

A KEY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHURCH HISTORY

by John H. Blunt

Blunt's accessible guide to church history providing a structured overview of the major periods, events, and figures from the apostolic era through later centuries, designed to give readers a framework for understanding the development of Christianity.

14 Chapters

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00. A Key to the Knowledge of Church History

A Key to the Knowledge of Church History John Henry Blunt In this 12 chapter work, Blunt works through various points of church history expounding on Church History at each point. The writer is writing from the point of view of the Church of England (Anglican).

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[Ancient]

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“This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be

preached in all the world for a witness

unto all nations.”—Matthew 24:14 Rivingtons Waterloo Place, London Oxford, and Cambridge MDCCCLXXVII [New Edition] (1877)

00a. Preface

PREFACE. This Volume offers to the reader a short and condensed account of the origin, growth, and condition of the Church in all parts of the world, from the time of our Lord down to the end of the fifteenth century, the narrative being compressed into as small a compass as is consistent with a readable form. In such a work the reader will not, of course, expect to find any full and detailed account of so vast a subject as Pre-Reformation Church History. Its object is rather to sketch out the historical truth about each Church, and to indicate the general principles on which further inquiry may be conducted by those who have the opportunity of making it.

It is hoped that those whose circumstances do not admit of an extended study of the subject will find in the following pages a clear, though condensed, view of the periods and Churches treated of; and that those whose reading is of a less limited range will be put in possession of certain definite lines of thought, by which they may be guided in reading the statements of more elaborate histories.

It may be added, that the writer's stand-point throughout has been that of a loyal attachment to the Church of England, as the authorized exponent and upholder of Catholic doctrine for English people.

M. F. B. P.

July, 1869.

01. The Foundation of the Church Among the Jews

CHAPTER I. The foundation of the Church among the Jews

A.D. 33-A.D. 38

Before entering upon an account of the Foundation and After-History of the Christian Church, it may be well to consider what that Church really is.

Section 1. Definition of the Church.

[Sidenote: Twofold nature of the Church.] The Church may be regarded in a twofold aspect, as an external Corporation, and as a spiritual Body.

[Sidenote: 1. An external Kingdom.] In the first light it is a Kingdom, in the world, though not of the world, extending through different and widely-separated countries, often seemingly divided by outward circumstances, but, in reality, having all its parts subject to the same Invisible King, governed by laws which He has given, and by means of those whom He has appointed to be His representatives on earth.

[Sidenote: 2. A spiritual Body.] In its spiritual sense the Church is the One Mystical Body of Christ, of which men are made members by Holy Baptism, and in which they are nourished and built up by the Holy Eucharist, and the other means of grace. These means of grace are dispensed by Priests, who receive authority and power to execute their ministerial functions from Bishops, successors of the Apostles, and are assisted in their ministry by the inferior order of Deacons.

[Sidenote: Future destiny of the Church.] The members of this Mystical Body, after passing through their appointed probation in this world, and being built up more and more, if they continue faithful, into Christ their Head, are removed to join the Church at rest in Paradise. There they await the Resurrection and Final Judgment, after which the "Church Militant here on earth" will become the Church Triumphant in Heaven.

[Sidenote: The Church exists through and by the Incarnation, applied to each individual in Holy Baptism, and the Holy Eucharist.] The existence of the Church is the consequence and fruit of the Incarnation and Death of her Divine Head; the spiritual life of all her members being derived from their union with our Blessed Lord's Sacred Humanity, whereby they are also made "partakers of the Divine Nature[1]," their birth-sin being at the same time washed away by the Virtue of His Cleansing Blood. This Life, once begun, is kept up in faithful Christians by believing and persevering use of the Mystical Food provided for its sustenance in their souls—the Blessed Body and Precious Blood thus given to them being a continual extension of the Incarnation; whilst their actual sins are forgiven by the absolving Word of the Priest, and the Pleading of the One Sacrifice, unceasingly presented in Heaven, and constantly shown forth and mystically offered on the Altars of the Church on earth.

[Sidenote: Foreshadowings of the Church and the Redeemer's sacrifice under the Patriarchal] From the time of the Fall and the merciful Promise of a Redeemer, "the Seed of the woman," there is also a foreshadowing of the Church as the appointed way by which mankind should lay hold on the salvation thus provided for them. The Patriarchs were priests in their own tribes, for which they continually offered up sacrifices to Almighty God; and to this patriarchal system succeeded the Mosaical Dispensation with an elaborate ceremonial, each minute detail of which was laid down by direct revelation from God Himself.

[Sidenote: and Mosaic dispensations.] In this system of Divine Worship given to Moses, sacrifices of animals still held the most prominent place, typifying as they did the great Oblation to come, and perhaps conveying a certain Sacramental grace to the devout offerers and partakers of them. To these perpetual sacrifices, offered morning by morning and evening by evening, there was also joined a continual round of praise and thanksgiving. [Sidenote: Much of the Jewish ritual absorbed in the Christian Church.] When our Blessed Lord came "to fulfil the Law," this Jewish ritual was in a great measure engrafted into the worship of the Christian Church. The Passover feast, as well as animal sacrifices and the feeding on them, were done away, and replaced by the "Unbloody Sacrifice" and Sacramental Communion of the Gospel covenant, whilst circumcision and ceremonial purifications disappeared to make room for the "true Circumcision of the Spirit," and the regenerating streams of Holy Baptism. But the "Hours of Prayer" and Praise were still retained, "the singers arrayed in white" became the white-robed choirs of the Christian Church, and the threefold order of the Christian ministry represented the High Priest, Priests, and Levites of the old dispensation.

[Sidenote: Jewish Worship a preparation for Christian Worship.]

We must not be led to think that the Jewish Worship was contrary to the Mind of God, for He Himself appointed it. It was, without doubt, a part of the great Scheme of Redemption—a preparation for the Gospel, the means ordained by the Divine Wisdom for keeping up in men's minds the future Coming of the Messiah. But when the Great Deliverer was indeed come, there was no further need for the types and shadows of the Law, and they disappeared to make way for the "substance" of the Gospel.

[Sidenote: The Church Militant a preparation for the Church Triumphant.] So when the number of the elect shall be accomplished, and the Church Militant changed into the Church Triumphant, her Worship and her Sacraments will have their full fruition in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and the unceasing adoration of the redeemed in the Heavenly Temple.

Section 2. Our Lord's Work in the Foundation of the Church.

[Sidenote: Our Lord prepared for the Foundation of His Church by instituting Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, and by appointing the twelve Apostles.] Our Blessed Lord's Ministry was spent in making preparations for the foundation of His Church. At His first entrance on that Ministry, He "sanctified Water to the mystical washing away of sin;" at the close of it, He blessed the elements of Bread and Wine, and made them the channels of His constant Presence with His Church, "a perpetual memory of His Precious Death" before God. He also appointed human instruments, who, in His Name and by His Authority, should carry out this mighty work, and be the foundation-stones of the new spiritual building, bonded together and firmly established in Him the

“Chief Corner Stone.” “The wall of the City had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb[2].”

[Sidenote: The Apostles taught and trained by our Lord's Example and Teaching.] The Apostles were solemnly set apart by our Lord after a night of watching and prayer[3], and from that time became His constant companions, witnessing His mighty works, listening to the words of Heavenly Wisdom which fell from His Sacred Lips, and thus experiencing, under the guidance of the Head of the Church Himself, such a training as might best fit them for their superhuman labours[4]. [Sidenote: Special instructions given them, and not understood until after the Day of Pentecost.] A large portion of what is now stored up in the Holy Gospel for the instruction of the whole body of Christians, was in the first instance spoken to the Apostles with a special view to their Apostolic vocation; to them it was “given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Doubtless much of what they were thus taught remained unexplained “Mysteries” to them until the Coming of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost to “guide them into all Truth,” and especially to instruct them in the real meaning of what had before seemed to be “hard sayings” in their Master's Teaching.

[Sidenote: This Teaching continued after the Resurrection.]

Again, after our Blessed Lord's Passion and Resurrection, we read that He was “seen of them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God[5],” i.e. to the Church, the Kingdom which, by the agency of the Twelve Apostles, He was about to establish in this world. No record is left us as to what these “things” were of which He spake to them; but we cannot doubt that the Words of Divine Wisdom would remain deeply engraven on their hearts, and be a treasure of strength and counsel in the trials and perplexities of the untried path which lay before them, the Holy Spirit “bringing to their remembrance” any sayings of the Saviour which human frailty might have hindered them from remembering[6].

[Sidenote: A commission given to the Apostles for all their official acts,] The Apostles received from the Great High Priest before His Ascension, a commission to execute the various functions of the priestly office, to baptize[7], to teach[8], to consecrate and offer the Holy Eucharist[9], and to absolve[10]; besides a general and comprehensive promise that all their official acts should be confirmed by Him, in the words, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world[11].”

[Sidenote: but not exerted till after Pentecost.]

We do not, however, find that this commission was acted on by the Apostles before the day of Pentecost; the Saviour's will was, that it should, so to speak, lie dormant until the seal of the Holy Spirit was impressed upon it. During the days of expectation which followed our Lord's Ascension, we read that the holy company who were gathered together in the “upper room,” “continued with one accord in prayer and supplication[12];” but we have no mention of any celebration of the Holy Eucharist, whilst immediately after the Descent of the Holy Ghost we are told of their daily continuance in “the Breaking of the Bread[13].”

Section 3. The Day of Pentecost.

[Sidenote: A.D. 33. Participation of the Blessed Trinity in the works of Creation, the Incarnation, and the Foundation of the Church.] As the Three Holy Persons of the Ever-blessed Trinity had shared in the work of the First Creation of the world, the Father speaking by the Eternal Word, and

the Holy Spirit brooding over what before was lifeless: and as in the work of the Incarnation the Father had sent the Son to take upon Him our human nature through the operation of the Holy Ghost: so, in the Foundation of the Church, the Power of the Holy Spirit co-operated no less than the Will of the Father and the Life-giving Grace of the Son.

[Sidenote: The waiting at Jerusalem.] The Apostles had received from their ascending Lord a command to await in the City of Jerusalem this “Power from on High,” which was to be sent upon them[14]. We can easily see the fitness of this injunction, when we remember that they were about to become the founders of the New Jerusalem, the true “City of God” in which the many “glorious things spoken[15]” by the Old Testament Prophets were to have their performance to a certain extent even in this life, but fully and perfectly in the Life to come.

[Sidenote: St. Matthias chosen.]

Immediately after our Lord's Ascension the Apostles, under the immediate guidance of Almighty God, made choice by lot of St. Matthias to fill up the vacancy in the Apostolic Body caused by the apostasy of Judas, and then awaited in prayer and worship the promised Coming of the Comforter.

[Sidenote: The coming of the Holy Ghost.]

After ten days of expectation, on the morning of the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, the Promise was fulfilled: with the sound “of a rushing mighty Wind,” with the brightness of “cloven tongues like as of fire,” the Holy Spirit descended “and sat upon each of” the Apostles[16]. Thus they were inspired and enlightened with Power and Knowledge, and all the other sevenfold gifts of the Paraclete[17] in fuller measure than had ever been vouchsafed to the Prophets and Teachers of old, as well as with miraculous endowments, that so they might be enabled to carry out the Commission entrusted to them by their Master.

[Sidenote: The gift of Tongues.]

One effect of this wonderful Visitation was immediately and strikingly apparent to all who stood by, for on these twelve unlearned men of lowly birth was bestowed the power of speaking fluently and intelligibly in languages of which, before, they had been altogether ignorant.

[Sidenote: The people come together.] The fame of this great wonder soon spread amongst the multitude of foreign Jews who were then gathered together at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Pentecost; many of them were probably at that very time in the Temple, of which the “upper room” is thought to have formed a part, and they quickly came around the Apostles, anxious to judge for themselves of the truth of what had been told them.

[Sidenote: Their amazement.]

Very great was their astonishment at what they heard. It seems as if words are multiplied in the Sacred Narrative to impress us with a sense of their awe and wonder. It is said that they “were confounded” or “troubled in mind,” that “they were all amazed and marvelled;” and again, that “they were all amazed, and were in doubt” at this startling exhibition of the “Power” of God[18].

[Sidenote: Though some refused to believe.] Some indeed “mocked,” despising the work of the Spirit, as they had before despised the work of the Son; but many opened their hearts to the softening influence, and of them it may truly be said that “the fear of the Lord” was “the beginning

of wisdom.”

Section 4. St. Peter's First Sermon, and its Results.

[Sidenote: A.D. 33. Conversion of the 3000.] And now at once the converting power of the Church was exercised. St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, took the lead, as he had already done in the election of St. Matthias, and preached to the impressed and eager multitude that first Christian sermon, which was followed by the conversion and baptism of “about 3000 souls[19].”

[Sidenote: The promise of St. Peter fulfilled.]

Thus was fulfilled, in one sense at least, the promise of Christ to St. Peter: “Upon this rock I will build My Church[20];” and he, who first of the Twelve had faith to confess the Godhead of our Blessed Lord, was rewarded by being the first to whom it was given to draw men into that Church, which in His Human Nature Christ had purchased for Himself.

[Sidenote: Further results of St. Peter's sermon.] In estimating the importance of the results which were brought about by St. Peter's sermon, we must not only take into account the actual number of those who were at once added to the disciples, large as that number was, but we must also remember that many of these converts came from far distant countries, whither, on their departure from Jerusalem, they would carry the tidings of the Faith which they had embraced. Hence they in their turn became forerunners of our Lord and of His Church, preparing the hearts of those amongst whom they dwelt to listen to the proclamation of the Gospel, when, in God's appointed season, it should be preached to them.

Section 3. The First Beginnings of Persecution.

[Sidenote: A.D. 33. Growth of the Church.] The Church now steadily grew in influence and numbers; “The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be” [or “were being”] “saved[21];” and on the occasion of a second sermon, preached by St. Peter after the healing of the lame man “at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple,” “about five thousand” were converted[22].

[Sidenote: Beginnings of persecution.] The opposition of the Jewish rulers was powerless to check the ever-advancing tide; and this first beginning of persecution, by calling forth from the whole Church an earnest act of worship and supplication, was the occasion of “great power” and “great grace” being given to enable her to do and bear all for the sake of her Lord[23].

[Sidenote: Conversion of St. Barnabas.]

Immediately afterwards we read of the conversion of St. Barnabas, the first convert mentioned by name, a Levite, and apparently a man of wealth and position[24]; and then we are told of the awe and reverence produced in the minds of the people of Jerusalem, and the neighbouring country, by the abundant exercise of the Apostolic power of working miracles[25].

[Sidenote: The gift of working miracles.] This great working gift of the Holy Ghost, bestowed, like the Gift of Tongues, on the Day of Pentecost, had similar results. Fear was followed by faith, and “multitudes both of men and women” were added to the Church.

Persecution once more followed, this time with greater severity; the Apostles were imprisoned through the influence of the sect of the Sadducees, and, being set free by a miracle, were called

before the Sanhedrim and scourged, only escaping death by the wise and merciful interposition of the Pharisee Gamaliel.

Section 6. Worship and Discipline of the Infant Church.

[Sidenote: A.D. 33.]

Before going farther into the History of the Church, we may pause to consider the account given us in Holy Scripture of Christian Worship and Discipline in the time immediately following the Day of Pentecost. The same chapter which contains the narrative of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, has also a short epitome of the daily life of the Apostles and their converts, during that brief interval of undisturbed peace which preceded the beginning of the bitter conflict between the Church and the world.

[Sidenote: Holy Baptism. Apostolic Doctrine.]

First we read of Holy Baptism as the source of the Christian Life[26], and then of steadfast continuance in the one Faith as taught by the Apostles, who were, so to speak, a kind of living Gospel to their converts.

[Sidenote: Oral teaching.]

None of the Books of the New Testament were as yet written, so that all instruction being oral, faithful must most fully have sought "the Law" of the Saviour at the "mouth" of His twelve chosen servants, who had listened to His gracious words, and had been themselves taught by Him Who is Wisdom.

[Sidenote: Value of tradition.] The Apostles' Creed is a mighty instance of this traditional teaching, which has come down even to our own days; and many points of Church government, and discipline, and ritual, merely hinted at, or not even referred to in the writings of the New Testament, were preserved to the Church by means of spoken tradition. St. Paul several times mentions these oral traditions, and in one instance speaks of them to his converts as equally binding with the written words contained in his Epistles[27]. The substance of such important traditions became ingrained into the system and belief of the Church, and it was thus of comparatively little importance that their exact words were forgotten.

[Sidenote: Apostolic fellowship. Faith and love towards God] To oneness of "doctrine" belonged also oneness of "fellowship." There was as yet "no schism in the Body;" and this inward Faith and Love found their outward expression both towards God and towards man. Towards God in "the Breaking of the Bread," the Daily Sacrifice and Thank-offering of the Holy Eucharist "at home[28]," i.e. in their own upper room, the first Christian Church, as well as in their constant attendance on the daily "Prayers" and praises still offered up in the Temple. Of the conduct of the first Christians towards each other we are told twice over, immediately after the Outpouring of the Day of Pentecost, and again after that increase of "boldness," which was granted to the earnest cry of the Church on the approach of persecution[29].

[Sidenote: and towards man.]

Both these accounts speak to us of their full realization of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. They “were together;” they “were of one heart and of one soul:” the need of one was the need of all; each felt his brother’s wants, as if he himself suffered; and so great was the liberality of those who had “possessions and goods,” that there was not “any among them that lacked.” “They had all things common,” as to the daily use of God’s worldly gifts.

[Sidenote: The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice] The Holy Eucharist was to the Church then, as it is still, the chief act and centre of Divine worship. In this new Sacrifice the Apostles showed forth and pleaded before God, the One Sufficient Sacrifice, which they themselves had seen “once offered,” with unspeakable sufferings, and all-prevailing Blood-shedding upon the Cross of Calvary.

[Sidenote: and a means of union with Christ.] In it they adored Him, Whom they now acknowledged with every faculty of their souls to be indeed their “Lord” and their “God;” in it they found again the Real and continual, though invisible, Presence of the Master and Friend for Whose sake they had forsaken all earthly ties; and by it they were brought into closer union with Him, than when of old they had walked and talked with Him beside the Galilean Sea, or beneath the olive-trees of Gethsemane; for now, they were indeed “nourished and cherished” by Him and made more and more “members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones[30].”

[Sidenote: Thankfulness of the first converts.]

What wonder, then, that we read of the “gladness and singleness of heart” of the Apostles and their converts thus living in the constant joy and presence of their Lord, and that “praising God” is mentioned as one of their distinguishing marks:—

“By ‘Deo gratias,’ as they pass’d,
The faithful folk were surest known;
That watchword for the daily strife
Might well their thoughts and tongues employ,
Who made the Church transform their life,
And the great Offering crown their joy[31].”

[Sidenote: Continued attendance of the Apostles on the Temple Services.]

We may here remark the many indications which are given us throughout the Book of Acts, that the Apostles, who were themselves Jews, did not, even after the Foundation of the Christian Church, oppose or neglect Jewish ordinances and worship, so long and so far as the union of the two dispensations was practicable. In this they followed the example of their Divine Master, Who, from His Circumcision upwards, paid obedience to that Law which He came to fulfil, and Who was a constant attendant at the services of the Temple and of the Synagogues. There was no violent rending away from the old Faith, until God, in His wisdom and justice, saw fit to ordain the destruction of the guilty city Jerusalem, and the overthrow of the Jewish Temple, and Altar, and Priesthood, none of which had then any further purpose to serve in the Divine plan for the redemption of mankind.

[Sidenote: In the cases of St. Peter and St. John,]

Thus we read of St. Peter and St. John going up to the Temple to worship at the ninth hour of prayer[32], and of their afterwards preaching to the people in that part of the Temple called Solomon's porch[33], of the daily preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles in the Temple[34], and of their constant resort to the Jewish Synagogues during their stay in such places as possessed them[35].

[Sidenote: and of St. Paul.]

Even five and twenty years after the day of Pentecost we find that the very tumult which resulted in St. Paul's apprehension and consequent journey as a prisoner to Rome, was immediately excited by his having "entered into the Temple[36]," in performance of one of the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law.

Section 7. The First Schism and the Appointment of the Diaconate.

[Sidenote: A. D. 33. The first deadly sin in the Church.]

Great and deadly sin had already made its way into Christ's fold, and been cast out from the midst of it by a fearful judgment. Ananias and Sapphira had "lied unto God," and been struck dead for their impiety; and the "great fear" excited by this first display of the judicial powers of the Church had been followed by another influx of conversions; for "multitudes were added to the Lord[37]."

[Sidenote: A.D. 34. The first schism.] And now came the first division in the body, "a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews[38]."

[Sidenote: Distinction between "Grecians" (or Hellenists) and "Hebrews."] By the "Grecians" are meant those Jews of foreign birth and education who had adopted Greek customs and the Greek language so entirely, that some even of their most learned men did not understand Hebrew but read the Scriptures of the Old Testament in the Septuagint Version. They were much despised by the stricter and more narrow-minded "Hebrews," the natives of Palestine, or Syro-Chaldaic Jews; and the rivalries of these two Jewish sects were carried even into the bosom of Christ's Church.

[Sidenote: Complaint of the "Grecians."] The Grecians, or "Hellenists" complained that their widows were neglected in the daily distribution of alms; perhaps grounding their complaint on the fact that the Twelve were all Hebrews. [Sidenote: Deacons ordained.] And the Apostles commanded that "seven men of honest report" should be chosen from the body of believers, and presented to them, that they might be ordained by Imposition of Hands to minister to the bodily wants of the poor and aged. This was the first institution of the Order of Deacons[39], the lowest of the three holy offices which were to be continually handed down and perpetuated in the Church. Thus did the Apostles begin to impart to others such a portion of the ministerial grace, of which they themselves had been at first the sole recipients, as might enable those whom they ordained to aid them, in a subordinate degree, in the work of building up the mystical Body of Christ.

[Sidenote: Increasing conversions.] This fresh proof of the vitality of the Church through the active, living Presence of her Divine Head, was followed by a new feature in the still increasing conversions to her fold. It was no longer the poor and the unlearned only, or chiefly, who listened to the teaching of the Apostles, "a great company of the Priests were obedient to the Faith[40]," while, on the other hand, a growing and more bitter spirit of persecution was soon to develope

itself.

Section 8. The Martyrdom of St. Stephen.

[Sidenote: A.D. 34. The Seven Deacons.]

St. Stephen, the foremost and saintliest of the Seven Deacons, and St. Philip, the second in order, are the only two of whom we have any further mention in the Book of Acts; but it is believed that the last named, Nicolas of Antioch, was the author of the heresy of the Nicolaitanes, which our Blessed Lord twice over tells us that He hates[41]. Nicolas seems in this way to be a sad reflection of the awful example set by the traitor Judas, the last reckoned Apostle.

[Sidenote: Their functions.]

It is clear that the ministrations of the first Deacons were not of necessity confined to the “serving of tables,” which was the primary occasion of their appointment. St. Philip both preached and baptized[42]; and St. Stephen brought down upon himself the hatred and malice of the Jews by the boldness and power of his preaching. Both preaching and baptizing do still, under certain restrictions, “appertain to the office of a Deacon[43].”

[Sidenote: Probably all Hellenists.]

Judging from the names of the Seven Deacons, there seems good reason for supposing that they were all or most of them Grecians or Hellenists. St. Stephen was undoubtedly a Hellenist, and his early training made him a ready instrument for the work to which the Holy Ghost had called him. Freed by education from many of the associations and feelings which bound his Hebrew brethren to the Holy City and the Temple, he could realize more plainly than they could do, the future of the Christian Church apart from both these, and boldly proclaimed his convictions.

[Sidenote: St. Stephen’s preaching rouses Hebrew prejudices.] By this conduct he aroused all the deeply-rooted prejudices and exclusive pride of the Jewish mind, even amongst those who, like himself, were Hellenists, and to whom he seems more particularly to have addressed himself. Up to this time, what opposition there was to the teaching of the Apostles, seems to have come chiefly from the unbelieving sect of the Sadducees[44]; for the people had espoused the cause of the Christian teachers[45], and the Pharisees had advocated lenient conduct towards those who confessed, as they themselves did, a belief in the Resurrection[46].

[Sidenote: The Pharisees join with the Sadducees in opposition to the Church.] But now all was altered; priests and people, Sadducees and Pharisees, were alike vehement against those who ventured to assert that the “Holy Place and the Law” should ever give way to a Holier than they; and foremost amongst the persecutors was the fiery, earnest, intellectual man who was afterwards the holy Apostle Paul[47].

[Sidenote: St. Stephen’s speech a direct Inspiration.] The defence of the heavenly-minded Deacon before his malicious and bloodthirsty enemies must be looked upon as a direct Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a fulfilment of our Blessed Lord’s promise to His Church[48], and a Divine commentary on Old Testament History, showing that God’s mercies were not restrained to any particular place or country, and upbraiding the Jews with their abuse of their many privileges and their rejection of the Saviour. But the words of this first Christian “Apology against Judaism” fell for

the time on unheeding ears; and its only present apparent result was the violent and yet triumphant death of him who had been chosen to utter it.

[Sidenote: His blessed martyrdom.]

Beneath the stoning of the enraged multitude, the First Martyr “fell asleep,” blessed in his last moments with a foretaste of the Beatific Vision[49].

Section 9. Results of St. Stephen’s Martyrdom.

[Sidenote: A.D. 34. Good brought out of evil for the Church.]

We may here pause to recollect how God had all along been bringing forth good out of seeming evil, in what concerned His Church. The first dawns of persecution drew down increased “boldness” in answer to thankful prayer; the first great necessity for exercising the judicial office of the Church was followed by “great fear” and multiplied conversions, as well as by the first miracles of healing wrought in the Church; the first schism was the occasion of the origin of the Order of Deacons, directly after which event we hear of “a great company of the priests being obedient to the Faith,” the first martyrdom helped to bring about the conversion of the chief persecutor; and now the first general persecution which came upon the Church was to have for its result a far more widely-spread diffusion of the knowledge of the Kingdom of God than had before taken place.

[Sidenote: Extension of the Church according to our Lord’s promise.] This extension of the Church was in exact accordance with our Lord’s words to His Apostles just before His Ascension, that they should be witnesses unto Him “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.” Jerusalem was already “filled with” their “doctrine,” and now the disciples were “scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria,” and “went every where preaching the Word[50].”

[Sidenote: Still confined to Jews, and Samaritans, or to proselytes.]

Still it would seem that they confined their preaching to such as were either Hebrews, or Grecians, i.e. foreigners more or less professing Judaism[51]; or, as in the case of the Samaritans, to such as were of mixed Jewish descent, and clung to the Law of Moses, though with manifold corruptions; or, again, to proselytes like the Ethiopian eunuch. The Apostles, we read, continued at Jerusalem, doubtless by God’s command and under His special protection.

[Sidenote: Conversion of Samaria.] The conversion of the despised city of Samaria was effected by the instrumentality of the Deacon St. Philip[52], whose preaching and miracles were followed by the baptism of large numbers of the people, and, amongst them, of one Simon of Gittum, better known as Simon Magus (i.e. the magician, or sorcerer), who had claimed supernatural powers, and given himself out to be an emanation from the Deity, or even God Himself.

[Sidenote: St. Peter and St. John sent to confirm.]

St. Philip, as a Deacon, could not complete the gift begun in Holy Baptism, and St. Peter and St. John were sent down by the Apostles from Jerusalem, that they might confirm the Samaritan converts by prayer and the Imposition of Hands. Confirmation in those early days of the Church was wont to be accompanied by a bestowal of miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; and the

wondrous signs following upon this, the first Confirmation mentioned in God's history of His Church, led the still unbelieving Simon to long for the ability to confer similar powers.

[Sidenote: The unbelief of Simon Magus.]

He dared to offer money to the Apostles with this view, and drew from St. Peter such a reproof as for a time pierced through even the heart which had hardened by an abuse of holy things. But this penitence was of short duration. He became the author in the Church of a deadly heresy called Gnosticism, mixing up what he had learnt of the doctrines of Christianity with heathen philosophy and sinful living, and making pretence of being endowed with miraculous gifts.

[Sidenote: His end.] This first heretic is said to have perished miserably whilst endeavouring to fly through the air at Rome[53], St. Peter praying at the same time that he might no longer be suffered to hinder the salvation of souls.

[Sidenote: The Gospel preached in Antioch.]

Another important result of the Sauline persecution was the preaching of the Gospel in the important city of Antioch by the Greek-speaking Jews who sought refuge there[54], and who addressed themselves to their Hellenist countrymen. It was in this city, the third in rank in the Roman Empire, and afterwards the mother of Gentile Christendom, that the first branch of the Church speaking Greek as its original tongue, was now beginning to have its foundation; and it was also here that the disciples were first called by the honourable name of Christians[55].

Section 10. The Conversion of St. Paul.

[Sidenote: A.D. 34.]

It has been said "that, to combine the ceremonial shortcoming of the eunuch with the imperfect faith of the Samaritan, is to arrive at the admission of the Gentiles[56]." Preparation had been made in both these instances for the carrying out of the Divine scheme by means of St. Philip, whose fellow-Deacon had gladly laid down his life in witnessing to the truth of it; and now God's great instrument for the conversion of the gentile world was to appear.

[Sidenote: Conversion of Saul.] The furious persecutor Saul was struck to the earth by the sight and voice of the Lord, whose disciples at Damascus he was bent upon ill-using; and his miraculous conversion was followed by his baptism and the devotion of all his powers to the promulgation of that "Faith which once he destroyed."

[Sidenote: His fitness for his mission.]

It is not hard to perceive in St. Paul a peculiar fitness for the work to which God called him. His zeal and self-devotion, deep affections, and warm sympathies, were joined to clearness of judgment and great intellectual powers; whilst, from the circumstances of his birth and education, he had much in common with both Hebrew and Hellenist Jews. Though born in the Greek city of Tarsus, where he came in contact with the classical ideas and learning of which traces appear in his writings, his father was a Hebrew, and sent him to finish his education at Jerusalem under the care of the learned Pharisee Gamaliel. Thus he became zealous in the Law; and hence his deep tenderness for his brethren of the seed of Israel, and his thorough insight into their feelings and

prejudices, were united to an acquaintance with gentile ways of life, classic learning, and foreign modes of thought. With St. Paul's conversion came a time of peace and increase to the Church, during which St. Peter's first Apostolic journey took place, undertaken with the especial view of strengthening, by the Laying on of Hands and by Apostolic preaching and counsel, those who, throughout Judea and Samaria, had been regenerated and made "saints" by Holy Baptism[57].

[1] 2 Peter 1:4.

[2] Revelation 21:14.

[3] Luke 6:12-16.

[4] "Apostle" is derived from the Greek word "Apostolos," i.e. "one sent." The Apostles were "sent" by Christ, the Great High Priest and Chief Pastor of the Church, Who comprehended in Himself the whole of the Christian Ministry, whilst the Apostolic Office comprehended all that could be delegated to man. This comprehensive Apostolic Office was afterwards broken up into the three Orders of—1. Deacons; 2. Priests and Bishops in one; 3. Bishops. After the special work of Bishops was defined (see chap. iv.), Priests were Priests only, and not Bishops, unless they had special consecration to the higher office.

[5] Acts 1:3.

[6] John 14:26.

[7] Matthew 28:19.

[8] Matthew 28:20.

[9] Luke 22:19-20.

[10] John 20:21-22.

[11] Matthew 28:20.

[12] Acts 1:13-14.

[13] Acts 2:42, Acts 2:46. It is said (John 4:2) that "the disciples of Jesus baptized;" but this baptism, like that of St. John Baptist, was a "baptism of repentance," not of Regeneration—a preparation for the Gospel, not a consequence of it. So the preaching of the Apostles, spoken of in Matthew 10:7, was (like the Baptist's preaching) an announcement that "the Kingdom of Heaven" was not come; but "at hand," and an exhortation to make ready for it.

[14] Luke 24:49.

[15] Psalms 87:3.

[16] Acts 2:1-3.

[17] Isaiah 11:2-3.

[18] Acts 2:1-13.

[19] Acts 2:14-41.

[20] Matthew 16:18.

[21] Acts 2:47.

[22] Acts 3:1-26.

[23] Acts 4:1-37.

[24] Acts 4:36-37.

[25] Acts 5:12-16.

[26] Acts 2:41-47.

[27] 2 Thessalonians 2:15. See also 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 11:2. "Ordinances," margin "Traditions."

[28] Acts 2:46 (margin).

[29] Acts 4:31-37.

[30] Ephesians 5:29-30.

[31] Poems by Prof. Bright..

[32] Acts 3:1.

[33] Acts 3:11.

[34] Acts 5:42.

[35] Acts 13:5, Acts 13:14; Acts 14:1; Acts 17:1-2; Acts 18:4.

[36] Acts 21:26-33.

[37] Acts 5:1-14.

[38] Acts 6:1, &c.

[39] Deacon, from "Diaconos," a Greek word, meaning a ministering attendant.

[40] Acts 6:7.

[41] Revelation 2:6, Revelation 2:15.

[42] Acts 8:5, Acts 8:38.

[43] See Office for "Making of Deacons," Book of Common Prayer.

[44] Cp. Acts 4:1-2, Acts 4:5-6, and Acts 5:17.

[45] Acts 2:47; Acts 4:21; Acts 5:13, Acts 5:26.

[46] Acts 5:34-40.

[47] It seems not unlikely that Saul of Tarsus in Cilicia was one "of them of Cilicia" mentioned in Acts 6:9.

[48] Luke 12:11-12.

[49] Acts 7:56.

[50] Acts 8:1, Acts 8:4.

[51] Acts 11:19-20.

[52] It may be, that the recollection of our Saviour's visit to the neighbouring city of Sychar, or Sichem [John 4:1-54], would help to influence the Samaritans.

[53] From the rather indistinct account of Simon's death, it seems probable that he became a victim to such a temptation as the "Cast Thyself down," which was set before our Lord.

[54] Acts 11:19-20.

[55] Acts 11:26.

[56] See "Some Account of the Church in the Apostolic Age," by the late Professor Shirley, p. 27.

[57] Acts 9:32.

02. The Foundation of the Church Among the Heathen

CHAPTER II. The Foundation of the Church among the Heathen

A.D. 38-45 [Sidenote: A.D. 38]

During St. Peter's journey, the course of God's good Providence led him to the sea-port town of Joppa, on the borders of Samaria and Judaea, and there we read that "he tarried many days," a measure of time which is supposed to be equivalent to three years. At the expiration of this time an event occurred which had a deep and lasting influence on the life of the Church of Christ.

[Sidenote: Further fulfilment of the promise to St. Peter.]

Hitherto no Gentiles had been admitted into her fold; but now it was to be given to St. Peter first to unlock to them the door of union with Christ through His Human Nature; for to him had first been committed the Power of the Keys, as a reward for his adoring confession of Christ's Divinity[1].

Section 1. The Conversion of Cornelius. A Roman soldier quartered at the great stronghold of Caesarea was honoured by being the occasion of the gathering in of the first heathen converts.

[Sidenote: A.D. 41. Conversion of the gentile Cornelius.] This centurion was not a proselyte, but a Gentile, one however who feared and served God according to the light given him through reason and natural religion. He was commanded by an angel from God to send to Joppa for St. Peter to show him the way of salvation, whilst another express revelation prepared the holy Apostle for a step so contrary to all his most cherished habits and prejudices.

[Sidenote: Descent of the Holy Ghost on gentile converts.]

Taught by God Himself no longer to consider or treat the Gentiles as "common or unclean," St. Peter obeyed the summons of Cornelius; and, even whilst he was preaching to him and the many gentile friends he had gathered, the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon them as upon the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost. The Gift of Tongues accompanied what we may almost call a second Foundation of the Church; and we may readily believe that those Christianized Jews who had accompanied the Apostle from Joppa were "astonished" at this indication of what was in store for the Gentiles in the Kingdom of God.

[Sidenote: Holy Baptism not superseded.]

It is worthy of remark, that notwithstanding this direct and extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Ghost—but once before, and never since, vouchsafed to any child of Adam—yet it was not considered by St. Peter to do away with the necessity for Holy Baptism. "He commanded them to be baptized[2]."

Section 2. The Apostolic church in Jerusalem.

[Sidenote: A.D. 41. Jerusalem still the centre of the Church.]

Up to this time, and for long afterwards, Jerusalem continued to be the centre of the Church of Christ. Within her walls was the home of the Apostles during the intervals between their missions to the Christian converts in the neighbouring towns; and, as a natural consequence, it was here that the first Councils or Synods of the Church were held.

[Sidenote: The Hebrews wish to impose circumcision.]

Here, too, were the head-quarters of those disciples who not only clung to the Mosaic law themselves, but wished to impose circumcision and the other precepts of the Old Dispensation on gentile converts. They yielded indeed to St. Peter's plea of special and Divine direction, when summoned to Jerusalem to answer for having eaten with men uncircumcised; nay, they even rejoiced in the prospect of the gathering in of the Gentiles; but they had yet to learn the temporary nature of the Ceremonial Law, and to realize that in Christ circumcision and uncircumcision were equally valueless.

[Sidenote: St. James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem.] The government of the Church in Jerusalem was conferred on St. James the Less, perhaps on account of his being "the Lord's brother;" and he remained in the Holy City as its Bishop, when, about twelve years after the Day of Pentecost, the other Apostles were for the first time dispersed beyond the borders of Palestine, over the face of the known world. The immediate occasion of this dispersion was the persecution by Herod Agrippa, which resulted in the martyrdom of St. James the Great^[3] and the temporary imprisonment and miraculous deliverance of St. Peter (A.D. 44), a deliverance granted to the earnest prayers of the Church.

Section 3. The Apostolic Church in Antioch.

[Sidenote: A.D. 42. St. Barnabas at Antioch.]

We have no account in the Book of Acts of the Foundation (in the strict sense of the word) of the Church in Antioch. We read of St. Barnabas being sent thither from Jerusalem to visit and teach the converts amongst the Greek-speaking Jews, he being all the more fitted for this office by his connexion with Cyprus, whence came some of those who had first spread the knowledge of the Gospel in Antioch. But St. Barnabas was not yet of the number of the Apostles, the Foundations of the Church (as neither was St. Paul, whom he lovingly sought out and brought from Tarsus to aid in his work); and consequently we do not read that the "laying on of hands" formed any part of their ministrations.

[Sidenote: St. Peter believed to be the founder of the Church in Antioch.]

There is, however, a very ancient tradition which tells us that St. Peter visited Antioch and founded the Church in that distant city whilst on his way to the still more distant Rome, after his miraculous escape from Herod's prison (A.D. 44); and in the ancient Church of England Feb. 22 was observed in commemoration of "St. Peter's Throne at Antioch," that is, of his episcopal rule there.

[Sidenote: Obstacles to the conversion of the gentiles.]

It was some years before the conversion of Cornelius and his gentile household was followed by any extended proclamation of the good tidings of the Gospel to the heathen world. It was not God's Will that all obstacles should be at once cleared away from the onward path of the Church;

and the question of the relation in which the heathen were to stand to the Law of Moses after their conversion to Christianity, presented many difficulties. St. Peter and the other Apostles seem to have waited patiently until God should vouchsafe to show them how these difficulties might best be overcome; and on the Church in the large gentile city of Antioch it first devolved to send forth missionaries to the heathen.

[1] Matthew 16:16-19.

[2] Acts 10:48. It does not seem to have been the usual custom of the Apostles to administer Holy Baptism themselves. See 1 Corinthians 1:14-17.

[3] In reference to the martyrdom of St. James, we may remember the prophecy of his Divine Master (Matthew 20:23). "James tasted the first draught of Christ's cup of suffering; and his brother John had the longest draught of it."—Wordsworth on Acts 12:2.

03. The Extension of the Church Throughout the World

CHAPTER III. The Extension of the Church throughout the World

A.D. 45-70 Section 1. The First Mission to the Gentiles.

[Sidenote: A.D. 45.] [Sidenote: St. Paul and St. Barnabas sent to preach to the heathen.]

It would seem that in the special Eucharistic offerings and Lenten discipline mentioned by St. Luke[1], the Church in Antioch was seeking guidance of her Divine Head as to her duties with respect to the gentile world in the midst of which she was placed; and that the command of the Holy Ghost to consecrate St. Paul and St. Barnabas as Apostles to the heathen was an answer to her cry.

We are not told whose "hands" were "laid" on the two newly-made Apostles in the solemn Consecration Service which followed, but it is likely that St. Peter was at that time at Antioch, and also that the Church in that city was already governed by a Bishop of its own.

[Sidenote: They complete the Apostolic number.]

It may here be remarked that the number of the Apostles was now completed. Those whom they ordained to be Bishops or Overseers in the Church of God, as St. Timothy at Ephesus, and St. Titus at Crete, though they received in the "laying on of hands" power to execute such of the highest offices of the Apostolic function as were to be perpetually continued to the Church, yet were not fully Apostles.

[Sidenote: Difference between Bishops and Apostles.]

They had grace given to them to confirm, to ordain, and to communicate the power of ordaining to others, but they were not endowed with the extraordinary and supernatural gifts bestowed by the Holy Ghost for the Foundation of the Church; nor did they receive the same direct and outward call as was vouchsafed to the Twelve by our Lord Himself, and to St. Paul and St. Barnabas by the special appointment of the Holy Spirit. They were not to found the Church, but to build up on its Apostolic foundations.

[Sidenote: Mission to Cyprus.] The first missionary journey of St. Paul and St. Barnabas was to Cyprus, the native country of the latter. Here the preaching of the Gospel, begun in the Jewish synagogue[2], was continued before the heathen proconsul Sergius Paulus; and through it and the judicial blindness inflicted by St. Paul on the false prophet Elymas, the gentile ruler was won to Christ.

[Sidenote: St. Paul, the chief Apostle of the Gentiles.]

St. Paul had now begun to take the lead as the chief Apostle of the Gentiles; it was he who, at Antioch in Pisidia, preached that sermon to the Jews which they would not heed, but which found acceptance with the heathen whom they despised.

[Sidenote: Missionary journey through Asia Minor.] The Jews persecuted and blasphemed, but the Gentiles believed; and, in the account given us of the labours of the Apostles here and at Iconium, we are reminded of the multitude of conversions and of the gladness of heart of the converted in the first days after the great Day of Pentecost[3].

[Sidenote: A.D. 46.] At Lystra the Apostles found themselves for the first time in the midst of a thoroughly heathen population, without any admixture of Jews; but here also they did not hesitate to preach the first Christian “Apology against Heathenism,” and to display the miraculous powers with which the Holy Ghost had gifted them.

[Sidenote: The Apostles confirm and ordain.] Their Jewish persecutors followed them and drove them to Derbe, the farthest limit of their journey; and from thence they retraced their steps, visiting each place where they had preached the Gospel, “confirming” their numerous converts, and “ordaining” Elders or Presbyters to have the care of those who were thus admitted to the full communion of the Church.

Section 2. The Ministry of the Apostolic Church.

[Sidenote: A.D. 46. Ordination of priests.]

This[4] is the first mention we have of the ordination of Elders, or Presbyters (or Priests[5], as we are most in the habit of calling them), though the fact of the existence of such officers has already been hinted at[6] as well-known and recognized. Thus we see that, as when at first “the number of the disciples was multiplied,” the Apostles delegated part of their work to the Order of Deacons, so afterwards, when the Church continued to grow and increase, they provided for her needs by instituting the Order of the Priesthood, conferring on others, in God’s Name and by His Authority, a larger portion of the ministerial grace they had themselves received from Him.

[Sidenote: Functions of the Priesthood.] The distinguishing Grace given to those who were called to the Office of Elder or Presbyter by the “laying on of hands,” was, as it still is, the power of consecrating and offering the Holy Eucharist, that so, according to St. Paul’s words to the Elders of Ephesus, they may “feed the Church of God[7],” not as in the case of the Deacons, with “the meat that perisheth,” but with “the Bread of God, which cometh down from Heaven.”

[Sidenote: Consecration of Bishops] Of the Ordination of Bishops[8], apart from the Apostolate, we have no mention in the Book of the Acts; but that the Apostles did ordain successors to themselves, so far as their office was to be perpetual in the Church, we have ample proofs in the Epistles of St. Paul to St. Timothy and St. Titus.

[Sidenote: Their functions.] To both these holy men, Bishops or Overseers of the Church in Ephesus and Crete respectively, St. Paul gives injunctions as to their duties, particularly in ordaining Elders or Priests, the distinguishing work of a Bishop[9].

Section 3. The First Council of the Church.

[Sidenote: A.D. 46-51.] For a “long time” after the return of St. Paul and St. Barnabas to Antioch, with the news that God had, through their instrumentality, “opened the Door of Faith to the Gentiles,” the Church in that city seems to have continued to flourish in peace and prosperity.

[Sidenote: Difficulties as to the observance of Jewish rites.] But difficulties with regard to the observance or non-observance by the Gentile converts of the rite of circumcision and other precepts of the Mosaic law, arose to disturb this quiet.

[Sidenote: A.D. 52. Hebrew Jews go to Antioch.] The Hellenist clergy in Antioch, less wedded to Judaism, had apparently received into communion, without doubt or question, those amongst the heathen around the city who had been added to the number of the faithful by Holy Baptism; but when tidings of this freedom of communion reached the more severely Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem, certain Hebrew Jews of them hurried to Antioch, anxious to bring the converts there under the yoke of the law. Though unauthorized in this mission by the rulers of the Church in Jerusalem[10], they urged with such persistency the necessity of circumcision for the salvation of all, that the opposition of St. Paul and St. Barnabas only raised “no small dissension and disputation,” and it was agreed that the advice of the Apostles and Presbyters at Jerusalem should be sought on this important question.

[Sidenote: St. Paul and St. Barnabas go to Jerusalem.]

St. Paul and St. Barnabas then, “and certain others with them” (amongst whom was Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile convert[11]), went up to Jerusalem, where at this time happened to be St. Peter and St. John, as well as St. James, the Bishop of that Church[12].

[Sidenote: The First Council.] The Apostles and Elders, under the presidency of St. James[13], met together in the First Council of the Church, a large body of the laity being also present, not indeed to take part in the discussion, but to hear it, and to receive and acknowledge the decision arrived at[14].

St. Peter, who had first been commissioned to carry the tidings of the Gospel to the Gentiles, boldly proclaimed the sufficiency of “the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” for their salvation[15], and St. James, who was probably himself a very strict observer of the Jewish law, yet did not hesitate to declare that it had no binding force on those who were not Jews by birth.

[Sidenote: St. James presides as Bishop of Jerusalem. Decree of the Council.]

He, as President of the Council, proposed the decree to which the rest agreed, and which was in substance, that the Gentile Christians should be commanded so far to respect Jewish prejudices as to “abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled,” whilst they were also enjoined to keep themselves from the sin of “fornication,” into which the Gentile world was so deeply sunk. The decrees of the Council did not enter into or provide any solution of the minor difficulties connected with the intercourse between Jews and Gentiles in the Church of Christ. Doubtless “it seemed good to the Holy Ghost” that these questions should be left to be solved by time and experience and the general exercise of His Gift of Wisdom.

[Sidenote: Claim for Divine Authority. Guidance of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed to General Councils.]

We can hardly fail to be struck by the confident language in which the First Council of the Church claims for its decisions the full weight of Divine Authority; and though it differed from later Catholic Councils in that it was presided over by inspired men, yet we may well believe that to those General Councils which really deserved the name, the Holy Spirit vouchsafed such a special measure of His guiding Power, as might suffice to preserve their decisions from error, and enable

them to hand down unblemished the deposit of Truth which Christ left with His Church.

Section 4. St. Paul's Second Apostolic Journey.

[Sidenote: A.D. 53. St. Peter's probable visit to Antioch.]

St. Paul and St. Barnabas bore back to the Church in Antioch the decree of the Council at Jerusalem, and it was probably about this time that St. Peter paid to Antioch the visit of which we read in the Epistle to the Galatians[16], when his fear of "them which were of the circumcision," led him to shrink from continuing to eat and drink with the Gentiles, and drew down St. Paul's stern rebuke.

[Sidenote: Separation of St. Paul and St. Barnabas.] The difference of opinion about St. Mark soon after separated the two Apostles, whose labours amongst the heathen had been till now carried on together, and St. Paul began his missionary travels without an Apostolic companion[17]. He went first through Syria and his native country Cilicia, "confirming" the baptized, and then to the scene of his first contact with actual heathendom at Derbe and Lystra. St. Paul's course of conduct with regard to the circumcision of St. Timothy, a native of Lystra, shows us clearly how fully his mind had grasped all the bearings of the question between Jews and Gentiles[18].

[Sidenote: St. Paul's indifference to circumcision in itself.]

Circumcision and uncircumcision were alike matters of indifference to him, in no way affecting salvation, excepting so far as they might tend to the edification of others. He did not blame those converted Jews who still thought it needful to observe the Mosaic law, but he resisted to the uttermost all attempts to make that law binding on the Gentiles, and would not sanction any thing which might seem to imply that the Life-giving ordinances of the Gospel were not sufficient for every need. St. Timothy, uncircumcised, would have obtained no hearing from Jews for the Gospel he preached, and therefore he was circumcised as a measure of Christian expediency.

[Sidenote: St. Paul crosses over to Europe. St. Luke joins him.]

After founding Churches in the semi-barbarous regions of Phrygia and Galatia, St. Paul was led by the express direction of the Holy Spirit to an altogether new field of labour, and it is here, just on the eve of St. Paul's departure from Asia for the continent of Europe, that St. Luke joins the Apostolic company.

[Sidenote: Jewish influences give way to Greece and Rome.] The Church was now spreading far westward and coming into closer contact with the philosophy of Greece and the power of Rome, whilst Jewish influences shrank into insignificance. There was no synagogue in the large and important Roman colony of Philippi, and only women seem to have resorted to the place of prayer outside the walls of the city, whilst at Thessalonica, where the one synagogue for the whole district was situated, the accusation of the Jews against the preachers of the Gospel was no longer of a religious, but of a political nature.

[Sidenote: Opposition to the Gospel political.]

"These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar[19]." In same way the malice of the rulers of the Jews against the Divine Head of the Church had found vent in assertions of His plotting to destroy

the Temple, or to make Himself a King, according as the Jewish populace or the Roman governor was to be stirred up against Him[20]. But if Jewish prejudices no longer offered the same formidable opposition to the soldiers of the Cross, as before in Palestine and the neighbouring countries, the Apostle and his fellow-labourers had now to encounter fresh enemies not less deadly.

[Sidenote: Vice and superstition mixed with intellectual unbelief.] In the highly civilized cities of Greece they encountered on the one hand the full tide of heathenism with all its degrading vices and superstitions, and on the other, Pagan philosophy with its hard sceptical temper and intellectual pride. Influences such as these may account for the comparatively small results which seem to have followed the preaching of St. Paul at Philippi, Thessalonica[21], and Berea, and the prominence given to women as being more easily touched by the good tidings of the Gospel.

[Sidenote: Open conflict with Satan.] At Philippi is noticeable the conflict between the visible power of Satan and the Power of One stronger than he, in the casting out by St. Paul of the evil spirit of Python from the soothsaying woman. This was an earnest of the final issue of that great contest between the kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God, which was now beginning in the very strongholds of darkness, and is to continue to the end of time.

We may also remark the first mention of the title and rights of a Roman citizen claimed by St. Paul for himself and St. Silas after their illegal imprisonment.

[Sidenote: A.D. 54. Athenians little inclined to believe.] At Athens St. Paul came in contact with the most intellectual and philosophical minds of heathendom; but heathen philosophy made the Athenians very little inclined to accept the supernatural mysteries of the Christian Faith. They listened indeed with eager curiosity to the “new thing” which the great Apostle proclaimed “in the midst of Mars’ Hill;” and yet when their intellectual pride was required to bow itself down, to acknowledge something more than a Neology, and to believe in the supernaturalism of the Resurrection, they only “mocked” the teacher. St. Paul, therefore, departed from the city where his cultivated mind had been stirred at the sight of so many great intellects “wholly given to idolatry[22].”

[Sidenote: Athens afterwards a Bishopric.] But yet his visit was not without its fruits; and Dionysius, a member of the great Council of the Areopagus, is believed to have been the first Bishop of the Church in Athens[23].

[Sidenote: Corinth the centre of the Church in Greece.] From Athens St. Paul went to Corinth, and it was in this luxurious and profligate city that he founded a Church which became the centre of Christianity in Greece.

[Sidenote: St. Paul turns from the Jews.] The obstinate unbelief and blasphemous opposition of the Corinthian Jews caused St. Paul, for the first time, to withdraw himself entirely from the services of the synagogue; but he continued at Corinth a year and six months, being protected, according to God’s special promise to him, from all the machinations of his Jewish enemies.

[Sidenote: Opposes the errors of Greek philosophy.] This lengthened stay was probably occasioned not only by the presence of “much people” who were to be converted to Christ, but also by the necessity of strengthening the Corinthian converts against the subtleties of the

heathen philosophy by which they were surrounded, and with which St. Paul was well fitted to cope by his early education. The errors of Gnosticism seem also to have penetrated at this time as far as Corinth.

[Sidenote: A.D. 55. A.D. 56.] After leaving Corinth, St. Paul paid a hasty visit to Ephesus, and then, for the last time, returned to Antioch.

Section 5. St. Paul's Third Apostolic Journey.

[Sidenote: A.D. 56.] [Sidenote: Ephesus the centre of the Church in Asia Minor.] The next journey of the great Apostle of the Gentiles led him first through Galatia and Phrygia, "strengthening" the Churches he had already founded, and then brought him to the rich and important maritime city of Ephesus, destined to be a third great centre of the Gentile Church, and to hold in Asia Minor the same position as did Corinth in Greece and Antioch in Syria. Here again St. Paul was forced to withdraw altogether from the Jewish synagogue, after three months of earnest preaching and teaching.

Ephesus was the great seat of the worship of the heathen goddess Diana, or Artemis, and was also full of those who practised "magical arts" or sorceries, so that its inhabitants were doubly enslaved by the Evil One. But the kingdom of darkness could not stand against the Kingdom of Light.

[Sidenote: Great power given to the Church. A.D. 57. A.D. 58.]

Great as was the power of Satan, still more mighty was the Power which the Lord Jesus gave to His Church. "Special miracles" were wrought in the place of "lying wonders;" the Jewish exorcists were confounded, and the sincerity of the Christian converts was proved by the costly sacrifice of their once-prized books of magic. "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed[24]."

St. Paul passed between two and three years at Ephesus, during which time he is supposed to have founded the Church in Crete, leaving St. Titus as its Bishop, whilst Ephesus was placed under the episcopal charge of St. Timothy. But eventually the riot excited by Demetrius drove the Apostle from that city.

[Sidenote: A.D. 59. A.D. 60.] [Sidenote: His visitation charge to the Elders of Ephesus.] On his return to the neighbouring city of Miletus, after his journey through Greece and Macedonia, we read of his sending to Ephesus for the clergy of that place, and delivering to them a solemn charge respecting their duties to the flock which God had entrusted to their care[25].

It is during St. Paul's long sojourn at Ephesus that we have the first indication of his intention to visit the remoter regions of the West, and more particularly its capital, imperial Rome[26]. He probably at that time expected to see its wonders under different circumstances than those of a prisoner, though before he finished his homeward journey to Jerusalem, he had supernatural warnings of what was coming upon him[27] from the malice of his Jewish enemies.

Section 6. St. Paul at Rome.

[Sidenote: A.D. 60.] The anxiety which St. Paul ever felt to avoid giving unnecessary offence to his fellow-countrymen, and his readiness to follow the precepts of Judaism when they did not interfere

with the liberty of Christianity, were, in God's good Providence, the indirect means of his being sent to preach the glad tidings of salvation, not in Rome only, but in still more distant countries.

[Sidenote: St. Paul goes to Rome. A.D. 63-65.]

It will not be necessary to enter into the particulars which drew upon St. Paul the unjust indignation of the Jews, and induced him to appeal from their persecutions and the popularity-seeking of Festus to the justice of the emperor: we need only remember that the conclusion of the Book of the Acts shows him to us a prisoner "in his own hired house" at Rome, and there preaching and teaching "with all confidence," first, as ever, to the Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles.

Section 7. Extent of the Labours of the Apostles.

We are told but little in Holy Scripture as to the particulars of the Apostles' work in founding the Church of God, except in the case of St. Paul, and we are not allowed to trace even his labours to their end.

[Sidenote: Preaching of the Apostles in all known countries.] From other sources we learn that the twelve visited almost every known country of the world, so as to give to each separate race of men then existing an opportunity of refusing or accepting the offer of the salvation of which they were the ministers and stewards. We are also told that all, except St. John and perhaps St. Matthew, crowned their life of toil in the service of their Lord by a martyr's death. St. Peter and St. Paul both suffered at Rome in the First Persecution under Nero, and most likely on the same day, A.D. 67. The following Table[28] will show the probable field of the labours of each Apostle, so far as the record of it has come down to us:—

Supposed Fields of Apostolic Labour.

Name of Churches. By whom Founded. Palestine and Syria All the Apostles. Mesopotamia (Turkey in Asia) St. Peter and St. Jude. Persia St. Bartholomew and St. Jude India St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas. Thrace (Turkey in Europe) St. Andrew. The flourishing

Church of Constantinople

afterwards sprang up on this

field of his labours. Scythia (Russia) St. Andrew. North Africa (Egypt and St. Simon Zelotes. St. Mark

Algeria) specially connected with

Alexandria. Ethiopia (Central Africa). St. Matthew. Arabia. St. Paul. Asia Minor (Turkey in Asia) St. Paul and St. John. Macedonia (Turkey in Europe) St. Paul Greece St. Paul. Italy St. Peter and St. Paul. Spain St. Paul. Gaul (France) and Britain St. Paul and St. Joseph of

Arimathea.

[1] Acts 13:2.

[2] The first offers of salvation continued to be made to the Jews, even after the recognition by the Church of her mission to the Gentiles.

[3] Acts 13:48-49, Acts 13:52; Acts 14:1.

[4] Acts 14:23.

[5] “presbyter,” afterwards shortened into “Prester” and “Priest,” is derived from the Greek word “Presbyteros,” “an Elder.”

[6] Acts 11:30.

[7] Acts 20:28.

[8] The word “Bishop” is derived from the Greek “Episcopos,” and signifies an overseer.

[9] 1 Timothy 5:1, 1 Timothy 5:19, 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6; Titus 1:5, Titus 2:15.

[10] Acts 15:24.

[11] Galatians 2:3.

[12] Galatians 2:9.

[13] St. James, as Bishop of the Diocese, taking precedence in this instance even of St. Peter.

[14] Compare Acts 15:6, Acts 15:12.

[15] This is the last mention of St. Peter in the Book of Acts.

[16] Galatians 2:11-14.

[17] Acts 15:36-41. The last mention of St. Barnabas in the Book of Acts.

[18] Compare Acts 16:3; and Galatians 2:3-4.

[19] Acts 17:7. Comp. Acts 6:11.

[20] Comp. Mark 14:58; and Luke 23:2.

[21] Both Philippi and Thessalonica eventually became the seats of flourishing Christian Churches, to whom St. Paul wrote Epistles.

[22] Acts 17:16-33.

[23] There are some reasons for thinking that men of cultivated minds and high social position were preferred for Bishops in the early as well as in later ages of the Church.

[24] Acts 19:1-20.

[25] Acts 20:17-35.

[26] Acts 19:21.

[27] Acts 20:23; Acts 21:11.

[28] From Blunt's “Household Theology.”

04. Final Settlement of the Church by St. John

CHAPTER IV. Final Settlement of the Church by St. John

A.D. 67-100

It seems probable that most of the Apostles had entered into rest before the Destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, and that St. John the Divine was the only one of the Apostolic body who long survived that event.

[Sidenote: St. Peter began to found the Church, St. John completed its foundation.] To St. Peter, one of the “pillars” of the Church, it had been given to begin the great work of laying the foundation of the Mystical Temple of God; to St. John, the other of the two, was allotted the task of perfecting what had been begun, so that a sure and steady basis should not be wanting on which the New Jerusalem might rise through time to eternity[1].

Section 1. Second Council at Jerusalem.

[Sidenote: A.D. 67.] [Sidenote: Purposes of the Second Council.]

There is good reason for believing[2] that after the martyrdoms of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and about the time of the invasion of the Holy City by Vespasian, a Second Council of such of the Apostles as still survived was held for the purpose of electing a successor to the See of Jerusalem, and definitely settling the future government of the Church.

[Sidenote: Bishops only rarely appointed at first,]

Bishops had already been consecrated in certain cases, as at Ephesus, Crete, and Rome; but during the time that the Apostles were still engaged in founding and governing the different branches of the great Christian community, the appointment of Bishops (in the sense of heads of the Church) seems to have been the exception rather than the rule.

[Sidenote: but now everywhere to replace the Apostles.] A new era was, however, now coming upon the Church; her Founders were gradually being withdrawn from her, and it was necessary that she should receive such a complete and permanent organization as would enable her to transmit to succeeding ages the saving grace of which the Apostles had been the first channels, that so what had been founded through their instrumentality might be continued and extended through the ministry of others.

[Sidenote: The establishment of the Apostolical Succession the special work of St. John,] This work of organization was fitly entrusted to St. John, who for so many years was left upon earth to “tarry” for the Lord, on Whose Breast he had leaned, and Whose teaching had filled his soul with adoring love, and with those depths of spiritual knowledge which are stored up for us in the “Theological Gospel.”

[Sidenote: and the necessary consequence of his teaching.]

It seems natural that he to whom it was given most fully to “enlighten” the Church respecting the Blessed Mysteries of the Incarnation and of the Two Holy Sacraments, should also be charged with the care of providing for the continual transmission of the sacramental grace of the Incarnation through the “laying on of hands,” and that he who saw and recorded the glorious ritual belonging to the Heavenly Altar, should organize that system by which Priests might be perpetually raised up to show forth the same Offering in the Church below.

Thus, though up to the time of St. Paul’s martyrdom (A.D. 67) Episcopal rule, as distinct from Apostolic, would seem to have been exceptional, before the death of St. John (A.D. 100), government by the Bishops had undoubtedly become the recognized rule and system of the Church.

Section 2. Development of the Church.

Before entering into any details respecting the final settlement by St. John of the Order, Discipline, and Worship of the Church, it may be well to remind ourselves that the Mystical Body of Christ only gradually attained her full shape and constitution, following, like God’s other works, His law of growth and development, and adapting herself, according to her Lord’s designs for her, to the needs of her members.

[Sidenote: Development in the minds of the Apostles as to the work of the Church.]

There is no reason to suppose that the Apostles, even after the Day of Pentecost, had clear ideas of the destiny which was in store on earth for the Church which they were engaged in founding. The gathering in of the Gentiles, the existence of the Church entirely apart from the Temple and its services, the place she was to occupy in the long reach of years before the Day of Judgment[3], all these were only made known to them by the course of events and the teaching of experience, conjointly with, as well as subordinate to, the general guidance of the Holy Spirit. So, too, as regards doctrine.

[Sidenote: As to doctrine.]

We cannot for a moment doubt that the Apostles, who had been taught by the Incarnate Truth Himself, and inspired by the Holy Ghost, held firmly “all the Articles of the Christian Faith;” but we may also believe that their insight into these verities would be deepened, and their expression of them become clearer, as adoring meditation and the Teaching of the Comforter brought more and more to their remembrance the Words and Works of their Lord, and unbelieving cavils forced them more and more fully “to give a reason of the Hope that” was in them[4]. The same thing may be noticed respecting the Faith of the Church.

[Sidenote: Development of the teaching of the Church.]

Held firmly in its fulness from the beginning, it was yet only gradually set forth in Creeds, Liturgies, and Definitions of Faith, according as the love and belief of Christians required expression, or the errors of heretics drew forth clearer teaching on the truths they attacked.

[Sidenote: Reserve in the teaching of the Church.] To this we may add, that the early Church was very careful to keep the knowledge of the deep mysteries of the Faith from those who were not Christians. It was only after their initiation by Holy Baptism that those who had, as Catechumens, been instructed in the rudiments of Christian doctrine, were admitted to a full knowledge of the belief and practice of the Church, especially as regarded the Holy Eucharist, which was very commonly spoken of under the name of the Holy Mysteries.

Section 3. St. John at Ephesus[5].

[Sidenote: St. John's work at Ephesus.]

About the time that Jerusalem was besieged by the armies of Vespasian (A.D. 67), St. John withdrew to Ephesus (whence for a while he was banished to Patmos by the Emperor Domitian[6]); and from this city he travelled about through the neighbouring country, organizing, amongst others, those Seven Churches of Asia Minor, to whose Angels or Bishops he was bidden to write the Seven Epistles contained in the Apocalypse.

[Sidenote: Fitness of Ephesus as a centre of organization,]

Here in Ephesus, the eye of Asia, the great mercantile seaport of the then known world, his influence could most easily make itself felt amongst the far-off members of the Christian body, which by this time had extended throughout the whole Roman empire. All the civilized world was then subject to the sway of Rome, except India and China; and it may be that even these two latter countries were not excluded from the influence of the Gospel. It is not, of course, meant that Christianity was the recognized religion of all or any of the Roman provinces; but that in each of them the Church had a corporate existence, and was a living power, drawing into herself here one, and there another of the souls who were brought into contact with her, and really, though gradually, spreading through and leavening the earth.

[Sidenote: and of orthodox teaching.]

Again, at Ephesus St. John could best combat and confute, both by his words and writings, the subtle and deadly heresies which were especially rife there. "False Christs," such as Simon Magus, the first heretic, Menander, Dositheus, and others, no longer troubled the Infant Church with their blasphemous impostures, but in their stead false teachers had arisen, seeking to "draw away disciples after them" into the more subtle error of misbelief about our Lord and His Incarnation.

[Sidenote: Errors of the Corinthians.] [Sidenote: The Docetae, and other variations of Gnosticism.]

Thus the Jew Corinthus taught that Christ was a mere man, born like other men, though united to Divinity from His Baptism to His Crucifixion; whilst to the errors of the Corinthians the Docetae added that the Body in which our Blessed Saviour suffered, was only a phantom, and a body but in appearance; both these heresies, and others of a similar nature, appear to have been variations of that Gnosticism to which St. Paul refers in his Epistles, as "science" (or gnosis) "falsely so called[7]," and which was long a source of danger and trouble to the Church. Gnosticism may be traced back to that Simon Magus, with whom St. John first came in contact at Samaria, and in all its varied distortions of the great Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation, through an admixture of Jewish and heathen error, there was always an unvarying denial of our Lord's Divinity.

[Sidenote: St. John's universal patriarchate.] For about a third of a century St. John continued to exercise a kind of universal patriarchate over the Church, being regarded, we cannot doubt, with almost unbounded reverence and affection by all its members, and perhaps first presenting that idea of one visible earthly head of the Church, which afterwards found its expression in the popedom.

Section 4. St. John's Writings.

[Sidenote: St. John's writings close the Canon.] The Gospel, Epistles, and Revelation of St. John, written as they were at a long interval after the rest of the New Testament, and closing the Canon of Sacred Scripture, may be usefully referred to, as giving us some idea of the appearance of the Church when its government and theology were finally settled.

[Sidenote: How his Gospel differs from the other three.]

St. John's Gospel differs from those of the other three Evangelists in having been written for men who from their infancy had grown up in the Faith of Christ, and who were thus more ready to enter into and profit by deep sacramental doctrine; whilst at the same time the dangerous heresies which were beguiling souls from the truth, called for more detailed and dogmatic teaching than had at first been needed.

[Sidenote: Dwells on our Lord's Divinity,]

Hence in place of an account of our Lord's Human Birth, St. John sets forth His Eternal Godhead and wonderful Incarnation, leaving no space for unbelief or cavil, when he proclaims for the instruction of the Church, that "the Word was God," and yet that He also "was made Flesh."

[Sidenote: and on the two Sacraments.]

Again, the last Gospel does not bring before us the Institution of the two great Sacraments of the Christian Covenant; though it, and it alone, does record the teaching of our Blessed Lord Himself with regard to the New Birth in Holy Baptism, and the constant Nourishment of the renewed life in the Holy Eucharist.

[Sidenote: The Epistles correct heresies.]

Having established the Faith in His Gospel, St. John in his Epistles sternly censures heresy and schism, thus witnessing to the end of time that the charity of the Church must never lead her to countenance false doctrine.

[Sidenote: The Apocalypse sets forth Discipline and Worship.]

We may look to the Book of the Revelation for some light as to the discipline and worship of the Church of St. John's days. We have there in the mention of the Seven Angels or Bishops, each ruling over his own Church and answerable for its growth in holiness, a confirmation of the fact that episcopacy was now fully organized as the one form of Church government which had replaced the extinct hierarchy of the former dispensation. Nor does it seem unreasonable to believe that St. John's vision of the Worship of Heaven was intended to supply to the Christian Church a model to be copied so far as circumstances should permit in the courts of the Lord's House on earth, much as the elaborate system of Temple Worship, which was entirely swept away with the destruction of

Jerusalem, had been in all things ordered “according to the pattern” which the Lord had “showed” first to Moses and afterwards to David. That the Primitive Church did thus consider the Heavenly Ritual set forth in the Apocalypse as the ideal of worship on earth, is proved by the accounts which have come down to us of the arrangement of Churches and the manner of celebrating the Holy Eucharist in early times.

[Sidenote: Arrangement of Churches in primitive times.]

“The form and arrangement of Churches in primitive times was derived, in its main features, from the Temple at Jerusalem. Beyond the porch was the narthex, answering to the court of the Gentiles, and appropriated to the unbaptized and to penitents. Beyond the narthex was the nave, answering to the court of the Jews, and appropriated to the body of worshippers. At the upper end of the nave was the choir, answering to the Holy Place, for all who were ministerially engaged in Divine Service. Beyond the choir was the Bema or Chancel, answering to the Holy of Holies, used only for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and separated from the choir by a closed screen, resembling the organ screen of our cathedrals, which was called the Iconostasis. As early as the time of Gregory Nazianzen, in the fourth century, this screen is compared to the division between the present and the eternal world, and the sanctuary behind it was ever regarded with the greatest possible reverence as the most sacred place to which man could have access while in the body; the veiled door, which formed the only direct exit from it into the choir and nave, being only opened at the time when the Blessed Sacrament was administered to the people there assembled[3]. The opening of this door, then, brought into view the Altar and the Divine Mysteries which were being celebrated there.

[Sidenote: Its resemblance to what the Apocalypse tells us of Heaven.] And when St. John looked through the door that had been opened in Heaven, what he saw is thus described: ‘And behold a Throne was set in Heaven and round about the Throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne and before the Throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.’ Here is exactly represented an arrangement of the altar familiar to the whole Eastern Church and to the early Church of England, in which it occupies the centre of an apse in front of the seats of the Bishop and Clergy, which are placed in the curved part of the wall. And, although there is no reason to think that the font ever stood near the altar, yet nothing appears more likely than that the ‘sea of glass like unto crystal’ mystically represents that laver of regeneration through which alone the altar can be spiritually approached. Another striking characteristic of the ancient Church was the extreme reverence which was shown to the Book of the Gospels, which was always placed upon the altar and surmounted by a cross. So ‘in the midst of the Throne, and round about the Throne,’ St. John saw those four living creatures which have been universally interpreted to represent the four Evangelists or the four Gospels, their position seeming to signify that the Gospel is ever attendant upon the altar, penetrating, pervading, and embracing the highest mystery of Divine Worship, giving ‘glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the Throne, who liveth for ever and ever.’ In the succeeding chapter St. John beholds Him for whom this altar is prepared. ‘I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the Throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as It had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.’ It cannot be doubted that this is our Blessed Lord in that Human

Nature on which theseptiformis gratiawas poured without measure; and that His appearance in the form of 'the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing,' represents the mystery of His prevailing Sacrifice and continual Intercession. But around this living Sacrifice there is gathered all the homage of an elaborate ritual. They who worship Him have 'every one of them harps' to offer Him the praise of instrumental music; they have 'golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of saints,' even as the angel afterwards had 'given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the Throne;' they sing a new song, mingling the praises of 'the best member that they have' with that of their instrumental music; and they fall down before the Lamb with the lowliest gesture of their bodies in humble adoration. Let it also be remembered that one of the Anthems here sung by the Choirs of Heaven is that sacred song, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come;' the Eucharistic use of which is traceable in every age of the Church[9]." The ritual of the early Church naturally gathered round the Holy Eucharist as the central act of worship in which the Lord was most especially present, and therefore to be most especially honoured. From the first days of the Church this had been the one distinctively Christian service; and now that the Temple services had ceased, it became more apparently even than before, the fulfilment and continuation of the sacrifices of the elder dispensations[10]: whilst it was also the Memorial of the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Representation on earth of the continual offering-up of "the Lamb as It had been slain," before the Throne of God in Heaven.

[1] St. Peter and St. John had been specially trained by their Divine Master for their special work. They with St. James, the first Apostolic martyr, had witnessed His Transfiguration, His Agony, His raising of Jairus's daughter, and had been admitted into more intimate communion with Him than the other Apostles.

[2] From passages in the works of St. Irenaeus and Eusebius. See "Some Account of the Church in the Apostolic Age," by Professor Shirley, pp. 136-140.

[3] The Apostles appear to have believed at first that our Lord's Ascension would be very speedily followed by His triumphal return to Judgment, and the glorification of His faithful people.

[4] On this point we may remember that St. John, who saw deepest into the Divine Life, did not write his Gospel till near the end of his earthly labours, almost sixty years after the Day of Pentecost.

[5] Ephesus is known to this day by the name of Aya-soluk, from Agios Theologos, or holy Divine, the title given to St. John.

[6] Or perhaps by Nero, as some ancient writers say. Nero's full name was Nero Claudius Domitianus, which may have caused this confusion.

[7] 1 Timothy 6:20.

[8] As St. Chrysostom says, "When thou beholdest the curtains drawn up, then imagine that the heavens are let down from above, and that the Angels are descending."

[9] Annotated Book of Common Prayer, Ritual Introduction, pp. 49:1.

[10] We are told that St. John adopted the vestments of the High Priest of the old covenant, and especially “the plate of the holy crown,” with its inscription, “Holiness to the Lord,” thus exhibiting very forcibly the continuity of the two priesthoods.

05. The Primitive Church

CHAPTER V. The Primitive Church A.D. 100-A.D. 312 [Sidenote: Persecution increases round the Church.]

We have already had occasion to notice the beginnings of the persecution which the Church was to undergo for the sake of her Head and Spouse, not only those of a local and unorganized character, which are spoken of in the Book of Acts, but also some of a more cruel and systematic nature under the Roman Emperors Nero and Domitian. From the death of the last of the Apostles to the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, A.D. 312, the Church passed through a succession of fierce trials, in which her members were called to undergo similar sufferings to those which had been borne by the holy Apostles St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John, and their fellow-martyrs[1].

Section 1. Causes of Persecution. In considering the causes which led to the persecution of the Church by the heathen around her, we must, of course, place first as the root and ground of all, the malice of Satan, and his hatred of God, and of the means appointed by God for saving souls.

[Sidenote: Satan's enmity the great cause of persecution.] The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan must ever be at war, and the fierce and varied sufferings inflicted by the cruel heathen on all who bore the name of Christ were so many assaults of the great adversary seeking to overthrow the Church in an open and deadly struggle. But the life-giving Presence of her Incarnate Lord, and "the patience and the faith of the Saints," were mightier weapons than "all the fiery darts of the Wicked," and "the gates of Hell" were not suffered to "prevail against her."

[Sidenote: Other minor causes.]

There were, however, other and secondary causes which led to the persecution of the Church. The Romans were not usually intolerant of religions which they did not themselves profess; their worship of their own false gods had come to be a form, as far as the educated classes were concerned, and what belief they had was given to philosophy rather than religion. Hence they were not unwilling that the nations they conquered should keep to their own respective creeds and religious ceremonies, so long as they did not interfere with Roman authority. But the religion of Christ required more than this. It could not be confined to any one country, nor be content with bare toleration, nor rank itself with the many forms of Pagan misbelief. It claimed to be the only True Religion, the only Way of Salvation, before which the superstitions of the ignorant, and the philosophy of the learned must alike give way. It made its way even into "Caesar's household." Besides this, Christians, owing to the nationality of the First Founders of the Church, were often confounded with, and called by the same name as the Jews, who had a bad repute under the empire for rebellious and seditious conduct, and we know how, even in the days of St. Paul, the charge of sedition had begun to be most unjustly fastened upon the followers of the Meek and Lowly Jesus. This charge of disaffection to the powers of the state received an additional and plausible colouring from the fact that the consciences of the faithful members of the Church would not suffer them to pay, what they and the heathen around them considered to be Divine honour, to

the emperor or the heathen deities, by sacrificing a few grains of incense when required thus to show their loyalty to their ruler and his faith. Over and over again was this burning of incense made a test by which to discover Christians or to try their steadfastness, and over and over again was its rejection followed by agonizing tortures and a cruel death.

[Sidenote: Nero's persecution.] The persecution in the reign of Nero is immediately traceable to the accusation brought against the Christians by the emperor, that they had caused the terrible fire at Rome, which there seems little doubt was in reality the result of his own wanton wickedness, whilst that under Domitian appears to have been connected with the conversion of some of the members of his own family, his cousin Flavius Clemens being the first martyr sacrificed in it.

Section 2. Number and Duration of Persecutions. The following table[2] will show how the early days of the Church were divided between times of persecution and intervals of rest.

Chronological Table of Persecutions and Intervals of Rest. A.D. 64-68. Persecution under Nero. Martyrdom of

St. Peter and St. Paul. 68-95. Time of peace. 95-96. Persecution under Domitian. Banishment of

St. John. 96-104. Time of peace. 104-117. Persecution under Trajan. Martyrdom of

St. Ignatius. 117-161. Time of peace. Apologies of Aristides,

Quadratus, and Justin Martyr. 161-180. Persecution under Marcus Aurelius. Martyrdom

of St. Polycarp, and the martyrs of Lyons. 180-200. Time of peace. 200-211. Persecution under Severus. Martyrdom of

St. Perpetua and others in Africa. 211-250. Time of peace, excepting—

235-237. Partial persecution under Maximinus. 250-253. Persecution under Decius. Martyrdom of

St. Fabian. 253-257 Time of peace. Disputes concerning the lapsed. 257-260. Persecution under Valerian. Martyrdom of

St. Cyprian. 260-303. Time of peace, excepting—

262. Persecution in the East under Macrianus.

275. Persecution threatened by Aurelian. 303-313. Persecution under Dioclesian, Galerius, and Maximinus.

Section 3. Nature and Extent of Persecutions.

[Sidenote: Terrors of persecution.]

Words can hardly be found strong enough to express the many and varied tortures which were inflicted on the Christians of the Primitive Church by their heathen countrymen. Death itself seemed too slight a punishment in the eyes of these cruel persecutors, unless it was preceded and accompanied by the most painful and trying circumstances. It was by crucifixion, and devouring beasts, and lingering fiery torments that the great multitude of those early martyrs received their crown. Racked and scorched, lacerated and torn limb from limb, agonized in body,

mocked at and insulted, they were objects of pity even to the heathen themselves. Persecuting malice spared neither sex nor age, station nor character; the old man and the tender child, the patrician and the slave, the bishop and his flock, all shed their blood for Him Who had died for them, rather than deny their Lord.

We have no possible means of estimating the number of this vast “cloud of witnesses,” but authentic accounts have come down to us which prove that some places were almost depopulated by the multitude of martyrdoms; and when we remember the length of time over which the persecutions extended, the blood-thirsty rage of the persecutors, and the firm perseverance with which the immensely large majority of Christians kept the Faith to the end, we may form some idea as to the “multitude” of this noble army of martyrs “which no man could number.”

[Sidenote: Persecution did not check the growth of the Church,] So widely did the Church spread during the age of persecution, in the face of all the fierce opposition of her enemies, that it was found at times to be impossible to carry out in their fulness the cruel laws against Christians, on account of the numbers of those who were ready to brave all for the sake of Christ. As has been often said, “The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.”

[Sidenote: nor revive decaying heathenism,]

Paganism was gradually dying away in the Roman world, notwithstanding all the craft and power of Satan, whilst no number of martyrdoms seemed to check the growth of the Body of Christ. Vain and short-sighted, indeed, was the boast of the Emperor Dioclesian during the last and most bitter of all the persecutions, that he had blotted out the very name of Christian. No sooner had the conversion of Constantine brought rest to the Church, than she rose again from her seeming ruins, ready and able to spread more and more through “the kingdoms of this world,” that they might “become the kingdoms of Christ.”

[Sidenote: and thus helped to prove the Divine origin of the Church.]

We may well believe that no institution of human appointment could have stood firm against such terrible and reiterated shocks. Nothing less than a Divine Foundation, and a strength not of this world could have borne the Church through the ages of persecution, not only without loss of all vital principle, but even with actual invigoration and extension of it.

Section 4. Effects of Persecution on the Worship and Discipline of the Church. The fierce trials of the age of persecution were not without their influence on the inner life of the Church, both as regarded Worship and Discipline. The cruel oppressions to which they were constantly liable, drove Christians to conceal their Faith from the eyes of the heathen world whenever such concealment did not involve any denial of their Lord, or any faithless compliance with idolatrous customs.

[Sidenote: Seeking martyrdom forbidden.]

Indeed, it was a law of the Church that martyrdom was not to be unnecessarily sought after, and the wisdom of this provision was more than once shown by the failure under torture of those who had presumptuously brought upon themselves the sufferings they had not strength to bear, and which did not come to them in the course of God’s Providence.

[Sidenote: Holy Rites and Books kept hidden.] The strictest secrecy was enjoined upon Christians as to the religious Rites and sacred Books of the Church, and we read of many martyrs who suffered for refusing to satisfy the curiosity of their Pagan judges respecting Christian worship, or for persisting in withholding from them the Christian writings.

[Sidenote: Church ritual temporarily checked.]

Another natural effect of persecution was to check for a time the development of the ritual of the Church, and to render necessary the use of the simplest and most essential forms even in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The immense subterranean excavations at Rome, known by the name of the Catacombs, are an abiding proof to us of the straits to which the primitive martyrs and their companions were reduced, when these sand-galleries were at once their Church and their burying-place, and in some instances the scene of their martyrdom also.

[Sidenote: Church discipline very severe] The discipline of the Church was made extremely strict by the lengthened continuance of severe persecution. In those days when so many gave proof of the strength and reality of their Faith by their persevering endurance of unspeakable agonies, any shrinking back was looked upon as very unworthy cowardice, and as an almost hopeless fall, to be hindered if possible by the merciful severity of the Church as shown in warnings and punishments. Even those who had so far succumbed to trial as to give up the Sacred Books were called "Traditores," and considered as very criminal; those who had consented to pay Divine honours to the emperors or to the heathen gods, fell under still more severe censure, whilst such Christians as led sinful and immoral lives were considered most worthy of blame and punishment. Very heavy penances were laid upon all who thus fell away, in proportion to their guilt, before they were again admitted to the Communion of the Church; and in some extreme cases the punishment was life-long, and only allowed to be relaxed when the penitent was actually in danger of death.

[Sidenote: for a time.] But this very severe discipline was temporary in its nature, as was the danger to the Church which called it forth, and was somewhat modified by the Letters of Peace which martyrs and confessors were allowed to give to excommunicated persons, authorizing their readmission to Church privileges.

[Sidenote: Church government modified also for a time.] A temporary modification in the government of the Church was also brought about by these times of suffering. Bishops, under the pressure of persecution, were sometimes forced to leave their flocks, or were first tortured and then banished, and their places had to be filled as far as they could be by the presbyters, with the advice of the distant Bishop; whilst at Rome, in the middle of the third century, there was a year's vacancy in the see after the martyrdom of Fabian, on account of the impossibility of bringing neighbouring Bishops into the midst of a storm which was raging with especial fury against the rulers of the Church.

[1] St. John was a martyr in will, though not in deed, being miraculously preserved from injury in the caldron of boiling oil, into which he was plunged by order of Nero or Domitian.

[2] From Dr. Steere's "Account of the Persecutions of the Early Church under the Roman Emperors."

06. The Church Under the Roman Empire

CHAPTER VI. The Church under the Roman Empire A.D. 312-A.D. 680 [Sidenote: Persecution arrested by conversion of Constantine.] [Sidenote: Outward triumph of the Church.] The conversion of the Emperor Constantine to the Faith worked a great change in the condition of the Christian Church. Even so early as the year 312, when the appearance to him of the luminous Cross in the sky was followed by victory over his enemies, Constantine began to issue edicts of toleration in favour of the Christians; and from the time of his sole supremacy, A.D. 324, Christianity and not Paganism became the acknowledged religion of the Roman empire.

Section 1. The altered Outward Circumstances of the Church.

[Sidenote: Consequent change in discipline and ritual.]

Such a change in the outward circumstances of the Church could not but produce a corresponding alteration in its discipline and mode of worship. The Kingdom of God on earth became a great power visible to the eyes of men, no longer hid like the leaven, but overshadowing the earth like the mustard-tree; and the power and influence of Imperial Rome were employed in spreading the Faith instead of seeking to exterminate it. Christians were not now forced to shun the notice of their fellow-men; banished Priests and Bishops came back to their flocks; heathen temples were converted into Churches, and new Churches were built with great splendour. The vast resources of Roman wealth and refinement were employed to render the Worship of Almighty God costly and magnificent, and the ritual of the Church was probably more fully developed and brought more into harmony with the prophetic vision of St. John than circumstances had ever before allowed.

[Sidenote: The first Christian city.] In Constantinople, built by the Emperor Constantine on the ruins of Byzantium, we have the first instance of a city which, from the time of its foundation, was entirely Christian.

[Sidenote: Endowment of the Church.] The Church was now no longer dependent on the alms of private Christians; the revenues which had formerly been devoted by the state to the maintenance of the heathen temples and their ministers, were transferred to the support of Christian Churches and their Clergy, and to the relief of the poor. Christian schools were also founded and endowed by the emperors; and learning, as well as wealth, was thus brought in contact with the Faith.

[Sidenote: Church honoured by the world.]

Christian Rome soon became a great instrument in God's hands for extending the influence of the Church even amongst little-known and uncivilized nations; and as persecution ceased to try the earnestness of those who embraced the religion of Christ, and the name of Christian came to be treated with respect instead of with scorn, the Church began to assume a position somewhat like that which she holds in our own day.

[Sidenote: Discipline relaxed.] The profession of Christianity under these circumstances was naturally more of a matter of course with many of those who had grown up under its shadow, than

when, in earlier times, such a profession was likely to involve loss and suffering, and even death itself, and discipline was gradually and necessarily relaxed from the severity needful in the days of persecution.

Section 2. Internal Trials of the Church.

[Sidenote: Heresy gathers strength in prosperity,] The Church being thus firmly settled and delivered from outer enemies, was now to find troubles within. Even from the days of St. John the Divine heresies respecting the Person of our Blessed Lord had been rife; but these open denials of the Divinity of the Great Head of the Church had been successfully opposed without their leaving behind them any very lasting trace.

[Sidenote: and is of a more dangerous nature.]

Errors of a more subtle class followed, amounting in reality to unbelief in our Saviour's Godhead, but expressing that unbelief by assailing the teaching of the Church respecting His nature as Very God or as Very Man.

[Sidenote: Arianism.] This species of error culminated in the heresy of Arius, who denied that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity was co-equal, co-eternal, and of One Substance with the Father, and whose false teaching was more widely listened to and followed than that of any of his predecessors in misbelief. Arianism, and various forms of error consequent upon it, long afflicted the Church, especially in the East, and the Emperor Constantine himself seems at one time to have had a leaning towards the theories of Arius.

Section 3. The General Councils.

[Sidenote: The remedy provided for heresy.] The full tide of the Arian heresy was, however, not suffered to come upon the Church without a barrier being raised up by God to stem the torrent. The Emperor Constantine was providentially guided to call together a Council of Bishops from every part of the world, to decide what was and always had been the Faith of the Church respecting the Nature of our Blessed Lord. This is the first instance of what are known by the name of General Councils of the Church. Other councils, called provincial synods, had indeed been frequently held from the earliest times; but they were of a much more limited and partial character, and their decrees were binding only on the province in which they were held, and not on the Church at large.

[Sidenote: Nature of General Councils.]

General Councils were called together by the Christian emperors, and, from the nature of their constitution, were not possible until all or nearly all the Christian world was governed by a ruler professing the Faith of Christ; nor has such a general synod been held since the breaking up of the universal empire of Rome helped to overthrow the external unity of the Church[1].

[Sidenote: Their number.]

Four General Councils are officially acknowledged by the Church of England as binding on her members, and to these are commonly added two, held somewhat later at Constantinople.

[Sidenote: I. Council.]

I. The First General Council was called together by Constantine the Great, A.D. 325. It was held at Nicaea in Bithynia, and was attended by 318 Bishops. The great work of this Council was the positive and explicit assertion of what the Church had always implicitly believed concerning the Nature of our Divine Lord, and His Oneness with the Father. It was at this Nicene Council that the great St. Athanasius, then only a deacon, first distinguished himself by his opposition to the heresies of Arius. The teaching of the Council was embodied in the creed which is known to us as the Nicene Creed[2], and which was signed by all the assembled Bishops with only two exceptions, these being probably personal friends of Arius. Besides the condemnation of Arius, the Council settled the time of keeping Easter, and passed twenty Canons which were confirmed by the Emperor.

[Sidenote: II. Council.]

II. The Second General Council was held at Constantinople, A.D. 381, in the reign of Theodosius the Great. It was summoned principally to condemn the heresy of Macedonius, who had been Patriarch of Constantinople, and who had added to the Arian heresy a denial of the Divinity of God the Holy Ghost. At this Council 500 Bishops were present, and it is especially remarkable for having completed the Creed of Nicaea[3], which is hence also called the Creed of Constantinople.

[Sidenote: III. Council.]

III. The Third General Council was summoned by the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, A.D. 431, and met at Ephesus. It was held to consider the heresy of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who taught that the Blessed Virgin was the Mother of our Lord's Human Nature only, and that, therefore, the title of Theotokos, or "Mother of God," ought not to be given her. This assertion was, in fact, only a refinement of Arianism, implying as it did that our Saviour had not always been God as well as Man, and it was accordingly condemned by the Council, Nestorius being at the same time deposed from his see.

[Sidenote: IV. Council.]

IV. The Fourth General Council met at Chalcedon during the reign of the Emperor Marcian, A.D. 451. Six hundred and thirty Bishops assembled at it and condemned the false teaching of Eutyches, who asserted that our Blessed Lord was God only, and not Man also.

[Sidenote: V. Council.]

V. The Fifth General Council was summoned at Constantinople by the Emperor Justinian, A.D. 533, and was attended by 165 Bishops. In it the decisions of the Four First Councils were confirmed, especially against the Nestorians.

[Sidenote: VI. Council.]

VI. The Sixth General Council was also held at Constantinople, A.D. 680, by command of the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus, and condemned a development of Eutychianism.

Table of Councils. Where held. Date. Emperor. Object. I. Nicaea 325 Constantine Against the Arians.

the Great II. Constantinople 381 Theodosius Against the

the Great Macedonians. III. Ephesus 431 Theodosius Against the
the Younger Nestorians. IV. Chalcedon 451 Marcian Against the
Eutychians. V. Constantinople 553 Justinian Against a
development of
Nestorianism. VI. Constantinople 680 Constantine Against a
Pogonatus development
of Eutychianism.

Section 4. Intellectual Development in the Church.

[Sidenote: Christian learning developed in peace.] This portion of the History of the Church, comprising as it does the first period in which the master-minds within her fold were left free by the cessation of outward persecution to resist the increasing attacks of heresy, may be looked upon as offering to our view the greatest intellectual development which the Church has experienced since the times of the Apostles.

[Sidenote: The Fathers.]

Learned and eloquent men abounded, "mighty in the Scriptures" and "steadfast in the Faith," and their commentaries and sermons have come down to us as an abiding heritage and a continual witness to the teaching of the Church in early times. St. Athanasius, St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, and St. Augustine, are but a few out of many whose writings are still held in honour by our own as well as by every other branch of the Catholic Church.

[1] A General Council is the highest possible way in which the voice of the Church can be heard. But its authority is much increased by the fact that to become really a general Council its decrees must be generally received by the Christian world. This was the case with the first six General Councils, but has not been entirely so with any similar gatherings of later ages.

[2] That part of the Creed which follows the words, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," was added later.

[3] The subsequent addition in the clause, "Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son," will be noticed later.

07. The Early History of Particular Churches

CHAPTER VII. The Early History of Particular Churches.

A.D. 67-A.D. 500 Section 1.The Church of England.

[Sidenote: St. Paul's visit to England.] The CHURCH OF ENGLAND is believed, with good reason, to owe its foundation to the Apostle St. Paul, who probably came to this country after his first imprisonment at Rome. The writings of Tertullian, and others in the second and third centuries speak of Christianity as having spread as far as the islands of Britain, and a British king named Lucius is known to have embraced the Faith about the middle of the second century.

[Sidenote: Martyrdom of St. Alban.] The Diocletian persecution made itself felt amongst the British Christians, the conversion of the proto-martyr St. Alban (A.D. 303) being followed by that of a large number of his countrymen, many of whom also suffered for their faith. The persecution ceased (A.D. 305) under the influence of Constantius, who, before his accession to the imperial dignity, had been viceroy in Britain. His son and successor Constantine was, if not born in England, at any rate of English parentage on the side of his mother Helen, better known as the Saint and Empress Helena.

[Sidenote: English bishops at Councils.]

Three English Bishops, those of York, Lincoln, and London, attended the Council summoned by Constantine at Arles, A.D. 314, a proof that at this time the Church of England was thoroughly organized and settled. English Bishops were also present at the Councils of Sardica, A.D. 347, and of Ariminum, A.D. 359.

[Sidenote: English Church depressed by Saxon invasion.] When the Romans abandoned Britain early in the fifth century, the Saxons took advantage of the defenceless state of the inhabitants to settle in the island, at first as colonists and afterwards as conquerors. The intermingling of these fierce heathens with the Christian population had a depressing influence on the Church; and the Bishops and Clergy, belonging as they did to the weaker and conquered portion of the community, seem to have been unable to do much towards the conversion of the invaders.

[Sidenote: Diminution and retreat of Clergy.]

Gradually, as the Saxons became more and more powerful in the island, the number of Bishops and Clergy in the accessible portions of of England grew smaller and smaller; and such as remained were at last compelled to take refuge with their brethren, who had retired to the mountain fastnesses, rather than live in slavery. Hence the records of the Church of England in the sixth century are chiefly confined to those dioceses which were situated in what we call Wales, or in other mountainous districts.

Section 2.The Church of Ireland. The CHURCH OF IRELAND is said by some to have been first founded in the Apostolic age, but this seems doubtful. The first certain information which we have

respecting the presence of Christianity in the island, is that in A.D. 431, a Bishop named Palladius was sent thither on a mission by Pope Celestine. He appears, however, not to have met with much success, and he soon left the country and died, probably in Scotland.

[Sidenote: St. Patrick the Apostle of Ireland.] A few years later, about A.D. 440, the celebrated St. Patrick began his mission in Ireland. He is generally considered to have been a native of North Britain, who, at the age of sixteen, was taken prisoner by pirates, and carried as a slave to Ireland. On regaining his liberty, he resolved to devote his life to the conversion of the country of his captivity; and having been consecrated Bishop, he returned to Ireland, and spent fifty years as a missionary in that hitherto heathen land. At the time of his death, A.D. 493, the Church was firmly rooted in Ireland, and possessed a native priesthood and a native Episcopate.

[Sidenote: Late development of dioceses and parishes in Ireland.]

It may, however, be mentioned, that neither the diocesan nor the parochial systems were developed in Ireland until a very late period, whilst, from the very large number of Bishops existing there in early times, we are led to infer that in Ireland, as before in the earliest ages of the Church, each missionary was invested with episcopal powers, and that the office of priest, separate from that of Bishop, was at first almost unknown. Gradually there sprang up Cathedral chapters, whose members acted as curates to the Bishop, and to this succeeded the parochial system.

Section 3. The Church of Scotland. The CHURCH OF SCOTLAND may, perhaps, like the Church of England, trace its foundation to the labours of St. Paul, and seems to be included in Tertullian's mention of the far-off limits to which Christianity had reached in his days.

[Sidenote: St. Ninian the first authenticated missionary in Scotland.]

Little is, however, known of very early Church history in Scotland until the beginning of the fifth century, when St. Ninian, who is said to have been the son of a British chief, preached to the Southern Picts, A.D. 412-A.D. 432. We have already seen that St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, was a Scotchman, and the fruits of the benefits thus conferred on the one country were reaped by the other in the next century, when St. Columba went from Ireland and founded the celebrated monastery of Iona in one of the isles of the Hebrides.

[Sidenote: Intercourse between Irish and Scotch Churches.]

Iona, like the Irish monasteries of the same period, sent out many missionaries, and the monks of the two countries appear to have kept up friendly communications with each other.

Section 4. Continental Churches. The CHURCH OF ITALY, as we have already seen, was founded by the joint labours of St. Peter and St. Paul, but the circumstances of its foundation were very different from those of the Churches of our own islands.

[Sidenote: Difficulties encountered by the Church in Italy from high civilization]

Christianity in Italy had to make its way amongst a highly civilized people, a nation of deep thinkers and philosophers, whose opposition to the truths of the Gospel was a far more subtle thing than the rude ignorance of barbarians.

[Sidenote: and political power.]

Besides this, the infant Church in Italy was brought face to face with the might of the Roman emperors who were at that time the rulers of the known world; and though their persecution of their Christian subjects extended more or less to all parts of the empire, yet Italy was the chief battle-field on which the first great contest between the Church and the world was fought. Hence the history of the early Church of Italy is a history of alternating persecutions and times of peace[1], during which Christianity was constantly taking deeper root and spreading more widely through the country, until the conversion of Constantine, A.D. 312, led to the establishment and endowment of the Church.

[Sidenote: Decay of the Roman empire.] As the Church was growing stronger and taking deeper root, the worn-out Roman empire was gradually decaying and fading away, and, practically, it came to an end with the division of East and West, A.D. 395.

Resistance to the inroads of the barbarians was no longer possible. Rome was sacked successively by different nations of Central Europe, and at length the kingdom of the Goths in Italy was established under Theodoric, A.D. 493.

[Sidenote: Arianism of barbarian conquerors.]

These rude nations, though professing Christianity, had received with it the heretical doctrines of Arianism, owing to their teachers having belonged to those eastern portions of Europe, which, from their nearness to Asia, were most infected with this heresy. The CHURCH OF FRANCE was probably founded by St. Paul, but we have no certain account of its early history. [Sidenote: Asiatic origin of Early French Bishops,] "Trophimus the Ephesian" is believed to have been the first Bishop of Arles, and Pothinus, another Greek Asiatic, occupied the see of Lyons at the time of the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, A.D. 161-A.D. 180, during which he suffered martyrdom. His successor was St. Irenaeus, a native, probably, of Smyrna, who was martyred under Severus, A.D. 202. This long-continued connexion with the Churches of Asia Minor left its traces on the liturgy and customs of the Church of France, and through it of Britain and Ireland, these latter Churches adhering to the Eastern mode of computing Easter even after the Western reckoning had been adopted in France.

[Sidenote: and of French Liturgy.] The liturgy used in France, as well as in Britain and Spain, is known to have been founded on that used in Ephesus and in the other Asiatic cities, which was almost certainly that used by St. John himself.

[Sidenote: Intercourse between English and French Churches.] A Council was summoned by Constantine, A.D. 314, at the French city of Arles, and one French Bishop at least was present at the great Nicaean Council, A.D. 325. About a century later (A.D. 429), St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and St. Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, were sent over to Britain to assist in combating the errors of Pelagius, the neighbour Churches of England and France maintaining apparently very friendly relations. Many of the barbarian tribes who overran France in the beginning of the fifth century, though professing Christianity, were deeply infected with the Arian heresy. The Franks, however, who were heathens at their first entrance into the country, embraced the orthodox faith, and eventually became masters of the kingdom under Clovis, A.D. 486.

[Sidenote: St. Paul and St. James in Spain.] The CHURCH OF SPAIN AND PORTUGAL traces its foundation to St. Paul, who speaks of his intended visit to Spain, Romans 15:24; and there is also

a tradition that St. James the Great preached the Gospel here. This Church, too, is spoken of by St. Irenaeus, and again by Tertullian. Its first known martyr was St. Fructuosus, A.D. 259, and its first Council that of Elvira, about A.D. 300. The names of nineteen Spanish Bishops are mentioned as present at it. The Council of Nice, A.D. 325, was under the presidency of Hosius, the Bishop of the Spanish diocese of Cordova.

[Sidenote: Arianism of Visigoths.]

About A.D. 470, the Visigoths, who were Arians, passed over from France into Spain, and were only gradually converted to the Catholic Faith.

We must look to a later period (see Chapter XI.) for the foundation of other Churches of the West in Northern and Central Europe, that is to say, the SCANDINAVIAN CHURCHES, including NORWAY, SWEDEN, and DENMARK, as well as those contained in the large extent of country to which we often give the comprehensive name of Germany. The Churches now comprehended in EUROPEAN TURKEY and GREECE were, as we have already seen, the fruits of the labours of St. Paul, and, like the Church of Rome, had wealth and learning to encounter instead of poverty and ignorance. The Book of Acts records very fully the earliest history of these Churches, and a large proportion of St. Paul's Epistles are addressed to them.

[Sidenote: Liability of the Greeks to heresy.] The theorizing and philosophical tendencies of the Greeks made them very liable to be led away by heretical teachers, and we find that the Church in Greece, from St. Paul's time downwards, was continually disturbed by the presence of those who taught or listened to "some new thing." Hence all the General Councils, summoned for the authoritative settlement of the faith of the Church, were held either in Greece, or in that part of Asia which had been colonized by Greeks. Arianism in particular, for a long period, caused the most violent dissensions throughout the Eastern world, and these were the occasion of that first Great Council of Nicaea which, though not actually held in Greece, was only separated from it by the narrow strait of the Bosphorus.

[Sidenote: Origin of jealousies between Rome and Constantinople.] The building of Constantinople, A.D. 330, gave a Christian capital to Greece, and, indeed, to the whole of the Eastern Roman empire; and from this time may be dated the jealousies and struggles for supremacy which took place between the Church in Italy and the Church in Greece, and resulted eventually in the Great schism between East and West[2].

[Sidenote: St. Andrew in Russia.] The CHURCH OF RUSSIA is believed to have been founded by the Apostle St. Andrew, who extended his labours northwards from Thrace (which now forms part of Turkey in Europe), to that portion of Scythia lying north of the Black Sea, and now constituting the southern part of European Russia. The bulk of the present Russian empire was, however, converted at a much later period.

Section 5. The Church in Africa.

[Sidenote: St. Simon Zelotes and St. Mark in Africa.] The first evangelizing of North Africa, including what we now know as Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco, is ascribed to St. Simon Zelotes and St. Mark, the latter of whom founded the CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA, of which he became the first Bishop. Christianity appears to have made very rapid progress in Africa, since, in the fifth

century, the Church numbered more than four hundred African Bishops.

[Sidenote: Patriarchate of Alexandria.]

Alexandria, from its wealth and importance, as well as from its reputation for learning, was looked up to by the other African Churches, and its Bishops were acknowledged as patriarchs throughout the Christianized portion of the continent.

[Sidenote: Its school.] The Alexandrian school of philosophy was very famous, and was at one time presided over by the Christian philosopher Clement of Alexandria, who died about A.D. 216. His pupil Origen was, for a while, at the head of the same college, and employed his vast learning both before and after his ordination, in comparing the extant copies of the Old Testament Scriptures, in order to bring the text of the original languages to a state of the greatest possible correctness. He died A.D. 253.

[Sidenote: Heresies at Alexandria.] The Church of Alexandria was much distracted by inward troubles. In A.D. 306, the schism of Meletius led many astray, and amongst them the too notorious Arius, who began to publish in Alexandria the heresy since known by his name, about the year A.D. 320.

[Sidenote: St. Athanasius and Arius.]

St. Athanasius, who became Patriarch of Alexandria, A.D. 326, was the chief instrument raised up by God for combating the errors of Arius, a work which he carried on unflinchingly both before and after his elevation to the episcopal throne, though his defence of the orthodox faith brought upon him long and severe persecution, including an exile of twenty years from his diocese. The Arian heresy, though checked, was however not exterminated, and long remained a source of trouble and weakness to the whole Church.

[Sidenote: St. Cyril and Nestorius.]

St. Cyril, who afterwards succeeded to the patriarchate of Alexandria, A.D. 412, was also called upon to defend Catholic truth against the errors of Nestorius, whilst his successor, Dioscorus, openly embraced the false teaching of Eutyches, and denied the Manhood, as Arius and Nestorius had before denied the Divinity, of our Blessed Lord. The evil example of the patriarch was followed by a large proportion of African Christians, who refused to receive the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 431, or to submit to Catholic Bishops.

[Sidenote: St. Cyprian. St. Augustine.]

Two other well-known names which adorn the records of the Church in North Africa may be mentioned: St. Cyprian, a native of Carthage, and afterwards Bishop of that city, who suffered martyrdom, A.D. 258, and St. Augustine, a native of Numidia (or what we now call Algeria), who was educated at Carthage, was consecrated Bishop of Hippo, A.D. 393, and died A.D. 430. He left behind him a great number of writings, the influence of which has been largely felt by the Church of England.

[Sidenote: St. Matthew in Ethiopia.] The CHURCH OF ETHIOPIA, now represented by Abyssinia, was planted by St. Matthew, the way having, perhaps, been prepared by that "man of Ethiopia,"

the eunuch “under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,” of whom we read in Acts 8:27-39. Little is clearly known of the early Christian history of this region; but the Ethiopian Church appears to have come under the patriarchal rule of the Bishop of Alexandria towards the beginning of the fourth century. Though keeping clear of Arianism, the Ethiopian Christians became deeply tinged with the Eutychian heresy, by which Dioscorus and his successors were unhappily led away.

Section 6. The Eastern Church. Of the Churches now comprehended in Turkey in Asia, the foundation and early history of PALESTINE, as represented by the CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, and of SYRIA, as represented by the CHURCH IN ANTIOCH, have been already related (Chapters I. and II.).

[Sidenote: Death of St. James.]

St. James the Less, first Bishop of Jerusalem, was martyred A.D. 63, and succeeded by Simeon, the son of Cleopas, in whose episcopate the destruction of Jerusalem took place, A.D. 70.

[Sidenote: Flight to Pella.] The Christians, in obedience to the prophetic teaching of their Divine Master, had already fled for safety to Pella, whence they afterwards returned to take up their abode amongst the ruins of the Holy City. In A.D. 132, a rebellious outbreak of the Jews, under the leadership of Barchochebas, drew down on them a severe chastisement from the Emperor Hadrian, and the Jewish Christians suffered much from being confounded with their rebellious countrymen. The ruins of the ancient city were completely destroyed, whilst no Jew was allowed to enter the new city of Aelia Capitolina, which was built on its site.

[Sidenote: Extinction of Judaism in Church of Jerusalem.] The Jewish Christians now entirely gave up all profession of Judaism, and the first Judaism in Gentile Bishop of Jerusalem was appointed A.D. 135.

Julian the Apostate (A.D. 361-A.D. 363) presumptuously attempted to rebuild Jerusalem, but his attempt was frustrated by a miraculous interposition, a failure which had already been predicted by St. Cyril, the then Bishop of Jerusalem.

[Sidenote: Double Episcopate at Antioch.] The CHURCH IN ANTIOCH having been probably founded by St. Peter, that Apostle is believed to have left behind him two Bishops in the city, the one Evodius, having the episcopal care of the Jewish converts, whilst Ignatius was placed in charge of the Gentile Christians; but, on the death of Evodius, A.D. 70, Ignatius became sole Bishop.

[Sidenote: St. Ignatius.] This holy man is said to have been the child whom our Lord took in His arms and set in the midst of His disciples. He was intimate with some or all of the Apostles, especially with St. John, and was martyred by being thrown to wild beasts at Rome, A.D. 107. The synods held at Antioch were very numerous, and far larger than any others, approaching almost in size and importance to General Councils.

[Sidenote: St. John Chrysostom.]

It was at Antioch that the celebrated and eloquent St. John Chrysostom was born about A.D. 347: he became Bishop of Constantinople, and died A.D. 407, after undergoing persecutions which almost amounted to a martyrdom.

[Sidenote: St. Paul and St. John in Asia Minor.]

We have already seen that the CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR owe their foundation chiefly to St. Paul, whilst their perfect organization and development was entrusted to St. John the Divine (pp. 49 to 51). The Seven Churches of the Apocalypse seem to have been in a special manner the charge of the latter Apostle, Ephesus, the chief of them, being the home of his later earthly years, and the scene of his decease and burial.

[Sidenote: The “Angels” of the Seven Churches.]

St. Timothy, the first Bishop of Ephesus, had been succeeded probably by Onesimus; St. Polycarp (martyred A.D. 167) had the episcopal charge of Smyrna; Archippus, it is believed, had followed Epaphras at Laodicea. The names of the other “Angels” spoken of in the Apocalypse have not come down to us, but there is no doubt that at the time when the seven inspired Epistles were addressed to these Churches, there was in each of them a firmly established episcopacy, and that this form of government was followed by all other Churches throughout the world. There is little that needs recording of the history of these Churches of Asia Minor, unless we except the Great Council of Ephesus, held in that city, A.D. 431, to condemn the heresy of Nestorius (p. 71).

[Sidenote: St. Bartholomew in Armenia.] The CHURCH OF ARMENIA, now included in Asiatic Turkey, is believed to have been first founded by St. Bartholomew. The country is said to have been further evangelized by a mission sent by St. Gregory the Illuminator in the third century. It is known that, in the following century, a flourishing Church existed there.

[Sidenote: Several Apostles in Parthia.] The CHURCH OF PARTHIA, or PERSIA, embraced the country lying between the Tigris and the Indus, with Mesopotamia and Chaldea; what we now call Persia, Cabul, and Belochistan; as well as part of Arabia and Turkey; and is said to have been planted by St. Peter, St. Bartholomew, St. Jude, St. Matthew, and St. Thomas. The inhabitants of this region were of different races: Greek colonists; many Jews, the residue of the Babylonish Captivity; Arabs, and ancient Persians. Till the fourth century the Parthian Church appears to have flourished in peace. It was beyond the jurisdiction of the persecuting emperors of Rome, and the Parthian monarchs, though not Christians themselves, protected or tolerated their Christian subjects.

[Sidenote: Persecution there.]

Two Bishops were sent from Parthia to the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 323, but shortly afterwards, A.D. 330, persecution broke out, occasioned apparently by the jealousy felt by the king towards the now Christian emperors of Rome, and the intercourse kept up between the fellow Christians of the two empires. Sixteen thousand martyrs are said to have shed their blood for their Faith, and amongst them was St. Simeon, the Patriarch of the Church, and Bishop of Seleucia. Another persecution took place in the beginning of the fifth century, and shortly afterwards Persian Christianity became strongly infected with the errors of Nestorius, the Shahs apparently favouring the heresy on account of its having been discouraged by the Roman emperors.

[Sidenote: Uncertainty as to the first conversion of Arabia.]

There is no record of the actual founding of the CHURCH IN ARABIA. We know, from Ga 50:1. 17, that St. Paul “went into Arabia” soon after his conversion, but there is no mention of his having

preached the Gospel there at that time, when indeed he was not yet called to be an Apostle; and the Arabia to which he went was probably the northern portion stretching up to the east of Syria, almost to Damascus itself. The Apostle of the Gentiles may probably have revisited this country at a later period; but, at any rate, we know that Christianity was firmly established there early in the third century, and that Origen made two several journeys thither between A.D. 220 and A.D. 248, to combat heresies which troubled the Arabian Church. The Bishop of Bostra, or Bozrah, was present at the Council of Antioch, A.D. 269.

[Sidenote: Nestorianism and Eutychianism in Arabia.] In the fifth century the errors of Nestorius, and, a little later, of Eutyches, made great inroads amongst the Christians of Arabia, several even of the Bishops being led away by them.

[Sidenote: St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew in India.]

There is an ancient tradition that St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew laid the foundations of the CHURCH IN INDIA, but very little is known of its early history. Pantaenus is said to have been sent as a missionary from Alexandria to India towards the end of the second century, though it is a matter in dispute whether by India in this case we are to understand the country now known under that name, or Ethiopia, or Arabia Felix.

There are still Christians in India who reverence St. Thomas as their founder, and use a liturgy which goes by his name. Nestorianism spread to India in the fifth century. The Church is believed to have been planted in CHINA by St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew, and the Chinese are mentioned by Arnobius in the fourth century amongst those nations which had received the Gospel. It does not seem, however, that Christianity existed for any length of time in this country.

[1] See Chap. V.

[2] In speaking of the Greek Church of the present day, we usually understand the whole body of orthodox Eastern Christians, and not merely those dwelling in Greece itself.

08. The Inroads of Mahometanism

CHAPTER VIII. The Inroads of Mahometanism A.D. 609-A.D. 732 [Sidenote: Arianism prepares the way for Mahometanism.] The various heresies, and especially the heresy of Arius, which had so widely troubled the peace of the Eastern Church, though they were not suffered by God's Mercy to cause a lasting schism, yet left behind them a certain weakness resulting in the decay of many of the Churches of the East, and finally in their overthrow by the false faith of the impostor Mahomet. The present state of the Churches of Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea, if viewed in the light shed upon it by the prophetic Epistles of St. John the Divine, may serve to show us how God withdraws His Blessing from a Church no less surely than from an individual Christian, when His Grace is obstinately rejected and despised.

Section 1. Mahomet.

[Sidenote: Mahomet's birth,] The false prophet Mahomet was born A.D. 569, of the chief family in the Arabian tribe of the Koreish; but it was not till after he had amassed a large fortune, partly by diligence in trade and partly by a wealthy marriage, that, at the age of forty, A.D. 609, he declared himself to be a prophet.

[Sidenote: and claim to be a prophet and reformer.] This announcement was at first confined to the members of his own immediate family, till, at the end of four years, Mahomet proclaimed that he had a mission from God to reform the state of religion in his native city, Mecca, and to put down the idolatry which prevailed there. [Sidenote: Flight to Medina.] The opposition which the false prophet encountered from his fellow-citizens did not hinder him from making many converts to the religion he was beginning to invent for himself and for them, until at length (A.D. 622) an insurrection, caused by the preaching and success of Mahomet, obliged him to fly for his life from Mecca, and take refuge at Yatreb or Medina[1].

[Sidenote: Founds a new religion.]

Here he was gladly received both by Jews and Arabs, rival races, who divided the city between them. The Jews were ready to welcome him as their expected Messiah, whilst the Arabs had heard of his fame from their brethren at Mecca; and Mahomet seems from this time to have entirely laid aside the character of a mere reformer, for that of the founder of a new revelation. The Koran and the Sword were now called in to aid in their respective ways in extending the power of the ambitious adventurer. [Sidenote: Cruelty.] Violence and bloodshed enforced the pretended inspiration by which Mahomet claimed to be acknowledged as the Prophet of God, and the civil and religious head of the nation; and the last ten years of his life present an almost unbroken course of warfare, which too often degenerated into simple robbery and murder.

[Sidenote: and conquests of Mahomet.]

He made himself master of the whole of Arabia, including the city of Mecca, where he destroyed the idols against which he had in earlier days protested, and then made an ineffectual attempt to

take possession of Palestine. [Sidenote: His death.] Mahomet died on June 8th, A.D. 632, partly from the effects of poison, which had been given to him some years before, and partly from the consequences of a life of excess and self-indulgence.

Section 2. The Religion of Mahomet. The false faith of which Mahomet was at once the prophet and the founder, seems to have taken for its basis the traditionary religion then prevalent amongst the Arab tribes. These traditions were probably compounded of dim remnants of the Truth which had been revealed to Abraham and handed down through his son Ishmael, and of a very corrupt form of Sabaeism, which included the worship of the heavenly bodies, as well as of idols, and which had been the religion of Terah and his fellow-countrymen. [Sidenote: Mixture of truth and error in Mahometanism.] Upon this foundation was engrafted a mixture of Persian philosophy, and of such perversions of Christianity and of Scriptural doctrine as Mahomet could gather from a Persian Jew and a Nestorian monk.

[Sidenote: Opposition of the Koran to Christianity.] The Koran, which Mahomet pretended to have received from heaven by the mouth of the archangel Gabriel, makes mention of our Blessed Lord and of many of the facts of Old Testament History, but its teaching is essentially anti-Christian and blasphemous, inasmuch as it denies the Divinity of Christ, and represents Him as a Teacher and Prophet far inferior to Mahomet himself. An intended contradiction of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity is also conveyed in its opening sentence, which is the Mahometan confession of faith,—“There is but one God, and Mahomet is His prophet.”

[Sidenote: Mahomet’s Iconoclastic tendencies.]

Mahomet’s energetic opposition to idolatry was, no doubt, a good feature in his religious system, though, like that of the Iconoclasts[2], it was carried to an extravagant extent, and this agreement, with their undue fears and prejudices on this head, seems to have been a sufficient inducement to many unstable Christians to deny the Lord, for Whose Honour they professed such deep concern, and to give themselves up to an impostor who was perhaps the nearest approach to Anti-Christ which the world has yet seen.

Christian people are found even in these days who do not hesitate to speak with some degree of favour of the great apostasy of which Mahomet was the founder, because of its opposition to idolatry, its recognition of our Blessed Lord as a Prophet, the certain admixture of truth contained in its grievous error, and the alleged moral teaching and beauty of language of particular passages in the Koran.

[Sidenote: Moral effects of Mahometanism.]

Any such favour or tenderness is, however, altogether out of place in professed worshippers of Him Whom Mahomet so grievously blasphemed, whilst the grossly sensual and immoral lives led by the false prophet and the large proportion of his followers down to the present time, serve to show us that wrong belief and wrong practice go hand in hand, and that whatever show of morality there may be in some few of the precepts of the Koran, it has no influence on the conduct of those who profess to be guided by it.

Section 3. The Spread of Mahometanism.

[Sidenote: Mahometan conquests] The work of conquest which Mahomet had begun was continued by his successors. Abu Bekr, the father of Mahomet's favourite wife, was the first of the four Caliphs who pushed the power of the Mahometan arms beyond the confines of Arabia, and laid the foundations of the future empire. [Sidenote: of the Holy Land.] Jerusalem was taken by Omar, the next Caliph, in A.D. 637, and, with the exception of a short interval during the Crusades, the Holy City has ever since remained in the hands of the unbelievers.

[Sidenote: Egypt,]

Omar made himself master of Egypt as well as of Syria, and showed his savage contempt for learning by burning the famous and valuable collection of MSS. contained in the Alexandrian library.

[Sidenote: Persia, and North Africa.]

Under Othman, Persia and the North of Africa were added to the empire, and after the death of Ali, son-in-law to Mahomet and fourth Caliph, the seat of government was removed to Damascus.

[Sidenote: Other portions of Asia and part of Europe.] The Caliphs of Damascus carried on the same system of warfare and bloodshed, took possession of Asia Minor, of the Northern parts of India, of Spain, and overran the South of France, where, however, A.D. 732, the Mahometan troops received such a check at Tours from the hands of Charles Martel, as hindered them from extending their conquests any farther in Western Europe.

[Sidenote: Present extent of Mahometanism.] At the present day Mahometanism is the professed faith of the inhabitants of the Northern half of Africa, of Turkey in Europe, of Arabia, Persia, the Holy Land, Asia Minor, and some parts of India, and its adherents number ninety-six millions. We shall perhaps realize still more strongly the havoc which this soul-destroying apostasy has been suffered to work, if we remember that some of the countries where it now reigns unchecked were formerly the seats of flourishing Christian Churches, the Church in Africa boasting of such great Saints as St. Cyprian and St. Augustine, whilst Palestine and Asia Minor witnessed the first foundation of the Church, as well as its earliest settlement in the form it was permanently to retain.

[1] It is from this Hegira (or Flight) of Mahomet, July 16th, A.D. 622, that Mahometans compute their time.

[2] See Chap. VIII.

09. The Division Between East and West

CHAPTER IX. The Division between East and West A.D. 680-A.D. 1054 [Sidenote: Outward unity of the Church broken] So far we have contemplated the Church of Christ as one in external communion, no less than by the inner bonds of charity and of sacramental life; but we now come to a period in which this external unity began to be to a certain extent dissolved, and that in great measure by the same outward influences which had at first secured its cohesion.

[Sidenote: with the breaking up of the Roman Empire.]

Heresies and schisms, especially the great heresy of Arius, had indeed troubled the Church and threatened to break the visible union existing between its branches in different countries; but it was not until after the dissolution of the Roman empire that the breach really came.

Section I. Jealousy between Rome and Constantinople.

[Sidenote: Reasons for Roman ascendancy.]

During the flourishing days of the empire the city of Rome had naturally been looked up to with great reverence by all the other Churches of the world. Its political importance as the centre of government, the vast number of its martyrs, its comparative freedom from heresy, and its connexion with the lives and deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul, all tended to give it a moral ascendancy which was gradually claimed as a right. This, however, did not take place without protests on the part of other Bishops, nor even without very definite disclaimers of any wish for or right to supreme authority on the part of the Bishops of Rome themselves.

[Sidenote: Ambition of an Eastern Patriarch.]

Constantinople, as being the new Rome and capital of the Eastern empire, was especially jealous of the claims of the mother city, and one of her Patriarchs, John the Faster, in the sixth century, first set the evil example of assuming the title of "Universal Bishop," a title which the Roman Pontiffs have since taken and retained. In proportion as the political division between East and West became more complete, so also did the tendency towards separation in ecclesiastical matters increase.

[Sidenote: Beginnings of disunion.]

Western dioceses, now peopled by the barbarian nations who had overrun Europe, still looked up to Rome as their centre and head; whilst the Eastern Bishops, under the sway of the decaying empire, clung to Constantinople.

[Sidenote: Its crisis.] The controversy respecting the use of Images, and that about the Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son as well as from the Father, were, however, the means of actually bringing about the cessation of all outward communion between East and West.

Section 2. The Iconoclast (or Image-breaking) Controversy.

[Sidenote: Dislike of images]

There had been from very early times an extensive though not universal feeling in the Church, against the use of painting or sculpture in Divine Worship. This feeling was occasioned partly by dread of the idolatry still prevalent amongst the heathen, and partly, especially in the East, where it was strongest, by the remains of Judaism still lingering in the Church of Christ.

[Sidenote: lost in the West, but retained in the East.] As heathenism died out, it was gradually felt in the West that the strong reasons formerly existing against the adornment of Churches with pictures and images had passed away; but the Eastern Church, with that dread of change which distinguishes it to this day, clung as before to the old sentiment.

[Sidenote: Image-breaking legislation] In the eighth century, Leo III., “the Isaurian,” then reigning at Constantinople, passed a decree for the removal of all images and paintings from Churches, and his violent conduct in the matter occasioned such discontent in the West, that Italy withdrew altogether from the nominal allegiance she had hitherto paid to the emperors, about A.D. 730.

[Sidenote: dissolved the link between Eastern and Western Empires.]

Other emperors were as fanatical in their Iconoclastic (or image-breaking) prejudices as Leo, and their extravagance excited a reaction in the other extreme in the Western empire.

[Sidenote: Reactionary decrees in the West.] In A.D. 786, a Council, which was held at Nicaea, not only protested against the violent fanaticism of the East, but sanctioned the veneration of images and pictures to an extent which we find it hard to justify, and which was, in fact, deemed unjustifiable by many in the West, who yet wished for their retention as decorations and aids to devotional feeling. Charlemagne, under the influence of our English Alcuin, opposed the decision of the Council, and held provincial synods (especially one at Frankfort, A.D. 794) to condemn what was, at any rate, very like image-worship.

[Sidenote: Charitable supposition regarding them.]

Probably dread of Judaism and Mahometanism, with their hatred of our Blessed Lord and of His Image, as well as of all sculpture, had some influence on the decisions of the council of A.D. 786, and we may reasonably hope that it was not really intended to encourage any worship or veneration contrary to the express law of God. At any rate, the Iconoclast controversy aided very strongly to put an end to all political union, and with it to all public ecclesiastical intercourse, between East and West; though the bonds of external communion were not yet broken, and they were still one both in faith and practice.

Section 3. The Controversy respecting the Double Procession of the Holy Ghost.

[Sidenote: Western addition to the Nicene creed.]

We have seen^[1] that the summary of Christian belief, known to us as the Nicene Creed, was completed at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381; but with this exception, that the article defining the faith of the Church concerning the Third Person of the Ever-Blessed Trinity, asserted only that “the Holy Ghost . . . proceedeth from the Father,” without the addition of the words “and the Son;” and it was the controversy as to the admission or non-admission of these words into the

Creed which caused the formal division between Eastern and Western Christendom. The question is said to have first arisen in the fifth century; and gradually the words in dispute came to be sung in the West during Divine Service.

[Sidenote: Decrees against it.] In the ninth century an appeal was made on the subject to Pope Leo III., who decided in a provincial Council that no such addition could lawfully be made to the Creed, and ordered it to be engraved on silver plates exactly as the Council of Constantinople had left it. Towards the end of the same century another Council was held at Constantinople, which also decreed the disuse of the addition, and then the matter dropped for about a hundred and fifty years.

[Sidenote: Dispute stirred up again for political purposes.] Its revival seems to have been chiefly owing to political jealousies and to the struggle for supremacy which was continually going on between Rome and Constantinople. We may be allowed to believe that the dispute was, in reality, a question of mere words, and that the two branches of the One Church did, and still do, hold the "One Faith," although differing in their mode of expressing it.

[Sidenote: Actual schism in consequence.]

Still the ultra-conservatism which has always distinguished the Eastern Church, and the unyielding temper which has been no less conspicuous in the Church of Rome, did in time bring about a formal schism; and in A.D. 1053, the Pope Leo IX. issued a sentence of excommunication against the Patriarch of Constantinople and all who adhered to him. In the following year the Patriarch Michael Cerularius summoned a synod at Constantinople, and retorted the excommunication upon the Latins. Two attempts at reconciliation were afterwards made, one in A.D. 1274, following the close of the last Crusade, and another which, after lengthened negotiations, came to an equally unsuccessful termination at the Council of Florence, A.D. 1430.

[Sidenote: Outward union never since restored.]

Since that time the two great Branches of the One Vine, whilst still drawing Life and Nourishment from the same Divine Root of Jesse by means of the same Holy Sacraments, have yet abstained from all acts of outward communion, and have failed to recognize in each other those essential marks of Catholicity which God's Mercy and Providence has preserved to them even in the midst of all their respective defects of Charity, or their errors in theory and practice.

[1] Chap. VI., se 100:3.

10. The Church of the Middle Ages

CHAPTER X. The Church of the Middle Ages A.D. 900-A.D. 1500 [Sidenote: Foundation of the temporal power of the Popedom.] The temporal power of the Popes gradually increased after the ninth century, when part of the territory since known as the States of the Church was bestowed on them by Pepin, whose son, the famous Emperor Charlemagne, confirmed the donation. The change thus wrought in the position of the Popes, who to their spiritual office of Bishop now added the temporal one of sovereign, was productive of a corresponding change in the claims they made upon the submission of the rest of Christendom, and these altered claims first assumed a definite form in the eleventh century.

Section 1. The Supremacy of the Popes.

[Sidenote: Papal claims to spiritual supremacy.] The Bishops of Rome had at first limited their ideas of universal supremacy to spiritual things: it was as Universal Bishop that they desired to be honoured and obeyed, and we have seen in the preceding chapter that a certain priority seemed to accrue to them by force of circumstances. Rome had come to be regarded as the Mother of the Churches, much as Jerusalem was in the first ages of Christianity, and appeals for advice and help were at first voluntarily made to the learning and piety of the Bishops of Rome.

[Sidenote: Further claims to temporal authority.]

Later, instead of advisers they claimed to be absolute judges in ecclesiastical matters, and when the temporal possessions of the Popedom made the chair of St. Peter an object of ambition to covetous, designing men, the character of Bishop was too often merged in that of Prince, and spiritual power ceased to satisfy those who thought it their duty or their interest to enforce what was in fact an Universal Sovereignty.

[Sidenote: Plausibleness and actual advantages of Papal supremacy.]

It is not difficult to understand that the idea of one Visible Head and Centre of Christendom would appear to have much to recommend it; nor even that the power of the Popes was in reality the source of many blessings in the lawless state in which European society found itself for many centuries after the fall of the Roman empire. An authority which could reduce rebellious subjects to obedience, overawe refractory nobles, or check the tyranny of an irresponsible sovereign, could hardly fail to be productive of some good effects when wielded by disinterested men, and with singleness of purpose.

[Sidenote: Its corruptions and dangers.] But in the hands of worldly-minded and ambitious prelates, such as too many of the Popes undoubtedly were, this usurped prerogative of interference in the affairs of foreign states became an engine of mighty evil, and in the course of time it was felt to be such an intolerable yoke by the people of Europe that continued submission to it became impossible.

[Sidenote: What the Reformation really was.] The Reformation was in fact a casting off of an unjustifiable usurpation in temporal as well as in spiritual things, and a violent reaction against that course of events which, from the eighth century downwards, had been tending to reduce the different sovereigns of Western Christendom to the rank of vassals of the Roman See.

Section 2. Some account of the Popes of the Middle Ages. A clearer view of the rise and results of papal supremacy may perhaps be gained by entering into a somewhat more detailed account of such Popes as from various causes occupy conspicuous places in the history of the Roman Church.

[Sidenote: St. Leo the Great, and the first “papal aggression.”] In order to do this effectually, it will be necessary to go back a little farther than the date at the head of the chapter, to the time of St. Leo the Great (A.D. 440-A.D. 461), whose claim to interfere between St. Hilary, Bishop of Arles, and Chelidonius, Bishop of Besançon, may be looked upon as the first “papal aggression” of which history gives us an example. Chelidonius had been deposed by a General Council of the Church of France under the presidency of Hilary, and so deeply did the French Bishops resent the unjust attempts of Leo to set aside their decision, that the Bishop of Rome found an appeal to the secular power necessary for the purpose of enforcing his claim to exercise jurisdiction over a foreign Church. But even the authority of Valentinian III., Emperor of the West, did not succeed in obliging Hilary to cede the liberties of the Church of France, and it is a significant fact that the Bishop of Arles is revered as a saint by the whole Western Church, although his sense of what was due to his position as a member of the French episcopate would not suffer him to yield his just rights, in order to obtain a reconciliation with one so personally worthy of esteem and honour as St. Leo.

[Sidenote: Papal claims strengthened and extended by St. Gregory] The good and wise St. Gregory the Great (A.D. 590-A.D. 604), though he strenuously disclaimed for himself, and denied to others, the right of assuming the title of “Universal Bishop,” appears to have had very strong ideas respecting the authority which he conceived to belong to the successors of St. Peter, whilst his talents and holiness gave him an extensive influence over his contemporaries.

[Sidenote: and Hadrian I.]

Succeeding Popes laid claim to more extended powers, especially Hadrian I. (A.D. 772-A.D. 793), who first advanced the doctrine that the whole Christian Church was subject to the see of Rome.

[Sidenote: Rise of the temporal power of the Popes under Leo III.] His successor, Leo III. (A.D. 795-A.D. 816), having crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the West, A.D. 800, received from that monarch the sovereignty of Rome, and thus became a temporal prince as well as a Bishop, and about the same time there began to appear certain forged canons (or Church laws), professing to be ancient decrees collected by St. Isidore of Seville, in the seventh century, and having for their object to give primitive sanction to Roman Supremacy.

[Sidenote: “Pseudo-Isidore” Decretals]

These “Pseudo-Isidore” Decretals, as they were afterwards called, were frequently appealed to, apparently in good faith, by subsequent Popes; and their genuineness was generally believed in, almost without question, until the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. By about the middle of the ninth century these decretals were made use of to settle ecclesiastical questions,

and Nicholas I. (A.D. 858-A.D. 867) laid great stress upon them when the liberties of the French Church were again defended by Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, in a very similar case to that in which St. Hilary had offered opposition to St. Leo.

[Sidenote: Hincmar's opposition to papal claims.]

Hincmar's zeal in opposing the usurpations of the Roman see had some little success during the episcopate of Hadrian II. (A.D. 867-A.D. 872), but its effects passed away when John VIII. (A.D. 872-A.D. 882) espoused the cause of Charles the Bald, and thus enlisted the interests of the crown on his side. The troubles and disorders consequent on the breaking up of the great empire of Charlemagne, had had a very injurious effect on morals and religion; and unworthy persons, to whom the temporal possessions of the Popes had by this time become an object of ambition, took advantage of the depressed state of the Church to seize upon the bishopric of Rome either for themselves or for others in whom they had an interest.

[Sidenote: Unspirituality caused by temporal power.]

Hence the history of the papacy during the next century and a half is full of dreary records of corruption and wickedness. The elevation of John XII. to the papal throne at the age of eighteen (A.D. 955), and his evil life, called forth the interference of the Emperor Otho the Great, who deposed him and elected Leo VIII. (A.D. 963-A.D. 965) in his stead.

[Sidenote: Interference of Emperors of the West.] From this time the emperors frequently interfered to check the continual disputes between Popes and anti-Popes, which often ended in the murder of one of the rivals. Silvester II. (Gerbert) (A.D. 999-A.D. 1003), who was made Pope through the influence of Otho III., was prevented by death from carrying out the reforms he meditated, and at length, in A.D. 1046, the Emperor Henry III. was called upon to decide between three claimants to the papal throne. He settled the question by appointing a German, Clement II. (A.D. 1046-A.D. 1047), after the synod of Sutri had put aside the claims of the original disputants. Henry thus took the election of the Popes entirely out of the hands of the Clergy of Rome, with whom it had hitherto nominally rested, and appropriated it to himself.

[Sidenote: This interference unjustifiable.] This was an undoubted usurpation on the part of the secular power, though Henry seems to have been in earnest in his endeavours to check the simony which had been so disgracefully prevalent in the papal elections, and to appoint Bishops who might be worthy of their position.

[Sidenote: Hildebrand's influence.] [Sidenote: Overthrow of secular interference.]

Leo IX. (A.D. 1048-A.D. 1054) and his successor, Victor II. (A.D. 1055-A.D. 1057), aided and influenced by the famous Hildebrand (afterwards Gregory VII.), succeeded in effecting considerable reforms in religion and morals, and were very zealous in discouraging simoniacal appointments to offices in the Church, but a gradual and increasing resistance was growing up against the imperial encroachments, and after the death of Henry, Pope Nicholas II. (A.D. 1059-A.D. 1061) was enabled to obtain a decree that the election of the Popes should, for the future, rest with the Roman Cardinals, subject to the consent of the Roman Clergy and people, and with some vague reference to the emperor's wishes.

[Sidenote: Hildebrand Pope.] At length Hildebrand, the counsellor and support of several preceding Popes, was himself called to the see of Rome under the title of Gregory VII. (A.D. 1073-A.D. 1083), and at once devoted the energies of his powerful mind to the work of reforming the Church.

[Sidenote: His reforms] The two means on which he chiefly relied for accomplishing his object were the enforcing of celibacy on the Clergy, and the abolition of simony, under which head he included every species of lay investiture.

[Sidenote: and their consequences.] The prosecution of his plans soon brought him into a violent dispute with the weak and wicked Emperor Henry IV., who was as eager to secure the right of bestowing upon Bishops the ring and pastoral staff, as well as of their sole appointment, and thus reduce them to the state of mere secular vassals, as Gregory was by the same means to secure their ecclesiastical obedience to the see of Rome, and their total independence of any civil power.

[Sidenote: Result of the contest.] The contest lasted till the death of Gregory in exile, and was carried on by his successors, until during the popedom of Calixtus II. (A.D. 1119-1124) a compromise was agreed upon by which the emperor left to each Church the free election of its Bishops, who were to receive the ring and staff from the altar, and the temporalities of their sees from the crown.

[Sidenote: Wars between Rome and Germany.] This arrangement did not, however, bring peace between the Popes and the emperors, the Popes siding with the Guelphs in the long civil wars of the next two centuries, in opposition to the Ghibelline emperors. Hadrian IV. (A.D. 1154-A.D. 1159), or Nicholas Breakspear, the only English Pope, found it expedient to seek the assistance of the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, to aid him in quelling the insurrection headed by Arnold of Brescia; but Alexander III. (A.D. 1159-A.D. 1181) came into fresh collision with Frederic, who was at length obliged to submit and beg for peace.

[Sidenote: Climax of the papal power under Innocent III.] The minority of Frederic II. was favourable to the ambitious schemes of Pope Innocent III. (A.D. 1198-A.D. 1216), and under him the power of the popedom reached its greatest height. He laid both England and France under an interdict, placed on the imperial throne, and then deposed, Otho IV., and took measures for the suppression of the Albigenses, which eventually resolved themselves into the dreaded Inquisition. The old strife was continued by Gregory IX. (A.D. 1227-A.D. 1241), who excommunicated Frederic II., and the sentence was renewed by Innocent IV. (A.D. 1243-A.D. 1254). The treatment of the emperor by these successive Popes was something akin to a persecution, and was apparently occasioned by a feeling of opposition to any authority which conflicted with the claims of Rome, and by a hatred of the Ghibelline race.

[Sidenote: Decline of the temporal power of the Popes.] From the death of Innocent IV. the excessive power of the Popes may be said to decrease. Gregory X. (A.D. 1271-A.D. 1276) and the Emperor Rudolf of Hapsburg were good, earnest-minded men, who put an end to the long-standing feud between Rome and the empire, and after a succession of short pontificates, Boniface VIII. (A.D. 1294-A.D. 1303) usurped the papal throne in the place of the "hermit Pope," Celestine V. [Sidenote: Interference of the King of France in papal affairs.] Boniface was a thoroughly bad and unscrupulous man, and at last died in a fit of disappointed rage at being taken

prisoner by the troops of his equally unscrupulous enemy, Philip IV. of France, who had refused to acknowledge the authority of the papal legate. Philip caused the death of Benedict XI. (A.D. 1303-A.D. 1304), whose honest goodness he feared, and then used his influence to procure the election of Clement V. (A.D. 1303-A.D. 1314), on condition of his pledging himself to aid in the French king's schemes to plunder and oppress the Church. Clement, having thus sold himself, was not allowed to leave France, and the papal court was fixed at Avignon. The Pope was now completely at the mercy of Philip, who robbed the Church at his will, and plundered and murdered the Knights Templars with the connivance of Clement.

[Sidenote: The Popes at Avignon.] The sojourn of the Popes at Avignon (A.D. 1305-A.D. 1376) was a great blow to the temporal power of the papacy, and was often called by the Italians the Seventy Years' Captivity. Meanwhile the Popes were again plunged into contests with the German emperors: Louis of Bavaria was excommunicated, and his empire laid under an interdict, on account of his refusal to accept his dominions from John XXII. (A.D. 1316-A.D. 1334). The papal authority in Italy had become almost nominal except in Rome itself, and even there it was much weakened by the rebellion under Rienzi, A.D. 1352. Pope Innocent VI. (A.D. 1333-A.D. 1362), soon after his election, sent a legate to Rome, with orders to reduce not only the city itself to obedience, but all that was then included in the States of the Church; and this having been successfully accomplished, the Popes began to think of returning to Rome.

[Sidenote: The return to Rome.] The court at Avignon had become fearfully corrupt, and some of those who composed it, and loved its evils, were ready to oppose any change; but Urban V. (A.D. 1362-A.D. 1370), a really upright man, spent some of his episcopate at Rome, and his successor, Gregory XI. (A.D. 1370-A.D. 1378) removed thither with his court two years before his death. The Cardinals however still clung to Avignon, and though, in compliance with the earnest wishes of the Roman people, they elected an Italian to be Pope under the name of Urban VI. (A.D. 1378-A.D. 1389), yet they were so offended at his zealous but indiscreet endeavours to reform the evils around him, that they declared him deposed, and set up an anti-Pope at Avignon.

[Sidenote: The consequent schism.] The schism thus begun lasted nearly forty years (A.D. 1378-A.D. 1417), England, Germany, North Italy, Poland, and the Scandinavian kingdoms siding with the true Popes, while France, Scotland, Spain, and South Italy held with the anti-Popes.

[Sidenote: Its results.] The troubles and corruptions of the Church now multiplied, Popes and anti-Popes alike made the acquisition of power and revenue their great object, and wickedness was left unrebuked both in Clergy and laity. A great impulse was given to the sale of indulgences or pardons, an evil practice which brought in large sums of money to the papal exchequer, and at the same time led to such abuses as probably to become a principal proximate cause of the Reformation.

[Sidenote: Council of Pisa.] At length there was an universal longing for the cessation of the great schism in the Western Church, and a Council was held at Pisa, A.D. 1409, where it was agreed by the Cardinals belonging to the two parties to depose both Pope and anti-Pope, and to elect another who took the name of Alexander V., with an understanding that he was at once to reform and pacify the Church. But neither Pope nor anti-Pope would resign, so that there were three claimants instead of two, and very soon after his election Alexander V. died. John XXIII. (A.D. 1410-A.D. 1415) was elected in his place, but he proved to be thoroughly devoid of principle, and

the Council of Pisa having proved unsuccessful in promoting unity or reformation, another was convoked at Constance, A.D. 1414, under the presidency of the Emperor Sigismund I.

[Sidenote: Council of Constance.] This Council was attended by the representatives of all the monarchs of the West, as well as by a very large number of Bishops and Clergy, and it was decreed that the three claimants to the papal throne should be deposed. John XXIII. was thrown into prison, and, after considerable delay, Martin V. (A.D. 1417-A.D. 1431) was chosen to succeed him. The Council shortly after broke up, without having done any thing towards the much desired reformation of the Church, although the English, French, and German deputies had been very earnest in their endeavours to advance some scheme of reform.

[Sidenote: Council of Basle.]

Another Council met at Basle, A.D. 1431, whence it was transferred by Pope Eugenius IV. (A.D. 1431-A.D. 1447) first to Ferrara, and afterwards (A.D. 1439) to Florence. This opportunity was also lost in a dispute between the Council and the Pope, and there seemed to be nothing more to hope for from Councils as a means of reformation.

[Sidenote: State of the papacy at the end of the fifteen century.] Nor were the personal characters of the Popes who filled the see of Rome during the remainder of the century, such as to encourage any expectation that their influence would be employed to revive religion, or to encourage holy living. Worldliness and ambition, revenge and immorality, cast a deep shadow over the records of the papacy at this time, until the century closes with the reign of Alexander VI., or Roderigo Borgia (A.D. 1492-A.D. 1503), who was elected by bribery, and whose shameless vice and cruelty brought greater scandals upon the Church than any of his predecessors had done.

Section 3. The Monastic Orders.

Monastic orders, though not by any means an invention of the Middle Ages, may yet fairly be said to have attained their height, both of prosperity and of usefulness, during this period of Church History.

[Sidenote: Early rise of monasticism.]

We may trace the origin of Christian monastic life to very early times, when persecution drove many Christians to a life of loneliness and privation in desert places. The mode of life thus begun from necessity was afterwards continued from choice, and in the hope of more complete self-devotion to God's service; and the solitary hermits and anchorites of primitive ages became the forerunners of an elaborate system of religious communities of men and women.

[Sidenote: Later influences brought to bear on it.]

St. Basil, in the fourth century, brought monasticism into a more definite form, and St. Athanasius during the same century introduced it into Europe from the East. In the West the religious life spread and flourished under the fostering care of such men as St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great, whilst by St. Benedict in the sixth century it was developed into the famous Benedictine rule, to which, with few exceptions, all the European monasteries conformed, and which was the parent of various minor orders or subdivisions[1].

[Sidenote: Beneficial results of monasticism.]

It is not easy to estimate the vast amount of good which the labours of the Benedictine monks conferred on the Church of the Middle Ages, good which has left many traces to the present day. Not only did they provide in a vast number of instances for the spiritual wants of the parishes in and near which they lived, as well as for the education of the young, both rich and poor, but they were also the philosophers, the authors, the artists, and the physicians, nay, even the farmers and the mechanics of Mediaeval times. They built cathedrals and churches, made roads and bridges, copied books when writing stood in the place of printing, and were in general the props and pioneers of civilization. Amongst the very large number of men who embraced the monastic life, it is no marvel that some were not all they professed to be, or that occasional causes for scandal arose, but the popular idea of the universal corruption of the inhabitants of the monasteries is unsupported by facts, and much of what helped to give rise to this false notion is traceable to the doings of the mendicant or preaching friars. These begging orders were offshoots from the regulars, and were but too often very unworthy representatives of the parent stock[2].

Section 4. The Crusades.

Amongst the events which stand out most distinctly in the history of the Church in the Middle Ages, the long series of warlike expeditions known as the Crusades bear a prominent part, stretching out as they do from the end of the eleventh to nearly the end of the thirteenth centuries. The empire of the Arabs had died out, but they had been succeeded in their schemes of conquest as well as in their adherence to the false faith of Mahomet, by the savage Turks, whose ferocity and hatred of Christianity were especially displayed in the ill-treatment of those Christians whose piety led them to visit the scenes of our Blessed Lord's Life and Death.

[Sidenote: Cause of the Crusades.] The indignation excited in Europe by the stories of outrage and desecration which were from time to time brought back by pilgrims to the Holy Land, at length found an outlet and expression in the First Crusade, which was preached, A.D. 1095, by Peter the Hermit, with the sanction both of the Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople. This expedition resulted in the taking of the Holy City by the armies of the Cross (A.D. 1099), and the establishment in it of a Christian sovereignty.

[Sidenote: Their transient results.] The First Crusade was the only one which had any real success, and even this was a transient one, for less than ninety years afterwards (A.D. 1187) Jerusalem was again taken by the Saracens, and has never since been a Christian power. But though the deliverance of the Holy Land from the yoke of the infidels was not accomplished by the Crusades, and though they caused much misery and bloodshed, and were stained by much lawlessness and plunder, yet the advance of the barbarous and anti-Christian influences of Mahometanism was checked, the Churches of Europe were saved from the soul-destroying apostasy which had over-run so large a portion of Asia, and the Crescent waned before the Cross.

[Sidenote: Reasons for their ill-success.]

Much of the ill success with which the Crusaders met during several of these expeditions, may be traced to jealousies and heart-burnings between the different princes and nobles who took part in them, whilst disagreements on a larger scale were amongst the evil fruits of the unhappy division between Eastern and Western Christendom. Latin Christians appear in too many instances to

have made use of the opportunities afforded them to injure and oppress their weaker brethren of the Greek Church, even whilst marching against the common foe of both, and the Fourth Crusade (A.D. 1203) was actually diverted from its legitimate purpose in order to conquer Constantinople, and establish a Latin Emperor, as well as a Latin Patriarch within its walls.

[Sidenote: Good directly brought about by them.]

Still, whatever may have been the want of single-mindedness on the part of many of the professed soldiers of the Cross, whatever the amount of failure with regard to the immediate objects of the Crusades, it is clear that much good was brought about through them by God's Providence, not only in the check given to the encroachments of the unbelievers, but also more indirectly in the quenching of rising heresies, in the greater purity of life which in many cases accompanied the taking of the Cross, the weakening of the feudal system, the impulse given to learning and civilization. Earnestness and self-devotion such as were shown by Godfrey de Bouillon, St. Louis of France, and no doubt by many more amongst the Crusaders, were rewarded and blessed, though not in what might have seemed at first sight the only way of success.

Section 5. State of Religions Relief and Practice during the Middle Ages.

[Sidenote: Popular idea of the Middle Ages,]

There is a wide-spread notion that the Middle Ages were also "Dark Ages," full of ignorance and superstition, with hardly a ray of knowledge or true religion to enlighten the gloom, and also that the Church was the great encourager of this state of things; indeed, that it was mainly due to the influence of the monks and of the Clergy generally.

[Sidenote: not founded in history.] This belief is however quite unhistorical. No doubt there was abundance of ignorance as well as of superstition, its natural consequence, but there are ample means of accounting for both in the political condition of Europe at that time, nor is it needful to blame the Church for what was in fact due to the sins and errors of the world.

[Sidenote: Real causes of ignorance and vice in the Middle Ages.] The confusion incident to the breaking up of the old Roman empire, and the occupation of its different provinces by less highly-civilized nations, had been followed by other disorders after the death of Charlemagne and the partition of his dominions; and the constant state of warfare and aggression in which most of the princes of that time lived, was not calculated to leave their subjects much leisure for intellectual culture. Besides this, we must take into account the crushing influence of the feudal system, which gave the nobles almost absolute power over their serfs or dependants, thus encouraging lawlessness on the one hand, and causing degradation on the other. The scarcity and costliness of books before the invention of printing was another formidable obstacle to any universal spread of education, all which causes tended to bring learning into contempt amongst the restless barons and their followers, restricting it chiefly to the Clergy and the monks. Thus not only theology, but secular knowledge besides, found a home in the Church, which was at once the guardian and the channel of literature.

[Sidenote: No scarcity of the means of grace in Mediaeval times.]

There are also good grounds for believing that the provision made by the Church for the spiritual necessities of the people was not, at any rate, less abundant than is the case at the present day.

Indeed, there is no doubt that both Churches and Clergy, and consequently opportunities for worship and instruction, were far more in proportion to the number and needs of the population than they can be said to be now in our own country, even after the persevering and liberal efforts of late years.

[Sidenote: Difficulties respecting Services and Bibles on the vernacular,]

If it is objected that the want of free access to the Holy Scriptures, and the use of the Latin tongue in the public services of the Church, were calculated largely to outweigh any advantages which the people of those days might possess, we may remember that those comparatively few who could read were just those who would have access to the necessarily rare copies then existing of the Word of God, and that to them also the Latin version would be more comprehensible than any other. Again, with regard to Latin services, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to translate the devotions of the Church into any of the slowly-forming dialects of the different European nations; whilst Latin was more universally spoken and understood than French is now, and was probably intelligible to a larger number of men and women during a considerable portion of the Middle Ages than any one of the other languages used.

[Sidenote: but the wish for them not wholly disregarded.] As the various languages of Europe became gradually developed, a desire naturally arose amongst those who spoke them for services in the vernacular; and this desire was not left altogether ungratified even long before the Reformation. Thus, in England, the Epistles and Gospels and the Litany were translated into the native language in the Services of the Church, and interlinear translations were made of many portions of the Mediaeval Prayer Books[3]. Neither must we imagine that the translations of Holy Scripture put forth by the Reformers, or even that earlier version to which Wickliffe gave his name, were by any means the first efforts made to produce the Holy Bible in the vernacular. From Anglo-Saxon times downwards, we have traces of Bibles translated for the use of those who preferred such versions; and to the truth of this statement may be quoted the testimony of John Foxe, the “martyrologist,” who says, “If histories be well examined, we shall find, both before the Conquest and after, as well before John Wickliffe was born as since, the whole body of the Scriptures by sundry men translated into this our country tongue[4].”

[Sidenote: State of learning in the Middle Ages.] The Mediaeval Church was, in reality, a great supporter of learning. Our two great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were not less flourishing during the Middle Ages than at present; and nearly all of the colleges and halls at both Universities were founded in those days of supposed darkness. Nor was this care for literature confined to the Church in England; Universities of equal note were to be found abroad at Paris, Pavia, Bologna, Salamanca, and other places, whilst the Schoolmen, or professors, who taught in these seats of learning, and who numbered amongst themselves the most acute thinkers and reasoners of the time, such as St. Anselm, Peter Lombard, Albertus Magnus, and St. Thomas Aquinas, were all attached to some Religious Order. Enough of the results of their labours have come down to our days to show us that it is neither wise nor just to despise the mental work which they accomplished, even though their conclusions may not always be in accordance with our own.

It is not meant by what has been said above to infer that the Mediaeval Church was altogether free from blemishes, or to deny that these blemishes did, as time went on, increase to an extent which rendered reformation not only expedient but necessary.

[Sidenote: The effects of Roman influence.]

We have already seen that the supremacy claimed by the Popes over the whole Church was productive of great, though, by God's good Providence, not unmitigated, evil in a political point of view; and much of the error in faith or practice on the part of Christians of those days, seems traceable to the tendency on the part of Rome to crystallize opinions into dogmas, and then to impose those dogmas on the Church. Thus the "Romish doctrine concerning purgatory," and the mechanism of "pardons," or indulgences, grew out of the floating belief held by such holy men as St. Augustine, that the souls of the faithful would undergo some more perfect purification after death than is attainable in this world; while the elaborate system of invocations of, and devotions to, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, were built up out of a not only harmless but justifiable faith in the intercessions of the Saints for the Church on earth, and the wish to obtain a share in their prayers. So again, the denial of the cup to the laity, which was justly felt by many to be such a grievous privation, was the natural consequence of the over-refinements of the Roman Church respecting the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist[5].

[Sidenote: The right spirit in which to regard the Mediaeval Church.] But whatever imperfections may have clung to the Visible Church in the Middle Ages, whether owing to external hindrances, or to the human frailties of her members, we have no right to doubt that she was still the one great instrument in God's Hands for the salvation of souls. Neither should we dwell so exclusively on what is often an exaggerated estimate of the extent and duration of these blemishes, as to ignore the zeal and self-devotion which grudged neither expense nor labour in the service of God and the adornment of His House and Worship, the charity which truly "cared for the poor," the faith and holiness which shone forth in the public and private lives of such men as St. Ferdinand of Spain, St. Louis of France, and Rudolf of Hapsburg, Emperor of Germany, and were, doubtless, not wanting in the case of countless numbers of their fellow-Christians, whose names, little known and soon forgotten on earth, are for ever written in God's Book of Remembrance.

[1] Especially the Cluniacs, founded by Berno, Abbot of Clugny, A.D. 910, and the Cistercians, founded by Robert of Citeaux, A.D. 1098, and rendered illustrious by St. Bernard, afterwards Abbot of Clairvaux (A.D. 1113-A.D. 1153).

[2] The order of Franciscan Friars was founded by St. Francis of Assisi, A.D. 1207, and that of the Dominicans by St. Dominic of Castile, A.D. 1215. They were originally intended to supplement the real or supposed defects of the Clergy and the regular orders, and to aid in the suppression of heresy.

[3] See "Key to the Prayer Book," pp. 1-8.

[4] See "Key to the Bible," pp. 18-23.

[5] The practice of communion in one kind made its way very slowly, especially in England, where it was perhaps never universal. A decree of the Council of Constance in A.D. 1415 gave its first authoritative sanction.

11. The Mediaeval History of Continental Churches

CHAPTER XI. The Mediaeval History of Continental Churches A.D. 900-A.D. 1500 [Sidenote: No Mediaeval Church history in Asia or Africa.]

Before proceeding to the consideration of the different European Churches in Mediaeval times, it may be well to remark that from the year 500 the Christian history of Asia and Africa is almost a blank. Arianism, partly imported into Africa by the Vandals, who crossed thither from Spain, and partly of native growth, as well as the opposite error, Eutychianism, took from the African Church all spiritual life and vigour, so that the apostasy of Mahomet met with no formidable obstacles when in the seventh century it swept like a flood over what had been Christian Africa. It is true that the Copts in Egypt and the native Christians of Abyssinia appear to have preserved the Apostolic Succession, but both these Churches are in a state of great depression, and the Faith they profess is mingled with much ignorance and superstition, as well as with positive error. A similar process took place in Asia. Arianism, chiefly in its later development of Nestorianism, with Eutychianism and other errors, ate out the heart of the Church, faith grew weak, and love grew cold, and Mahometanism once more triumphed almost unchecked. Although the Churches of Asia are not all utterly extinct, yet they share more or less in the state of ignorance, superstition, and depression which is a natural consequence of the serious errors with which their profession of Christianity is intermixed, as well as of the way in which the few despised Christians are mingled with their richer and more numerous Mahometan neighbours.

Section 1. The Church of Italy.

[Sidenote: Lombard kingdom in Italy.] The kingdom of the Goths in Italy was not of long duration, and their successors and fellow-Arians, the Lombards, only obtained possession of the northern portion of the Peninsula, whilst Rome and Southern Italy became once more subject to the emperors of the East. Gregory the Great (A.D. 590-A.D. 604) began the work of converting the Lombards to the Catholic Faith, and in the middle of the seventh century Arianism had disappeared from Italy.

[Sidenote: Renewal of the tie between East and West.] The renewal of the connexion between the Eastern and Western Empires, and the attempt of the Emperor Justinian to subject the see of Rome to that of Constantinople, placed Gregory under the necessity of vindicating the independence of the Church of Italy, and of denying the right of any one Patriarch to assume authority over another. St. Gregory's holiness and learning, and the wisdom of his endeavours to reform corruptions, were most beneficial to the Church over which he ruled.

[Sidenote: Its rupture.] The Image-breaking Controversy put an end to the nominal tie between the Eastern emperors and the Church of Italy (about A.D. 730), and almost the whole of the peninsula soon after became part of the dominions of Charlemagne. This great Emperor's influence was used in Italy, as elsewhere, to foster the work of the Church, which however suffered severely from the state of lawlessness and confusion incident on the breaking up of Charlemagne's empire after

his death, A.D. 814.

[Sidenote: Depression of the Church in Italy.] The Church of Italy in the ninth century had also to undergo the inroads of the Mahometans in the South, and of the heathen Magyars (or Hungarians) on the North, as well as of the Northmen, who ravaged and pillaged the churches and monasteries on the coasts. Other depressing influences were to be found in the secularization of the Bishops of Rome through the increase of their temporal power, and the usurpation by the German emperors of the right of election to the popedom, which properly belonged to the Clergy of Rome.

[Sidenote: Gregory VII.'s reforms.] The corruptions which from these and other causes had crept into the Church of Italy, drew towards them the attention of the famous Hildebrand, afterwards Pope Gregory VII. (A.D. 1073-A.D. 1085), and his efforts at reformation were not without a beneficial effect.

[Sidenote: Heresies of the Albigenses]

Early in the twelfth century the heretical sect of the Albigenses, whose doctrines resembled those of the ancient Manicheans, spread from the South of France into Italy, where they received the name of Paterini.

[Sidenote: and Waldenses.]

Both they and the kindred sect of the Waldenses came under the notice of Innocent III. (A.D. 1198-A.D. 1216). The Albigenses were exterminated with circumstances of great cruelty[1], but the Waldenses survive to the present day in the valleys of Piedmont.

[Sidenote: Evil effects of the residence at Avignon on the Italian Church.] The seventy years' residence of the Bishops of Rome at Avignon (A.D. 1305-A.D. 1376) was felt by the Church of Italy to be an injury and a great evil, and in the forty years' schism which followed the return of the chief pastor of the Italians to his own episcopal city (A.D. 1378-A.D. 1417), only the kingdom of the Two Sicilies sided with the anti-Popes.

[Sidenote: Other depressing influences.]

Meanwhile the constant warfare between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines in Italy, the feuds between the different republics, the worldliness and evil lives of too many of the Popes, and the luxury and immorality which increased riches, consequent on increased commerce, brought with them, had all tended to a state of things in which the purifying influences of the Church as "the salt of the earth" were sorely needed.

[Sidenote: Desires for reformation.]

Longings for a reformation of men's lives and morals were smouldering in many breasts, and in the city of Florence these hidden wishes were kindled into a flame by the zeal and eloquence of the monk Girolamo Savonarola, who however fell a victim to his zeal, A.D. 1498.

[Sidenote: Liturgy of the Italian Church.] The ancient Liturgy of the Church of Italy was derived from one bearing the name of St. Peter, and revised by St. Gregory, A.D. 590. This Roman or Gregorian Liturgy, though with certain later additions, is still in use throughout Italy, the only exception to this rule being the cathedral and diocese of Milan, which still preserve a Liturgy

known as that of St. Ambrose, who was Bishop of Milan from A.D. 374 to A.D. 397.

Section 2. The Church of France.

[Sidenote: Orthodoxy of the Franks.] The Franks alone of all the barbarians who swept over Europe at the time of the decay of the Western Empire, were Catholic from their first conversion to Christianity; and to this circumstance the French kings owed their title of Eldest Sons of the Church. It was by the influence of a French princess, Bertha, the Christian wife of Ethelbert, king of Kent, that St. Augustine and his companions were favourably received in England; whilst another princess of the same race, Ingunda, who married the son of the Visigoth king of Spain, is said to have brought about the conversion of her husband from Arianism to the Catholic faith, by her own constancy under persecution.

[Sidenote: The Church under Charlemagne.]

During the reign of the Emperor Charlemagne (A.D. 768-A.D. 814), the French monasteries became seats of learning, and amongst the learned men who assisted the Emperor in his efforts for the religious and intellectual improvement of his people, may be mentioned the English Alcuin, who held an honourable position at the French court as the instructor and adviser of the monarch and his sons.

[Sidenote: The French Liturgy.] The Gallican Liturgy, a branch of the Primitive Liturgy of Ephesus, was entirely disused by order of Charlemagne, and the Roman service used in its stead.

[Sidenote: Conversion of the Northmen.] From about A.D. 870 the Northmen, who had long been a scourge to France, began to settle down in that country, and were gradually converted to the Christian Faith, their chief, Rollo, marrying a Christian princess, A.D. 911, and being baptized in the following year.

[Sidenote: The Crusades.] A French hermit, Peter of Auvergne, was the instigator of the First Crusade, which was preached by him at Clermont, and joined by a large number of French nobles, the command of the expedition being given to Godfrey de Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine. The system of Crusades thus inaugurated for the defence of Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land, and the winning back of the Holy Places from the hands of the Mahometans, was turned to a cruel and unjustifiable use in the thirteenth century, when Innocent III. proclaimed a Crusade against the Albigenses in the South of France, in which multitudes of these unhappy and misguided men were slaughtered.

[Sidenote: Rupture between France and the Pope.]

During the reign of Philip IV. (A.D. 1285-A.D. 1314) a collision took place for the first time, between the Church and Kingdom of France and the authority of the Pope. Hitherto the disputes between the Popes and the French monarchs had been on personal rather than on political grounds, and had given no opportunity for defining the exact limits of papal authority in France.

[Sidenote: Comparative independence of French Church.] But meanwhile the French Clergy had not lost their feeling of nationality, and the kings of France had been able to use much more independent action in the appointment of Bishops than was the case in other countries. Hence the Bishops and Clergy joined with the king in resisting the sentence of excommunication pronounced

by the Pope on Philip and his kingdom. Neither King nor Pope appear to have been influenced by any religious feeling in their contest, and after the miserable death of Boniface VIII. (A.D. 1303), and the murder of his successor, Philip's unprincipled interference in the election of Clement V. was productive of great evils.

[Sidenote: Evil results of the conduct of Philip IV.] The cruel massacre of the Knights Templars, the corruptions of the Papal Court in France, and more indirectly the Great Schism in which the Church of France espoused the cause of the anti-Popes, may all be traced to the conduct of Philip IV.

Section 3. The Church of Spain and Portugal.

[Sidenote: Conquest of Spain by the Moors.]

Before the end of the sixth century, the Visigoths, who had settled in what is now Spain and Portugal, had been converted from Arianism to the Catholic Faith. In A.D. 711 the Mahometan Moors crossed over from Africa to the South of Spain, and in A.D. 713 all the Peninsula, except the small mountain district of Asturias, had fallen into their hands. The more independent and hardy amongst the Spanish Christians took refuge in this inaccessible portion of the country, whilst others dwelt amongst the Moors, and appear for a time to have been allowed the exercise of their religion unmolested by any systematic persecution.

[Sidenote: Persecution of the Spanish Church.]

About A.D. 830, however, the policy of the Moorish conquerors underwent a change, and during the next hundred years multitudes of Christians in Spain suffered martyrdom for their faith.

[Sidenote: The re-conquest of Spain by the Spaniards.]

After the death of Hachem, the last Caliph of Cordova (A.D. 1031), and the subdivision of his dominions, the Christians of Asturias succeeded in making head against their oppressors, and gradually won back from them district after district, until Ferdinand III. (A.D. 1214-A.D. 1252) succeeded in reducing the Moorish possessions to the single province of Grenada. This last remnant of Mahometan dominion was wrested from the Moors A.D. 1492, and Spain, as well as the separate kingdom of Portugal, was once more entirely Christian.

[Sidenote: Effect of national circumstances on Spanish Christianity.]

It is perhaps hardly to be wondered at, that the continual state of religious warfare in which Spain was so long plunged should have given a somewhat stern character to Spanish Christianity. The Inquisition, when introduced into Spain by the mistaken zeal of the good Queen Isabella towards the end of the fifteenth century, found a readier welcome than elsewhere, and gained an additional tinge of severity in a country which had been brought into such close contact with one of the deadliest forms of unbelief.

[Sidenote: The Spanish Liturgy.] The original Liturgy of Spain was, like the ancient Liturgy of France, a form of that used at Ephesus. It received the name of Mozarabic, from having been in use by Christians living in the midst of Arabs, or Moors, and was not discontinued in the Church of Spain until A.D. 1080, when after much resistance on the part of the Spaniards it was abolished by

order of Alphonso VI., King of Castille and Leon, under the influence of Pope Gregory VII., and the Roman rite substituted throughout the country.

Section 4. The Church of Germany.

[Sidenote: Conversion of Germany by French] The large tract of country which is now comprehended under the name of Germany was won to the Church by a long series of missionary labours. In the beginning of the seventh century Frankish missionaries laid the foundations of a Church in Bavaria and on the banks of the Danube, thus paving the way for the conversion of Southern Germany.

[Sidenote: and British missionaries.]

Central Germany, then called Franconia, was the scene of the labours of Kilian, an Irish missionary (A.D. 630-A.D. 689), whilst the English Bishops Wilfrith (A.D. 677) and Willebrord (A.D. 692-A.D. 741), preached with much success to the Frieslanders in the Northwest of Germany, now included in Holland. [Sidenote: Labours of St. Boniface] It is, however, to a Devonshire clergyman, Winfrith, better known as St. Boniface (A.D. 715-A.D. 755), that the title of Apostle of Germany is generally given, not only on account of his unwearied missionary labours in still heathen districts, but also on account of his success in organizing and consolidating the different branches of the German Church. He became Archbishop of Mentz, and Metropolitan, and at last suffered martyrdom at the hands of some heathen Frieslanders at the age of seventy-five. The Emperor Charlemagne endeavoured to compel the rude Saxons in the neighbourhood of the Baltic to embrace the Christian faith; but eventually he was induced to trust less to the force of arms for their conversion, and more to the missionary work of the Church.

[Sidenote: and of Willehad.]

Amongst the prominent members of this Saxon mission, we find another English priest, Willehad, a native of Northumbria, afterwards Bishop of Bremen, who died A.D. 789. The first attempts to plant the Church in Moravia were made by German missionaries in the ninth century.

[Sidenote: Eastern missionaries in Moravia]

These do not appear, however, to have been very successful, and about A.D. 860, two Greek monks, Cyril and Methodius, entered upon the same sphere of labour. Methodius was afterwards consecrated Metropolitan of Pannonia and Moravia by the Pope; but there was considerable jealousy on the part of the Latinized Germans towards their Eastern fellow-labourers, and eventually the Moravian Church was subjected to the Bishops of Bohemia.

[Sidenote: and Bohemia.] The first Christian Duke of Bohemia was converted about A.D. 871, whilst staying at the Moravian court, probably by Methodius; but the Church made very slow progress in Bohemia until after the conquest of that country by Otho the Great (A.D. 950), and the foundation of the Bishopric of Prague by King Boleslav the Pious (A.D. 967-A.D. 999). In Bohemia, as well as in Moravia, the influence of the Greek missionaries made itself felt in the impress it left upon the ritual and usages of the two Churches, especially in the fact that the native Sclavonic language was used in Divine Worship; but in the end German influences prevailed in both countries, and the national "use" gradually made way for the Latinized ritual common in Germany.

[Sidenote: Conversion of North Prussia,]

Until towards the middle of the tenth century, the Church made but very small progress in the northern portion of what is now the kingdom of Prussia. These regions were then occupied by a Slavonic race called Wends, who yielded an unwilling submission to the Western emperors, and disliked Christianity as being the religion of their conquerors. Between A.D. 964 and A.D. 968, several bishoprics were founded in this country by Otho the Great, and amongst them the metropolitan see of Magdeburg. A revolt of the Wends frustrated for the time the success of the emperor's plans, but in the next century Gottschalk, who became king of the Wends A.D. 1047, and was himself a Christian, did all in his power to aid the missionary work of the Church among his people. He was martyred by his subjects, A.D. 1066, and heathenism triumphed once more. During the twelfth century, the Wendish kingdom was dissolved, and its territories divided amongst different German princes, after which the Church gradually regained and extended its hold on the country. The northern Wends, who obstinately adhered to their Pagan superstitions, were at last converted chiefly by the labours of St. Vicelin, who became Bishop of Oldenburg, A.D. 1148.

[Sidenote: of Pomerania,] The conversion of Pomerania was first attempted by the Poles, who, on obtaining possession of the country at the end of the tenth century, founded a bishopric at Colberg, A.D. 1000. It was not, however, until their more complete subjection to Poland about a hundred years later, that any marked result was obtained. Otho, Bishop of Bamberg, who placed himself at the head of the Pomeranian mission A.D. 1124, was at last enabled to overcome the fierce opposition which the heathen natives offered to the work of the Church, and by A.D. 1128 Christianity had gained a firm footing amongst them.

[Sidenote: of Prussia Proper.] From Pomerania the Church extended itself eastward to Prussia Proper, about A.D. 1210. Here, too, Christianity was very distasteful to the natives, partly as being the religion of their enemies the Poles. About A.D. 1230, the "Order of Teutonic Knights" was instituted for the purpose of subjugating Prussia; and, after a depopulating warfare of fifty years' duration, the remaining inhabitants embraced Christianity. Before the end of the thirteenth century, the German element had quite superseded the Slavonic in Prussia, as well as in Pomerania, and in what had formerly been the kingdom of the Wends.

[Sidenote: Extent of Roman influence in Germany.] The Church in Germany, taken as a whole, was very much under Roman influence, partly, perhaps, on account of the early connexion between the emperors of the West and the see of Rome, and partly from the constant state of civil warfare into which Germany was plunged from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. In these contests the near neighbourhood of the Popes to the Italian possessions of the Western Empire gave them a hold on the affairs of Germany which they were not slow to use, and the turbulent German nobles were disinclined to resent an interference which was so often exerted in their behalf against an unpopular sovereign. The temporal power of the Popes was, however, much weakened by the great Schism; and though the Church of Germany acknowledged the true Pope, there was, amongst its members, a very widespread sense of the urgent need of some searching reformation. To this feeling may be traced, not only the unhappily disappointed expectations with which so many persons looked to the Councils of Constance and Basle, but also the unsound and exaggerated teaching of such men as John Huss and Jerome of Prague.

Section 5. The Church of Hungary.

[Sidenote: Conversion of Hungary.] The Hungarians or Magyars were descended from a Tartar or Finnish tribe, who settled in Pannonia towards the close of the ninth century, and thence made fierce inroads on Italy and Germany. In A.D. 948, two Hungarian chiefs were baptized at Constantinople, and the daughter of one of them afterwards marrying Geisa, Duke of Hungary (A.D. 972-A.D. 997), Christian influences were, by degrees, brought to bear upon the Hungarian people. About the same time German missionaries began to labour in Hungary, but it was not until the reign of St. Stephen, the first King of Hungary (A.D. 997-A.D. 1038), that the country was completely evangelized.

[Sidenote: Hungary Latinized.]

Stephen did all in his power to aid the work of the German missionaries; Hungary was divided into dioceses, and the originally eastern origin of the Hungarian Church, as well as the Slavonic origin of the people, forgotten under the desire felt by the king to keep on a friendly footing with the German emperors and the Popes.

[Sidenote: Attacks of the Turks.] The Church of Hungary suffered severely from the invasion of the Mongul Tartars, A.D. 1241, and when, about a century later, some of these Tartars returned from Asia and settled in Europe under the name of Turks, Hungary, owing to its frontier situation, was constantly liable to their attacks. During the fifteenth century, Hungarian bravery was the great barrier that opposed the spread of Mahometanism over Western Europe. Even after the fall of Constantinople, the Turks vainly endeavoured to make themselves masters of their Christian neighbours, and found themselves obliged to retreat discomfited from the siege of Belgrade, A.D. 1456.

Section 6. The Church of Poland.

[Sidenote: Conversion of Poland.] The Church of Poland was founded about A.D. 966, when a daughter of the Christian Duke of Bohemia married Miecislav, Duke of Poland, and introduced Christianity into her adopted country.

[Sidenote: Romanizing the church of Poland.] The Polish Church at first bore traces of its Eastern origin in its liturgy and ritual, but these traces were removed by Casimir I. (A.D. 1040-A.D. 1058), who, previous to his accession, had been a monk in a French or German monastery, and who made a point of bringing the Church of his own country into uniformity with the other Churches of the West.

Section 7. The Scandinavian Churches.

[Sidenote: Conversion of Denmark]

About A.D. 822, a mission was sent from France to Denmark under Ebbo, Archbishop of Rheims, which resulted in the conversion of Harold, King of Jutland, who was baptized at Mayence, A.D. 826. At the request of Harold, a fresh mission to Denmark was organized and headed by Anskar, a monk of Corbey, near Amiens, who is often known as the "Apostle of the North."

[Sidenote: and Sweden.] From Denmark Anskar made his way to Sweden, A.D. 831, where he was favourably received by the king, and a year or two later was consecrated Archbishop of Hamburg, with jurisdiction over the whole northern mission.

[Sidenote: Slow advance and vicissitudes of the Church.] At first the progress of the Church, both in Denmark and Sweden, was very slow and fluctuating, and the ravages of the northern pirates, or Vikings, caused great loss and suffering; but after some years, Anskar was enabled to disarm the opposition of Eric the heathen King of Denmark, and to make a favourable impression upon the Swedish nobles. After his death in A.D. 865, the Church in Denmark went through many vicissitudes owing to irruptions of the Northmen and other invaders, as well as to native opposition. Svend, who reigned over Denmark A.D. 991-A.D. 1014, though brought up a Christian, persecuted the Church until his re-conversion during a victorious sojourn in England.

[Sidenote: English missionaries in Denmark]

Svend's son and successor, Canute the Great (A.D. 1014-A.D. 1033), was very zealous in his endeavours to undo the evil effects of his father's violence, and sent missionaries from England, by whom the bulk of the Danish nation were converted to Christianity.

[Sidenote: and Sweden.] In Sweden, too, the Church made but slow progress after the death of Anskar, until, in the beginning of the eleventh century, the King Olaf Skötkonung, having been himself baptized about A.D. 1008, invited to Sweden certain English clergymen, who laboured there with great success. The first bishopric in Sweden was placed at Skara in West Gothland, and filled by Turgot, an Englishman.

[Sidenote: Conversion of Norway, by English missionaries.] The knowledge of the Gospel was first brought, in the tenth century, into Norway from England by Hacon, who is said to have been educated at the court of Athelstan, and who endeavoured, with the aid of English priests, to bring about the conversion of his subjects. Hacon was, however, induced, by the bitter opposition of his countrymen, to yield a weak compliance to their idolatrous practices, and the Church languished and almost died out until the reign of Olaf Trygvason (A.D. 993-A.D. 1000), who had been baptized in the Scilly Isles during a piratical expedition. The labours of the English missionaries were finally successful in the reign of Olaf the Holy (A.D. 1017-A.D. 1033), who was earnest in his efforts to further the work of the Church. It may be remarked that Norwegian Bishops were usually consecrated either in England or France, though all the Scandinavian Churches were still professedly dependent on the Archbishopric of Hamburg.

[Sidenote: Conversion of Iceland,] In Iceland some traces of early Christianity, probably the result of the labours of Irish missionaries, were still remaining when it was colonized by Norwegian settlers in the ninth century; and towards the end of the tenth century successive attempts were made by a Saxon Bishop and by missionaries from Norway, to revive and deepen these impressions. The opposition of the heathen colonists was, however, of so determined a character, that it was only by the gradual conversion of the mother country, and the labours of new bands of missionaries, chiefly English and Irish, that Paganism was by degrees overcome.

[Sidenote: Greenland,] From Iceland the Church made its way to Greenland, another Norwegian colony, which was converted mainly by the instrumentality of an Icelandic missionary, in the first half of the eleventh century; but this ancient Church died out in the fifteenth century. About the same time Christianity spread through the Norwegians to the Orkney, Shetland, and Faroe Islands.

[Sidenote: and Lapland.] The Church was first planted amongst the Lapps by Swedish missionaries in the thirteenth century, but it was not until the sixteenth and two following centuries that Christianity became the religion of the country.

Section 8. The Churches now comprehended in European Turkey and Greece.

We look in vain in the history of the Church in Eastern Europe for the missionary activity which bears so prominent a place in the annals of Western Christendom.

[Sidenote: Lack of missionary zeal in the East.] The minds of Eastern Christians were still much occupied by continued contests between the Catholic Faith and developments of already condemned heresies, and to these succeeded the scarcely less absorbing controversy about Image-breaking. Nor was there in the East the same pressing contact with Paganism, which made it in the West a political necessity no less than a religious duty at once to christianize and civilize the ever advancing hordes of heathen barbarians.

[Sidenote: Conversion of Bulgaria.] The evangelization of Bulgaria was, however, begun early in the ninth century, by the carrying off of the Bishop of Adrianople and many of his flock, in a victorious inroad of the Bulgarians, A.D. 811. Half a century later the Bulgarian King Bogoris, influenced by his sister, who had been brought up a Christian at Constantinople, put himself and his country under the tuition of the Greek patriarch Photius. Soon after, becoming weary of his Eastern instructors, he applied for aid to the Western Church, and, in A.D. 867, the Pope Nicholas I. despatched two Italian Bishops and other missionaries to Bulgaria.

[Sidenote: Collision between Greek and Roman missionaries.] This interference of the Roman Church, in an already occupied field of missionary labour, added considerably to the jealousy between East and West, and helped to bring about the eventual and lamentable schism. Bogoris soon after returned to his allegiance to Photius, insisted on the withdrawal of the Roman Mission, and obtained a Greek Archbishop of Bulgaria from Constantinople.

[Sidenote: Peculiar position of the Eastern Church.] The state of external isolation in which the Church of the Eastern Empire was placed by the Schism of A.D. 1054, had a tendency to increase its exaggerated spirit of conservatism, which was also encouraged by the indolent unenterprising temper of the Greeks of the later empire, whose blood had not been quickened by the same admixture of races as had given new life to the worn out nations of the West.

[Sidenote: Effects of the Crusades.]

Under these circumstances the crusades were hardly less a cause of terror to the Greeks than were the advances of the Turks themselves, and tended to widen rather than to heal the unhappy breach between the Latin and Greek Churches.

[Sidenote: Unjustifiable proceedings of the Latins.] The foundation of a Latin Patriarchate at Jerusalem, after the taking of that city in A.D. 1099, could not but be accounted an usurpation on the part of the Pope, which was, however, far surpassed in injustice by the erection of a Latin empire and a Latin Patriarchate in Constantinople itself, A.D. 1204. During the time that this oppressive arrangement lasted (i.e. till A.D. 1261) the rightful Patriarch took refuge at the court which the Eastern emperors held at Nicaea in Asia Minor, and the fugitives there clung to their national Church, and her rightful independence. [Sidenote: Attempts at reunion.] The Emperor

Michael Palaeologus, after driving out the Latins from Constantinople, endeavoured once more to effect a reunion between East and West, partly from political and partly from personal motives, and a formal act of union was signed, A.D. 1274. Neither the Greek Clergy nor the Greek people would, however, consent to give up their own national religious customs, nor to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope; and this shadow of union died out with the death of the Emperor, its originator.

[Sidenote: Invasion of the Turks.] In the fourteenth century the Turks were treacherously invited over to Europe as allies of the usurper, John Cantacuzenus (A.D. 1347-A.D. 1353), and so firm a footing did they gain, that the rightful Emperor, John Palaeologus (A.D. 1341-A.D. 1391), found himself obliged to appeal to Rome for aid, promising in return to reconcile the Greek Church to the Roman communion. The affairs of Western Europe, were, however too unsettled to admit of such aid being afforded, and the Emperor was obliged to give up all his possessions to the Turks, except Constantinople, Thessalonica, part of the Morea, and a few islands. Another appeal was made, with the same results, by his son, Manuel Palaeologus (A.D. 1391-A.D. 1425).

[Sidenote: New attempts at reunion.]

John VII. (A.D. 1425-A.D. 1448) opened fresh negotiations with the West, and he and the Patriarch of Constantinople, together with twenty-one other Eastern Bishops, appeared (A.D. 1438) at the Council of Ferrara (afterwards transferred to Florence). At this council a decree of union was once more signed by the Greeks, on condition of their receiving aid against the Turks (A.D. 1439). This fresh attempt at union was repudiated by the Eastern Church at large, but a troop of French and Italian crusaders started for the East. Constantinople was, however, doomed, and the good and brave Constantine Palaeologus (A.D. 1448-A.D. 1453) was the last, as he was one of the best, of the Greek emperors. [Sidenote: Fall of Constantinople] The city fell, after an obstinate defence, on the 29th May, A.D. 1453, and Constantine was among the slain. The Turks pillaged and slaughtered indiscriminately, and turned into a mosque the beautiful Church of St. Sophia, built by the Emperor Justinian in honour of the "Holy Wisdom" of God.

[Sidenote: and the Greek Empire.]

All the Greek Empire had now fallen into the hands of the Turks, except the small mountainous district of Albania, which held out until the death of George Castriota (dreaded by the Turks under the name of Scanderbeg), A.D. 1467. The rocky strip of land known as Montenegro has been enabled to maintain an unbroken independence.

[Sidenote: State of the Church of Greece under Turkish rule.] The Church of Greece was now no longer the dominant and recognized religion of the country, but it was not extinguished. The numerous mountain monasteries, inaccessible from their construction and position, were the chief strongholds of the Christian Faith; and so, "cast down, but not destroyed," the Church in Greece struggled on, until, after nearly three centuries of Turkish rule, Greece itself once more became a Christian kingdom.

Section 9. The Church of Russia.

[Sidenote: Decay of the Church after its first planting in Russia.] The Church, founded in the South of Russia by St. Andrew, appears not to have spread to the other parts of this vast country, and to

have died out, perhaps under the influence the hordes of barbarians who poured westward from Asia to Europe.

[Sidenote: Foundation of the present Church.] The Church of Russia, as it now exists, owes its foundation chiefly to Greek Missionaries, who began their labours about A.D. 866, amongst the tribes bordering on the dominions of the Eastern Empire. Before the middle of the next century Christianity had gained a footing in the ancient capital of Kiev, and about A.D. 933 the Princess Olga was baptized at Constantinople.

[Sidenote: It flourishes under Vladimir.] In the reign of her grandson, Vladimir (A.D. 986-A.D. 1014), the Church made great progress in Russia. Vladimir made a public recognition of Christianity, and by his marriage with the sister of the Greek Emperor strengthened the links which bound Russia to Constantinople. The Greek missionaries were aided in their labours, churches and bishoprics were founded, and the Holy Scriptures and Service Books translated into the native Sclavonic language; the Greek monks, Cyril and Methodius, who have been already mentioned as instrumental in the conversion of Bohemia and Moravia, taking also an active share in the Christianizing of Russia.

[Sidenote: Independence of the Russian Church,] In the reigns of Yaroslav and his successor (A.D. 1019-A.D. 1077), the empire became completely Christian, and the Church of Russia was placed on an independent footing, with a native primate at its head. Innocent III. (A.D. 1198-A.D. 1216) attempted to win over Russia to the Roman communion, by offering to confer the title of King on Prince Roman, but his offer was at once rejected. [Sidenote: which it has steadily refused to give up,] Russia suffered severely from the ravages of the Mongul Tartars, A.D. 1223, and Pope Innocent IV. took advantage of the distressed condition of the Russian church and the removal of the Greek Patriarchate from Constantinople to Nicaea, to make another attempt at detaching Russia from communion with the Greeks. David, Prince of Galicia, professed himself willing to receive the crown and title of king from Rome, but this arrangement was not of long duration, and about A.D. 1230 a Metropolitan of the Russian Church was consecrated by the Greek Patriarch, to fill up the vacancy which had taken place ten years before during the Tartar invasion. Kiev, the original seat of the Russian Patriarchate, was burnt and pillaged by the Tartars, and the see was transferred to Vladimir, A.D. 1299, and thence during the early part of the next century (A.D. 1320) to Moscow, where it has since remained.

[Sidenote: and has preserved unbroken.] For more than two centuries, until A.D. 1462, Russia was oppressed by the yoke of the unbelieving Tartars, but the Church still maintained her independence, and steadily resisted the various attempts which were made to bring about a reunion between East and West, by the subjugation of the former to the unjust claims of the latter.

[1] The preaching Friars having been in vain employed for the conversion of the Albigenses, their efforts were supplemented by the institution of the Inquisition.

12. The Mediaeval Church in Great Britain and Ireland

CHAPTER XII. The Mediaeval Church in Great Britain and Ireland A.D. 500-A.D. 1500 Section 1. The Church of England.

[Sidenote: Trials of the English Church under the Saxons.]

We have seen (p. 74) that the native Church of England had not succeeded in converting the Anglo-Saxon invaders who gradually took possession of the country, and that such as remained of the Bishops and Clergy had been compelled for the most part to take refuge in mountainous, and therefore inaccessible, districts. It was, however, only in A.D. 587, that Theonas, Bishop of London, and Thadiocus, Bishop of York, retreated from their sees, and they were both living in exile in Wales, when, ten years later, St. Augustine was sent by Pope Gregory to found a mission in England.

[Sidenote: Roman usurpation.]

It seems uncertain whether St. Gregory was aware of the previous existence of a Church in these islands; at any rate, he acted as if ignorant of the fact, by bestowing on St. Augustine a spiritual supremacy over the whole country; and the good Italian missionary, when brought into actual contact with the living representatives of a national Church already five hundred years old, appears to have considered himself justified in endeavouring to bring its Liturgy and usages into agreement with the Roman pattern.

[Sidenote: Consequent disputes.]

All this was not unnatural, especially under the circumstances of weakness and depression in which the Church of England was then placed; but it was equally natural that such interference should be felt to be an usurpation, and resented accordingly, and that much misunderstanding and bitterness should be the consequence. There probably was a recognition of the claims of the elder race of English Bishops in the fact, that St. Augustine was consecrated to the see of Canterbury rather than to that of London, of which the rightful occupant was still living, and that neither the latter diocese, nor that of York, appear to have been filled up until after the deaths of Theonas and Thadiocus.

[Sidenote: English independence partially recognized.]

It was also eventually found expedient to leave to the English Church its own national Liturgy and ritual (originally derived through a Gallican channel from that of Ephesus), instead of insisting upon an exact conformity to Roman rites.

[Sidenote: Some account of the English Liturgy.] This ancient English Liturgy, revised in the seventh century by St. Augustine, underwent a second revision at the hands of Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, about A.D. 1083; and, though certain variations existed in some dioceses, the "Use of Sarum," as it was called, became the general "use" throughout the southern portion of England,

and was even at length considered to be the Liturgy of the country. It is from this Sarum Use that our present Post-Reformation Liturgy is derived. A very considerable amount of new life and energy was infused into the Church of England by the mission of St. Augustine. Though the native Bishops and Clergy could not bring themselves to look cordially on those whose religious zeal was not always tempered with justice or courtesy towards their predecessors in the field of their missionary labours, still both foreigners and natives worked for the same cause, each in their own way, and a new evangelization of the freshly-heathenized population ensued[1]. [Sidenote: Amalgamation of English and Roman successions.] By degrees the two lines of Bishops became blended in one succession, which has continued unbroken until the present day.

[Sidenote: English missionary zeal.] The Church of England, thus strengthened and quickened, soon began to give abundant proofs of its vitality by sending out missionaries to convert the heathen in other lands. A large part of Germany and the Netherlands owes its Christianity to English Bishops and Clergy, such as Winfrith or Boniface, Willebrord, and a host of other less well-known or altogether forgotten names. The eighth century was especially distinguished by these missionary labours abroad, whilst, at home, were to be found such good and learned men as the Venerable Bede (A.D. 672 or '3-A.D. 735), an early translator of the Holy Scriptures, and his friend Egbert (A.D. about 678-A.D. 776), Archbishop of York, and founder of a famous school in that city, where the illustrious Alcuin (about A.D. 723-A.D. 804) was a scholar.

[Sidenote: Invasion, and conversion of the Danes.] In A.D. 787, the Church of England began to suffer severely from the ravages of the heathen Danes or Northmen; but, by the wisdom and valour of the good King Alfred (A.D. 871-A.D. 901), they were for a while subdued, and numbers of them settled as peaceable colonists in England, where they gradually embraced Christianity.

[Sidenote: King Alfred.]

Alfred was very zealous in his endeavours to repair the spiritual and intellectual losses which the Church of England had undergone during the contest with the Danes, whose ravages had almost entirely swept away all native scholarship. The king was especially eager to secure a literature in the vernacular for his subjects, and himself translated into "simple English" parts of the Holy Bible, and other religious books. In these labours he was assisted by a small body of learned men, including the two Aelfrics, Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and Wulfstan, supposed to have been Bishop of Worcester. The conversion of the Danes who had first settled in England to Christianity prepared the way for the evangelizing of later colonists; and when, through the crimes and weakness of the later Anglo-Saxon princes, the country fell altogether into the hands of Danish invaders, Canute the Great (A.D. 1016-A.D. 1033) not only embraced Christianity himself, but secured for his native country the services of English missionaries. [Sidenote: Evangelization of Scandinavia.] In fact, at this time Scandinavia seems to have been the chief mission-field of the English Church.

[Sidenote: Roman influence comparatively small under the Saxons.]

We can hardly be wrong in gathering from all this, that Roman influence had only to a certain limited extent been introduced into the Church of England by St. Augustine's mission, and that, as time passed on, the foreign element had become absorbed in the national one. With the Norman conquest of A.D. 1066, the case was, however, altered.

[Sidenote: Much increased under the Normans.] The claims of the Popes to temporal as well as to spiritual authority were by that time definite and authoritative; the Conquest itself had been undertaken by the permission of Alexander II., and the authority of the foreign conquerors, (as the Norman and early Plantagenet kings continued to be,) required foreign support. Hence the Bishops of Rome gained an amount of political influence in England which was thoroughly unconstitutional, and which could probably never have been attained by any foreign power, had the English sovereigns immediately after the Conquest felt themselves more firmly fixed upon the throne they had seized.

[Sidenote: Denationalizing of the Episcopate.] The appointment of foreigners to the highest ecclesiastical offices in England, was one means by which the Norman sovereigns sought to secure themselves against disaffection amongst their new subjects; but the real result of this policy was to foster the claims of the Popes to religious and secular supremacy in this country; for these foreign ecclesiastics, though English Bishops, were not loyal subjects of the English crown, nor were their interests identical with those of their flocks.

[Sidenote: Lanfranc.]

Thus the Italian Lanfranc, when appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by William the Conqueror (A.D. 1070), did not hesitate to obey the summons of the Pope to Rome for the purpose of receiving the pall, and thus acknowledging that he held his Bishopric from the Papal see.

[Sidenote: St. Anselm.] His successor, St. Anselm (A.D. 1093), also an Italian, and a man of great learning and holiness, was prepared to carry out a similar line of conduct; but the covetous and irreligious tyrant, William Rufus, was seeking at the same time to reduce Bishops to the state of mere nominees and vassals of the crown, and a long contest ensued[2]. The dispute was carried on into the next reign; and at length, in A.D. 1107, a compromise was agreed upon, by which it was arranged that Bishops should receive investiture from the Pope, and, at the same time, take an oath of allegiance to the king.

[Sidenote: St. Thomas of Canterbury.]

Anselm's unflinching advocacy of Papal claims cost him years of exile from his diocese, and much suffering; but, in the following century, similar conduct involved still more serious consequences to St. Thomas à Becket, the then Archbishop of Canterbury. The new question in dispute was the right of clerical offenders to be tried in the spiritual courts, instead of coming under the jurisdiction of the civil power; but, in reality, it was only another form of the constant endeavours of the English monarchs to free themselves from the foreign bondage which was, to some extent at least, self-imposed. Becket fell a martyr to his own sense of duty and the king's displeasure, A.D. 1170.

[Sidenote: Roman influence strongest in England.]

Papal usurpation in England reached its height when, in A.D. 1208, Innocent III placed the kingdom under an Interdict, for refusing to receive as Archbishop of Canterbury his nominee, Stephen Langton, who was unacceptable both to king and people; and soon after proceeded to excommunicate John, and depose him from his throne. The king's cowardly and unconstitutional conduct in resigning his kingdom into the hands of the Pope's legate (A.D. 1213), and receiving it again at the end of three days as a tributary vassal of the Roman see, caused England to be

looked upon for some years as only a fief of Rome.

[Sidenote: Kept up by the Friars;] In the reign of Henry III. (A.D. 1216-A.D. 1272), Roman influence in England was greatly sustained by the introduction of the Preaching Orders of Franciscan and Dominican Friars, who, being many of them foreigners, and all of them independent of any episcopal control, and subject to Papal jurisdiction only, were very energetic in their endeavours to maintain and extend the authority of the popedom.

[Sidenote: by the habit of appeals;] By this time, too, appeals to Rome against the decisions of English courts had come to be a great bar to national independence. Such appeals had been altogether unrecognized in England until the days of Stephen, and the practice was again forbidden in Henry II.'s reign by the Constitutions of Clarendon (A.D. 1164); but, after Becket's death, the prohibition was once more repealed. It is easy to see how seriously this system of appeals must have delayed and interfered with the regular course of justice in this country, and how capable it was of being made a political engine in the hands of the Pope, or of those who held with him. The exemption of most of the monasteries from the supervision of the Bishops was also a serious evil, interfering as it did with the Divinely-appointed functions of the episcopacy, and opening the door to disorders which the distant and usurped authority of the Popes had not power to remedy.

[Sidenote: by large money payments.] In the fourteenth century another means was resorted to of increasing the power of the Popes at expense of the monarch and people of England, by the payment of annates, or first-fruits, on the appointment of each Bishop; and so heavy did this burden become, that between A.D. 1486 and A.D. 1531, 160,000 pounds (or about 45,000 pounds a year of our money) was paid to Rome under the head of annates.

[Sidenote: All these evils borne under protest.]

It is not to be supposed that these encroachments of a foreign power were accepted without a murmur or remonstrance on the part of the people of England; on the contrary, there was a constant undercurrent of discontent, which found occasional expression in some official or popular protest. Such, on the one hand, was the statute of praemunire, passed in the reign of Richard II. (A.D. 1389), to prohibit Papal interference with Church patronage and decisions in ecclesiastical causes; and, on the other, the irregular proceedings of Wickliffe and the Lollards, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which, though they eventually degenerated into seditious agitation, had their rise in a feeling of opposition to Romish abuses and usurpations. This feeling was increased by the fearful state of profligacy into which Rome, and indeed all Italy, was plunged during the fifteenth century, which effectually destroyed the character formerly enjoyed by the Roman Church, whilst it could not but affect the spiritual health of the other Churches over which Rome exercised so wide an influence. Wiser and calmer men than Wickliffe saw the need of some reformation, though they questioned, and, as the event showed, rightly, the wisdom and the justice of the steps he took towards his object. Wickliffe's teaching in the fourteenth century had, in fact, little or nothing to do with the real Reformation of two hundred years later, except that some of his dangerous theories on political matters took deeper root than did his religious peculiarities, and bore fruit in much of the unprincipled licence which was an unhappy, though by no means an essential, feature of the Reformation era.

[Sidenote: English longings for reformation.]

England, in common with the other nations of Europe, was willing to hope for great benefit from the councils of the Church held in the fifteenth century; and, at each of them, we find English Clergy making grave and urgent protests against the abuses which they saw around them, and pleading for a return to purer and better ways. Thus, at the Council of Pisa, A.D. 1400, one of the English Bishops who attended it presented a memorial which complained of the evils resulting from the want of episcopal control over the monasteries, from the practice of appeals to Rome, and from the ease with which dispensations for non-residence and pluralities were obtained[3]. Again, at the Council of Constance (A.D. 1415) a sermon was preached by Dr. Abendon, an Oxford professor, which painted in very strong language the worldliness and covetousness of the non-resident Bishops and Clergy; and these protests were followed up by an official appeal to the Pope for a reformation, on the part of the Kings of France and England, A.D. 1425, as well as by official instructions given to the English deputation despatched to the Council of Basle (A.D. 1431), to use their influence for the same end.

Section 2. The Church of Ireland. The Church of Ireland was not, like the Church of Great Britain, to which it owes its foundation, a prey to the depressing influences of the heathen Saxons; and, at the time of the mission of St. Augustine, the daughter was in some measure enabled to repay to the mother the benefits which the British St. Patrick had conferred on the scene of his missionary labours. A constant intercourse was kept up between the numerous monasteries of Ireland and those of Wales and Scotland, some of the abbeys in the latter countries being founded and frequented by Irishmen.

[Sidenote: Early reputation of Ireland.]

Ireland, in the sixth and seventh centuries, had a great reputation for learning and missionary zeal, both of which were called into play to help in the reconversion of a large portion of England, as well as to encourage the efforts of English Churchmen in retaining in the National Church the national characteristics, with the loss of which it was threatened from the large admixture of foreign elements introduced by St. Augustine.

[Sidenote: Irish missionary work in England and elsewhere.] Nor were their missionary labours confined to England: they shared in the toils and honours of the conversion of Germany, and are believed to have penetrated as far as Iceland and Greenland.

[Sidenote: Unjustifiable conduct of England.] The aid given by Irish ecclesiastics in preserving the religious liberty of the Church of England was ill requited in the twelfth century, when the English, having taken possession of Ireland, forced the Irish Church to abandon her distinctive Liturgy by a decree passed at the synod of Cashel, A.D. 1173. The state of anarchy and restless discontent into which Ireland was thrown by the presence of English invaders, had a very unfavourable effect on the Church of the country, as had also the appointment of Englishmen to Irish bishoprics, and the consequent non-residence of the Bishops. It is curious that the influence of English conquerors should have tended to extend Roman authority in Ireland, much as the policy of Norman conquerors produced the same effect in England. Before the Reformation, the state of the Irish Church had become thoroughly unsatisfactory, and was felt to be so by many of the Irish themselves.

Section 3. The Church of Scotland.

[Sidenote: St. Columba.] The country of the Southern Picts, christianized by St. Ninian (see p. 76), having fallen into the hands of the heathen Anglo-Saxons, something like a fresh evangelization became necessary; and this was accomplished by the labours of St. Columba and his successors, who, having crossed over from Ireland (first about A.D. 560) for the purpose of preaching to the Northern tribes of Scotland, extended their mission southward. [Sidenote: Irish or Scotch missionaries in England.] The monastery of Iona, or Icolmkill, was for some time inhabited by Irish missionaries, and became the chief source of missionary labour not only in Scotland, but also in the North of England, the Scotch or Irish missionaries using all the weight of their influence to uphold the independence of the National Church against the Roman tendencies of St. Augustine and his successors. St. Aidan (died A.D. 651), Bishop of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, and the head of the mission for the conversion of the Saxon kingdom of Mercia, was a monk of Iona. His diocese included Yorkshire, and extended to Scotland; and, in consequence of this, the Archbishops of York long laid claim to exercise metropolitan authority over the whole of North Britain.

Roman influence gradually made itself felt in Scotland, in great measure through the monastic system, which received a great impetus under David I. (A.D. 1124-A.D. 1153).

[Sidenote: Longings for reformation.] The constant wars with England, and the confusion and bloodshed they entailed, had a very unfavourable effect on the prosperity and spiritual activity of the Church of Scotland, so that from Scotland, no less than from England and Ireland, there arose that cry for a return to older and purer ways, which ended in the Reformation.

[1] The native Clergy seem to have laboured chiefly in the north, where they were aided by Scotch and Irish missionaries. St. Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island (who died A.D. 651), may be mentioned as a successful agent in the conversion of Northumbria and Mercia.

[2] This dispute between St. Anselm and the English king was another form of the long strife between the Popes and the Emperors of the West, which is known as the War of Investitures.

[3] Many of the Bishops, at this time, were foreigners, who lived away from their sees, and did not even understand the native language of their flocks. The Kings of England and the Bishops of Rome seem to have equally abused their powers of patronage in this respect.

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