary to know oneself. A fortiori, the soul would be able to reach God only after a lengthy journey through the meanderings of the human psyche and the steps of the intellect: ‘How do you ask to sec me in my brightness, you who do not know yourself?’ says God to the soul in a bernardine work. Far from being a detour, introspection henceforth appeared as a necessity for anyone aspiring to live at a level higher than that of instinct.

Biblical (Monastic) Mysticism

According to monastic tradition, the privileged meeting place between the individual conscience and God was Scripture. For in the Middle Ages the Bible was not one book among many others, but the book which held the key to all mysteries. People learned to read in it, and attempted to discover in it the laws ruling the life of human beings and of the universe. God was almost physically present in it: solemn oaths were sworn on the Bible, and one would open it at random in order to read in it one’s destiny or seek one’s vocation. Saint Francis did so at the moment of his conversion. Such a book was not intended to be read. In fact, even among monks, few indeed possessed the entire text, and its content was far from invariable. Important differences were to be found from one copy to the next, and the notion of canonical scriptures meant almost nothing during a period when apocryphal texts such as the gospel of Saint Peter and apocalyptic treatises were readily incorporated into the Bible. The knowledge which both clerics and laity had of it was nearly always an indirect one. The texts most often quoted were those which occurred in the liturgy: the psalms, the synoptic Gospels, the letters of Saint Paul and the Book of Revelation. As a result, the faithful were well acquainted with some books, and virtually ignorant of others. Every believer drew from this vast heritage according to his abilities and his needs. The literature relating to the crusades afforded ample room to the Old Testament, with its tales of the wars waged by the people of God and its descriptions of the Holy Land, and also to the Book of Revelation which nourished the eschatological hopes of the masses. Under normal circumstances, most of the faithful were more interested in the psalms and in the Book of Job, which abounded in moral precepts and down-to-earth maxims. The clerics in city schools were fond of speculating on Genesis, which brought out God’s action as creator, and contemplatives, beginning with Saint Bernard and William of Saint Thierry, took pleasure in commenting on the Song of Songs interpreted as a chronicle of the tumultuous wedding of God and the human soul.

For medieval man, therefore, the Bible was a reality with which he was more or less deeply permeated, but which, in all cases, nourished his spiritual life by providing him both with matter for reflection and with directions for action. Reminiscences and quotations crowd the writings of clerics in such large numbers that it is often difficult to make out what proceeded from their own minds and what belongs to the sacred text. The latter was both interiorized and updated, so much so that it became part of personal experience. For Scripture was not regarded as a mere narrative of salvation history. Beyond its obvious historical meaning, a subtle exegesis, which sometimes tended to drift towards allegory, discovered an appropriate moral and spiritual significance in every episode, if not in every word. This manner of approaching the biblical texts entailed the risk of dissolving facts in a very rich but not always coherent symbolism. How tempting it was to seek answers to each and every question in a book whose author was God himself?

During the first decades of the twelfth century, the urban schools developed a method allowing access to an understanding of the divine mystery while avoiding what might have been vague and subjective about the traditional biblical commentaries. With Abelard, theology - since that is what we are dealing with--became an autonomous discipline, resorting to logical reasoning and dialectics. God remained the
object of knowledge, but one sought to attain him through natural reasoning, not through outpourings of
the heart. Scripture was not excluded from the field of reflection, but was placed on the same level as
pagan authors, particularly Plato and Aristotle, whom the West was beginning to rediscover. In some
intellectual circles—especially Parisian ones—the idea prevailed that the principal truths of Christianity,
including the mystery of the Trinity, could be accounted for by using the concepts and methods of pagan
philosophy. Saint Bernard was disturbed by this and accused Abelard and his disciples of bringing
revealed truth down to the level of human truth. It is not our intention to relate the long and painful
controversy which pitted the abbot of Clairvaux against the ‘knight of dialectics’, whom he blamed for
trusting the aptitudes of reason too much. What matters for our purpose is that with Abelard theology
broke away from the ‘sacred page’ (sacra pagina), that is, from the spiritual commentary of the Word of
God. From then on, we must deal on one hand with a scholastic theology which was a rational specula-
tion on revelation, and on the other with a mystical one which remained centered on the meditation of
Scripture and refused to favor intellectual reflection as a means of access to the knowledge of God.

The Origins of Western Mysticism

There was another deep divergence between the theological and the mystical way: the latter’s objective
was not to wrest God’s secrets from him, but to allow the soul to experience his presence and to be united
with him. The biblical text, which, for the spiritually-minded, remained the necessary reference of all
religious experience, provided a starting point for meditation, which led by stages to contemplation. Many
twelfth century authors, from Aelred of Rievaulx to Saint Hildegard, have described this passage from
reflection to enlightenment from personal experience. According to them, the divine Word first acts upon
the mind like a flame, severing the bonds which join it to the flesh and to sin. Once the memory has been
purified, the soul can use the words and images of the text as a foothold in its attempt to rise toward its
Creator. At the end of a series of ascending stages, it crosses, as by means of a ladder, the infinite distance
separating it from God. Confessions of unworthiness are gradually replaced by surges of affection.
Finally, in silence, the Word takes possession of the soul and becomes flesh: man gives birth to God. As
Saint Bernard says: ‘The Word’s speech is the infusion of his gift’ (Locutio Verbi, infusi doni). The Word
who speaks to human persons and who gives himself to each of them are one and the same. The spirit
emerges elated and dazzled from these uplifting moments. Thanks to Scripture, man can free himself from
his own limitations, since in it the visible and the invisible meet.

With Saint Bernard and William of Saint Thierry—both of them Cistercians—, such mystical
experiences, always present in a diffuse way within monasticism, were carried to their farthest
consequences and presented in systematic fashion for the first time. Both of them took as a starting point
the Song of Songs, an especially lyrical book of the Old Testament which was interpreted as a dialogue
between God, identified with the lover, and the soul, presented as the Almighty’s beloved. Starting from
there, Saint Bernard developed in a grandiose vision a whole dialectic of the relationship between the
Creator and his creatures. According to him, man is in the image of the world through his body, in that of
God through his soul. On account of original sin, the divine element in man has been overshadowed by
evil. But God has restored this likeness through the Incarnation: Mary, the new Eve, is not only the
instrument of the new creation, but a model for Christians of all times. The soul-bride in search of God
must strive to resemble the Virgin and, like her, to become a mother in order to give birth to the divine
spirit. From that moment on, man rises above his fleshly and sinful condition and finds his way back to the
heavenly home for which he yearns from the bottom of his heart. The abbot of Clairvaux distinguishes
four steps in this ascent: carnal love, which consists in loving oneself, then love of neighbor and of
Christ’s humanity which is already higher, although still on a mediocre level. If the Christian perseveres,
he will come to love God in his sweetness and to obtain spiritual consolations. But God will not come
down into the soul until she has become capable of loving him for himself, after having completely shed
her carnal husk. Once she has reached this stage, the soul-bride, like the Church whose figure she is, lives
according to love. In her all the potentialities which go to make up human nature become supernaturally
actualized. Far from being an abnormal occurrence, mystical ecstasy is the soul’s perfect fulfilment
inasmuch as it allows God to be known in the deepest recesses of the trinitarian mystery. Saint Bernard was too much of a realist to be unaware of how exceptional such states are, and he himself clearly underlined that the mystical experience is inferior to the face-to-face vision of God which would occur in heavenly bliss. But, as at the Transfiguration the apostles participated in Christ’s radiance, the ecstasy afforded the soul by the Bridegroom’s kiss conforms her to some extent to the loved one to whom she is spiritually united. Through mystical union, man does not become God, but he rises above himself and receives by grace what God is by nature. In a being thus deified, the divine image is definitively restored.

The spiritual themes found in the writings of William of Saint Thierry (d.1148), author of the Mirror of Faith (Speculum fidei) and On Contemplating God (De contemplando Deo), are more or less the same as those developed by his friend Saint Bernard, but there is more emphasis on the trinitarian mystery. The human soul, in William’s eyes, is the created image of the creating Trinity—a doubtless inferior and debased image, but one nevertheless modeled on it. For, according to him, the Fall did not destroy the basic likeness, but merely clouded it. By relying on grace and on personal effort, a human being athirst for perfection may restore this likeness by reattuning his soul to the Trinity. In order to achieve this, he will have to rise from the animal to the rational state, and from the latter to the spiritual one, which lets him share in the glory of the Resurrection here below. In those who establish themselves at this level, the three faculties of the soul regain their true function—memory brings man back to the Father, reason leads him to Christ and will to the Holy Spirit—and open up onto an intimate knowledge of the triune God.

The mysticism which arose in the West in the twelfth century was not restricted to the cistercian current alone, important though it was. Indeed, other ways were experimented with in the search for union with God. Some authors strove to associate intellectual reflection with a loving quest for the divine presence. This was the case, in particular, in the School of Saint Victor, a house of regular canons founded in Paris in 1113 by William of Champeaux and made famous by a series of great theologians and spiritual teachers, chief among them Hugh (d.1141) and Richard (d.1173) of Saint Victor. The latter is the more interesting from our viewpoint, for he developed a doctrine often called ‘speculative mysticism’. For Richard, the author of a treatise on the Trinity (De Trinitate), the Holy Trinity is the highest object of contemplation. In order to attain to knowledge of this mystery, speculation, that is, rational investigation, is the first stage. One must discover the necessary reasons which allow the intellect to grasp the foundations of trinitarian life. But, according to him, contemplation alone, founded on Scripture and nourished by love, allows access to the intimate life of the divine persons. God awakens in the human soul a haunting and unquenchable longing which drives the creature to merge with him in a leap of the mind beyond itself (excessus mentis) which, according to Richard, is an enlightenment rather than an ecstasy properly so called. Though the goal pursued is, as for Saint Bernard, intimate union with God, the Victorines view it primarily as a vision of the profound meaning of things and of beings. Their thought process abolished, or rather was unaware of, the harriers set up by later spirituality between the ascetic, intellectual, and mystical lives. For them, the ascent toward God implied the analysis of psychological realities, the exploration of the soul’s faculties, and the steps of contemplation. This concept of the spiritual life—one both synthetic and dynamic had scarcely any influence in its own day. But it opened the avenues on to which a Saint Bonaventure was to venture in the thirteenth century.

Other mystical experiences, most especially in feminine circles, took devotion to Christ’s humanity and a longing for active participation in the Saviour’s Passion as a starting point. This current is not unrelated to the cistercian school, and both Saint Bernard and William of Saint Thierry gave the mystery of the God-Man an important place in their experience and in their writings. Both had, however, emphasized that devotion to the humanity of Christ was merely one of the very first steps of love. In their view, one could go from shadow to light, from earth to heaven, only by gazing on God in his divinity, and the soul in quest of perfection had to rise from meditation on Christ according to the flesh to contemplation of Christ according to the spirit. In the religious movement which developed in the diocese of Liege and in Brabant at the end of the twelfth century, those aspects played an essential part, however, and adoration of the suffering Christ lay at the heart of the mysticism which then blossomed in cloisters and beguinages. Saint Lutgard and Mary of Oignies sought to be united with God in his incarnation and poverty. From then on,
and for at least a century, the emotional element became dominant in western mysticism. Its essential components were a pathetic feeling for the drama of Redemption, meditation on the bloody sacrifice of Christ, the gift of tears which purified the inner gaze and expressed compunction of the heart. Should we see in this feminine mysticism no more than a popularized reflection of Saint Bernard’s ideas on the soul’s relationship with its Creator? In so doing, we would be minimizing the originality of the Low Countries’ spirituality; we would also be forgetting that a half century rich in change separates the abbot of Clairvaux from the beguine recluse of Oignies. I-ic saw the flesh as no more than a shadow and an obstacle beyond which one had to go in order to rise up to the eternal Word; for her, Christ’s body, both as an instrument of salvation and as a token of eternity in its eucharistic continuation, was at the heart of the Christian mystery.

All religions have witnessed and witness various degrees of participation in the mysteries they teach. Medieval Christianity is no exception to the rule: from the cult of relics to bridal mysticism, it offers a broad spectrum of ways of access to the divine. It may seem strange to lump together such different forms of religious expression. But the stress laid by theologians on the role of the incarnate Word in the Redemption and the upsurge of popular devotions to the persons of Christ and his mother express the same intuition, though doubtless at different levels. The orientations of piety have by no means been proven to be always dependent on that of the lofty spirituality lived in cloisters. In the twelfth century, the two apparently developed concomitantly, and in some features, the religion of the masses may even have been ahead of that of the elite: devotion to the Holy Lance, miraculously discovered before Antioch by the crusaders, preceded the Brabant mystics’ veneration for the wound in Christ’s side by several decades. Beyond these problems of influence, which are always delicate and difficult to solve, the historian notes that on the threshold of the thirteenth century two basic certainties permeated the religious consciousness of the West: God could be reached only through his crucified Son, and in order to achieve salvation, it was necessary to model oneself on Christ. But there are several ways of identifying with a loved one: seeking out his footsteps and cultivating his memory, imitating his example or attempting to be one with him. Different though these attitudes are, they are nonetheless inspired by the same feeling.

Besides the intellectual, the mystical tendency was strongly represented in many of the schoolmen. Hugo of St. Victor and Bonaventura may as rightly be reckoned to the mystics as to the scholastics. Aquinas showed marked mystic leanings, derived from Augustine and the Pseudo-Dionysius. Aristotle never wholly conquered Neo-Platonic influences. Neo-Platonism itself enjoyed a measure of revival in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, partly through the strongly Neo-Platonizing. Arabian commentaries on Aristotle, but even more through the widely read Liber de Causis, falsely ascribed to Aristotle, but containing excerpts from the Neo-Platonic philosopher, Proclus (410-485), and ultimately by translations directly from Proclus’s accredited works.

An important representative of this mystical spirit was “Meister” Eckhart (1260-1327), a German Dominican, who studied in Paris, served as provincial prior of the Saxon district, lived for a time in Strassburg, and taught in Cologne. At the close of his life Eckhart was under trial for heresy. He himself declared his readiness to submit his opinions to the judgment of the church, but two years after his death a number of his teachings were condemned by Pope John XXII. In true Neo-Platonic fashion Eckhart taught that that which is real in all things is the divine. In the soul of man is a spark of God. That is the true reality in all men. All individualizing qualities are essentially negative. Man should, therefore, lay them aside. His struggle is to have God born in his soul, that is to enter into full communion with and to come under the control of the indwelling God. In this effort Christ is the pattern and example, in whom Godhead dwelt in humanity in all fulness. With God dominant the soul is filled with love and righteousness. Churchly observances may be of some value, but the springs of the mystic life are far deeper and its union with God more direct. Good works do not make righteous. It is the soul already righteous that does good
works. The all-important matter is that the soul enters into its full privilege of union with God.

Perhaps the most eminent of Eckhart’s disciples was John Tauler (?-1361), a Dominican preacher who worked long in Strassburg, of which he was probably a native, in Cologne and in Basel. The times in Germany were peculiarly difficult. The long contest for the empire between Frederick of Austria and Louis of Bavaria, and papal interferences therein, wrought religious as well as political confusion. The bubonic plague of 1348-1349, known in England as the “black death,” devastated the population. To his distressed age Tauler was a preacher of helpfulness, whose sermons have been widely read ever since. In them are many “evangelical” thoughts, which aroused the admiration of Luther, and have often led to the claim that he was a Protestant before Protestantism. He emphasized the inward and the vital in religion, and condemned dependence on external ceremonies and dead works. His real position was that of a follower of Eckhart, with similar mystic emphasis on union with the divine, on “God being born within,” though he avoided the extreme statements which had led to churchly condemnation of Eckhart’s opinions. A less practical but widely influential representative of the same tendencies was the ascetic Dominican, Henry Suso (?-1366), whose writings did much to further this mystic point of view.

Other Mystics

Through these influences a whole group of mystic sympathizers was raised up in southwestern Germany and Switzerland, who called themselves “Friends of God.” These included not only many of the clergy, but nuns and a considerable number of laity. Among the laymen, Rulman Merswin, of Strassburg (1307-1382), was the most influential. Originally a banker and merchant, he was intimate with Tauler, whose views he shared, and devoted all the latter part of his life to religious labors. He mystified his contemporaries and posterity by letters and books which he set forth purporting to come from a “great Friend of God” in the Highlands (i.e., Switzerland), whose existence was long believed real, but now is practically proved to have been a fiction of Merswin himself. The most important work of these Friends of God was the “German Theology,” written late in the fourteenth century by an otherwise unknown and unnamed priest of the Deutsch-Herrn Haus of Frankfort, which was to influence Luther, and to be printed by him in 1516 and 1518.

These German mystics all leaned strongly toward pantheism. They all, however, represented a view of the Christian life which saw its essence in a transforming personal union of the soul with God, and they all laid little weight on the more external methods of ordinary churchly life.

Brethren of the Common Life

This mystical movement was furthered in the Netherlands by John of Ruysbroeck (1294-1381), who was influenced by Eckhart’s writings and enjoyed the personal friendship of Tauler and other of the Friends of God. Ruysbroeck’s friend, in turn, was Gerhard Groot (1340-1384)—a brilliant scholar, who upon his conversion, about 1374, became the most influential popular preacher of the Netherlands. A more conservative churchly thinker than Ruysbroeck, Groot was much less radical in his mysticism. A man of great practical gifts, Groot’s work led shortly after his death to the foundation by his disciple, Florentius Radewyn (1350-1400), of the Brethren of the Common Life. This association, of which the first house was established in Deventer, grew out of the union of Groot’s converts for a warmer religious life. They grouped themselves in houses of brethren and of sisters, who lived essentially a monastic life under common rules, but without permanent vows, engaged in religious exercises, copying books of edification, and especially in teaching. Work was required of all. These houses were wide-spread in the Netherlands and in Germany, and did much to promote popular piety in the fifteenth century.

The Brethren of the Common Life were non-monastic in the matter of vows. Groot’s preaching led to an influential movement for those who preferred the monastic life, though it, also, did not take full form till shortly after his death. This was the foundation of the famous monastery of Windesheim, which soon gathered a number of affiliated convents about it, and became a reformatory influence of power in the monastic life of the Netherlands and Germany. In both these movements the mystic influence was strongly present, though in a much more churchly form than among the immediate disciples of Eckhart. The noblest product of this simple, mystical, churchly piety is the *Imitation of Christ*—a book the
circulation of which has exceeded that of any other product of the Middle Ages. Though its authorship has been the theme of heated controversy, it was unquestionably the work of Thomas a Kempis (1380?-1471). A pupil of the Brethren of the Common Life in Deventer, most of his long life was spent in the monastery of Mount St. Agnes, near Zwolle. This foundation was a member of the Windesheim congregation, of which Thomas’s older brother, John, was one of the founders. Thomas’s life was outwardly the most uneventful conceivable; but few have understood, as did he, the language of simple, mystical devotion to Christ.

Mystical Extravagances

The mystical movement had its reverse side in a pantheism which broke with all churchly and even all moral teaching. Such was that of Amalrich of Bena (?-1204), a teacher in Paris, who was led by the writings of John Scotus Erigena *(ante, p. 210)* and the extreme Neo-Platonic opinions of the Spanish Mohammedan expositor of Aristotle, Averroes (1126-1198), to the conclusions that God is all, that He is incarnate in the believer as in Christ, and that the believer cannot sin. He also held that as the Jewish law and ritual had been abolished by the coming of Christ, so that of earlier Christianity was now done away with by the coming of the Holy Spirit. Amalrich was compelled to recant by Pope Innocent III, but he left a number of followers.

Similar extravagances kept cropping out in the regions of Germany and the Netherlands, where the mysticism already described had its chief following. In many ways it was simply that mysticism carried to a pantheistic extreme. It was usually quietist, believing that the soul could become one with God by contemplation, and in consequence of that union its acts could no longer be sinful, since it is controlled by God. All sacraments and penances, even prayer, become superfluous. These views were not united into a compact system, nor did their holders constitute a sect, though they have often been so regarded and named the “Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit.” Undoubtedly, however, such notions were rather frequently to be found in monasteries and nunneries, where mysticism was practised extravagantly, and among the Beguines, whom they brought into doubtful repute. They were not only repressed by the inquisition, but were opposed by the greater mystic leaders of whom an account has been given.

23. Papal Leadership and Schism

[adapted from Walker, 5]

[23.1] Missions and Defeats

The period between the Crusades and the Reformation was one of gains and losses for Christendom. In Spain the Christian forces struggled with increasing success against the Mohammedans. Gradually, four Christian states dominated the peninsula. Castile conquered Toledo in 1085, defeated the Moslems at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, and united with Leon into a strong state in 1230. Little Navarre stretched on both sides of the Pyrenees. Meanwhile Aragon on the east and Portugal on the west were winning their independence, so that by 1250 Mohammedan power on the peninsula was confined to the kingdom of Granada, whence it was to be driven in 1492. The Spanish Christian kingdoms were weak. The real power of Spain was not to be manifest till the joint reign of Ferdinand and Isabella united Castile and Aragon in 1479.

Missions to China and to Moslems

In the East the great Mongol empire, which began with the conquest of northern China in 1213, stretched across northern Asia, conquering most of what is now European Russia between 1238 and 1241, and reaching the borders of Palestine in 1258. 284 By this devastation the flourishing Nestorian Church in central Asia *(ante, p. 149)* was almost annihilated. Yet after the first rush of conquest was over, central Asia under Mongol control was accessible as it had never been before and was not to be till the nineteenth century. About 1260 two Venetian merchants, Nicolo and Maffeo Polo, made the long journey by land to Peking, where they were well received by the Mongol Khan, Kublai. Returning in 1269, they started again
in 1271, taking Nicolo’s more famous son, Marco, who entered the Khan’s service. It was not till 1295 that the Polos were back in Venice. Even before their return an Italian Franciscan, John of Monte Corvino, had started in 1291 for Peking, where he established a church about 1300. Christianity flourished for a time. Pope Clement V (1305-1314) appointed John an archbishop with six bishops under him. The work came to an end, however, when the Mongols and other foreigners were expelled from China by the victorious native Ming dynasty in 1368.

Efforts were made to reach the Mohammedans, but with little success. Francis of Assisi himself preached to the Sultan in Egypt in 1219 (ante, p. 258). More famous as a missionary was Raimon Lull (1235?-1315), a native of the island of Majorca. From a wholly worldly life he was converted in 1266, and now studied Arabic, as a missionary preparation, writing also his Ars Major, which he intended as an irrefutable demonstration of Christianity. In 1291 he began missionary work in Tunis, only to be expelled at the end of a year. He labored to induce the Pope to establish schools for missionary training. He went once more to Africa and was again driven out. His eloquence persuaded the Council of Vienne in 1311 to order teaching in Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic, in Avignon, Paris, Salamanca, Bologna, and Oxford, though this remained a pious wish. Back to Tunis he went as a missionary in 1314, and met a martyr’s death by stoning the next year. He had little to show of missionary achievement, but much of missionary inspiration.

Spread of [Turkish] Islam

The prevailing characteristic of this period was the loss of once Christian territories. The last of the conquests of the Crusaders in Palestine passed out of their hands in 1291. A new Mohammedan force was arising in the Ottoman Turks. Sprung from central Asia, they attained an independent position in Asia Minor in 1300. In 1354 they invaded the European portion of the Eastern empire, capturing Adrianople in 1361, and gradually spreading their rule over the Balkan lands. But a fragment of the empire remained till 1453, when Constantinople fell and the Eastern empire was at an end. The victorious career of the Turks was to carry them, in the Reformation age, nearly half across Europe. Christians ruled by them were deprived of political rights, though Christian worship and organization continued, under conditions of much oppression. The Greek Church, which had stood higher in culture than the Latin, certainly till the thirteenth century, was now largely robbed of significance. Its daughter in Russia was not conquered, however, and was growing rapidly in strength and importance. With it lay the future of the Eastern Church.

[23.2] THE PAPACY AT ITS HEIGHT AND ITS DECLINE

The contest between papacy and empire was by no means ended by the Concordat of Worms (ante, p. 234). The religious interest in the struggle was thereafter far less. Hildebrand’s quarrel had involved a great question of church purification. The later disputes were plain contests for supremacy. Frederick “Barbarossa” (1152-1190), of the house of Hohenstaufen, was one of the ablest of the Holy Roman Emperors. His model was Charlemagne, and he aspired to a similar control of churchly affairs. A vigorous ruler at home, no sovereign had been more thoroughly master of Germany than he. In spite of the Concordat of Worms he practically controlled the appointment of German bishops. On the other hand, his claims met with energetic resistance from the cities of northern Italy, which were growing strong on the commerce induced by the Crusades. This hostility he at first successfully overcame. With Alexander III (1159-1181) Frederick’s most able enemy mounted the papal throne. The cardinals were divided in the choice, and an imperialistic minority elected a rival Pope, who called himself Victor IV, and whom Frederick and the German bishops promptly supported. Alexander’s position was long difficult. In 1176, however, Frederick was defeated at Legnano by the Lombard league of Italian cities, and was forced to recognize Alexander. Frederick’s attempt to control the papacy had been shattered, but his authority over the German bishops was scarcely diminished. 453  Frederick won a further success over, the papacy, in 1186, by the marriage of his son Henry with the heiress of Sicily and southern Italy, thus threatening the papal states from north and south.
Henry II and Thomas Becket

Alexander III also won at least an apparent success over Henry II (1154-1189), one of the ablest of English Kings. That monarch, in order to strengthen his hold over the English church, secured the election of his apparently complaisant chancellor, Thomas Becket, as archbishop of Canterbury, in 1162. Once in office, Becket showed himself a determined upholder of ecclesiastical claims. Henry now, in 1164, secured the enactment of the Constitutions of Clarendon⁴⁵⁴, limiting the right of appeal to Rome in ecclesiastical cases, restricting the power of excommunication, subjecting the clergy to civil courts, and putting the election of bishops under the control of the King, to whom they must do homage. Becket now openly broke with the King. In 1170 a truce was brought about, but it was of short duration, and a hasty expression of anger on the part of Henry led to Becket’s murder just at the close of the year. Alexander used the deed skilfully. In 1172 Becket was canonized, and continued till the Reformation one of the most popular of English saints. Henry was forced to abandon the Constitutions of Clarendon, and do penance at Becket’s grave. Yet in spite of this apparent papal victory, Henry continued his control of English ecclesiastical affairs much as before.

Frederick “Barbarossa” died in 1190, on the Third Crusade. He was succeeded by his son, Henry VI (1190-1197), who, in 1194, obtained full possession of his wife’s inheritance in Sicily and southern Italy, and developed ambitious plans of greatly extending his imperial sway. The papacy, with both ends of Italy in the possession of the German sovereign, was in great political danger; but the situation was relieved by the early death of Henry VI in 1197, and the accession to the papacy in 1198 of one of its ablest mediæval representatives, Innocent III (1198-1216).

The Papacy at its Height of Power

Innocent III was unquestionably a man of personal humility and piety, but no Pope ever had higher conceptions of the papal office and under him the papacy reached its highest actual power. The death of Henry VI saw Germany divided. One party supported the claims of Henry's brother, Philip of Swabia, the other those of Otto of Brunswick, of the rival house of Welf (Guelph). Out of this confused situation Innocent strove with great skill to bring advantage to the papacy. He secured large concessions in Italy and Germany from Otto, yet when Philip gradually gained the upper hand, Innocent secured an agreement that the rival claims should be submitted to the judgment of a court controlled by the Pope. The murder of Philip in 1208 frustrated this plan, and put Otto IV once more to the fore. Innocent now obtained from Otto the desired guarantee of the extent of the papal states, and a promise to abandon control of German episcopal elections, and on the strength of these concessions crowned Otto Emperor in 1209. Otto promptly forgot all his promises. The angered Pope now put forward Frederick II (1212-1250), the young son of the late Emperor, Henry VI, who was chosen to the German throne by the elements opposed to Otto, in 1212, and renewed all Otto’s broken promises. In 1214 Otto was wholly defeated by the French King, Philip II (1179-1223), on the field of Bouvines, and Frederick was assured of the empire. Thus, Innocent III seemed wholly to have defended papal claims and to have dictated the imperial succession. The world supremacy of the papacy appeared realized.

Nor was Innocent III less successful in humbling the sovereigns of other lands. He compelled the powerful Philip II of France, by the prohibition of religious services—an interdict—to take back the Queen, Ingeborg, whom Philip had unjustly divorced. He separated King Alfonso IX of Leon from a wife too closely related. King Peter of Aragon received his kingdom as a fief from the Pope. Innocent’s greatest apparent victory was, however, in the case of England. The cruel and unpopular King John (1199-1216), in a divided election tried to secure his candidate as archbishop of Canterbury. The dispute was appealed to Rome. The King’s choice was set aside and Innocent’s friend, Stephen Langton, received the prize. John resisted. Innocent laid England under an interdict. The King drove out his clerical opponents. The Pope now excommunicated him, declared his throne forfeited and proclaimed a crusade against him. The defeated King not merely made a humiliating submission to the Pope, in 1213, but acknowledged his kingdom a fief of the papacy, agreeing to pay a feudal tax to the Pope of a thousand marks annually. Yet when the barons and clergy wrung Magna Charta from John in 1215, Innocent denounced it as an injury to his vassal.
In the internal affairs of the church Innocent’s policy was strongly centralizing. He claimed for the papacy the right of decision in all disputed episcopal elections. He asserted sole authority to sanction the transfer of bishops from one see to another. His crusade against the Cathari has already been noted (ante, p. 253). The great Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, at which transubstantiation was declared an article of faith, and annual confession and communion required, was also a papal triumph. The conquest of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade (ante, p. 243), though not approved by Innocent, seemed to promise the subjection of the Greek Church to papal authority.

In Innocent III the papacy reached the summit of its worldly power. The succeeding Popes continued the same struggle, but with decreasing success. The Emperor Frederick II, ruler of Germany, as well as of northern and southern Italy and Sicily, a man of much political ability and of anything but mediaeval piety, though put in office largely by Innocent III, soon proved the chief opponent of the world pretensions of the papacy. Under Gregory IX (1227-1241), the organizer of the inquisition and the patron of the Franciscans (ante, pp. 254,258), and Innocent IV (1243-1254) the papal contest was carried on against Frederick II, with the utmost bitterness and with very worldly weapons. Frederick was excommunicated, and rivals were raised up against him in Germany by papal influence. The papacy seemed convinced that only the destruction of the Hohenstaufen line, to which Frederick belonged, would assure its victory. On Frederick’s death in 1250 it pursued his son, Conrad IV (1250-1254), with the same hostility, and gave his heritage in southern Italy and Sicily to Edmund of England, son of King Henry III. A new influence, that of France, was making itself felt in papal counsels. Urban IV (1261-1264) was a Frenchman and appointed French cardinals. He now gave, in 1263, southern Italy and Sicily to Charles of Anjou, brother of King Louis IX of France (1226-1270). This was a turning-point in papal politics, and with it the dependence of the papacy on France really began.

New Forces Limiting Papal Power

The next Pope was also a Frenchman, Clement IV (1265-1268). During his papacy Conradin, the young son of Conrad IV, asserted his hereditary claims to southern Italy and Sicily by force of arms. He was excommunicated by Clement IV and defeated by Charles of Anjou, by whose orders he was beheaded in Naples, in 1268. With him ended the line of Hohenstaufen, which the Popes had so strenuously opposed, though there is no reason to think that the Pope was responsible in any way for Conradin’s execution. These long quarrels and the consequent confusion had greatly enfeebled the power of the Holy Roman Empire. Thenceforward, to the Reformation, it was far more a group of feeble states than an effective single sovereignty. It was able to offer little resistance to papal demands. Other forces were, however, arising that would inevitably make impossible such a world sovereignty as Innocent III had exercised. One such force was the new sense of nationality, which caused men to feel that, as Frenchmen or Englishmen, they had common interests against all foreigners, even the Pope himself. Such a sense of unity had not existed in the earlier Middle Ages. It was rapidly developing, especially in France and England in the latter half of the thirteenth century. A second cause was the rise in intelligence, wealth, and political influence of the middle class, especially in the cities. These were restive under ecclesiastical interference in temporal affairs. Closely associated with this development was the growth of a body of lay lawyers and the renewed study of the Roman law. These men were gradually displacing ecclesiastics as royal advisers, and developing the effectiveness of the royal power by precedents from a body of law—the Roman—which knew nothing of mediaeval ecclesiastical conditions. There was also a growing conviction among thoughtful and religious men that such worldly aims as the recent papacy had followed were inconsistent with the true interests of the church. These were growing forces with which the papacy must reckon. The weakness of the papacy, from a worldly point of view, was that it had no adequate physical forces at its disposal. It must balance off one competitor against another, and the wreck wrought in Germany left the door open to France without forces which could be matched against her.

Papal interference in Germany continued. Pope Gregory X (1271-1276) ordered the German electors, in 1273, to choose a King, under threat that the Pope himself would make the appointment if they failed. They chose Rudolf I, of Habsburg (1273-1291), who promptly renewed the concessions to the papacy which had been once made by Otto IV and Frederick II.
Boniface VIII and Philip the Fair

Quite otherwise was it speedily with France. The power of that monarchy had been rapidly growing, and in Philip IV, “the Fair” (1285-1314), France had a King of absolute unscrupulousness, obstinacy, and high conceptions of royal authority. In Boniface VIII (1294-1303) the papacy was held by a man of as lofty aspirations to world-rule as had ever there been represented. Neither participant in the struggle commands much sympathy. War had arisen between France, Scotland, and England which compelled the English King, Edward I (1272-1307), to rally the support of all his subjects by inviting the representatives of the Commons to take a place in Parliament, in 1295, thus giving them a permanent share in the English national councils. The struggle also induced the Kings of France and England to tax their clergy to meet its expenses. The clergy complained to Pope Boniface, who, in 1296 issued the bull Clericis laicos, inflicting excommunication on all who demanded or paid such taxes on clerical property without papal permission. Philip replied by prohibiting the export of money from France, thus striking at the revenues of the Pope and of the Italian bankers. The latter moved Boniface to modify his attitude so that the clergy could make voluntary contributions, and even allowed that, in great necessities, the King could lay a tax. It was a royal victory.

Comparative peace prevailed between Philip and Boniface for a few years. In 1301 the struggle again began. Philip had Bernard Saisset, bishop of Pamiers, whom the Pope had recently sent to him as untius, arrested and charged with high treason. The Pope ordered Bernard’s release and cited the French bishops, and ultimately King Philip himself, to Rome. In reply, Philip summoned the first French States- General, in which clergy, nobles, and commoners were represented. This body, in 1302, sustained the King in his attitude of resistance. The Pope answered with the famous bull, Unam sanctam, the high-water mark of papal claim to supremacy over civil powers. It affirmed that temporal powers are subject to the spiritual authority, which is judged in the person of the Pope by God alone. It declared, following the opinion of Aquinas (ante, p. 277), “that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman pontiff”—an affirmation the exact scope of which has led to much subsequent discussion. Philip answered with a new assembly, where the Pope was charged with an absurd series of crimes, involving heresy and moral depravity, and appeal was issued for a general council of the church before which the Pope might be tried. Philip was determined that this should be no mere threat. He would force the Pope to consent. He therefore sent his able jurist vice-chancellor, William Nogaret, who joined to himself Boniface’s ancient family enemy, Sciarra Colonna. Together they gathered a force and made Boniface a prisoner in Anagni, just as he was about to proclaim Philip’s excommunication, in 1303. Boniface was courageous. He would make no concessions. His friends soon freed him, but a month later he died. These events were a staggering blow to the temporal claims of the papacy. It was not primarily that Philip’s representatives had held Boniface for a short time a prisoner. A new force had arisen, that of national sentiment, to which the King had appealed successfully, and against which the spiritual weapons of the papacy had been of little avail. The papal hope of world-rulership in temporal affairs had proved impossible of permanent realization.

The Papacy Removes To Avignon

Worse for the papacy was speedily to follow. After the death of Boniface’s successor, the excellent Benedict XI (1303-1304), the cardinals chose a Frenchman, Bertrand de Gouth, who took the title of Clement V (1305-1314). A man of weakness of character and grave moral faults, he was fully under the influence of King Philip IV, of France. He declared Philip innocent of the attack on Boniface VIII, and cancelled Boniface’s interdicts and excommunications, modifying the bull Unam sanctam to please the King. An evidence of French domination that was patent to all the world was the removal of the seat of the papacy, in 1309, to Avignon—on the river Rhone—a town not belonging indeed to the French kingdom, but in popular estimate amounting to the establishment of the papacy in France. Undoubtedly the troubled state of Italian politics had something to do with this removal. At Avignon the papacy was to have its seat till 1377—a period so nearly equal to the traditional exile of the Jews as to earn the name of the Babylonish Captivity. Nor was the cup of Clement’s humiliation yet filled. The cold-blooded King compelled him to join in the cruel destruction of the Templars (ante, p. 242)
**Canon Law**

Clement V’s pontificate is interesting as marking the conclusion, to the present, of the official collections of church or “canon” law. That great body of authority was the product of the history of the church since the early councils, and embraced their decisions, the decrees of synods and of Popes. The Middle Ages had seen many collections, of which the most famous was that gathered, probably in 1148, by Gratian, a teacher of canon law in Bologna. Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) caused an official collection to be formed, in 1234, including new decrees up to his time. Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303), published a similar addition in 1298, and Clement V (1305-1314) enlarged it in 1314, though his work was not published till 1317, under his successor, John XXII (1316-1334). The great structure, thus laboriously erected through the centuries, is a mass of ecclesiastical jurisprudence embracing all domains of ecclesiastical life. Though official collections ceased from Clement V to the twentieth century, the creation of church law has continued in all ages, and the recent Pope, Pius X (1903-1914), in 1904 ordered the codification and simplification of the whole body of canon law by a special commission.

[23.3] **THE PAPACY IN AVIGNON, CRITICISM. THE SCHISM**

The Popes, while the papacy was in Avignon, were all Frenchmen. It seemed as if the papacy had become a French institution. This association caused greatly increased restlessness in view of papal claims, especially in nations which, like England, were at war with France during much of this period, or Germany on which the still continuing interference of the papacy bore hard. The ablest of the Avignon Popes was unquestionably John XXII (1316-1334). The double imperial election in Germany, in 1314, had divided that land between supporters of Louis the Bavarian (1314-1347), and Frederick of Austria. John XXII, supported by King Philip V of France (1316-1322), thought the occasion ripe to diminish German influence in Italy for the benefit of the States of the Church. He declined to recognize either claimant, and declared that the Pope had right to administer the empire during vacancies. When Louis interfered in Italian affairs the Pope excommunicated him, and a contest with the papacy ensued which lasted till Louis’s death. In its course the German electors issued the famous declaration of 1338, in Rense, which was confirmed by the Reichstag in Frankfort the same year, that the chosen head of the empire needs no approval from the papacy whatever for full entrance on or continuation in the duties of his office.

These attacks upon the state aroused literary defenders of considerable signification. One of these was the great Italian poet, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). His Latin treatise, *On Monarchy*, is not surely dated, but was composed between 1311 and 1318. Dante holds that peace is the best condition of mankind. It is most effectively secured by an Emperor. The power of empire rightfully came to Rome. It is as necessary for man’s temporal happiness as the papacy is to guide men to eternal blessedness. Each is directly from God, and neither should interfere in the province of the other. Dante carefully controverts the papal ‘interpretation of the Bible texts and historical instances on which claims to control over the state were based. All this is the more impressive since Dante was no free-thinker but theologically of most impeccable orthodoxy.

**Critics of the Papal Claims**

Much more radical than Dante, and vastly influential on later political theories were several treatises produced in France. The Dominican, John of Paris (1265?-1306), taught that both papal and royal powers are based on the sovereignty of the people, and neither has a right to interfere with the sphere of the other. The most important of these works was the *Defensor Pacis* of Marsilius of Padua (?-1342?) and John of Jandun (?-1328). It is the most startlingly modern treatise that the age produced. Its principal author, Marsilius, was long a teacher in Paris, where he was rector of the university in 1313, and was regarded as learned in medicine. The *Defensor Pacis* was written in 1324, in the controversy between Pope John XXII and the Emperor Louis the Bavarian. Its radical views caused its authors to seek protection from the Emperor, which they enjoyed, though with some hesitation, for the rest of their lives. They were excommunicated by John XXII in 1327, and Pope Clement VI declared, in 1343, that he had never read a worse heretical book.
According to Marsilius, who was deeply versed in Aristotle, the basis of all power is the people; in the state the whole body of citizens; in the church the whole body of Christian believers. They are the legislative power; by them rulers in church and state are appointed, and to them these executive officers are responsible. The only final authority in the church is the New Testament; but priests have no power of physical force to compel men to obey it. Their sole duty is to teach, warn, and reprove. The New Testament teaches that bishops and priests are equivalent designations, yet it is well, as a purely human constitution, to appoint some clergy superintendents over others. This appointment gives no superior spiritual power, nor has one bishop spiritual authority over another, or the Pope over all. Peter had no higher rank than the other Apostles. There is no New Testament evidence that he was ever in Rome. The New Testament gives no countenance to the possession of earthly lordships and estates by clergymen. No bishop or Pope has authority to define Christian truth as contained in the New Testament, or make binding laws. These acts can be done only by the legislative body of the church—the whole company of Christian believers, represented in a general council. Such a council is the supreme authority in the church. Since the Christian state and the Christian church are coterminous, the executive of the Christian state, as representing a body of believers, may call councils, appoint bishops, and control church property. Here were ideas that were to bear fruit in the Reformation, and even in the French Revolution; but they were too radical greatly to impress their age. Their time was later, and something was lacking in Marsilius himself. He was a cool thinker rather than a man who could translate theory into action in such fashion as to create large leadership.

**English Limitation of Papal Powers**

Because of a zeal which Marsilius lacked, and of ideas not too much in advance of the age, a greater authority was wielded by William of Occam, whose theological influence and energetic defense of the extreme Franciscan doctrine of the absolute poverty of Christ and the Apostles has been noted (ante, pp. 261, 278). Occam, like Marsilius, found a refuge with Louis the Bavarian. To him, as to Dante, papacy and empire are both founded by God, and neither is superior to the other. Each has its own sphere. The church has purely religious functions. Its final authority is the New Testament.

Voices were raised in defense of papal claims. One of the most celebrated, though typical rather than original, was that of the Italian Augustinian monk, Augustinus Triumphus (1243-1328). In his *Summa de potestate ecclesiastica*, written about 1322, he holds that all princes rule as subject to the Pope, who can remove them at pleasure. No civil law is binding if disapproved by him. The Pope can be judged by none; nor can one even appeal from the Pope to God, “since the decision and court of God and the Pope are one.” Yet should the Pope fall into heresy, his office is forfeited.

These opinions of the papal supporters were far from being shared by Germans engaged in a struggle against the papacy for the political autonomy of the empire, or by Englishmen at war with France, who believed the Avignon papacy the tool of the French sovereign. Pope Clement V (1305-1314) had asserted the right of the papacy to appoint to all ecclesiastical office. Such appointees were called “provisors,” and the intrusion of papal favorites in England aroused King and Parliament in 1351 to enact the Statute of Provisors. Elections to bishoprics and other ecclesiastical posts should be free from papal interference. In case appointment was made by the regular authorities, and also by the Pope, the provisor was to be imprisoned till he resigned his claim. This law inevitably led to disputes between papal and royal authority, and a further statute of 1353, known as that of *Præmunire* forbade appeals outside of the kingdom under penalty of outlawry. In enforcement these statutes were largely dead letters, but they show the growth of a spirit in England which was further illustrated when Parliament, in 1366, refused longer to recognize the right of King John to subject his kingdom, in 1213, to the Pope as a fief (ante, p. 288).

**The Papal Taxes**

No feature of the Avignon papacy contributed to its criticism so largely as its offensive taxation of church life. The Crusades had been accompanied by a much readier circulation of money, and a great increase in commerce. Europe was passing rapidly from barter to money payments. Money taxes, rather than receipts in kind, were everywhere increasing. It was natural that this change should take place in church
administration also; but the extent to which taxation was pushed by the Popes of the thirteenth and
dfourteenth centuries was a scandal, and it was much aggravated when the removal of the papacy to
Avignon largely cut off the revenues from the papal estates in Italy without diminishing the luxury or
expensiveness of the papal court. This period saw the extensive development, in imitation of secular
feudal practice, of the *annates*, that is a tax of one year’s income, more or less, from each new
appointment. Since the reservation of posts to exclusive papal appointment was at the same time
immensely extended, this became a large source of revenue. The income of vacant benefices, also, became
a significant source of papal receipts. Taxes for bulls and other papal documents, also rose rapidly in
amount and productivity. These were but a portion of the papal exactions, and the total effect was the
impression that the papal administration was heavily and increasingly burdensome on the clergy, and
through them on the people. This feeling was augmented by the ruthless manner in which churchly
censures, such as excommunication, were imposed on delinquent taxpayers. The papacy seemed
extravagant in expenditure and offensive in taxation, and its repute in both respects was to grow worse till
the Reformation.

The collapse of the imperial power in Italy, for which the papacy was largely responsible, and the transfer
to Avignon, left Italy to the wildest political confusion. Nowhere was the situation worse than in Rome. In
1347 Cola di Rienzi headed a popular revolution against the nobles and established a parody of the ancient
republic. He was soon driven out, but in 1354 was in power again, only to be murdered in the partisan
struggles. Innocent VI (1352-1362) sent the Spanish cardinal Albornoz (1307-1367) as his legate to Italy. By
Albornoz’s military and diplomatic abilities the papal interests in Rome and Italy generally were much
improved, so that Urban V (1362-1370) actually returned to the Eternal City in 1367.

The death of Albornoz deprived him of his chief support, and in 1370 the papacy was once more in
Avignon. Urban V was succeeded by Gregory XI (1370-1378), whom St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380)
urged in the name of God to return to Rome. The distracted state of the city also counselled his presence if
papal interests were to be preserved. Accordingly he transferred the papacy to Rome in 1377, and there
died the next year.

*The Schism*

The sudden death of Gregory XI found the cardinals in Rome. A majority were French, and would gladly
have returned to Avignon. The Roman people were determined to keep the papacy in Rome, and to that
end to have an Italian Pope. Under conditions of tumult the cardinals chose Bartolommeo Prignano the
archbishop of Bari, who took the name Urban VI (1378-1389). A tactless man, who desired to terminate
French influence over the papacy, and effect some reforms in the papal court, he soon had the hostility of
all the cardinals. They now got together, four months after his election, declared their choice void since
dictated by mob violence, and elected Cardinal Robert of Geneva as Pope Clement VII (1378-1394). A
few months later Clement VII and his cardinals were settled in Avignon. There had been many rival Popes
before, but they had been chosen by different elements. Here were two Popes, each duly elected by the
same body of cardinals. The objection that Urban VI had been chosen out of fear had little force, since the
cardinals had recognized him without protest for several months; but they had done all they could to undo
the choice. Europe saw two Popes, each condemning the other. There was no power that could decide
between them, and the several countries followed the one or the other as their political affinities dictated.
The Roman Pope was acknowledged by northern and central Italy, the greater part of Germany,
Scandinavia, and England. To the Pope in Avignon, France, Spain, Scotland, Naples, Sicily, and some
parts of Germany adhered. It was a fairly equal division. The great schism had begun. Europe was pained
and scandalized, while the papal abuses, especially of taxation, were augmented, and two courts must now
be maintained. Above all, the profound feeling that the church must be visibly one was offended. The
papacy sank enormously in popular regard.

In Rome Urban VI was succeeded by Boniface IX (1389-1404), and he by Innocent VII (1404-1406), who
was followed by Gregory XII (1406-1415). In Avignon Clement VII was followed by a Spaniard, Peter de
Luna, who took the name Benedict XIII (1394-1417).
24. NATIONALISM AND CONCILIARISM

[adapted from Walker, 7]

[24.1] WYCLIF AND HUSS

The English opposition to the encroachments of the Avignon papacy has already been noted (ante, p. 295). Other forces were also working in the island. Of these that of Thomas Bradwardine (?-1349) was one of the most potent in the intellectual realm. Bradwardine, who was long an eminent theologian in Oxford, and died archbishop of Canterbury, was a leader in the revival of the study of Augustine, which marked the decline of Scholasticism, and was to grow in influence till it profoundly affected the Reformation. He taught predestination in most positive form; like Augustine, he conceived religion as primarily a personal relationship of God and the soul, and emphasized grace in contrast to merit. There were now, therefore, other intellectual traditions besides those of later nominalistic Scholasticism in the Oxford of Wyclif’s student days.

John Wyclif (?-1384) was born in Hipswell in Yorkshire. Few details of his early life are known. He entered Balliol College, Oxford, of which he became ultimately for a short time “master.” In Oxford he rose to great scholarly distinction, lecturing to large classes, and esteemed the ablest theologian of its faculty. Philosophically he was a realist, in contrast to the prevailing nominalism of his age. He was deeply influenced by Augustine, and through Augustine by Platonic conceptions. Wyclif gradually became known outside of Oxford. In 1374 he was presented, by royal appointment, to the rectory of Lutterworth, and the same year was one of the King’s commissioners—probably theological adviser—to attempt in Bruges with the representatives of Pope Gregory XI an adjustment of the dispute regarding “provisors” (ante, p. 295). In how far these appointments were due to the powerful son of King Edward III, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, is uncertain, though he probably regarded Wyclif as likely to be useful in his designs on church property; but Wyclif’s opinions, if entertained in 1374, cannot then have been widely known. There is no evidence that the Pope yet looked on him with distrust, and recent investigation has shown that his reformatory work did not begin in 1366, as formerly supposed.

By 1376, however, it was the wealth of the church and clerical interference, especially that of the Popes, in political life, that aroused his opposition. He lectured that year in Oxford On Civil Lordship. Wyclif’s view of ecclesiastical office and privilege was curiously feudal. God is the great overlord. He gives all positions, civil and spiritual, as fiefs, to be held on condition of faithful service. They are lordships, not property. God gives the use but not the ownership. If the user abuses his trust he forfeits his tenure. Hence a bad ecclesiastic loses all claim to office, and the temporal possessions of unworthy clergy may well be taken from them by the civil rulers, to whom God has given the lordship of temporal things, as He has that of things spiritual to the church. This doctrine, advanced in all simplicity and sincerity, was undoubtedly pleasing to John of Gaunt and his hungry crew of nobles who hoped for enrichment from church spoliation. It was no less satisfactory to many commoners, who had long been critical of the wealth, pretensions, and too often lack of character of the clergy. It was not displeasing to the mendicant orders, who had always, in theory at least, advocated “apostolic poverty.”

Wyclif’s teaching aroused the opposition of the high clergy, the property-holding orders, and of the papacy. In 1377 he was summoned to answer before the bishop of London, William Courtenay. The protection of John of Gaunt and other nobles rendered the proceeding abortive. The same year Pope Gregory XI issued five bulls ordering Wyclif’s arrest and examination. Yet Wyclif enjoyed the protection of a strong party at court and much popular favor, so that further proceedings against him by the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London were frustrated in 1378.

Wyclif was now rapidly developing his reformatory activities in a flood of treatises in Latin and English. The Scriptures, he taught, are the only law of the church. The church itself is not, as the common man
imagined, centred in the Pope and the cardinals. It is the whole company of the elect. Its only certain head
is Christ, since the Pope may not be one of the elect. Wyclif did not reject the papacy. The church may
well have an earthly leader, if such a one is like Peter, and strives for the simple conditions of early
Christianity. Such a Pope would be presumably one of the elect. But a Pope who grasps worldly power
and is eager for taxes is presumptively non-elect, and therefore antichrist. With his deeper knowledge of
the Bible, Wyclif now attacked the mendicant orders, which had supported him in his assertion of
apostolic poverty, regarding them as without Scriptural warrant and the main pillars of the existing
papacy. He was now fighting current churchly conditions all along the line.

Wyclif now proceeded to more constructive efforts. Convinced that the Bible is the law of God, Wyclif
determined to give it to the people in the English tongue. Between 1382 and 1384 the Scriptures were
translated from the Vulgate. What share Wyclif had in the actual work is impossible to say. It has been
usually thought that the New Testament was from his pen, and the Old from that of Nicholas of Hereford.
At all events, the New Testament translation was vivid, readable, and forceful, and did a service of
fundamental importance for the English language—to say nothing of English piety. The whole was
revised about 1388, possibly by Wyclif’s disciple, John Purvey. Its circulation was large. In spite of severe
repression in the next century, at least one hundred and fifty manuscripts survive.

To bring the Gospel to the people Wyclif began sending out his “poor priests.” In apostolic poverty,
barefoot, clad in long robes, and with staff in the hand, they wandered two by two, as had the early
Waldensian or Franciscan preachers. Unlike the latter, they were bound by no permanent vows. Their
success was great.

But events soon lamed the Lollard movement, as the following of Wyclif was popularly called. Convinced
that the elect are a true priesthood, and that all episcopal claims are unscriptural, Wyclif saw in the priestly
power of exclusive human agency in the miracle of transubstantiation a main buttress of what he deemed
erroneous priestly claim. He therefore attacked this doctrine in 1381. His own view of Christ’s presence
seems to have been essentially that later known as consubstantiation. [According to this doctrine the
elements of bread and wine are not changed into the Body and Blood of Christ: rather, after the
Consecration Christ is mysteriously present “with” the unchanged elements]. It was not his positive
assertions, but his attack, however, that aroused resentment, for to oppose transubstantiation was to touch
one of the most popularly cherished beliefs of the later Middle Ages. That attack cost Wyclif many
followers and roused the churchly authorities to renewed action. This tide of opposition was strengthened
by events in 1381, for which Wyclif was in no way responsible. The unrest of the lower orders, which had
been growing since the dislocation of the labor market by the “black death “of 1348-1350, culminated in
1381 in a great peasant revolt, which was with difficulty put down. This bloody episode strengthened the
party of conservatism. In 1382 the archbishop of Canterbury held a synod in London by which twenty-
four Wyclifite opinions were condemned. Wyclif was no longer able to lecture in Oxford. His “poor
priests” were arrested. He was too strong in popular and courtly support, however, to be attacked
personally, and he died still possessed of his pastorate in Lutterworth on the last day of 1384.

The Lollards

No small element in Wyclif’s power was that he was thought to have no scholastic equal in contemporary
England. Men hesitated to cross intellectual swords with him. Equally conspicuous were his intense
patriotism and his deep piety. He voiced the popular resentment of foreign papal taxation and greed, and
the popular longing for a simpler, more Biblical faith. It was his misfortune that he left no follower of
conspicuous ability to carry on his work in England. Yet throughout the reign of Richard II (1377-1399)
the Lollard movement continued to grow. With the accession of the usurping house of Lancaster in the
person of Henry IV (1399-1413), the King, anxious to placate the church, was persuaded to secure the
passage in 1401 of the statute De hæretico comburendo, under which a number of Lollards were
their most conspicuous leader, Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, a man of the sternest religious
principles, whom tradition and dramatic license transformed into the figure of Falstaff, was condemned,
driven into rebellion, and executed in 1417. With his death the political significance of Lollardy in
England was at an end, though adherents continued in secret till the Reformation. Wyclif’s chief influence was to be in Bohemia rather than in the land of his birth.

**Bohemia, John Huss**

Bohemia had undergone a remarkable intellectual and political development in the fourteenth century. The Holy Roman Emperor, Charles IV (1346-1378) was also King of Bohemia, and did much for that land. In 1344 he secured the establishment of Prague as an archbishopric, releasing Bohemia from ecclesiastical dependence on Mainz. Four years later he procured the foundation of a university in Prague. In no country of Europe was the church more largely a landholder, or the clergy more worldly than in Bohemia. Charles IV was not unfriendly to moral reform. During and following his reign a series of preachers of power stirred Bohemia, attacking the secularization of the church. Such were Conrad of Waldhausen (?-1369), Milicz of Kremsier (?-1374), Matthias of Janov (?-1394), and Thomas of Stitny (1331-1401). These all opposed clerical corruption, emphasized the Scriptures as the rule of life, and sought a more frequent participation in the Lord’s Supper. Milicz and Matthias taught that antichrist was at hand, and was manifest in an unworthy clergy. These men had little direct influence on Huss, but they stirred Bohemia to a readiness to accept his teachings. Bohemia was torn, furthermore, by intense rivalry between the Germanic and the Slavonic (Czech) elements of the population. The latter was marked by a strong desire for racial supremacy and Bohemian autonomy.

Curiously, also, Bohemia, hitherto so little associated with England, was brought into connection with that country by the marriage of the Bohemian princess, Anna, to King Richard II, in 1383. Bohemian students were attracted to Oxford, and thence brought Wyclif’s doctrines and writings into their native land, especially to the University of Prague. The great propagator of Bohemian Wyclifism was to be John Huss, in whom, also, all Czech national aspirations were to have an ardent advocate. It was this combination of religious and patriotic zeal that gave Huss his remarkable power of leadership.

John Huss was born, of peasant parentage, in Husinecz, whence he derived his name by abbreviation, about the year 1373. His studies were completed in the University of Prague, where he became Bachelor of Theology in 1394, and Master of Arts two years later. In 1401 he was ordained to the priesthood, still maintaining a teaching connection with the university, of which he was “rector” in 1402. Meanwhile Huss had become intimately acquainted with Wyclif’s philosophical treatises, with the “realism” of which he sympathized. Wyclif’s religious works, known by Huss certainly from 1402, won his approbation, and henceforth Huss was, theologically, a disciple of Wyclif. More conservative than his master, he did not deny transubstantiation; but like him he held the church to consist of the predestinate only, of whom the true head is not the Pope, but Christ, and of which the law is the New Testament, and its life that of Christ-like poverty. Though the publication of Huss’s commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard has led to a higher estimate of his scholarly gifts than formerly prevailed, it is certain that in his sermons and treatises Huss usually reproduced not only the thoughts but the language of Wyclif.

In 1402 Huss became preacher at the Bethlehem chapel, in Prague, and soon gained immense popular following through his fiery sermons in the Bohemian language. Though Wyclifite views were condemned by the majority of the university in 1403, Huss’s preaching had, at first, the support of the archbishop, Zbynek (1403-1411); but his criticisms of the clergy gradually turned this favor into opposition, which was increased as Huss’s essential agreement with Wyclif constantly became more evident. New causes of dissent speedily arose. In the schism Bohemia had held to the Roman Pope, Gregory XII (1406-1415). As a step toward the healing of the breach King Wenzel of Bohemia now favored a policy of neutrality between the rival Popes. Huss and the Bohemian element in the university supported Wenzel. Archbishop Zbynek, the German clergy, and the German portion of the university clung to Gregory XII. Wenzel therefore, in 1409, arbitrarily changed the constitution of the university, giving the foreign majority one vote in its decisions and the Bohemians three, thus completely reversing the previous proportion. The immediate result was the secession of the foreign elements and the foundation, in 1409, of the University of Leipzig. This Bohemian nationalist victory, of doubtful permanent worth or right, Huss fully shared. Its immediate consequences were that he became the first “rector” of the newly regulated university, and enjoyed a high degree of courtly favor. His views were now spreading widely in Bohemia.
Huss at Constance

Meanwhile the luckless Council of Pisa had run its course (1409) (see p. 307). Zbyněk now supported its Pope, Alexander V (1409-1410), to whom he complained of the spread of Wyclifite opinions in Bohemia, and by whom he was commissioned to root them out. Huss protested, and was excommunicated by Zbyněk in 1410. The result was great popular tumult in Prague, where Huss was more than ever a national hero. King Wenzel supported him. In 1412 Alexander V’s successor, Pope John XXIII (1410-1415), promised indulgence to all who should take part in a crusade against King Ladislaus of Naples. Huss opposed, holding that the Pope had no right to use physical force, that money payments effected no true forgiveness, and, unless of the predestinate, the indulgence could be of no value to a man. The result was an uproar. The Pope’s bull was burned by the populace. Huss, however, lost many strong supporters in the university and elsewhere, and was once more excommunicated, while Prague was placed under papal interdict. Wenzel now persuaded Huss, late in 1412, to go into exile from Prague. To this period of retirement is due the composition of his chief work—essentially a reproduction of Wyclif—the *De Ecclesia* (On the Church).

In 1413 a synod in Rome formally condemned Wyclif’s writings. The great Council of Constance (see p. 308) was approaching, and the confusion in Bohemia was certain to demand its consideration. Huss was asked to present himself before it, and promised a “safe-conduct,” afterward received, by the Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund. Huss, though he felt his life in grave peril, determined to go, partly believing it his duty to bear witness to what he deemed the truth, and partly convinced that he could bring the council to his way of thinking. Shortly after his arrival in Constance he was imprisoned. Sigismund disregarded his promised safe-conduct. His Bohemian enemies laid bitter charges against him. On May 4, 1415, the council condemned Wyclif, and ordered his long-buried body burned. Huss could hope for no favorable hearing. Yet, in the end, the struggle resolved itself into a contest of principles. The council maintained that every Christian was bound to submit to its decisions. Only by so holding could it hope to end the papal schism which was the scandal of Christendom. It insisted on Huss’s complete submission. The Bohemian reformer was of heroic mould. He would play no tricks with his conscience. Some of the accusations he declared false charges. Other positions he could not modify unless convinced of their error. He would not submit his conscience to the overruling judgment of the council. On July 6, 1415, he was condemned and burned, meeting his death with the most steadfast courage.

Bohemia in Revolt

While Huss was a prisoner in Constance his followers in Prague began administering the cup to the laity in the Lord’s Supper—an action which Huss approved and which soon became the badge of the Hussite movement. The news of Huss’s death aroused the utmost resentment in Bohemia, to which fuel was added when the Council of Constance forbade the use of the cup by laymen, and caused Huss’s disciple, Jerome of Prague, to be burned in 1416. Bohemia was in revolution. Two parties speedily developed there—an aristocratic, having its principal seat in Prague, and known as the Utraquists (communion in both bread and wine), and a radical, democratic, called from its fortress, the Taborites.

The Utraquists would forbid only those practices which they deemed prohibited by the “law of God,” *i. e.*, the Bible. They demanded free preaching of the Gospel, the cup for the laity, apostolic poverty, and strict clerical life. The Taborites repudiated all practices for which express warrant could not be found in the “law of God.” Fierce quarrel existed between these factions, but both united to resist repeated crusades directed against Bohemia. Under the leadership of the blind Taborite general, John Zizka, all attempts to crush the Hussites were bloodily defeated. Church property was largely confiscated. Nor were the opponents of the Hussites more successful after Zizka’s death in 1424. Under Prokop the Great the Hussites carried the war beyond the borders of Bohemia. Some compromise seemed unavoidable. The Council of Basel (see p. 310), after long negotiation, therefore, met the wishes of the Utraquists part way in 1433, granting the use of the cup, and in a measure the other demands outlined above. The Taborites resisted and were almost swept away by the Utraquists, in 1434, at the battle of Lipan, in which Prokop was killed. The triumphant Utraquists now came to an agreement with the Council of Basel, in 1436, and on these terms were nominally given place in the Roman communion. Yet, in 1462 Pope Pius II (1458-
declared this agreement void. The Utraquists, nevertheless, held their own, and the Bohemian Parliament, in 1485 and 1512, declared their full equality with the Catholics. At the Reformation a considerable portion welcomed the newer ideas; others then returned to the Roman Church.

The real representatives of Wyclifite principles were the Taborites rather than the Utraquists. Out of the general Hussite movement, with elements drawn from Taborites, Utraquists, and Waldenses, rather than exclusively from the Taborites there grew, from about 1453, the *Unitas Eratrum*, which absorbed much that was most vital in the Hussite movement, and became the spiritual ancestor of the later Moravians (see pp. 502, 503).

Wyclif and Huss have often been styled forerunners of the Reformation. The designation is true if regard is had to their protest against the corruption of the church, their exaltation of the Bible, and their contribution to the sum total of agitation that ultimately resulted in reform. When their doctrines are examined, however, they appear to belong rather to the Middle Ages. Their conception of the Gospel was that of a “law.” Their place for faith was no greater than in the Roman communion. Their thought of the church was a onesided development of Augustinianism. Their conception of the relation of the clergy to property is that common to the Waldenses and the founders of the great mendicant orders. Their religious earnestness commands deep admiration, but in spite of Luther’s recognition of many points of agreement with Huss, the Reformation owed little to their efforts.

THE REFORMING COUNCILS

The papal schism was the scandal of Christendom, but its termination was not easy. The logic of mediæval development was that no power exists on earth to which the papacy is answerable. Yet good men everywhere felt that the schism must be ended, and that the church must be reformed “in head and members”—that is, in the papacy and clergy. The reforms desired were moral and administrative. Doctrinal modifications were as yet unwished by Christendom as a whole. A Wyclif might proclaim them in England, but he was generally esteemed a heretic. Foremost among those who set themselves seriously to the task of healing the schism were the teachers of the age, especially those of the University of Paris. Marsilius of Padua had there proclaimed the supremacy of a general council in his *Defensor F a c t s* of 1324. The necessities of the situation rather than his arguments were rapidly leading to the same conclusion. It was presented first with clearness by a doctor of canon law, then in Paris, Conrad of Gelnhausen (1320?- 1390), who advised King Charles V of France (1364-1380), in written treatises of 1379 and 1380, to unite with other princes in calling a council, if necessary, without the consent of the rival Popes. Conrad went no further than to hold that such a council was justified by the necessities of an anomalous situation. Conrad’s proposal was reinforced, in such fashion as to rob him of the popular credit of its origination, by the treatise of another German scholar at the University of Paris, Heinrich of Langenstein (1340?-1397), set forth in 1381.

Growth of the Conciliar Idea

The thought of a general council as the best means of healing the schism, thus launched, made speedy converts, not only in the University of Paris, but in the great school of canon law in Bologna, and even among the cardinals. To call a council presented many difficulties, however, and the leaders at Paris, Peter of Ailli (Pierre d’Ailli) (1350-1420) and John Gerson (Jean Charlier de Gerson) (1363-1429), famed for their mastery of nominalistic theology, and the latter eminent among Christian mystics, were slow to adopt the conciliar plan. Efforts were vainly made for years to induce the rival Popes to resign. France withdrew from the Avignon Pope, without recognizing the Roman, from 1398 to 1403, and again in 1408; but its example found slight following elsewhere. By 1408 d’Ailli and Gerson had come to see in a council the only hope, and were supported by Nicholas of Clémanges (1367-1437), a former teacher of the Parisian university who had been papal secretary in Avignon from 1397 to 1405, to whom one great source of evil in the church seemed the general neglect of the Scriptures.

Councils of Pisa and Constance
The cardinals of both Popes were now convinced of the necessity of a council. Meeting together in Leghorn, in 1408, they now issued a call in their own names for such an assembly in Pisa, to gather on March 25, 1409. There it met with an attendance not only of cardinals, bishops, the heads of the great orders, and leading abbots, but also of doctors of theology and canon law, and the representatives of lay sovereigns. Neither Pope was present or acknowledged its rightfulness. Both were declared deposed. This was a practical assertion that the council was superior to the papacy. Its action, however, was too hasty, for instead of ascertaining, as d’Ailli advised, whether the person of the proposed new Pope would be generally acceptable, the cardinals now elected Peter Philargies, archbishop of Milan, who took the name Alexander V (1409-1410). The council then dissolved, leaving the question of reform to a future council.

In some respects the situation was worse than before the Council of Pisa met. Rome, Naples, and considerable sections of Germany clung to Gregory XII. Spain, Portugal, and Scotland supported Benedict XIII. England, France, and some portions of Germany acknowledged Alexander V. There were three Popes where before there had been two. Yet, though mismanaged, the Council of Pisa was a mark of progress. It had shown that the church was one, and it increased the hope that a better council could end the schism. This assembly had been called by the cardinals. For such invitation history had no precedent. A summons by the Emperor, if possible with the consent of one or more of the Popes, would be consonant with the practice of the early church. To that end those supporting the council idea now labored.

The new Holy Roman Emperor-elect, Sigismund (1410-1437), was convinced of the necessity of a council. He recognized as Pope John XXIII (1410-1415), one of the least worthy of occupants of that office, who had been chosen successor to Alexander V in the Pisan line. Sigismund used John’s difficulties with King Ladislaus of Naples, to secure from him joint action by which Emperor-elect and Pope called a council to meet in Constance on November 1, 1414. There the most brilliant and largely attended gathering of the Middle Ages assembled. As in Pisa, it included not only cardinals and bishops, but doctors of theology and representatives of monarchs, though the lay delegates were without votes. Sigismund was present in person, and also John XXIII.

Constance: the Schism Healed

John XXIII hoped to secure the endorsement of the council. To this end he had brought with him many Italian bishops. To neutralize their votes the council organized by “nations,” the English, German, and French, to which the Italians were forced to join as a fourth. Each “nation” had one vote, and one was assigned also to the cardinals. Despairing of the council’s approval, John XXIII attempted to disrupt its session by flight, in March, 1415. Under Gerson’s vigorous leadership the council, however, declared on April 6, 1415, that as “representing the Catholic Church militant [it] has its power immediately from Christ, and every one, whatever his position or rank, even if it be the papal dignity itself, is bound to obey it in all those things which pertain to the faith, to the healing of the schism, and to the general reformation of the Church of God.” On May 29 the council declared John XXIII deposed. On July 4 Gregory XII resigned. The council had rid the church of two Popes by its successful assertion of its supreme authority over all in the church. It is easy to see why its leaders insisted on a full submission from Huss, whose trials and martyrdom were contemporary with these events (ante, p. 304).

Benedict XIII proved more difficult. Sigismund himself, therefore, journeyed to Spain. Benedict he could not persuade to resign, and that obstinate pontiff asserted himself till death, in 1422 or 1423, as the only legitimate Pope. What Sigismund was unable to effect with Benedict he accomplished with the Spanish kingdoms. They and Scotland repudiated Benedict. The Spaniards joined the council as a fifth “nation,” and, on July 26, 1417, Benedict, or Peter de Luna, as he was once more called, was formally deposed. The careful action of the council, in contrast to the haste in Pisa, had made it certain that no considerable section of Christendom would support the former Popes.

One main purpose of the council had been moral and administrative reform. Here the jealousies of the several interests prevented achievement of real importance. The cardinals desired no changes that would materially lessen their revenue. Italy, on the whole, profited by the existing situation. England had relative self-government already in ecclesiastical affairs, thanks to its Kings. France was at war with England, and indisposed to unite with that land. So it went, with the result that the council finally referred the question...
of reforms to the next Pope “in conjunction with this holy council or with the deputies of the several nations”—that is, each nation was left to make the best bargain it could. The council enumerated a list of subjects for reform discussion, which relate almost entirely to questions of appointment, taxation, or administration. As a reformatory instrument the Council of Constance was a bitter disappointment. Its one great achievement was that it ended the schism. In November, 1417, the cardinals, with six representatives from each nation, elected a Roman cardinal, Otto Colonna, as Pope. He took the name Martin V (1417-1431). Roman Christendom had once more a single head. In April, 1418, the council ended, the new Pope promising to call another in five years, in compliance with the decree of the council.

The Council of Constance was a most interesting ecclesiastical experiment. It secured the transformation of the papacy from an absolute into a constitutional monarchy. The Pope was to remain the executive of the church, but was to be regulated by a legislative body, meeting at frequent intervals and representing all interests in Christendom.

**The Council of Basel**

It seemed that this great constitutional change had really been accomplished. Martin V called the new council to meet in Pavia in 1423. The plague prevented any considerable attendance. The Pope would gladly have had no more of councils. The Hussite wars distressed Europe, however (ante, p. 305), and such pressure was brought to bear on him that in January, 1431, Martin V summoned a council to meet in Basel, and appointed Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini his legate to conduct it. Less than two months later Martin V was dead and Eugene IV (1431-1447) was Pope. The council opened in July, 1431, but in December Eugene ordered it adjourned, to meet in Bologna in 1433. The council refused, and re-enacted the declaration of Constance that it was superior to the Pope. Thus, almost from the first, bad feeling existed between the Council of Basel and the papacy. Mindful that jealousies between “nations” had frustrated the reform plans in Constance, the council rejected such groupings, and instead organized four large committees, on reform, doctrine, public peace, and general questions. It began its work with great vigor and promise of success. It made an apparent reconciliation with the moderate Hussites in 1433 (ante, p. 305). Roman unity seemed restored. The Pope found little support and, before the close of 1433, formally recognized the council. Its future seemed assured.

The Council of Basel now proceeded to those administrative and moral reforms which had failed of achievement at Constance. It ordered the holding of a synod in each diocese annually, and in each archbishopric every two years, in which abuses should be examined and corrected. It provided for a general council every ten years. It reasserted the ancient rights of canonical election against papal appointments. It limited appeals to Rome. It fixed the cardinals at twenty-four in number, and ordered that no nation should be represented by more than a third of the college. It cut off the annates and the other more oppressive papal taxes entirely. All this was good, but the spirit in which it was done was increasingly a vindictive attitude toward Pope Eugene. The taxes by which the papacy had heretofore been maintained were largely abolished, but no honorable support of the papacy was provided in their stead. This failure not only increased the anger of the papacy but caused division in the council itself. At this point a great opportunity presented itself, of which Eugene IV made full use, and regarding which the council so put itself in the wrong as to ruin its prospects.

**Efforts to Reunite Christendom**

The Eastern empire was now hard pressed in its final struggles with the conquering Turks. In the hope of gaining help from the West the Emperor, John VIII (1425-1448), with the patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II (1416-1439) and Bessarion (1395-1472), the gifted archbishop of Nicæa, were ready to enter into negotiation for the union of the Greek and Latin Churches. Both Pope and council were disposed to use this approach for their several advantage. The majority of the council would have the Greeks come to Avignon. The Pope offered an Italian city, which the Greeks naturally preferred. The council divided on the issue in 1437, the minority seceding, including Cesarini. The Pope now announced the transference of the council to Ferrara to meet the Greeks. Thither the minority went, and there in March, 1438, the Eastern Emperor, with many Oriental prelates, arrived. The Pope had practically won. An event so full of promise
as the reunion of Christendom robbed the still continuing Council of Basel of much of its interest.

Failure of the Council of Basel

The Council of Ferrara, which was transferred to Florence in 1439, witnessed protracted discussion between Greeks and Latins, in which as a final result the primacy of the Pope was accepted in vague terms, which seemed to preserve the rights of the Eastern patriarchs, the Greeks retained their peculiarities of worship and priestly marriage, while the disputed *filioque* clause of the creed was acknowledged by the Greeks, though with the understanding that they would not add it to the ancient symbol. Mark, the vigorous archbishop of Ephesus, refused agreement, but the Emperor and most of his ecclesiastical following approved, and the reunion of the two churches was joyfully proclaimed in July, 1439. An event so happy greatly increased the prestige of Pope Eugene IV. The hollowness of the achievement was not at once apparent. Reunions with the Armenians, and with certain groups of Monophysites and Nestorians, were also announced in Florence or speedily after the council. The reconciliation of the Armenians in 1439 was the occasion of a famous papal bull defining the mediæval doctrine of the sacraments. Yet from the first the Oriental monks were opposed. On the Greeks’ return Mark of Ephesus became the hero of the hour. Bessarion, whom Eugene had made a cardinal, had to fly to Italy, where he was to have a distinguished career of literary and ecclesiastical service. No efficient military help came to the Greeks from the West, and the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 permanently frustrated those political hopes which had inspired the union efforts of 1439.

Meanwhile the majority in Basel proceeded to more radical action under the leadership of its only remaining cardinal, the able and excellent but dictatorial Louis d’Allemand (1380?-1450). In 1439 it voted Eugene IV deposed, and chose as his successor a half-monastic layman, Duke Amadeus of Savoy, who took the name Felix V. By this time, however, the Council of Basel was fast losing its remaining influence. Eugene IV had won, and was succeeded in Rome by Nicholas V (1447-1455). Felix V laid down his impossible papacy in 1449. The council put the best face on its defeat by choosing Nicholas V his successor, and ended its troubled career. Though the council idea still lived and was to be powerful in the Reformation age, the fiasco in Basel had really ruined the hope of transforming the papacy into a constitutional monarchy or of effecting needed reform through conciliar action.

National Bargains

Yet if the council thus failed, individual nations profited by its quarrel with the papacy, notably France, where the monarchy was coming into new power through effective resistance to England under impulses initiated by Joan of Arc (1410?1431). In 1438 King Charles VII (1422-1461), with the clergy and nobles, adopted the “pragmatic sanction” of Bourges, by which the greater part of the reforms attempted in Basel were enacted into law for France. France therefore secured relief from the most pressing papal taxes and interferences, and this freedom had not a little to do with the attitude of the land previous to the Reformation age.

Not so fortunate was Germany. There the nobles in the Reichstag in Mainz of 1439 adopted an “acceptation” much resembling the French “pragmatic sanction”; but the divisions and weakness of the country gave room to papal intrigue, so that its provisions were practically limited by the Concordat of Aschaffenburg of 1448. Certain privileges were granted to particular princes; but Germany, as a whole, remained under the weight of the papal taxation.

Throughout the period of the councils a new force was manifesting itself—that of nationality. The Council of Constance had voted by nations. It had authorized the nations to make terms with the papacy. Bohemia had dealt with its religious situation as a nation. France had asserted its national rights. Germany had tried to do so. With the failure of the councils to effect administrative reform, men began asking whether what they had sought might not be secured by national action. It was a feeling that was to increase till the Reformation, and greatly to influence the course of that struggle.

[24.3] THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE AND ITS POPES

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The most remarkable intellectual event contemporary with the story of the papacy in Avignon and the schism was the beginning of the Renaissance. That great alteration in mental outlook has been treated too often as without mediæval antecedents. It is coming to be recognized that the Middle Ages were not uncharacterized by individual initiative, that the control of the church was never such as to make other-worldliness wholly dominant, and that the literary monuments of Latin antiquity, at least, were widely known. The revival of Roman law had begun contemporaneously with the Crusades, and had attracted increasing attention to that normative feature of ancient thought, first in Italy and later in France and Germany. Yet when all these elements are recognized, it remains true that the Renaissance involved an essentially new outlook on the world, in which emphasis was laid on its present life, beauty, and satisfaction—on man as man—rather than on a future heaven and hell, and on man as an object of salvation or of loss. The means by which this transformation was wrought was a reappraisal of the spirit of classical antiquity, especially as manifested in its great literary monuments.

Rise of the Renaissance

The Renaissance first found place in Italy. Its rise was favored by many influences, among which three, at least, were conspicuous. The two great dominating powers of the Middle Ages, the papacy and empire, were suddenly lamed, as far as Italy was concerned, by the collapse of the imperial power in the latter part of the thirteenth century and the removal of the papacy to Avignon early in the fourteenth. The commerce of Italy, fostered by the Crusades and continuing after their close, had led to a higher cultural development in the peninsula than elsewhere in Europe. The intense division of Italian politics gave to the cities a quality of life not elsewhere existent, rendering local recognition of talent easy, and tending to emphasize individualism.

The earliest Italian in whom the Renaissance spirit was a dominating force was Petrarch (1304-1374). Brought up in Avignon, and in clerical orders, his real interest was in the revival of Latin literature, especially the writings of Cicero. A diligent student, and above all a man of letters, he was the friend of princes, and a figure of international influence. Scholasticism he despised. Aristotle he condemned. Though really religious in feeling, however lacking in practice, his point of view was very unlike the mediæval. He had, moreover, that lack of profound seriousness, that egotistical vanity and that worship of form rather than of substance which were to be characteristic of much of Italian humanism; but he aroused men to a new interest in antiquity and a new world-outlook. Petrarch’s friend and disciple was Boccaccio (1313-1375), now chiefly remembered for his Decameron, but greatly influential in his own age in promoting the study of Greek, in unlocking the mysteries of classical mythology, and in furthering humanistic studies in Florence and Naples.

Greek may never have died out in southern Italy, but its humanistic cultivation began when, in 1360, Boccaccio brought Leontius Pilatus to Florence. About 1397 Greek was taught, under the auspices of the government of the same city, by Manuel Chrysoloras (1355?-1415), who translated Homer and Plato. The Council of Ferrara and Florence (1438-1439) (ante, p. 311) greatly fostered this desire to master the treasures of the East by bringing Greeks and Latins together. Bessarion (ante, p. 312) thenceforth aided the work. To the influence of Gemistos Plethon (1355-1450), another Greek attendant on this reunion council, was due the founding of the Platonic Academy, about 1442, by Cosimo de’ Medici (1389-1464), the real ruler of Florence. There the study of Plato was pursued ardently, later, under the leadership of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499). Ficino, who became a priest, combined an earnest Christianity with his platonic enthusiasm. He believed a return to the Christian sources the chief need of the time—a feeling not shared by the majority of Italian humanists, but to be profoundly influential beyond the Alps, as propagated by his admirers, Jacques Le Favre in France and John Colet in England. Colet, in turn, transmitted it to Eruchlin. Almost as influential was Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), whose zeal for Hebrew and knowledge of the Kabala were to influence Reuchlin.

Historical criticism was developed by Lorenzo Valla (1405-1457), who exposed the falsity of the Donation of Constantine (ante, p. 204) about 1440, and denied the composition of the Apostles’ Creed by the Apostles. He criticised the rightfulness of monastic vows, and laid the foundation of “New Testament studies, in 1444, by a comparison of the Vulgate with the Greek.
An examination of the dates just given will show that the Renaissance movement in Italy was in full
development before the fall of Constantinople, in 1453. By the middle of the fifteenth century it was
dominating the educated class in Italy. In general, its attitude toward the church was one of indifference. It
revived widely a pagan point of view, and sought to reproduce the life of antiquity in its vices as well as
its virtues. Few periods in the world’s history have been so boastfully corrupt as that of the Italian
Renaissance.

The Renaissance movement was given wings by a great invention, about 1440-1450—that of printing
from movable type. Whether Mainz or Strassburg, in Germany, or Haarlem in Holland was its birthplace
is still a matter of learned dispute. The art spread with rapidity, and not only rendered the possession of the
many the books which had heretofore been the property of the few, but, from the multiplication of copies,
made the results of learning practically indestructible. More than thirty thousand publications were issued
before 1500.

No mention of the Renaissance could fail to note its services to art. Beginnings of better things had been
made, indeed, in Italy before its influence was felt. Cimabue (1240?-1302?), Giotto* (1267?-1 337), and
Fra Angelico (1387-1455) belong to the pre-Renaissance epoch, remarkable as is their work. With
Masaccio (1402-1429), Filippo Lippi (1406-1469), Botticelli (1444-1510), and Ghirlandajo (1449-1494),
painting advanced through truer knowledge of perspective, greater anatomical accuracy, and more
effective grouping to the full noonday of a Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), a Raphael Sanzio (1483-
1520), a Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), and their mighty associates. Sculpture received a similar
impulse in the work of Ghiberti (1378-1455), and Donatello (1386-1466); while architecture was
transformed by Brunelleschi (1379-1446), Bramante (1444?-1514), and Michelangelo. Most of the work
of these great artists, however classical in motive, was wrought in the service of the church.

The Popes - Patrons of the Renaissance

The most conspicuous early seat of the Italian Renaissance was Florence, though it was influential in
many cities. With the papacy of Nicholas V (1447-1455), it found, for the first time, a mighty patron in the
head of the church, and Rome became its chief home. To him the foundation of the Vatican library was
due. The next Pope, Alfonso Borgia, a Spaniard, who took the name Calixtus III (1455-1458), was no
friend of humanism, and was earnestly though fruitlessly, intent on a crusade that should drive the Turks
from the recently conquered Constantinople. In Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who ruled as Pius II (1458-
1464), the papacy had a remarkable occupant. In early life a supporter of the conciliar movement, and
active at the Council of Basel, he had won distinction as a humanistic writer of decidedly unclerical tone.
Reconciled to Eugene IV, he became a cardinal, and ultimately Pope, now opposing all the conciliar views
that he had once supported, and forbidding future appeals to a general council. His efforts to stir Europe
against the Turks were unavailing. Yet, in spite of his changing and self-seeking attitude, he had the most
worthy conception of the duties of the papal office of any Pope of the latter half of the fifteenth century.
The succeeding Popes, till after the dawn of the Reformation, were patrons of letters and artists, great
builders who adorned Rome and felt the full impulse of the Renaissance.

Meanwhile a change had come over the ideals and ambitions of the papacy. The stay in Avignon and the
schism had rendered effective control in the States of the Church impossible. They were distracted by the
contests of the people of Rome, and especially by the rivalries of the noble houses, notably those of the
Colonna and the Orsini. Italy had gradually consolidated into five large states, Venice, Milan, Florence,
Naples, or the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, as it was called, and the States of the Church, though many
smaller territories remained outside these larger groups, and were objects of contest. The politics of Italy
became a kaleidoscopic effort to extend the possessions of the larger powers, and to match one against the
other, in which intrigue, murder, and duplicity were employed to an almost unexampled extent.

Into this game of Italian politics the papacy now fully plunged. Its desire was to consolidate and increase
the States of the Church and maintain political independence. Its ambitions and its aims were like those of
other Italian rulers. The papacy became secularized as at no other period in its history, save possibly the
tenth century. Martin V (1417-1431), the Pope chosen at the Council of Constance, himself a Colonna,
succeeded, in a measure, in restoring papal authority in Rome. His successor, Eugene IV (1431-1447),
was not so fortunate, and spent a large part of his pontificate in Florence. Nicholas V (1447-1455), the humanist, effectively controlled Rome and strengthened the papal authority—a policy which was continued by Calixtus III (1455-1458), Pius II (1458-1464), and Paul II (1464-1471). With Sixtus IV (1471-1484) political ambition took almost complete control of the papacy. He warred with Florence, he sought to enrich and advance his relatives, he aimed to extend the States of the Church. A patron of learning, he built extensively. The Sistine Chapel preserves his name. All these endeavors required money, and he increased papal taxation and the financial abuses of the curia. He made into an article of faith the wide-spread belief that indulgences are available for souls in purgatory by a bull of 1476.\(^6\)  

The Popes as Italian Princes

The next Pope, Innocent VIII (1484-1492), was of weak and pliant nature, notorious through the open manner in which he sought to advance the fortunes of his children, his extravagant expenditures, and his sale of offices. He even received a pension from Sultan Bayazid II for keeping the latter’s brother and rival, Jem, a prisoner. Innocent’s successor, Alexander VI (1492-1503), a nephew of Calixtus III, and a Spaniard (Rodrigo Borgia), obtained the papacy not without bribery, and was a man of unbridled immorality, though of considerable political insight. His great effort was to advance his bastard children, especially his daughter, Lucrezia Borgia, by advantageous marriages, and his unscrupulous and murderous son, Cesare Borgia, by aiding him to carve a principality out of the States of the Church. His reign saw the beginning of the collapse of Italian independence through the invasion of Charles VIII of France (1483-1498), in 1494, in an attempt to assert the French King’s claim to the throne of Naples. In 1499 Louis XII of France (1498-1515), conquered Milan, and in 1503 Ferdinand the Catholic, of Spain (1479-1516), secured Naples. Italy became the wretched battleground of French and Spanish rivalries. Under such circumstances to increase the temporal power of the papacy was not easy; but the task was achieved by the most warlike of the Popes, Julius II (1503-1513), nephew of Sixtus IV. The Orsini and Colonna were reconciled, Cesare Borgia driven from Italy, the cities of Romagna freed from their Venetian conquerors, the various nations in Europe grouped in leagues, with the result that the French were, for the time, expelled from Italy. In this contest Louis XII secured a parody of a general council in Pisa, which Pope Julius answered by calling the Fifth Lateran Council in Rome. It met from 1512 to 1517, and though reforms were ordered it accomplished nothing of importance. Julius II was undoubtedly a ruler of great talents, who led his soldiers personally, and was animated by a desire to strengthen the temporal power of the papacy, rather than to enrich his relatives. As a patron of art and a builder he was among the most eminent of the Popes.

Julius II was succeeded by Giovanni de’ Medici, who took the name Leo X (1513-1521). With all the artistic and literary tastes of the great Florentine family of which he was a member, he combined a love of display and extravagant expenditure.

Far less warlike than Julius II, and free from the personal vices of some of his predecessors, he nevertheless made his private interests the enlargement of the States of the Church, and the balancing of the various factions of Italy, domestic and foreign, for the political advantage of the papacy. He strove to advance his relatives. In 1516 he secured by a “concordat” with Francis I of France (1515-1547) the abolition of the “Pragmatic Sanction” (ante, p. 313) on terms which left to the King the nomination of all high French ecclesiastics and the right to tax the clergy, while the annates and other similar taxes went to the Pope. The next year a revolt began in Germany, the gravity of which Leo never really comprehended, which was to tear half of Europe from the Roman obedience.

St. Catherine

Such Popes represented the Italian Renaissance, but they in no sense embodied the real spirit of a church which was to millions the source of comfort in this life and of hope for that to come. A revolution was inevitable. Nor did such a papacy represent the real religious life of Italy. The Renaissance affected only the educated and the upper classes. The people responded to appeals of preachers and the example of those they believed to be saints, though unfortunately seldom with lasting results save on individual lives. Such a religious leader, when the Renaissance was young, was St. Catherine (1347-1380), the daughter of
a dyer of Siena. A mystic, the recipient as she believed of divinely sent visions, she was a practical leader of affairs, a healer of family quarrels, a main cause in persuading the papacy to return from Avignon to Rome, a fearless denouncer of clerical evils, and an ambassador to whom Popes and cities listened with respect. Her correspondence involved counsel of almost as much political as religious value to many of the leaders of the age in church and state alike.

Savonarola

Even more famous in the later period of the Renaissance was Girolamo Savonarola of Florence (1452-1498). A native of Ferrara, intended for the medical profession, a refusal of marriage turned his thoughts to a monastic life. In 1474 he became a Dominican in Bologna. Eight years later his work in Florence began. At first little successful as a preacher, he came to speak with immense popular effectiveness, that was heightened by the general conviction which he himself shared that he was a divinely inspired prophet. He was in no sense a Protestant.

His religious outlook was thoroughly mediaeval. The French invasion of 1494 led to a popular revolution against the Medici, and Savonarola now became the real ruler of Florence, which he sought to transform into a penitential city. A semi-monastic life was adopted by many of the inhabitants. At the carnival seasons of 1496 and 1497, masks, indecent books and pictures were burned. For the time being the life of Florence was radically changed. But Savonarola aroused enemies. The adherents of the deposed Medici hated him, and above all, Pope Alexander VI, whose evil character and misrule Savonarola denounced. The Pope excommunicated him and demanded his punishment. Friends sustained him for a while, but the fickle populace turned against him. In April, 1498, he was arrested, cruelly tortured, and on May 23 hanged and his body burned by the city government. Not the least of Alexander VI’s crimes was his persecution of this preacher of righteousness, though Savonarola’s death was due quite as much to Florentine reaction against him as to the hostility of the Pope.

[24.4] THE NEW NATIONAL POWERS

The half-century from 1450 to 1500 saw a remarkable growth in royal authority and national consciousness in the western kingdoms of Europe. France, which had seemed well-nigh ruined by the long wars with England, from 1339 to 1453, came out of them with the monarchy greatly strengthened, since these struggles had been immensely destructive to the feudal nobility. Louis XI (1461-1483), by intrigue, arms, and tyranny, with the aid of commoners, broke the power of the feudal nobility and secured for the crown an authority it had not hitherto possessed. His son, Charles VIII (1483-1498), was able to lead the now centralized state into a career of foreign conquest in Italy that was to open a new epoch in European politics and give rise to rivalries that were to determine the political background of the whole Reformation age. What these Kings had attempted in centralization at home, and in conquest abroad, was carried yet further by Louis XII (1498-1515), and by the brilliant and ambitious Francis I (1515-1547). France was now a strong, centralized monarchy. Its church was largely under royal control, and to a considerable degree relieved of the worst papal abuses, thanks to the “Pragmatic Sanction” of 1438 (*ante*, p. 313); and the custom which grew up with the strengthening of the monarchy in the fifteenth century that appeals could be taken from church courts to those of the King. The control of the monarchy over clerical appointments, clerical taxation, and clerical courts was increased by the “concordat” of 1516 (*ante*, p. 319), which gave to the Pope in turn desired taxes. By the dawn of the Reformation the church of France was, in many respects, a state church.

In England the Wars of the Roses, between Yorkists and Lancastrians, from 1455 to 1485, resulted in the destruction of the power of the high nobility to the advantage of the crown. Parliament survived. The King must rule in legal form; but the power of a Henry VII (1485-1509), the first of the house of Tudor, was greater than that of any English sovereign had been for a century, and was exercised with almost unlimited absolutism, though in parliamentary form, by his even abler son, Henry VIII (1509-1547). The English sovereigns had attained, even before the Reformation, a large degree of authority in ecclesiastical affairs, and, as in France, the church in England was largely national at the close of the fifteenth century.

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This nationalizing process was nowhere in so full development as in Spain, where it was taking on the character of a religious awakening, which was to make that land a pattern for the conception of reform, often, though not very correctly, called the Counter-Reformation—a conception that was to oppose the Teutonic ideal of revolution, and was ultimately able to hold the allegiance of half of Europe to a purified Roman Church. The rise of Spain was the political wonder of the latter part of the fifteenth century. Aside from the main currents of medieval European life, the history of the peninsula had been a long crusade to throw off the Mohammedan yoke, which had been imposed in 711. Nowhere in Europe were patriotism and Catholic orthodoxy so interwoven. The struggle had resulted, by the thirteenth century, in the restriction of the Moors to the kingdom of Granada, and in the formation of four Christian kingdoms, Castile, Aragon, Portugal, and Navarre. These states were weak, and the royal power limited by the feudal nobility. A radical change came when the prospective rulership of the larger part of the peninsula was united,

in 1469, by the marriage of Ferdinand, heir of Aragon (King, 1479-1516) with Isabella, heiress of Castile (Queen, 1474-1504). Under their joint sovereignty Spain took a new place in European life. The disorderly nobles were repressed. The royal authority was asserted. In 1492 Granada was conquered and Mohammedanism overcome. The same year witnessed the discovery of a new world by Columbus, under Spanish auspices, which speedily became a source of very considerable revenue to the royal treasury. The French invasions of Italy led to Spanish interference, which lodged Spain firmly in Naples by 1503, and soon rendered Spanish influence predominant throughout Italy. On Ferdinand’s death, in 1516, these great possessions passed to his grandson, already heir of Austria and the Netherlands, and to wear the imperial title as Charles V. Spain had suddenly become the first power in Europe.

**The Spanish Reform**

The joint sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, devoted themselves no less energetically to the control of the church than to the extension of their temporal authority. The “Spanish awakening” was in no sense unique. It did not differ in principle from much that had been attempted elsewhere in the later Middle Ages. No nation with a history like that of Spain could desire doctrinal change. It was intensely devoted to the system of which the papacy was the spiritual head. But it believed that papal aggressions in administrative affairs should be limited by royal authority, and that an educated, moral, and zealous clergy could, by the same power, be encouraged and maintained. It was by reason of the success with which these results were accomplished that the Spanish awakening became the model of the “Counter-Reformation.”

No more conscientious or religiously minded sovereign ever ruled than Isabella, and if Ferdinand was primarily a politician, he was quick to see the political advantages of a policy that would place the Spanish church in subjection to the crown. In 1482 the joint sovereigns forced Pope Sixtus IV to agree to a concordat placing nomination to the higher ecclesiastical posts in the royal control. The policy thus begun was speedily extended by the energetic sovereigns. Papal bulls now required royal approval for promulgation. Church courts were supervised. The clergy were taxed for the benefit of the state. Ferdinand and Isabella now proceeded to fill the important stations in the Spanish church not only with men devoted to the royal interests, but of strenuous piety and disciplinary zeal. In this effort they had the aid of many men of ability, but chief among them stood Gonzalez (or Francisco) Ximenes de Cisneros (1436-1517), in whom the Spanish awakening had its typical representative.

Born of a family of the lower nobility, Ximenes went to Rome after studies in Alcalá and Salamanca. On his return, in 1465, after six years in the seat of the papacy, he showed great ability in church business and much talent as a preacher. About 1480 he was appointed vicar-general of the diocese by Mendoza, then bishop of Siguenza. In the full tide of success Ximenes now renounced all his honors and became a Franciscan monk of the strictest observance. Not content with these austerities, he adopted the hermit’s life. In 1492, however, on recommendation of Mendoza, now become archbishop of Toledo, Queen Isabella appointed Ximenes her confessor, and consulted him in affairs of state as well as questions of con-science. Queen and confessor worked in harmony, and under their vigorous action a thoroughgoing reform of discipline was undertaken in the disorderly monasteries of the land. Ximenes’s influence was
but increased when, in 1495, on Isabella’s insistence, and against his own protests, he became Mendoza’s successor in the archbishopric of Toledo, not only the highest ecclesiastical post in Spain, but one with which the grand-chancellorship of Castile was united. Here he maintained his ascetic life. Supported by the Queen, he turned all the powers of his high office to rid Spain of unworthy clergy and monks. No opposition could thwart him, and more than a thousand monks are said to have left the peninsula rather than submit to his discipline. The moral character and zeal of the Spanish clergy were greatly improved.

Ximenes, though no great scholar, saw the need of an educated clergy. He had encountered Renaissance influences in Rome, and would turn them wholly to the service of the church. In 1498 he founded the University of Alcalá de Henares, to which he devoted a large part of his episcopal revenues, and where he gathered learned men, among them four professors of Greek and Hebrew. A quarter of a century later Alcalá counted seven thousand students. Though opposed to general reading of the Bible by the laity, Ximenes believed that the Scriptures should be the principal study of the clergy, on which he directed the labor from 1502 to 1517. The Old Testament was presented in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, with the Targum on the Pentateuch; the New Testament in Greek and Latin. The New Testament was in print by 1515. To Ximenes belongs the honor, therefore, of first printing the New Testament in Greek, though as papal permission for publication could not be obtained till 1520, the Greek Testament, issued in 1516, by Erasmus, was earlier on the market.

The less attractive side of Ximenes’s character is to be seen in his willingness to use force for the conversion of the Mohammedans. In affairs of state his firmness and wisdom were of vast service to Isabella, Ferdinand, and Charles V, till his death in 1517.

The intellectual impulse thus inaugurated by Ximenes led ultimately to a revival of the theology of Aquinas, begun by Francisco de Vittoria (?-1546) in Salamanca, and continued by Vittoria’s disciples, the great Roman theologians of the early struggle with Protestantism, Domingo de Soto (1494-1560) and Melchior Cano (1525-1560).

Characteristic of the Spanish awakening was the reorganization of the inquisition. The Spanish temper viewed orthodoxy and patriotism as essentially one, and regarded the maintenance of their religions by Jews and Mohammedans, or relapse by such of those dissenters as had embraced Christianity, as perils to church and state alike. Accordingly, in 1480, Ferdinand and Isabella established the inquisition, entirely under royal authority, and with inquisitors appointed by the sovereign. It was this national character that was the distinguishing feature of the Spanish inquisition, and led to protests by Pope Sixtus IV, to which the sovereigns turned deaf ears. Supported by the crown, it speedily became a fearful instrument, under the leadership of Tomas Torquemada (1420-1498). Undoubtedly its value in breaking the independence of the nobles and replenishing the treasury by confiscation commended it to the sovereigns, but its chief claim to popular favor was its repression of heresy and dissent.

Spain had, therefore, at the close of the fifteenth century, the most independent national church of any nation in Europe, in which a moral and intellectual renewal—not destined to be permanent—was in more vigorous progress than elsewhere; yet a church intensely mediaeval in doctrine and practice, and fiercely intolerant of all heresy.

The Condition of Germany

In Germany the situation was very different. The empire lacked all real unity. The imperial crown, in theory elective, was worn by members of the Austrian house of Habsburg from 1438 to 1740, but the Emperors had power as possessors of their hereditary lands, rather than as holders of imperial authority. Under Frederick III (1440-1493) wars between the princes and cities and the disorder of the lower nobility, who lived too often by what was really highway robbery, kept the land in a turmoil which the Emperor was powerless to suppress. Matters were somewhat better under Maximilian I (1493-1519), and an attempt was made to give stronger central authority to the empire by frequent meetings of the old feudal Reichstag, the establishment of an imperial supreme court (1495), and the division of the empire into districts for the better preservation of public peace (1512). Efforts were made to form an imperial army and collect imperial taxes. These reforms had little vitality. The decisions of the court could not be
enforced nor the taxes collected. The Reichstag was, indeed, to play a great role in the Reforma
tion days, but it was a clumsy parliament, meeting in three houses, one of the imperial electors, the
second of lay and spiritual princes, and the third of delegates from the free imperial cities. The lower
nobles and the common people had no share in it.

The imperial cities were an important element in German life, owning no superior but the feeble rule of
the Emperor. They were industrious and wealthy, but they were far from democratic in their govern
ment, and were thoroughly self-seeking as far as the larger interests of Germany were concerned. Thei
r commercial spirit led them to resist the exactions of clergy and princes alike.

In no country of Europe was the peasantry in a state of greater unrest, especially in southwestern
Germany, where insurrections occurred in 1476, 1492, 1512, and 1513. The peasants were serfs—a
condition that had passed away in England, and largely in France. Their state had been made rapidly
worse by the substitution of the Roman law—a law made largely for slaves—for the old legal customs,
and by the close of the fifteenth century they were profoundly disaffected.

Yet if German national life as a whole was thus disordered and dissatisfied, the larger territories of
Germany were growing stronger, and developing a kind of semi-independent local national life in
themselves. This was notably true of Austria, electoral and ducal Saxony, Bavaria, Brandenburg, and
Hesse. The power of their rulers was increasing, and they were beginning to exercise a local authority in
churchly affairs, controlling the nomination of bishops and abbots, taxing the clergy, and limiting to some
extent ecclesiastical jurisdiction. This local territorial churchmanship had not gone far, but that it existed
was of the utmost importance in giving a framework which the Reformation was rapidly to develop when
Roman obedience was rejected.

Rivalries of France and The Habsburgs

The years preceding the Reformation witnessed two marriages by the Habsburg rulers of Austria of the
utmost importance for the political background of the Reformation age. In 1477 the death of Charles the
Bold, the ambitious duke of Burgundy, left the heirship of his Burgundian territories and the Netherlands
to his daughter, Mary. Her marriage that year, with Maximilian I, to the dissatisfaction of Louis XI of
France, who seized upper Burgundy, sowed the seeds of quarrel between the Kings of France and the
Habsburg line which were largely to determine the politics of Europe till 1756. Philip, the son of
Maximilian and Mary, in turn married Juana, heiress of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. So it came about
that Philip and Juana’s son, Charles, became possessor of Austria, the Netherlands, and the wide-extended
Spanish territories in Europe and the New World—a larger sovereignty than had been held by a single
ruler since Charlemagne—to which the imperial title was added in 1519. Charles V became heir also to
the rivalry between the Habsburg line to which he belonged and the Kings of France. That rivalry and the
struggle for religious reform were to interplay throughout the Reformation age, constantly modifying each
other.

[24.5] RENAISSANCE AND OTHER INFLUENCES NORTH of the ALPS

Though the fifteenth century was a notable period of university foundation in Germany—no less than
twelve coming into existence between 1409 and 1506—these new creations did
not owe their existence to the Renaissance. They grew partly out of a strong desire for learning, but even
more from the ambition of the larger territorial rulers to possess such schools in their own lands. An
influence favorable to the ultimate triumph of humanism was the revival of the older realistic medieval
theology, and a tendency to go back of even the earlier schoolmen to Augustine, and to Neo-Platonic
rather than Aristotelian conceptions. These revivals were strongly represented in the University of Paris by
the last quarter of the fifteenth century, and spread thence to German universities with considerable
following. They made for many the bridge to humanism, and they rendered possible that dominance of
Augustinian conceptions which was to be characteristic of the Reformation age.

Humanism in Germany
The Renaissance beyond the Alps was inaugurated by contact with Italian humanists at the Councils of Constance and Basel, but it did not become a powerful influence till near the close of the fifteenth century. Its conquests were earlier in Germany than in France, England, or Spain. Some considerable impulse was given by the learned mathematician and philosopher, Nicholas of Cues (1401-1464), who collected a notable library. He died a cardinal and bishop of Brixen. Many of its earlier representatives in Germany were little fitted, however, to commend it to the serious-minded. German students brought home from Italy the love of the classics, and also the loose living too often characteristic of the Italian Renaissance. Such were men like the vagabond poet, Peter Luder, who passed from university to university, a disreputable exponent of the new learning, from 1456 to 1474. A very different teacher, who had studied in Italy, was Rudolf Agricola (1443-1485), who closed his life as professor in Heidelberg. A man of worth and influence, he did much to further classical education in the fitting schools. Through Agricola’s disciple, Alexander Hegius, who dominated the school in Deventer from 1482 to 1498, that foundation became a centre of classical instruction, of which Erasmus was to be the most famous pupil. By the close of the fifteenth century a great improvement in the teaching of Latin had taken place in the secondary schools of Germany.

Humanism found footing in the universities, not without severe struggle. Its earliest conquest was the University of 328 Vienna, where the semi-pagan Latin poet, Conrad Celtes (1459-1508), enjoyed the patronage of the humanistically inclined Emperor, Maximilian I. By the first decade of the sixteenth century, humanism was pressing into the Universities of Basel, Tubingen, Ingolstadt, Heidelberg, and Erfurt. It also found many patrons in the wealthy commercial cities, notably in Nuremberg, Strassburg, and Augsburg. So numerous were its sympathizers by the close of the fifteenth century that learned circles were being formed, like the Rhenish Literary Association, organized by Celtes in Mainz, in 1491, the members of which corresponded, circulated each other’s works, and afforded mutual assistance. By 1500 humanism was becoming a vital factor in Germany.

German humanism presented many types, but was, in general, far less pagan and more serious-minded than that of Italy. Many of its leaders were sincere churchmen, anxious to reform and purify religious life. It is to be seen at its best in its two most famous representatives, Reuchlin and Erasmus.

Reuchlin

Born in humble circumstances, in Pforzheim, in 1455, Johann Reuchlin early gained local reputation as a Latinist, and was sent as companion to the young son of the margrave of Baden to the University of Paris, about 1472. Here, in Paris, he began the study of Greek, instruction in which had been offered there since 1470. In 1477 he received the master’s degree in Basel, and there taught Greek. Even before his graduation he published a Latin dictionary (1475-1476). He studied law in Orleans and Poitiers, and in later life was much employed in judicial positions; but his interests were always primarily scholarly. The service of the count of Württemberg took him to Florence and Rome in 1482—cities which he visited again in 1490 and 1498. At Florence, even on his first visit, his acquaintance with Greek commanded admiration. There he met and was influenced by the scholars of the Platonic Academy (ante, p. 315), and from Pico della Mirandola (ante, p. 315) he acquired that strange interest in Kabalistic doctrines that added much to his fame in Germany. Reuchlin was regarded as the ablest Greek scholar of the closing years of the fifteenth century in Germany, and his influence in promotion of Greek studies was most fruitful. Reuchlin had the Renaissance desire to return to the sources, and this led him, first of non-Jewish scholars in Germany, to make a profound study of Hebrew that he might the better understand the Old Testament. The fruit of twenty years of this labor was the publication in 1506 of a Hebrew grammar and lexicon—De Rudimentis Hebraicis—which unlocked the treasures of that speech to Christian students. The bitter quarrel into which the peace-loving scholar was drawn by reason of these Hebrew studies, and with him all educated Germany, will be described in treating of the immediate antecedents of the Lutheran revolt. Reuchlin was no Protestant. He refused approval to the rising Reformation, which he witnessed till his death in 1522. But he did a service of immense importance to Biblical scholarship, and his intellectual heir was to be his
grandnephew, that scholar among the reformers, Philip Melanchthon.

Erasmus

Desiderius Erasmus was born out of wedlock in Rotterdam, or Gouda, probably in 1466. The school in Deventer awakened his love of letters (ante, p. 327). His poverty drove him into an Augustinian monastery in Steyn, but he had no taste for the monastic life, nor for that of the priesthood, to which he was ordained in 1492. By 1495 he was studying in Paris. The year 1499 saw him in England, where he made the helpful friendship of John Colet, who directed him toward the study of the Bible and the Fathers. A few years of studious labors, chiefly in France and the Netherlands, saw him once more in England, in 1505, then followed a three years’ sojourn in Italy. In 1509 he again returned to England, and now taught in the University of Cambridge, enjoying the friendship of many of the most distinguished men of the kingdom. The years 1515-1521 were spent for the most part in the service of Charles V in the Netherlands. From 1521 to his death in 1536 Basel, where he could have ample facilities for publication, was his principal home. He may thus be called a citizen of all Europe.

Erasmus was not an impeccable Latinist. His knowledge of Greek was rather superficial. He was, above all, a man of letters, who touched the issues of his time with consummate wit and brilliancy of expression; set forth daring criticism of clergy and civil rulers, and withal was moved by deep sincerity of purpose. Convinced that the church of his day was overlaid with superstition, corruption, and error, and that the monastic life was too often ignorant and unworthy, he had yet no wish to break with the church that he so freely criticised. He was too primarily intellectual to have sympathy with the Lutheran revolution, the excesses of which repelled him. He was too clear-sighted not to see the evils of the Roman Church. Hence neither side in the struggle that opened in the latter part of his life understood him, and his memory has been condemned by polemic writers, Protestant and Catholic. His own thought was that education, return to the sources of Christian truth, and flagellation of ignorance and immorality by merciless satire would bring the church to purity. To this end he labored. His *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* of 1502 was a simple, earnest presentation of an uneclesiastical Christianity, largely Stoic in character. His *Praise of Folly* of 1509 was a biting satire on the evils of his age in church and state. His *Familiar Colloquies* of 1518 were witty discussions in which fastings, pilgrimages, and similar external observances were the butts of his brilliant pen. His constructive work was of the highest importance. In 1516 came the first edition of his Greek Testament, the pioneer publication of the Greek text, for that of Ximenes was still inaccessible (ante, p. 324). This was followed by a series of the Fathers—Jerome, Origen, Basil, Cyril, Chrysostom, Irenaeus, Ambrose, and Augustine, not all wholly from his pen, but all from his impulse, which placed scholarly knowledge of early Christianity on a new plane, and profoundly aided a Reformation, the deeper religious springs of which Erasmus never understood. Erasmus rendered a service for the Christian classics, much like that of the Italian humanists for the pagan writers of Greece and Rome.

Yet Erasmus did something more than revive a knowledge of Christian sources. In a measure, he had a positive theology. To him Christianity was but the fullest expression through Christ, primarily in the Sermon on the Mount, of universal, essentially ethical religion, of which the philosophers of antiquity had also been bearers. He had little feeling for the sacramental or for the deeply personal elements in religion. A universal ethical theism, having its highest illustration in Christ, was his idea. His way of thinking was to have little influence on the Reformation as a whole, though much on Socinianism, and is that represented in a great deal of modern theology, of which he was thus the spiritual ancestor.

The Service of Humanism

Though Germany was more largely influenced by the Renaissance at the beginning of the sixteenth century than any other land beyond the Alps, the same impulses were stirring elsewhere. The efforts of Ximenes in Spain have already been noted (ante, p. 324). In England John Colet (1467?-1519) was introducing educational reforms and lecturing on the epistles of Paul in Oxford and London. His influence in turning Erasmus to Biblical studies was considerable (ante, p. 329). He rejected all allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures, criticised clerical celibacy and auricular confession, and desired to better the education and morals of the clergy. As the sixteenth century dawned humanism was gaining constantly
increasing following in England, and King Henry VIII (1509-1547) was deemed its patron. The situation in France was similar. The chief representative of a churchly reformatory humanism was Jaques Le Fevre, of Etaples (1455-1536), most of whose active years were spent in or near Paris. A modest, kindly little man, of mystical piety, he published a Latin translation and commentary on Paul’s epistles in 1512, which denied the justifying merits of good works and held salvation a free gift from God. He never perceived, however, any fundamental difference between himself and the Roman Church; but he gathered round himself a body of devoted pupils, destined to most unlike participation in the Reformation struggle, Guillaume Briçonnet, to be bishop of Meaux; Guillaume Bude, eminent in Greek and to be instrumental in founding the College de France; Louis de Berquin, to die a Protestant martyr; and Guillaume Farel to be the fiery reformer of French-speaking Switzerland.

Publication of the Bible

To all these religious-minded humanists the path of reform seemed similar. Sound learning, the study and preaching of the Bible and the Fathers, and the correction of ignorance, immorality, and glaring administrative abuses would make the church what it should be. This solution did not meet the deep needs of the situation; but the humanists rendered an indispensable preparation for the Reformation. They led men to study Christian sources afresh. They discredited the later scholastic theology. They brought in new and more natural methods of exegesis. To a large degree they looked on life from another standpoint than the mediaeval. They represented a release of the mind, in some considerable measure, from mediaeval traditionalism.

Partly as a result of the Renaissance emphasis on the sources, but even more in consequence of the invention of printing, the latter half of the fifteenth century witnessed a wide distribution of the Bible in the Vulgate and in translation. No less than ninety-two editions of the Vulgate were put forth before 1500. Eighteen editions of a German version were printed before 1521. The New Testament was printed in French in 1477; the whole Bible ten years later; 1478 saw the publication of a Spanish translation; 1471 the printing of two independent versions in Italian. In the Netherlands the Psalms were seven times published between 1480 and 1507. The Scriptures were printed in Bohemian in 1488. If England had no printed Bible before the Reformation, many manuscripts of Wyclif’s translation were in circulation. Efforts were made to restrict the reading of the Bible by the laity, since its use seemed the source of mediaeval heresies; but there can be no doubt that familiarity with it much increased among the less educated priesthood and among laymen. Yet the real question of the influence of this Bible reading is the problem of Biblical interpretation. The Middle Ages never denied the final authority of the Bible. Augustine and Aquinas so regarded it. It was the Bible interpreted, however, by the Fathers, the teachers, and the councils of the church. Should that churchly right to interpret be denied, there remained only the right of private interpretation; but the voices from Bohemia and the mediaeval sects which denied the interpreting authority of the church, found no general response as yet. The commanding word had yet to be spoken. The mere reading of the Bible involved no denial of mediaeval ideals. Only when those ideals were rejected could the interpreting authority which supported them be denied and the Bible become the support of the newer conceptions of salvation and of the church. The Bible was not so much the cause of Protestantism as was Protestantism a new interpretation of the Scriptures.

Unrest in Germany

The closing years of the fifteenth century were, as has been seen, a period of religious betterment in Spain. No such corresponding revival of interest in religion is to be traced in France or England; but Germany was undergoing a real and pervasive religious quickening in the decades immediately preceding the Reformation. Its fundamental motive seems to have been fear. Much in the popular life of Germany tended to increase the sense of apprehension. The witchcraft delusion, though by no means new, was rapidly spreading. A bull of Pope Innocent VIII in 1484 declared Germany full of witches, and the German inquisitors, Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer, published their painfully celebrated Malleus Maleficarum in 1489. It was a superstition that added terror to popular life, and was to be shared by the reformers no less than by their Roman opponents. The years from 1490 to 1503 were a period of famine in
Germany. The Turkish peril was becoming threatening. The general social unrest has already been noted (ante, p. 325). All these elements contributed to the development of a sense of the reality and nearness of divine judgments, and the need of propitiating an angry God. Luther’s early religious experiences were congenial to the spirit of this pervasive religious movement.

Contrasted Types of Religion

The religious spirit of Germany at the close of the fifteenth century found expression in pilgrimages. A few of the more wealthy journeyed to the Holy Land, more went to Rome, but the most popular foreign pilgrimage shrine was that of St. James at Compostella in Spain. German pilgrim shrines were thronged, and great collections of relics were made, notably by the Saxon Elector, Frederick the Wise (1486-1525), to be Luther’s protector, who placed them in the castle church, to the door of which Luther was to nail his famous Theses. The intercession of Mary was never more sought, and Mary’s mother, St. Anna, was but little less valued. Christ was popularly regarded as a strict judge, to be placated with satisfactions or absolutions.

Yet side by side with this external and work-trusting religious spirit, Germany had not a little of mystic piety, that saw the essence of religion in the relation of the individual soul to God; and a good deal of what has been called “non-ecclesiastical religion,” which showed itself not only in simple, serious lives, like that of Luther’s father, but in increasing attempts of lay princes to improve the quality of the clergy, of towns to regulate beggary, to control charitable foundations, which had been in exclusive ecclesiastical hands, and in various ways to vindicate for laymen, as such, a larger share in the religious life of the community. The active life was asserting its claims against the contemplative. Theology, as such, had largely lost its hold on popular thought, discredited by nominalism, despised by humanism, and supplanted by mysticism.

It was no dead age to which Luther was to speak, but one seething with unrest, vexed with multitudinous unsolved problems and unfulfilled longings.

A Source Book for Ancient Church History  By Joseph Cullen Ayer

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11 Peter 5:12; John 21:18, 19; Clement, 5, 6; Ignatius, Romans, 4:3; Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 3:1:1; Caius of Rome in Eusebius, Church History, 2:25: 5 7,
Tacitus Annals 15.44; Ayer, A Source-Book for Ancient Church History, p. 6.
2 The translations, which imply that, in Romans 9:5 and Titus 2:13, are for various reasons to be rejected as Pauline.
3 Trajan, Letters, 10:96; Ayer, p. 20.
4 Justin, Apology, 61; Ayer, p. 33
5 Justin, Apology., 67; Ayer, p. 35
6 Justin, Apology., 67; see also Pliny, Letters, 1096; Ayer, pp. 21, 35.
7 Justin, Apology., 65, 67; Ayer, pp. 33-35
8 Justin, Apology., 67.
9 1 Clem., 59-61, see also Didache, 9, 10; Ayer, pp. 38, 39; Didache, 8; Hermas, Sim., 51; Ayer, p. 38.
10 Didache, 8; Ayer, p. 38.
11 2 Clem., 16.
13 Hermas., Sim., 7.
14 Hermas., Sim., 5:2; 3; Ayer, p. 48.
15 1 Clem., 55.
16 Hermas, Sim., 2.
17 Ignatius to Polycarp, 4.
19 Justin, Apology, 5.
20 Justin, Apology, 62.
21 Justin, Apology, Dialogue, 35.
22 2 Clem., 9, 16.
23 Ante, §1.4.
24 1 Cor. 16:15, 16.
25 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28-30, 14:26-33.
26 1 Cor. 12:23.
27 Gal. 1:1, 11-16; 1 Cor. 14:18.
28 Didache, 11; Ayer, p. 40.
29 e.g., Timothy in 1 Cor. 4:17, 16:10.
30 Didache 11; Ayer, p. 40.
31 Didache 11.
32 Mand., 11.
34 1 Clem., 42, 44
35 Vis., 2-4.
36 Sim., 9:26, 27.
37 Didache, 15; Ayer, p. 41
38 1 Clem., 44; Ayer, p. 37.
39 Romans 2.
40 Smyrn., 8.
41 See Phila., 7, where Ignatius declares it is by charismatic inspiration, and not by knowledge of divisions, that he exhorted: “Do nothing without the bishop.”
42 Acts 20:17-35
43 1 Cor. 42, 44; Ayer, pp. 36, 37.
44 Acts 18:14-16.
45 Pliny’s Letters 10:96; Ayer, p. 22
46 Justin, Apology, 5, 6; 11, 12.
47 Martyrology of Polycarp., 3, 8-10.
48 Justin, Dialogue, 10.
49 Eusebius, Church History, 51.
50 Dialogue, 2-8.
51 Apology, 12.
52 Ibid., 46; Ayer, p. 72.
53 Ibid., 32.
54 John 1:1-3, 2:22, 4:2, 3; Ignatius, Trallians, 9-11; Smyrn., 1-6.
55 Useful selections regarding Gnosticism may be found in Ayer, pp. 76-102.
56 1 Cor. 2:6.
57 Romans 8:22-25; 1 Cor. 15:50.
58 Col. 2:15; Eph. 6:1
59 1 Cor. 15:47.
60 Acts 8:9-24; Irenaeus, Heresies, 1:22; Ayer, p. 79.
61 See selections, Ayer, pp. 102-105.
62 2 Cor. 3:17.
63 E.g., 1 Clem. 8, 13, 16; “the prophetic Spirit,” Justin, Apology, 13.
64 1 Clem., 47.
65 Matt. 28:19.
66 Acts 2:32.
67 E.g., 1 Clem. 46, 58; Ignatius, Eph., 9.
69 Smyrn., 8; Ayer, p. 42.
70 Heussi, Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte, p. 44.
71 Heresies, 3:1-4; Ayer, pp. 112-114.
72 1 Cor. 26.
73 Heresies, 3: 4.1.
74 Ibid., 4, 26.2.
75 Justin, Apology, 61.
76 Prescription, 13, 36.
77 Barn., 4.
78 Phil. 12.
79 Apology, 66, 67.
80 Ayer, pp. 117-120.
81 Clem., 59, 63.
82 Eusebius, Church History, 4: 23.10; Ayer, p. 24.
83 Romans
84 Heresies, 3: 3.2; Ayer, p. 113.
85 Eusebius, Church History, 5: 24.16, 17; Ayer, p. 164.
86 1 Eusebius, Church History, 5: 23, 24; Ayer, pp. 161-165.
87 Ag., Heresies, 3:18.1; Ayer, pp. 137, 138.
88 Ag., Heresies, 5; Preface.
89 Ag., Heresies, 4: 20.7.
90 Ag., Heresies, 4:18:5; Ayer, p. 138.
91 Ag., Heresies, 3: 22.4.
93 Prescription, 7.
94 Apology, 17.
95 Prescription, 13-19.
96 Prescription., 32.
97 Prescription., 13.
98 Baptism, 1.
99 Repentance, 6.
100 Anima, 41.
101 Anima., 21.
102 Baptism, 10.
103 Patience, 1.
104 Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte, p. 164.
105 Repentance, 2, 9.
106 Praxeas, 2.
107 Praxeas, 12.
108 Praxeas, 7.
109 Praxeas, 27.
110 Praxeas, 7, 9.
111 Letters, 39-43.5.
112 Ibid., 51-55.24.
113 Unity of the Church, 6.
114 Letters, 72-73.21.
115 Ibid., 68-66.8.
116 Unity of the Church, 5; Ayer, p. 242.
117 E.g., Unity of the Church, 4.
119 Ibid., 76.6.
120 Praxeas, 3.
121 Praxeas, 3, 10.
122 Hippolytus, Refutation, 7.33, 10.19; Ayer, p. 172.
123 Letters, 72-734.
124 Hippolytus, Against Noetus, 1; Ayer, p. 177.
125 Praxeas, 1; Ayer, p. 179.
E. g., 2.64-72. 10; 5; 2, 25; Mirbt, 54, 55. In Loofs, Ayer, pp. 542, 543.

1. Seeberg, 54.3. 1; 621. Church History, Codex Theodosianus, Eg., pp. 510, 511.


1.8. 173; see Ayer, p. 536. 1.4

16,10, 12; Nestoriana, 3:12.3; Ayer, p. 135; see Ayer, p. 536. 16:10.4;

1Ayer, pp. 498-501. 1.6.


1Ayer, pp. 498-501. 1.6.


of censure to pagan intellectuals like Libanius, Julian, and Macrobius, as well as to moralists like John Chrysostom.

355 The Kontakion got its name in the ninth century from the rod (kontos) round which the text was rolled.

354 Augustine, *Sermons*, 15.91

355 Against *Vigilantius*, 6.


357 Col. 2.18.

358 *Acts* 17.34.

359 "In Orthodox practice icons are normally two-dimensional, but the use of free-standing, three-dimensional statues is not altogether unknown. Although modern Orthodox writers sometimes condemn the use of statues, in the eighth/ninth-century iconodule sources no doctrinal significance is attached to the distinction between two- and three-dimensional religious art." Bishop Kallistos Ware, "The Spirituality of the Icon", *ch. 7. The Study of Spirituality*. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Edward Yarnold (Oxford University Press. New York. 1986 pp. 195-199)

360 *Confessions*, 3.4.

361 *Ibid.*, 3.5


363 *Ibid.*, 4.2,3

364 *Confessions*, 6.15.

365 Against the *Epistle of Manicheus*, 5; *Ayer*, p. 455.

366 *Confessions*, 8.2; *Ayer*, pp. 431-433.

367 *Confessions*, 8.8. 5

368 *Romans* 13.13-14; *Confessions*, 312; *Ayer*, pp. 435-437.

369 *Confessions*, 9.10-12.


371 *Trinity*, 8, Preface.


373 3 *Ibid.*, 5.9


377 *Enchiridion*, 35.


379 *Confessions*, 10.43.

380 *Rebuke and Grace*, 33.


382 *Nature and Grace*, 33.

383 *Enchiridion*, 11.

384 *City of God*, 13.2.


387 *Romans* 5.12; *Forgiveness of Sins*, 1.11.

388 *Marriage*, 1.27.

389 *Original Sin*, 34.

390 1 *Original Sin*, 34.

391 *Enchiridion*, 107.


393 *Ayer*, p. 442.

394 *Predestination*, 3.

395 *Rebuke and Grace*, 3.

396 *Gift of Perseverance*, 1.

397 *Baptism*, 3.16, 21.


399 *Reply to Faustus*, 19.11.

400 *Forgiveness of Sins*, 1.34.

401 *Letters*, 98.10; *Ayer*, p. 450.

402 *City of God*, 14.23.


404 *Ayer*, pp. 458, 459.

405 *Ayer*, p. 461.

406 112; *Ayer*, p. 469.

407 Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus, 24; *Ayer*, p. 471.

408 *Ayer*, pp. 472-476.

409 *Ayer*, p. 475.

410 *Letters*, 520.

411 *Ayer*, pp. 592-595.


413 *Moralia*, 33.21.

414 *Moralia*, 16.51.

415 *Vis.*, 3.7

416 *Letters*, 51-5520


418 *Dialogues*, 4.39.

419 Silent recitation of the great eucharistic prayer is first attested for fifth-century Syria. It was forbidden by a law of Justinian of 565, but had become customary at Constantinople by the ninth century.

420 E.g., *Ayer*, pp. 542, 555.

421 *Ayer*, p. 361.


423 *Ayer*, p. 360.


426 *Letters*, 145.


428 Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, pp. 9, 10.


430 The Veronica legend arose from a remarkable fusion of several legends. By the fourth century the woman with the issue of blood was named Berenice. According to one form of the Abgar legend, current by 400, Christ sent his portrait to a princess of Edessa named Berenice. The two ladies were identified, and in the Latin West the name became Veronica. In later legend she acquired her picture of Christ on a towel which she offered him on the *via dolorosa*. The towel, preserved at St Peter’s, Rome, has in modern times attracted less attention than the Shroud of Turin, the work of a fourteenth-century artist for which no claims can be made on historical grounds.

431 *Ayer*, pp. 694-697.

432 The principal iconoclast arguments were: (a) the second commandment; (b) man alone is the earthly image of God; (c) to portray Christ implies a Nestorian separation of the humanity from the divine nature; or, if not that, it implies a circumscribing and limiting of the divine nature which cannot be so limited.

The iconodules replied: (a) we venerate not the icons but those whom they depict; (b) honour addressed to Christ’s servants the saints is relative, not an absolute worship; (c) icons are a necessary consequence of the invocation of saints; (d) if value is ascribed to relics, why not also to icons? (s) the second commandment was only temporary legislation; (f) icons aid devotion and are universally used.


436 Rev. 2.6, 14, 15.

437 Text in Henderson, *Select Historical Documents*, pp. 361-365. The so-called “Papal Version” is in all probability the original.
The letter seems to belong here, rather than to January, 1076, to which it is often assigned.

The best account is that of Hildebrand himself. Henderson, pp. 385-387; Robinson, 1: 282-283.

Henderson, pp. 373-376.


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Henderson, pp. 388-391

Ibid., pp. 391-394.

Henderson, pp. 405-407; Robinson, 1: 290-292.

Henderson, pp. 407, 408.

Henderson, pp. 408, 409; Robinson, 1: 292, 293.

Matt. 19.

Matt. 10.

Probably from Matt. 5.


Matt. 10.7,14.

Testament.


Gee and Hardy, Documents Illustrative of English Church History, pp. 68-73.

Henderson, pp. 430-432.

Henderson, pp. 433-434; Robinson, 1: 488-490.


See, for some extracts, Robinson, 1: 491-497.

Gee and Hardy, Documents Illustrative of English Church History, pp. 103, 104, 113-119.

Gee and Hardy, pp. 105-108.


Robinson, 1:511.

Ibid., 1:513.

Robinson, 1:512.

Kidd, Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation, p. 3.