A HISTORY OF CHURCH HISTORY

A HISTORY OF CHURCH HISTORY

STUDIES OF SOME HISTORIANS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

by

FREDERICK JOHN FOAKES-JACKSON, D.D.

Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, and Professor Emeritus of the Union Theological Seminary, New York; Lightfoot Scholar in Ecclesiastical History, Cambridge (1880); *D. Théol Strasbourg* (*France*); *Hon. Litt.D., University of the South* (*U.S.A.*)

CAMBRIDGE

W. HEFFER & SONS LTD.

First Published - - 1939

PRINTED AND BOUND IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE WORKS OF
W. HEFFER & SONS LTD., CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Preface

THE writer of these Essays was a candidate for the Lightfoot Scholarship in Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge in 1879, when the examiners declared that he had "acquitted himself with credit, the successful candidate being Thomas Thornely of Trinity Hall who had been bracketed second in the Law Tripos of 1876 and was Senior in the History Tripos of 1877. In the following year, 1880, the writer was successful in obtaining the Scholarship and wrote to Bishop Lightfoot thanking him for his benefaction. In reply, he received the following letter:

AUCKLAND CASTLE,
BISHOP AUCKLAND,
June 5th, 1880.

MY DEAR SIR,

It was a very great pleasure to me to receive your note, which only reached my hands this morning owing to absence from Auckland. I have been more than rewarded for any sacrifice that I may have made in the establishment of the Scholarships by seeing the good work which they have stimulated. I trust you will take up some portion of history and make it your own that you may give it in due time to others.

With best wishes,
Yours very sincerely,
J. B. DUNELM.

Rev. F. FOAKES JACKSON.

In accordance with this expression of the Bishop's desire these Essays are offered to his memory, with the further object of providing students with a guide to the study of the broad principles of the history of the Christian Church. Portions of these essays have appeared in England in the *Hibbert Journal* and the *Modern Churchman*, and in the United States in the *Chronicle* (N.Y.).

Contents

		PAGE
	PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION	v
CHAPTER		
I.	THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY	1
II.	THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT	15
III.	THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION OF HIPPOLYTUS AND OTHER CHURCH ORDERS	28
IV.	PHILO AND ALEXANDRIAN JUDAISM	39
V.	EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA AND HIS PREDECESSORS	56
VI.	THE GREEK HISTORIANS AFTER EUSEBIUS	71
VII.	ST. AUGUSTINE'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY	87
VIII.	GREGORY, BISHOP OF TOURS	97
IX.	ADAMNAN'S LIFE OF COLUMBA	109
X.	THE VENERABLE BEDE	119
XI.	ANNA COMNENA	130
XII.	BURNET'S HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION AND OF HIS OWN TIMES	145
XIII.	GIBBON'S CHAPTERS ON THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY	159
XIV.	THE BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY BISHOP LIGHTFOOT	171
	INDEX	183

CHAPTER I

The Origin and Development of Ecclesiastical History

THE writing of history has been described as an art. In recent times Art has rather gone out of fashion and its pedestal is occupied by Science. Indeed, science is actually pushing art aside and forcing her to pose as Science. It may, however, be said with some plausibility that the aim of Art is beauty, whilst that of Science is truth; but one is compelled reluctantly to own that if beauty is not always truth, truth is often anything but beauty. We see this in the pictorial and plastic arts, which, now that the aim seems to be truth or what is called realism, have resulted in a multitude of hideous pictures and sculptured abominations. And the same is true of much of the poetry and literature of our day, in which there is an appalling absence of form and grace. This applies particularly to the writing of history in which art ought to be combined with science.

The study of history is emphatically a science. The word history means "investigation." When Paul went to Jerusalem "to see (ἱστορῆσαι) Cephas," his object was scientific. He wanted to discover from the best available source the truth about Jesus whom he had accepted as his Master. The real historian has to go to the authority for all records, and to sift his materials as severely as though he were conducting any scientific investigation. He has often to reject what is interesting or beautiful, in the cause of truth. He has to subject the most dramatic events and the most arresting of personalities to a scrutiny as ruthless as if they were specimens of inanimate matter. He has to revise judgments

which have the stamp of world-wide acceptation and great antiquity, and are backed by the most cherished convictions, when they prove incompatible with well-ascertained facts. In a word, he ought to survey both past and present with the Olympian calm of a god, who, as Epicurus pictured him, was far too wise to trouble himself with the welfare of mortal man. History is, in fact, as exact a science as the investigation of anything in nature.

But if the truly scientific historian ever existed, his advent might be hailed with enthusiasm, but the results of his labours would never be read except possibly by a few specialists. His labours might result in a collection of bare facts which would have to be interpreted by men who shared in some of the weakness of ordinary humanity. To appeal to the world his material must be intelligibly and attractively presented; and here we enter the domain of art and literature.

True historical writing must be based on science and adorned by art. It demands all the qualities of a great artist, the power of seeing things as a whole, and grouping figures so as to produce a correct impression. It requires a sympathetic mind in order to judge fairly of the importance of events, and the motives of individuals. It calls forth the imagination which enables a man to transport himself into a past, often utterly unlike the present, and as it were, to live among men whose modes of thought and conditions of life were alien from his own, yet fundamentally were men of like passions with himself. In addition to this the writer has to sift his material with the utmost care, understanding what will interest his readers, avoiding what to them may appear trivial, of no importance, or tedious. To do this he must be a true artist.

In nothing are these two qualifications, the scientific and the artistic, called for more than in the field of Church history. The Church may be defined as the embodiment of an ideal and of the motives, hopes and fears connected with it. A Great Teacher, to use His

own language, "sowed the seed" in the principles He inculcated, the example He gave, and the tragic death which sealed His work on earth. To give the result of the labours of this Founder a concrete form, His followers became an organised body, known as "The Church." Church history relates how the Christian religion was active in the society of believers; but the fruit of the seed sown by Jesus Christ was also seen in the individuals who composed the organisation. A distinction must be made between the story of those personalities in the Lives of the Saints and in that of the corporation we call the Christian Church. To relate how Christians co-operated with one another in successive ages is the province of the Church historian.

In the discharge of this task he has to be first a scientist and afterwards an artist; for he has to exhibit the impartiality of the one, and the enthusiasm of the other. To combine these two qualifications is a work of the greatest difficulty.

It would be mere waste of words to insist that the true investigator must be "scientific" in the modern sense of the term, since to discover what the facts really are demands all the qualities of a highly-trained observer of nature as well as the minute methods of the laboratory. It also provokes a healthy scepticism, which lies at the foundation of all science. To accept nothing one cannot verify is a counsel of perfection, but all the same the principle is sound and has to be followed, albeit haltingly, by the historical researcher. Then there is the accumulation of material. All that is read or noted by observation has to be collected and, as far as is possible, set in order, before coming to any definite conclusion. But there is no need to labour the point that to be an historian one must be a man of science.

But the discharge of scientific duties is apt to hinder productive work. Some may be so anxious to guard against the possibility of making mistakes that they will refuse to accept even an obvious axiom, and worry over it too much to make any progress. Others are so

painfully conscientious that, even when they have made a valuable discovery, they hesitate so long to give it to the world; and it lies buried among miscellaneous papers to be unearthed or not according to the diligence or carelessness of their literary executors. A third class of futile investigators consists of those who are so eager to accumulate knowledge that they cannot bring themselves to give their often disorderly accumulations form, so that much of its value is lost to posterity. There have been many instances of men enjoying, not always unjustly, a vast reputation for learning who have proved in the end "to have been as though they had never been."

When the work of scholars does see the light, it often results in being presented in a form so crude and unintelligent that only the few experts interested in details can read or even understand what it is about. These authors have to carry such an appalling amount of learning that they are unable to sift their material or to discriminate between what is truly important and what really matters little. They seem incapable of making a plain statement without qualifying it by interminable discussions or veiling it in the obscurest of technicalities. This defect is often even admired by some learned men, and one of the reasons for the often extravagant admiration of German scholarship is that most of its professorial writing is so obscure. On the other hand, the French suffer from the very fact that their teachers are prone to an excessive clarity of thinking and lucidity of expression. This bears on the subject under discussion, namely the writing of Church history, and the popular suspicion that a book on the subject must necessarily be dull.

The real truth lies in the fact that very few possess both arts of reading and writing; for to acquire knowledge by reading and to express it in writing is an art possessed by few. To write a good book based on sound knowledge is indeed difficult, and the task almost requires two persons to accomplish; for rare indeed, at any rate in our day, is the concord of erudition with literary skill, though it is happily not unknown.

In dealing with the story of the Christian Church the New Testament, the first and most valuable contribution to the subject, has provided a very brief historical record in the Acts of the Apostles; after which one is left almost in the dark for more than two centuries. In Acts the author has realised that it is his duty to relate the progress of a community although in the end he is perforce compelled to make his history revolve about two important personalities, SS. Peter and Paul, and finally to confine himself to recording the adventures of St. Paul. But his purpose at the outset is sufficiently obvious. It is to describe the foundation and development of an institution. The fact that Luke found it necessary to relate the adventures of individuals of itself proves the difficulty of writing what is properly Church history. Although the author of the Acts evidently insists that the Faith from the very first was in essence corporate, he is perforce compelled to dwell on the influence of individuals in the development of the Church. And here in a nutshell is the real problem of the writing of Church history. From the historian's point of view, however, the first five chapters of Acts are not as informing as might be expected, because the writer was not in contact with what he relates. His object throughout is to show how united and harmonious the Christian Church of the very first age appeared to a writer of the second generation of Christians. The Society was all it ought to have been, and in consequence never actually existed. We have a well-regulated body in which no disagreement is allowed to appear. The Twelve with Peter at their head exercise unquestioned authority. Peter himself is transformed from the wayward, loving, and attractive companion of Jesus into a model of respectable episcopal orthodoxy. He becomes the mouthpiece of a governing body, the learned exponent of Scripture to the Jews, the inflexible judge of Ananias and Sapphira. He and his colleagues are in a position entirely different from the rest of the Christians, and keep severely apart, no one presuming to be intimate with them.

Peter's very shadow heals disease. But no one with the material before us can construct a living human being out of the Peter of Acts i.–v. or describe the Church over which he presided. It is the same throughout the long history of the Church. Always in the background there is an ideal body which never had a real existence, an Apostolic Church, a world-embracing Catholic Church, the Church of the Martyrs, an undivided Church, an Orthodox Church, a Church gathered securely under the protecting wing of Rome, or guarded by a Protestant adherence to the written word of God. But in the journey through the desert of this world, whether one looks backwards or forwards, the perfect Church is a mirage.

Now St. Luke is before all things a good churchman. He realised fully the importance of the corporate life to Christianity. But suddenly he transports himself from the ideal Church of the Twelve Apostles to the actual community. With Acts vi. Church history really begins. Women are complaining that they are unfairly treated by the dispensers of the daily dole, Hebrew and Hellenistic Christians are in rivalry with one another. Missionaries are perplexed by the opposing propaganda of a Simon Magus, and we are at a very early date indeed in the midst of troubles and difficulties to which most of us are accustomed in the present day. Then indeed the personal note appears, and we have the adventures of individuals as Philip the Deacon, Peter converting Cornelius, Barnabas and the Church of Antioch, and finally, the thrilling adventures of St. Paul.

But in the background there is always the official Church of Jerusalem. When Philip has made converts in Samaria, this Church immediately dispatches Peter and John to regulate what has been done. No sooner has Peter converted Cornelius than he has to go to Jerusalem to convince his friends that he had "gone unto men uncircumcised and had eaten with them" in obedience to a divine vision. When Paul and Barnabas had completed the mission on which the prophets of Antioch

had sent them, they have to go to Jerusalem to explain what they had done. The chapter in which the so-called assembly at Jerusalem, the first Council of the Church, is described will fit almost every later clerical assembly, the only unique feature being that it "kept silence" and allowed Barnabas and Paul to tell their own story without interruption. But the result of the deliberation of the council was eminently characteristic. It was a compromise, embodied in a circular letter, to which nobody, and notably St. Paul, paid any attention, and up to the present day neither the scribes who copied it nor the learned of all ages who have interpreted it have agreed as to its exact meaning.

It may be said that here the field of Church history has not been explored but only a few chapters of the Bible have been dwelt upon. But here is almost every feature of the long story. An ideal Church of peace and love which never materialised, an actual one was distracted by petty disputes, expedients which did not really solve the problems, missionary work hampered by rivalries and hindered by the interference of a central authority, and finally, an important controversy settled by a badly worded decree of a clerical assembly.

It is only when Luke relates the adventures of the Apostle Paul from Philippi and onwards that he becomes really interesting, and even here our author reveals the Christian historian. His Paul, until he was arrested in Jerusalem and was brought into contact with Claudius Lysias, Felix, and King Agrippa, appears as a cautious and conciliatory man anxious to stand well with James and the Church of Jerusalem. In his Epistles, however, Paul appears impulsive, affectionate, outspoken, sometimes self-contradictory, capable not only of warm friendship, but of strong dislikes, no conventional saint, but a real man, full of fire, intense in the display of spiritual genius, yet thoroughly human and lovable, because, and, not in spite of, his peculiarities. This comparison between the Acts written by an intimate friend, and the genuine letters of the Apostles, is a

revelation of the relative value of a history, however excellent, and the actual documents.

The rise and progress of the Church as an institution is one of the most astonishing facts in human history. An obscure teacher appeared in a remote province. He belonged to a race held in contempt by the majority of mankind, and was held in no high reputation by his own people as a teacher. Only the common folk in Galilee crowded to hear Him, and apparently deserted Him later; for there is scant evidence that His words or acts made a permanent impression even in Galilee. He gathered a small company of intimate friends, only two, perhaps three, of whom, Peter, John and Philip, can be proved to have done anything to spread the fame of His teaching or personality. Yet suddenly the belief in Him spread abroad in every country in the civilised world in which at the same time new cults were constantly appearing and enjoying a wide popularity. Within three centuries of the death of Jesus the Roman Empire began to accept Him as the head of its official religion.

Then suddenly the entire fabric of the ancient civilisation collapsed. New nations came into being which had no use for the art, the culture, the social life of the old world. Yet Christianity survived with increasing strength. That this could have been possible without its having an organised society for its support is incredible, and it is impossible to see how the Faith could have continued without it not only through the Dark Ages, but in every subsequent period of storm and stress.

It is only possible to account for this by suggesting a few considerations. There is the attitude of the Church towards individuals who themselves have made Church history. It is hardly too much to say that scarcely one of these have had at first the entire approval of the Church, if it can be defined as Christians acting in a corporate capacity. The Church of Jerusalem certainly regarded St. Paul with no little suspicion, and dreaded that, in his extraordinary success in spreading the Gospel, he might be compromising the newly-born

institution. Tertullian the great Latin genius of the second century was compelled to go outside its pale. The Church of Alexandria drove Origen, a man of spotless character, encylopædic learning, and one of the most original thinkers Christianity has ever seen, to exile in Syria. More than one Council condemned that pillar of orthodoxy, the great St. Athanasius. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, whom the Orthodox Church of the East acclaims as the "Theologian," found little encouragement from councils of bishops. Centuries later St. Thomas Aquinas, now recognised as the greatest exponent of Catholic doctrine, had his troubles with the Church of his day. Nor is the history of Protestantism exempt from the same defects which are seen in the Roman and Orthodox Churches. These examples in all ages and in every clime almost force the Church historian to make his work a series of biographies, rather than an account of the corporate action of the Church.

The Church has been truly called "the body" and, after all, a body of some kind is necessary to enshrine a spirit. But the spirit can and does often act apart from the body, or at least by means of its members. Certainly this is true of the Church, and, if we desire to have a manifestation of its spirit, it is always seen in individuals rather than in the visible Church. After all, Christianity, as the name implies, was the work of a Single Person, who revealed Himself to individual followers. With this in mind we may endeavour to suggest how the history of the Christian Church should be related. To do more than take a few points would here be out of the question: to take only two: the need of (1) Candour and (2) The historic sense of sympathy.

(1) Candour we may take to mean honesty in investigation and truthfulness in expression. The first duty of any historian is to ascertain the facts, a necessarily laborious process. And here he has to realise that at times they are so numerous that the greatest discretion in selection is demanded; and often that when he desires

to know more he has to admit that he has very little real information; for occasionally those who produce large volumes have to rely for what they tell almost entirely on their prejudices or imagination. Consequently, when a man attempts to deal thoroughly with certain periods he has to admit at one time his own ignorance, and at another, his inability to form a judgment.

(2) When the facts have been honestly ascertained, what may be termed historic sympathy is necessary. It is a real art to endeavour to go back and live in the atmosphere of the past, not to judge individuals by the standards of to-day and by the results of their action on modern thought and practice, but to consider how oneself would have behaved in similar circumstances.

When the historian contemplates the state of the Christian world to-day he cannot fail to be impressed by its extraordinary varieties, and by the diversity of forms in which the religion founded by Jesus Christ is manifested. On looking backward into the past it becomes evident that, despite every attempt on the part of the Church to maintain the original Faith unchanged, it has appealed in a different aspect to each successive generation. This leads to the conclusion that not only has the Christian religion been remarkable for its persistency, but also for its adaptability to the most varied conditions of human existence. To account for this is the great problem of Church history, the significance of which can be estimated by a necessarily brief survey of its course throughout the centuries.

The earliest proclamation of the Gospel or good news that Jesus by His Resurrection had proved to be the long expected Messianic deliverer of Israel. The great and terrible day was at hand to be manifested in "blood and fire and vapour of smoke." St. Peter's hearers are exhorted to save themselves from the impending calamity by accepting Jesus and being baptised. Three thousand persons, awestruck by the signs of Pentecost joined the company of the saved. This description of the speech of Peter in Acts ii and its

immediate effect gives an accurate idea of the way in which the Gospel was first received as a promise of a catastrophic deliverance, which never came. It is scarcely too much to say that the expectation aroused in some few of those three thousand who received baptism was that of saving themselves from an imminent danger, which threatened the world. It is hardly too much to say that of all the cults which were springing up in the Roman Empire none did so under less favourable auspices than the Christian religion.

Yet the record preserved in the New Testament scriptures reveals the fact that from the first the very people, who looked for a speedy return of Jesus in triumph, applied themselves to the task of giving their society a permanent form. The disappointment they must have experienced, instead of discouraging only spurred them to fresh endeavours. As Jesus did not return at once, they made extensive preparations for His coming. And this may be considered as the keynote to Church history, which is largely a record of frustrated hopes which were powerless to retard the progress of the Faith. Church history is, in fact, a record of the pursuit of an ideal which has never been realised and of hopes which have never been fulfilled on earth.

As we turn the page of the age-long history of the Church we constantly find disillusionments, comparable to that of the primitive expectation of a sudden deliverance, accompanied by the same amazing power of rising superior to disappointment. Thus, when was the Church more justified in expecting great things than when, after the greatest and most persistent of the persecutions, the victorious Emperor Constantine called upon the Christians to aid him to regenerate the Roman world. It must have seemed to many believers that "the kingdoms of this world were about to become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ." Yet the story of the fourth century proves how far from fulfilment such a hope actually was. By the next century things were far worse than they had ever been, and by its close the

Western world had become the prey of the triumphant barbarians and the Eastern Empire seemed to be hopelessly decadent. But though many laid the blame for this catastrophe upon the shoulders of the Church, the Christian religion constantly increased and the Gospel was preached to peoples whom the Roman armies had been powerless to subdue. One explanation of this is the marvellous power Christianity has displayed in adapting its message to men of every kind, and under the most various conditions of human life.

Merely to enumerate the different types in which Christianity has been displayed would exceed the limits of a brief chapter, not to say a large volume. The Faith attracted the moralists of Israel, the lawyers of Rome, the ascetics of Egypt and Syria, the philosophers of Greece, the energetic Celtic monks, and the mystics in every land. It became militant among the knights of the Middle Ages, and political among those who aimed at creating a Christian government. It showed its influence in the marvellous organisation of the world embracing the Catholic Church, and in the sects called into being by enthusiasts for a Christian liberty. It adapted itself to the men of the romantic thirteenth century, as well as to the commonplace reasonableness of the eighteenth. It is not possible to predict its future, but if the past can be taken as an indication, it may safely be said that there will be new developments in its progress.

Those who seek for a practical solution of present problems can never safely ignore the lessons of the past, nor have the presumption to say that the bygone ages have nothing to teach them. Conditions to-day cause the existing generation to believe that the world around is changing with a rapidity which makes the experience of the past useless, but has mankind ever lived in an unchanging world? This is profoundly true of the Christian society. Here history conforms the saying of the preacher, "There is nothing new under the sun." What is presented with all the attraction of novelty is

frequently no more than something ancient dressed in a modern garb. The new criticism, the new psychology, the new socialism and communism and many other new departures have almost exact parallels in Christian antiquity. Many experiences of the older Church which man believed could never be repeated have become the realities of to-day. Some Christian nations are not only repudiating but are persecuting the Christian religion for no new reasons but for the very same which actuated the Government of the old Roman Empire. The refusal to offer sacrifice to Cæsar and the genius of Rome is precisely the same, with only a change of names, as the denial to pay to an omnipotent State a worship which God alone has the right to demand; and the command to "curse Christ," which the early martyrs died rather than obey, is in another form repeated in the injunction to repudiate any higher authority than that of the civil government. All this brought on the early believers the charge of being disloyal just as now in some countries they are regarded as being useless in an emancipated society, with the aims of which the presence of a Christian Church is considered incompatible. History can truly be said to be repeating itself both in Church and State; nor is it unreasonable to hope that it may emerge with added strength from the perils of the present day.

But the greatest dangers of the Church in every age have come from within rather than without. The Christian society has in all ages proved to be its own greatest enemy. Even the Church has been guilty of serious crimes and inexcusable mistakes, and, when all allowance is made for the varying circumstances of the times, one can but be amazed that Christianity has survived in spite of all. To overcome difficulties and to triumph over opposition is far easier than to recover from the consequences of one's own follies or faults. Yet even the crimes and errors, which can be justly laid to the Church, have not been able to destroy the power of the Spirit of Christ within it.

Herein lies the interest, not only in religion but in every relation of human life, which the Christian message must have in the history of mankind. The story of the Church cannot be ignored by anyone who is interested in the human race, and whatever has been done to emphasise the importance of ecclesiastical history as elucidating the knowledge of mankind and its attitude towards the Divine must be welcomed as an invaluable contribution.

CHAPTER II

The Origin and Growth of the Canon of the New Testament

THE object of this essay is to show how and by what methods the Church acted in a matter of supreme importance, in the collection of the earliest of its historical documents. It is often said in one form or another that "The Church made the New Testament and not the New Testament the Church." Let us see what this statement actually implies. When the Faith in Jesus Christ appeared its professors had the same Scriptures as the Jews. These were the Bible of the New Testament writers, and sufficed for their purpose, which was to prove that Jesus was the Christ, and that all He had done and suffered had been prepared for and foretold. But circumstances soon arose to create a demand for a distinctly Christian Scripture to supplement the Jewish Bible used by the rapidly increasing community of believers.

To understand how this demand was satisfied it is necessary to bear in mind that from the first the Faith was being accepted, not only emotionally by the downtrodden and ignorant classes, but by men of education. The Gospel was certainly not promulgated in an illiterate age, indeed it seems improbable that any Jew of the time could be described as entirely uneducated. Those who accepted the message of the Twelve, like Barnabas, Paul, Mark and Silas, were assuredly not members of the uncultured classes. This is important to show that neither the writers of the New Testament nor the Church which at a later date accepted it can justly be described as "unlettered and uneducated men." Even if the Greek they wrote was not "academic," it was not that of men who were lacking in the power of literary

expression; and from the earliest days there must have existed some kind of Christian literature.

This literature was remarkably various. If the letter to the Romans reveals the logical ability of St. Paul, it also indicates that the Apostle wrote to a highly intelligent community. If the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was a practised man of letters, he evidently did not address an illiterate circle of believers. On the other hand, as is now known from the papyri, even uneducated people were accustomed, much as they are to-day, to write to one another, even though they could not express themselves, or even spell, correctly. There were obviously current very crude conceptions of the meaning of the Gospel, a craving for tales of wonder and miracles and a literature designed to satisfy these demands. From the first days of the Faith there was no lack of what we should term fraudulent literature. In one of his earliest epistles (2 Thess. ii. 2) spurious letters were circulated in St. Paul's name, and he had to take precautions to indicate that what he had actually written was genuine (2 Thess. iii. 17; Gal. vi. 11). Further, there were many attempts to write the life of Jesus (Luke i. 1), and obviously fictitious books were quoted as authoritative Scripture (Jude 14). Many indications have survived of a considerable literature under the most venerable names in early Christianity, which had evidently a widespread popularity and was regarded as authentic. How out of this mass of material the New Testament came into being is almost a literary miracle, revealing a power of selection and an excellence of judgment hard to account for, unless it be assumed that those who exercised so wise a discrimination were divinely guided.

The wisdom of the Church in this respect appears not only in what it selected as New Testament but in what it rejected.

The earliest book of the non-canonical writings which has survived is probably older than some of the Scriptures of the New Testament, and was at an early date

attributed to one of the most attractive men who belonged to the Apostolic circle. Joseph, who was known in the Church as the son of Consolation (Barnabas), was the leader of the first missionary enterprise dispatched by the Church of Antioch. Not only does his name appear in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Pauline Epistles, but it has a prominent place in Christian legend. Although the writer observes a strict anonymity, it was a tradition that he was Barnabas. The Epistle almost certainly belongs to the first century, and deals with the burning question of the day, the transitory character of the dispensation of the Jewish Law, compared with the permanence of the Gospel revelation, of which the ordinances of Moses were a mere foreshadowing. The writer has a remarkable knowledge of the ancient Scriptures, and his interpretation of their significance must, by its ingenuity, have excited the admiration of those who first enjoyed it. The ethical teaching is much the same as that of the New Testament, and served as a basis of instruction for converts.

One of the most remarkable things about "Barnabas" is that, instead of defending its authenticity, the most orthodox of critics have to admit reluctantly that there is much to be said in favour of it because they are pained at the thought that so good a man as St. Barnabas, the friend of St. Paul, could have written such overstrained allegorical interpretations, mingled with illustrations from a Natural History absurd even in his unscientific age. Although the Epistle appears in a venerable Codex in the New Testament, it is creditable to the wisdom of the Church that it has never been accepted as Scripture.

Much the same may be said of those two valuable and instructive survivals of the Apostolic Age emanating from the Church in Rome, the Epistle of the Roman Church to the Corinthians, popularly ascribed to Clement, who was thought to be the friend of St. Paul (Phil. iv. 3), and the Shepherd of Hermas, at an early date identified with the Hermas saluted in the Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 14). Like Barnabas, these documents have found

a place in an ancient and costly MS. of the Christian Scriptures, the famous A (Codex Alexandrinus). A casual glance at either convinces the reader that in both there shines forth much truly Christian piety, and at the same time passages exist which would be a terrible stumbling-block if Clement and "Hermas" ranked among the Scripture of the Church. Witness, to take but one example, Clement's use of the fable of the Phœnix in Egypt as an argument for the truth of the Resurrection of the Christ!

From the very first there was a natural desire to know more about the earthly career of our Lord than we can gather from the canonical Gospels, and that by the close of the second century this demand was being satisfied. Apocryphal Gospels abounded telling us about the birth, the infancy, the youth of the Saviour, and have created legends about Him which are an influence on Christian thought down to the present day. It cannot be doubted that these legends enjoyed a wide popularity, and are probably far older than the dates now assigned to their first appearance. They are accessible to all in the late Provost of Eton's *Apocryphal New Testament*, an even hasty perusal of which convinces one of the wisdom of the primitive Church.

From the above-named book it is apparent that the fortunes of the immediate disciples excited an interest only second to that of Jesus. It is remarkable how completely nearly all of the Twelve Apostles disappear from history, and yet what great importance was attached to their authority: Creed, Succession, Canon, Constitutions, are all entitled Apostolic, yet of their labours little is known. The want was supplied by various *Acts*, some as early as the second century, but the Church has been contented with the book of Acts. Only one Apocalypse revealing the unseen world was allowed to survive as Scripture; and even its authority was a subject of dispute.

When the result of the unknown process by which the different books of the New Testament were recognised as authoritative Scripture is considered, it is evident that

no little wisdom is displayed in their selection. Modern critics may question the judgment which allows such books as 2 Peter, James, and Jude to be reckoned as Apostolic; but they cannot deny that there is hardly anything in these Epistles which is unsuitable as Scripture, or unfit for public reading. The Revelation of St. John the Divine has only to be compared with those attributed to St. Peter or St. Paul to establish its superiority. The Canon was by no means settled by the end of the first century; but it can be safely assumed that something had already been done in that direction from 1 Clement, and Barnabas, not to mention other writings which are generally admitted to belong to the first half of the second century. The noteworthy point is that there is no evidence of any early formal or authoritative recognition of a Christian Scripture to support or even to take its place by the side of the ancient Bible.

After the first century it becomes more clear how and why our New Testament came into being. When a young student begins to read the history of the primitive Church and has finished the first chapters, his bewildered attention is usually directed to the Gnostics; and, if he stops to enquire about these curious folk, he naturally marvels at being told that any people held such strange ideas. But these aberrations from the original purpose and sense of the Christian Church drew attention to the New Testament. The Good News or Gospel was the proclamation of a coming deliverance, and came as the very antithesis of the written Law. Those who accepted the message preferred the "living voice" to the authority of any document. Indeed, the only written material carefully preserved seems to have consisted of a few letters which had been kept out of regard for such a writer as St. Paul, and read in the assemblies of believers. Still, the literary output of the new religion may be admitted to have been much more abundant than can be proved to have existed; and out of this a selection had to be made. This was necessitated by the circulation of a rival literature, some under the most august names.

No one was more honoured as the repository of the true Christian tradition than Peter; and a Gospel by the leading Apostle would be preferred to any by such comparatively obscure authors as Matthew, Mark or Luke. Consequently a Gospel according to Peter duly made its appearance, the rejection of which is very significant.

Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, as Eusebius relates, had discovered that the Christians of Rhossus were using a Gospel attributed to Peter. Having heard that the community was divided he paid a visit to the town, an obscure place some thirty miles distant from Antioch. He learned that the cause of dispute was a Gospel under the name of Peter. Strangely enough he had not seen the book himself, but inferred that it was harmless if not authentic, and allowed it to be read. When he returned to Antioch he was informed that this Gospel contained docetic teaching. Something of the contents of the last part relating to the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ has come to light. Carelessly glanced at, it might appear that "Peter" was nothing more than another account, not unlike that in our Gospels, but for a single remark that our Lord hung on the Cross "as though he felt no pain," which of course would countenance Docetism.* But the action of Serapion, although all we know about it is only from a very brief and not overclear letter of his copied by Eusebius (HE vi. 12), is for our purpose significant. In the first place, in the bishop's time (A.D. 190) there was evidently an unauthentic and apocryphal Scripture, used by Christians, which the authorities were quite ready to allow their people to read. In the second, Serapion seems quite ready to assume that this Gospel was substantially orthodox, and only interfered with its circulation when he discovered in it a latent heresy. Finally, there does not yet appear to have been a definite line drawn between the New Testament books and those which resembled them. Judging by the little Serapion wrote, he ignored

* The Docetists denied the Incarnation and taught that the body of Christ was a phantasm, not a human body of flesh and blood.

the whole question of the authenticity of the work under Peter's name. That the action of a bishop occupying the most influential see in the East should have been disposed to recognise the Petrine Gospel, proves how slow was official recognition of a Christian Scripture in the form of a New Testament. The Church assuredly did not make the New Testament; the two grew up together.

Irenaeus marks an important stage in the story of the Christian Scriptures. This remarkable man is a link between Apostolic Christianity and the developed and widespread Catholic Church. A native of Asia Minor, he taught in Rome and became Bishop of Lyons, a commercial city on the Rhone in constant communication with the Near East. In his conflict with the Gnostic sects, Irenaeus had to oppose those who wished to add to the authoritative Christian writings, and also another school of Gnosticism which tried to excise from them all passages which conflicted with their preconceived ideas. The chief representative of the last-named was Marcion, the most modern minded of the critical scholars in the early Church. To refute these Irenaeus brings forward the four Gospels accepted by the Church, and gives an argument, strange to-day, but doubtless convincing in his, why the information about the work of our Lord should be neither more nor less than that contained in our books. Thus before the close of the second century are signs of the appearance of sacrosanct Christian Scriptures, side by side with the holy books of Judaism.

Generally, discussions on the Canon of the New Testament have been complicated by arguments as to the authenticity and date of the several books, whereas the real point is their recognition by the Church, as equally and even more authoritative than the writings of the Old Testament. For the earliest Christian list of sacred books by Melito of Sardis, a contemporary of Irenaeus, is confined to the Old Testament. He calls these the "books of the Old Testament," which by no means may

be assumed to connote a New Testament in our sense of the words. To the Christian of this period, one of the most important features of the Gospel was, not so much what Christ had said or done, as that He had fulfilled all that the Prophets had predicted of the Messiah. From a modern point of view this may seem strange; but at this time, if Jesus could be proved to be the Messiah, faith and obedience might be taken as a matter of course. This explains the determination of the Church to keep the Old Testament; for few indeed, as Marcion had done, troubled about the question of the moral character of the God who inspired it. As to the Christian documents, they may have seemed of less importance when the tradition concerning the Saviour was living. The vital point was not so much whether the Christian literature was authentic, as whether its books were in accord with the universal traditions of the Church. The early reception of the Epistle to the Hebrews is an example of this. Here a book so highly honoured both in Rome and Alexandria that, though anonymous, it was attributed to St. Paul, despite the fact that scholarly men recognised that it had few traces of the style of the Apostle. At the same time all recognised its excellence, and readily included it among the most honoured writings of the Apostolic Age, in contrast with the Epistle of Barnabas, which was obviously inferior in tone and argument. We have still to wait awhile before we find the New Testament of even greater importance than the Old, though even in the second century it seems to have been hardly regarded as Holy Scripture in the same sense.

The expression, Canon of the New Testament, is misleading if it is taken in the sense of a formal decree that certain books, and these only, should be regarded as exclusively Christian Scriptures. What the New Testament should include was ultimately settled, not as a law (canon) of the Church, but by the silent and finally unanimous consent of the Christians. The VIth Article of the Church of England indicates this, when it gives a

list of the books of the Old Testament, supplemented by the Apocrypha, which may be read "for example of life and instruction of manners," and adds that all the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, "we do receive and account them canonical." This brief statement is scholarly: there has never been, strictly speaking, a canonisation of the New Testament: the Church received it as a matter of course.

But despite the plain facts there is a popular belief that somehow or other the Church took action at a comparatively early date. The first recorded conciliar action was by an assembly at Laodicea of a few bishops of questionable orthodoxy, the integrity of whose 59th Canon is, to say the least, doubtful. The exact date is not known, but it is supposed to be about A.D. 375 or earlier, and only some thirty-two bishops were present. Anyhow, after this date the New Testament appears as we now have it. It should, however, be noticed that as a rule the Christian Scriptures were not so much selected on the ground of their inspiration, but because they were suitable to be read in the Church services. For in certain lists the Revelation of St. John does not appear; and some may recall the fact that it was not directed to be read in the Old Table of Lessons in the Anglican Prayer Book of 1662.

By the third century we have the New Testament almost in its present form, and early in the next century the Church was forced to make a practical decision as to what books were to be considered as belonging to its Sacred Scripture. The so-called Diocletian persecution was a deliberate attempt to suppress the Christian religion by law, inspired by intellectual pagans, who regarded it as dangerous to the existing order of society. Anti-Christian propaganda was encouraged in the schools, and the destruction of the New Testament was part of the programme. When the commissioners demanded the surrender of Christian books it was the duty of those to whose charge they were committed to suffer martyrdom rather than give up a Scripture of the

Church. But as the officials of the Government were often ignorant, or corrupt, it was possible to surrender something that had outwardly a Christian appearance in place of a copy of the Gospels. There were consequently books which might be handed over without incurring serious guilt and others which it might be even meritorious to cause to be destroyed. Thus it may be inferred that to save a copy of a Gospel it was a venial sin to let the persecutors take the Shepherd of Hermas, and almost a merit to let them think that in securing a commentary on the Fourth Gospel they had only committed the work of a Valentinian heretic to the flames. This enhances the value of the testimony of Eusebius about the writings of the New Testament, when one bears in mind that he had survived the persecution and was writing at a time when it might possibly be renewed. In this chapter of the Third Book of his *Ecclesiastical History*, it is well known that Eusebius classified the Christian books under (1) those of unquestionable authority, those which have been subject to dispute, (2) spurious writings, and lastly, (3) those to be condemned as proceeding from heretical authors.

Practically there are only seven doubtful books in our New Testament. Of these, three (2 and 3 John and Jude) are no more than single short chapters. James and 2 Peter are of the nature of sermons for the use of the Churches; and their uncertain authorship rather than their contents has made them suspect. None of these "epistles" is found in the earliest Syriac translation of the New Testament, except possibly the Epistle of James, and it would be a matter for regret if they had not found a place in our New Testament. There remains only the Epistles to the Hebrews, which, as has been remarked, deserved its place because of its inherent excellence, and the Apocalypse, the visions recorded in which have in every age caused trouble in the minds of those who interpreted them too literally, or saw the fulfilment of them in an immediate future.

The whole subject of the Canon of the New Testament

has proved to be anything but attractive to the average student, and perhaps this is due to a belief that the Church formally recognised the existence of a catalogue of its inspired as distinguished from its uninspired writings. There has been a general impression that Christian writers accepted the books solely on the ground of their authorship—often wrongly attributed—whereas it may be that they went far deeper than that, and placed a book on the list because of its value to believers. Nothing makes the collective wisdom of the Christians of the first age more conspicuous than a study of the so-called sub-Apostolic writers, whose work, with many merits, seems to be infinitely inferior not merely to the best, but to the most criticised parts of the acknowledged Scripture of the Church. Studied with more attention to historical circumstances, the story of how the Christians got their own Scriptures is far more interesting. It shows how the new community came into existence without any very definite idea of the circumstances which called it into being, albeit in a not illiterate age. The expectation that the Saviour would immediately appear made the believers comparatively indifferent to anything except that this could be proved by the Scriptures of the old dispensation. It is evident from the recorded speeches in Acts, from the early letters which have survived, and even from the forms the creeds ultimately assumed, that the Gospel was primarily the story of the death and resurrection of the Christ. Then St. Paul appeared, a learned Pharisee who did not belong to the immediate circle of Christ and the Twelve. During his extraordinary missionary labours he wrote a few letters in which he showed an original spiritual insight into the significance of the appearance of Christ on earth. That these letters were appreciated and carefully preserved by Paul's converts is almost miraculous, and even more so that they were treasured and disseminated by his readers, some of whom were probably opposed to many of his views. Paul's Epistles may be described as inaugurating the Christian literature.

When the form, alleged authorship and contents of the Synoptic Gospels are considered, their reception is as wonderful as that of the Pauline Epistles. They testify to an interest in the ministry of Jesus which could not have been awakened among those who looked for His immediate coming to deliver His people. Christianity entered into a new stage when the words and acts of the Founder were becoming as important as His resurrection from the dead and His return in glory, and believers realised how He desired those, who looked with hope to Him, to live during the period of waiting.

But for a generation or so the supreme desire of the faithful was to know what those who had seen the Lord, or associated with those who had seen Him, had to tell rather than to depend on written statements, and even the Synoptic Gospels must for a time have been in abeyance. There were also other written records; and that the Church chose the Gospels as authoritative is a proof of its wisdom, nay even of its divine guidance. Thus far the growth of the Faith may be traced: first a hope, then a rule of life and conduct based on the Lord's ministry, later a Gospel which reveals what He Whom the faithful had accepted actually was. This had been indicated by Paul's letters and was finally supplemented by the doctrine of St. John in the Fourth Gospel.

Thus the story of its origin and development of the New Testament is really an account of the development of the Christian Faith, and, regarded in this light, no one can say that it can be lacking in interest. When divested of technicalities, however necessary speculative theories as to text, origin and authorship may be, it ought to be attractive, not to scholars alone, but to every Christian.

But if the New Testament is an indication of the evolution of the Christian religion, its recognition throughout the believing world raises the important and difficult question of the rapid spread of the unity of the Church. We might naturally infer that the Christian religion diffused itself by means of a number of isolated communities cut off from all communication with other

similar bodies. And yet it appears that within a century after the Resurrection and Pentecost, there was formed a collection of Christian books which with a very few exceptions were universally accepted in every part of the Roman Empire and beyond its borders. How this came to pass can only be conjectured. The Scripture of St. Paul, the greatest and most successful of missionaries, was practically the Old Testament; and he is only once reported to have quoted a saying of Jesus, which is not preserved in any Gospel. There is no evidence of the Churches coming to any agreement on this most important matter of the Scriptures, on which the fabric of the Christian Faith and practice was to depend. All we have any knowledge of is the supreme fact that it happened—how, we know not. That the New Testament came into being is the most significant event in Church history.

CHAPTER III

The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus and other Church Orders

THE Pastoral Epistles, or Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, have been the subject of keen dispute as to their authenticity. Yet hardly any of the documents of the New Testament are better supported by the evidence of the fathers, not one of whom from the earliest times doubted that they were the work of the Apostle, nor was it till the beginning of the last century that anyone questioned their authorship. But it is not necessary here to discuss the pros and cons of this controversy, when the point at issue is how this group of Epistles became so important a part of the New Testament scriptures. Few passages in them are of the striking sublimity found in the generally admitted Pauline Epistles; and, when he comes across a verse, which seems to echo the views of the Apostle, the modern critic is sometimes disposed to question its genuineness. Compare the eloquently spiritual phrases of Eph. iv. 7–13: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man,

unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" with the prosaic, if wise, rules for selecting a bishop, whose positive virtues are to be those of irreproachable respectability, whilst his negative qualities prevent him getting himself into trouble, or compromising the Church. These rules are as applicable in the choice of any official in high position to-day as they were when Paul gave this excellent advice to Timothy—Select a man of moderation and good sense, and be true to the motto of "Safety First."

This does not affect the question of the genuineness of the Epistles; for whether they were written by Paul or someone else, there can be no doubt that at a very early date they were recognised as emanating from the Apostle himself, and were considered to be of the greatest importance to the Church. The reason is that the injunctions to Timothy are the foundation of Christian legislation, or Canon Law; and that from the first the rules necessary for the existence of the Church were regarded as on a par with those which regulated the conduct of its members. This may be deplored as a deterioration from the assumed spirituality of the first days of the Faith, but it was bound to come more rapidly than is often supposed, and St. Paul was the last man in the world not to realise it to be inevitable that the members of the Church must be united in some form of government. He would never have accomplished his work as a widespread planter of churches, had he not possessed what he acknowledged to be one of the gifts of the Spirit, that of administration (κυβέρνησις). There is consequently nothing anomalous in his display of this in his Pastoral Epistles.

But whether the letters are genuine, or written by someone who used the name of the Apostle, there can be no doubt that they contain the rudiments of Church Law. They deal with practical problems of the government, and even the finances of a Christian society, and their very early appearance admits of little doubt. If not really Pauline, like all primitive Church legislation

they claim the Apostolic authority of a great name, and earnestly insist on the paramount importance of preserving the tradition (παράδοσις) of the Christian dispensation.

The books of Church orders, which were once neglected or unknown, are now recognised as absolutely indispensable to the historian as giving an invaluable clue to the character of primitive Christian life. The work before us is of especial interest as among the earliest of its kind, and because it is attributed to one of the most enigmatic figures in the story of the Church. St. Hippolytus reveals a long forgotten episode in primitive Christian Rome. He was a most learned man in his day, took a prominent place among the opponents of Gnosticism, and was the leader of a great party in the Church. Yet till the appearance of the *Philosophumena* in the middle of the last century he was, though recognised as a saint, almost forgotten. His account of his controversy with Pope St. Callistus reveals a surprising state of affairs in the Roman community.

It seems that there were two factions; the Greek-speaking one to which Hippolytus belonged represented the older Church, scholarly (most of the educated class used Greek), austere, and conservative. Those who understood Latin were less cultured and were anxious to be included in the Church, their leader being Callistus. In the *Philosophumena* we have a scandalous story related by a bitter opponent—Callistus depicted as a man of servile origin, a swindler, a false confessor, sent to Sardinia as a criminal, where he posed as a Christian and was released under false pretentions. The weak Pope Zephyrinus took him into favour and gave him an important position; and, in the end, Callistus managed to be elected Bishop of Rome, in which position he relaxed the discipline of the Church and then set at nought social duties of decent Roman citizens, adding to all other offences the guilt of heresy.

The justice of this scathing indictment is as doubtful, as the purpose which lay at the back of it is malicious;

and if Callistus was guilty, Hippolytus was equally uncharitable. The merits of the controversy need not here be discussed, as the Church settled it by declaring both of the disputants to have been saints and martyrs. Hippolytus is credited with having compiled the first digest of Christian Law; and for this he deserves gratitude. He flourished in the early days of the third century.

The title *The Apostolic Tradition* proves that the legislation is not intended to be the writer's; but that it records the practice of his Church which is believed to be derived from the Apostles. The laws are committed to writing because the customs have been perverted by ignorant men. The first of these is the choice and ordination of the bishop. As the text presents a very complicated problem, being composed of fragments in different languages, for the present purpose one must be content with Dr. Easton's scholarly reproduction and translation and play the part not of critics but of enquirers.

The bishop must be chosen by all the people and set apart for his office on a Sunday in the most public manner possible. The neighbouring bishops are to attend and the presbytery is to be present with all the people. The bishops are to lay their hands upon the elected person and all are to keep silent, praying for the descent of the Holy Spirit. Then one bishop lays on his hand and prays. In the prayer he asks that the candidate may serve God as an "high priest without blame" and "have authority to remit sins." After his consecration the newly-appointed bishop with his presbytery says the Prayer of Consecration over the bread and wine, and if oil, milk or cheese are offered, he is to give thanks for them. In this single paragraph a host of very difficult questions are raised. A few points only can be selected.

1. There is the selection of the bishop. Who chose him? In Rome we know the electorate was large and that in the third and fourth centuries the contests were long and embittered. At Alexandria he was nominated by the twelve great presbyters. A history of episcopal

and papal elections would be a vast, and perhaps a scandalous record in Church history.

2. If the *Tradition* is a Roman document, who were the bishops who were bidden to the consecration? Were they as some suggest the suffragans of the Roman See?

3. There is a petition that the bishop may have authority to pardon sinners. Could he, in the opinion of Hippolytus and his party, do this if they were guilty of the graver offences?

4. Finally, there is the question as to the rights of the presbyters. We know that a little later in the days of Cyprian they administered the Roman See when there was no bishop.

5. Did the words of institution or the invocation of the Spirit over the elements consecrate them? The ordination of a presbyter is to be performed by the bishop and his fellow presbyters. The bishop in his prayer compares the order of presbyters to the seventy elders whom Moses chose to assist him in ruling the people.

The second order of the ministry presents an even greater difficulty than the first. Was a presbyter, in one sense of the word a "priest"? Was he not rather a member of a board like the Jewish elders? A priest now has virtually the same powers as a bishop, save for a few reserved to the higher office. Was this so in early times? Could there be a local church without a bishop?

In the *Tradition* a presbyter seems to be one of a ruling body rather than an individual priest. When does the modern parish priest make his appearance? A "confessor" was not ordained but became automatically a member of the presbytery. Did this give him priestly rights?

How the deacon was chosen is not known but the difference between the diaconate and the presbyterate is carefully explained. "He does not receive the spirit that is possessed by the presbytery in which the presbytery share." He is ordained by the bishop alone because his

business is to carry out the orders of the bishop. No hint is given in the prayer of the deacons being the successors of the Seven. Yet in Rome the diaconate was of the highest importance; and the "college" was restricted to seven, who at one period were with the Pope the rulers of the Apostolic See. A deacon was certainly not, as at present, a sort of immature priest. He was frequently an embryo bishop. St. Leo the Great rebukes the patriarch of Constantinople for promoting a deacon to the presbyterate and thus prejudicing his chance of becoming the bishop. It is hardly too much to say that, if the deacons *stood* in the presence of the presbyters they often *ran* the church.

The only recognised "minor order" is that of a Reader. He is not ordained but given the book by the bishop. There is no mention of a sub-deacon being ordained: he is merely nominated as a servant of the deacon, and no symbol of his office is delivered to him. Widows and virgins are not to be admitted by the laying on of hands.

The training of candidates for membership of the Church, and their admission by the sacrament of baptism, is a subject as interesting as that of the Christian ministry, in that it proves how strict the Church, at least in theory, was in admitting its candidates for baptism. This explains the severity with which post-baptismal sinners were treated in the days of Hippolytus. The candidate is to be strictly examined whether he is competent to become a hearer of the Word. If he is the slave of a Christian master, he must have his consent. If the master is a heathen, the candidate must be taught "to please his master that the word be not blasphemed." Married people are exhorted to strict observance of their duties as husbands or wives. If not married, it is half-hinted that it is better not to take a mate (see 1 Cor. vii.). All whose occupations connect them with idolatry are to be rejected. It is even suggested that "a teacher of young children had best desist." Soldiers "of the civil authority" are not to kill men and to disobey if ordered

to do so. Those under instruction (catechumens) are to continue to be so for three years, unless they are exceptionally qualified for an earlier baptism. A catechumen who is martyred "has been baptised in his own blood."

To the historian of the Church the scattered fragments of the *Apostolic Tradition* are of the highest importance, not so much because they afford precedents for modern beliefs and usages, but as revealing the ideas of the past. The "Fathers" are naturally interested in refuting the doctrinal and practical errors of their age, and make their modern readers not unnaturally impatient with the controversies they are engaged in; but these dull regulations show the sort of life people lived; and this is eminently true of the way they bring out the meaning of early baptism. For this reason the directions as to how the sacrament was to be administered are worthy of special attention.

The candidates were to fast on the Friday and Saturday before the sacrament and at cock-crow on the Sunday prayer is to be made over the water, now introduced into the baptismal tank. The baptised are to remove all their clothing and the women must be careful not to take anything alien into the water like gold or silver ornaments. The candidates are to be exorcised by the bishop the day before. He is also to pronounce a eucharistic prayer over the two oils that of "thanksgiving" and that of "exorcism." At the baptism the candidates are examined as to the Creed and baptised thrice in the name of each Person of the Trinity. After this the presbyter who presides anoints the neophyte "with the oil of thanksgiving," and after he is clothed he is brought to the church and received with the others by the bishop, who anoints each one, after which the Eucharist is celebrated. There are certainly some surprising elements in this service. The newly baptised bring their offerings of bread and wine, water, milk, and honey. There are three cups of wine, water, and milk, and the baptised receives them standing from the presbyters, and if there

are not enough of these, from deacons. Among the strange features of this baptism are the insistence of the complete nudity of the recipients of the sacrament, the threefold immersion, the exorcism, the different forms of anointing with various oils, and the instruction in the secret of the Faith communicated by the bishop after baptism, which may not be revealed to unbelievers. "This is the white stone of which John said: 'There is upon it a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth the stone'."

Infant baptism and the use of sponsors to answer for the children is recognised, but upon the whole, it seems that by the time of the *Apostolic Tradition* the sacrament was regarded as the supreme rite of initiation into the Christian mystery, and everything is directed to be done to impress the recipient with the awfulness of the step he was about to take. Every care was taken to impress him that his acceptance of baptism was irrevocable and the long preparation he had undergone as a catechumen made him fully aware of the seriousness of his action. Henceforward he was entirely severed from every sort of pagan social life. Not only were all trades and professions connected with idolatry debarred, but he could take no part in the government of the world at a time when every citizen hoped to be a member of the vast bureaucracy of the Roman Empire. A baptised Christian was, in theory at least, as much isolated from the world as a strict Jew. He was supposed to be both a soldier of Christ, and a priest of God. As a soldier he was pledged to fight under the banner of his leader and subject to the same penalties as an enlisted man who deserts in the face of the enemy, or utterly disgraces the honour of his regiment. Hence the terrible severity of early discipline. The baptised Christian was under martial law. As a priest he had been as much set apart by accepting baptism as by undertaking the obligation of a Church office. When Tertullian says "are we not all priests?" he is indignantly protesting against the idea of a twofold morality, for clergy and laity. In the

Middle Ages the Church meant the clerical order, but it was not so in primitive days.

Taking these Church orders as guides and reading one of them, without expert knowledge but simply as a document by itself, would it be legitimate to reach an independent judgment of the character of the Christian Church after it had become crystallised into a definite organisation? It seems evident that the Christian society in the days of Hippolytus, if a legitimate outcome of the Apostolic Church of the New Testament, was very different, and had perhaps been legalised almost beyond recognition. On the other hand, it bore hardly any resemblance to the Church after the time of Constantine. If it lacked the freedom of the first days, the Church had little or nothing of the clericalism of a late age. One of the most interesting problems for the historian to solve is the rise of the Christian ministry. That every Church had its officers, and that certain privileges in the conduct of worship were reserved to them, is undeniable; but this does not explain the rise of a clerical order of men separated from the ordinary believers. Within two or three generations the Christian world had become a graded society to which candidates were admitted by degrees. Full baptism was the highest grade by which a man became partaker of all the privileges and all the secrets of the society. Some Christians might be entrusted with more duties and responsibilities, but in baptism all had received the full status of a believer. Baptism was, in fact, in itself an ordination, and the ritual prescribed intended that it should be so, and it was made so impressive that no one who had received it should ever forget it. In the first century baptism was readily granted; in the third it was won with difficulty; later everybody in a Christian land was baptised.

The Church seems in early times to have passed through three stages. The Apostolic Church was a group with a glorious message of salvation, and all who accepted the message and confessed Jesus as the Christ were welcomed and baptised. As time progressed, it

became an organised fraternity and, like any other, became exclusive. Those outside taunted its adherents with admitting anyone, and they partly realised the justice of the charge by resolving to take in only those of whose worthiness they were convinced, and expelling all who brought shame on their society. Baptism became the reward of a good disciple, who had to prove by his life that he had deserved it. It was, in fact, not so much an entry into the Church as the admission to the highest degree of the Christian mystery. The results were the catechumenate, and the carefully graded disciplining of the unworthy, penitential acts, and total expulsion. This was the ideal of the party of St. Hippolytus in Rome. The third stage was reached when the Church became, less of a military association pledged to fight Satan and the world, than a civil society. The Eucharist, rather than Baptism, became the great sacrament and its reception the test of the worthiness of the true believer. The Church tended to become a school for those who joined it by Baptism, which became the first step and not the final earthly reward of a Christian education.

This explains many things. In the first place it accounts both for the severity of an Hippolytus and the "liberality" of a Callistus; for the prudent relaxation of discipline to retain the weaker brethren and for the appearance of Montanism, Novatianism, and Donatism. This further explains the organised asceticism as manifested in all forms of Christian cœnobite monasticism by which men and women endeavoured to retire to societies in which the sterner duties of religious life could be fulfilled as they had been in the ancient Church orders, some of which were promulgated long after they could be actually enforced. In the end the result was the broad line of demarcation which separated believers into two great classes, the clergy and the laity. St. Augustine whose churchmanship was undoubted, but whose spiritual instincts were more developed, drew the line rather between the elect and the rejected.

On the whole, the study of these orders not only is

valuable as showing the rise of Church Law but explains an age when professed believers were not assumed by courtesy to be Christians, but were expected to act up to the principles accepted at baptism. In the *Apostolic Tradition*, after explaining the rite, it adds: "And when these things are completed, let each one hasten to do good work, and to please God and to live aright, devoting himself to the Church, practising the things he has learned advancing in the service of God." In this sense the priesthood of the laity was then not a theory but a living reality.

Chapter IV

Philo and Alexandrian Judaism

One of the most remarkable facts in the story of early Christianity is the way in which the religion spread throughout every class in the Roman and civilised world. From the very beginning the message was not accepted by the poor alone; for, if "the common people heard Him gladly," Jesus numbered among His followers men and women of social and religious importance in Palestine; and if His Gospel commanded the attention of fervid Messianists among the Jews, it soon attracted those whose hopes lay in the direction of a peacefully ordered world rather than in a catastrophic upheaval of existing conditions. It may indeed be asserted that He who declared "My kingdom is not of this world" was Himself the chief opponent of the militant and ecstatic Messianism of His age. Here, however, the main question is how it came to pass that the Faith proclaimed by Jesus was able to claim among its adherents not only enthusiasts, but many of the profoundest philosophers of the time. Virgil's line may not inaptly be quoted of nascent Christianity,

Via prima salutis
Quod minime reris Graia pandetur ab urbe,

since Greek philosophy, which must have seemed most alien to Christianity, materially aided its progress.

The surprising fact, too often overlooked, is that a Jew connected with a rich and influential banking firm of Alexandria, a man deeply conversant with Hellenic learning, though he probably had never so much as heard of Jesus the prophet of Nazareth, did much to pave the way for the acceptance of the Gospel by the thinkers of his and subsequent ages.

One of the most curious features in the history of Israel's patriarchs is the story of Joseph, the ancestor of the warrior tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. There is nothing of the mythical hero about Joseph. The son of a petty chief sold as a slave to Egypt, the lad by prudence, honesty and industry became the chief minister of the king, by saving his people and enriching the Crown during and after a serious famine. Stripped of its poetic associations the story has a thoroughly modern ring about it, and might have happened in any civilisation and in almost any age. Josephus tells of another Joseph, the son of Tobias, who came to Egypt in the days of the Ptolemies; and, though he possessed few of the virtues of his namesake, yet rose by sheer ability to the control of the royal revenues.

Egypt had a strange fascination for the Hebrews; and even in the Wilderness the people wished to go back, forgetting their slavery and remembering only the fertility of the country and its excellent fruits. Their prophets and lawgivers protested against the attraction of that highly civilised land, where the Jew was treated with a consideration, which was conspicuous both during the Persian and Macedonian occupations. When, therefore, Alexander with great sagacity selected the site of the place still bearing his name as the commercial capital of the new world he had called into being, and gave the Jews exceptional privileges, it is not surprising that Alexandria became one of the richest and most important centres of Judaism. Nothing can be more significant than the attitude of the Egyptian Ptolemies and the Syrian Seleucids towards the polity and religion of Israel, in the interest shown by the one and the intolerance displayed by the other.

Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 B.C.), who encouraged the translation of the Septuagint, and Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.), who defiled the Sanctuary, stand for the two extreme attitudes towards Judaism, and their respective policies had entirely opposite results. Whilst the brutality of Antiochus completely

alienated the Jews of Palestine from the Greek culture he clumsily attempted to introduce, the more kindly sympathy of the Ptolemies succeeded in Hellenising the Jews of Egypt. The results have endured to this day, Talmudic orthodoxy with its exclusiveness being the outcome of the persecuting provocation of Antiochus, and the widespread influence of liberal Judaism of the intelligent sympathy of Ptolemy. Rabbi Akiba may be said to be typical of persistent orthodoxy, Philo and St. Paul of a religion which appropriated the riches of the Gentiles to further development and progress.

Alexandria may be regarded as one of the most modern cities in antiquity; thoroughly cosmopolitan, with a population gathered from all parts of the world. It combined the characters of an emporium of trade, and a university town. Its importance to the surrounding nations as the centre of the corn trade made its good government vital to its rulers, and consequently, though its heterogenieous inhabitants were always inclined to disorder, all attempts in that direction were promptly suppressed. From the first the city enjoyed no little religious liberty. Alexander and the Ptolemies respected the ancient gods of Egypt and their priesthood, the Jews rapidly increased in wealth and population, and the chief temple was dedicated to Serapis, a deity introduced by the early Ptolemies with the object of uniting their Greek and Egyptian subjects in a common cult. This vast edifice with the Museum or university, the great library, and the zoological garden, were the visible symbols that the city was designed to combine the religions, the literature, and the science of a newly planned society of civilised humanity. The population, which must have exceeded a million, made Alexandria the second city in the Roman world.

The Jews formed one of the three main divisions of the city, and with the Macedonians enjoyed a privileged position from the days of Alexander. In intelligence, wealth and commercial enterprise they ranked among the best citizens, and though they were

sincerely devoted to their ancestral religion, despite occasional desertions of individuals to the heathen camp, they took their part in the civil and intellectual life of the great capital. Their own ruler, the Alabarch, or Ethnarch, was one of its leading citizens.

The Judaism of Alexandria is revealed in a Greek literature preserved chiefly by the Christian Church, notably in the Apocrypha, which as part of the acknowledged Scripture of the ancient Church, has received a semi-recognition among Protestants. To take but one book as a representative; one of the most illuminating is the so-called *Wisdom of Solomon*, the inherent excellence of which entitles it to rank with the best wisdom literature of the Old Testament. The religion inculcated is fundamentally Jewish; but the style, vocabulary and thought are thoroughly Hellenic. Its influence is apparent in the New Testament: both in doctrine and in the view taken of life it is uncompromisingly orthodox; but it does not represent the standpoint of the Holy Land.

After a short chapter on the nature of wisdom the goodness of God and His mercy to men, though He hates iniquity, the *Wisdom of Solomon* attacks the apostacy of the age. This is not manifested, as might be expected among the Jews, by neglect of the Law or desecration of the Sabbath but in an entire abnegation of every principle of religion. The Jewish apostates were turning not to the worship of the gods of Greece and Egypt, but to a crude rationalism leading to positive atheism, with a contempt for all morality. The arguments advanced against religion are a distortion of the teaching of Epicurus; not the rejection of old beliefs to seek happiness in a well-ordered life of moderation and refinement, nor the indignant protests against superstition which inspired Lucretius, but a shameless abandonment of all restraint of decency or thought for others. The apostate Jew here denounced is worse than the heathen, and is the persecutor of all who desire to retain their religion and to serve God. Against his practices the writer speaks in the person of Solomon, the wisest of men, who has

made Wisdom his bride, and in the eighth chapter he sings her praises. He obtained her by prayer and finds that her conversation "hath no sorrow but mirth and joy."

This beautiful book deserves more attention than it can receive here, where the object is simply to display one side of Alexandrian or at any rate Hellenic Judaism, influenced by the spirit of Greece and the outside world. The high moral tone is Stoic rather than Rabbinic. The date, the learning of the writer and much else is a subject of controversy; but the *Wisdom of Solomon* is certainly a pre-Christian work, and whether the author was a profound student of philosophy or not, those addressed are evidently permeated by the ideas of the age and city in which they lived. Though the work of wisdom is dwelt on in the story of Israel in the concluding chapters, the important question is not so much the future faith and hope of the nation, but the existence of a Providence and the possibility of a life after death. Upon the whole, the reading of the *Wisdom of Solomon* is one of the best introductions to the study of Alexandrian Judaism of which Philo is the best representative. Two things are being realised in the atmosphere of this new world that the old personal God of Israel is being so refined and dematerialised as to become The Incomprehensible and that His Wisdom or Reason has taken His place in theology.

Philo was a member of the richest and most honourable family in Jewish Alexandria. His brother was evidently a great financier, and at Rome enjoyed the patronage of the imperial family as manager of the estate of the sister of Tiberius. His son married into the family of Herod Agrippa, to whom his firm advanced large sums of money at a critical period of his adventurous career. One of Philo's nephews was Tiberius Alexander who apostasized from Judaism and became a distinguished general of Vespasian. As the official head of the Jewish community, Philo's brother, the Alabarch, was conspicuous for his devotion to his religion and his munificence to the Temple. From a wordly standpoint the family

represented all the prestige and eminence attainable by Hebrews in the Roman imperial system. Every advantage, therefore, a Jew could possess was attained by Philo. But whilst doubtless playing a leading part in the social, commercial and political life of Alexandria, Philo was pre-eminently a philosopher. He was acquainted with all the knowledge accessible to a student in his age, deeply read in Greek literature and conversant with the natural sciences which were pursued with so much ardour in his native city. Above all things, he was devoted to the Hebrew Scriptures, especially in their Greek form and he made these the basis, not only of his belief, but of his entire philosophy.

Little is known of the facts of Philo's private life; but he relates one personal experience which makes him a familiar figure in ancient history. Perhaps nothing better illustrates the conditions of life in the early days of the Roman Empire than his account of how he visited Rome in the days of Caius (Caligula) to remonstrate with that Emperor when he attempted to insist on the Jews acknowledging his divinity, shortly after a manifestation of popular fury against them in Alexandria. The whole story is so vividly related that it is not easy to realise how perplexing the facts actually are. At any rate, it exhibits Philo, not so much as a philosopher of immense learning, and as a deeply religious Jew, as it shows him in the light of a man of the world with an instinctive observation of human nature.

Since the days of the Persian Empire, the Jews have lived in precarious security in the midst of alien societies, and have been never free from the danger of violent outbreaks of popular indignation. It is not necessary here to say that in all parts of the world, not only among races naturally out of sympathy with them, but among kindred peoples the Jews have provoked the hostility of those who lived in contact with them. Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, in the days of Nehemiah, were quite as bitterly anti-Jewish, as Herr Hitler and his Nazis are to-day.

Anti-Jewish riots broke out in Alexandria at the time of the Emperor Tiberius's death in A.D. 37. There was a literary campaign headed by Apion, a grammarian with an Egyptian name, who bitterly assailed the nation on its traditions. He was answered by the historian, Josephus, and his name appears in Christian literature, though it does not occur in the voluminous works of Philo. But the passions of the mob were not stirred by philosophic or learned works, but were due to obscurer causes. The strange thing is that the furious outbreak against the Jews occurred at the time of the visit of Herod Agrippa to Alexandria, and is the more surprising from the fact that this Herod came to take possession of the Palestinian kingdom bestowed on him by his friend, the Emperor. The arrival of Herod with his royal honours fresh on him was the signal for a most unseemly exhibition on the part of the Gentile mob, who dressed up a well-known lunatic in kingly robes and saluted him as king, shouting the Syrian word, *Maris*, or Lord, in derision. This deliberate insult to the friend and nominee of Cæsar was allowed to pass with impunity by Avilius Flaccus, who had for six years been the imperial representative in the city. Herod Agrippa had the good sense completely to ignore the whole proceeding. Philo is our only authority for all this, and even Josephus says nothing about the incident, nor does he mention the name of Flaccus which never appears in any record of the period, although he is the subject of one of the most interesting and informing of the treatises of Philo.

The successor of Tiberius, Caius, the son of the beloved Germanicus, nicknamed Caligula, has gone down to posterity as one of the most infamous of men. It is necessary, however, to remember that his short principate (A.D. 37–41) covers a period related in those books of Tacitus' Annals which have been lost, and that the unspeakable scandals relating to the private lives of the emperors, especially those hostile to the Senate are constantly repeated, by the historians, and that almost

identical stories are related centuries later of the princely popes of the Renaissance. Here it is sufficient to state the facts regarding the attitude of Caius towards the Jews. His promotion of Herod Agrippa I to a throne in Palestine was a wise step as he gave them a ruler who, despite his profligacy and extravagance, was a scrupulous observer of their religion and was the only Herod whom the people ever loved. The disturbances in Alexandria are unaccountable, when they were directed against so intimate a friend of Caius, and could not have been encouraged to secure his favour. Flaccus, the enemy of the Jews, was deprived of his office in the city, and eventually put to death by order of the Emperor. All this makes the conduct of Caius in deliberately violating every Jewish scruple by resolving to place his own statue in the Temple so inexplicable. The only explanation of this act of mad folly was that Caligula who was young and inexperienced and, moreover, intoxicated by his popularity, was resolved to abandon the Augustan policy of exercising supreme power nominally as no more than the chief magistrate of the Republic, and to declare himself the Lord of the world possessed of the attribute of divinity.

The deification of distinguished men even in their lifetime is a practice repulsive to modern ideas and to the best Roman traditions but has widely prevailed in the East in all ages, where kings receive divine honours and find it not impolitic to accept them. There seems to have been a vein of insanity in Caligula; but one can understand that his motive for accepting and even claiming worship was not entirely due to madness. The divine honour bestowed on the Emperor was in a sense paid to the genius of Rome and consequently contributed to the unity of the Empire. The introduction of an imperial statue into a temple, like that of a national flag into a modern church, was regarded as a proof of loyalty to the State, and its exclusion was open to misinterpretation. Small wonder, therefore, that when the statue of Caius was ordered to be placed in the

Temple of Jerusalem, the Jews were horrified and that their enemies pointed out that their disobedience ought to be taken as a proof of disloyalty to his empire. Nor must it be forgotten that this command was withdrawn at the intercession of Herod Agrippa.

The treatise of Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*, culminates in an account of his own experiences as an ambassador of the Alexandrian Hebrew community. It is the only extant document of the reign of Caius which is absolutely contemporary, as the classical portrait of him by Suetonius who was alive in the first twenty years of the second century, Philo's embassy to Rome being in A.D. 40. The treatise deals with the relations of the emperors with the Jews before the accession of Caligula as an introduction to the actual embassy to him to prevent the erection of the statue.

The Legatio in some respects resembles the early Christian apologies, for one reason because it is addressed to an emperor who was never likely to see it. It opens with a very fine description of the world Empire of Rome, in which for the first time the human race was united under a single monarch. The peace and prosperity which the human race had enjoyed under its beneficent rule recalled the Golden Age of Saturn. Philo continues by describing the hopes aroused by the accession of Caius, the son of Germanicus, and the universal despair caused by the rumours of the illness of the Emperor. But when he recovered it became evident that sickness had impaired his reason, and the result was a series of crimes, which made him odious to mankind. One symptom of insanity was that Caligula assumed the dress and attributes of almost every god, not remembering that these deified personages had benefited humanity, which the Emperor never attempted to do.

The embassy of Philo and the deputation from Alexandria is related and gives an unique picture of the life of a Cæsar. The opponents of the Jews had impressed Caius by declaring that their nation was the only one on earth which declined to acknowledge his godhead

and aroused in his breast the most violent prejudice. He did not receive the Jewish delegates with proper dignity seated among his assessors and listening to the advocates of both sides, but let them present their cause informally as he was engaged in arranging a new palace. The whole proceedings, indeed, were more like a farce than a judicial hearing. Surrounded by his flatterers and the enemies of the Jews, Caius allowed the Alexandrian deputies to follow him from court to court, and from room to room giving orders to his servants.

But flippant and insulting as was the conduct of the Emperor it does not leave the impression that the Jews were dealing with a madman and a fool. Absurd as his conduct may have appeared, he showed a mastery of the situation. He welcomed Philo and his friends with brutality, and reproached them for not honouring his divinity, causing a thrill of horror when he uttered the unspeakable name of their God. Their enemies showed no little satisfaction and the delegates explained that the Jews offered sumptuous sacrifices in his honour, to which he replied, "Yes, but it was *for* me and not *to* me," and went on giving orders about the furniture. Suddenly, he turned and asked abruptly, "Why won't you eat pork?" The Jews gravely replied that each nation had its own laws and some refused to eat lamb, whereupon Caius burst out laughing and said, "They are right, it's poor meat." He went out giving orders about filling the windows with a substance which let in the light and kept out the cold—evidently glass. At last he became serious, and demanded a statement of the case, which he heard with patience, and said that the Jews were more unfortunate for denying him to be god, and dismissed them, amid the jeers of the courtiers. But if not gratified by the reception, Philo and his four friends had won their case.

The story of the embassy is important for the light thrown on the character of Philo, he being not only one of the most learned men of his day but one skilled in the practical affairs of life as one of the leading citizens of

Alexandria and a representative of Hebrew nationality. It also reveals the fact that Caius Caligula was no mere monster of iniquity, nor an irresponsible lunatic but one who could withdraw with skill from the difficult position his own folly had placed him by his attempt to force his worship on the Jews; for after all he did withdraw his order to place his statue in the Holy of Holies and prevent the outbreak of a despairing but formidable Jewish revolt.

To the historian of the Christian Church Philo is of great importance in helping to solve a difficult problem. After all, the Faith of Jesus, which was from the first a form of Judaism, ultimately overspread the entire world; for Jesus was not only a Jew but also one who based his message upon the hopes and the morality of the Old Testament, and His professed followers greatly outnumber the adherents of the most widespread religions of the world. If Islam, which cannot be counted by its bitterest opponents as heathenism, though it may be termed heresy, be included, Judaism in some form or other is now the religion of the greater part of the human race. It must be admitted that the essential principle of the revelation to Israel is the absolute unity and sovereignty of God on which the three monotheistic religions are in agreement.

The most remarkable feature of Christianity is its power of adapting itself to all conditions of life. It appealed to every class of men when the world was under the influence of Hellenic culture, Roman Law, and Oriental systems of religion. It survived the downfall of the ancient civilisation in the West and gained the adherence of the barbarians who destroyed it. The amazing progress of Islam failed to destroy the Eastern Church. It created the civilisation of the Middle Ages, it revived under other forms after the Reformation; and the new political, social and scientific revolutions of the succeeding centuries have been powerless to uproot it. This is the most significant lesson of its long history and is as much a problem to us as it has been to our ancestors.

One of the answers to this is supplied by a consideration of the origin of the religion in the part played by the Alexandrian Jews among whom Philo is an outstanding figure.

Philo was in the truest sense a "theologian" (for theology means the study of God), and the profoundest of all questions as to the nature and attributes of God was always in his mind. The God of the ancient Hebrews was intensely personal, and they conceived Him as having the characteristics of humanity. He has a local habitation and a Name. He comes down to see what men are doing; He shares in those feelings which are common to man; He even regrets what He has done. He has His favourites and His enemies. But though these qualities are inconsistent ideas of a true God, they certainly endeared Him to His people; and made them feel that they had in Him a constant Friend, to whom they could manifest their love by faith and obedience. But as the religious conscience of Israel developed, it was realised that this God was not merely the best and most powerful of all other deities, but that He was the ruler of the whole world, and Lord not only of Israel but of all men.

This altered and spiritualised conception of God had its reaction, notably in Hellenic Judaism. Monotheism in the sense of an exclusive deity, chiefly if not entirely confined to Israel, was being replaced by the recognition that God was interested in all mankind. The same idea was becoming prevalent everywhere and there was a tendency to realise that behind the national and local gods of antiquity, there was some One overruling power, existing from eternity. This feeling against polytheism reacted upon Jewish thought in the form of an impatience at the representation of the God of Israel as a magnified man. It was felt that the earlier ideas suggested in the Old Testament were unworthy of Him and in need of being refined.

But the price paid for spiritualising the conception of God is the destruction of all that is personal in Him. Israel had received the command, "Thou shalt love the

Lord they God, etc."; but human nature is so constituted that it cannot feel love for the Abstract. We find the truth of this in the Wisdom Literature in the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Apocrypha. The wise men profess their devotion not so much for God as for Wisdom. Their enthusiasm for this Divine Attribute makes them speak of her as a person, they call to her, they hear her addressing them, they desire her company. She is to them the assessor of God in the creation and ruling of the world. God to them is remote, unknown and unknowable; but they learn of Him through His Wisdom. This personification is later extended to the Source of all Wisdom, the Divine Mind or Logos. These notions are to have a powerful influence on the development of religious thought.

But if the Wisdom and Word of God are pervading His universe, they must be shared by all creatures with reason. Hence they are to be seen in men whether they belong to the polity of Israel or not. The Alexandrian Jews recognized, their Wisdom was due to a knowledge of something divine, the source of which could only be from the God of whose Law Israel was in possession, and the obvious inference was that the sages of old had somehow learned their wisdom as the Jews had from Moses. With this idea in mind Jewish thinkers set to work to prove a relationship between the wisdom of the pagan world and the revelation God had given to His people. This belief that Pythagoras and Plato borrowed their wisdom from Egypt, where it had been implanted by Moses and the patriarchs before him, had a practical value to the Jewish teachers as it justified their study of Gentile philosophy, at any rate to themselves, and enabled them to enjoy the benefit of the highest education of the age, and also fostered better relations with Gentile philosophy than would otherwise have been possible.

The Hebrew and Hellenic world had each what may be termed a Scripture of its own, the Law of Moses and the poems of Homer alike representing the inspired

wisdom of remote antiquity. But to the ordinary reader both of these contained much that appeared to be unedifying. Rightly to understand the message of the ancient world it was necessary to penetrate beneath the surface, and to search for a hidden meaning underlying narratives which seemed trifling or obscure. This method of interpretation is known as Allegorism and was universally popular, as it both rescued the early myths from the reproach of childishness, and stimulated the ingenuity of scholars. Examples of the allegorical system are to be found in the New Testament, notably in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, a very practical letter, in which, however, the two wives of Abraham, Hagar, the slave and Sarah the princess, are made to represent the two covenants of legal bondage, and evangelical freedom. Long before Homer's gods had been subjected to the same treatment as Israel's patriarchs by being explained away as types and figures of deeper truths, to be understood only by the initiates, the patriarchs of Genesis representing the moral virtues, and the gods of Homer more often the forces of Nature.

Judaism in Palestine and the East may be described as that of *halakah* (a rule of life), whilst that of Alexandria and the Hellenic world was interested in *haggadah* (meditation). The Law of Moses seems designed for a pastoral or, later, an agricultural nation; but by the first century of the Christian era the Jews were more numerous in the cities of the Empire than in the open country; the nation had, in fact, become urban rather than rural. The problem was how to adapt the ancestral customs to the new conditions. It was solved in two ways. The Pharisees representing the Palestinian school endeavoured to make the fulfilment of the Law possible by explaining its commands in such a way that every Israelite would keep it. They interpreted every command as being possible though difficult to observe. Every precept in it, even the most minute, had to be kept, and the Rabbis so interpreted as is possible to do this. The ultimate result of this was a legalism, which isolated those subject to

it from the rest of mankind. Circumstances made the Alexandrian Jews take a different view of the Law, and study it as a revelation of wisdom rather than as a guide to conduct. They found in it a philosophy of life, and were strongly attracted to that detachment from the world which Stoicism ardently preached. Their ideal was to free themselves from the material conditions of life and to seek for the consolation of a contemplative life; and whereas the Jew of Palestine disciplined himself by scrupulous attention to the precepts of the Law, the Alexandrian's ideal was one of separation from the rest of man which he believed to be attained by bodily abstinence.

Monastic asceticism or the banding of men together to practise self-discipline and contemplation has had an extraordinary influence on religion in every part of the world. It is perhaps less powerful in Judaism than elsewhere, but it was not alien to the Hellenic spirit. Pythagoras, the half-legendary founder of philosophic retirement, in the schools which bore his name, with their rules and discipline, was followed by such as Philo; and though his authorship of the *Contemplative Life* has been pronounced due to later Christian imagination, the ideals and system in many of his books, especially on Genesis, are Pythagorean as much as Jewish. It should always be remembered that Alexandria, the meeting-place of East and West, an Egyptian city with Greek culture, was a home of ascetisism and that the first Christians who embraced the monastic life received the impulse in or near that city. But the entire movement did not emanate from Palestine, nor from the teaching of the Founder. Its origin goes back to an earlier period and it seems to have sprung from many independent sources. Philo, a rich man immersed in the business of social and perhaps financial life, had much of the monk in his heart and the repulsion to material things shared by many Greek philosophers. His ambition must often have been to attain the blessing of ascetic contemplation in the company of men like-minded with himself. The monastic Christianity of the fourth century must have been

largely due to the influence of Hellenised Judaism in Alexandria.

It is scarcely possible that Philo should so much as have heard of Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee, despite Eusebius' statement that he met St. Peter in Rome. Nevertheless, he and his school played a great part in the history of the Christian Church by furnishing an explanation of some phenomena connected with its progress. An Hebraic Church could never have overspread the Gentile world. To the generality of mankind the proclamation that Jesus was the Messiah could never have appealed, and to many Jews it would have been unwelcome, and probably dangerous. The Athenians, we are told, mocked when St. Paul spoke to them of a Resurrection and a Day of Judgment, and the Apostle declares that the preaching of the Cross was "to the Greeks foolishness." In Philo's writings there is no suggestion of any Messianic hope.

The world indeed needed to be prepared for the message of Jesus, and nowhere was this preparation carried on more effectively than in Alexandria. To all appearance Hellenised Egypt and Palestine might be regarded as too incompatible to unite in furthering a new religion in common, and at first the Gospel seems to have only slowly permeated the Alexandrian community. Yet Philo with his highly intellectual and somewhat over-elaborated philosophy was in a true sense one of the great pioneers of a Faith he had never known. He was this because in his system the desires of thoughtful men were indicated, although by no means satisfied. The tendency of philosophy at this time was in the direction of monotheism and the only reasonable basis of religion was seen in at any rate postulating a single God in place of the many deities whom man worshipped. Judaism satisfied this need; and it was becoming generally an accepted view that the Unity of God was a dogma inherent in all natural religion. This truth, divorced from the exclusiveness of Judaism, the followers of Jesus were about to proclaim to the world.

The Alexandrians, as has been indicated, had been searching for a means of bringing the Impersonal and Incomprehensible Deity into some sort of relationship with humanity, by a personified Wisdom or Reason (*Logos*), and by spiritualised powers were endeavouring to satisfy the thirst of the soul for the Living God for which the Faith in Jesus was destined to supply a remedy. There was besides a growing conviction of a need for a religion accessible to the entire human race. At the very time that hostility to the Roman Empire, which was, at any rate, labouring to consolidate mankind in an international system, was developing in Palestine, Hellenised Jews like Philo were trying to make peace with Greek philosophy. Uncompromising as they were in their devotion to the revelation of God to Moses as they discovered it in the Five Books of the Law, they were striving to prove that the creed of the Lawgiver was the original and natural religion of all mankind. Thus, as some Christian Fathers subsequently realised, they were quite unconsciously Christians before Christianity, in so far as they expressed those ideas which the Faith realised. Philo and his scholars—Jewish, Platonist, and Pythagorean as they were—had undertaken a veritable *Præparatio Evangelica*, and difficult and sometimes dreary as the work of trying to understand them is, it cannot be neglected by the ecclesiastical historian.

CHAPTER V

Eusebius of Caesarea and his Predecessors

FROM the time of the third year of St. Paul's sojourn in Rome (A.D. 62) to the early days of the third century the Christians were making, but not writing, the history of the Church. Here and there we can construct the story of a local Church, Rome, Alexandria, Carthage, etc., but only for short periods, sometimes at considerable intervals from one author. It is not till we come to the days of Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine (d. 340), that we find a man who boldly attempted to be the historian of the Universal Church. This pioneer in our subject possessed two indispensable qualifications, an indefatigable power of research and an excellent library. He can be censured for his opinions, and criticised for his style, nevertheless, the Christian Church owes him a debt which can hardly be exaggerated; for without him its rise and progress could never be properly known, and many of his predecessors have been rescued from complete oblivion, to enjoy a fame to which their lives and writings had justly entitled them.

The long life of Eusebius of Cæsarea, roughly from 260 to 340, was in stirring times, and he played an active part in great events. It is, however, as a student that he is of especial interest to the historian; and here an attempt must be made to estimate what is his due by enquiring how much could have been known of the progress of the Church in early days had he never given the information contained in his *Ecclesiastical History*. The student would do well to remember that Eusebius is even more valuable when he treats of the past than when he deals with the events of his time where he was tempted to omit or misrepresent inconvenient facts.

The last words of the Acts of the Apostles leave us in complete ignorance of the rest of the career of St. Paul. St. Peter and the rest of the Twelve have vanished from our ken. If we except the Pastoral Epistles published under the name of St. Paul, we have no information except what we can gather from the so-called Apostolic Fathers, of some of whom we should know little but for Eusebius.

Until the Catholic Church had been virtually incorporated in the Roman Empire, it could not properly be said to have a history. The record of the Christian religion is really that of a number of Churches, isolated from one another but united in a common brotherhood. At the same time the little Christian bodies began to group themselves around certain important centres, and communicate with one another from an early date in order to consult about the common interests of the widely scattered Christian body. Jerusalem was naturally the first centre of the Church, but the destruction of the city by Titus made it impossible that this could continue; and several cities took the place of the original home of the Church. Of these we may mention Rome, Alexandria, Carthage, Antioch, Ephesus, and, perhaps Edessa. These may be taken in turn in our effort to determine what our knowledge of them would be but for Eusebius, though, strange to say, we now have a great deal more information than ever was accessible to the Father of Church History.

We may be sure that there was a Christian community at Rome at a very early date. The Roman believers were known to St. Paul, long before he reached the city; and from his Epistle one may infer that they were a fairly numerous, intelligent, and unmolested society. We have no information as to whether they were organised in anything like a Church, at any rate, before the arrival of St. Paul as a prisoner. That there was a society of some kind scarcely admits of a doubt; but the facts about the first days of the Roman Church, and even of its connection with Peter are more easy to assert than to prove.

Eusebius appears to possess very little knowledge about the Church of Rome; but, as he is above all things interested in chronology, and his *History* even suffers from being arranged on a too severe adherence to this method, he is most careful to record the succession of bishops in the Roman and other important Churches. This was in support of the argument of his entire *History*, which is to show the unbroken continuity of the True Faith in the Churches, of which the leading bishops were the repositories. Now it is remarkable that, whereas towards the close of the second century, Irenæus who had himself taught in Rome, says that the true doctrine was always preserved by that Church, having been handed down by its bishops from the days of the two founders, SS. Peter and Paul, so little can be proved as regards its original episcopate. Two of the most venerable sub-apostolic documents, the *Epistle of Clement*, and the *Shepherd of Hermas* are products of the Roman Church, and it was also the recipient of Ignatius' famous letters; but in all three there is no mention of a Bishop of Rome.

The so-called first Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians is an appeal of the Roman Christians to their brethren at Corinth to put an end to the factions prevalent in their Church. It suggests that the Christian community at Rome was already influential and felt entitled to address another Church in a certain tone of authority; that it had its rulers "bishops and deacons" admits of no doubt. The strange thing is that St. Clement, to whom the letter has been always attributed, and was a very prominent figure in the early tradition of the Church, does not write as the bishop, but anonymously in the name of the Roman Church. Almost contemporary with him was Ignatius, who, on his way to martyrdom, wrote to the Romans begging the members of their Church by their well-meant anxiety for him, not to deprive him of the glories of a martyr's death. We are able to draw certain inferences from the silences of this latter. In the first place, Ignatius never

alludes to the Roman Church having suffered persecution, nor does he, when speaking of Peter and Paul, allude to their having been martyred at Rome, although he might well have suggested that he was about to enjoy the same honour as they had gained there. Again, he is evidently not writing to a community of humble people, who lived in obscurity and poverty, but to an influential body whose intercession might procure a mitigation of his sentence, as he says that it would not be hard for them to do this. At the same time this great advocate of episcopacy not only does not mention the Roman bishop by name, but never alludes to his office in the Church of the imperial city.

The *Shepherd of Hermas* is a Roman document of much importance, letting a flood of light on the popular Christianity of middle class society; for whereas Clement is by tradition connected with an aristocratic and even an imperial family, Hermas says of himself that he was educated by a slave dealer and sold to a lady. Like many other slaves he became a freedman, married, had a family, and occupied an independent position as a prosperous tradesman. The Muratorian Fragment says that his brother Pius was Bishop of Rome; for an ex-slave might attain to an honourable social position, and, if his character was good, be chosen to rule his Church. *The Shepherd* is, as everyone knows, a collection of visions and precepts, though here and there we have glimpses of actual Church life. Discipline at Rome was strict, as one object of the book is to show that a grievous sinner might be readmitted to the Church, but only once. It is remarkable how rarely the officials are mentioned in this book. We are, however, informed that Clement is to communicate with foreign Churches, and Grapte with the widows. Perhaps Clement is the famous saint, but we do not know.

Later we are told that Hegisippus visited Rome after having remained long in the Corinthian Church. He bears emphatic testimony to the pure doctrine which Rome had received from the Apostles, and adds that he

had drawn up a "succession" (διαδοχή) of its bishops. If this interpretation be correct, it implies that there was no official catalogue, and that Hegesippus had some trouble in making one. That the accepted list was no invention is proved by the fact that although tradition asserts that Clement was ordained bishop by St. Peter, his name is third on the list as the successor of Linus and Cletus, of whom little is known. No controversial point can be made from these facts, though they have to be stated and their importance realised.

The obscurity which hangs over the early Church of Rome does not mean that it was disregarded in the Christian world. On the contrary, it inspired admiration for its adherence to the apostolic faith, and affection for its liberality and hospitality. This makes the general ignorance about its early bishops the more remarkable. Even when a pope begins to take an active interest in the affairs of other Churches, as Victor (190–198) did in the matter of keeping Easter, we hear very little about the action of any individual pontiff till the fourth century. Much, however, happened in the Roman Church during the third century, when, two such famous martyrs as Ignatius and Justin suffered. The different Gnostic sects were active in propagating their views; Marcion, their most original thinker went to Rome to advocate his theories. The Asiatic Montanists betook themselves thither, and, after being favourably received, were expelled from the Church by Victor. Polycarp of Smyrna visited Rome to discuss the Paschal question with Pope Anicetus; and Irenæus gave his epoch-making lectures against Valentinus and the Gnostics there. It is remarkable, therefore, that we learn so little about the Roman bishops, and that Tertullian, who was in constant communication with the imperial city, does not mention a single pope by name.

Here, perhaps, it may be well to collect all that Eusebius has to tell us about the Roman Church down to the persecution of Decius (249–251) and to leave the reader to draw his own conclusions. The briefest possible

survey must be employed to inaugurate a study of one of the most difficult problems of Church history.

The Second Book of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* has three references to Roman Christianity. St. Peter's first visit to the city was in the days of Claudius (41–54) for the purpose of overthrowing Simon Magus (ch. 14). St. Paul was acquitted of the charges against him made by the Jews. The two Apostles were martyred under Nero at the same time Peter on the Vatican, and Paul by the Ostian Road, the authorities quoted being Caius, the Presbyter, and Dionysius of Corinth, both of whom lived late in the third century (ch. 15), Euaristus succeeded Clement (34). The *Epistle of Clement* is mentioned and Hegesippus is quoted as an authority for the schism at Corinth (ch. 16). In Bk. IV we find the same condition. The Roman Church is of evident importance, but except the care with which the succession of bishops is noticed hardly anything is told us of them as individuals. And, though in all its early history every prominent Christian desired to get a hearing at Rome, and heretics like Valentinus, Cerdon and Marcion left their native cities to expound their views there, of the Church itself we learn very little and even in the third century, important movements like the controversy between Pope Callistus and his rival, Hippolytus, are passed over in silence. Perhaps the strength of the episcopate of the city owes something to the fact that it had for a considerable time no history, but maintained a dignified silence in upholding the Christian tradition and administering the affairs of the Church with discretion. The art of a good government is often to leave things as much as possible alone.

As a Christian centre Alexandria takes a place second only to Rome. Intellectually in the second and following centuries it towered above all the Churches of Eastern Christianity as the Church of Carthage did over those of the West. The names of Clement, Origen, Dionysius and Athanisius give Alexandrian Christianity an imperishable lustre. In his enumerations of bishops, Eusebius generally puts those of Rome and Alexandria side by side.

The origin of this great Church is veiled in obscurity. All we are told is that it was founded by the preaching of St. Mark; and here it may be remarked that the Roman Church, whilst conceding a primacy to Alexandria next to its own, always expected as representing St. Peter, filial obedience from the Church, which derived its origin from one whom the Apostle calls "Marcus my son." The Christians took over the Bible, the method, and the philosophy of Alexandria. Their Scripture was the Septuagint, and the allegorical treatment of it, as well as the use of the word *Logos* are derived from the Hellenistic Judaism of Alexandria. In the New Testament there is no mention of a Church of Alexandria and the only native of that city mentioned is Apollos. But its allegorical interpretation of the Bible is manifested in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and its philosophy in the Gospel of St. John. It is certainly remarkable that this Church should glory in its foundation by the author of the simplest of the Gospel narratives, though St. Mark's name is always connected with Rome, from whence the earliest and simplest of the Gospels may well have emanated. According to Jerome the government of the Alexandrian Church was in the hands of a bishop and twelve presbyters; and the bishop —the first to be known as a "Pope"—exercised almost unlimited power over the other bishops of Egypt.

Immediately after relating how Peter had sanctioned the use of the Gospel according to Mark in the Church, which he does on the authority of Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius goes on to say that Philo the famous Jewish philosopher went to Rome to visit the Apostle, who had previously sent Mark to preach the Gospel which he had written to the Alexandrians. In the next chapter the ascetic sect of the Therapeutæ, described by Philo, is attributed to Christian influence. Here it seems sufficient to indicate how important an influence Philo's was rightly supposed to have on several aspects of Christianity, especially in Alexandria. The long list of Philo's writings given by Eusebius proves that he was aware of this.

The list of bishops of Alexandria given by Eusebius contains a number of persons who are to us no more than names, till we come to the closing years of the second century, when the Church there appears as the great centre of intellectual Christian activity with its famous Catechetical School connected with its first great teacher, Pantænus. But at a very early date two great Gnostic systems are traceable to Alexandrian influence, those of Basilides and Valentinus, both of whom show great proficiency in the Christian Scriptures, Valentinus baseing his main theories on the Fourth Gospel. After Pantænus, the master of Clement of Alexandria, Alexandrian Christianity comes into the full light of history, and its teachers Clement, Origen, Athanasius, Didymus the Blind, and Cyril, were the leaders of one of the greatest schools of thought in the Church. The fame of the Egyptian patriarchate from the second century outwards makes the obscure origin of the See the more remarkable.

Even more noteworthy is the obscurity of the origin of a Church which had more influence on Western thought in early days than Rome, Carthage, and the African provinces over which its See virtually presided, produced three men who really determined the future of Western Christianity in Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine. Nowhere was persecution so severe as in Africa, and two of the most famous ancient "Acts," those of Perpetua, Felicitas and their companions, and of the Scillitan Martyrs belong to that province. Carthage may be called the home of Latin Christianity, the home of the Latin Bible, whereas the Roman Church of the first two centuries was mainly Greek, at any rate in language. A striking proof of our ignorance concerning the early Church of Carthage is the fact that we do not know who its bishops were. Cyprian in 248 succeeded Donatus, of whom nothing more is known: before him we have only two or three names of bishops, and no fact concerning them. Yet in the days of Tertullian who died between 230 and 240, we realise that the Christianity of

Carthage was extremely active and in constant communication with the Roman See.

We turn in vain to Eusebius for information. Till the days of Cyprian the name of this great city does not appear. It is not until we come to the Novatian Schism (Bk. VI. ch. 43) that we hear of the great bishop, and the only other allusion to him is connected with the controversy about heretical baptism. In both of these the Eastern Church was keenly interested.

Thus both of Rome and Carthage one of the most learned of the Fathers, who read all the historical information accessible to him in Antioch, Cæsarea Stratonis, and Jerusalem, with their fine libraries, is surprisingly devoid of any information, although considerable use is made of the testimony of Tertullian.

We learn from the New Testament that the Syrian Antioch, the capital of the Eastern world was, after Jerusalem the first home of Christianity. It was the earliest Church to plan a wide missionary campaign and it was deeply indebted to Barnabas, whose remarkable appreciation of the zeal and ability of Paul made him enlist the services of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. So far as we are able to judge, Barnabas is the real founder of the Antiochian Church, who has perhaps received from posterity less credit than he deserves. But, in the desire to trace its origin to St. Peter, Antioch has attributed the honour of its planting to the Prince of the Apostles, who, according to the Epistle to the Galatians, did not play a very creditable part when he visited the city, and was severely rebuked by St. Paul for his inconsistent attitude towards the Gentile converts. The first Bishop of Antioch was Evodius and there is no early evidence that he was ordained by St. Peter. But so great was the importance and influence of Antioch as the primatial See of the East that it was natural that tradition connect it with the leader of the Apostolic College, and by the fifth century the Petrine origin was an accepted fact.

Evodius was succeeded by Ignatius, whose martyrdom

at Rome gave an undying glory to his Church. The story of the circumstances of his martyrdom would be incredible were it not that the evidence for his being the author of the letters were overwhelming. Very early in the second century within seventy years or so of the foundation of the Christian Church, a Christian bishop was considered by the Roman government of sufficient importance to be sent to the imperial city under a guard of ten soldiers, in order that he might be exposed to death by the beasts in the amphitheatre. His journey to a cruel death was a triumphal progress: deputations from Christian Churches awaited him: he wrote and received letters. To all appearance none of his friends were denied access to the saint; nor were they apparently in any danger because of their religion. The most remarkable of the Ignatian letters was addressed as has been shown, to the Roman Christian community, begging them not to deprive the writer of the glory of martyrdom. From this, one is compelled to infer that there was no general persecution and that Ignatius was regarded by Trajan's government as a very important criminal, exceptionally dangerous to the State. This is attested by the fact that Ignatius himself admits that after he had been arrested and condemned his fellow Christians began to be let alone. The literary controversy concerning the letters and their different recensions has possibly caused scholars to overlook the improbability of the circumstances. Here it is impossible to do more than suggest a solution. The East was in a desperate condition owing to the seditions of the Jews. Even in the reign of Domitian there had been a fear that the followers of Jesus, still regarded as a Jewish sect, looked for a Messianic deliverance to appear on earth. It may be that Trajan resolved upon annihilating these wild aspirations by arresting the most prominent of the Christians in Antioch and sending him to a shameful execution in Rome as a dangerous fanatic. This at least would account for the large guard which escorted Ignatius and also for the indulgence these greedy police

allowed to be shown him on exacting a heavy price for their complaisance. The martyr complains that the "ten leopards," as he calls his guards made his life intolerable; and, the more they were paid, the worse they treated him,—doubtless in the hope of extracting more money.

Although Eusebius is careful to record the Antiochene succession of bishops, he tells us little about the Church, till we come to his later books. Before the end of the second century, however, there were two notable men in Theophilus the first of the Fathers, who, so far as we know, applied the word Trinity (Τριάς) to the divine nature, and Serapion who discovered that the so-called Gospel of Peter was an heretical document. The fame of the school of Antioch, which rivalled that of Alexandria, dates from these bishops and became established by the middle of the third century. The spread of Aramaic-speaking Christianity, with the curious story of Abgar, King of Edessa, and his correspondence with Christ, has some connection with the Christianity of Antioch.

The Churches of Asia, of course, play a great part in the New Testament, and the names of Peter, Paul and John are connected with them, as also are the First Epistle of Peter, addressed to the different provinces of the peninsula, those of Paul to Ephesus, and Colossæ, and the Apocalypse and Gospel according to St. John. Omitting for the present all critical questions, this is enough to prove that by the close of the first century, Asia Minor was possibly the chiefest centre of primitive Christianity. The famous correspondence between the young Pliny as governor of Bithynia and the Emperor Trajan, shows that in the early years of the second century the progress of the new religion had become a formidable economic question, affecting the agricultural interests of the province. We cannot overlook the immense influence of Asiatics in the Western Church exercised so notably by Irenæus, who in Rome attacked Gnosticism and upheld the Catholic tradition, and later

presided over the Christians of Lyons who had only just emerged from the fierce persecution in the days of Marcus Aurelius. Nor may we disregard the prophets of Montanism and the attraction of this outburst of enthusiasm in Rome and Africa. Nothing, however, can better illustrate the importance of this widespread Church than the tone of the letter of Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, to Pope Victor, who had tried to bring the Churches of Asia into conformity with that of Rome. Victor is reminded that Ephesus can boast of the two virgin daughters of Philip the Apostle, as well as St. John who leaned on the Lord's breast, Hierapolis of Philip, Smyrna of Polycarp, and other bishops and martyrs. Polycrates himself came of a family which could already claim seven bishops, the inference being that if Rome could claim apostolic authority, Asia had an equal right to do so. How important the Asian community was to Eusebius, who derived his information mainly from the Christian libraries of Jerusalem, Cæsarea, and Antioch, and regarded Origen, the greatest Alexandrian, as his master, may be seen in his employment of the Asiatic Fathers as authorities.

Of all the extracts made by Eusebius we owe him the heaviest obligation for the two stories embodied in letters from the actual scenes of their sufferings to other Churches. Among all the records of martyrdom the Epistles of the Church of Smyrna to that of Philomelium telling of the death of St. Polycarp, and that of Lyons in Gaul, addressed to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia are the most instructive and beautiful. These, it is hardly too much to say, give us a better idea of the sufferings endured for Christ than any others in the voluminous martyrologies. The fine spirit exhibited by the martyr Polycarp, and the charity shown by the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne to their less resolute brethren, reveal the best side of early Christianity, and the tale in both instances is told with little exaggeration, yet with so much vividness that we can easily imagine the circumstances. The preservation of these two

beautiful accounts is one of the greatest debts the Church owes to Eusebius.

In the account in the *History* of three great Asian Fathers we see the same feature in Asian Christianity as is revealed in the letter of Polycrates to Victor, namely the insistence of its intimate relation with the Apostles. Papias of Hierapolis, Polycarp of Smyrna and, later Irenæus, who never lost touch with the Church in which he was born represent the tradition received at first hand from the apostolic founders of the Church.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis is introduced in HE III, 36, as a very learned man (λογιώτατος), if these words are part of the text. It does not appear that he was an actual hearer of the Apostles of the Lord but he sought his information from the Christians of the next generation and specially mentions the daughters of Philip (the Apostle or the Deacon) who ended their days at Hierapolis. Irenæus, who was a disciple of Polycarp, suggests that Papias knew St. John; but Eusebius doubts this and thinks that Papias means by "John" not the Evangelist, but the Elder who was author of the Apocalypse. The remarks of Papias on the origin of the Gospels according to Mark and Matthew have been made the subject of a veritable library of commentators. Here we allude to him as standing for primitive tradition on which the Asian Church laid such stress.

But Papias represents another side of native Christianity. He was an ardent Chiliast or Millenarian, believing in a return of Christ to reign on earth for a thousand years as is promised in the Book of Revelation. This literal interpretation has always persisted in the more enthusiastic forms of Christianity and continues to be held to this day. To Eusebius and the school to which he belonged this view was extremely repugnant, and he calls Papias "a man of very limited intelligence." The Asian provinces did not produce heresies so much as fanatical movements, not altogether unlike those which prevailed in the heathen worships prevalent in the district, which had so powerful an influence throughout the Roman world.

The "false prophets" of Phrygia occupy the attention of Eusebius, who gives us valuable quotations, illustrative of the Montanist movement which distracted Asia Minor in the third century. Although Eusebius describes Montanism as the "Cataphrygian heresy" it was not, in our sense of the word a heresy, the Montanists holding in the main the accepted doctrines of Catholic Christianity. Indeed, the movement was one in favour of simple faith, as opposed to the philosophic theories of the Gnostics. It has its analogies in almost every period of Christianity. It may be maintained, at least, with plausibility, that the Church as an organised body has always stood for a reasonable faith and practice and opposed any form of what used to be called "enthusiasm." But from time to time a man arises, who is dissatisfied with the ordinary life of average Christians and desires something which appeals to his emotions and satisfies his spiritual cravings. Such was Montanus, who, carried away by a prophetic impulse, believed that he was the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit and the harbinger of a new dispensation. Enthusiastic women joined in the movement and prophesied to the great discomfiture of the bishops, who considered the inspiration claimed to be demonic and tried to exercise the evil spirit.

Instead of giving his own views of this remarkable and widespread movement and his private views on the subject, Eusebius, as is often his wont, lets its earliest opponents speak and gives a long series of extracts from an unnamed antagonist of Montanism, which enable us to see how it was regarded at the time of its appearance. He quotes writers named Miltiades and Apollonius and also Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, who give a vivid if not a very clear picture of the origin of the enthusiasm aroused by Montanus.

Another indication of the vitality of early Christianity in Asia Minor is seen in the issue of Spurious "Acts" of various apostles. The earliest of these "Acts" those of John, a Gnostic production said to be by Leucius, who is no more than a name to us, though this books apparently

by the middle of the second century were widely known and circulated as far as Egypt and Roman Africa. In the closing years of that century a priest composed in honour of the Apostle an "Acts of Paul," orthodox, but influenced by Leucius. This was rejected as Scripture by the Church. In the third century "Acts" of Peter, Andrew, and Thomas were composed, and these five appeared later under the name of Leucius. The popularity of these "Acts" may account for the attention paid to the Canon of Scripture as is evidence by that somewhat voluminous writer, Melito, Bishop of Sardis, from whom Eusebius freely quotes.

This digression is permissible if only to show that in the province of Asia and in all the peninsula there was a widespread Christian population not only of the apostolical and organised religion, but also of a popular craving for the more marvellous aspect of the Faith in districts which produced those exciting cults which appealed to the people throughout the Empire. No group of Churches exercised so widespread an influence on the spread of the Christian religion than the Asiatic, as will be evident from this survey embracing Rome, Alexandria, Carthage, and Antioch. Eusebius also hints at the very powerful impression made by the Aramæan-speaking Churches of the East, when he relates the story of the correspondence between Abgar of Edessa with Jesus Himself.

Chapter VI

The Greek Historians after Eusebius

Whatever may be the merits or the defects of Eusebius of Cæsarea as an historian, it cannot be denied that as "the father of Church history," he gave birth to a numerous offspring. Those writers of exceptional interest in the Eastern branch of the Church carried on his work down to some thirty years after the beginning of the fifth century. It is noteworthy that the first two of these, Socrates and Sozomen, were laymen; and, although they were undoubtedly men devoted to their religion, they do not write from a standpoint of ecclesiastical piety. What they specially admire in the Christian religion is its ascetic spirit; their heroes are monks rather than bishops. Moreover, especially Socrates, these historians write about schismatics and even heretics with a moderation and a desire to do them justice which, in the eyes of some modern writers, has laid them open to the charge of being of lukewarm orthodoxy.

Constantinople in the days of Socrates and Sozomen, though situated on the site of the ancient and not altogether obscure town of Byzantium, was essentially new. Constantine had displayed restless energy in hastening the erection of the place which he had decided to make the administrative seat of the reconstituted Roman Empire. He succeeded in completing the city within four years of the marking out of its limits. He ransacked cities and provinces for objects of art to decorate the streets, the squares, and the race-course. He offered every inducement to persuade senators or men of wealth and respectability to inhabit the New Rome, whither adventurers of every kind flocked.

The early days of Constantinople bore the impress of its sudden growth: with all the monuments of ancient art collected within its walls, it was a mushroom town. It suffered great damage from earthquakes; and this has been attributed to the unsubstantial foundation of building which had arisen "like the exhalation of a dream." The population was as heterogeneous as its ornaments, and its parvenu aristocracy lacked the gravity of the nobility of old Rome. Constantinople, moreover, was an Oriental rather than a Western city. Its main population was Levantine, and its court and government, though consistently claiming to be Roman, was Eastern. The chief offices of State were at times monopolised by eunuchs, and its politics were those of the seraglio.

On the other hand, Constantinople, the New Rome, marking as it did the beginning of a new era, was from the first, Christian, and displayed certain refinements to the advantage of the old City. The populace were not indulged in the bloodthirsty spectacle of gladiatorial games, nor did impurity flourish openly under the sanction of religion. None of its emperors were as bad as the worst of the Roman Cæsars are said to have been; and the domestic lives of Constantine's successors for more than a century were singularly blameless. With all its defects, we feel that, in relating the story of the place, we are in a Christian atmosphere.

Like the City, the Church of Constantinople can be contrasted with that of Rome. We can never forget, that, whereas in the ancient City the Christian system developed spontaneously, that of its modern counterpart was fostered under imperial patronage. The Church of Rome from the earliest times had been an influential body and had attracted the attention and suspicion of the Government. Subject repeatedly to persecution it had steadily maintained its influence and increased its prestige. Even after the Peace of the Church it had to hold its own in a profoundly pagan city. Its bishops were generally men of independent character, impatient

of dictation. Some emperors after Constantine might try to coerce, but never to patronise the Pope. Moreover, the Roman Church maintained its unbending orthodoxy, indifferent to the controversies which distracted the East on subtle theological questions.

The Bishop of Constantinople, on the contrary, was the servant of the Emperor. In the fourth century he was in rank no more than an ordinary bishop, inferior in dignity and prestige, not only to Rome, but to Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and even other Sees. When Constantinople came to be acknowledge as the second See in the Christian world, its bishop was never able to act as one independent of the imperial power.

Herein lies the difference between Roman and Greek ecclesiastical history; the one is centred in the Pope, the other in the Emperor. A writer like Socrates, as will appear, could never, in Rome, have composed a history displaying such independence of judgment uncontrolled by ecclesiastical prejudice.

The facts of the life of Socrates Scholasticus are derived from his own statement in the prefaces to some of the seven books of his *History*.

Like most of his educated contemporaries, Socrates studied under pagan professors of rhetoric. At what age he became a Christian we are not informed but, even if he had been baptised as a child, he had his best literary training at the hands of non-Christians. Education was then what we should now describe as "classical," by scholars imbued with a culture based upon the religion of the ancient world. Indeed, in the non-theological literature of this, and even a later age, it is remarkable for the way the very existence of the Christian religion is completely ignored. Socrates tells us that his instructors, when he was a mere boy, were two heathen sophists, Helladius, and Ammonius, who had fled from Alexandria when the temple of Serapis, which they as priests of the gods had vigorously defended, was destroyed in A.D. 388.

Socrates was born probably about the time of the

accession of Theodosius, whose reign is marked by the triumph of orthodox Christianity as the official religion of the Roman world. The childhood of the historian witnessed the disendowment of the old religion and the official recognition of the Faith as held by the Bishops of Rome and Alexandria, in other words, of the Creed of the Council of Nicæa. In his lifetime the old order was passing rapidly away and making room for the medieval age of imperial Christianity. When Socrates reached maturity not only was the triumph of the Faith assured, but it was no longer a question whether the civilised world was to be guided by any other form of doctrine than the Orthodoxy supported by the Roman law.

We may assume that Socrates was born about A.D. 378, and he concludes his *History* in the year 439, although after the Council of Ephesus, 431, he records nothing but what is brief, trivial, and unimportant. His life covers a very critical period in the history of the Church of Constantinople, during which Eastern Christianity took permanent form. In his infancy, the Goths utterly defeated the Roman army near Adrianople, where the Emperor Valens was killed. Gratian, the son of Valens' brother, Valentianian, wisely sent Theodosius, a distinguished Spaniard, to the East with the dignity of Augustus. This great emperor amply justified the choice of the youthful Gratian, and delivered the portion of the Roman world entrusted to him from the barbarian invaders. Theodosius professed the Christianity of Nicæa; and, having received baptism at the hands of Ascholius, Bishop of Thessalonica, came to Constantinople as the supporter of Orthodoxy. The City had been in the hands of the Arians under the Emperor Valens, who actually persecuted the Nicæan party. Theodosius invited Gregory of Nazianzus to teach the Orthodox Faith, and his eloquence—he is known in the Eastern Church as "The Theologian"—won the people. A council of one hundred and fifty bishops assembled in 381 to settle the Arian controversy; and though it was not

representative, its proceedings being marked by intrigue and ignoble disputes, it is reckoned as the Second General Council. Gregory of Nazianzus, despite the fact that he was one of the three great Cappadocian Fathers, famed alike for his learning and his truly Christian character, was obliged to withdraw from the episcopal throne, and Nectarius the Prætor, though unbaptised, was chosen to fill his place. According to one account, a list of eligible candidates was submitted to Theodosius, from which he selected Nectarius. If so, we have a forecast of the ecclesiastical history of Byzantium.

Theoretically, the people of a Church elected their bishop, but on this occasion the Emperor's nomination was accepted without question. That this was to become the rule is apparent in the choice of a successor to Nectarius, whose comparatively uneventful episcopate ended with his death in 397. Theodosius had been succeeded by his youthful son, Arcadius. The successor to Nectarius was the great St. John Chrysostom, appointed at the suggestion of the chief minister, Eutropius, a eunuch, who had heard of his fame as a preacher at Antioch, and had him literally dragged from that City to undertake the office of Bishop of Constantinople. The story of Chrysostom, his influence and popularity, his eloquence which first charmed and then offended the leaders of society, the cruel persecutions he underwent, the charges brought against him, his exile and death, are not exceptional episodes in the careers of bishops of the capital of the Eastern part of the Empire.

The successors of Chrysostom need not here occupy our attention till 426 when the difficulty of a disputed election was solved, as before, by sending to Antioch for another famous preacher in the person of Nestorius. The episcopate of the heretic bears a close analogy to that of the saint. Exposed to the intrigues of his own clergy, the unscrupulous tactics of the Bishop of Alexandria and the hostility of the court, Nestorius was accused of heresy, condemned by the General Council of Ephesus, and hurried into exile. Nestorius may have

been guilty of heresy; but his treatment cannot be excused, by the zeal for the Faith manifested by those who compassed his ruin. In such an atmosphere of ecclesiastical politics, Socrates lived; and we can scarcely wonder that his contemporary, Philip, Bishop of Side, gave his own book the title of *Christian* rather than *Ecclesiastical History*. In the preface to his Sixth Book, Socrates apologises for not speaking of the bishops of his own day by their proper titles, "Dearest to God," "Most Reverend," etc., and when we read of their behaviour we understand his reluctance to do so.

We can form a judgment of what manner of man our historian was from the prefaces to some of his books; and, although he was evidently not a great writer, we cannot but feel that he was an honest and most likeable man. He tells us that he proposes to continue the work of Eusebius; but as he considers that the Life of Constantine was rather a panegyric than a history, and that Eusebius has hardly touched on the Arian controversy, Socrates starts from the conversion of the Emperor. When he reaches the Second Book he tells his friend or patron, Theodore, that he had used Rufinus too confidingly, and consequently had rewritten the first two books of his history. As he approaches his own time he informs Theodore in the preface to the Sixth Book, that he has deliberately avoided using a style acceptable to critics because his purpose was to write for ordinary folk who wanted information; and with this object in view he aimed at clearness rather than eloquence. Further, he promises that when he relates what he himself has seen, he will confine himself to the simple facts, and when he has to rely upon others he will endeavour to sift their testimony and ascertain the facts. It is impossible to give Socrates a high place even among Church historians, nevertheless, he exhibits a spirit which those who have followed him down to the present day might have acquired with advantage.

Some of his most pungent remarks on the Arian controversy are those which a clergyman could scarcely have

made. Socrates was by profession a lawyer (*scholasticus*), and was on the side of all which made for peace and good government. He notices that whenever the Church is distracted, civil disturbances ensue, and he has the practical objection of a layman to disputes on theological subtleties being allowed to disturb public tranquility. He writes, without fanaticism, as one holding strictly to the Orthodox Faith.

One phrase of his in describing the events after the Council of Nicæa reveals a detachment which no ecclesiastic could have manifested. With more acuteness than piety he declares that the disputes which ensued were like "a fight in the dark" in which the combatants struck blindly at friend and foe without clearly discerning who was on their side. We may, however, be sure that Socrates would more likely have ranged himself at this juncture with Eusebius of Cæsarea than with Athanasius.

But there is little need to conjecture how Socrates might have acted in a controversy which was finally settled in Constantinople before his time, when we know what his attitude was in ecclesiastical disputes which in his day engendered a bitterness at least as great as in the Arian controversy, and endured far longer. He was a young man when John Chrysostom was driven from Constantinople, and of mature age when the Nestorian heresy arose. It must have seemed hard for any contemporary to write dispassionately of the episcopate of Chrysostom, a man who exhibited in his person some of the best qualities of a Christian bishop, a severe reformer of abuses, yet a tender father to his people, whose love he never forfeited; one who made mistakes, but whose oratory bestowed imperishable lustre on the Church of Constantinople.

John of the golden mouth, was a true saint, and Socrates realises this, but he describes his troubles with great frankness, and is not blind to his faults. The unpopularity of Chrysostom was due not only to his virtue and reforming zeal, but also to irritability of temper and

to a certain ungraciousness of demeanour. The archdeacon, Serapion, was more disliked by the clergy than the bishop, whose habit of dining alone and not keeping an open table exposed him to a suspicion of haughty contempt of his colleagues. When the Empress Eudoxia became Chrysostom's bitter enemy, his injudicious sermon, in which he compared her to Herodias, provoked her, not unnaturally, to do all she could to compass his ruin. Whilst doing justice, therefore, to the merits of the bishop, the historian has to admit that his temper and lack of discretion made his exile inevitable. When we remember that when Socrates wrote, Chrysostom's body had been taken back to Constantinople and placed with great veneration in the imperial burying place, the Church of the Holy Apostles, and moreover, that the historian was in thorough sympathy with the saint's views, we are astonished at his frankness.

Still more remarkable is Socrates' account of Nestorius. That most unfortunate prelate and preacher had been condemned by the Third General Council of Ephesus in 431. All his friends had deserted him. He was long alive in exile, and was destined to survive St. Cyril, Pope Celestine, and all his enemies. His name was execrated as connected with heresy, and there was every inducement for a living historian to abuse him. For all this, Socrates deals with him with astonishing impartiality, and even explains that Nestorius was not the sort of heretic he was considered to be. Socrates frankly disliked Nestorius. He was disgusted by his intolerance, his constant readiness to make trouble, and his zeal as a heresy-hunter. He could not endure his fluency of speech combined with ignorance of the elementary principles of the theology, which he was so ready to expound to his audience. John Chrysostom appears in the history as an eloquent saint who was at times indiscreet, and Nestorius as an eloquent fool who made mischief by discoursing on subjects he did not understand. Socrates had evidently a Christian reverence for John, and a lawyer's contempt for Nestorius.

Nevertheless, our historian tries to be scrupulously fair. He declares that he has read what Nestorius wrote and has recorded his errors without prejudice. At the same time, he will not depreciate him to oblige anybody. It was customary to fasten upon anyone accused of unorthodox teaching the imputation of being a follower of the worse or most unpopular heretics of antiquity, and Nestorius was consequently supposed by the party opposed to him to be tainted by the false doctrine of Paulus of Samosata. But Socrates carefully explains that Nestorius was guiltless of denying the humanity of our Lord, and that his fault lay in his being observed by a mistaken idea that the word *Theotokos* (she who begat God), applied to the Blessed Virgin, was an unwarrantable novelty, whereas it had been in constant use by the Fathers. In short, Nestorius had made a bugbear of it (*mormolukei*). He had fallen into the mistake of supposing in common with some later pulpit orators that eloquence could be a substitute for profound learning, and the whole bitter controversy which he had aroused was unnecessary.

The common sense of Socrates combined with his appreciation of the true essence of the Christian religion appears in his long chapter in the Fifth Book on the date of keeping Easter, the fixation of which Eusebius considers to be one of the most important tasks of the Council of Nicæa. How embittered a controversy this matter engendered is seen three centuries later when it became the point at issue between the Roman and Celtic missionaries in Britain. Socrates plainly says that the question has nothing whatever to do with the Faith in Christ, which originally took no interest whatever in Church festivals or rites, as it was not, like Judaism, a religion of ritual, but of the Spirit. He goes on to show that in his day every Church had its peculiar customs and yet this did not impair the unity of the Faith nor, indeed, Christian harmony. Local Churches had different customs as to fasting, the time for administering baptism, clerical celibacy. Even the eucharist was celebrated in

some place in the morning and at others in the evening, and sometimes the sacrament was received fasting and occasionally not. Socrates remarks with disgust that there were Christians who were actually indifferent to the most obvious moral laws, and yet quarrelled about feast days as though these were a matter of life and death. The whole 21st Chapter of the book is a most illuminating summary of Christian practice in the early days of the fifth century, and is a testimony to the good sense and liberality of spirit in days when ceremonial in matters secular as well as religious was being regarded as increasingly important.

To the average clerical mind schism is, if less heinous, at least far more inconvenient than heresy itself; and a History of Christian schisms has perhaps not been attempted so far as we are aware, because the subject is inexhaustible as well as a disgraceful exhibition of un-Christian bitterness. One of the earliest schisms began in the Church of Rome, and diffused itself throughout the Christian world and is known as Novatianism. Novatianus in the middle of the third century was made Bishop of Rome as a rival to Cornelius, and may be called the first Antipope. He represented the old party of extreme severity which refused all hope of readmittance to the Church to those who had been guilty of apostasy. He consecrated bishops for different Churches and the schism spread rapidly in the East and was influential in Constantinople; and, though we hear little or nothing of Novatianus' successors in Rome, the sect must have been widespread, if not aggressive, elsewhere. The doctrinal position of Novatianus was unimpeachable, and his book on the Trinity was accepted as authoritative. When the Arian controversy arose, the Novatians were staunch opponents of the heresy, and as such were the allies of the Church from which they had seceded; and one of their bishops, Acesius, was summoned to give his testimony at the Council of Nicæa, and was ultimately allowed to preside over his Church at Constantinople. The Novatianists appear to have been a small rigid and respected

party of Puritans, austere in life and not inferior to churchmen in learning. They may be said to bear an analogy with the Plymouth Brethren in England. Socrates lived on very friendly terms with them; and has been perhaps unjustly accused of being himself a Novatianist. At any rate, he was an admirer of the schismatical Bishop Sisinnius, and his churchmanship did not prevent his friendship with nonconformity.

The partiality shown by the historians of the period for monastic virtues and practices and their credulity in the matter of the miraculous may be criticised, but can be accounted for if we bear in mind the conditions under which they lived. The Church was rapidly becoming subservient to the imperial government, and the most important questions of the Faith were decided ultimately one way or the other by political considerations. Several of the emperors were weak men, sometimes in the hands of their abler wives, at others, the tools of scheming eunuchs, or powerful barbarian generals. The bishops were often as unspiritual as the politicians, and were intriguing against one another. It is little to be wondered at that men fled from the world to the desert and found solace in pious solitude, and that good men who had a part to play in the world turned with admiration of those who were shunning it. The monks were at least in earnest, and the monastic movement was striving after an ideal.

As to the credulity of so wise and judicious a man as Socrates in regard to miracles, while making all allowance for the unscientific condition of people in the Roman world, it may be said that a craving after the supernatural is inevitable in days of pessimism, even when the knowledge of what are called "the natural sciences" is universally diffused. Years later, it is true, we have the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great, a saint, but all the same, an excellent administrator, and one of the greatest statesmen in history, who finds consolation in the hours of deepest depression in relating to his Deacon, Peter, all the marvels God has wrought in his own days. Even

the most improbable "miracles" are accepted when the world is darkest, and the prospect of better things most dim. Socrates had some serious limitations, but he deserves a high place as an honest man who did his best to judge the men of his time, fairly and dispassionately.

Very different were the antecedents of Sozomenus (Preserved), the contemporary of Socrates. Whereas Socrates was a native of Constantinople and a pupil of heathen philosophers and lawyers, Sozomen was born in a Palestinian village, called Bethelia, near Gaza. He belonged to a Christian family with an hereditary admiration for the neighbouring ascetics. The grandfather was converted by St. Hilarion, a disciple of St. Antony, who had expelled a demon from his friend, Alciphron. Sozomen was, indeed, educated in an atmosphere of miracle and piety and was a consistent admirer of monastic Christianity as is apparent from his *History*. Photius, the famous Patriarch of Constantinople in the ninth century, one of the greatest bibliographers of all time, prefers the more ornate Greek of Sozomen to the simpler language of Socrates, but this verdict has not been endorsed by posterity. Both historians begin with Constantine and allude to events which happened in 439, but Sozomen evidently wrote later, and often copies Socrates. At the same time his history has an independent value, and Sozomen is in some respects more widely acquainted with the happenings of the time. For instance, Socrates tells us very little of the affairs of the West in his day, and is by no means well informed as to what happened in Rome and Italy. He tells hardly anything of the career of St. Ambrose of Milan, and if he were the only Greek authority, the people of Constantinople would have known little about him; whereas Sozomen tells us of Ambrose's courage in braving the victorious Emperor, Theodosius, and much else besides.

What are supposed to be the faults of Sozomen, his credulity and his digressions in honour of the ascetics of his time add to the value of his record as an historical

document, inasmuch as he reveals the mind of his age. There is, for example, a delightful chapter about Spyridion, of Cyprus who was present at the Council of Nicæa, revealing the shrewd simplicity of the rustic bishop. Sozomen's description of the city of Constantinople is extremely graphic; and the account of the Council of Nicæa, full of incidents which a graver historian might have omitted, is eminently lively and readable. It is, in fact, a mistake to suppose that Sozomen can be dispensed with by those who have read the more matter of fact Socrates; for he gives us a real insight into the Christian life of the fourth and fifth centuries.

In one thing the two historians seem to be agreed. Both were laymen and trained for the legal profession, and exhibit a creditable absence of bigotry in speaking of those who differed from them in matters of doctrine. Thus what has been already said of Socrates is applicable also to his contemporary.

It is generally agreed that Sozomen wrote his *History* after that of Socrates, and one may venture to mention a single instance which is, perhaps, not sufficiently stressed. Both histories go down to the year 439. If Socrates finished his *History* in that year and Sozomen wrote, say a decade later, this would account for the remarkable fact that all mention of the affair of Nestorius, which, as we have seen, Socrates treated with scrupulous fairness, is entirely omitted by Sozomen. In the year 449, the notorious "Robber Synod" of Ephesus scandalised the Roman Church and Pope Leo the Great, and in 451 the Fourth General Council of Chalcedon reversed the decrees of Ephesus. The controversy concerning the Divine and Human natures of our Lord which lasted for centuries and had such fateful results was raging with increasing bitterness, and had become a dangerous subject for any historian to write about. Consequently, both Sozomen and Theodoret maintain a discreet silence, which they would not have needed to observe had they written a few years earlier. A century before Eusebius

had displayed similar caution in not treating of the Arian controversy in his account of the Council of Nicæa.

From the two lawyers, Socrates and Sozoman, we now turn to a great episcopal theologian, Theodoret, who played a prominent part in the Church during his long career as a bishop of Cyrrhus in the Euphratensis, on the frontier of the Roman and Persian Empires, bordering on the province of Syria on the western side. Theodoret gives a very interesting description of a great diocese in the fifth century. His jurisdiction extended over some 1600 square miles of country in which there were no less than 800 churches besides monasteries, hospitals and innumerable hermits. In addition to this evidently large orthodox population, there were numerous colonies of heretical Christians. Thus in one of the remoter provinces of the Roman Empire the Christian religion under various forms must have permeated the entire population to a large extent within little more than a century after the Edict of Milan; and the bishop of an insignificant City was exercising powers resembling those of an imperial governor for Theodoret was engaged in building bridges, public porticos, aqueducts, and baths, as well as in his properly ecclesiastical functions.

The energy displayed by Theodoret, his devotion to his duties, and his literary activities are truly amazing. As an Antiochene by birth, who kept in constant touch with the patriarchal Church, Theodoret was naturally opposed to the party of Cyril of Alexandria, and was the object of its constant enmity. Nothing can illustrate better the extreme bitterness of the controversy concerning the most difficult subject of the Twofold Nature of the Saviour than an extract from the official report of the Council of Chalcedon, taken from Dean Stanley's *Eastern Church*.

"And when the most reverend Bishop Theodoret entered, the most reverend the Bishops of Egypt, Illyria, and Palestine shouted out—Mercy upon us! the faith is destroyed. The canons of the Church excommunicate him. Turn him out! Turn out the teacher of Nestorius.

On the other hand the most reverend the Bishops of the East, of Thrace, of Pontus and of Asia shouted out . . . Turn out the Manichæans. . . . Turn out the adversaries of the faith! . . . On Theodoret taking his place the most reverend Bishops of the East shouted out—He is worthy—worthy. The most reverend the Bishops of the East shouted out—The Orthodox for the Synod. Turn out the rebels; turn out the murderers. The most reverend the Bishops of Egypt shouted out, Don't call him bishop, he is no bishop. Turn out the fighter against God; turn out the Jew," and so on. No wonder Socrates disliked applying titles of respect to bishops!

This is sufficient to show the provocation to which Theodoret was compelled to endure, and it is greatly to his credit that he shows a surprising spirit of moderation. Nor did death allay the hostility felt towards him as one who lay under suspicion of partiality for Nestorius, on whom, however, he had pronounced an anathema at the Fourth General Council. Nevertheless, his writings against St. Cyril of Alexandria, the spirit of whose life is in complete contrast with that of Theodoret, were condemned by the Fifth General Council of Constantinople as the last of the so-called "Three Chapters"; and Theodoret's name does not appear among the saints or doctors of the Church. Few, indeed, would now deny that he was a model bishop whose zeal and learning made the obscure City of Cyrrhus, illustrious in the story of the Church.

The *History* of Theodoret covers exactly the same ground as that of Socrates and Sozomen. It is an open question whether he used the work of these historians; but it would appear that he did not. Under any circumstances he is an independent witness. I can, for example, remember being asked who recorded the alleged last words of Julian the Apostate, when he was killed in battle with the Persians, words which are generally quoted in Latin *Vicisti Galilæe!* and finding them in Theodoret. Turning over his *History* lately I came across a report of a conversation between the Emperor

Constantius and Pope Liberius at Milan in 357. Liberius is chiefly remembered because he appears to have regained his position by signing an Arian formula in a moment of weakness, an act never forgotten by anti-papal controversialists. It must, however, be admitted that when he stood before the Emperor, the Pope represented alike the pontifical and judicial dignity of a true Roman. Very significant is the remark of one of his suffragans, that Liberius defied the imperial authority because he wished to stand well with that anything but Christianised Roman Senate, a sure proof of the influential position already occupied by the Bishop of Rome.

It must be admitted that the period covered by these three historians, important as it is, is scarcely exhiliarating reading. The whole Arian controversy does not give us a high opinion of the rulers of the Church, with a few bright exceptions like Athanasius, Ambrose, and others, and we cannot wonder that those who recorded it turned for relief to examples of monastic sanctity and miracle as proofs of the presence of God's spirit in a worldly Church.

CHAPTER VII

St. Augustine's Philosophy of History

WHAT we call the "Historical" books of the Old Testament in the Jewish Canon are recognised as "Prophecies." Nor is this a wrong definition. To the Hebrew the Law is a declaration of the will of God and the record of the destiny of his nation, not so much a recital of events as an attempt to show how the Law was observed or disregarded and the results which followed. The object of the documents is primarily prophetical. Throughout them there is the same moral strain. Divine Providence is seen in the course of events, and the nation prospers or suffers according to its obedience to or disregard of the will of God. The object of these prophetic histories is consistently moral. They do not aim at satisfying curiosity or exciting interest; but at edifying the reader by employing the experience of the past as a guide of his present conduct.

The Western Christian world in the fifth century was being faced by a problem analogous to that of the ancient Jews in having to reconcile the love and justice of God to a series of appalling calamities which threatened to overwhelm them; and the attitude towards the past was to seek in its history both warning and encouragement. This fact is borne out in the career of St. Augustine, which has left a permanent and enduring impression on the mind of Western Europe, which survived the ruin of the Old World and moulded the destinies of the New.

One cannot fail to be impressed and even appalled by the similarity of the experiences of his age and those of the present day. A civilisation which it had taken centuries to establish was falling to pieces. When we

enquire into the causes of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, we appear rarely to consider what a wonderful achievement that Empire really was. For generations it had given mankind an orderly administration and more peace and security than the nations of Western Europe have before or since enjoyed. In every part of the Roman world there were large and prosperous cities, and wide lands which had not known war for many generations. The seas were open to the traveller, the war-roads enabled him to go from the walls of Rome to the Roman wall in Britain mostly by highways superior to any dreamed of till within little more than a century ago. True, taxation was terribly oppressive; but the crushing burthen of the vast armaments of to-day was unknown. A regular army, smaller than a modern one of second-rate power, protected the Empire from invasion, and was dispersed chiefly along the frontiers. Many of the inhabitants of the Roman world may never have set eyes upon a soldier. Moreover, citizenship was no longer, as in the days of St. Paul, confined to a few privileged persons. Since the days of Caracalla (A.D. 211-217) every free inhabitant of the Empire was a Roman citizen, and racial and even colour prejudice was far less pronounced than it is to-day. There was a passion for education; and schools and colleges were to be found in every province. Men looked upon the brutalities of the past with horror, and the aristocracy of Rome certainly preferred intellectual pursuits to the cruel enjoyments of their ancestors.

That the felicity of the age here depicted is exaggerated, one may freely admit. There was undoubtedly much oppression, no little cruelty, a glaring contrast between the excessive wealth of the few and the abject poverty of the many; nevertheless, the main features of the period thus hastily sketched are not deceptive. It might plausibly be maintained that life in the countries which make up Western Europe was far more civilised and endurable between A.D. 300 and 400 than a thousand years later, if not for a much longer period.

But there were unmistakable signs that the well-organised society of the Roman world was on the verge of collapse, and in A.D. 410 the truth was brought home in a most dramatic way. Alaric, a Gothic chieftain, who had been employed in the Roman army, revolted from the Empire and became its formidable foe. His army penetrated as far as the walls of Rome and was admitted, it is said by treachery, through the Salarian Gate. For six days the City was sacked by the Goths. This calamity was more spectacular than actual, but the effect on the public mind was tremendous. Although Rome had practically ceased to be the capital of the Roman world, the reverence with which the City was regarded had increased rather than diminished. It was regarded by pagan and Christian alike as a holy city, the home of the gods, and the sepulchre of the saints and martyrs. Never since B.C. 390, when Brennus and his Gauls entered its walls had Rome been the prey of a foreign enemy; and now the inviolability of eight centuries was at an end. The proud aristocracy fled in terror from the invader. Carthage especially became a place of refuge for crowds of people who had believed themselves secure in the imperial city.

The news of the fall of Rome reached the two Latin Christians, who were not only the greatest geniuses of their age, but have left an ineradicable impression upon human thought. It is no exaggeration to say that Western Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, has never been able to dispense with the work of St. Jerome and St. Augustine, and not too bold a prediction to assert that it never will. As long as the Scriptures are studied it cannot be forgotten that Jerome boldly went back to the Hebrew source of the Old Testament and retranslated it from the original Hebrew and that Augustine faced the deepest problems of Christian speculation in St. Paul's Epistles. Intelligence of the appalling disaster reached Jerome in his cell at Bethlehem, where surrounded by his admirers he was prosecuting his monastic practices and his scholarly labours. When

Augustine received it he was immersed in the business of an important bishoprick, and was practically the director of the ecclesiastical politics of the Western Church. Each received the news in his own way, Jerome with the eloquent language of a scholar and a man of letters, and Augustine, as a bishop, confronted by a practical problem. Both agreed that the event was the first symptom of the destruction of the old order.

Let us now consider the most wonderful episode which characterised the first four centuries of our era, namely, the triumph of the Christian religion in the Roman world. The Faith spread silently but with astonishing rapidity and the Government soon perceived that the new secret society might endanger its stability. At first it declared the religion illegal and persecuted sporadically. By the middle of the third century it made a deliberate attempt to stamp out the Faith in Christ, and in the beginning of the fourth it braced itself for a supreme effort. By A.D. 313 the Empire capitulated by formally recognising the Church in the famous edict of Milan. When Alaric's troops entered Rome, the old heathen religion had been proscribed and the Christian Church was everywhere dominant.

That question then arose, which has never been satisfactorily answered, as to the cause of the collapse of civilisation in what we are accustomed to call the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. The first explanation of the catastrophe, which has been constantly repeated ever since, was that it was due to the adoption of the Christian religion. The gods who had made Rome strong had been deserted, and in wrath had declared for her downfall. There was consequently a widespread demand to restore the ancient worship in order to pacify the offended deities. Even Christians must have wondered how it came to pass that now the inhabitants of the civilised world were turning to the true God, they were more seriously afflicted than ever. To all it was evident that the old order was doomed to decay, and, after a long agony, to disappear, to make way for something

infinitely worse in the form of utter barbarism. Shortly after the sack of Rome, Britain was being deprived of the protection of the legions, Gaul was overrun by barbarous hordes, Spain was being lost to the Empire, and the downfall of the provinces of Africa under the Vandal invasion was imminent. A general feeling of despair was prevalent, and with it, doubts that the existing state of the world was not worth preserving, and even that barbarism was preferable to Roman civilisation. A spirit was abroad not wholly different from that of the present day towards the existing order. At this critical period a new conception of the function of relating the story of the past arose, the pioneer of which was St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo Regius, in the province of Africa.

The first part of the life of this great and versatile man may be described in modern terms as that of a middle-class university professor. He describes his father as a coarse, vulgar bourgeois, who, however, had the merit of recognising the abilities of his son, and of sparing none of his scanty means in order to give him the best education possible. Monnica, the mother of Augustine, was a devout Christian and one of the most delightful of those women who have been the friends and companions of their distinguished sons.

From Augustine's *Confessions* we learn how by his early career he was qualified to become a writer and thinker of exceptional fertility and also one of the most sympathetic of men, because he could really understand human folly and weakness. He tells us he was not a model child; and though his career as a student was brilliant from the first, he shared in the errors to which exceptionally clever and active-minded youths are liable. He was not a scholar in the accepted sense of the word; for he had not, as he confesses, the patience to master the Greek grammar, and never really understood the value of the work his contemporary, Jerome, was accomplishing. His inclinations were really those of a logically-minded mathematician. He tells us he understood the *Categories* of Aristotle without the aid of

diagrams. His severely logical mind led him at times to conclusions which we may regret, but also made him honest in facing the problems by which he was confronted.

Such was the man who was the first to frame a formal reply to the assertion that the Christian religion had proved the ruin of the civilisation of the ancient world. He devoted no less than thirteen years to the completion of his work in twenty-two books. The title, *On the City of God*, and the general conception of a heavenly state is not original; we find the idea in St. Paul (Phil. iii. 20), and it was common among the Stoics; nor is the book, despite some beautiful passages, easy to read with pleasure or very convincing to us as an apology. At the same time, the *City of God* was admirably adapted to the needs of the age of Augustine, and few books have exercised a greater influence upon successive generations, since it brought men to realise that in this world two states can co-exist—the visible and transitory association of men under governments of human creation, and an indestructible society in which the people of God is bound together, or the *Civitas Dei*.

We may now consider in what way Augustine develops the idea of human society and the State of God. Two things must be remembered in studying Augustine's argument: *first* that the Roman Government was already Christian; and, as our author could appeal to its rulers to restrain error, he could not wholly condemn it as evil: *secondly*, that the system of Augustine recognised the distinction between the visible and invisible Church on earth.

In the First Book the absurdity of the ancient gods having ever protected Rome is exposed, and the calamities of former times are contrasted with that which had recently overtaken the City. Every siege, followed by a sack, must be terrible but that of Rome was less so than the capture of a city in ancient days. Alaric and his Goths were at least Christians, albeit Arians, and they displayed a moderation unknown in ancient days.

Reverence for their God protected the Churches as no heathen deity had guarded his temple and some of His servants were protected and treated with respect. Indeed, this sack of Rome was infinitely less brutal than any recorded. Then Augustine proceeds to discuss the character of the religion, which, it was confidently maintained, had protected the City of old. How could it be the City's salvation when the worship of the gods as practised in Rome was profoundly immoral? And here we may note throughout this long defence of the Faith, that to Augustine the ancient gods were not simply idols or delusive imaginations, but actual beings. They were active devils or evil demons who had possessed the heathen world. We may think that much of the great apology is superfluous owing to the writer's insistence on this point; but it was necessary as an argument against the dying paganism of the age. What so deeply shocked Augustine was that the fugitives from Rome at Carthage clamoured for the theatrical entertainments to which they had been accustomed, the hideous cruelty and immorality of which were actually employed to propitiate the gods whom they worshipped. Augustine is ready to acknowledge the virtue of some of the old Romans, and to admit that their success was due to it, but their gods never taught the manliness which made Rome great. But what Empire can be really divine in origin, when each one since that of Ninus the Assyrian, has been founded by successful warfare and aggression on the rights of other nations?

Space does not permit us to recapitulate the argument of this great Christian apology; and here it must be sufficient to enquire what Augustine meant by the *Civitas Dei* as contrasted with the earthly state the *Civitas terrena.* The answer of posterity for many centuries is perfectly definite. The one is the Christian Church, the other the human State. Generally the Church is God's perfect kingdom in contrast with man's imperfect and even evil creation. At times the two are in complete antithesis, realms of light and darkness in

opposition to one another. This crude distinction is no part of the philosophy of Augustine, since to him the *Civitas terrena*, as has been indicated was not all evil, but ordained, as St. Paul had admitted long before, by God (Rom. xiii. 1) and the Church on earth, like the field in the parable was till the last day a mixture of wheat and tares. The idea of the ecclesiastical state being naturally at enmity with the civil is said to have been first suggested by St. Gregory the Great, who had perhaps in mind the incompetent rule of the Empire in Constantinople and the exarchate in Italy. It was developed by his successor, St. Gregory VII, in his struggle with the secular ambitions of the Germanic king, Henry IV. It found full expression in the fourteenth century in the words of Boniface VIII's famous bull (*Clericis laicos oppido infestos antiquitas tradidit*). Nor was this conception of the divine authority of the Church as a perfect organism confined to the papal claim to domination. This idea continued after the Reformation, notably in Scotch Calvinism, and Anglo-Catholicism, and in our own day it has been compelled to come to the fore in both Protestant and Catholic Germany.

Now Augustine, like St. Paul, is so great a man that he could afford to be inconsistent. Both were absolutely consistent in their main religious convictions; but, nevertheless, they were not ashamed to adapt themselves to conditions even though they appeared to contradict what they had said on other occasions. Throughout their long lives they showed their greatness by being always learners. This is seen in Augustine's view of the Church. In his career as a bishop, he found it necessary to present the Church in two different aspects. In his controversy with the Donatists, to whom the Church was a national and local affair, he maintained its Catholicity as a world-wide institution. When he encountered Pelagianism, which seemed to deny the constant need of the grace of God for the salvation of His people, he laid stress on the Church of the Elect. When the supreme moment arrived and he had to undertake once

and for all the task of overthrowing the old religion, he set himself to explain what the *Civitas Dei* is, and, as far as one can gather, he means it to be less the organised Church than the invisible kingdom of God on earth, which though embodied in an institution finds its expression in a frame of mind, through which those who share it are united in God with the unseen, but ever-present Church. The aim and object of true members of this invisible Church are directed, not to this life, but to that which is to come and in this lies the fundamental difference between the *Civitas Dei* and the *Civitas terrena* (see Bk. XV., ch. iv). The real distinction between the two results, not in the sort of antagonism which divides Church and State, but in the purpose which underlies those who choose the one side or the other.

To one tendency of the age the *De Civitate Dei* certainly contributed. It laid more stress than ever that nothing in the existing order of society was worth preserving. This was not the opinion of Augustine himself, but was the outcome of his teaching. The *Civitas terrena* was in too bad a condition to be improved or preserved, and it mattered little to the citizen of the heavenly country on earth what happened to the civilisation, art and culture of this transitory world. This despair had not a little to do with the fall of the Roman Empire of the West and all for which it had stood, good as well as evil.

Enough has hitherto been said to show that the *City of God* is not in any sense an historical work, though most important as revealing the state of the world at the time of its composition. Yet it marks an epoch in the writing of history. Hitherto the historian had aimed at recording the past; but henceforth the days of philosophy of history were inaugurated. Augustine, like the old Hebrew prophets, recognised that the record of the past was valuable as providing a clue to the events of the present and as a guide to man's conduct in the future. He did not attempt the work of a historian himself but he gave the impulse to others to undertake it. The

Seven Books of *History* composed by his pupil, Paulus Orosius, put the idea of his master into form.

Orosius, a Spanish priest, formed the resolve of visiting Augustine in Africa in order to consult him as to his literary labours and as a result, he wrote a *History of the World* which became the handbook of the Middle Ages.

Orosius' *Seven Books of Histories against the Pagans* cannot be considered to be a valuable contribution to historical knowledge being mainly a compilation from writers accessible to the author. It is of interest to us because it embodies the idea which Augustine expresses in his *City of God*, and was composed at his suggestion. Being brief, it was a convenient manual for medieval students, and its popularity gave it an influence disproportionate to its merits. But it emphasised the belief of Augustine in the divine government of the world, the course of events being uniformly directed by God's Providence.

Although Augustine wrote no history, he supplied a key to almost every dark chamber in the Middle Ages. Those to whom his writings are sealed books can have no solution of many problems which meet them at every turn when they survey the progress of the Christianity of the West. He accounts for the claim of the Latin Church, and the protests of the northern nations. Those who extol a literal interpretation of sacramental grace seek his support, and their opponents base their arguments on what he wrote. He is called upon to justify the extremest churchmanship, and the advocacy of exclusively personal religion. His spirit pervades every field of Christian activity. He was not perfect or infallible; in some instances he made mistakes, which his interpreters made infinitely worse. He has been praised and perverted; but all the same, he remains pre-eminently great, and when one attributes to him the foundation of a school of philosophic history there is at least justification for the claim.

CHAPTER VIII

Gregory, Bishop of Tours

IN St. Gregory of Tours we have a striking personality, a bishop of noble birth, a man immersed in the religious and secular activities of his age, a writer, who if his Latin is rude and barbarous, can tell a story with power and vividness, and an historian who records the rise of the most interesting of the nations which formed a settlement in the territory of the Roman Empire. His theme is the emergence of the pagan and savage nation of the Franks from a collection of heathen hordes into a great Christian nation. Yet those who read Gregory's *History of the Franks* may well ask themselves to what religion Clovis and his followers were converted, and whether it made any real difference from the conditions to which they had been accustomed? It is not, as in the Middle Ages, whether the Christianity professed was of the same character as that held to-day, but whether the religion of the people among whom Gregory, Bishop of Tours, ministered can be described as Christianity at all. This is one of those embarrassing problems which the Church historian has to face unflinchingly.

Gaul during the later part of the fifth and throughout the sixth century needs at least some description to be intelligible to any but professed historians. Since its inclusion in the Roman Empire, it had received an indelible impression of Latin civilisation. Its inhabitants, at any rate those of whom we have any knowledge were thoroughly imbued with the culture of their conquerors who had brought all the life of the Western world under their influence, and what ancient Gaul received, modern France has retained.

Roman Gaul was a flourishing collection of provinces with populous cities, schools in which literature and law were systematically taught, and there was an active commerce, in which Greeks, Syrians and Jews took their

share. It was traversed by excellent roads, served by a well-ordered public postal system. The rustic population had a language or dialects of its own, but the educated classes prided themselves on the purity of their Latinity; and Greek was spoken in many cities. But above all, it was a land of country gentlemen, who administered their large estates, with, upon the whole, a view to the interests of their tenants and dependents, and whose lives were occupied not only in the pleasures of their class, but very often in the pursuit of literature. Their villas (*villes*) and the territories around them survived to a comparatively late period; and, upon the whole, the owners lived in the midst of a prosperous and polite society, which was Roman to the core.

On the early Christianity of the province it is not necessary here to enter; and it may be well to begin with the story of a great bishop, who may, in a sense be regarded as the most energetic of missionaries of the rapidly spreading faith. By the close of the fourth century, St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, had become the most popular saint in Gaul, whose labours had converted a semi-pagan into a Christian land. Soon after his death he almost reached the position of a tutelary deity. The importance of St. Martin can hardly be exaggerated in the story of the Gallican Church.

Martin was above all things a saint of the people. As a Roman soldier he was distinguished for the kindness of his heart. The favourite story was that, on meeting a beggar, whom his companions had refused to help, Martin cut his cloak in two and gave half to the poor man. When he left the army he became a hermit, occupied in solitary prayer, and mortification of the body. His miracles soon made him famous, twice before he became a bishop he is said to have raised the dead. When he pleaded for the unfortunate, his military frankness made him treat the usurping Emperor Maximus with boldness. He protested vigorously against the execution of Priscillian, the heretic. As Bishop of Tours (371–396) he was remarkable for his activity in the

destruction of pagan idols, temples and shrines, and in his iconoclastic expedition he was accompanied by troops of ardent disciples. His amazing popularity spread far and wide. The first church, Augustine's mission found in England at Canterbury, was dedicated to St. Martin. His contemporary, St. Ninian, built the first stone church (*Candida Casa*) in Scotland in his honour; another contemporary, Sulpicius Severus, wrote his *Vita S. Martini*. The feast of Martinmas (Martin's Mass) on 11th November, was a day of rejoicing and is still a landmark in the year; and the little birds who build in the eves of our English houses are called "Martins" or St. Martin's birds. His life is marked by a constant series of miracles, none of which is more wonderful than his enduring popularity. The little we know of him makes us feel that his courage, his zeal and his loveable qualities largely accounts for the estimation in which the saint has been held.

The fair and highly civilised land of Gaul in the fourth century became the prey of successive invasions during the fifth century. Devastating hordes of Goths, Vandals, and Burgundians, poured in and the calamities of the land culminated in the invasion of the terrible Huns under Attila, checked in 451 by the great victory at Chalons of the Roman general, Aetius, and the Visigothic king, Theodoric I.

The Teutonic invaders of Gaul had received the Christian religion from Arian missionaries and adhered to their theological opinions, with the result there could be no union between their Church and Catholic Orthodoxy. This rendered any amalgamation of the conquerors and the Roman provincials impossible, owing to the formidable ecclesiastical barrier between them. Catholicism had thus become the symbol of civilisation, and Arianism of barbarism, and every Roman in Gaul looked for a deliverer from the oppressor of his creed. Relief came in the invasion of a heathen people from beyond the frontier of the Ancient Empire.

The Franks were divided between the Salian, and

Ripuarian tribes, the Franks who lived by the sea, and those inhabiting the northern banks (*ripae*) of the Rhine. In 481, the king of the Salian Franks is called by the chroniclers Hlodwig, Clodovig, Chlodovechus, but in modern literature, as opposed to pedantry, he is known as Clovis, which, in Latin, is the same as Ludovicus, and in French is Louis, in German, Ludwig. Clovis, succeeded his father, Childeric, in 481. He proved a mighty conqueror; and persuaded by his wife, St. Clotilda, he received baptism at the hands of Remigius (St. Remi), Bishop of Rheims, as an Orthodox Catholic. Whether Clovis was morally the better after receiving the water of baptism, or understood the vital difference between a Catholic and an Arian, his conversion secured him the support of Roman Gaul and of its powerful Church, whose champion he had become.

The episcopate of the country was in the hands of some remarkable men. The great landed aristocracy no longer supplied the temporal rulers of the land, and their energies were devoted to the Church rather than the State. Those whose predecessors had been magistrates now became bishops; and we find that noble birth was considered as a most valuable qualification for the office. Gregory of Tours speaks of the members of his family who had been bishops, as an ancient Roman might have done of those who had attained consulates or prætorships. Nor need this cause surprise. For a long time there had been a tendency to choose a bishop who could stand between the people and their secular rulers, and in Gaul the bishops had become the representatives and defenders of the provincials. No wonder, therefore, that good birth, and powerful connection were an important factor in selecting a bishop. As a Christian and a Catholic, Clovis, had the support of a powerful and respected aristocracy. As was the wont of historians, Gregory begins with the scriptural account of the creation of man; but the real interest in his Ten Books starts with the Conversion of Clovis and the appearance of his victorious Franks.

The fact that Clovis was a bloodthirsty barbarian must not allow us to forget that he possessed all the qualities of a great politician in perceiving the importance of alliance with the Romans, which the Franks realised throughout their long and famous history. The Emperor, Anastasius (491–518), in giving Clovis consular dignity, bound the Franks in closer connection with the Empire. After a reign of thirty years, Clovis died in 511. His reign was throughout that of a successful general, and an able but unscrupulous ruler, murdering impartially all Franks and foreigners who stood in his way. As his life drew to a close Clovis lamented pathetically that he had left so few of his kindred alive; but Gregory says that he only expressed his contrition in the hope that some more survivors might present themselves, and so enable him to put all his relatives to death. He is probably the most wicked man who has ever been commended in such terms as these, "For daily the Lord laid his enemies low under his hand, and increased his kingdom, because he walked before Him with an upright heart and did that which was pleasing in His sight."

The dynasty which Clovis founded is known as the Merovingian, from Merovech, the grandfather of the great king. Legend reported that this Merovech (sea born), was the offspring of a woman and a sea monster; and his family was regarded with veneration by the Frankish people long after it had been deprived of all but the outward honours of kingship. With the sons of Clovis the work of St. Gregory as an historian may be said to commence.

Gregory was born about 538 and was Bishop of Tours from 573–594. He therefore lived under the sons and grandsons of Clovis with many of whom he was brought into personal contact. He deplores the fact that so low had culture in Gaul sunk that he was unable to write in Latin worthy of his theme. His very sensible mother, Amentaria, told him that if he wrote in polished language people would not understand him; and we may

be profoundly grateful that he tells his story in his own way.

All of us know how dull an admirably written book in our language can be, or how ridiculous are some efforts of foreigners who have modelled their English upon the style of the best masters. On the other hand, an ungrammatical letter sometimes may be a document which gives a true picture of what we desire to know. As, therefore, the style and diction of Gregory leaves much to be deplored by the scholarly critic, we may be grateful that he is allowed to give us some of his admirable stories in his own unpolished terms, although his history is not always lucidly arranged.

With its constant digressions and passing from one Merovingian king to another, the *History* is not easy to read through continuously, but a perusal of the Ten Books leaves us with a somewhat definite conception of the Gaul of the sixth century. Sometimes the land was under a single monarch, at others it was divided between brothers, each of whom was a king in his own territory. War was the constant occupation of all, either with one another, or against some nation whose lands the Franks coveted. Whether in war or peace, horrible crimes were of daily occurrence, and are related by the historian as ordinary happenings. Here it is sufficient to mention but one related by Gregory, which reveals the innate savagery of the Merovingian kings of Gaul.

The dominions of Clovis at his death were divided among his four sons. Theodoric (Theodoric in French, Thierry), Alothat (Lothar), Clodomer, and Childebert. Clodomer was killed in battle in 524, and Childebert suggested to his brother, Lother, that they should take his kingdom from his young children and divide it among themselves. The three boys were brought to their uncles, and two were murdered in childhood. When the children were in their uncle's power a messenger was sent to their grandmother, St. Clotilda, the widow of Clovis, with a pair of scissors and a naked sword. She was addressed thus: "Most

glorious queen, our lords thy sons seek to know thy desire with regard to the boys; is it thy will that they live with shorn locks, or that they both be slain." Meaning the alternative of death, or entering the clerical order. The queen in her indignation declared she would prefer to see her grandsons dead. Whereupon Arcadius, the messenger, hastened from her presence and declared that it was her will that they should be killed. In Gregory's words:—

" 'The queen approveth; finish the task which ye have begun,' they did not wait for more, but Lothar seized the elder boy by the arm, dashed him to the ground, and driving his dagger deep under his armpit did him cruelly to death. At the sound of his cries his brother flung himself at Childebert's feet, clasped his knees, and cried amid his tears, 'Help, dearest uncle, lest I too perish with my brother.' Then Childebert, his face wet with tears, cried: I beseech thee, beloved brother, of thy pity grant me his life, and I will pay thee whatever thou mayest ask in return.' But the brother giving way to violent abuse cried, 'Cast him from thee or thou shalt surely die in his place. It was thou didst prompt to this business, and art thou so swift to recoil from thy pledge?' At this rebuke Childebert pushed the boy from him and drove him to Lothar who received him with a dagger thrust in his side, and slew him as he had done his brother. The attendants on the young princes were slain. After all were killed Lothar took horse recking little of the murder of his nephews." (*Hist.* III. 18.)

Similar stories of murders, abound in the pages of Gregory's *History* as revealing the savage brutality of the early Merovingian kings, and are the more revolting when one realises that the state of society in Gaul was outwardly civilised, and that some of these exceptionally wicked sovereigns were men of real ability. Chilperic IV, the grandson of Clovis and King of Soissons (561–584), is an instance of this. Gregory calls him, "The Nero and Herod of our time," and describes him thus: "Many a region did he lay waste and burn. . . . Many a time

did he unjustly punish men to confiscate their goods. . . . He gave himself over to gluttony, and his God was his belly, . . . ever he spoke evil of the priests of the Lord . . . no men were more often the butt of his ridicule and jests than the bishops. . . . The mind can conceive no lust and debauchery this man did not practice. . . . Never a soul did he love in singleness of heart; by none was he himself beloved." The acts of his reign almost justify this furious invective. But we also read that this monster of iniquity composed chants for the Mass and actually wrote two books of poetry, adding false quantities and grammatical solecism to his other crimes. He had even presumed to enter the field of theology and to explain the mystery of the Trinity in terms savouring of Sabellianism. As an educational reformer he proposed to add four letters to the alphabet and directed the school-books to be remodelled in accordance with his views of orthography. Chilperic, like some literary monarchs in after times had no small appreciation of his own ability. "No man, in his opinion, was cleverer than he." All the same, this Frankish king was evidently a man of some education with literary ambitions.

Women played a very important rôle in the barbarous nations and especially in the conversion of their husbands, whether from heathenism to Christianity or from Arianism to the Catholic faith. The Roman clergy were evidently more civilised than the Teutonic, and the semi-barbarous kings and nobles were influenced by their wives. Indeed, the Germanic peoples were disposed to honour women and to attribute to them gifts of mind superior to those of men. Thus in the new kingdoms which occupied the western provinces of the Empire, female influence was a very important factor whether in Italy, Spain, Gaul, and Teutonic Britain, women were powerful both for good and evil. Three notable queens were contemporary with Gregory of Tours. Brunhild, a great and statesmanlike ruler, the wicked but able, Fredegond, her lifelong enemy, and the queen abbess, Radegund of Poictiers.

The life of Fredegond is an example of the triumph of iniquity. For thirty-two years, first as a slave concubine of Chilperic, then as his queen, and lastly as mother of his son, Childebert, she was the real ruler of their dominions and no one could hope to thwart her whether personally or politically, and live. The catalogue of her crimes extends over six of the Ten Books of the *History*, and assassinations mark every stage of her infamous career. Yet when he died she had successfully established her son, Childebert, as monarch of the entire Frankish realm. One act of grace is recorded of her by Gregory. In her sorrow for the loss of many children, she induced Childebert to burn the tax-rolls to relieve his people; and the speech the historian puts into her mouth is not devoid of magnanimity.

The deadly enemy of Fredegond was her equal in ability and her superior in everything else. Brunhild has had her detractors, but she certainly was very remarkable with great and queenly qualities. Sigebert, King of Austrasia, was different from the other Frankish kings in that he had some sense of decency in regard to his matrimonial relations. He chose as his bride, Brunhild, the daughter of Athanagild, King of the Visigoths, a Spanish princess, and his brother, Chilperic, decided to follow his example, and to wed her sister, Galswintha. Fredegond, Chilperic's mistress, resolved to tolerate no rival and Galswintha was soon done to death. From this time the implacable enmity between Brunhild and Fredegond which distracted the Frankish nation for so many years, and may be said to have proved the ultimate ruin of the Merovingian house, began. In Brunhild we have the ferocity of her age, blended with the older civilisation and the softening influence of Christianity. Like some queens of later France, she ruled with ability but it was never forgotten that she was a foreigner. She fought hard in the interests of her son, her grandsons and her great grandson; she respected and was honoured by the clergy and corresponded with Pope Gregory the Great, who addresses her in terms of

the highest respect. In 613 she met with a dreadful death at the hands of Fredegund's son, Clothar II, being bound naked to an infuriated horse who dragged her over rough ground till she died.

Very different was St. Radegund, the third queen of the Franks, who is selected as a type of her age. The daugher of Berthar, King of Thuringia, she fell into the hands of Lothar I, the son of Clovis, whose evil reign lasted for fifty years. The king does not seem to have treated Radegund other than well. She was his captive as a little girl and he saw to her education, and married her. He than found that he had taken a nun rather than a queen; and when Radegund compelled St. Medard, Bishop of Noyon, to give her the veil, the king contributed to the house she had founded at Poictiers and allowed her to retain considerable property wherewith to endow her nunnery. Radegund was a popular saint, and in England several churches and religious houses were founded in her honour. She seems to have been an amiable character, harsh to herself and kindly to others. To us she is interesting as throwing light on the social and religious condition of her age, and as the patroness and friend of Venantius Futunatus, an Italian poet, who ended his days as Bishop of Poictiers and a canonised saint, whose presence in Gaul is a proof, that under Frankish rule there was more culture than might be supposed.

Merovingian Gaul was a happy hunting ground for adventurers of less fortunate nations; and thither Venantius Fortunatus repaired, in order that he might show his respect for St. Martin, whose holy oil had cured his eyes at Ravenna, and in hope that the devotees of St. Martin might keep him in comfort. His verses were greatly admired by his patrons; for though lacking in grammatical diction, or poetic sentiment, they praised extravagantly all from whom he could expect a suitable reward. But he enjoyed the friendship of Gregory of Tours, who looked upon him as a master in literature, and of St. Radegund, who kept him by her at Poictiers

where her nuns supplied him with those delicate attentions in the way of fruit and food in which his soul delighted. Venantius Fortunatus achieved immortality by the composition of two hymns, *Vexilla Regis*, and *Pange Lingua*, the first on the occasion of the arrival of relics of the True Cross which the Emperor, Justin II and his wife, Sophia, sent in 569 to St. Radegund from Constantinople. If she is a shadowy figure in Gregory's *History*, Radegund must have been a remarkable person, combining the virtues of an ascetic with the qualities of a patroness of literary culture. It is evident that among the Frankish princes there was an interest in the things of the mind. St. Gregory was as we have seen, well aware of the defects of his Latinity and a bad poet like Fortunatus, received a welcome for his verses among people who had an imperfect knowledge of the language in which he composed them, but appreciated the fact that he could at least write in the language of the Church and of the provincials. In Gregory of Tours' *History* we see how in early Frankish Gaul, some of the elements of French were already developing.

The *History* is not really secular, but ecclesiastical. St. Gregory was a bishop and his chief interest is in the saints, the clergy, the monks and ascetics of his day. Like many other bishops among his countrymen he stood for Roman civilisation as opposed to Teutonic barbarism; but it is noteworthy that Rome and its Church is rarely mentioned. This is the more remarkable, because during the last years of his episcopate, Pope Gregory the Great, was in active sympathy with the Frankish rulers and notably with Queen Brunhild; and that the Bishops of Arles had been in constant touch with the papacy. Indeed, Virgilius, who received the *pallium* from Gregory the Great, and also instructions regarding St. Augustine's mission to Teutonic Britain, was a contemporary of Gregory of Tours, whose silence cannot be used controversially, but is certainly worthy of attention.

Far more important is the question as to what the Christianity in Gaul at the close of the sixth century

actually was. Practically it may be plausibly suggested that its effects were almost negligible in view of the extreme wickedness of the period. Such a statement would be as malevolent as it is superficial, for Gregory relates many examples of virtue, magnanimity and forbearance which prove that the adoption of the Christian faith by the Franks had resulted in a beneficial change in character. Nevertheless, when we try to discover what kind of religion even the best men and women believed in, we are not a little embarrassed. Jesus Christ, in the first place, is seldom mentioned as the Master to be followed or as a pattern, nor do we find a trace of the passionate devotion to His Person displayed in some of the medieval saints. The doctrine of St. Gregory as to the Godhead of the second person of the Trinity is unimpeachable; and he gives us specimens of his arguments with the Arians which prove his acquaintance with the use of Scripture in the controversy. We find few indications of that devotion to the Mother of our Lord, which is often so tender and beautiful in medieval religion. The fact is that the Gaul of Gregory was profoundly pagan at heart. Defunct saints were very active especially in protecting their shrines and their property; their relics were marvellously efficacious. Charms, talismans, amulets and the like abounded. The saints had replaced the ancient gods, who always appear under classical names; for all practical purposes St. Martin was the god of the land; and heaven was, as in antiquity, the home of the Trinity in Unity, who had little concern in the affairs of men on earth. But at least the Churches and their saintly patrons did provide sanctuaries to which the wretched might find some place of refuge, and charity to the poor was a recognised virtue.

The Gaul in this period may be described as a mixture of the old Roman civilisation sinking into barbarism, and to discover how the Christian religion saved some remnants of it and emerged as a living power is the task of the Church historian.

Chapter IX

Adamnan's Life of Columba

The history of Ireland is, to say the least, bewildering. It seems to the student a record of incredible fables and unaccountable contradictions. From the impossibly early day at which Irish history is said to have begun, the island has repeatedly been conquered and settled by invaders, and yet its inhabitants have retained the same characteristics; and, wherever the Irish are, they are a race apart. In the British Isles the Saxon and the Celt have found it difficult to understand each other; nor have the Bretons ever been the same as the French. The Christianity of the Celt is as great a problem as his character, and almost as paradoxical; and the Irish though a very mixed race are the embodiment of all the Celtic peculiarities.

It may appear fanciful; but an important key to the understanding of Ireland, and, indeed, of Celtic Scotland, is found in a life of a very great saint written in an island monastery in the seventh century. In St. Columba we seem to recognise all the qualities which make up the attractiveness of his nation, as well perhaps as some of its shortcomings. We see in him sincere devotion, a genuine poetic temperament, a combative disposition, the spirit of a mystic, and also of a warrior. He displays both the qualities of a diligent student and of an adventurous sailor. At one time we recognise a saintly abbot, at another a typical chieftain of a religious clan united by the bonds of family and religion. Adamnan's *Life of Columba* is a revelation in itself of the Irish character. The Church in the provinces throughout the Empire had by the fourth century virtually taken over the divisions of the Roman world of the time, in that the chief cities of the different districts, from Rome downwards,

had become also centres of ecclesiastical government. In this way the smaller cities had their bishop, and were grouped about some larger one, with what was equivalent to an archbishop at their head. Episcopacy had become diocesan and provincial. Ireland had never been a part of the Roman Empire and what civilisation was there, was native. All its organisation was tribal; and each sept or clan had, as far as possible, a jurisdiction of its own under a "king." There was apparently no ancient religious institution with an organised priesthood. The Druids and bards were men versed in the traditions of the nation and experts in magical arts; and barbarous as Ireland was, there was a respect for learning which had great influence on its early religious development. When Christianity came to the island, it had in the first place to adapt itself to the conditions of tribal government, and in the second to contend with the wonder-working Druids. One cannot but be struck by the fact that missionaries like St. Patrick are represented as appealing only to kings or chieftains, and that he and his devoted followers had to beat the Druids by proving that they possessed a better magic than these pagan sages.

Christian Ireland became full of monasteries. In the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* 1481 monasteries earlier than A.D. 800 are enumerated, and of these, 256 are in Ireland. The fact is that the Irish monasteries were mostly Christian tribes, often presided over by men of royal birth, and bound together by ties of kinship.

Whoever takes up Adamnan's *Life of Columba* expecting to read anything resembling a biography of the saint is certain to be disappointed, as he will find the three books are simply a catalogue of miracles, prodigies, and prophecies. In the preface there is a brief notice of Columba's parentage. In Book I we have his prophetical revelations, in Book II, miracles, and in Book III, apparitions of angels. Yet, out of these apparently impracticable materials, the careful reader can form an excellent idea of the man and of the times in which he lived. Unfortunately, no chronological sequence is observed,

the miracles fall into certain groups, but there are few indications when they occurred. To understand Adamnan, however, we must take his story as he tells it, and draw our own conclusions as to the facts of the life of Columba.

In Book I, Columba, as a prophet, is able not only to foretell what will happen but he actually sees far away things as they occur. Many examples of this power are related by Adamnan. This gift of "second sight" was, and perhaps is still, recognised as possessed by certain individuals among the Highlanders in Scotland, who are the undoubted representatives of the Scots of Ireland. The saint is able to foretell the speedy approach of death to those who appear in perfect health. He sees guests coming to his monasteries long before they arrive. He witnesses battles being fought many long miles away. He is not deceived by strangers who seek for some reason or other to conceal their identity from him, or by penitents who profess a contrition they never feel.

In the days of Columba it did not require a prophet to predict that most people he saw would die by violence, but he could sometimes actually declare that a "king" would live to a good old age and be allowed to die in his bed, and have this bold prophecy fulfilled. In foretelling the weather our saint was always correct. He predicts that a ship will encounter a huge whale. Cronan, a bishop, comes to Iona and modestly conceals his rank. But when he accompanied Columba to the altar "to break the bread of the Lord together," Columba recognised that his companion was a bishop and insisted on his celebrating alone "according to the episcopal rite."

Anyone who has read carefully the novels, in which Sir Walter Scott describes the habits of the primitive-minded Highlanders, the similarity of some incidents with what Adamnan records is sure to be noted. To take but two examples. In *Waverley* just before the battle of Preston Pans (1745), the clansman, Callum Beg, is prevented from shooting the English Colonel Gardiner by an aged seer, who said, "Spare your shot, his hour is

not yet come. But let him beware of to-morrow—I see his winding-sheet high upon his breast."

In the *Legend of Montrose*, Allan M'Aulay, who was regarded by his clan as inspired, is represented in a very dramatic scene as recognising the Earl of Montrose, disguised as a servant. It is the story of St. Columba and the bishop, who, through modesty, acted as a mere priest. These two illustrations confirm our view of Adamnan's honesty in reporting what his people believed for many centuries, and was generally expected of a saint in his own day.

For Columba is a true Celtic chieftain, albeit his clan was essentially a religious household united by family ties. The principal monks were his near relatives, and regarded him with filial respect. Moreover, he possessed all the qualities which made a great chief. He was of noble birth on both sides, and had the support of a leading tribe of northern Ireland. He was versed in the traditions of his ancestors, a patron of not only Christian scholars, but of his native poets. He was distinguished for his noble presence, and for what was always prized in an ancient leader, a powerful voice. He possessed the adventurous spirit of a sailor, and had a knowledge of nature, so necessary in one who had to provide food for his people. He was recognised as the protector of the poor, and yet could inspire a wholesome awe in the heart of his followers. Indeed, Columba was regarded by posterity, less as a gentle, than as a formidable saint, though Adamnan reveals many amiable traits in his character and shows that his contemporaries looked on him with affection. Bearing this in mind, we may pass on to Book II, which recites his miracles.

No less than forty-seven chapters are devoted to Columba's miracles, some of which contain more than one. They naturally differ in kind:—(1) Nature miracles, (2) Cures, (3) Blessings, (4) Penalties inflicted on oppressors, (5) Trivialities, (6) Contests with demons and Druids, and (7) Miracles wrought by the saint after his death. On the whole, they are what might be

expected to be preserved in the monastery which he had founded and where his name was held in high honour. As Columba died in 597, and Adamnan was abbot, 679–704, the chronicler must have conversed with many who had witnessed those he records.

(1) Nature miracles are numerous. As a deacon of St. Finnbarr (Finnian or Vinnian), he draws water for the eucharist, and it becomes wine. A tree bears bitter apples till he blesses it. A field sown after Midsummer bears fruit in August. A friend is saved from a sea-monster. He causes miraculous draughts of fishes, mostly gigantic salmon.

(2) Columba cures the broken thigh-bone of a holy virgin. He works many miracles in Druimceatt; even to touch the hem of his robe cures some. A youth at the point of death is healed, and a long life foretold for him. Even a boy is raised from the dead.

(3) The blessing of the saint procures wealth and happiness for his friends. Twice, poor men, who showed hospitality to Columba, have a small herd of cattle raised to an hundred and five: in neither instance could this number, predicted by the saint, ever be exceeded.

(4) The curse of Columba was as effective as his blessing. Avaricious persons, oppressors of the poor, and murderers had every reason to dread his maledictions. "Joan, son of Conall, son of Domnall, sprung from the royal tribe of Galran," plundered the house of Columban, a friend and entertainer of the saint, and mocked at his holy remonstrances. Columba followed him to the water's edge and waded in up to his knees, invoking Christ to punish the robber, who with his whole crew was overtaken by a storm and perished. One specially cruel murder was avenged when Columba was only a deacon. A young girl fled from a man to escape murder; but he stabbed her in the presence of the saint and his master, St. Gemman. As Ananias had fallen dead before St. Peter, so did this atrocious criminal on hearing his doom pronounced by Columba. The

curse of Columba also slew a dangerous wild boar. The atrocious murder of the girl, just mentioned, throws a light on the extreme barbarity of the age, and is at least an excuse for the fact that the Irish saints display a certain degree of vindictiveness in the exercise of their supernatural powers. It must not be forgotten that the Apostles are credited with being able to inflict similar penalties; but that no injury to any human being is recorded of their Divine Master.

(5) Miracles apparently trivial must be taken into account if only to illustrate the conditions of life and belief at the time. Two bring into prominence the chief glory of the Celtic Church: its enthusiasm for books. The least injury to a book is regarded as a calamity. One written by Columba falls into the water, and is miraculously preserved undamaged. Baithene, his friend and successor, asks him to look over a book he has written. Columba says "Why give us this trouble . . . in the Psalter there is only an I omitted;" and this was discovered to be true. This love of books is noteworthy. They were sacred things, and had a magical power, equal to any relic. St. Columba's Psalter, the *Cathach* was borne for generations before the armies of his clan as a talisman of victory.

(6) The Christians from the days of Simon Magus and Elymas had to contend with the wonder workers of other religions. Although the Celtic word is *drai* (from whence, and not δρῦς = oak), Druid is derived, in the Latin lives of Irish saints, Magus is always used as its equivalent. A Druid consequently meant, not a member of a priesthood, but a magician, just as Magus is derived from a word designating the priestly caste of Persia, but later popularly applied to all who practised the art of a wonder worker or magician. Contemptuously to dismiss the miracles of these "Druids" as impostures, and those of Columba as pious fancies, is to mistake the whole spirit of Christian antiquity. Columba and his fellow missionaries were convinced that their rivals by the aid of the demons were capable of doing wonders: they,

on the contrary, were able to do greater works by the help of God.

A single example will suffice us. The "Druids" had power over the wind: "Nor should we wonder, that God sometimes allows them with the aid of evil spirits to raise tempests and agitate the sea." Briochan caused a violent storm to arise on Loch Ness to prevent Columba putting to sea. The saint orders the sailors to hoist the sails, the vessel ran against the wind; at last the wind changed and the ship and crew were carried to the haven where they would be. It must not be forgotten that Columba had the experience of a sailor, but all who beheld it believed that here he wrought a great miracle.

(7) The miracles of Columba ceased not at his death. About fourteen years before Adamnan wrote there was a great drought. The brethren took counsel and resolved to perambulate a field, bearing the tunic of Columba and the books written in his own hand. They halted on the "Hill of the Angels," shook the tunic three times and opened the books. Immediately there was an abundant rain. On three different occasions, as Adamnan testifies, favourable winds were given, when prayers were offered, his garment raised and shaken, and his books were opened. Finally, we are told at the end of Book II, that owing to St. Columba, his monastery was untouched by a plague which had in 664 devastated all Europe.

The Third Book treats of the visions of St. Columba to whom the angels constantly appeared, and relates what either he saw himself or others saw concerning him. The book concludes with a chapter of great beauty in which his last days are described. An exquisite touch is given in relating how the white pack-horse (*caballus*), who carried the milk from the cow-shed to the monastery, came to the aged saint and shed tears in his bosom. When the attendant tried to drive this mourner away, Columba told him to forbear because God had let the poor animal know that he would lose his master though He had concealed this from human beings. Columba was writing a Psalter just before he died and

had finished the page, "They that seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good" (Ps. xxxiii., A.V. xxxiv.). Here, said he, "I must stop; and what follows let Baithene write," meaning that his kinsman and friend should be his successor.

The *Life of Columba* still seems little more than a catalogue of miracles, and Adamnan certainly does not allow us to know from what he relates that his hero was a great missionary; that his monastic home in Iona was chosen as an ideal spot from which to reach the heathen Picts with the Gospel message; that his life was not that of a cloistered monk, but one of increasing activity. It is not so much as hinted that Columba was occupied in founding religious houses throughout Ireland, and that he kept in constant touch with the secular life of his age. All this we have to discover from other sources. But from Adamnan at least we see through the mist of miracles and legend traits of a truly Christian character which make this scholar-monk, and leader of men, deservedly beloved by those who served him.

Adamnan concludes his preface to the *Life* by telling his readers that Columba was "Angelic in appearance, graceful in speech, holy in work, with talents of the highest order and consummate prudence." He was indefatigable in prayer, study, and the practice of austerity. "And still in all these he was beloved by all, for a holy joy ever beaming in his face revealed the joy and gladness with which the Holy Spirit filled his inmost soul."

Unpromising as Adamnan's book may seem to the inexperienced student, who looks for a biography and finds a loosely assorted catalogue of prophecies and prodigies, the task of reading it will not prove unprofitable. In the first place it will give him a valuable insight into the mind of the men who lived under the influence of St. Columba, and a picture of the conditions of early Celtic Christianity. He will, if he considers the nature of the wonders attributed to the saint, learn that Adamnan's hagiology is not the product of senseless

credulity, but that the writer has been careful to relate only what he himself honestly believes, and has sought for his information from honest eye-witnesses. We may regard his wonders as either incredible, or easily explained away; but few of them can be dismissed as absurd. What we regret in the *Life*, is that Adamnan tells us hardly anything we want to know about Columba, due no doubt to the monkish admiration of the contemplative as compared with the active virtues of more practical life. One might think after reading the *Life* that the saint spent all his time as a secluded and studious monk.

It appears desirable, therefore, briefly to recapitulate the main facts concerning this great saint and apostle. His ancestry is important as affording a clue to his subsequent career. He was the great-great-grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages, and grandson of Conall, who had been baptised by St. Patrick. His grandfather married the daughter of the King of Scottish Dalriada. On his mother's side he was descended from the kings of Leinster. His kindred was thus related to the ruling families of Ireland, which explains why he was received on all sides, and able to build churches and monasteries far away from his birthplace in Donegal. It is not so much as suggested by Adamnan, that Columba was responsible for the war between the Northern and Southern O'Neills and the battle of Cul Dreimnhe (561). The popular story of the cause of the war was that Columba had copied a Psalter of St. Finnian of Moville, and the High-King, Diarmaid, decided the dispute as to its ownership by saying, "the calf belongs to the owner of the cow" As a penance, Columba was to leave Ireland and never to return, but to convert as many heathen as would compensate for the loss of Christians in the battle. Adamnan says nothing of this, though he admits that a synod had excommunicated Columba for some "pardonable and very trifling reasons" (*pro quibusdam veniabilibus et tam excusabilibus causis*). The real cause of his leaving Ireland for Britain (Scotland), appears to have been a desire to

do missionary work; and he migrated to find a home among his own kindred, the Scots of Dalriada, where he was so great an influence that he was able to appoint Aidan as their king and to secure his independence in Ireland. So far from never revisiting Ireland again Columba was frequently there and was treated with great respect as a saint and religious chieftain.

The island, now called Iona, but then known as Hii and styled by Adamnan *Ioua Insula*, was given to Columba by his kinsman, Conall, and was admirably suited not only for monastic seclusion from the world, dear to the Celtic temperament, but also as a centre of missionary enterprise. From Iona went missionary expeditions to the Picts, especially by the way of the Caledonian Canal, then a chain of lakes stretching across the Highlands of Scotland. As the ships were made of ox-hides they could be carried from one sheet of water to another, and thus, Inverness and the eastern district of Scotland were rendered accessible. A sketch map of places throughout Scotland in which Columba was reverenced shows how widespread was the honour his name was held in that country. To the missionary labours of his disciples, the monks of Iona, northern England also owes an immense debt. It is noteworthy that St. Aidan, the apostle of Northumbria, followed the policy of Columba, when in 635 he established himself on the remote Farne Islands making them the centre of his missionary labours. The object of these remarks, however, is, not to present all the facts relating to this great Saint, but to show how a document, which might be dismissed by the superficial reader as a mere collection of miraculous occurrences, can be used as an invaluable historical record.

CHAPTER X

The Venerable Bede

THE *Ecclesiastical History* of the Venerable Bede is indirectly familiar to every student, and, indeed, to everyone who has had the curiosity to read the story of the origin of the Church of England and of the Christianity of the entire Anglo-Saxon race. Every text-book, even of the most elementary kind, gives the substance of his story and much of what he relates is familiar to everybody. And yet it is full of problems which hardly anyone realises unless he is acquainted with the *History* of St. Gregory of Tours.

More than a century intervenes between the deaths of the two historians, and their times, their countries, and the circumstances of their lives are totally different. The Gaul of Gregory in the sixth century is a land utterly unlike the England of the seventh and eighth. Gregory, a bishop immersed in the practical politics of a Romanised society controlled by Frankish warriors, and Bede, a monk, living in two monasteries remote from civilisation, and spending his days in prayer and study, are very different persons. But what is even more striking, is that Gregory, though a member of one of the most aristocratic families in Gaul, is illiterate compared with the humble native of a country beyond the pale of civilisation, whose learning is a cause for wonder even to-day.

The late Dr. Bright of Oxford has in a short note, compared Bede's *History* with that of Gregory in a way to excite interest in the difference between the Christian story of the Gaul of Gregory and the England of Bede, and one is compelled to ask how it came to pass that one of these good men has recorded so many horrors and atrocities, and the other tells a really beautiful story of the transition of a race from heathenism to Christianity. To

answer this question off-hand is impossible; all that can be attempted is to indulge in certain suggestions for consideration.

Like Gaul, Roman Britain had considerable cities. The largest of these seems to have been Londinium or London, which grew up, not as a Roman *colony* or *municipium*, but owed its population as a mercantile city. It has been conjectured from its Roman remains and extent, that at one time it contained 100,000 inhabitants and many handsome buildings. Colchester (Camalodunum), Lincoln (Lindum), York (Eburacum), etc., must have been the secure and prosperous homes of the Roman provincials. Scattered over the country are the remains of Roman *villas*, the country houses of a landed aristocracy similar to that of Gaul. There were roads and harbours designed, not only for military, but for commercial traffic. If the organised Church was comparatively late in coming into being, by the fourth century the British bishops co-operated actively with those of the rest of the Empire. The fact that Pelagius and his friend, Celestius, were the most formidable foes of St. Augustine in Africa, and St. Jerome in Palestine, shows that Britain could produce men of at least a highly educated type early in the fifth century. How then can we account for the fact that the Saxon, Jute, and Angle invaders, who came, not as the hordes which over-ran the Empire by land, but in ships, were able to completely wipe out every trace of Roman-British civilisation in the eastern part of the island and to drive the inhabitants to take refuge in the mountains of the west. One must leave the solution of this surprising fact to others and content ourselves with observing that in the history of the conquered Gaul of Gregory of Tours, remnants of the old culture were the foundation of its Christian civilisation; but in Teutonic Britain the Church was planted on what was practically virgin soil. This had important results on the development of Anglo-Saxon Christianity.

Gregory of Tours was born in the very heart of modern France and belonged to the highest class of the provincial

aristocracy. For four generations his family had produced bishops, so presumably he had every advantage of education. Bede, on the contrary, has given no particulars as to his family. All we know is that as a child of seven he was dedicated to religion and placed in one of the Benedict Biscop's monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow. Yet Gregory, though not uninterested in literature, is a writer of very barbarous Latin; whilst Bede became the wonder of his age for the width of his learning, and his *History* is remarkable for the simple excellence of its style.

It is easier to state than to account for the contrast presented by the facts, and one can only offer a tentative explanation, namely, that the Anglo-Saxon Church grew up not only under the fostering care of Gregory the Great and his successors, but also owed its foundation to the learned and active Scottish Christians, who played so large a part in the Churches throughout western Europe.

Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, unlike Gregory's *History of the Frankish Nation*, does not follow the fashion of his time by beginning with the Creation, but goes straight to the point by describing the islands of Britain and Ireland. Here Bede may disappoint us if we expect a sketch of the land by a native. He seldom left his twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow and never went further afield than York, consequently, he relies on the information given by the best available authorities. But it must not be forgotten that he was a true historian in the modern sense of the word, and sought far and wide for his facts. His story of Roman Britain is distinguished by its learning and silence as to those mythical or semi-mythical elements found in later writers. The omission of two great names may surprise the beginner. Bede does not mention King Arthur in his account of the fall of Britain, and he ascribes the conversion of Ireland to Palladius and tells us nothing of St. Patrick. The great question of the miraculous stories related must receive attention as we proceed with our account; but one thing in the First Book deserves a passing note.

A translator of St. Gregory's *History* remarks "Under the externals of Christianity, Gregory was almost as superstitious as a savage." The Gaul of the sixth century was something like the primitive districts of Haiti with a population, nominally Christian, but at heart imbued with the superstitions of the Congo. Gaul was full of relics, sacred objects which obtained virtue by reason of the proximity to some holy shrine. Bags of bones of saints, unknown to the possessor, were carried about as amulets to avert disaster and as remedies against every disease. Now we do not find much of this reliance on pure magic in Bede, nor do we read of embassies of bishops to Rome solely with the object of collecting relics. Readers of the First Book will remember, however, the story of St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, who with Lupus of Troyes visited Britain to refute the Pelagian or semi-Pelagian heresy, rampant in the Island. St. Germanus, armed with a perfect panoply of sacred relics, overcame the heresy, one may almost say "*pulveris exigui jactu,*" and wrought many miracles. Even here we find that Bede has borrowed from the *Life* of Germanus by a Gallic priest, Constantius of Lyons; and it merely confirms the passion for relics in Gaul as early as the fifth century. The mission of Germanus is especially notable because it is connected with the famous story of the bloodless Alleluia Victory, when the army of Picts and Saxons fled discomforted at the sight of the white-robed Christians, whom the saint had just baptised. A few years after the death of Gregory, Bede tells the story of the coming of St. Augustine of Canterbury to Kent, full of beautiful and interesting touches; a story too well-known to retell here, which must be read in Bede's own words to be honestly appreciated. Nor is it the purpose of this sketch to do more than to notice certain significant things in the *Ecclesiastical History*, without attempting to relate or summarise the facts it contains.

With this in view the wonderfully vivid account of the conversion of Northumbria may be left to the reader of Bede's *History* and stress may be laid upon the less

interesting, yet very instructive topic of the controversy about Easter which occupies a great part of the Second Book. Here we have a parallel with Gregory of Tours, since both in Gaul and in Britain, two rival forms of Christianity were striving for the mastery. Before Clovis, Gothic, Vandal, and Burgundian Gaul were Arian, and Roman Gaul, Catholic in doctrine, and the controversy was ended when the Franks declared themselves on the side of Orthodoxy. To us it would appear of vital importance that the faith of Nicæa should be accepted instead of that of Arius; but it would seem probable that hardly any one could comprehend the theological point of interest at the time. It must, however, be admitted that some learning was on the side of the Roman provincials; and that the Arianism professed by the invaders' clergy was generally little more than a meaningless repetition of certain formulæ. The factor which decided the whole question was the very imperfect conversion of Clovis, which induced that astute and unscrupulous barbarian to support the Catholics of Gaul.

The controversy in Britain, on the other hand, turned on two points which have not the remotest bearing on the fundamentals of Christianity, the date of observing the Easter festival and the form of the tonsure of the clergy. But both sides of the question were intelligible to all; and, strange as it may appear, the debate was conducted with considerable knowledge. It also was characterised by the racial antagonism of Celts and Teutons.

The Irish monks, or Scottish as they were then called, had long vindicated their claim to be ranked among the intellectual leaders of the West; nor must it be forgotten that two British Celts, Pelagius and Celestius, had contended about Grace and Free Will on equal terms with such intellectual giants as St. Jerome and St. Augustine. In the sixth century the Irish monks were active in Gaul, Italy, and the neighbouring countries, as both missionaries and scholars, deserving the admiration, but not always commanding the affection of the settled rulers of the Church. They do not seem to have been pleasant to

deal with, being both quarrelsome and disputatious; but their zeal and scholarship were conspicuous. The chief point on which they differed from other Christians was when the Passover was to be celebrated.

This had been a cause of dispute among Christians as early as the second century and was only settled in the fourth at the Council of Nicæa by being entrusted to the Bishop of Alexandria, the most learned school of science in the world. St. Athanasius was accustomed to send an annual letter to announce when the Paschal Feast ought to be kept. In process of time, "cycles" to determine the date of Easter were compiled; and the Celts used an antiquated one instead of that which the Roman Church had adopted in the fifth century. Unimportant as the matter seems to us, like others of a similar nature in later days it resulted in bitter divisions, the more regrettable because as a rule Easter was kept by both parties on the same day, and only occasionally the dates differed. The whole question involves considerable difficulties which to this day only experts can possibly appreciate.

Bede gives the arguments advanced by both sides at the Council of Whitby, 664, when both Scripture and Church history were appealed to by Celts and Romans. To us, however, the matter is of interest as a revelation of the spirit in which Bede deals with the subject. He, as a Northumberland man, had no liking for his Celtic neighbours: indeed, he records the defeat of the Welsh after their rejection of Augustine's proposal to co-operate with him in converting the non-Christian part of the island as a well-merited punishment. Nor did he regard the Paschal question as an indifferent matter; but he records carefully each stage by which the Celtic Easter was abandoned as a triumph of his cause. Still he cheerfully admits that the Irish missionaries who converted the Teutonic kingdom had "A zeal for God, but not according to knowledge," and he does full justice to their missionary labours, and has a fervent admiration for a man like St. Aidan, and scrupulously abstains from any attempt to blacken the characters of those who were

opposed to him in a matter which, in his eyes, was of real importance.

As to the miracles recorded by Bede in his *History*, those from the Fourth and Fifth Books which relate to events more or less of the writer's own day are here the subject of discussion. In the two books there are 54 chapters, 20 of which are devoted to supernatural events. Here it may be permissible to make a somewhat arbitrary distinction between the supernatural and the miraculous and the attitude of our historian to each.

There is no doubt that the Venerable Bede lived in a supernatural world, surrounded by the mysteries of the unseen. To him this life was the path to a better world, death was a release by which the servant of God entered into the gate of Heaven, where the saints were praying for their brethren on earth. His thoughts were constantly on the great Day of Judgment, and he never reveals a symptom of doubt or incredulity. His career is marked by his undoubting faith. But an examination of the wonders he records shows the honesty of his mind, and that he does not relate what he believes to be not true. The unseen world is usually revealed to him not by marvels or miracles (*miraculum* = a thing to be wondered at) but by visions and heavenly premonitions. Now the record of a vision should always be treated with respect by the historian; because it is usually the account of what a person believes he actually realised. The source of the vision is generally more open to question than the fact. For example, St. Paul may conceivably have been deceived when he tells the Corinthians that he had been taken up into the third heaven, but that he believed that he had been is beyond question. A recapitulation of the miracle chapters in the Fourth and Fifth Books will assist the reader to form his own conclusion.

In Book IV we have a group of supernatural events connected with the monastery of Barking (in monasterio Berecinensi) in Essex at the time of the great plague before Bede's birth (chs. 7–20). A vision of a great light from Heaven reveals where the nuns who had

died ought to be buried. A boy three years old at the point of death calls to a nun, who dies of the plague the same day. Another nun is warned of her approaching end by a man of God who died the year before.

That there should be visions among the nuns of Barking when the plague was carrying off the members of the community might be expected even to-day; but one which is told in the next chapter (11) is a genuine ecclesiastical miracle illustrative of the time. King Sebbi died, and a stone coffin was required for so holy a man. One was found among the remains of the Roman occupation and though at first unsuitable was wondrously lengthened "in the presence of the bishop, the king's son and a great crowd, by four inches to receive the corpse." The monastery of Selsey (Selæscu = seals' island) was visited by the plague which was stayed by the intercession of St. Oswald on the anniversary of that king's death (ch. 14). The body of the abbess, Queen Etheldreda, foundress of Ely, was found to be uncorrupted sixteen years after her death, when her body was placed in a stone coffin which had been brought to her monastery from Grantchester (Grantacæster) (ch. 19). The singing of the Mass prevents a captive being bound by a chain (ch. 22). Bede says that his fellow monk and presbyter, Aedgils, who had been a monk of Coldingham (Coludana in Berwickshire), told him how that monastery had been burned, after a divine warning, because of the wickedness of its inmates (ch. 25). The last five chapters (chs. 26–30) are devoted to miracles wrought by, or connected with the great northern saint, Cuthbert, whose body also remained uncorrupted. In the concluding chapter, relics of Cuthbert cured two men suffering from disease of the eye.

The Fifth Book begins with chapters devoted to the miracles wrought by the great northern saint, John, Bishop of Hexham, known as St. John of Beverley, who had ordained Bede to the priesthood. In the headings of two chapters he is said to have raised the dead but this simply means that he restored them at the point of death.

One miracle of the saint is recorded which would appeal to the psychologist. He ordered the boy to be kept apart for a week and then sent for him and ordered him to put out his tongue. Having made the sign of the Cross, he told him to put it back and talk. "Say," said the bishop, "*gae*," the equivalent of yes. The boy did so and he was then told to say the alphabet, letter by letter. Then he was made to say syllables, then words, and lastly, sentences. The patient bishop worked at the cure a day and a night, and finally the boy spoke plainly. He had also suffered from scabs and a doctor was called in to attend to this, and by the aid of the bishop's prayers the boy was completely cured. The other chapters, dealing with the supernatural in the book, tell of visions of Heaven and Hell.

Bede's treatment of the supernatural gives the reader of his *History* a very high idea of his scrupulous fairness. He believes intensely in the manifestations of the Divine Power on earth and has every reason to enlarge upon them. Yet he never allows himself, when he is relying, not upon old books, but on evidence accessible to him, to indulge in exaggeration, or to magnify a miracle at the expense of truth. All he tells us is what he himself is convinced has actually happened.

The story of Bede's death bears out what has been said above. It is told by Cuthbert, Abbot of Wearmouth, in a letter to his friend, Cuthwin, a monk of the same monastery. It is a most pathetic and beautiful record of the last days of one who was great, both as a scholar and as a saint. Bede was taken ill a fortnight before Easter and suffered from great shortness of breath, yet without much pain. He lingered on till the eve of Ascension Day, teaching, praying, and chanting psalms. Among other devotions he sang the words of a Saxon song, "For he was skilled in our native songs." He continued cheerful to the last, and on the evening of Ascension he disposed of his few little treasures among the brethren; pepper, napkins (*oraria*) and incense. To the last he dictated the book he was engaged upon. His amanuensis,

the boy, Wilbert said, "There is still one sentence which is not written down." And he said, "Well, write it." And after a little space the boy said: "Now it is finished. And he answered: "Well, thou hast spoken truth; it is finished. Take my head in thy hands, for it much delights me to sit opposite my holy place, that so sitting I may call upon my Father. And thus upon the floor of his cell singing, 'Glory be to the Father . . .,' he breathed his latest breath."

Such is the simple and unaffected narrative of the last hours of a wonder not only of his time, but of every age. That such a man should have passed away in the midst of monks who loved and admired him and that his end should be described so reverently and yet without mention of any marvels attendant upon it is characteristic of the author of his beautiful *History*.

The island of Britain in the seventh and eighth centuries was a real home of learning, full of schools and famous teachers. The Celtic Church vied with the Roman in the encouragement of letters. The Welsh had their schools as well as the Scots or Irish, and the Anglo-Saxons received instruction with avidity. But nothing proves what has been said more than the intercourse between the newly-converted English and the City of Rome. In days when relics of saints and martyrs were sought out, and, whether genuine or spurious, were collected by methods which would seem questionable even by curio hunters to-day, visitors from Britain, though they regarded the remains of the heroes of the Truth with superstitious piety, were in search of all things which would add to the improvement of their Church and nation. Pope Gregory among other presents for Augustine and the church of Canterbury was careful to send manuscripts (codices), and the copy of the Gospels is still to be seen in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. One has only to read in Bede's *History of the Abbotts*, a list of the treasures his first abbot, Benedict Biscop, brought back from his fifth visit to Rome, to see what were valued in the Church of

the English, and what were the foundation of the learned tradition of its clergy which it had never abandoned.

Scant justice, not without a purpose, has here been done to the great *Ecclesiastical History of the Nation of the Angles*, all the most interesting and beautiful episodes in it have been omitted, partly because they are so well known, but also because those who would appreciate Bede's work ought to read for themselves. The less popular parts of the book have been stressed as illustrating the character of the author.

At the end of his *History* Bede gives a list of all his writings from his ordination as priest down to the fifty-eighth year of his age. First he enumerates his books on the Old and New Testament; next come his book of *Histories of the Saints*, his *History of the Abbots* under whom he served as a monk, his *Ecclesiastical History of our Island and Nation.* To this catalogue he adds a martyrology, hymns, epigrams, books on the *Nature of Things*, on chronology, orthography, metre, etc. Then he concludes with a simple little prayer which reveals as in a mirror his character.

> "I pray thee, good Jesus, that as thou hast graciously granted me sweetly to drink in the words of thy knowledge, thou wilt also grant me of thy goodness sometime to come to Thee the Fount of all knowledge, and always to appear before thy face."

CHAPTER XI

Anna Comnena

LADIES who write history are not a phenomenon in our day when the female sex has certainly achieved remarkable success in this field, notably in England. But almost as far down as the nineteenth century a woman as an historian was indeed a *rara avis*. When, therefore, a princess arose in the eleventh century to give the world an important record of one of the most momentous movements in human history she surely deserves the respectful attention of posterity. Such is Anna Comnena, who has scarcely received the credit she deserves from those who are prejudiced against her because of her sex, her family pride, and the pedantic vanity with which she exhibits her erudition. Nevertheless, to those who have read the History of her father's reign, Anna Comnena, leaves an agreeable impression of her personality.

In order to understand the circumstances under which this princess lived, studied, and wrote, it is desirable to know the conditions under which her father, Alexius Comnenus became Emperor, and the state of the Eastern Roman world over which he ruled. It is not easy to read Gibbon's skilful analysis of Byzantine history during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, with his masterly touches illumined by epigram, and not to share his prejudices, especially as the story he relates is often obscure and almost always complicated. The fashionable judgment of his age was that the Greek Empire was throughout decadent both politically and intellectually, and that the imperial government was a gloomy tyranny of a court with an absurd ceremonial. Nothing, however, can be more misleading, though Gibbon's verdict is confirmed by Sir Walter Scott's description of Constantinople in his *Count Robert of Paris*, in which he contrasts the treacherous lying Greeks with the manly

gallant Crusaders. But the history of the Roman Emperors in Constantinople shows that some of them were worthy to be compared with the best Roman Cæsars, whilst none resembled the worst. They certainly did not spend their days in luxury and idleness in the imperial city; on the contrary, they were generally to be found on the frontier, fighting Bulgarians in Europe, or Islamites in Asia. So far from ruling tyrannically over abject slaves, the emperors had often occasion to submit to the demands of a formidable populace, whilst they themselves were not isolated from all other men, but surrounded by noble families, who, like the patricians of ancient Rome considered themselves as at least equal to the imperial house. With the possible exception of the fierce Justinian II (685–711), we meet with no monsters of iniquity comparable to such Cæsars as Caligula, Commodus, or Heliogabalus. When an Augustus is condemned as incompetent, it is generally because, instead of attending to the business of the State, he was absorbed in an over-scrupulous performance of the duties of religion, or in literary pursuits.

In 867, Basil I, a Macedonian, ascended the throne of Constantinople. He had been famed as a tamer of horses; but seldom has any sovereign founded a dynasty of more remarkable men and women. It lasted till 1056, and witnessed the era of the greatest prosperity of the divided Empire. From 976 to 1025 a second Basil occupied the throne. Reared in the obscure luxury of a palace, this great emperor appeared at the age of thirty-three as the most skilful warrior of his age, and from his victories over the formidable Bulgars, was known as *Bulgaroktonos*, the Slayer of Bulgarians. Under Basil II the Empire reached the height of its power and influence. Patient in adversity and defeat, victorious in the end in all his campaigns, the relentless foe of official corruption, capable of great cruelty, but devoted to the interests of his subjects, this rough, honest, and uncultured monarch, ranks among the best rulers in the Roman world. On his death in 1025, his brother, Constantine IX, who had been

his passive colleague, reigned for three years, leaving his kingdom to his two elderly daughters, Zoe and Theodora. Zoe was of an amorous temperament and always ready to take a fresh husband, as her own desire, or regard for the welfare of the State prompted, whilst Theodora's asceticism made her averse to marriage. It says much for the people of Constantinople and their generous fidelity to the Basilian dynasty that each of Zoe's successive husbands was accepted as emperor, but any sign of disrespect to her or to her sister, Theodora, was instantly observed and resented, and the mob of the City insisted on due respect being paid to "our mothers Zoe and Theodora." This is not the conduct of a degenerate populace groaning under tyranny.

The general condition of the Empire after Basil II was far from satisfactory, as on all sides its enemies were threatening. The greatest peril was the appearance of the victorious Turks in Asia Minor, a people of central Asia whose appearance wrought changes in the world of Islam as great as those it later effected in Eastern Christian Europe. The followers of the Prophet, though they moved their capital successively from Mecca to Damascus, and from Damascus to Bagdad, maintained much of the civilisation of both, and in some respects their culture surpassed that of the Greeks. But with the coming of the Turkish warriors who had adopted the faith of Islam, the power of ancient Caliphs or representatives of the Prophet declined, till it became a mere shadow, and the Roman Empire had to reckon with a formidable Asiatic power, more barbarous than the original followers of the Prophet. In 1071, the Emperor, Romanus Diogenes, was defeated and taken prisoner by the leader of the Selukian Turks, Alp Arslan, and from that day the supremacy of Constantinople over Asia Minor was ended and the complete triumph of the Turkish nation in eastern Europe was only a matter of time. Ten years later, Anna's father, Alexius Comnenus began his eventful reign. In 1083, two years after his accession, Anna was born in the Purple Chamber, where imperial mothers

were confined, and was able to claim that she was "born in the purple," the proudest boast of imperial nobility. But we must let her speak for herself.

"I Anna daughter of two royal personages, Alexius and Irene, born and bred in the purple. I was not ignorant of letters for I carried my study of Greek to the highest pitch, and was also not unpractised in rhetoric; I perused the *Works* of Aristotle and the *Dialogues* of Plato carefully, and enriched my mind by the 'quaternion' of learning." These few words show that Anna lived in highly civilised society. Born a royal personage, she was carefully educated, and studied the best literature available. This is in itself a proof of the high degree to which the civilisation of the upper classes, at any rate, was carried in Constantinople. Nowhere else in this age is it conceivable that a lady, even of royal birth, could have had such an intellectual training. Our author was married to the Cæsar Nicephorus Bryennius, distinguished equally as a soldier, a diplomatist, and a literary man. The imperial family was evidently remarkable for the refinement of its good manners, witness Anna's charming description of her mother, the Empress Irene. Nothing can better illustrate how perfect a gentleman her father, Alexius Comnenus was than the story of the ill-behaved knight (Sir Walter Scott's *Count Robert of Paris*), who seated himself on the imperial chair. Instead of manifesting his just indignation at this impertinence, Alexius told the barbarian that if he wanted fighting he would get enough to satisfy him when he met the Turks, and strongly advised him to keep his troops by him when he met them. It must be borne in mind that the Emperor and all the Comneni were distinguished soldiers, and that the fault of his own brother Isaac and his grandson, Manuel I, was that in battle they behaved more like knightly adventurers, or, as Anna would say, Homeric heroes, than as commanders of disciplined armies. Constantinople was, in fact, nearer in refinement of manners, education, and organisation, to the cities of our own day than any City in the semi-barbarous world of

the Europe of the First Crusade. The inhabitants of Paris, London, and even Rome resembled hordes of savages beside the people of the capital of the Christian East. Anna Comnena must be judged by the fifteen books in which she has related the life of her father, the Emperor Alexius, a summary of which with little or no comment, will introduce the reader to a period of history with which few are familiar. Fortunately, the book is accessible in a careful literal translation by Dr. Emily Daws, as the original is difficult to read, even to those familiar with the Byzantine Greek of her age, owing to its florid style. With a good translation as a guide, the unfamiliar names of nations, cities, and individuals, render the task of deciphering the narrative no easy one.

In Book I, Anna explains that her late husband, Nicephorus Bryennius, has related most of the early career of Alexius Comnenus and tells of the war with a Frankish mercenary named Ursel, who was ultimately taken prisoner at Amaseia by the Romans after an agreement for his surrender by the Turks. Ursel was to all appearance deprived of his sight to satisfy the people of Amaseia, but was really sent to the Emperor, Nicephorus Botaniates (1078–81) unharmed. The scene then shifts to the shores of the Adriatic, whither Alexius had been sent as Domestic of the Schools against a Nicephorus Bryennius, who as Duke of Dyrrachium, had rebelled. With a hastily-gathered army of "Roman," Turks, and Scythians, Alexius suppressed the revolt, and was next sent to Thrace against another pretender called Basilacius. For his services the Domestic was publicly proclaimed "Sebastos" = Augustus. The rest of the Book is devoted to an account of the rise to power of the Norman, Robert Guiscard and his son, Bohemund, the most dangerous enemies of the Roman Empire.

Books II and III transport us to Constantinople where the powerful family of the Comneni are driven to desperation by the intrigues of the unscrupulous advisers of the Emperor. Alexius, and his elder brother, Isaac, guided by their very able mother, Anna Dalassena,

raised a rebellion in which Nicephorus Botaniates was compelled to resign and to become a monk. Alexius became Emperor in 1081, conciliating his kinsmen and others by bestowing on them splendid titles of honour, and entrusting the direction of home affairs to his experienced mother. His attention was directed to the growth of the Turkish power in Asia Minor, and especially to the intrigues of Guiscard who had set up a rival to Alexius in the person of an obscure individual whom he declared to be the deposed emperor, Michael Ducas (1071–78), now Bishop of Ephesus. At this juncture Alexius sought the alliance of the Germanic king (the Emperor Henry IV), against Robert Guiscard and his ally, Pope Gregory VII.

Book IV is occupied with the siege of Dyrrachium by Guiscard, and its defence by the brave George Palæologus. Alexius advanced to the relief of the city and suffered a disastrous defeat by the Normans, narrowly escaping from falling into the hands of Guiscard's soldiers.

In Book V Anna remarks that Alexius and Robert Guiscard were well-matched as rivals both in arms and in political skill, Alexius having the advantage of being the younger man. But the emperor's financial troubles were greater than his military, and he and his faithful brother, Isaac the Sebastocrator, resolved to raise money from the clergy. This was opposed by the Bishop Leo of Chalcedon, who also tried to revive the dispute about the images, and was deposed. After much fighting with the Normans, Alexius returned to the "queen of cities" in triumph. The Book ends with an account of a Sicilian heretic named Italus, whose sophistry caused much excitement in literary circles. Isaac the Sebastocrator, took an active part in refuting the errors of Italus, whom he induced to recant his heretical opinions.

In Book VI we are informed that Alexius did his best to suppress the Manichæans, as the descendants of the Paulicians were called; but, knowing their courage in war, he proceeded with great caution. Many of the

heretics were reconciled to the Church, and their worst punishment was banishment to an island. A conspiracy against Alexius by one, Travlos, was detected and suppressed. The Venetians assisted the emperor in the war with Bohemund. Robert Guiscard died at the time that Anna was born in the Purple Chamber. Several chapters are devoted to Turkish affairs. A Scythian invasion, which approached the walls of Constantinople, ends the Book.

The Scythian invasion resulted in much desperate fighting; and at first Alexius was utterly defeated near Distra, barely escaping seriously wounded with his life. He redeemed the Roman captives, and once more reorganised his army. The Scythian success tempted Tzachas, a Turkish pirate, to raise a fleet and take several towns. At last he was compelled to sue for terms by Dalassenus, a relative of the Empress. The Scythians with their formidable war wagons were in the end defeated, and the VIIth Book ends with a note that Alexius was preparing to renew the contest.

In Book VIII we find the Scythians at the very gates of Constantinople. Alexius defeated them, but had no little trouble owing to the plots hatched against him in his own family. This is relieved by the loyalty of his elder brother, Isaac the Sebastocrator, who supported the emperor even though his own son, John, was plotting against his uncle.

Book IX is mainly occupied by stories of plots against Alexius and by the story of the ingratitude of Nicephorus Diogenes, the son of the late Emperor, Romanus Diogenes, who had been blinded and deposed after his defeat at Manzikert.

The Xth Book contains matter of more interest to the reader than any of the earlier ones; for in it the Crusaders make their appearance. But before their arrival the Comans crossed the Danube and invaded the Empire; and a pretender to the Empire arose who claimed to be the son of Romanus Diogenes. The Turks at the same time overran Bithynia. Then came the Crusaders,

first the disorderly army of Peter the Hermit (Peter of the Cowl), and, finally, the disciplined forces of the "Counts" as Anna calls them, with Ubus (Hugo), brother of the King of France. They actually attacked the walls of Byzantium on Good Friday and were repulsed by Anna's husband, Nicephorus Bryennius—"my Cæsar," as she always calls him. At last Alexius induced the Frankish nobles to promise fealty to him and they cross the Propontis and enter Asia. Anna is convinced that Bohemund's object was not the Sepulchre, but the overthrow of the Empire and the seizure of the Capital.

The XIth Book finds the Crusaders in Asia; but after the capture of Nicæa we have little information how they reached Antioch, except that the Turks were utterly defeated at this battle of Dorylæum. Much is said of the ingenuity and treachery of Bohemund and his nephew, Tancred.

Bohemund had pretended to be dead and had reached home ready once more to invade the Empire. There was trouble owing to Tancred's claim to make Antioch his own principality. Alexius in the twentieth year of his reign (A.D. 1101) once more took the field in Macedonia. He was suffering from gout and the Empress Irene now accompanied him on his expeditions. There was another plot to dethrone Alexius and set up a puppet emperor, the Senator Solomon. Here again Isaac the Sebastocrator, supported his brother. Again Bohemund crosses the straits and invades the Empire (Book XII).

When we reach the last three Books, which take us to the death of Alexius, Anna, though she is now able to relate events of which she was old enough to take an intelligent interest, is much less diffuse than before. She ends Book XII and begins Book XIII very artistically. Alexius had just come back from the chase when a special messenger arrived in haste, bowed his head and shouted that Bohemund had crossed the straits. Alexius heard the news calmly and remarked: "Let's have luncheon, and discuss things afterwards." Only

one thing disturbed him; the Mother of God had not vouchsafed the customary miracle at Blachernæ. However, after unusually protracted devotions, the miracle was duly wrought and everybody was happy. There was an exceptionally wicked plot to kill the Emperor, which delayed his departure against Bohemund for five days: after this Anna gives a lively description of the repulse of the Normans, who with the most modern contrivances available, were trying to capture Dyrrachium. Alexius now resorted to measures more dangerous than military operations by stirring up dissension among Bohemund's allies. Finally, a treaty was arranged by "My Cæsar" between Bohemund and Alexius by which the Norman's position at Antioch was assured, and the terms set forth at great length.

Book XIV relates that very soon after Bohemund had made peace with the emperor he died. Tancred kept hold of Antioch and Alexius realised that all his efforts to help the Franks were met with ingratitude. The Turks gave trouble again and were defeated by Alexius, who on his return to Constantinople in triumph was involved in trouble caused by the heresy of the Bogomils.

When we reach Book XV of the Alexiad we find the emperor a very sick man, but still with his troops fighting the Turks, not so much as a champion of the Cross as in the capacity of a ruler trying to suppress marauding invaders. Anna admits that her father was at this time bitterly criticised for his inaction; but he bided his time, and came out victorious in the end. Some space is devoted to an interesting description of the charities and educational institutions of Constantinople; and Anna condemns the instruction she herself received before she began her literary career. The last public act recorded of her father by Anna is his unmasking of the heresy of Basilius, the Bogomil. Without entering into detail, it is enough here to say that the sects which distracted the Empire were partly offshoots of Manichæan dualism and Paulician protests against the corruptions of the Church, and that cruel persecution had turned many

of their adherents into formidable rebels against the State; and that some of them attracted people by their outward, and perhaps genuine, severity of life. Needless to say the orthodox suspected these Bulgarians, as they were called, of being guilty of all the abominations imputed to the ancient Gnostics, which Anna refuses, as a woman and a highborn princess, to describe. Basilius was invited to the table of Alexius, who professed a desire to understand his doctrines and held a long private discussion of them; a report of which was made by a stenographer concealed from view by a curtain. The Holy Synod on receiving the information, condemned Basilius, who with his adherents was summoned to appear in the Hippodrome, and given the alternative of dying as Christians or as heretics. After a spectacular scene, none were executed, except Basilius, whose invincible firmness provoked the unwilling praise of Anna. We may suppose that this vindication of Orthodoxy was regarded by Alexius' daughter as a triumphant and worthy conclusion of a glorious reign. Anna concludes her narrative with an account of her father's last illness, and the way in which in truly modern fashion the best physicians wrangled over his deathbed. When the great emperor breathed his last she concludes the Alexiad.

If the foregoing summary of this book seems as tedious to read as it was to compile it is necessary, because it reveals so many sidelights of history, and dispels so many preconceived illusions.

As regards Anna herself the perusal of her *History* leaves the present writer at least with a far better idea of her personality than can be gathered from the historians. Her frequent protestations that she is writing the story of her father's career without prejudice has led to the belief that she is no historian, but has constructed an imaginary description of an heroic emperor. This belief is enhanced by the way in which she indulges in affected language and a pompous display of her own erudition. Yet it is evident that Anna genuinely endeavoured to tell her facts with impartiality.

When one realises the scope of Anna's *History* one sees plainly that her father's reign was exceptionally troubled. Civil war threatened him on every side, and the frontiers of his Empire were never free from the danger of irruption by alien hordes. The victory of the Turks in 1071 appears to have been less a triumph of Islam over Christianity than of barbarism over civilisation. When Alexius could engage Turkish troops in his army he never hesitated to do so, and though a religious man concerned about the Orthodoxy of his subjects, he was in no sense a Crusader. Constantly engaged in military matters, he was by no means uniformly successful. His daughter records several defeats he sustained and that on more than one occasion he had to flee from the battlefield. Indeed, despite her inveterate classicalism, which sometimes makes her write as if she was describing an Homeric combat, Anna has the good sense to recognise that her father deserves more credit for his patience in defeat and his astuteness as a politician, than as a military hero; and we are told that when he comes out of a campaign triumphantly, the enemy often received a large subsidy. Not that Alexius or any of the Comneni, was unwarlike or cowardly. Anna declares her father in one battle acted the part more of a common soldier than a general. But, on the whole, she depicts Alexius as one who for years doggedly persisted against adverse circumstances, neither elated by success, nor daunted by defeat. Certainly she did not write simply to chant the praises of her father, and she declares she had consulted the best authorities at her disposal and learned all she could from such active participators in events as Alexius' most faithful and able partisan, George Palæologus.

Far from being uniformly dull by giving a dreary catalogue of events, our historian can be both lively and entertaining. She regards the Frankish adventurers as the worse enemies of the Romans; but this does not prevent her drawing favourable portraits of some of the most formidable foes of the Empire. Her accounts even

of the pretenders who rebelled against Alexius are seldom characterised by bitterness. Sometimes she gives a good idea of sieges and military operations; and in describing the different armies and their weapons, she is evidently relying on expert information. Her account of how the faction of the Comneni overthrew the weak and incompetent government of Nicephorus Botaniates in Constantinople is really excellent, and gives a vivid picture of the revolution till the aged Emperor wearied of his troubles retires to become a monk and declares that he objects to nothing except that, in future, he will not be allowed meat for his dinner. Anna introduces her readers to members of her family and entourage and even makes them desire their personal acquaintance. There is the head of the great clan of the Comneni, Isaac the Sebastocrator, the older brother of Alexius, conspicuous as a warrior against the Turks, and as a theologian against heretics, but more remarkable for his loyalty to his imperial brother.

Two remarkable women appear in Anna's portrait gallery. Anna Dalassena, the mother of Isaac and Alexius, a strong masterful character, whom Alexius during his absence left in virtual control of the Empire, and his wife, the Empress Irene, of whom a charming description is given. To her daughter, Irene appears as the embodiment of female charm and virtue, a gracious lady, capable of enduring the dangers and hardships of war when she attended her husband, when, though an invalid, he was on a military expedition. As representing the clan of Ducas, Irene strengthened her husband's position as emperor; but her union to him met with violent opposition from her mother-in-law, Anna Dalassena, who detested the Ducases. In truth, the Empire in Constantinople was in constant dispute between the great rival houses of Ducas, Bryennius, Comnenus, and other powerful aristocratic families, and their alliances and rivalries are not unlike those of the great Whig houses, which ruled England in the days of the Hanoverian Kings.

Anna seems to have been the most devoted of wives; and there is little ground for supposing that her heart was touched by any Crusader, though she was not blind to the physical attraction of some of the warrior "Counts." Her husband, Nicephorus Bryennius, was by her account, a truly remarkable man, more like an Italian prince of the Renaissance than a semi-barbarous champion of the Sepulchre of Christ. "My Cæsar," as she affectionately calls him, was more attractive than any Frank who intruded his rough presence into the polished society of Byzantium.

It has been truly maintained that Roman Constantinople never was medieval; and this is borne out by Anna Comnena's *History*. Homer, Plato, and the Greek classics are her text-books, and though she is a most orthodox Christian princess, the tone of the little she says of her religion is assuredly not that of the medievalism of western Europe. We may take as an example her remarks on Latin Christianity. To her the conduct of Pope Gregory VII is reprehensible; and she gives an account of his treatment of the envoys of Henry IV, which is as remarkable for her ignorance as her complete lack of charity. Yet she, despite her dislike of the Latin "barbarians," the fact that the Eastern and Western Churches had parted company in 1054, never blames them as schismatic or heretics. Of the harm done to the Crusades by the famous and enduring schism caused by the Patriarch Michael Cerularius, we have no hint in the Alexiad. What obsessed the mind of the author was the idea, justified by later events, that the object of the Latins was to seize Constantinople.

Every emperor was interested in maintaining the Orthodoxy of the Church; and as no head of the Eastern Empire seems to have been completely illiterate, the secular ruler at least was not incompetent to express an opinion on the meaning of the Faith; nor was there any lack of interest in philosophy in Constantinopolitan society. The two heretics, Italus and Nilus, are mentioned by Anna with contempt for their imperfect

education and ignorance of the first principles of philosophy.

One cannot fail to be amazed at the absence of bitterness between the Eastern Christians and the Mohammedan Sultans. Turkish mercenaries are an important factor in the Roman armies, and diplomatic overtures are made by, and to the Sultan of Egypt, with talks as to the desirability of a good understanding between the civilised Christian and Mohammedan powers. Generally speaking, the avarice and ambition of the Norman Christians appeared to be less endurable than the religious opinions of the Islamites.

But if there was, as compared with the rest of the world, little Christian bigotry in Constantinopolitan society, there was a good deal of practical religion. Great reluctance was shown to inflict the penalty of death, even on traitors. The punishment of blinding was rarely resorted to by Alexius; once, as we have seen, it was pretended to have been performed on a dangerous enemy of the State, like Ursel, to satisfy the people of Amaseia who demanded it. From Anna's description of her grandmother, Anna Dalassena, and her mother, Irene, the royal ladies of Byzantium were free from any reproach by the propriety of their behaviour. Anna actually tries to do justice to the bitterest enemies of her country and her family, though she is evidently devoted to both. On the whole, she leaves us with the impression of a highly cultured and affectionate woman, anxious to be fair to all, a surprising figure to meet with in the barbarous Europe of the twelfth century.

Anna Comnena is chiefly known by the appearance of her name in Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Count Robert of Paris*; but the lady has been so transformed by the touch of the Wizard of the North as to be quite unrecognisable. She is introduced in the memorable scene when Edward, the Anglo-Saxon and Varangian soldier, is brought into the presence of emperor and empress. She reads an extract from her *History* which certainly does not appear in the Alexiad, and is represented as a

blue-stocking, past her first youth. When her husband, Nicephorus Bryennius enters the presence, he appears as a supercilious dandy, frankly bored by his wife's erudition. But at the time of the arrival of the main army of the Crusaders, 1197, Anna was in her fourteenth year, and Bryennius, a brave soldier and prudent diplomatist, was himself engaged in the composition of an *History* which was continued after his death by his widow. Alexius is in the romance a stately but enfeebled figure, whereas he had still some twenty years of hard fighting and ingenious political strategy before him. A mysterious personage called Ursel is kept in the dungeons of Alexius and a conspiracy to make him emperor is unmasked, whereas the only Ursel in Anna's narrative, is a Frankish general captured by treachery by her father, before he became emperor, and, as we have seen, blinded in pretence and sent to Alexius' predecessor, Botaniates. Nicephorus Bryennius is made out to have been involved in this conspiracy; but, when Alexius died, he refused to entertain the idea of supplanting his son and successor, John Comnenus. Finally, Count Robert of Paris is called the ancestor of Hugh Capet, who died as King of France more than a century before the First Crusade.

CHAPTER XII

Burnet's History of the Reformation and of His Own Times

IF he does not rank among the greatest historians or perhaps among great men, Gilbert Burnet is a most interesting character. Ecclesiastically, a Low-Churchman, politically, a Whig, unpopular in Scotland as an Episcopalian, regarded with suspicion by the Anglican clergy both as a Scotsman, which in his days in England meant a foreigner, and of being at heart a Presbyterian, his peculiarities and very patent faults made him an object of dislike and ridicule. Lord Macaulay, who has an evident regard for him, declares that he is rather a typical Irishman than a Scot; but had Sir Walter Scott or Robert Louis Stevenson introduced Bishop Burnet into one of their novels as a countryman, they would have doubtless depicted him as such, and made their readers laugh at him and love him. Burly, clumsy and officious, Burnet with his self-importance and almost incredible lack of tact, was as embarrassing to his friends, as offensive to his opponents. Yet with all his faults it must be admitted that he was no contemptible character, a man of learning, and a politician honest and fearless in every situation. And withal, Burnet was generous and large-hearted, liberal as well as sympathetic, always ready to take the side of the oppressed, a model bishop in the zeal with which he administered his diocese, and in his earnest desire to alleviate the poverty of the clergy. If only because he made the accession of William and Mary to the throne possible, and was the real originator of Queen Anne's Bounty, he has left

enduring monuments of his devotion to the Church of England.

The circumstances of Gilbert Burnet's long and eventful life can here be only briefly mentioned. Born in Edinburgh in 1643, an Aberdonian of a honourable Scottish legal family, he was sent to be educated when a child of nine to the Mareschal College of Aberdeen. His father was a Lord of Session with the title of Lord Crimond, who resigned on refusing to sign the Covenant, and twice went into exile, being both in politics and religion strictly moderate. The son followed in his father's footsteps, although his mother was a rigid Presbyterian. He was ordained by the Bishop of Edinburgh, and administered the parish of Saltoun near that City till he became Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, where he enjoyed the friendship of the learned and pious Archbishop Leighton, with whom he strove to promote unity between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. His historical studies began with researches into the papers of the Dukes of Hamilton, which were made over to him by the Duchess Anne. In 1673, Burnet settled in England where he was favourably received by Charles II, who made him a royal chaplain, but soon dismissed him, at the suggestion of Lauderdale, who declared that he had been troublesome in Scotland; but this king, no mean judge of men, declared that Burnet was "too busy." The Duke of York, afterwards James II, did not withdraw his patronage, and Burnet gained much credit as a preacher in London at the Rolls Chapel, and as lecturer at St. Clement Danes Church. Although he wrote tracts against the Roman Church, in the days of the Popish Plot, Burnet was on the side of moderation, and strongly opposed the legal atrocities to which those accused of popery were subjected. In 1681, he brought out his first volume of the *History of the Reformation*, for which he received the thanks of Parliament.

The book on the English Reformation best known in Europe was the work of Nicolas Sanders, a graduate of

Oxford, and in the days of Elizabeth, a perfervid Catholic, whose one object was to secure the supremacy of his creed, if needs be, by violence. He schemed and plotted in every way to dethrone the queen, and did all in his power to ensure her downfall. He was a man of learning whose short popular book in Latin, *De Schismate Anglicano*, was translated into French, and is still regarded by Roman Catholics as valuable. Sanders died in Ireland where he was endeavouring to arm the native population against England. His book was considered by many to be the authoritative account of the English Reformation, and had never, in Burnet's opinion, been properly answered.

Burnet already possessed the experience of an archivist, which he had acquired in his study of the Hamilton documents and had shown himself to be an able pamphleteer, and his volumes are of value for the amount of material he had laboriously amassed. The first volume covers the reign of Henry VIII, the second the reigns of his three successors. His accuracy and reliability have been naturally severely criticised, but Macaulay's verdict is, upon the whole, favourable to the honesty of Burnet as an ecclesiastical historian, and even those who condemn his judgments can profit by the study of his methods and his use of first hand evidence.

In judging Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, it must not be forgotten that the first volume appeared at the time of the Popish Plot. The hatred and fear of the Roman Church, and especially of the Jesuits, had driven the English nation to the verge of madness. By a strange coincidence, the *Pilgrims' Progress* appeared in 1678, the year before Burnet's first volume; and it is curious to remark that neither Bunyan, the Baptist visionary, nor Burnet seem to lose their heads in denouncing the Pope. To Bunyan's Christian, Giant Pagan was dead and Giant Pope in his dotage; the real danger came from France, that country being even more formidable to England under Louis XIV, than Spain had been a century before under Philip II. The peril was all the greater in the

seventeenth century, because the Court of Charles II was suspected, not without reason, of being on the side of England's great enemy.

The preface to the *History* gives a good idea of the intention and method of the whole in refuting the misrepresentations of Sanders by all the documentary evidence available. The most vulnerable points in the beginning of the so-called English schism are the cruelty and injustice of Henry VIII, in the putting away of his wife, Catharine of Aragon, his marriage with Anne Boleyn, and his assumption of the Royal Supremacy over the Church in England with the crimes and depredations which followed. Burnet fully recognises the weakness of his cause, and does not attempt to justify the king, only pleading that his actions were, on the whole, beneficial to religion, and that God has often used bad men to carry out His purposes. But he does not attempt to excuse crimes like those of the judicial murders of Cardinal Fisher and Sir Thomas More.

Of Henry VIII he says: "The faults of this king being so conspicuous, and the severity of his proceedings so unjustifiable, particularly that heinous violation of the most sacred rules of justice and government, in condemning men without bringing them to make their answers," and remarks that what good he accomplished, "could only have been done by a man of his humour." The king "saving the reverence due to the crown," is compared to the "postillion of reformation who made way for it through a great deal of mire and filth." All this is characteristic of our historian, who if he justifies the end, he never justifies the means. Even Cranmer, though one of his hereoes, does not escape. "Indeed Cranmer was in all points so extraordinary a person, that it was perhaps fit there should be some ingredients in his temper to lessen the veneration which great worth might have raised too high, if it had not been for those feeblenesses which upon some occasions appeared in him." Burnet also tried to be fair to those whose opinions he opposed, and recognises the virtues of Cardinal Pole.

His weapons against Sanders consisted of original documents, and he gives a very interesting account of his researches in London, especially in the libraries of the Rolls Office and of the Inner Temple; and he especially acknowledges the help of that great scientist, The Hon. Robert Boyle, one of the founders of the Royal Society. But he declares that the whole project was due to the encouragement of one whose name he was not allowed to publish, though in the preface of Volume II he lets us know that he was the learned Bishop William Lloyd of St. Asaph, who died in 1717 at an advanced age, as Bishop of Worcester.

But, although the first volume brought no little credit to Burnet with the thanks of Parliament, it is, after all, a record of the events of the reign of a monarch, who despite his breach with Rome, had little or no sympathy with the doctrinal Reformation. The second volume is more interesting as it treats of the progress of the reformed doctrines in the days of Edward VI, the reaction under Mary, and the accession of Elizabeth.

The preface to this book is very informing. After making due acknowledgment of the help, pecuniary and otherwise, he had received, and testifying to the generosity of the Earl of Halifax, whose detached views of politics as a "Trimmer" were thoroughly in accord with his own, Burnet describes this patron thus: "That was done in a most extraordinary manner by the Right Honourable the Earl of Halifax, whom if I reckon among the greatest persons this age has produced, I am sure all who know him will allow that I speak modestly of him." Then follows a discussion of the objections brought against the Anglican reformation.

The first "prejudice" which our historian mentions is that the changes in religion broke up the unity of the Church. Burnet's answer to his is that even in early times the different Churches had set themselves to reform the abuses and heresies which had sprung up in them without waiting for united action in the Christian world, and the reader is invited to judge for himself whether

the Church in the days of the revolt against Rome was not in need of reformation.

The second and third "prejudices," that the majority of the bishops did not agree to the changes in the days of Edward VI and that many of his statesmen were bad men, may here be passed over; but in replying to the fourth, regarding the spoiliation of the monasteries and the Church, Burnet reveals one of the most creditable impulses of his life in his deep sympathy for the poorer clergy. In Scotland he declares that King James and his Parliament had done all in their power to raise the stipend of every parish minister to at least fifty pounds sterling a year; but in England, "What greater scorn can be put upon religion, than to provide so scantily those that are trusted with the care of souls, that some hundreds of parishes in England pay not ten pounds a year to their pastors, and perhaps some thousands not fifty?" Years later, as Bishop of Salisbury, he endeavoured to remedy this crying evil, by his successful advocacy of Queen Anne's Bounty.

In his discussion of the fifth "prejudice," Burnet utters a fierce denunciation of the corruptions of the English Church in his own day—the abuses of the Church courts, the non-resident ministers in wealthy parishes, who employed underpaid and inefficient curates, etc. "These," he says, "are abuses that even the Church of Rome, after all her impudence is ashamed of; and are in this day discountenanced in France all over. Queen Mary here in England, in the time of popery, set herself effectually to root them out. . . . All the honest prelates at the Council of Trent endeavoured to get residence to be of divine right, etc." Nor was Burnet content with declamation: as Bishop of Salisbury he tried earnestly to practise what he had preached.

With his usual generous appreciation, Burnet speaks in the highest terms of his brother clergy in London, and of their preaching being worthy of the best days of the Church. Certainly the standard of clerical education during the seventeenth century in the capital, the

universities, and the more cultured circles was high, indeed, it was a period of great intellectual activity in every department of religious, social, and political life in England, France and Holland. Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, is in many respects, not unworthy of the age. The author is still an example of with what unwearied industry and constant reference to the best available documentary sources, history ought to be written. But this work deserves higher praise. Composed in days of intense religious excitement, the desire to be fair and charitable is manifest. No Protestant in the days of the Popish Plot could have summed up the character of Queen Mary, and done justice to the purity of her life, but a man who could rise superior to the bigotry of the time.

The third volume was not written till just before Burnet's death and dedicated to George I on his accession. It covers much the same ground as the two previous ones, with corrections which the author was able to make now that he had obtained leave to use Sir John Cotton's library.

After all, the *History of the Reformation* treats of a bygone age and is the result of research, whilst Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, is a contemporary account of events in which he played a conspicuous part.

A survey of British history from the restoration of Charles II in 1661 to the accession of George I, 1714, takes the reader over one of the most momentous half centuries in the destinies of humanity, marked by the presence of men of exceptional genius. England, Scotland, Ireland, and the colonies in America, were producing men, whose work in religion, philosophy, politics, literature, and science, was destined for immortal fame. The period is marked by momentous changes in every department of human life and thought. It was in fact, an age of strong characters, in which Gilbert Burnet lived and took a not inconspicuous place. Times marked by so much mental activity were, as might be expected, conspicuous for furious controversies and

intense animosities, and the men who lived through them were characterised by a strong individualism, which left its permanent impression on generations to come. To enumerate the famous pioneers in many fields of these days would be a tedious and perhaps an invidious task. Here it is sufficient to say that Burnet lived in the times of Milton and Dryden, of Swift and Defoe, of Locke, Newton, and Napier, of Sir Richard Temple, Halifax and Somers, of Marlborough and William III, of the foundation of the Royal Society, the Bank of England, and the Observatory at Greenwich, of the statesmen who made the Revolution of 1688, and the Union between England and Scotland.

On attacking the two great folios of Burnet's record, the reader finds no pompous chronicle of four reigns, but a *History* relieved by personal touches which bring him into close sympathy with the author. In his insight into character Burnet resembles and, being more human, at times surpasses Clarendon, and here and there almost ranks with Boswell, whose indiscretions are of more value than most men's wisdom. Like Boswell, Burnet came of a good intellectual Scottish stock and was an officious and inveterate gossip. Despite his good nature, for he was thoroughly kind-hearted, he could be more cruel than even Swift in his description of some men's character, yet he always tried to be just. At first, for example, he worked with that very able but unscrupulous Scottish politician, the Duke of Lauderdale, but was ultimately disgusted by his cruelty and has made an unforgettable sketch of the man: "He was very big: his hair red, hanging oddly about him: His tongue was too big for his mouth, which made him bedew all that he talked to: and his whole manner was rough and boisterous, and very unfit for a Court. . . . He was a man, as the Duke of Buckingham called him to me, of a blundering understanding. He was haughty beyond expression, abject to those he saw he must stoop to, but imperious to all others." Yet we are surprised to read that the Duke, brute as he was, "was very learned, not only in

Latin of which he was a master, but in Greek and Hebrew. He had read a great deal of divinity, and almost all the the historians, ancient and modern: So that he had great materials. He had with these an extraordinary memory, and a copious but unpolished expression."

Burnet gives a very discriminating picture of the different kings with whom he came in contact, and the general features of each. His description of Charles II, for instance, makes that monarch into a personal acquaintance. The faults of their king are not disguised; but frivolous, immoral and indolent, as he may have been, his great natural abilities receive ample justice. He seemed to acquire his knowledge without the effort of study, and was fully abreast with the scientific pursuits of his age, and his good manners, wit, and powers of telling a good story, though, like most raconteurs, he too often repeated himself, are dwelt on by Burnet, who had many interviews with the king. It is by our historian that the cynical remark that "Presbyterianism was not the religion of a gentleman" is preserved, and also that his brother James, Duke of York, evidently was given his many ugly mistresses by his confessor as a penance for his sins. The profligate Duke of Buckingham, who certainly had the gift of hitting the nail on the head, remarked to Burnet that "The king could see things if he would, and the Duke would see things if he could." Nothing could better express the contrast between the brothers, the elder, indolent but shrewd, and the other, businesslike and industrious and stupid.

Burnet was a devoted friend and his sketches of his friends make very pleasant reading. He portrays two Scotch ministers, Mr. Nairn* and Mr. Charteris with admirable skill, as well as another countryman, Lord Kincardine, with whom he lived in close intimacy for many years. He had a great admiration for the amiable Leighton, Archbishop of Glasgow, and the praise he

* The character of Mr. Nairn could apply to the late Alexander Nairne, Regius Professor of Divinity Emeritus of Cambridge and Canon of Windsor, whom the present writer is proud to claim as an old pupil.

has for Bishop Lloyd and the London clergy, as has been shown, is unstinted.

The events in the reign of Charles II in which Burnet was especially interested, are the Covenanter's rebellion in the western shires of Scotland; the so-called Popish Plot; the Exclusion Bill; and the Rye House Plot. Although Charles II had struck his name off the list of royal chaplains, Burnet's activity and undoubted abilities made him an important clerical figure in London. He was naturally not an eye-witness of the troubles in his native country; but, though he had no sympathy with the fanaticism of the Covenanters, he felt acutely the cruelty which they experienced at the hands of the Government, and was especially disgusted at the behaviour of the two archbishops, Sharp of St. Andrews, and Alexander Burnet of Glasgow, the predecessor of Leighton. From what is said of Sharp, the murder of that venerable prelate on Magus Moor by the Covenanters is certainly intelligible, if inexcusable.

One of the most revolting aspects of the society of the seventeenth century both in England and Scotland is that its leaders were often men and women of exceptional intelligence with the instincts of hardened criminals. Lauderdale is an extreme type of the age combining the coarsest brutality with scholarship and real learning. Burnet has given one dreadful description of the trial and condemnation of a would-be assassin of Archbishop Sharp, and of the callous vulgarity of his judges. Yet, brutes as were Lauderdale and his friends, they tried to escape from the court room when the dreadful torture of the "boot" was applied to extort a confession; only the Duke of York would watch the torment of the accused with a certain scientific interest.

The Scotland of this period was more uncivilised than England, yet the fury of faction in London was equal to what prevailed in Edinburgh. Both capitals in the last years of Charles II were stained by judicial murders. The first victims were the Roman Catholics. Titus Oates and a host of informers encouraged by his example

accused a number of persons, mostly innocent of a plot to murder Charles II and to introduce Romanism. Under the influence of prejudice and terror the accused were hurried to the scaffold on the slenderest evidence of venal informers. This Popish Plot was followed by the Exclusion Bill, an attempt to bar the accession of James, Dukes of York, as an avowed Papist. Then the tide turned and the Puritans and Republicans came to be regarded as the public enemies. The criminal and foolish Rye House Plot gave the excuse for more executions after trials no fairer than those which disgraced the Popish Plot. Such was the Terror which reigned in London from 1678 till the death of Charles II in 1685. Few periods of its history are more discreditable to the nation.

According to his own statement, Burnet deserves much credit for his behaviour in these troublous times, and he certainly made many enemies by his efforts to be impartial. One thing is evident from what he relates, namely his horror of the vindictive spirit displayed on all sides, and of the flagrant illegality of acts committed by such travesties of justice as the State trials. His natural kindness of heart is apparent throughout, as is also his readiness to help the oppressed, however much their views may have been opposed to his own; his very faults are those of a generous man.

Burnet's previous life in his native Scotland is sufficient to show the horror he must have felt at what was known as "the killing time." Strong Protestant as he was, he never was carried away by the calumnies of Oates and his gang, or gave the smallest credence to their perjuries. When he believed a man to be innocent, he did all in his power to save him. In his interviews with Viscount Stafford, under sentence of death in the Tower, he showed himself courteous and considerate to the noble prisoner. He attached himself to Lord Halifax in the matter of the Exclusion, and refused to take sides with Shaftesbury, who posed as the champion of the Protestant religion; and he visited and consoled Lord Russell

before his death for alleged complicity with the Rye-House conspirators. When a kind action was demanded of him, Burnet never discriminated between friend and foe.

Burnet's earlier experiences explain much of his conduct after he became a bishop and a prominent public character. A short digression may, therefore, here be allowed to explain his attitude after William III had appointed him Bishop of Salisbury. The reintroduction of the Episcopal office in Scotland by James VI had made little outward change in the National Church. The mode of worship was unchanged; and, after Charles I and Archbishop Laud's mad attempt to introduce a Prayer Book, there was no tendency to conform to the usages of the Anglican Church, whose orthodox divines, like Hooker, admitted that Episcopacy was not necessary to the *esse*, though desirable for the *bene esse* of a Christian Church. At the Restoration the Episcopal system was again established, but with but little of the importance of the office enjoyed by the English bishops. In England the dignitaries of the Church enjoyed considerable revenues, whilst the incumbents of many parishes had to live on starvation pay. In Scotland, on the other hand, as has been shown, care had been taken to make the distribution of Church revenues more even and the ministers enjoyed greater independence. The Presbyterian system of government with its lay representatives made the Scottish Church far less dependent on the State than the English, and it was felt that bishops like those in southern Britain were more easily controlled by the government than any presbytery could be. The contest between the two systems of Church administration, turned less upon the partial adoption of Reformation principles in England, and the entire rejection of the Roman system in Scotland, than on the question of the independence of the Church and its ministry, of which the Scottish Protestants were extremely jealous. Burnet was always an Episcopalian, but his object was to have the bishops and ministers act together in harmony, without much concern for formularies and ceremonies.

He found it difficult to understand why this system should not prevail in England. Hence the intense bitterness displayed towards him by the party in Anglicanism, henceforward to be known as the "High Church."

Space does not permit a full disquisition on the later life of Burnet as related in the second volume of his *History*, but perhaps enough has been said to indicate the nature of his character and opinions.

In the later part of the reign of James II, Burnet was in exile, and travelled widely on the Continent. He was among the English in Holland who planned William of Orange's expedition to England which resulted in the flight of James II and the Revolution of 1688. His most important service was to persuade the Princess of Orange, who on the abdication of her father would have succeeded to the throne, to consent to her husband being associated with her with the understanding that she should be his subject rather than a queen in her own right. The most questionable act in Burnet's whole career is that he accepted the popular belief that James II's infant son was a suppositious child put in place of his wife's dead infant, a wicked rumour made possible by the king's blundering at the time of the accouchement. In 1689, Burnet was made Bishop of Salisbury, and enjoyed the friendship and confidence of Mary II. He was not equally fortunate with her husband; for William III, perhaps the ablest, and certainly the worst mannered of British kings with his disagreeable taciturnity, could not appreciate the virtues of the learned, if indiscreet, clergyman, to whom he owed so much.

It is only possible briefly to allude to Burnet's subsequent career. When the Toleration Act was passed in 1689, as Bishop of Salisbury, he earnestly advocated a Comprehension Bill to remodel the Church of England in such a way as to conciliate the Nonconformists, a measure violently opposed by the clergy, and but coldly received by many of the Dissenters. At the same time, Burnet raised his voice against the successful attempt to

force the clergy to take the oaths in favour of William and Mary as legitimate sovereigns, which led to the schism of the Non-jurors.

In the reign of Queen Anne, Burnet was a strong supporter of the Whig party, and vigorously opposed the Bill against occasional conformity, and all attempts to deprive Dissenters of the benefits they had gained by the Toleration Act. The majority of the clergy could never pardon this, even in one who had tried to relieve their necessities by his successful advocacy of Queen Anne's Bounty. His attempt to explain the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England was indignantly condemned; and he was regarded, despite his excellent administration of the diocese of Salisbury, as a Presbyterian masquerad-in the lawn-sleeves of a bishop.

His *History of My Own Time* was published by a provision in his will after his death, and edited by his sons, Gilbert and Thomas, Volume I in 1724, and Volume II, in 1734. Its statements and accuracy have long been the subject of severe criticism, and even now needs some boldness to recommend it. Nevertheless, it is well written, full of interesting information, and gives not only a self-revelation of the author, but also brings the reader into close connection with times, in which the destinies of Church and State of the England of to-day were largely determined.

In one respect Burnet shows an inconsistency also displayed by Bishop Lightfoot. His view of the Episcopal dignity provoked the fury of the Tories and High-Churchmen of his time; and Bishop Lightfoot's account of the origin of the Christian ministry caused no little perturbation among Anglo-Catholics. But, if the theories of these great men on the subject gave offence, both proved by their actions the high ideal each had of the duties of the Episcopal office.

CHAPTER XIII

Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

IN Edward Gibbon the intellectualism of the eighteenth century is incarnate. He belonged to one of those families which though untitled and not inordinately rich or influential, combined intellect with honourable ancestry; and he enjoyed the intimacy of the representatives of the highest aristocracy of both birth and talent of two great nations. Reared as a delicate child, owing to the unceasing care of his relatives, his health debarred him from sharing in the sports and grosser pleasures of the class to which he belonged. He combined to an unusual degree the urbanity of a fine gentleman with a rare understanding of what true scholarship and patient research really mean. As a result he was able to avoid alike the superficiality of the amateur and the tediousness of a pedant because he had no patience with easily-acquired learning, and the society in which he moved had no use for anyone whose conversation bored them. This helps to account for the extraordinary welcome given to a work of so much learning on a subject so abstruce and lengthy as the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which is not only a monument of erudition, but can be read with absorbing interest. So far from being out of date, this great work can still be read with interest and pleasure, nor can even a beginner of the study of Church as well as secular history afford to so much as enter upon it till he has mastered his Gibbon. Fortunately, Gibbon has left his priceless *Memoirs of My Life and Writings*, which, with his *Miscellaneous Papers* were published by his devoted friend, John Holroyd, afterwards Lord Sheffield. No young man who aspires to be an historian should fail to read and re-read this invaluable record of the studies of a great scholar. He will rise from its

perusal with a high ideal of what an historian should be, and not without a sense of his own shortcomings if he hopes to follow in the footsteps of so great a master.

Gibbon was born in 1737 and wrote his *Memoirs* when he was fifty-two years of age. He boasts that he was descended from Lord Say and Sele, the minister of Henry VI, whose trial and execution by the Kentish peasants is celebrated by Shakespeare. At his mock trial he is accused of speaking French, the language of "England's enemies," a crime of which Edward Gibbon could not plead "Not guilty," as he wrote and spoke French well. Early in the seventeenth century an ancestor changed the three scallops in the Gibbon coat to three ogresses heads, to represent three ladies of his family who annoyed him by litigation. His son, John, educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, was a curious antiquary who went to America, and declared the Red Indians practised the science of heraldry. He was admitted to the Herald's College as Blue Mantle Pursuivant at Arms. His brother, a London draper, had two sons, Edward, the grandfather of the historian, and the Dean of Carlisle. This Edward Gibbon, who was a director of the South Sea Company, was, when the bubble burst, deprived of a large fortune by the vindicative judicial proceedings which followed, and given back only £10,000 out of the ruin of his fortune. At the age of sixty he set to work undaunted, and made a fortune equal, if not greater, than that of which he had been illegally deprived.

It is interesting to note that the Acton family was related to the author of the *Decline and Fall*, who speaks of being entertained at Besançon by "my cousin Acton." The late Lord Acton, to whose historical labours the world is so greatly in debt, owes, it may here be remembered, like Gibbon, his inspiration to European rather than to English scholarship. Perhaps, however, enough has here been said to show that the historian came of a house in every branch of which talent of some description was abundantly displayed.

A few facts concerning him may here be inserted. He was a delicate boy, reared with difficulty by the motherly care of his aunt, Miss Sarah Porter. He was at Westminster School, and he pays his tribute to the English public-school system which instructed boys in little, but taught that thoroughly. At the early age of fifteen his father sent him as a gentleman-commoner to Magdalen College, Oxford. It was, to say the least, an injudicious step. The boy was already learned, having, in his own words, acquired "cheaply so much knowledge" mainly from English books and translations, and he was made a member of the high table to associate with a most uninteresting body of indolent dons, who seem to have flattered wealthy lads, and to have demanded nothing in the way of study from them. He seems to have indulged in some youthful follies; but what gave gravest offence was his seeking admission to the Roman Church after reading the argument of Bossuet. In those days in England such a step was unpardonable and certain to ruin for life the prospects of the convert, so his indignant father at once packed him off to Protestant Switzerland in the hopes that he might there learn the folly of his rash action.

Lausanne was chosen as the place of young Gibbon's exile, where at first he had every reason to regret his spacious college rooms and the comforts of Magdalen. He lodged with a Mons. Pavilliard and found the cookery atrocious and the house none too clean. In Pavilliard he found a judicious friend and a wise counsellor, and he gradually detached himself from the Roman Church which he had entered, more perhaps from perversity than from sincere conviction. It is interesting to note that "From the *Provincial Letters* of Paschal, which almost every year I have perused with new pleasure, I learned to manage the weapons of grave and temperate irony, even on subjects of ecclesiastical solemnity." During his sojourn at Lausanne he fell in love with Mademoiselle Curchod, whom he found to be "learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in

sentiment, and elegant in manners." When his father objected, however, young Gibbon "signed as a lover and obeyed as a son." After four years' residence abroad, he says, "I ceased to be an Englishman." He came home in 1758 and found his father had married again; and, having recovered from the shock, he learned to regard the new Mrs. Gibbon as a second mother. He was reconciled to his father, who received him "as a man and a friend"; and they lived together "on the same terms of equal and easy politeness." These remarks are indicative of his character, and throw some light upon his attitude as an historian. Amiable, with his emotions under strict control, he remarks when his father died in 1770, "My grief was soothed by the conscious satisfaction that I had discharged all the duties of filial piety." Such a man was hardly capable of understanding those violent enthusiasms which so often influence the actions of mankind.

On his return to England at the age of twenty-one, Gibbon with occasional visits to the Continent, lived with his family at Beriton in Hampshire and in London, never abandoning his scholarly pursuits, but engaging in the duties and pleasures of his rank and position. The Militia had been embodied by Mr. Pitt, and Gibbon served from 1760 to 1762 as a captain of the Hampshire Regiment, in which his father was major. In January, 1763, he began to prepare for another visit to Europe. His military experience bored him, but nevertheless he benefited by it, not only in health but in knowlege; and he confesses: "The discipline and evolutions of a modern battalion gave me a clearer notion of the phalanx and the legion; and the captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers [the reader may smile] has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire." After his father's death in 1770 the future historian sat a silent member in the House of Commons and was on the Board of Trade, enjoying one of those pleasant sinecures which added to the amenity of the political life of his time. Thus Gibbon gained the experience of how affairs were managed in a society not altogether dissimilar to that of

ancient Rome, and an ability to recognise what could and could not be done in the conduct of public business. During his sojourn in England, Gibbon says he at times regretted "That at a proper age he had not embraced the lucrative pursuits of the law or of trade, the chances of civil office or India adventure, or even the fat slumber of the Church." All the time, however, he was planning to write on a variety of historical subjects; till "At Rome on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amid the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started in my mind."

Years, however, elapsed before he seriously engaged in his laborious work; and it was not till 1776 that the first volume of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* saw the light. Needless to say, the book with its wonderful description of the Roman world under so excellent a series of rulers, from Nerva to Marcus Aurelius, was received with universal applause, and Edward Gibbon won a deserved place among the greatest historians of all time. Five years later the second volume appeared, and Gibbon, greatly to his surprise, found that he was not only famous, but infamous. He had lived in brilliant intellectual and social society, and he assumed that the attitude of educated humanity did not take the claims of the Christian religion seriously; or at best regarded it as, on the whole, beneficial to the maintenance of law and order among the people. He was, in consequence, amazed to find that his Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters were regarded as a virulent and dangerous attack on the Christian religion.

The first notes of alarm were sounded in the pulpits of Oxford and displayed zeal rather than discretion, the protests of Cambridge soon followed, the Nonconformists emulated the indignation of churchmen, and the nations of Europe joined in a controversy which has continued to this day.

It is not our present purpose to enter into the details of this embittened dispute or to attempt a refutation of the

conclusions arrived at by Gibbon. We propose rather to state the theory advanced, and to show its importance to those who are ready to acknowledge the problem of Church history, which is at least squarely faced, if not fully understood in the *Decline and Fall.* There can be no better introduction to the study of Church history than to examine "the five causes of the growth of Christianity." Before doing this it seems advisable to state them separately.

I. "The inflexible, and if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit, which instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses."

It would not be easy to dispute this; and allowance has to be made in reading Gibbon's remarks on the subject, for the fact that he is necessarily covering a vast field in a limited space. One can but admire the immense amount of reading Gibbon has undergone to compress into so short a space the account of the Jewish polity, the separation of the Christians from Judaism, the rise of Ebionites and Gnostics. Nor is it reasonable to complain that Gibbon is not in possession of all that which recent research and discovery have provided for the Church historian. But one must observe that disguised irony underlying the apparently harmless words under which the historian conceals his ironical contempt for the whole system of revealed religion and argues on the ground of reason. This is in thorough accord with the spirit of Gibbon's age, but it reads too plausibly to convince us. He is justified in laying stress upon the unamiable character of Judaism as described by Juvenal, whom he quotes, but he ignores certain factors. The Law and the Prophets are not in complete accord as to the attitude towards the Gentile world, or perhaps, it would be more fair to say that they approach the subject from different angles. Both recognise that Israel possesses the knowledge of the True God; but whilst the Law aims at preserving it by rigid

exclusion from the Gentile world in order to avoid its corruptions, the noble idea of the Prophets is that Israel is entrusted with a sacred deposit of truth and that, in God's good time, this will be communicated to all mankind. Gibbon does not say anything of the interest Judaism excited in some important people in Rome, nor does he mention that St. Paul incurred the enmity of the Jews in Greek cities because his preaching attracted the Gentiles from the synagogues. The isolation of the Christians from the pagan world is stressed to excess because too much is made of the rigorous Puritanism of such a writer as Tertullian, who, whether he within or without the pale of the Church, advocates an ideal severity to which the average believer never attained.

II. "The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth."

Gibbon was powerfully influenced by the idea prevalent in his time that the continued existence of the soul after death cannot be accepted except through a revelation. Here Gibbon bases his argument, it would appear, too much on the ideas of a future life prevalent in the days of Cicero and the closing years of the Roman Republic, confessedly an age of unusual scepticism. At the time of the diffusion of the Christian religion there was, as is now well known, a strong craving for a life beyond the grave and a consequent disposition to gratify it by means of the religious cults with their increasing stress on visions and initiations. The experience of Judaism was much the same as that of the Hellenic world. At first, earthly prosperity was the reward of virtue; next, when experience showed that this was not the invariable rule, there were hopes of future bliss for the people of God and punishment hereafter for his enemies. For a period the question of survival was an open one, and by tne time of the coming of Jesus all except the aristocratic and unpopular Sadducees believed in a future life. After the destruction of Jerusalem this hope became part of the creed of Israel. Heaven and

Hell were not a monopoly of Christianity, though they inspired the believer with hope, and others with fear. In Gibbon's day the mystery religions were little known, and he and his contemporaries could hardly be expected to understand their present significance.

III. The miraculous powers ascribed to the Early Church. In common with many of his generation, Gibbon treats the subject of miracles with incredulity and polite contempt. He appears, however, to overrate their evidential value in ages in which supernatural powers, though due to demonic agency, as was believed, were confessedly exercised also by the enemies of the Gospel.

IV. The pure and austere morals of the Christians. The fourth cause of the spread of the Christian religion deserves more serious attention. No doubt the high standard of morality, as compared with the laxity of heathen life, attracted people to the Christian Church, as it had operated in favour of Jewish proselytism. But in enlarging on this point it appears that Gibbon greatly exaggerates the strictness demanded of the mass of baptised Christians. He would have us believe that the growing Christian community was entirely composed of people who had cut themselves off from all social intercourse with their fellows and refused to take any part in any of the activities or amenities of life. From a certain standpoint this would be highly satisfactory, as the primitive Church would have attained an ideal life of detachment from the world. But one has only to turn to the New Testament to see that even in Apostolic times it was not so. Gibbon seems to have relied too much on the testimony of Tertullian, a legalist of the most austere type, who in his brilliantly-written tracts is advocating an austerity of life with a persistence which in itself proves that the majority did not attempt to aspire to practice it. The Roman Catacombs reveal that the believers had not thrown off many of the habits and ideas of their day, including a fondness of art symbolism and decoration which Tertullian and his friends would

have indignantly denounced. Moreover, Gibbon's implication, which is still prevalent, that the new religion is misleading, as from the very first the Church drew into its fold not merely the oppressed classes, but some men and women of wealth, intelligence and high birth.

It would appear that the Christian Church drew converts from the fact that membership was not devoid of social advantages. Lucian's account of the adventures of that plausible adventurer, Pergrinus Proteus, shows the loyalty of the Christians to one another, and also that their charity was easily abused, especially by those who were in trouble with the authorities because of their Faith. It must not be forgotten that the persecutions, even if at times severe, were as a rule, local and intermittent, and that the reward of a martyr hereafter was certain. Although "the blood of the martyrs was their seed," it seems certain that, when the Church enjoyed peace, its membership was prized and increased rapidly.

V. "The union and discipline of the Christian Republic, which gradually formed an independent State in the heart of the Roman Empire." Although his treatment of the vexed question of the rise of the Christian clergy may be open to criticism, it should be read carefully as a masterly sketch of a very disputed subject. Our historian has a great respect for the marvellous organisation of the Church, with its elaborate system of discipline, and its wise distribution of relief to the needy. To quote his words: "The well-tempered mixture of liberality and vigour, the judicious dispensation of rewards and punishments, according to the maxims of policy as well as justice, constituted the human *strength* of the Church." It may be observed that in one instance he falls into the common error in regard to the priesthood of the laity in quoting Tertullian's remark in his *Exhortation to Chastity*. "Are not we laity, priests" which is directed not against sacerdotal privileges but against the claim of those not ordained to be subject to a laxer code of morality than the priesthood.

The five points of Gibbon are here mentioned not for the purpose of disputation, nor with the object of refuting them as hostile to the Christian religion; and it may be remarked, in passing, that the above discussion is independent of any of the literary attacks to which they have been subjected. Attention is here called to the way in which an attempt is made to account for the extraordinary fact of the rapid spread of the Christian Church in the first three centuries of its existence. To do this by advancing arguments purely rational is not in any way to attack the Christian revelation, and though it caused a shock in religious circles, is in accord with historical principles. But the brief survey already given of the circumstances of Gibbon's life throws some light upon his motive in advancing his argument. Apart from the intellectual and literary influences amid which he lived he seems never to have been so much as aware of what was going on in the religious world of eighteenth-century England, even when it touched his own family. William Law acted as the spiritual guide of his Aunt Hester, and was tutor to his father; but whilst Edward Gibbon acknowledges that he was not only remarkable as a man of letters but also as a true saint, he was completely untouched by his teaching and example. Wesley and all connected with the entire evangelical movement is not mentioned in the *Memoirs*. Gibbon's temporary conversion to the Church of Rome as a mere lad seems to have been an intellectual rather than a spiritual experiment. To him, therefore, religion of any kind was a purely objective concern to be regarded as an aberration of the human mind and examined impersonally by the philosophic observer.

The Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of the *Decline and Fall*, describing the rise of the Church till its triumph over the religion of the ancient world by the so-called Conversion of Constantine, may be regarded as the introduction to the second part of his whole work. The first part depicts the Empire in its most flourishing days under a series of excellent rulers beginning with Nerva.

Rarely, indeed, in human history have such warriors, statesmen and philosophers succeded one another as Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius, each of whom satisfied Gibbon's conception of some aspects of an ideal ruler. But, in his opinion, in the Christian Church a rival power was making its appearance, destined in the end to destroy the magnificent fabric of the Roman domination. The Christian Church rather than the barbarian invasions was the real power which destroyed the civilisation which Greek had inspired and Rome had created; and its triumph was the true cause of its ruin. No wonder, therefore, as the historian and panegyrist of the old order, Gibbon saw in Christianity the enemy. This made it well-nigh impossible to do justice to the fact that the triumph of the Faith of Christ was not due to the political sagacity of its organisers, but to the new spirit it inspired in mankind, a spirit manifested under most varying conditions of human life. Had his five causes been the sole reasons for the victory of Christianity over the ancient Roman system, the result would be more difficult to account for than it now is. But Gibbon was blind to much that was going on in the times in which he lived.

The rest of the Fifteenth Chapter gives a rapid and masterly sketch of the progress of the Gospel to the time of Constantine, and concludes with a specimen of the irony of Gibbon by which he shows his contempt for revealed religion, under the guise of a rebuke of the obstinate infidelity of the pagan world, for ignoring the miracles of Christ and the darkness which overspread the land on the day of his crucifixion: assuredly an unpleasing exhibition of his powers of satire.

The Sixteenth Chapter gave almost more offence than its predecessor, though it is less open to the criticism of the historian. It has been a generally accepted belief that an innumerable number of men and women laid down their lives during the first three centuries for the cause of Christ. To this day it is popularly supposed that the primitive Christians lived with the prospect of

martyrdom constantly before them. The attitude of the Roman government towards the Christians is discussed, and the conclusion reached that the officials were seldom animated by any kind of fanatic bitterness; and it has been pointed out by those who have no sympathy with Gibbon's point of view, that even the horrible tortures reported in the *Martyrologies* were designed to make the accused save his life by recanting. Gibbon further labours to show that, judging by contemporary evidence, the number of Christian martyrs was comparatively small, and that professing Christians have inflicted far more death and suffering on those who differed from them than the pagans did in the worst days of persecution. This view aroused general indignation; for the whole tone of the chapter shows that the sympathies of the historian were with the persecutors.

Gibbon, great as he is as an historian and a scholar, was essentially a product of his age and of the society in which he moved. The chief objection to the first Christians was their enthusiasm. To Gibbon, the correct attitude to religion was one of polite indifference. His whole life had been that of a man reared in comfort and undisturbed by any great sorrow, and of one who attributed his insensitiveness to religious emotion to a philosophic calm which no serious doubts or troubles had ever disturbed. In attempting to account for the appearance and spread of Christianity he was engaged on a problem which the coldness of his temperament disqualified him from understanding, and the impartiality on which he prides himself results in a complete neglect of the most important factors which explain the phenomenon of one of the most remarkable facts in the experience of humanity. At the same time, the genius he displays here and elsewhere as a writer of history renders every page of the *Decline and Fall* invaluable to all who attempt to follow in his steps.

CHAPTER XIV

The Books Recommended by Dr. Lightfoot

IN *Lightfoot of Durham: Memories and Appreciations*, collected and edited by George R. Eden, formerly Bishop of Wakefield and Canon F. C. Macdonald, there is a chapter by Dr. Whitney, Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Cambridge, on the Lightfoot Scholarships. The second paragraph is as follows:—

"For many years the list of books drawn up by the founder was in force, and it was an admirable, solid foundation for continuous knowledge likely to inspire and suggest lines of further study. I know both from what others have told me and from my own experience, the excellent wise guidance it gave. The books thus set were:—

De Broglie: *L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain.*
Bryce: *Holy Roman Empire.*
Guizot: *Histoire de la Civilization en France.*
Milman: *History of Latin Christianity.*
Ranke: *History of the Popes.*
Ranke: *History of the Reformation.*"

This catalogue is a revelation of Lightfoot's comprehensive idea of historical knowledge, and whatever may be the merit of the individual works recommended, any one who followed the scheme laid down will possess far more than a general acquaintance of what is known as ecclesiastical history. Indeed, the fact that the successful candidates have, with very few exceptions, distinguished themselves in the Historical Tripos is sufficient proof that a knowledge of secular affairs is essential to every

student of the story of the Church. Moreover, this choice of books provokes those who read them to desire a more extended knowledge of history. One who has twice undergone the examination for the Lightfoot Scholarship and prepared five successful candidates may claim some right to discuss the course of reading here prescribed, and to indicate the value it was to himself as a beginner.

In endeavouring to accomplish this he has to transport himself into a remote past and with the books before him imagine that he is once more a candidate. He must, however, admit that were he to be allowed once more to face the examiners, he would do so with little hope of satisfying them.

Professor Whitney pronounces de Broglie's *l'Eglise et l'Empire* to be out of date; and the present writer has no desire to dispute his verdict if so be that a good, well-written book can ever be relegated to permanent obscurity. But anyhow, one who had passed through the old Theological Tripos would find little that was new though much that was very suggestive in de Broglie. The period demanded of the candidates then extended to the days of St. Gregory the Great and did not, as now, end with the Council of Chalcedon, a curtailment possibly to be regretted. But whether now more or less obsolete, the choice of de Broglie was a wise one, because it made the student read a history written by an accomplished French man of letters, who presents his facts in an interesting manner.

Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire* is not likely to be placed on the discard, nor can anyone pronounce it dull. This astonishing little book appeals to the tyro as well as to the experienced historian, for it explains with admirable lucidity the Holy Roman Empire, the most characteristic feature of the Middle Ages, revealing as it does, the mind and aspirations of those who laid the foundations of European society for generations to come.

As Bishop Lightfoot's list has been modified in recent years, and the discussion of the books he recommended

would at best be jejune if restricted to a single chapter, it seems advisable to confine one's attention to one important work, namely, Ranke's *History of the Popes*.

This great account of the Papacy which appeared in 1836, was admirably translated by Sarah Austin, the wife of John Austin, the great authority on jurisprudence. It is the subject of one of the best reviews by Macaulay; and it is necessary to read the *History* and also the *Essay* on Ranke fully to appreciate the meaning of the writer and the insight of his critic. At the same time it is necessary to remind the student who tackles the three volumes of Ranke that he has a stiff task confronting him. The requisite knowledge of Italian and European history demanded is considerable, and to understand the course of events, books of reference and maps are indispensable. Nevertheless, the necessary care and study is amply repaid when the scope of the first volume dealing with the history of the sixteenth-century popes is satisfactorily grasped. Never was there a greater change in the whole spirit of the Papacy than in the period under consideration. The contrast between such popes as Alexander VI (1492–1503) and Pius V (1566–72) is startling as marking a transition from the most unscrupulous of priestly rulers to a canonised saint, although each successive pope is an interesting personality and none, whatever judgment we may form as to his character and administration, lacked ability. Ranke, a Protestant and north German, succeeds in making each Pope an attractive study, and does justice to the motives and virtues of many of these pontiffs. Lord Macaulay in his *Essay* has seized upon the vital point of Ranke's *History*, namely his endeavour to account for the amazing vitality of the Papacy. He endeavours to solve the problem in the spirit, not so much of a Protestant, as of a philosopher.

Having sketched the first years of the sixteenth century, Ranke concludes his first book with the pontificates of the two Medicis, Leo X and Clement VII, interrupted only by the reign of that excellent man, Hadrian VI (1522–23), the last non-Italian pope, whose

virtues could not compensate for his inexperience of Roman life. Never did a pope enter upon his sacred office with a more enjoyable prospect than Leo X. The warlike Julius II had reduced the States of the Church to obedience, and the day of enormous wickedness seemed past. The new pope, Leo X, was a cultured man, an excellent scholar with a reputation for piety. His court was the most agreeable in Europe, the artistic and literary centre of the world, when suddenly the protests of Luther initiated the Reformation. It is a great mistake to consider Leo as a mere frivolous worldling. Ranke does justice to his amiable character, and also to the consummate ability he showed in the midst of the difficulties of his age. He depicts him as one of those exceptional men who refuse to be entangled in the details of business and at the same time know how, in the midst of their enjoyments, never to neglect what they felt to be of real importance. "It was precisely because he did not devote every day and hour to business, that he was able to deal with it in a large and unfettered spirit; that, in all the perplexities of the moment, he could keep his eye steadily fixed on the one guiding thought." No one was more fortunate in all his enterprises than this luxurious and worldly pope.

Leo's cousin Guilio, as Clement VII, was the most unfortunate of popes. He quarrelled with the Emperor Charles V, whose army commanded by the Constable Bourbon, captured Rome. The General was killed in the assault and his army completely lost control, and in 1527 subjected the city to one of the most horrible sacks recorded. This pope lost England by failing to assent to the putting away of Catherine of Aragon, the emperor's aunt, by Henry VIII. Clement was an illegitimate scion of the Medicean family, and is often spoken of with contempt. Yet Ranke sums up his character thus:—

"We have called Leo fortunate; Clement was perhaps a better man, at all events more blameless, and even, in details, more acute; but in his whole course of life,

active and passive, unfortunate: he was indeed the most ill-starred pope that ever sat on the throne."

Ranke is happy in these felicitous touches, and he leaves the reader with a feeling that he would have liked to know the personages whom he describes.

By the death of Clement VII in 1534, the old order was passing away and a new spirit was invading the government of the Roman Church. No longer could a pope act as a secular prince bent on advancing his own family, with worldly ambitions disguised under a language of specious piety. A Renaissance pope, a Sixtus IV or Alexander VI, was henceforth an impossibility. The heads of the Church were men who took the lead in the religious movements of the age. Their chief faults were like those of Gregory VII and his successors, due to an austere and even fanatical piety. Strange to say the reaction began under Alexander Farnese who, as Paul III, reigned from 1534 to 1549. This pope was a thorough son of the Renaissance, and is thus described by Ranke:—

"Paul III was of an easy, magnificent, and liberal nature. Seldom has a pope been so beloved in Rome as he was. There was a grandeur in the way in which he nominated men of distinguished merit to the dignity of cardinal, without even their knowledge. . . . Not only did he nominate them—he allowed them unwonted liberty. He endured contradiction in the consistory, and encouraged the cardinals to fearless discussion."

In a sense, Pius III was as worldly and as resolved to favour his family as any of his predecessors, but the trend of the times was more powerful than he. A circle of devoted priests established under Leo X the Oratory of the Divine Love, and its members were already conspicuous alike for culture and piety. The group included the stern Caraffa, later Paul IV, and Reginald Pole, Queen Mary's Archbishop of Canterbury. The movement in the direction of practical piety was embodied in the Theatine Order of priests, which was sanctioned by Clement VII. But far more momentous was the career of the Spanish soldier, Ignatius Loyola.

His society in which discipline was marvellously combined with flexibility, and the most ardent piety with practical good sense, was one of the chief causes of that Counter Reformation, which so effectually stemmed the flowing tide of Protestantism. The reign of Pius III was also marked by the institution of the Roman Inquisition which armed the Catholic Church with powers which had long, save in Spain, remained in comparative abeyance. The Council of Trent, by which the Church was itself reformed, also began in the days of this pope.

Paul III died at the age of eighty, lamented by the people of Rome and was succeeded by Julius III, the last pontiff who lived at his ease. He was succeeded by Marcellus II, a man who have lived a blameless life and whose choice inspired hope on every side. He died after a pontificate of twenty-two days, and then the Cardinal Caraffa mounted the papal throne. In him the reformed papacy became incarnate. He was resolved to reform the Church on lines of uncompromising ecclesiasticism. His strongest passions were zeal for the Inquisition and hatred of the emperor, Charles V.

From the time of the fall of the Roman power in Italy, the papacy has always dreaded the unification of the peninsula under a single great power. The rise of Spain made the danger more imminent. Not only was its monarchy the strongest in Europe and it had now been united with Germany and the Netherlands and threatened to be master of Italy also. By a strange anomaly, Spain was the mainstay of the most orthodox Catholicism, the strongest opponent of the rapidly spreading revolt against Rome. Yet such was Paul IV's hostility to the Spaniards that he quarrelled with Charles V's son, Philip II, as implacable and bigoted an adherent of the same cause as this pope. He thwarted Philip's plans for the securing of England to Catholicism by his rudeness to Queen Elizabeth, and he sought the support of the Protestants of Germany against the House of Austria, which he opposed even at the expense of the cause he had most at heart. As is frequent, his successor, Pius IV,

a Medici, but not of the great Florentine family, reversed his policy and conducted the affairs of the Church so diplomatically that he revived the Council of Trent and brought it to a successful issue.

Pius IV had a nephew who was totally unlike any previous papal "nephews." His predecessors, whether bad or good men, found that their relatives as a rule were a disgrace and embarrassment to them. But in his nephew, St. Carlo Borromeo, Pius IV, has one of his greatest titles to fame. Two saints, his nephew and St. Philip Neri were present at the death-bed of this experienced diplomatic pope; and he was succeeded by the last pontiff who has attained the honour of canonisation.

Pius V, Michaele Ghislieri, was elected by the influence of St. Carlo Borromeo, and exhibited in his person both the virtues and the defects of the reformed Papacy. It is a remarkable testimony to Ranke's impartiality that, after reading his account of this pontificate, we are able to appreciate the reason for the reverence with which Rome has regarded St. Pius V. Judged by some of his actions his zeal for the Church made him not only severe and cruel but injudicious in his fanaticism. He enacted laws imposing punishments with the uncompromising harshness of an English Puritan, he embarrassed even so bigoted a king as Philip II of Spain, by excommunicating and outlawing the Queen of England. He suppressed every symptom of Protestantism in Italy by every device at the disposal of the Inquisition. Ranke even declares that he approved the scheme of the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France. Yet he admits that Pius V was almost blameless otherwise as a pope, kind to his servants, free from all undue partiality to his family, never sparing himself, generous to his personal enemies. In him we have incarnate the spirit of the Catholic reaction with its strange medley of truly Christian virtue with unscrupulous fanaticism.

Here we may close the catalogue of popes; and when we reflect that the beginning of the sixteenth century

witnessed an Alexander VI on the papal throne, and in about fifty years we have a succession of deeply religious pontiffs culminating in St. Pius V, the transition to a new age is sufficiently astonishing. The Roman Church as a spiritual power within this comparatively brief space of time had advanced from a sort of death to abundant vitality and energy, prepared to regain most of its losses. How serious these were before the reformation of papal Rome, Ranke's masterly, if somewhat sketcy, survey of western Europe reveals.

The background of all this papal revival merits attention. In one section we have descriptions of the States of the Church and their administration, an interesting description of the sale of offices with curious names and no duties, practically amounting to annuities, which could be purchased at prices proportionate to the salary attached to the appointment, the suppression of banditry under the vigorous administration of Sixtus V (1585–90). Such facts are necessary in order to understand the great revival of the Roman Church.

A very few passages of Ranke are devoted to the influence of reformed Catholicism upon the "General change in the intellectual tendency of the age." The influence of the ecclesiastical efficiency of Rome was fatal to the vigorous, if semi-pagan mental emancipation of the Renaissance in Italy. A single example may suffice which is not mentioned by Ranke. There is nothing in the New Testament more vivid, no more illuminating example of the character of St. Paul, than his description of how he rebuked Cephas (St. Peter) at Antioch for his inconsistency towards the newly-converted Gentiles (Gal. ii. 11–14).

It is not difficult to imagine the scene. The group of Christians around St. Peter and St. Paul confronting the Apostle with fiery indignation and burning reproach. The scene has perplexed commentators: since the third century they have been trying to explain away the incident. But Guido Reni in the realm of art has solved the difficulty by depicting St. Paul as timidly

standing and explaining his view to a seated St. Peter, who looks far from pleased at the presumption of his brother saint. No one, moreover, is present, and St. Paul is acting as a humble clergyman should do in the awful presence of the Pope. Thus a bold protest becomes softened into an humble expostulation, and the words of the Epistle emasculated in the interest of Orthodoxy and ecclesiastical decorum. This single example well exemplified the spirit of the new age.

In fact, by the close of the sixteenth century, the Catholic Reformation had changed the spirit of the Church, if not its outward form as much as Protestantism itself. What we call the Middle Ages were at an end and a new Europe had emerged from their ruin. This is the real lesson of Ranke's *History of the Popes*, which makes the work of such supreme interest. True, the Roman Church, far from dying, awoke to a new life and overcame many serious dangers and was destined to overcome others more formidable than the Protestant rebellion against its authority. The value of the story of its revival in the past is that it shows its inherent strength. Whether this will enable us to foretell a future in which every form of the Christian religion, with all its diversities is treated is another question. But the record of the past must still occupy the attention of every student of what we call ecclesiastical history.

Ranke's *History of the Reformation in Germany* is not unworthy of the great historian, but is not comparable to his story of the Popes. Practically the three volumes translated by Mrs. Austin take us no farther than 1535. As a work of art, as Ranke himself admits, it is inferior to his popes. "It seemed to me impossible to make a readable book out of the Acts of the Reichstag and theology. I did not try for readers in the great world but strove to satisfy German erudition." The book was better received in Germany than in the world at large, being both duller and more patriotic than the account of the papacy. Ranke makes everything circle around Martin Luther, the most typical German in all history,

both in his virtues and in his shortcomings. The culmination of the book is the overthrow of the anabaptists led by the fanatical Jan of Leyden, and the capture of Münster, where the sectaries had endeavoured to establish an order of society on the basis of a mixture of Communism and the wildest exhibition of Christian enthusiasm, coupled with a disregard of the most elementary rules of human morality. The most notorious of these fanatics, Jan Bochelson, better known as John of Leyden, proclaimed himself king and representative of David. The City was finally captured by the troops of the Bishop of Münster and the three leading anabaptists in it, John of Leyden and his lieutenants, Knipperdolling, and Krechting, condemned to be publicly executed in a most horrible manner. Justice can only be done to Luther's wisdom if the excesses of the German Reformation of which anabaptism was the worst, are taken into account.

That the *History of the Reformation* has been dropped from the list of requirements is not altogether to be regretted; for, excellent as the book is, it covers too short a period; and the history of the Germany of the sixteenth century is very hard to follow owing to conflicting interests in a nation divided by so many governments.

Two books remain for consideration: Guizot's *History of Civilisation in France* and Milman's *Latin Christianity*.

The reasons for leaving Guizot out of the amended list are sufficiently plain; but this does not affect the value of his lectures of which the work is composed, any more than the fact that later historians have tilled the same field.

François Pierre Guillaume Guizot was a French Protestant born in 1787, and lived till 1874. His long life was occupied as a professor, a politician, and a period of honourable and not unfertile retirement. He combined with the industry of a student that practical knowledge of affairs so valuable to one who undertakes to record the progress of men and nations. In

detachment and impartiality, Guizot is on a par with Ranke and the selection of these two great historians by Lightfoot is characteristic of those three eminently just writers of history.

Perhaps it is sufficient here to allude but to one passage of Guizot in which he gives his reasons for selecting his own country as especially representative of European civilisation. He had a great admiration for England, and devoted infinite labour to its history; but he considers the country and the language too practical and impervious to logic or theory. Germany's erudition deserves all praise, but the people are lacking in the amenities of life. Italy's intellectual achievements are marred by a certain lack of moral sense, while France preserves a balance which makes the people represent civilisation at its highest.

Milman's *Latin Christianity* is naturally retained though in a shortened form in the revised list of books, as it must be the basis of any English study of medieval history. In impartiality this great survey of the period from Theodosius to the Renaissance is on a par with Ranke and Guizot, and another proof of Lightfoot's intense desire that his students should learn the story of the Church not so much from the theologian's as the historian's viewpoint; for though Milman, as Dean of St. Paul's was a high dignitary of the Church of England, the attitude of his mind was that of a layman whose object was to give the facts rather than to edify. Inferior to Gibbon in genius, and destitute of that great master's inimitable style, Milman takes as broad a view of human events without being biassed by any preconceived opinions. He draws his information from original sources and makes the reader feel that he is in touch with them. It is scarcely too much to say that despite the undoubted fact that more recent books have supplemented part of Milman's great work a student can hardly find a better introduction to general church history than *Latin Christianity*. If it does not give all the information to the student, it has, at least, the merit

of stimulating his desire for more, and that if he has perused the volumes in their entirety he has broken the back of the task which Bishop Lightfoot has set before the ambitious youth who tries for his scholarship, which cannot be won by simply adhering to a prescribed course of reading.

The object of this essay is not to discuss the books recommended by Dr. Lightfoot, but to mention their selection as an indication of his purpose. His design seems to have been to lay the foundation of a general knowledge of human history as an aid to the study of all Christian learning. To mention a few points in regard to this selection may not be out of place.

The wide liberality displayed is remarkable: The Duc de Broglie was an ardent Roman Catholic: Lord Bryce was a typical English political thinker: Guizot represents French Protestantism in its most attractive form. In Milman we have an Oxford clergyman on the liberal side, whose first ambitions were distinctly poetical, and ended in his becoming a great historian. Ranke represents the learning of north Germany combined with a literary grace, rare among his countrymen. All were men of wide experience of the world and four of the five were laymen.

The selection is as remarkable for its omissions as for the wisdom it displays, the more remarkable when we remember that he who made it was one of the profoundest scholars of all time. There was nothing of showy superficiality in Lightfoot. Yet none of the books he chose were other than interesting. Everyone of the six can be read with pleasure. They are not the work of laborious pedants unable to see the wood for the trees. Lightfoot had the wisdom of a true teacher. He desired his pupils to be interested in the subject before they entered upon the indispensable study of its *minutiæ*.

Index

Acts, of the Apostles 5, 56
Acts, spurious 69
Acton, family relatives of Gibbon 160
Adamnan 109 ff.
Adrianople, battle of 74
Aetius 99
Alexander the Great 40
Alexandria 40, 61
Alexius I (Comnenus) 132
Allegorism 52
Anastasius (Emp.) 101
Anicetus 60
Antiochus Epiphanes 40
Art in historical writing 1 ff.
Ascholius of Thessalonica 74
Asia Minor, Christianity in 66 ff.
Athanagild 105
Attila 99
Augustine 87 ff.

Baptism 34
Barnabas (Ep. of) 17, 64
Basilian dynasty 131
Bede 119 ff.
Bishops (how chosen) 31
Bright, Dr. W. (on Bede) 119
Brunhild 105
Bryce 172
Burnet (Bp.) 145 ff.
Byzantines 75

Caius (Caligula) 44
Callistus (Pope) 30
Canon (of N.T.) 22 ff.
Canterbury 99
Catechumens 33
Carthage 63
Chalons (battle) 99
Charles II (of England) 153
Chilperic 104
Church 3 ff., 57
Chrysostom 77
Clement (Ep. of) 58
Clothilda 102
Columba (St.) 109 ff.
Confessions of Augustine 91 ff.
Constantine 71
Constantinople 71, 133 ff.
Covenanters 154
Cranmer 148
Crusades 141
Cyprian (St.) 63

Dalriada (Scots of) 163
Dawes (Dr. Emily) 103
de Broglie, *l'Eglise et l'Empire Romaine* 172
Diocese in fifth century (description of a) 84
Disputed books of New Testament 24
Donatists 94
Ducas family 141

Easter, question of, in Britain 124
Empire (Roman) 88
Emperor, worship of the 20
Ephesus 74
Euaristus 60
Eucharist 37
Eudoxia 78
Eusebius 56 ff.
Eutropius 75
Evodius 64

Fredegund 105

Gaul (in fifth and sixth centuries) 97
Gibbon 160 ff.
Decline and Fall
Five reasons (for success of Christianity)
Gospels 26 ff.
Gratian (Emp.) 74
Grapte 59
Greek Empire 130
Gregory the Great 81

Gregory Nazianzen 9, 74
Gregory of Tours 97
Guido Reni 178
Guizot, F. P. 180

Hegesippus 59
Hermas (Shepherd of) 17, 38
Herod Agrippa 45
History 95, 107, 148

Ignatius 58, 65
Ireland 109

James II (king of England) 148
Jews (unpopular) 44
Joseph in Egypt 40

Laodicaea (Council of) 23
Legatio ad Gaium 47
Leucius (Acts of John 69
Liberius (Pope) 86
Lightfoot (Bishop) 171 ff.
London clergy 150
Lothar 104

Macaulay (Lord) 145
Marcion 60
Mark (St.) 61
Martin (St.) 98
Merovingians 101
Milman (Latin Christianity) 181
Millenarianism 68
Miracles 81, 112, 125
Monasteries in Ireland 110

Nestorius 80
New Testament 15 ff.
Nicephorus Bryennius 133
Novatianism 80

Orders (Holy) 32
Origen 9
Orosius 96

Papacy 173
Papias 68
Paschal Blaise 161
Pastoral Epistles 27
Paul (St.) 25
Pauline Epistles 25
Pentecost 10

Peter (St.) 10, 60
Peter (Gospel of) 20
Philo 48 ff.
Pliny, the younger 66
Polycarp 60
Popish plot 154
Presbyters 32
Priscillian 98
Ptolemy Philadelphus 40
Purple Chamber (borne i 133

Radegund 106
Relics 128
Rome 17, 57 f.

Sanders (English Roman C lic controversialist) 14
Scripture inspired 16
Scott (Sir W.) 111, 130 ff.
Second sight 111
Septuagint 40
Serapion 20
Socrates 71
Sozomen 71
Suetonius 47

Tertullian 26
Theodore 76
Thedoret 84
Thedosius (Emp.) 75
Theophilus (of Antioch)
Toleration Act 153

Ursel 144

Valens (Emp.) 74
Valentinian (Emp.) 74
Valentinus (Gnostic) 60
Venantius Fortunatus 10
Victor 60
Visions 125

Whitby (Council of) 124
Whitney (Prof.) 172
Wisdom of Solomon 42
Word of God 51

York (Duke of) 146

Zephyrinus (Pope) 30