

Monergism

# **A History of CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE**



**W. G. T. Shedd**

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**by William G. T. Shedd**

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## **PREFACE**

THE History of Christian Doctrine here given to the public is the result of several years of investigation, while the author held the professorship of Ecclesiastical History in the Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts. As this is the first attempt of the kind in English literature, to write an account of the gradual construction of

all the doctrines of the Christian religion, he had no models before him, and was compelled to originate his own method. Upon a survey of the vast field, it appeared to be the most simple and perspicuous plan to investigate each of the principal subjects by itself, starting from the first beginnings of scientific reflection upon it, and going down to the latest and most complete forms of statement. This method, though not without some disadvantages, recommends itself by reason of the opportunity it affords for continuous investigation, each part flowing out of the preceding and preparing for what follows, and the whole making a single and strong impression. Such a method is in harmony with the nature of history itself. The reader follows a single stream from its rise in its head-waters through all its windings, until it discharges itself, immenso ore, into the sea.

The history of Christian doctrine thus conceived and composed is one of the strongest of all defences of the Christian faith. It is a common remark, that a powerful statement is a powerful argument. This is true of the dogmas of Christianity. But there is no statement of revealed truth more clear, connected, and convincing, than that which it obtains in the gradual and sequacious constructions of the Church, from century to century. Let any one trace the course of thinking by the theological mind, upon the doctrine of the Trinity, e.g., and perceive how link follows link by necessary consequence; how the objections of the heretic or the latitudinarian only elicit a more exhaustive, and at the same time more guarded, statement, which carries the Church still nearer to the substance of revelation, and the heart of the mystery; how, in short, the trinitarian dogma, like the Christian life itself as described by the apostle, "being fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase unto the edifying of itself" into a grand architectural structure,—let this process from beginning to end pass before a thinking and logical mind, and it will be difficult for it to resist the conviction that here is science, here is self-consistent and absolute truth. It cannot be that the earnest reflection of all the Christian centuries should thus have spent itself upon a fiction and figment. The symbol in which this thinking embodied itself must be the

exponent of a reality. Such is the impression made, and such is the unavoidable inference.

Christianity is, ultimately, its own best defence. The argument of a holy and beautiful life, it is universally conceded, is unanswerable; and so is the argument of a profound and homogeneous system. At a time when the divine origin and authority of the Christian religion are disputed and combatted with more than ordinary violence, it is seasonable to introduce the opponent to the Christian dogmas themselves, in the very act and process of their scientific construction. If he is capable of connected thinking himself, and his mind is at all accustomed to high problems, before he is aware he will be caught in the intellectual process, and whether he accept the conclusions of the ecclesiastical mind or not, he cannot but respect the mental acumen and energy which are exhibited. The history of such a mind as that of Ferdinand Christian Baur exemplifies this. To what degree that remarkable scholar and thinker was practically affected by the studies of many years, in the mines of Christian doctrine, is known only to the Searcher of hearts; but no one can peruse a page of any of his dogmatico-historical works without perceiving, that contempt for that great system which the oecumenical mind has built up out of the living stones of revelation was no feeling of his. The system was too vast in its reach, too comprehensive in its scope, too high and too deep in its aims, to provoke either ridicule or scorn. It might be a failure, but it was a splendid failure.

Respecting the sources whence this history is derived, the authors mentioned under the head of "Literature," at the beginning of each book, will indicate the works that have been most drawn upon. The writings of Athanasius, Augustine, and Anselm, have yielded much solid and germinant material. To the dogmatic historians of Germany of the present century, I am greatly indebted; and not less so to the great lights of the English Church in the preceding centuries. These latter have been unduly overlooked, amidst the recent fertility of the Teutonic mind. Though comprising no

continuous and entire history of Christian doctrine, and even when investigating a particular subject oftentimes doing it incidentally, the labors of Hooker and Bull, of Pearson and Waterland, are every way worthy to be placed beside those of Baur and Dorner. The learning is as ample and accurate, the logical grasp is as powerful, and the judgment more than equal. To these must be added the two manuals of Baumgarten-Crusius and Hagenbach, which have to some extent furnished the rubric under which the generalizations have been made, as well as considerable material itself.

But while the leading ancient, mediaeval, and modern authorities have been used, it has been my endeavor to fuse everything in my own mind. Perhaps the chief criticism that may be made upon the work is, that it betokens subjective qualities unduly for a historical production. That the work pays more attention to the orthodox than to the latitudinarian drift of thought, is plain. It is impossible for any one author to compose an encyclopaedic history. Every work of this kind must be stronger in some directions, than in others. I have felt a profound interest in the Nicene trinitarianism, the Augustinian anthropology, and the Anselmic soteriology, and from these centres have taken my departures. To what degree I have succeeded in fairly stating the variant or opposing theories, must be left to the judgment of each reader.

The work has been put to press amidst the pressure of engagements incident to a large pastoral charge. More leisure would have improved it. But it is committed, with all its imperfections, to the common current, with the hope, and aspiration, that it may contribute something towards that victory and triumph to which Christian science is destined in the earth.

NEW YORK, Nov. 4th, 1863.

## INTRODUCTION



## 1. Methodology

DES CARTES: *Dissertatio de Methodo* (English translation published by Sutherland, Edinburgh, 1850). COLERIDGE: *Essays on Method*, Works II. 408–472, Harper's Ed. WHEWELL: *History of Inductive Sciences* (Introduction). AGASSIZ: *Natural History* (Essay on Classification).

BEFORE proceeding to investigate the several subjects that belong to a History of Christian Doctrine, it is necessary to make preliminary statements, respecting the general scheme and method, upon which the investigation will proceed. Methodology, or the science of Method, is never more important, and never yields greater fruit, than when applied to historical studies. At the same time, it possesses an independent value, apart from its uses when applied to any particular subject. Treating, as it does, of the scientific mode of approaching and opening any department of knowledge, it is a species of *philosophia prima*, or philosophy of philosophy, such as Plato and Aristotle were in search of. This, in their view, was the very highest kind of science; for the reason that it is not confined to some one portion of truth, as a specific science is, but is an instrument by which truth universally may be reached. It was what they denominated an *organon*,—an implement whereby the truth of any subject might be discovered. It, thus, resembled the science of logic. Logic does not, like philosophy or theology, enunciate any particular truths, but teaches those principles of universal reasoning, by which particular truths, in these departments or any other, may be discovered, and defended. If, now, we conceive of a science of investigation, that should stand in the same relation to all particular investigations, that logic does to reasoning generally, we shall have the conception of the science of Methodology; and it is one form of that primary philosophy which Plato and Aristotle were seeking for.

In the judgment of these thinkers, the *philosophia prima* was the most difficult problem that could be presented to the human mind; because, it was the problem for solving all problems. It was like those

general formulas which the mathematician seeks, by means of which he may resolve a great number of particular questions. They did not claim to have constructed such a *prima philosophia*, yet they none the less regarded it as the goal, which should be continually kept in view, by the philosopher. And they would measure the progress of philosophic thought, from age to age, by the approximation that was made towards it. Even if the goal should never be reached, still the department of philosophy would be a gainer, by such a high aim. Lord Bacon himself regrets, that the eye had been taken off from it, and that thinkers had confined themselves to mere parts of truth. "Another error,"—he remarks, in enumerating the "peccant humors" of learning,—"*is, that after the distribution of particular arts and sciences, men have abandoned universality, or 'philosophia prima'; which cannot but cease and stop all progression. For no perfect discovery can be made upon a flat or level, neither is it possible to discover the more remote and deeper parts of any science, if you stand but upon the level of the same science, and ascend not to a higher science.*"

The science of Method seeks from this higher level to survey all the sciences, and from an elevated point of view, to discover, in each given instance, the true mode of investigation. It is the science of the sciences, because it furnishes the philosophic clue to all of them, and stands in the same relation to the whole encyclopædia of human inquiry, that a master-key does to all the locks which it opens. Its uses are evident; for if the method, or plan of investigation, is the avenue by which the human mind makes its entrance into a subject, then, upon its intrinsic adaptation to the case in hand, depends the whole success of the inquiry. If the method be a truly philosophic one, the examination of the topic proceeds with ease, accuracy, and thoroughness. But if it be arbitrary and capricious, the inquirer commences with an error, which, like a mistake in the beginning of an arithmetical calculation, only repeats, and multiplies itself, every step of the way.

Methodology seeks, in each instance, to discover the method of nature, as that specific mode of investigation which is best fitted to elucidate a subject. By the method of nature is meant, that plan which corresponds with the internal structure. Each department of human inquiry contains an interior order, and arrangement, which the investigator must detect, and along which he must move, in order to a thorough and symmetrical apprehension of it. The world of mind is as regular, and architectural, as the world of matter; and hence all branches of intellectual and moral science require for their successful prosecution, the same natural and structural modes of investigation, which a Cuvier applies to the animal kingdom, and a De Candolle to the vegetable. The method of the anatomist is a beautiful example of the method of nature. As in anatomy, the dissection follows the veins, or muscles, or nerves, or limbs, in their branchings off, so the natural method, everywhere, never cuts across, but along the inward structure, following it out into its organic divisions. The science of Method aids in discovering such a mode of investigation, and tends to produce in the investigator, that fine mental tact, by which he instinctively approaches a subject from the right point, and like the slate quarryman lays it open, along the line of its structure, and its fracture. The power of method is closely allied to the power of genius. A mind inspired by it attacks a subject with great impetuosity, and yet does not mar, or mutilate it, while it penetrates into all its parts. "I have seen Michael Angelo,"—says a cotemporary of that great artist—"at work after he had passed his sixtieth year, and although he was not very robust, he cut away as many scales from a block of very hard marble, in a quarter of an hour, as three young sculptors would have effected in three or four hours,—a thing almost incredible, to one who had not actually witnessed it. Such was the impetuosity, and fire, with which he pursued his labor, that I almost thought the whole work must have gone to pieces; with a single stroke, he brought down fragments three or four fingers thick, and so close upon his mark, that had he passed it, even in the slightest degree, there would have been a danger of ruining the whole; since any such injury, unlike the case of works in plaster or

stucco, would have been irreparable." Such is the bold, yet safe power, of a mind that works by an idea, and methodically.

The importance of a philosophic method is nowhere more apparent than in the department of History. The materials are so abundant and various, that unless they are distributed in a natural order, they accumulate upon each other, and produce inextricable confusion. And yet, in no province is it more difficult to attain to a method at once comprehensive, and exhaustive. For History includes so much, that it is not easy to enclose it all at once; and it is so full of minute details, that many of them escape. And even when we separate some one division of the subject, such as Dogmatic History for example, and treat it by itself, the same difficulty remains. Such questions as the following immediately arise. Shall the whole system of Christian doctrine be described together, in its origin and gradual formation; or shall a single dogma be selected and followed out by itself? If the first mode be adopted, we secure comprehensiveness at the expense of exhaustiveness. If the latter be chosen, we cannot exhibit the reciprocal influence of doctrine upon doctrine, and lose the advantages of a comparative view of the whole, in securing those of minuteness and thoroughness in a part. A multitude of such questions immediately arises, when the dogmatic historian begins to lay out his plan of procedure, and he finds that almost every advantage is counterbalanced by some disadvantage. It only remains that he should exercise his best judgment, and produce the best method that is possible to him. The grade of its excellence can be known only by trial. Just so far as it proves itself to be a logical instrument of investigation, and actually divides and distributes the historical materials in a natural order, does it prove its author to be possessed of genuine philosophic talent.

Addressing ourselves, then, to the task of indicating a scientific method in Dogmatic History, it is evident, that the first step to be taken is, to enunciate the generic idea of History itself. What is History in its own nature? What is the fundamental conception involved in it? And inasmuch as Dogmatic History is a branch of

Sacred, in distinction from Secular, or Profane History, it will become necessary to discriminate these two latter species from each other, so that the special subject of our investigations may be narrowed down to its real and distinctive elements. The definition, therefore, of History in its abstract nature, together with its subdivision into Sacred and Secular, must precede, and prepare the way for, the distribution of the dogmatic materials which we are to analyze, and combine.

## **2. Idea, and definition of History**

History, in its abstract and distinctive nature, we define to be a development. It is a gradual expansion over a wider surface, of that which at the instant of its creation existed in a more invisible and metaphysical form. The development of a tree from a rudimental germ, for example, constitutes its historic process. Here the evolution, or expansion, is continuous from the seed, or rather from that invisible principle which contains the whole fabric potentially. For Cowper's lines upon the Yardley Oak are literally true:

"Thou wast a bauble once, a cup and ball  
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,  
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloined  
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down  
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs,  
And all thy embryo vastness, at a gulp."

The idea of an evolution from a potential basis, is identical with that of a history. In thinking of one, we unavoidably think of the other, and this evinces an inward coincidence between the two conceptions. Unceasing motion, from a given point, through several stadia, to a final terminus, is a characteristic belonging as inseparably to the

history of Man, or the history of Doctrine, as to that of any physical evolution whatever. In bringing before our minds, for example, the passage of an intellectual or a moral idea, from one degree of energy and efficiency to another, in the career of a nation, or of mankind, we unavoidably construe it as a continuous expanding process. The same law of organic sequence prevails in the sphere of mind, and of freedom, that works in the kingdom of matter and necessity. There is a growth of the mind, as truly and strictly as a growth of the body. The basis from which the one proceeds is, indeed, very different from that which lies at the foundation of the other. The evolution, in the first instance, is that of a spiritual essence, while that in the second is the unfolding of a material germ; but the process in each instance, alike, is an organically connected one. The history of matter, and the history of mind, though totally different from each other in respect to the substance from which the movement proceeds, and the laws that regulate it, are alike in respect to the continuity of the movement.

The essential substance of History, be it that of Nature or of Man, is continually passing through a motive process. The germ is slowly unfolding, as it is the nature of all germs to do. A corn of Egyptian wheat may sleep in the swathes and folding of a mummy, through three thousand springs, but the purpose of its creation cannot be thwarted, except by the grinding destruction of its germinal substance. It was created to grow, and notwithstanding this long interval of slumbering life, the development begins the instant it is taken from the mummy, and cast into the moist earth. In like manner, an idea which inherently belongs to the mind of man may be hindered in its progress, and for ages may seem to be extinct; yet it is none the less in existence, and a reality. It is all the while a factor in the earthly career of mankind, and the historian who should throw it out of the account would misconceive, and misrepresent, the entire historic process. An idea of human reason, like popular liberty, for example, may make no external appearance for whole periods, but its reappearance, with an energy of operation heightened by its long suppression in the consciousness of nations, is the most impressive of all proofs, that it has a necessary existence in human nature, and

is destined to be developed. A doctrine of Divine reason, like that of justification by Christ's atonement, is a positive truth which has been lodged in the Christian mind by Divine revelation, and is destined to an universal influence, a historical development, in and through the church; notwithstanding that some branches and ages of the church have lost it out of their religious experience. In brief, whatever has been constitutionally inlaid either in matter or in mind, by the Creator of both, is destined by Him, and under His own superintendence, to be evolved; and of all such germinal substance, be it in the sphere of Nature or of Man, we may say, that not a particle of it will be annihilated; it will pass through the predetermined stages of an expanding process, and obtain a full development. And this its development is its history.

### **3. Creation discriminated from Development**

The doctrine of Development has been greatly misconceived, especially in modern speculation, and hence it becomes necessary to discriminate it still more carefully. Theorists have handled it in such a manner as to invalidate the principles of both natural and revealed religion. In the first place, substituting the idea of development for that of creation, they have constructed a pantheistic theory of the origin of the universe; and in the second place, confounding a development with an improvement, they have precluded the necessity of any supernatural and remedial methods for human welfare.

There are no two conceptions more diverse from each other, than those of Creation and Development. The one excludes the other. Development supposes existing materials; creation supposes none at all. Creation is from nothing; development is from something. Creation indeed implies a preexisting Creator, but not as the substance or stuff out of which the creature is made. This would be emanation, or generation. The Creator, when he issues a creative fiat, does not send out a beam or efflux from his own substance, but by a miracle of omnipotence wills an absolutely new entity into being.

This creative act is, of necessity, inexplicable, because explanation would imply the possibility of pointing out preëxisting materials of which the created product is composed. But by the very definition of creation, there are none. Development, on the contrary, implies the existence of rudimental and germinal matter. It supposes that a creative fiat has been uttered, and cannot be accounted for, except upon such a supposition. It requires a potential base from which to start, and this requires an act of absolute origination *de nihilo*.

For there is nothing more absurd, than the pantheistic notion of an eternal potentiality, or, which is the same thing, that the Infinite is subject to the same limitations with the Finite, and must pass, by the method of development, from less perfect, to more perfect (yet ever imperfect) stages of existence, and in this manner originate the worlds. The idea of an absolute perfection implies, that the Being to whom it belongs, is immutable,—the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. The whole fabric of ancient and modern Pantheism rests upon the *petitio principii*, that the doctrine of evolution has the same legitimate application within the sphere of the Infinite and Eternal, that it has within that of the Finite and Temporal,—a postulate that annihilates the distinction between the two. The idea of undeveloped being has no rational meaning, except in reference to the Created and the Conditioned. Progressive evolution within the Divine Nature would imply a career for the deity, like that of his creatures, in which he was passing from less to more perfect stages of existence, and would thus bring him within the realm of the relative and imperfect. All latency is necessarily excluded from the Eternal One, by virtue of that absolute perfection, and metaphysical self-completeness, whereby his being is "without variableness or shadow of turning." His uncreated essence is incapable of self-expanding processes, and hence the created universe cannot be an effluent portion of his essence, but must be a secondary substance which is the pure make of his sheer fiat. To the question which still and ever returns: How does the potential basis which lies at the bottom of every finite development, itself come into existence? to what, or to whom, do these germs of future and ceaseless processes owe their origin? the



theist gives but one answer. He applies the doctrine of creation out of nothing, to all germinal substance whatsoever. For the doctrine of evolution explains nothing at this point. A development is simply the unfolding of that which has been previously folded up, and not the origination of entity from nonentity. The growth of a germ is not the creation of it, but is merely the expansion of a substance already existing. All attempts to explain the origin of the universe, by the theory of development, or expansion, like the Indian cosmogony, drive the mind back from point to point in a series of secondary evolutions, still leaving the inquiry after the primary origin, and actual beginning of things, unanswered. Mere development cannot account for the origin of a strictly new thing. A germ can only protrude its own latency, and cannot inlay a foreign one. The significant fact in Natural History, not yet invalidated by the most torturing experiments of baffled theorists, that one species never expands into another, proves that though a process of development can be accounted for out of the latent potentiality at the base, the latter can be accounted for, only by recurring to the creative power of God. The expansion of a vegetable seed, even if carried on through all the cycles upon cycles of the geological system, never transmutes it into the egg of animal life; and this only verifies the self-evident proposition, that nothing can come forth, that has never been put in.

#### **4. Development discriminated from Improvement**

Of equal importance is it, to discriminate the idea of a Development from that of an Improvement. The abstract definition of history merely describes it as an evolution, or movement from some germinal point, but does not determine whether the movement be upward, or downward; from good to better, or from bad to worse. This depends upon the nature of the potential base from which the expanding process issues. Within the sphere of material nature, the germ, being a pure creation of God, can exhibit only a healthy and normal development. But within the sphere of free-will, the original foundation, laid in creation, for a legitimate growth and progress, may be displaced, and a secondary one laid by the abuse of freedom.

This has occurred in the apostacy of a part of the angelic host, and of the entire human race. By this revolutionary act, the first potential basis of human history, which provided for a purer progress, and a grander evolution than man can now conceive of, was displaced by a second basis, which likewise provided for a false development, and an awful history, if not supernaturally hindered, all along through the same endless duration. It must, however, be carefully observed, that the secondary foundation did not issue out of the primary one, by the method of development. Original righteousness was not unfolded into original sin. Sin was a new thing, originated *de nihilo*, by the finite will. It had no evil antecedents, and was in the strictest sense a creation of the creature. As it is impossible that the creature should originate any good thing *de nihilo*, since this is solely the Creator's prerogative, so it is impossible that the Creator should originate evil *de nihilo*, since this implies a mutable excellence, and a possibility of self-ruin. Under and within the permissive decree of God, sin is man's creation; he makes it out of nothing. For the origin of moral evil cannot be accounted for, by the expansion of something already in existence, any more than the origin of matter itself can be. Original righteousness unfolded never so long, and intensely, will never be developed into original sin. The passage from one to the other must be by an absolutely originant act of self-will; which act, subject only to the limitation and condition above-mentioned, of the permission of the Supreme Being, is strictly creative from nothing. The origin of sin is, thus, the origination of a new historic germ, and not the unfolding or modification of an old one; and hence the necessity of postulating a creating, in distinction from a merely developing energy,—such as is denoted by the *possibilitas peccandi* attributed by the theologian to the will of the unfallen Adam.

The origination of a corrupt nature by the self-will of the first man, and the subsequent development of it in the secular life and history of the human generations, bring to view another aspect of the idea of development, and a different application of the doctrine of continuous evolution. This stubborn fact of apostacy compels the theorist to acknowledge what he is prone to lose sight of, viz.; that so

far as the abstract definition is concerned, development may be synonymous with corruption and decline, as well as with improvement; that the organic sequences of history may be those of decay and death, as well as those of bloom and life. For there is no more reason for regarding evolution as synonymous with improvement alone, than with degeneracy alone. Scientific terms are wide and impartial. No particular truth is told, when it is asserted that there is a process of development going on in the world. This is granted upon all sides. On coming into the sphere of free agency, it is necessary, in order to any definite and valuable statement, to determine by actual observation, what it is that is being expanded; whether it is a primitive potentiality originated by the Creator, or a secondary one originated by the creature, to either of which, the abstract conception of development is equally applicable.

## **5. Distinction between Sacred and Secular History**

This discrimination of the idea of development, from that of improvement, prepares the way for the distinction between Sacred and Secular History. Had the course of human history proceeded from the original basis, laid by the Creator, in the holiness and happiness of an unfallen humanity, human development would have been identical with human improvement. The evolution of the primitive historic germ would have exhibited a normal and perfect career, like that of the unfallen angels, and like that of the beautiful and perfect growths in the natural world. But we know, as matter of fact, that the unfolding of humanity does not now proceed from this first and proper point of departure. The creative idea, by the Creator's permission, is not realized by the free agent. The law of man's being is not obeyed, and his true end and destination is not attained. The original historic germ was crowded out by a second false one, from which the actual career of man now proceeds. But this illegitimate career, or development of a secondary and corrupted nature, exhibits all the characteristics of a continuous evolution. The depravation of humanity has been as organic a sequence from a common centre, as is to be found either in the realm of matter or of

mind. The history of apostate man is as truly a development of moral evil, as the history of the angelic world is a development of moral good. And this species of history, by one of those spontaneous epithets which oftentimes contain a wonderful depth of truth, for the very reason that they are the invention of the common and universal mind, and not of a particular philosophical school, is well denominated profane. The secular career of man is a violation of sacred obligations, and of a divinely-established order. In reference to the Divine idea and intent, in the creation of man, it is a sacrilege. It displays downward tendencies, connected with each other, and acting and reacting upon each other, by the same law that governs any and every evolution. The acknowledged deterioration of languages, literatures, religions, arts, sciences, and civilizations; the slow and certain decay of national vigor, and return to barbarism; the unvarying decline from public virtue to public voluptuousness: in short, the entire history of man, so far as he is outside of the recuperating influences of Christianity, and unaffected by the supernatural intervention of his Creator, though it is a self-willed and guilty process, is, yet, in every part and particle of it, as organically connected, and as strict an evolution from a potential base, as is that other upward tendency, started in the Christian Church, and ended in the eternal state, by which humanity is being restored to the heights whence it fell.

For Sacred History is a process that results from the replacement of the original righteousness, and the original germ. It can no more be an evolution from the corrupted human nature, than this corruption itself can be a development of the pure and holy humanity. As we have seen, that the origin of the second, and false foundation for man's career upon the globe, can be accounted for, only by postulating an absolutely originating activity upon the part of the creature; so the origin of that new foundation which is laid for the upward and recuperative career of man, in the Christian Church, can be accounted for, only by postulating a creative energy and influence upon the part of God. This energy is found in Revelation, considered in its twofold direction, as a manifestation of truth, and a

dispensation of spiritual influence. This supernatural energy, seizing upon the corrupt and helpless man, reinstates him in his original relations, and in the new birth of a principle of holiness, lays again the foundation for an upward career, which ends finally in the perfection with which he was originally created and endowed. Sacred History is thus differentiated from Secular, or Profane, by its underlying supernaturalism. In passing from Secular to Sacred History, we pass from the domain of merely human and sinful, to that of divine and holy agencies. For we do not find in the history of the world, as the opposite and antagonist of the church—of the natural, as distinguished from the renewed man,—any evidence of a special and direct intercommunication, between man and God. We find only the ordinary workings of the human mind, and such products as are confessedly within its competence to originate, evil included, and tinging all the elements with its dark stain. We can, indeed, perceive the hand of an overruling Providence throughout this realm, employed chiefly in restraining the wrath of man, but through the whole long course of false development, we see no signs, or products, of a supernatural and special interference in the affairs of men. Empires rise and fall; arts and sciences bloom and decay; the poet dreams his dream of the ideal, and the philosopher elicits and tasks the utmost possibility of the finite reason; and still, so far as its highest interests and destiny are concerned, the condition and history of the race remains substantially the same. It is not until a communication is established between the mind of man, and the mind of God; it is not until the Creator comes down to earth, by miracle and by revelation, by incarnation and by the Holy Ghost, that a new order of ages, and a new species of history begins.

This new and higher history, this new and higher evolution of a regenerated humanity, is the theme of the Church Historian. The subject matter becomes extraordinary. The basis of fact, in the career of the Church, is supernatural, in both senses of the term. In the first place, from the expulsion from Eden down to the close of the apostolic age, a positively miraculous intervention of Divine power lies under the series of events, momentarily withdrawn, and

momentarily reappearing, throughout the long line of Patriarchal, Jewish, and Apostolic history,—the very intermittency of the action indicating, like an Icelandic geyser, the reality and proximity of the power. And if, in the second place, we pass from external events, to that inward change that was constantly being wrought in human character, by which the Church was called out from the mass of men, and made to live and grow in the midst of an ignorant, or a cultivated heathenism; if we pass from the miraculous to the simply spiritual manifestation of the divine agency, as it is seen in the renewal of the individual heart, and in the inward life of the Church, we find that we are in a totally different sphere from that of Secular History, and in a far higher one. There is now a positive intercommunication, between the human and the Divine, and the development that results constitutes a history far profounder, far purer, far more hopeful and beautiful, than that of the natural man, and the secular world.

## **6. Uses of these definitions and distinctions**

In these definitions and discriminations, we find a proper introduction to Dogmatic History. For this portion of the general subject of Ecclesiastical History presents a very transparent and beautiful specimen of a historic evolution. The germ, or base of the process, is the dogmatic material given in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. In the gift of revelation, the entire sum, and rudimental substance, of Christian theology was given. But this body of dogma was by no means fully apprehended, by the ecclesiastical mind, in the outset. Its scientific and systematic comprehension is a gradual process; the fuller creed bursts out of the narrower; the expanded treatise swells forth growth-like from the more slender; the work of each generation of the Church joins on upon that of the preceding; so that the history of Christian Doctrine is the account of the expansion which revealed truth has obtained, through the endeavor of the Church universal to understand its meaning, and to evince its self-consistence, in opposition to the attacks and objections of scepticism.

The idea and definition of History, which we have thus enunciated, gives to this branch of inquiry all the advantages that flow from the dynamic theory, or the theory of organic connections, and at the same time protects it from the naturalism and pantheism which have too often invaded the province of history, in connection with the doctrine of development. The distinction between a creation and an evolution, carefully observed by the historian, preserves in his investigations, both the Supernatural and the Natural,—both the supernatural fiat or creative energy, from which everything takes its beginning of existence, and the natural process of development, that commences and advances gradually from that point. And the distinction between Secular and Sacred History, if firmly grasped, likewise yields to the historical investigator all the advantages of the theory of connected and gradual processes, while, at the same time, it protects him from the error of those who overlook the fact of human apostasy, and who, consequently, see but one species of historical development in the world,—that, namely, of improvement and steady approximation to the ideal and the perfect. The distinction, in question, discriminates between normal and abnormal developments, and directs attention to the fact, that the total history of man upon the globe is not now a single current; that the stream of human history, originally one, was parted in the garden of Eden, and became two fountain-heads, which have flowed on, each in its own channel and direction, and will continue to do so forevermore; and that there are now two kingdoms, two courses of development, two histories, in the universal history of man on the globe,—viz.: the Sacred and the Secular, the Church and the World.

## **7. Relation of doctrinal to external history**

This enunciation of the idea of History brings us to the subject matter itself,—to the materials and elements of Dogmatic History. Our methodizing must now mark off the divisions of the doctrinal history of the Christian Church, in accordance with the actual structure of the subject, and arrange them in their natural order. These divisions will yield the topics that are to be investigated.

But, before proceeding to our analysis, it is worthy of notice, that although the external and doctrinal history of the Church can be distinguished from each other, they cannot be divided or separated from each other. The religious experience, the dogmatic thinking, and all the workings of the Christian mind and heart, exert a direct influence upon the outward aspects of Christianity, and show themselves in them. Improvement in one sphere leads to improvement in the other; and deterioration in the one leads to deterioration in the other. The construction of a creed oftentimes shapes the whole external history of a people. The scientific expansion of a single doctrine results in the formation of a particular type of Christian morality, or piety; which, again, shows itself in active missionary enterprises, and the spread of Christianity through great masses of heathen population. In these instances, the symbol and the dogma become the most practical and effective of agencies, and tend immediately to modify the whole structure of a Church, or a people,—nay of entire Christendom. In this way, the doctrinal history is organically connected with the external, and in the last result, with the whole secular history of man. Still, it is plain that we must distinguish parts of a subject, in order to discuss it with success. He who should attempt to grasp such a great theme as Ecclesiastical History, all at once, and to treat it in the entire comprehensiveness and universality with which it is acted out, and going on, would attempt a task too great for human powers. History occurs simultaneously, in all its parts and elements. Like Wordsworth's cloud, "it moveth all together, if it move at all." But although the history of an age is going on all at once, it cannot be written all at once. Missionaries are proceeding on their errands of love, theologians are constructing their doctrinal systems, persecutors are slaying the believer, prelates are seeking for supremacy, kings are checking the advance of the churchman,—all this, and an infinitude of detail, is going on in one and the very same period of time; but what historian can represent this whole simultaneous movement, with perfect success? He who would sketch an outline of such vast proportions, as to include all that has been thought, felt, and done,



by the Christian Church, would make a sketch which no single human mind can fill up.

The great whole, therefore, will be most completely exhibited, if the work is divided among many laborers, and each portion is made a special, and perhaps life-long object of attention, by a single mind. And it is for this reason, that the student must not rest satisfied with perusing a general history of the Christian religion and Church, however excellently composed. He must also study special histories, —the history of Doctrine, both general and special; the history of Creeds; the history of Politics; the history of Heresies; the history of Christian Philosophy, and of Christian Art; the history of Missions; Monographs, or sketches of historic individuals. By thus examining one portion of the great subject, at a time and by itself, the mind obtains a more complete and symmetrical understanding of it, than is possible, in case only manuals and general treatises are read. Year after year, such a careful and discriminating study of special parts of the subject builds up the mind, in very much the same gradual mode and style, in which it has pleased the Head of the Church to spread his religion, and establish his kingdom upon the earth. The individual repeats in his own culture, the great historic process, and the result is a deep and clear apprehension of Christianity, as a kingdom and a power among men.

## **8. Specification of the Method adopted**

The Doctrinal History of the Church, in the method which we shall adopt, divides into the following topics:

### **I. The first division discusses the Influence of Philosophical Systems, upon the construction of Christian Doctrine.**

We naturally begin the account of the internal history of Christianity, with the exhibition of philosophical opinions, because they have always exerted a powerful influence upon the modes and systems of theological speculation. We are obliged to take this influence into

account, because we find it at work in the history itself. We have no concern with the question, whether philosophy ought to exert any influence upon the theological mind, in unfolding revealed truth. The settlement of this question belongs to the theologian, and not to the historian. But however the question be answered, it is a fact, that human speculation has exerted a very marked influence upon the interpretation of Scripture, and particularly, upon the construction of doctrines and symbols; and actual fact is the legitimate material, the true stuff and staple of history.

Moreover, we begin with considering the influence of Philosophy upon Christianity, because this influence shows itself at the very beginning. The human mind is already in a certain philosophical condition, before it receives Christianity, and even before Christianity is offered to it by the Divine Mind. In the history of man, that which is human precedes, chronologically, that which is divine. "That was not first which is spiritual: but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. 15:46). Men are sinners before they are made saints; and they are philosophers before they become theologians. When Christianity was revealed, in its last and fullest form, by the incarnation of the Eternal Word, it found the human mind already occupied with a human philosophy. Educated men were Platonists, or Stoics, or Epicureans. And if we go back to the time of the Patriarchal and Jewish revelations of the Old Testament, we find that there was in the minds of men, an existing system of natural religion and ethics, which was for that elder secular world what those Grecian philosophies were for the cultivated heathen intellect at the advent of Christ. A natural method in Dogmatic History must therefore commence with the influence of human philosophy, because this influence is actually existing and apparent at the beginning of the process. Christianity comes down from heaven by a supernatural revelation, but it finds an existing state of human culture, into which it enters, and begins to exert its transforming power. Usually it overmasters that culture, but in some instances it is temporarily overmastered by it. But the existing culture of a people is more the product of philosophy than of any

other department of human knowledge; and hence the necessity of commencing the account of the doctrinal development of Christianity, with the exhibition of the influence of Philosophical Systems.

## **II. The second division, in the method we have adopted, comprises the History of Apologies, or Defences of Christianity.**

We are naturally led to consider the manner in which the Christian religion has been maintained against attacks by the speculative understanding of man, after having first discussed the general influence of philosophy upon its interpretation and statement. For this second division is supplementary to the first. The defence of Christianity upon rational grounds, completes the philosophical enunciation of it. As matter of fact, we find that, so soon as the theologian has done his utmost to make a logical and systematic representation of revealed religion, he is immediately called upon by the skeptic to defend his representation. And having done this, his work is at an end.

But this is not the whole truth. For the relation between these two divisions is also that of action and reaction. The endeavor to defend Christianity very often elicits a more profoundly philosophic statement of it. The defence of the doctrine of the Trinity against Sabellian and Arian objections, resulted in a deeper view of the subject than had heretofore prevailed. The subtle objections, and dangerous half-truths of the Tridentine divines, were the occasion of a more accurate statement of the doctrine of justification by faith without works, than is to be found in the Ancient Church. Indeed, a clear, coherent, and fundamental presentation is one of the strongest arguments. Power of statement is power of argument. It precludes misrepresentations. It corrects misstatements. Hence, we find that the Defences of Christianity embody a great amount of philosophical expansion of Scripture doctrine; so that the history of Apologies is oftentimes, to a great extent, the history of the influence of

Philosophy upon Christianity. In this, as we shall frequently have occasion to observe, we have an incidental, and therefore strong proof of the position, that history is organic in the connection and interaction of its divisions and elements.

Again, we see the propriety of discussing the History of Defences immediately after that of Philosophical Influences, from the fact, that both divisions alike involve the relation of reason to revelation. In the first division, reason receives and states the revealed truth; in the second, it maintains and defends it. But neither of these two functions can be discharged, without either expressly, or by implication, determining what is the true relation of the finite to the infinite reason, and coming to some conclusion respecting the distinctive offices of each.

### **III. The third division, in our general method of investigation, comprises the History of individual Doctrines.**

Comparing the parts of the plan with each other, this is the most interesting and important of all. It is the account of the interpretation and systematic construction of Scripture truth, by the œcumenical Christian Mind. It is the Bible itself, as intellectually explored and apprehended by the Church universal. It is the result of the scientific reflection of representative and leading theologians, of every age, upon the meaning and contents of revelation. Such is the general nature of this branch of the internal history of the church; but it is necessary to analyze it more particularly.

The History of Doctrines contains two subdivisions: 1. General Dogmatic History; 2. Special Dogmatic History.

The first treats of the general tenor and direction of dogmatic investigation; and is, in reality, an introduction to the second part of the subject. It serves to characterize the several stadia in the historic march and movement, and to periodize the time in which they occur.

It is found for illustration, that one age, or one church, had a particular work to perform, in constructing the Christian system out of the contents of revelation, and that this imparted a particular tendency to the theological mind of that age or church. The Greek Church, during the first four centuries, was principally engaged with the doctrine of the Trinity, and, consequently, the general drift of its speculation was trinitarian, or theological, in the narrower sense of the term. The Latin Church, in the fifth and sixth centuries, was occupied with the subject of sin, in the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian controversies, and its main tendency was anthropological. The doctrine of justification by faith was the absorbing theme for the Reformers, and the general tenor of Protestant speculation was soteriological. The specification, and exhibition of this particular function and work, in each instance, makes up the matter of General Dogmatic History.

Special Dogmatic History takes the doctrines one by one, and shows how they were formed, and fixed, by the controversies in the church and out of it, or by the private study of theologians without reference to any particular controversy. The doctrines of Christianity, as we now find them stated in scientific and technical terms, were constructed out of the Scripture phraseology very gradually. Sixteen hundred years must roll by, before the doctrine of the atonement could be analytically stated, and worded, as we now have it. Other doctrines received an expansion, and a systematic construction, sooner than this; but each and all of them were a slow and gradual formation. The account of this formative process, in each particular instance, constitutes Special Dogmatic History.

We cannot better exhibit the nature and characteristics of these two branches of Dogmatic History, which we have thus briefly discriminated, than by presenting examples of some of the methods that have been employed by dogmatic historians.

HAGENBACH finds five tendencies in doctrinal history; and, consequently, five periods, in the scientific development of revealed

truth. They are as follows:

1. The Age of Apologies; when it was the main endeavor of the theological mind, to defend Christianity against infidelity from without the church. It extends from the end of the Apostolic Age, to the death of Origen: A.D. 70–A.D. 254.
2. The Age of Polemics or Controversies; when it was the main endeavor of the theological mind, to maintain Christianity against heresy from within the church. It extends from the death of Origen, to John of Damascus: A.D. 254–A.D. 730.
3. The Age of Systematizing past results, or of Scholasticism, in the widest signification of the word. It extends from John Damascene, to the Reformation: A.D. 730–A.D. 1517.
4. The Age of Creed Controversy in Germany. It extends from the Reformation, to the time of the Leibnitz-Wolfian Philosophy: A.D. 1517–A.D. 1720.
5. The Age of Philosophizing upon Christianity. This period is characterized by criticism, speculation, the reconciliation of faith with science, philosophy with Christianity, reason with revelation. It extends from A.D. 1720, to the present time.

BAUMGARTEN-CRUSIUS finds three general tendencies in doctrinal history; but each one involves two special tendencies, so that the entire course of development presents six periods. The first general tendency is that of construction; the second is that of establishment; the third is that of purification. These three conceptions of constructing, establishing as authoritative, and purifying, the system of Christian doctrine, determine and rule the three principal stages which Baumgarten-Crusius finds in dogmatic history.

Subdividing each tendency, we have the following six periods:

1. First Period: Construction of the system of Christian doctrine, by pure thinking, and the influence of individual opinions. It extends to the Nicene council: A.D. 325.
2. Second Period: Construction of the system of Christian doctrine, through the influence of the church represented in general councils. It extends, from the council of Nice, to the council of Chalcedon: A.D. 325–A.D. 451.
3. Third Period: Establishment of the system of Christian doctrine, as authoritative, through the hierarchy. It extends, from the council of Chalcedon, to Gregory VII: A.D. 451–A.D. 1073.
4. Fourth Period: Establishment of the system of Christian doctrine, through the church philosophy and scholasticism. It extends, from Gregory VII to the Reformation: A.D. 1073–A.D. 1517.
5. Fifth Period: Purification of the system of Christian doctrine, through the influence of ecclesiastical parties and controversies. It extends, from A.D. 1517–A.D. 1700.
6. Sixth Period: Purification of the system of Christian doctrine, through the influence of science and speculation. It extends, from A.D. 1700 to the present.

The method of ROSENKRANZ makes three periods, divided with reference to philosophical categories. The first period is that of analysis, and is represented by the Greek Church. The second period is that of synthesis, and is represented by the Latin Church. The third period is that of systematizing, and is represented by the Protestant Church.

ENGELHARDT'S method finds the first period, to be that of analytic talent, engaged in the construction of individual doctrines, and extending from the Apostles to Scotus Erigena: A.D. 50–A.D. 850; the second period, that of synthetic talent, employed in constructing Christianity as a universal system, marked by two tendencies, the

scholastic and mystic, and extending from Scotus Erigena to the Reformation: A.D. 850–A.D. 1517; and the third period occupied with completing the three doctrinal systems of the Western Church,—the Lutheran, Papal, and Reformed,—and returning to the Biblical ideas, and elements, which had been neglected in the second period.

The method of KLIEFOTH is a combination of several. His first period is characterized by the construction of individual doctrines, by the Greek mind, in the analytic method, and with a prevailing theological (trinitarian) tendency. His second period is characterized by the construction of symbols by the Roman mind, in the synthetic method, and with a prevailing anthropological tendency. His third period is marked by the perfecting of doctrines and symbols, by the Protestant mind, in the systematizing method, and with a prevailing soteriological tendency. His fourth period is characterized by the dissolution of doctrines and symbols, confined to no particular church, and in no special method, but with a prevailing ecclesiastical tendency. The following table presents his scheme, at a glance.

#### 1. Construction of single doctrines

: Greek

: Analytic

: Theology.

#### 2. Construction of symbols

: Roman

: Synthetic

: Anthropology.

#### 3. Perfecting of doctrines and symbols



: Protestant

: Systematic

: Soteriology.

#### 4. Dissolution of doctrines and symbols

: ?

: ?

: Church.

It will readily be seen, that in following these main tendencies, which appear in the principal aeras and periods, General Dogmatic History finds a very rich amount of material. It exhibits the genius and spirit of particular ages, or leading churches; so that that monotony, which is complained of in some histories of the Christian Church, is entirely banished, and the inquirer finds himself in a region of great varied currents, and streams of tendency. One age is analytic; another is synthetic; another combines analysis and synthesis. Or, one age defends; another defines and authorizes; another eliminates and purifies; another is destructive and critical. In this way, the history presents a variety upon a grand scale; and the student who follows these courses and movements of the Ecclesiastical Mind feels an influence from the great whole, like that experienced by the voyager over the whole globe,—at one time, floating down the Amazon; at another opposing the mystic currents of the Nile; at another, "borne by equinoctial winds, stemming nightly toward the pole."

In respect to Special Dogmatic History, there is less variety in the methods employed. During each of these periods in General Dogmatic History,—viz.: the Apologetic, the Polemic, the Systematizing, etc.,—the theological mind also traverses the circle of individual doctrines; commonly, however, giving most attention to some one of them, or to some one kindred group of them. Take, for

illustration, the Polemic period, in Hagenbach's method, extending from the death of Origen, to the time of John of Damascus,—the principal theologian of the Greek Church, after the division between the Eastern and Western Churches. The general tendency of this period was polemic; yet most of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity were more or less didactically investigated, and systematically constructed, during this controversial age, which included nearly five centuries (A.D. 254–A.D. 730). The various topics in Theology and Christology: viz., the evidences of the Divine existence, the unity and trinity of God, the two natures in the one person of Christ; in Anthropology: viz., the doctrines of sin, freedom, grace, and predestination; in Soteriology: viz., atonement, and justification; and in Eschatology, together with the doctrines of the Church and the Sacraments,—all these various, and varied, single topics were subjects of reflection and positive construction, during this controversial period. Yet not all to an equal degree, and extent. The two divisions of Theology and Anthropology were by far the most prominent; that of Soteriology being least considered. Thus we find special tendencies, in the midst of the great general one; single smaller but strong currents, in the one great polemic stream that was pouring onward. In the Greek Church, the polemic mind was most engaged with Theology. The doctrine of the trinity, together with the person of Christ, owes its systematic form to the subtle profundity of the Greek theologians. In the Latin Church, Anthropology excited most attention. The doctrines of sin, free will, and grace, awakened in the Occidental mind a preëminent interest, so that this anthropological cast characterizes its thinking.

These examples will suffice, to indicate the contents of the third, and most important division, in the internal history of the church.

#### **IV. The fourth division in the method adopted comprises the History of Symbols.**

The ultimate result of all this construction, authorization, and purification of doctrines, is their combination into a Creed, to

constitute the doctrinal basis of a particular church. It is not enough to eliminate these doctrines, one by one, out of scripture, defend them against infidelity, define and establish them against heresy, and expand them into their widest form, and then leave them to stand, each for, and by itself. This whole process of doctrinal development, though it has its origin partly in a scientific temper, and satisfies an intellectual want, is nevertheless intended to subserve practical purposes, in the end. The church is not scientific, merely for the sake of science. It is not speculative merely for the sake of speculation. It runs through these stadia of Apologetics and Polemics, in order that it may reach the goal of universal influence, and triumph, over human error and sin. This controversy, and toilsome investigation of revealed truth, is undergone, in order that the church may obtain a system of belief, a creed, or confession of faith, that shall withstand the attacks of infidelity, preclude the errors of heresy, and above all furnish a form of sound doctrine which shall be employed in moulding the religious experience of the individual believer. Personal Christian character is the object ultimately in view, in the formation of doctrinal statements, and the construction of symbols of faith.

The account of these Confessions, therefore, properly follows that of the single doctrines of which they are composed. Symbolics, as it is termed, is coördinate with the history of individual dogmas, and constitutes a general summary of the total results of theological speculation. It describes the origin and formation of those principal creeds which have been constructed, at different periods, by the universal church represented in a general council, or by the church of a particular country, to serve as the expression of its faith, and the theoretic foundation of its life and practice. It exhibits the history of such symbols, as the (so-called) Apostles' Creed, the Augsburg Confession, the Helvetic Confession, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the creeds of Dort and Westminster, the Boston Confession of 1680, the Cambridge and Saybrook Platforms.

If now we take in, at one glance, the whole field of investigation, opened before us in the third and fourth divisions of the general method we have adopted, we see that they are of themselves worthy of the undivided study of a lifetime. To trace the rise and growth of each of the great tendencies in dogmatic history; the elaborate formation of each and every one of the particular Christian doctrines, under the influence and pressure of the ruling spirit of the period; and then, the organization of all these general and special results, into creeds and confessions of faith, in order to strengthen and consolidate the individual and the general religious character: to do all this with profundity, and comprehensiveness, is a work worthy of the best scholarship, the deepest reflection, and the most living enthusiasm of the human mind.

**V. The fifth and last division, in the method adopted, includes Biographic History as related to the History of Doctrines.**

This presents sketches of those historic individuals, who, like Athanasius, Anselm, and Calvin, have contributed greatly by their intellectual influence, to shape either the single doctrines, or the symbols of the church, and who are, consequently, representatives of its philosophical and theological tendencies. A historic personage is one in whom the spirit of an age, or a church, is more concentrated and powerful than in the average of individuals. He is therefore history in the concrete; history in a single mighty and passionate personality.

This division, it is easy to perceive, contains a greater variety of features, and more of popular and immediately impressive qualities, than either of the others. Indeed, if one were to choose a single portion of the wide field of Ecclesiastical History, as that in which he could labour with most ease, and exert the greatest popular influence, it would be that of biography. The lights and shadows play more strikingly and variedly, and there is far more opportunity for vivid sketching, brilliant description, and rapid narration, than in

those more central parts of the subject which we have been describing. Biographic history, also, permits the writer to pay more regard to those secular characteristics, which throw a grace, and impart a charm. The influence of poetry, of art, and of science, in moulding and colouring religious character, can be exhibited far more easily while sketching the life of an individual, than when mining in the depths of doctrinal development. Biography invites and induces more flexibility and gracefulness in the style, than is possible in the slow but mighty movement of Christian science.

There is also an inexpressible charm in the biographic Monograph, especially when passing to it from the severer and graver portions of dogmatic history. We have been following the impersonal spirit of the age, the great tendency of the period, and now we come to a single living man, and a single beating heart. The forces of the period play through him, and that which had begun to appear somewhat rigid, though ever impressive and weighty, is now felt to have an intensely human interest, and a vivid vitality. Pass, for illustration, from the contemplation of the deep central movement of Scholasticism, to the study of the life and character of its noblest and best representative Anselm, and observe the agreeable relief, the grateful change. All this science, this dialectic subtlety and exhaustive analysis, which, contemplated, in the abstract, had begun to oppress the mind, while it astonished it, is now found in alliance with a piety as rapt and contemplative as that of a seraph, a simplicity as meek as that of a child, an individuality as marked and natural as that of a character in Shakspeare.

The biographic Monograph as related to the history of Opinions, constitutes, therefore, a very appropriate conclusion to the doctrinal history of the Christian Church. It serves to connect the whole department with those active and practical aspects of Christianity, which are the immediate object of attention for the preacher and pastor. Beginning with the more speculative foundations of historical theology, and going along with its scientific development, the investigator concludes with its concrete and practical workings in the

mind and heart of those great men who have been raised up by Providence, each in his own time and place, to do a needed work in the church. And while he is not to set up any one of them as the model without imperfection, and beyond which no man can go, he will find in each and all of those who are worthy to be called historic men, something to be revered, and to be imitated; something that serves to remind him of that only perfect model, the great Head of the Church, who made them what they were, and who reflects something of His own eternal wisdom and infinite excellence, in their finite, but renovated natures.

Such men were Athanasius and Augustine of the Ancient Church; Anselm and Aquinas of the Mediaeval Church; Luther and Calvin of the Modern Church. Each pair is a dual man. The six are three representatives of the three great general tendencies in ecclesiastical history,—those of construction, authorization, and purification. But we have seen that there are tendencies within tendencies, subordinate movements in the great general movement, the river Rhone in Lake Geneva. These, also, have their representatives, whose career and influence belong to biographic history. Such are Tertullian and Origen of the Apologetic period; Basil, the two Gregories, and Chrysostom, of the Polemic period; Scotus Erigena the lonely theologian of one of the darkest ages in church history, Abelard, Bernard, and the two interesting mystics Richard and Hugh St. Victor, of the Scholastic period; Melanchthon and Zuingli of the Reformatory period.

Such, it is conceived, is a natural Method for the investigation of the internal or dogmatic history of the Christian Church. And in closing this statement of the Methodology of the subject, it may be remarked, that this plan for a written volume is also a plan for a life-long course of private study and investigation. Upon examination, it will be perceived, that it allows of indefinite expansion as a whole, and in each of its parts. The entire history in its general aspects may be investigated wider and wider, and deeper and deeper, or a single section may be made the subject of study for years. The history of an

individual doctrine may be selected, and the student find matter enough in it to occupy him a lifetime. What an interest would be thrown around the clerical life of one, who in the providence of God is separated from educated men and large libraries, by collecting about him the principal works upon the doctrine of the atonement, e.g., from the patristic, scholastic, reformed, and present periods, and making them his study for a few hours every week. What a varied, yet substantially identical soteriology would pass slowly, but impressively, before his continually expanding and strengthening mind. Carrying him back continually, as such investigation naturally and spontaneously would, to an examination of the scripture matter, out of which this body of dogmatic literature has been expanded, what a determined strength, and broad comprehensiveness of theological character would be gradually and solidly built up, like a coral isle, in that man's mind.

In closing this statement of the general method, therefore, may it not be recommended as the basis of one important part of that life-long course of study, which every clergyman is solemnly bound to begin and carry along? No man, in any department of literature, or in any profession or calling, ever regrets subjecting himself to the history of his department. It is a safe and generous influence that comes off upon the mind from History; and there is no way so certain to secure an impression ever deeper and purer from this great intellectual domain, as to lay down in the outset a method that is natural, organically connected, and self-expanding. Then, the inquirer may begin in any section; work backwards, or forwards; contemplate the whole, or only a part. He will find connections all along the line, and be in communication with the great whole, at each and every point of his investigation.

# **BOOK FIRST: HISTORY OF THE INFLUENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS UPON THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE**

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## **CHAPTER I:**

### **PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH: A.D. 1—A.D. 730**

#### **1. General features of Platonism and Aristotelianism**

IN investigating the influence which secular Philosophy has exerted upon the construction of Christian Doctrine, the limits to which we are shut up by the character of this work will not permit an examination of the great multitude of schemes of human speculation, that have made themselves felt in the intellectual history of the church. We shall, therefore, confine our attention to those two systems, by which the theoretical apprehension of revealed truth has been the most decidedly modified, and for the greatest length of time. These two systems are Platonism, and Aristotelianism.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the subject, it is worthy of notice, that there are some advantages in being limited to the examination of only these two philosophies.

1. In the first place, they have exerted more influence upon the intellectual methods of men, taking in the whole time since their appearance, than all other systems combined. They certainly influenced the Greek mind, and Grecian culture, more than all the other philosophical systems. They reappear in the Roman philosophy,—so far as Rome had any philosophy. We shall see that

Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, exerted more influence than all other philosophical minds united, upon the greatest of the Christian Fathers; upon the greatest of the Schoolmen; and upon the theologians of the Reformation, Calvin and Melancthon. And if we look at European philosophy, as it has been unfolded in England, Germany, and France, we shall perceive that all the modern theistic schools have discussed the standing problems of human reason, in very much the same manner in which the reason of Plato and Aristotle discussed them twenty-two centuries ago. Bacon, Des Cartes, Leibnitz, and Kant, so far as the first principles of intellectual and moral philosophy are concerned, agree with their Grecian predecessors. A student who has mastered the two systems of the Academy and Lycaeum will find in Modern philosophy (with the exception of the department of Natural Science) very little that is true, that may not be found for substance, and germinally, in the Greek theism. In being shut up to these systems we are, therefore, subjected to no great disadvantage.

2. Secondly, these two philosophies contain more of truth than all other systems that do not draw from them, or are opposed to them. They contain a representation of the powers and functions, the laws, operations, and relations, of the human mind, that is nearer to the actual matter of fact, than can be found in other alien and differing systems. They are therefore the best instrument to be employed in evoking the powers of the human mind; in forming and fixing its methods of intellectual inquiry; and in guiding it in the investigation of the legitimate subjects that are presented to it. We are speaking only comparatively, it will be noticed. We are comparing things human with things human; systems of finite reason with systems of finite reason. Neither Platonism nor Aristotelianism is free from grave errors. Plato, in some places, certainly, teaches a defective theory of moral evil, in deriving it from the ὕλη, and regarding it as the involuntary imperfection which necessarily belongs to the finite. Aristotle indirectly fosters pantheism, in speculating so much more upon τὸ ὄν than upon ὁ ὢν, and in denying the immortality of the individual soul, though conceding it to mind in its generic nature. Yet

both of these systems, taken together as a whole, were antagonistic to the atheism, the materialism, and even the polytheism of the pagan world. The Greek theism, as represented in these two systems, notwithstanding its defects, affirmed the existence of god, and of one supreme god,<sup>2</sup> and taught a spiritual theory of man and human life. Hence we are justified in saying that these two systems are, comparatively, the best which the unaided reason of man has constructed, and that there are some advantages in being forced to pass by all secondary and opposing systems, when discussing the influence of philosophical systems upon Christianity.

3. A third advantage in confining our attention to these two systems, is found in their essential agreement with each other. Platonism and Aristotelianism differ only in form, not in substance. This is evident upon testing each by the great standing problems of philosophy. In reference to the principal questions and topics, both give the same answers, and both are found upon the same side of the line that divides all philosophies into the material and the spiritual, the pantheistic and the theistic. There is a substantial agreement between Plato and his pupil Aristotle, respecting the rationality and immortality of the mind as mind, in distinction from matter; respecting the nature and origin of ideas; respecting the relative position and importance of the senses, and of knowledge by the senses. But these are subjects which immediately reveal the general spirit of a philosophic system. Let any one read the ethical treatises of Plato and Aristotle, and he will see that both held the same general idea of the deity as a moral governor; of moral law; and of the immutable reality of right and wrong. The political writings of both, teach that man possesses an innate political nature, and both breathe the same political spirit. Noticing these resemblances, the student who passes from the one to the other author perceives that he has not passed into a different philosophical division, but is all the while upon the high ground of theism and spiritualism.

The method of each is indeed different, though the matter remains the same. And inasmuch as the method sometimes exerts even more

influence than the matter upon the mind of the student, it is not surprising, if, upon looking too exclusively at the divergence of men and schools at the end of the line, and after this difference between the two methods has been aggravated and exaggerated by time and mental temperaments, he is strongly inclined to believe, that there must be an essential diversity between the two systems themselves. The synthesis and poetry of Plato, for illustration, at one extreme, become Gnosticism, while the analysis and logic of Aristotle, at the other extreme, become extravagant subtilty, and minute Scholasticism. And inasmuch as but little resemblance can be traced between Gnosticism and Scholasticism, it is hastily concluded that there can be no sameness of essential matter, and oneness of fundamental principle, between the original systems from which they sprang, and by the abuse of which they came into existence. For we shall find that the evil which Christianity has suffered from these philosophical systems, has originated from an exaggeration of one particular element in each, and its sole employment in philosophizing upon Christianity, to the neglect of the remaining elements of the system. Letting go of the sober and truthful ideas of the system itself, which served to fill out and substantiate the method, the speculator held on upon the mere hollow method alone. In this way, Platonism, under the treatment of the New-Platonics, degenerated into an imaginative theosophy; and Aristotelianism, in the handling of the later Schoolmen, became mere hair-splitting,—both systems, in this way, each in its turn, contributing to the corruption of Christianity.

With this preliminary account of the relations of Platonism and Aristotelianism to each other, we pass to consider the extent to which these philosophies have prevailed in the church, and the estimate in which they have been held.

## **2. Philosophy at the time of the Advent**

At the time of the advent of Christ, and in the age immediately preceding, the philosophical world was in a state of deep decline, and

of growing corruption. Philosophy, like all other departments of human inquiry, as well as the general intellectual condition of mankind, was at the lowest point. The system most extensively prevalent was the Epicurean, because this is most congenial to corrupt human nature, and possessing little or nothing of a scientific character is more easily understood and received by the masses. Epicureanism is the most natural and spontaneous philosophical scheme for earthly minds, and hence prevails in those periods when the fallen humanity runs its career with greatest swiftness, and with least resistance, from religion, or from the better philosophical systems.

Yet, at the time when the Eternal Word became flesh, and dwelt among men, the system that exerted most influence upon the nobler class of minds was Platonism. The Jewish Philo, and the Pagan Plutarch and Pliny, are representatives of a class of men of earnest minds, in this period, who could not be satisfied with the prevailing Epicureanism and Sensualism in speculation. We cannot call them Platonists in the strictest use of the term; for Philo and Plutarch were New-Platonists, and Pliny was of the Stoic school. Still, employing the term in a wide signification, to denote a great philosophical tendency opposed to Epicureanism and Sensualism, these men belonged to one and the same general division in philosophy,—that of the Grecian Theism. For New-Platonism, though a degenerate type, was yet tinctured strongly with the characteristics of the system from which it had degenerated; and Stoicism upon the side of ethics has much in common with the system of Aristotle.

We find then the fact to be, that in the century preceding and succeeding the advent of our Lord, Platonism, in the wide acceptance of the term, was the philosophy that was moulding the minds of the most thoughtful and earnest men, and that these men, although a very small minority, yet like such minorities generally, were destined to exert a greater influence upon the history of Opinions than the opposite majority of Epicureans.

### **3. Philosophy in the Apologetic Period: A.D. 70–A.D. 254**

Passing into the Apologetic period, we find the facts in respect to the philosophical influences operating within the Christian church to be as follows:

Philosophy is now within the church itself. In the preceding period, it was outside of it. The Plutarchs, Plinys, and Philos, were not Christians; and the Apostolic Church, being under the direct guidance of the Apostles, had little or nothing to do with systems of human speculation. In this period, however, we find that philosophy has been adopted by the Christian as distinguished from the Pagan mind, and that within the sphere of the church it is now more successfully cultivated, and more legitimately employed, than in the sphere of the world. The secular mind now employs philosophy, and even this more lofty and ethical philosophy of which we are speaking, in attacking Christianity; while the ecclesiastical mind employs it to repel their attacks. Lucian was indeed an avowed Epicurean; but Celsus pretends at least to Platonism, and Porphyry was a New-Platonist; and the substance of the attack upon Christianity, in this period, was the work of these two latter minds. The consequence is, that the Christian apologist is compelled to study, and employ this same general system of speculation, for his own higher purposes. He perceives that a system of philosophy like the Platonic is favourable to the principles of ethics and natural religion; that it does not, like the Epicurean, undermine all morality and religion; and therefore insists, and with right, that so far as it can properly go, it is not unfriendly to the system of revealed truth.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the controversy between the Platonic infidels Porphyry and Celsus, and the Platonic apologists Justin Martyr and Origen, did not relate so much to the question whether Platonism was substantially correct, but whether it was all that man needed; not whether the first principles of ethics and natural religion are true and valid, but whether natural religion is able to secure the eternal interests of mankind,—a question which is constantly recurring, and which constitutes the gist of the

controversy between skepticism and Christianity at this very moment, as much as it did in the first ages of the church.

The consequence was, that this system of human philosophy, the Greek theism, upon being brought into the church and employed in defending Christianity, received a more exact definition, and a more legitimate application, than it obtained while employed by the secular and skeptical mind. It thereby came nearer to the original form in which it was first promulgated by Plato and Aristotle. Let any one examine the philosophical positions of Justin, Origen, and even that earnest hater of philosophy Tertullian, and he will see that there is a much closer agreement between these Christian Apologists and Plato and Aristotle, than there is between these latter and the New-Platonic skeptics. For the New-Platonic skeptics did not confine Platonism within its true limits. It was their desire to establish human philosophy upon the ruins of Christianity, as a universal religion,—sufficient to meet the wants of humanity, and therefore rendering the revealed system superfluous. Hence the human system itself was enlarged by deductions that were illegitimate, and by additions that were alien to its true meaning and substance; so that the imaginative New-Platonism that resulted is quite different from the more sober and circumscribed philosophising of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

The fact then, in relation to the Apologetic period is, that Platonism, in the widest acceptation, was the dominant philosophy, so far as the theologian made any use of human speculation. To use the summary conclusion of Baumgarten-Crusius, "the church adhered to Platonism, notwithstanding all the varied and injurious influences that were experienced from the exaggerations or misapplications of this system, as that philosophical doctrine or school which was not only the most extensively prevalent, but appeared to be most akin, in its general spirit and tendency, to Christianity."

It ought, however, to be added, that at the close of this Apologetic period, Aristotelianism began to appear in a more distinct and

independent manner than before, so that the dim beginnings of that dialectic spirit which did not attain any very considerable influence till the great outburst of Scholasticism, may be traced here and there. It was, however, the method, rather than the matter of this system that exerted an influence, and attracted attention at this time. So far as the substance of Aristotelianism is concerned, it was, as we have shown, one with Platonism, and therefore really at work in the general mind of this period; but so far as its logical forms are concerned, it now began for the first time to exert a slight influence, which was not regarded with favour by the leading ecclesiastical minds. The school of Alexandria, where the Platonic spirit was more intense and extreme than elsewhere, were particularly opposed to Aristotelianism, as it had then appeared, and as they understood it. But the writings themselves of Aristotle were not much known, and as a consequence both adherents and opponents proceeded from an imperfect apprehension of his system. Baumgarten-Crusius remarks, that in the church of the first centuries Aristotelianism was almost synonymous with sophistry, and hair-splitting. Irenaeus says that "minuteness and subtilty about curious questions is characteristic of Aristotelianism." Tertullian, speaking of the heretics he was opposing, alludes to the "wretched Aristotle, who invented their logic for them."<sup>2</sup> The fact seems to have been that Aristotelianism, during the 2d and 3d centuries, was employed chiefly by the heretical mind, merely as an acute logical method, and almost wholly in discussions respecting the origin of the world, and the nature of the deity. Among the erroneous doctrines advanced at this time in connection with this system, was that of the eternity of the world.

#### **4. Philosophy in the Polemic Period. A.D. 254–A.D. 730**

Passing into the Polemic period, we find the same Grecian theism to be the dominant philosophical system. As the ecclesiastical mind now became more scientific than in the Apologetic age, it was natural that the Platonic philosophy should be still better understood, so that we find the vagueness and fancifulness of New-Platonism gradually disappearing, and giving place to a more correct apprehension of the



genuine Socratic Platonism united with more of the Aristotelian element. The attention of Augustine, the greatest theologian of this important period, had been directed to Christianity by the aspirations awakened during his Platonic studies, which, he discovered, as Plato himself did, could not be realized by anything human. "In Cicero and Plato and other such writers," he says, "I meet with many things acutely said, and things that awaken some fervor and desire, but in none of them do I find the words, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' "2 In his Confessions, he speaks of the broad prospect opened before him by the Platonic writings, but of their utter insufficiency to empower the mind to reach the region thus displayed,—of the immortal longing united with the eternal hopelessness. "For it is one thing,"—he says, in that deep-toned eloquence of his, which so often stirs the depths of our being like a choral anthem,— "for it is one thing, from the mountain's shaggy top to see the land of peace and find no way thither; and in vain to strive towards it, in ways beset by fugitives and deserters, and opposed by their captain, the lion and the dragon; and another thing, to keep on the way thither, guarded by the hosts of the heavenly general. These things did wonderfully sink into my soul, while I read the least of thy apostles, and meditated upon thy word, and trembled exceedingly."

The influence of Platonism is also very apparent in the scientific, as well as practical theology of the Polemic period. The anthropological views called out in the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius exhibit unmistakable signs of the prevalence of this system. The Augustinian view of the origin and nature of sin is closely connected with the Platonic view of the nature and endowments of the human soul. The doctrine of innate ideas harmonizes with that of innate depravity. In the other great controversy of this period,—that respecting the Trinity,—those theologians who exerted most influence in forming, and establishing the final creed-statement, had been disciplined by the Greek intellectual methods. Athanasius, Basil, and the two Gregories, were themselves of Greek extraction, and their highly metaphysical intellects had been trained in Grecian

schools. Athanasius was a reverent student of Origen, though by no means a servile recipient of all of Origen's opinions; and Basil, Gregory Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzen, were thoroughly versed in classical antiquity. Such a discipline as this would naturally introduce these leading minds of the 4th century, to the philosophy of Plato, whose influence was felt through the whole Hellenic culture of the period.

But as we pass along in this Polemic age, we find that, although the same general estimate is put upon Platonism, as during the Apologetic period, yet the theological mind is forced to employ, and does imperceptibly employ, more and more of the logic and dialectics of Aristotle's system. In constructing the doctrine of the Trinity and the Person of Christ, the mind of an Athanasius is compelled to an analysis, distinction, limitation, and definition, which has perhaps even more affinity with the dialectic spirit and method of Aristotle, than with that of Plato. Let us look a moment, for illustration, at a statement of the doctrine of the trinity ascribed to Athanasius, but which probably proceeded from the school of Augustine,—commonly called the *Symbolum Quicumque*. A few positions taken from it will suffice to show that the theological mind, in drawing up a form of doctrine that should contain all the Scripture elements, was forced to employ that niceness of discrimination, and sharpness of distinction, which is so characteristic of the Aristotelian system. "This is the catholic faith: that we worship one God in a trinity, and a trinity in a unity. Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance." Here the logical conceptions of "confusion" and "division" are carefully distinguished. "The person of the Father is one; the person of the Son is one; the person of the Holy Spirit is one." Here, the conception of "person" is discriminated from that of "nature," or "essence," by the affirmation that there are three persons. "But of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the divinity is one, the glory equal, the majesty equal. Such as is the Father, is the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, the Spirit is uncreated. The Father is infinite, the Son is infinite, the Spirit is infinite. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy

Spirit is eternal." Here the notion of "equality" in the persons is enunciated. "And yet there are not three eternal beings, but one eternal being; there are not three uncreated, nor three infinite beings, but one uncreated and one infinite being." Here, the conception of "being" or "essence" is discriminated again from that of "person," by the affirmation that there is but one being.

No one can look, for a moment, at these statements involving such logical conceptions as "confusion," "division," "essence," "person," etc., or can follow the course of the controversy with Sabellianism on the one side, and Arianism on the other, without perceiving that although the theological mind had not derived this subtlety from the study of Aristotle in any very formal manner, it had nevertheless felt the influence of that close and powerful method which is to be seen in the more dialectic dialogues of Plato, and which was carried to a still greater energy of abstraction, and power of analysis, in the writings of his successor.

In this manner, we think, the combined system of Platonico-Aristotelianism may be said to have been the dominant one in this Polemic period, when the scientific statements of Scripture truth were forming. We do not, indeed, find that the entire works of Aristotle were translated, commented upon, and taught by distinguished men in the church, during this period, as we shall in the next. So far as a text book was concerned, Plato was still the great philosophical authority. Nevertheless, the writings of Aristotle were beginning to attract the attention of students, and the dim beginnings of that formal Aristotelianism which reaches its height of influence in the Scholastic age, may be traced in all the more acute and subtle workings of the theological mind in this controversial period.

## **CHAPTER II:**

## **PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES IN THE MEDIAEVAL CHURCH: A.D. 730–A.D. 1517**

### **1. Platonism of the Mystic Theologians**

PASSING, now, into the Systematizing Period, extending from John Damascene to the Reformation, we enter into a sphere of more intense philosophical activity than any in the history of the church. Even the speculative movement of the German mind for the last half-century, confined though it has been to a single nationality, and not shared by the church at large, and therefore more likely to become intense, is inferior in energy, subtlety, and depth, to mediaeval Scholasticism. Probably the church will never again see a period in which Scripture and theology will be contemplated so exclusively from a philosophical point of view; in which the desire to rationalize Christianity (in the technical sense of the term), to evince its absolute reasonableness, will be so strong and overmastering. We are, therefore, passing into the most speculative period in Church-History; and hence it is well denominated the period of Systematizing.

In the outset it may be remarked, as it was in relation to the two preceding periods, that the Greek philosophy, as formed and fixed by Plato and Aristotle, was the prevalent system. We shall indeed find here and there tendencies to a pantheistic philosophy in individual minds; but the weight and authority of both intellectual and moral character is almost entirely upon the side of the Grecian theism. But instead of the collocation employed in speaking of the two previous periods, we must now change the position of the two philosophies, and say that the general philosophical system of this Scholastic period was Aristotelo-Platonism, instead of Platonico-Aristotelianism. The basis of speculation was now the Aristotelian analysis, with more or less of the Platonic synthesis superinduced and interfused; while in the Apologetic and Polemic periods, the ground form was the Platonic idea, more or less analyzed and cleared up by the Aristotelian conception. But in both cases, it was the one

general system of theism and spiritualism, as opposed to the general system of pantheism, naturalism, and sensualism.

We have less difficulty in detecting the presence of the Platonic element during this Scholastic age, than we had in detecting the Aristotelian element in the preceding periods. For we find it formally and distinctly existing. In the first half of the Systematizing period,—viz.: from John of Damascus to Anselm (A.D. 730–A.D. 1109)—the philosophical character of the Polemic time is still very apparent, though beginning to wane before the growing scholastic tendency. Platonism, says Hagenbach, constituted the red morning dawn of the mediaeval philosophy, and was not entirely eclipsed by formal and established Aristotelianism in the schools, until the 13th century. It is, remarks Ritter, the notion of ignorance which affirms that in the Middle Ages men were given up solely to the Aristotelian philosophy. The foundation of Anselm's mode of thinking, says Baumgarten-Crusius, was a free Platonism in the spirit of Augustine.

Platonism in the Systematizing period displays itself very plainly and powerfully in the Mystic Theology. All along through this age of acute analysis and subtle dialectics, there runs a vein of devout and spiritual contemplation, which stands out in striking contrast with the general scholastic character of the time. It appears in its best form in the Mystic Scholastics. This was a class of men of naturally meditative temper, and of deep religious devotion, who found more satisfaction in contemplating the objects of faith and religion, than in philosophizing upon them,—especially in that extremely analytic manner in which the mind of the period delighted. Such men discovered in the writings of Plato,—and more particularly in the more ethical and practical portion of his writings,—a philosophy that harmonized with their cast of mind, and favoured their contemplative disposition. But although they were predominantly contemplative, they must carefully be distinguished from that small circle of Mystics who appeared in the century immediately preceding the Reformation, and who possessed far less of that systematic and scientific spirit which must ever be united with the contemplative, in

order to a symmetrical theological character. These Mystic Scholastics of whom we are speaking, and whom we have so denominated because they were Schoolmen with an infusion of mysticism, felt the influences of the time in which they lived, and especially of the Aristotelianism that was dominant in the schools; so that while by their writings and teachings they helped to check the excessive subtilty and speculation of the period, by keeping in view the more practical and contemplative aspects of Christianity, they were themselves preserved from that degenerate mysticism which ends in a vague and feeble pantheism and naturalism, because it neglects the scientific aspects of religion, and decries all creed-statements.

For it is important to discriminate between the two species of Mysticism which appeared not only in the Middle Ages, but appear more or less in every age. In itself, and abstractly considered, Mysticism was a healthful reaction against the extremely speculative character of Scholasticism. It served to direct attention to the fact that religion is a life, as well as a truth. But, on the other hand, Mysticism was sometimes an unhealthy reaction against a moderate Scholasticism. It forgot that Christian dogma is the support and nutriment of all genuine Christian life; and that there is no trustworthy religious experience that is not grounded in the perception of religious doctrine. The mystic of this species disparaged discriminating and accurate statements of biblical doctrine, and was often the violent enemy of scientific theology and church-symbols. In this instance, Mysticism soon run itself out into positive and dangerous errors.

The first class of Mystics, the Mystic Scholastics, were those who held the hereditary orthodoxy of the church, and sought to reach the meaning of the old symbols and doctrines by a contemplative and practical method; yet not to the entire exclusion of the speculative and scientific. Such men were Bernard († 1153), Hugh St. Victor († 1141), Richard St. Victor († 1173), William of Champeaux († 1121), Bonaventura († 1274).

A second class of Mystics, whom we denominate the Heretical Mystics, were those who rejected, in greater or less degree, the historical theology, and sought to solve the mysteries of religion either by an intensely speculative, or a vague and musing method. Hence, there were two subdivisions in this class, both of which were characterized by a common undervaluation of the church orthodoxy. The representative of the first subdivision is Scotus Erigena († 880), —a theologian who diverged from the catholic faith into pantheism, by the use of a very refined and subtile dialectics, and who, in his treatise *De Divisione Naturae*, anticipates some of the positions of Spinoza. Representatives of the second subdivision are Eckart († 1329), and Ruysbröck († 1384), who likewise lapsed into pantheistic views from the other side, by the rejection of all logical methods, and the substitution of mere feelings and intuitions, for clear discriminations and conceptions.

Between the Mystic Scholastics and the Heretical Mystics, there stood a third interesting class, the Latitudinarian Mystics, who partook of the characteristics of both. They agreed with the Mystic Scholastics in holding the church orthodoxy in honor, but from the neglect of scientific investigation lost sight of some parts of the catholic system. The piacular work of Christ and the doctrine of justification, in particular, were misconceived and sometimes overlooked. The best representatives of this class are Von Cölln († 1329), Tauler († 1361), Suso († 1365), Gerson († 1429), Thomas à Kempis († 1471), and the author of the work which goes under the title of "*Theologia Germanica*." These writers, though the harbingers of the Reformation, and in general sympathy with the evangelical system, are not complete representatives of the historical orthodoxy.

## **2. Aristotelianism of the Scholastic Theologians**

But while there was this very considerable amount of Platonism in the Systematic period, Aristotle's method was by far the most influential. The Crusades had opened a communication with the East, and had made the Western Church acquainted with the Arabic

translations of Aristotle, and commentaries upon him. The study of Aristotle commenced with great vigor, and notwithstanding the prohibition of the church, the system of the Stagirite took possession of all the principal schools, and of all the leading minds. The 13th century exhibits Scholasticism in its finest form. Minds like Alexander Hales († 1245), Albertus Magnus († 1280), and Thomas Aquinas († 1274), employ the Aristotelian analysis in the defence of the traditional orthodoxy of the church. Their reverence for the faith of the church kept them from deviating into those errors into which philosophy is liable to fall, when it is not restrained and guided by revelation; so that although we find in their writings a very acute and intense speculation, we discern in them nothing of pantheism or naturalism. The fundamental principles of ethics, and Christian theism, have found no more powerful defenders than the great Schoolmen of the thirteenth century.

But this moderation in the use of Aristotle's method did not long continue. In the 14th century and onward, we find a class of Schoolmen who are characterized by more or less of departure from the doctrines of revelation, and an extreme subtilizing and refinement in ratiocination. It is from this class that Scholasticism has too often obtained its bad reputation in modern times. Minds like Duns Scotus († 1308), Occam († 1347), and Gabriel Biel († 1495), not content with analysing truth down to its ultimate elements, attempted to analyse these ultimates themselves; so that there were for them no strictly first principles, but everything must undergo division and subdivision indefinitely. Distinctions without differences, innumerable distinctions that had no existence in the real nature of things, were drawn, and Christian philosophy as well as theology was unsettled. An influx of barbarous terms was one consequence; and these terms had not even the merit which often atones for uncouthness of phrase—that of exactly defining a real philosophic idea, or discriminating a really scientific distinction. Dialectic ingenuity was expended in the attempt to answer all possible questions. Such queries as the following were raised: "Is it a possible supposition that God the Father can hate God the Son? Is it



possible for God to substitute himself (suppositare se) for the devil, for an ass, for a gourd, for a flint? In case he can, then in what manner would the gourd preach, work miracles, or be affixed to the cross?" Then, again, "there were," says Erasmus, "innumerable quibblings about notions, and relations, and formalitations, and quiddities, and haecceities, which no eye could follow out but that of a lynx, which is said to be able, in the thickest darkness, to see things that have no existence."

The 14th century exhibits Scholasticism in its most extreme forms. The Aristotelian logic and analysis is now applied, in the most ingenious and persistent manner, to the dogmas of the Papal Church. Most of these not only afforded opportunity for the display of acuteness and ingenuity, but absolutely required it. Such doctrines as absolution or the forgiveness of sins by the Church, the meritoriousness of works, works of supererogation, refusal of the cup to the laity, purgatory, and particularly transubstantiation, elicited all the intellectual force of the Schoolman. In his reasoning, he made much more use of the form, than of the substance of Aristotelianism. The logic of Aristotle was disconnected from both his metaphysics and politics, so that the ideas of the Stagirite upon all the higher problems were lost sight of, and only the Aristotelian categories were employed to make distinctions which the discriminating intellect of the Greek never would have made, and to defend tenets which, had he lived in the days of Duns Scotus, his sagacious understanding never would have defended. Thus we find, in the 14th century, the system of Aristotle employed in the same onesided and merely formal manner in which we have seen that of Plato employed in the 2d and 3d centuries,—Scholasticism, in the narrow sense, being the result in the former instance, and Gnosticism in the latter.

### **3. Reaction against extreme Aristotelianism, from the Later Mystics and the revival of Greek Literature**

But this extreme tension of the human intellect, and this microscopic division and subdivision, could not last, and the reaction came on

apace. Even in the 14th century, while the highly speculative dispute between the Thomists and Scotists was going on, that middle division of the mediæval Mystics of which we have spoken,—the Latitudinarian Mystics,—began to appear, and by its warm devoutness and musing contemplativeness, contributed to soften the theoretic hardness, and render flexible the logical rigidity of the period. Such men as Von Cölln († 1329), Tauler († 1361), and Henry Suso († 1365), with much less of that scientific spirit which we have seen to have coexisted with the contemplative tendency in the Bernards and St. Victors, and hence not so interesting to the theologian, or so influential upon the development of doctrine, nevertheless exerted considerable practical influence through their preaching, and works of devotional theology. Sermons like those of Tauler, and tracts like that entitled "Theologia Germanica," which Luther praised so highly, and like the "Imitation of Christ" by à Kempis, were composed and spread abroad, during the close of the 14th and beginning of the 15th centuries. We begin to see the dawn of the Reformation, in this inclination toward a more contemplative method, and a more devout and practical apprehension and use of Christian doctrine.

This tendency, moreover, was strengthened by the revival of Greek literature, in the 14th and 15th centuries. A very interesting school of Platonists sprang up in Italy, in the latter part of the 15th century; at the head of which stood Marsilius Ficinus († 1499), who translated the writings of Plato into Latin, and Picus Mirandola († 1494), who awakened a wonderful enthusiasm by his lectures and commentaries upon the philosophy of the Academy. Though the influence of this school contributed nothing toward the revival of evangelical Christianity, but on the whole tended to deism, its intellectual effects were favorable to a spirit of inquiry, and assisted in undermining the superstitions of the Papal system. The Italian literature of the 14th century is also pervaded with Hellenism. Boccaccio († 1375), and Petrarch († 1374) his friend and teacher, show everywhere in their writings the influence of Greek culture, and also, what is more noticeable still, a veiled but deeply seated opposition to the Papacy.

It is from the Italian writers of the 14th and 15th centuries that that large infusion of Platonism flowed, which came into the English literature of the Elizabethan age. Spenser, Surrey, Wyatt, Sidney, Herbert, Vaughn, Shakspeare, and Milton, all, either directly or indirectly, felt the influences of the Italian poets and novelists, and borrowed more or less from them. In the preceding 13th century, Dante († 1321) composed a poem which from beginning to end is luminous and distinct with the metaphysics of Aquinas, and the abstraction of Aristotle. This poem also, like the writings of Boccaccio and Petrarch, breathes a spirit of opposition to the Papacy; but the utterance is much more unambiguous and fearless.

These influences began to be felt also within the Papal church itself, long before the Reformation of the 16th century. The English Wickliffe († 1384), the "morning star" of Protestantism, had been trained up in the most rigorous scholasticism. He was an admirer of Occam, one of the most intense dialecticians of the 14th century. But he had read Aristotle diligently in the translations of the day, and had become somewhat acquainted with the Platonic philosophy through the writings of Augustine,—the writings of Plato himself not being current in his time. The influence of these studies is apparent. He rejected the nominalism of Occam and the century, and adopted the theory of realism in philosophy. From the first awakening of his intellectual and religious life, he had been a diligent student of the Scriptures, the whole of which he translated into English. He contended for the rights of the laity, in opposition to the claims of the hierarchy; and labored for the promotion of the political and educational interests of England, in opposition to the aims of the Papacy. Contemporaneously with Wickliffe, Chaucer († 1400) exerted that wonderfully creative and vivifying influence upon the English mind, language, and literature which they have not yet lost, although this most original writer has become obsolete to the majority of his countrymen. And like the Italian Dante, the whole spirit of his writings favored the downfall of the Papal superstition, and prepared the way for Luther and the Reformation.

## **CHAPTER III:**

### **PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES IN THE MODERN CHURCH: A.D. 1517–A.D. 1860**

#### **1. Philosophy of the Reformers**

WE have arrived now, in our rapid survey, at the age of the Reformation, and shall throw into one period the whole time since 1517 down to the present, in continuing this account of the influence of the two cognate philosophical systems of Plato and Aristotle, upon Christian theology.

The Reformers were Platonico-Aristotelian, so far as they employed any system of human speculation. In this age we find the basis reversed from what it was during the Systematic period, and perceive the same general order and proportion of the two elements, that we saw in the Polemic period. The theological mind once more proceeds from the contemplative and practical side of the Grecian theism, as its point of departure, but in its controversies, especially, employs its logic and analysis. Luther's mission and function was a practical rather than a scientific one, and we do not find his mind strongly interested in any portion of human science. The abuse of philosophy, and particularly of the Aristotelian, by the Scotuses, the Occams, and the Biels, and still more the employment of it in the defence of the formalism and ungodliness of the Papacy, excited in his mind such a strong aversion to Aristotle, that he is said, with exaggeration probably, to have trembled with rage at the sound of his name, and to have affirmed that if the Greek had not been a man, he should have taken him to be the devil himself. But the deep and real sentiment of Luther, in regard to philosophy, as well as in regard to

revelation itself, must be derived from a comparison of all his views and statements, and not from some particular sentiments expressed in certain connections, and drawn out by the polemic temper of the moment. If certain isolated expressions are to be taken as the exponent of his ulterior opinions respecting the authority of Scripture, the modern rationalist, who insists upon subjecting the inspired Canon to the tests of an individual opinion, really is, as he claims to be, a lineal descendant of that bold spirit who threw the Epistle of James out of the Canon, and spake violently against the Apocalypse.

But this is not a correct view. As Luther did undoubtedly, in his inmost soul, completely submit his reason to that divine revelation, whose normal authority over the Church and tradition, he was such a mighty instrument of restoring; so in his sober judgment he did recognize the importance of a true and proper science of theology, and of a true and proper science of the human mind, to be employed in building it up out of the matter of revelation. Even in reference to Scholasticism itself, he remarks in a letter to Staupitz, "I read the Scholastics with judgment, not with closed eyes. I do not reject everything they have advanced, neither do I approve of everything."

Calvin and Melancthon were the theologians for the two branches of the Protestant Church, and in these minds the influence of Platonism is very visible and marked. Melancthon was one of the ripest Grecians of his time, and his whole intellectual method is the spontaneous product of a pure and genial sympathy with the philosophy of the Academy. Calvin, though less intensely and distinctively Platonic, because his mind was naturally more logical and dialectic, and this tendency had been strengthened by his early legal studies, exhibits a symmetrical union of the two systems whose influence we are describing. No one can read the first five chapters of the first book of the Institutes, without perceiving plainly, that this mind, which has done so much to shape and mould modern systematic theology, had itself been formed and moulded, so far as

philosophical opinions and methods are concerned, by the Grecian Theism.

## **2. Philosophy of the English and Anglo-American Churches**

Respecting the prevalence of Platonism and Aristotelianism since the time of the Reformation, our limits will permit only a very concise statement. These two systems exerted upon the English theology of the 17th century, both of the Established Church and of the Nonconforming divines, a very powerful influence. Selecting Hooker as the representative of the first, and Howe of the last, we see that the Platonic philosophy never in any age of the church moulded the theological mind more pervasively and thoroughly, than in this instance. In Baxter and Owen, both of whom were also very diligent students of the Schoolmen, we perceive more of the influence of the Aristotelian system. This body of divinity, which without question is the most profound that the English mind has originated, owes its systematic form and structure to the Grecian intellectual methods. Respecting the influence of philosophy upon the English and Anglo-American theologies of the 18th and 19th centuries, we briefly remark the following. The system of Locke, which held undisputed sway in both countries during the 18th century, is antagonistic in its first principle to the Platonico-Aristotelian system. Its primary position that all knowledge comes from sensation and reflection, if rigorously construed, renders it a sensuous system, and brings it into affinity with those ancient Epicurean and materializing schools which it was the endeavour of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to overthrow. The French philosophers of the 18th century put this strict construction upon Locke's affirmation respecting the source of all ideas, and built up a system from which all spiritual ideas and truths were banished. The Scotch philosophers, on the contrary, put a loose construction upon Locke's dictum, and regarded "reflection," in distinction from "sensation," as the source of that particular class of ideas which are the foundation of morals and religion, and which cannot, confessedly, be derived through sensation. The system of Locke, as interpreted by the French school, run itself out into sheer

materialism and atheism. The system of Locke, as interpreted by the Scotch mind, was brought into affinity with the theism of the past,—though only by elevating the function of "reflection" into a coördinate rank with that of "sensation," and making it a second and independent inlet of knowledge.

The English and American theologies of the 18th and 19th centuries have felt the influence of the Locke philosophy, in the modified form of the Scotch school; while the earnest and practical religious spirit, which has characterized these churches, has tended to neutralize the materializing elements that still remained in it. During the last quarter of the present half-century, both countries have felt the influence of a revived interest in that elder system whose history we have been delineating,—an interest that is growing deeper and stronger, and from which, if not allowed to become extreme to the neglect of the theological and practical religious interests of the church and the world, the best results for Christian science may be expected.

### **3. Philosophy of the German Church**

A very important and influential movement of the theological mind, since the Reformation, appears in the German theology of the last half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries. We are too near this, in time, to be able to judge of it in the best manner, for we have yet to see its final issue. One thing, however, is certain, that so far as it is a truthful and really scientific method of theologizing, it is due greatly to the influence of the Grecian masters in philosophy, and their successors.

The Germanic mind has been influenced during the last hundred years, by two entirely antagonistic systems of human speculation,—that of Theism, and that of Pantheism. The former, as we have seen, has come down from Plato and Aristotle; the latter, though not unknown to the ancient world, yet received its first scientific construction in the mind of that original and powerful errorist,

Baruch Spinoza. The revival of the interest in philosophy, which began as soon as the general European mind had become somewhat tranquillized, after the deep central excitement of the Reformation and of the theological controversies which followed it had partially abated, showed itself in the rise of the systems of Des Cartes, Leibnitz, Wolff, and Kant. All these systems are substantially theistic. They reject the doctrine of only one Substance, and strongly mark the distinction between finite and infinite Being. They are all of them, in greater or less degree, influenced by the systems of Plato and Aristotle, and are in the same general line of philosophical speculation. But the deep and solid foundation for pantheism that had been laid by Spinoza, and the imposing architectural superstructure which he himself had reared upon it, gave origin to another, and totally different philosophical tendency and system of speculation. For although Des Cartes, Leibnitz, and Kant differ from each other, and upon important points, yet their systems are all theistic, and therefore favorable to the principles of ethics and natural religion. The systems of Spinoza and his successors Schelling and Hegel, have, on the other hand, had a more uniform agreement with each other. They are fundamentally and scientifically pantheistic; and therefore are destructive of the first principles of morals and religion. By their doctrine of only one Substance, only one Intelligence, only one Being, they annihilate all the fixed lines and distinctions of theism,—distinctions like those which imply the metaphysical reality of an uncreated and a created essence or being, and lines like those which distinguish right and wrong, free-will and fate, from each other, as absolute contraries, and irreconcilable opposites.

So far therefore as the theological mind of Germany has been influenced by the earlier Germanic philosophy, and more especially so far as it has felt the influence of the Platonic and Aristotelian systems themselves, it has adopted the historical theism, and its philosophical thinking has harmonized with that of the church from the beginning.



It is true, that in the eighteenth century, the German Church was largely infected with rationalism and deism; but this should be traced primarily to a decline of the religious life itself,—to the absence of a profound consciousness of sin and redemption. The existence of a living, and practical experience of New Testament Christianity in the heart, does not depend ultimately upon a system of philosophy, good or bad, though it is undoubtedly favored or hindered by it, but upon far deeper and more practical causes. At the same time it should be noticed, that if the church must make its choice between two such evils, as an arid and frigid deism, or an imaginative and poetic pantheism, it chooses the least evil, in electing that system which does not annihilate the first principles of ethics and practical morality, and which, if it does not accept a revealed religion, does at least leave the human soul the truths of natural religion. An unevangelical, though serious-minded Lord Herbert of Cherbury, or Immanuel Kant, who insists upon the absolute validity of the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality, together with the immutable reality of right and wrong, is a less dangerous enemy to the gospel, than an unevangelic pantheist, who denies the metaphysical reality of each and all of these ideas, as apprehended and accepted by the common human mind, and destroys the foundations not merely of revealed religion, but of all religion, by affirming that God is the only Substance, and the only Being, and that all that has been, is, and ever shall be, is his self-evolution and manifestation.

On looking at the scientific theology of Germany, during the present century, we find it modified by both of these two great philosophical tendencies. The two systems of theism and pantheism have been conflicting in this highly speculative country, with an energy and intensity unequalled in the history of philosophy; so that the theological mind of Germany exhibits a remarkable diversity of opinions and tendencies. Even in the anti-rationalistic or spiritual school, this same opposition between the historical Theism and Spinozism is to be seen. The theology of Schleiermacher, which has exerted a great influence upon classes that disagree with it—upon the

Rationalist on the one hand, and the Supernaturalist on the other, and upon all the intermediates between these—is characterized by a singular heterogeneity of elements. Its founder was a diligent student of Plato, and an equally diligent student of Spinoza. Hence, while we find in this system, a glowing and devout temper that is favorable to a living theism, and a vital Christianity, we also find principles that are subversive not merely of revealed but of natural religion. In fact, this system presents, in one respect, the most remarkable phenomenon in the whole history of theology and philosophy,—the phenomenon of a system mainly pantheistic, instrumental at a particular crisis in the history of a national mind, in turning its attention to the more distinctively spiritual and evangelical doctrines of Christianity. Having served this purpose, however, its work is done, and it cannot, as the course of thinking now going on in Germany itself plainly indicates, continue to satisfy the wants of the theological mind, but must either be adopted in all its logical consequences, and thereby become the destruction of evangelical religion, or else be rejected and left behind, in that further progress towards, and arrival at New Testament Christianity, which it was instrumental, by a logical inconsistency however, in initiating.

The final judgment, consequently, in respect to the real worth and influence of the philosophic movement of the German mind, must be held in reserve, until the final issue appears. The estimate which the future historian will form of it, will be determined according as the German Church of the future shall draw nearer to the symbols of the Reformation, or shall recede further from them. But the same may be said of German theologizing, that has been remarked of theological science in the former periods, and in other countries,—viz: that so far as it has been influenced by the Platonic and Aristotelian systems, it has been theistic in its principles and methods, and has been favorably formed and moulded.

# **BOOK SECOND:**

## **HISTORY OF APOLOGIES**

### **LITERATURE**

FABRICIUS: Delectus argumentorum, et syllabus scriptorum, qui veritatem religionis Christianae adversus Atheos, Naturalistas, etc. asseruerunt.

TZSCHIRNER: Geschichte der Apologetik (unfinished).

RÖSZLER: Bibliothek der Kirchen-Väter.

RITTER: Geschichte der Christlichen Philosophie, I. 289–564.

ERSCH und GRUBER: Encyklopädie (Artikel Apologetik).

THOLUCK: Ueber Apologetik (Vermischte Schriften, I. 149–373).

KAYE: Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian.

BOLTON: Evidences of Christianity as exhibited in the writings of its Apologists down to Augustine.

LECHLER: Geschichte des Englischen Deismus.

HAGENBACH: Kirchengeschichte des 18 und 19 Jahrhunderts.

LELAND: View of the principal Deistical Writers.

SCHLOSSER: History of the Eighteenth Century; translated by Davison.

# CHAPTER I:

## DEFENCES OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE APOLOGETIC PERIOD. A.D. 70—A.D. 254

### 1. Preliminary Statements

THE History of Apologies is the next subject to be investigated, in our course through the internal history of the Christian Church. As we proceed, we shall find that we are examining the workings of the Christian Mind, in its endeavour to harmonize revelation and reason. The history of the Defences of Christianity is, therefore, one of the best sources whence to derive a true philosophy of Christianity. As we pass along through this branch of Dogmatic History, we shall observe that substantially the same objections are urged by the skeptical mind, from age to age, and that substantially the same replies are made. Perhaps in no part of Church History, do we observe so striking verification of the proverb that man is the same being in every age, as in the history of Apologies. Infidelity is the same over and over again; reappearing in new forms, it is true, so that it looks to the time and the church in which it appears, like a new thing under the sun, yet ever remaining identical with itself, it makes very much the same statements, and elicits very much the same replies.

At the same time, the investigation of the process discloses the fact of a diversity in the unity. The skepticism of one period is not a mere fac simile of a preceding. It springs up out of the peculiar culture of the age, and takes on a hue by which it can be distinguished. At one time it is deistic infidelity; at another pantheistic. At one time an epicurean naturalism is the warm and steaming soil, in which it strikes its roots; at another a frigid and intellectual rationalism. And the same variety is seen in the Apologies. Like meets like. Each form of error is counteracted by a correspondent form of truth, and thus the great stream of debate and conflict rolls onward.

Commencing with the Apologetic period, we find that this first age of the church is very properly denominated the Age of Apologies. The great work to be performed by the Christian Mind was to repel attacks. Christianity, during the whole of this period of two centuries, was upon the defensive. Less opportunity, consequently, was afforded for constructing the positive system of scripture truth, so that the theological interests of the church in this age were subordinated to its apologetic effort, and Christian science received only that indirect, though important investigation, which is involved in the discussion of the relations of reason to revelation.

The attacks upon Christianity during this period, proceeded from two general sources: Judaism and Paganism. Judaism held the doctrine of a special revelation, in common with Christianity, and consequently the objections which it raised were of a different character from those urged by a Pagan philosophy which did not acknowledge any special and supernatural communication from God. The attacks upon Christianity that proceeded from the Judaistic opposer had a constant and immediate reference to the Old Testament, as he understood it. He did not, like the pagan skeptic, attack Christianity because it claimed to be a divine revelation; but because it claimed to be a form of revelation more final and conclusive than that first and ancient form whose authority he believed to be valid, and which he supposed was to be entirely annihilated by the new religion. Hence the question between the Judaistic skeptic and the Christian apologist involved the whole subject of the relation of the New to the Old Dispensation. The Pagan opponent of Christianity, on the other hand, received neither the Old nor the New Testament as a divine revelation, and the objections which he urged related to the possibility, and reality of any special communication from the infinite to the finite mind.

It is to these two general forms of skepticism, and the replies that were made by the Christian apologist, that we now turn our attention.

## **2. Ebionite Skepticism, and Christian replies**

The first species of opposition to Christianity, from the direction of Judaism, and having reference to the meaning and authority of the Old Testament, was Ebionitism.

The Ebionite, judging from the somewhat conflicting statements of the early fathers, was the apostate Jewish-Christian of the 2d century. The Jewish-Christian, originally evangelical, had by this time lapsed down to a humanitarian position respecting the person and work of Christ, and the nature of Christianity. He rejected the doctrine of Christ's deity, and of his miraculous birth, and held him to be the son of Joseph and Mary. At the same time, however, he regarded Jesus as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament; believing that he was set apart for his work by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, at the time of his baptism by John. He made use of a Hebrew gospel, now lost, which was probably that of Matthew, with the omission of such portions of it as teach his miraculous birth, and his divine nature. The remainder of the New Testament canon he rejected, particularly the epistles of Paul, whom he regarded as the corrupter of genuine Christianity.

The Ebionite was thus pseudo-Jewish in all essential particulars. With the exception that he believed the Messiah to have made his appearance, and that Christ was he, he stood upon the same position with the Pharisee who opposed Christ in the days of his flesh, and with the Jew whom Paul found his bitterest enemy. The Messiah of the Old Testament was not a divine being in his view; circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic ritual were requisite to salvation; and salvation was by the works of the law.

Having this conception of the Messiah, and of the Old Testament dispensation generally, the Ebionite could see no affinity between the Christianity of the catholic Church, and Judaism. On the contrary, he saw only an irreconcilable opposition between them; so that one was the entire extinction of the other, to its inmost substance and fibre.

He could not, to use the fine phrase of Augustine, see the New Testament in the Old, and of course he could not see the Old Testament in the New.

This preparatory statement will now enable us to understand the nature of the objections urged by the Ebionite against the faith of the Church, which were the following:

(1.) The Christ of the New Testament, as the Church received and interpreted the New Testament, was contrary to the representations of the Messiah contained in the Old. The portraiture did not agree. The person depicted in the four canonical Gospels was not the person described in the Jewish Scriptures. The Old Testament Messiah, the Ebionite contended, was not an incarnation of a divine Person, but only a supernaturally born and inspired man.

(2.) The Christ of the catholic Church, the Ebionite asserted, was contradictory to the Old Testament conception of God. The divinity of Christ, it was contended, was incompatible with the monotheism of the Jewish Scriptures, and was a species of idolatry and polytheism.

(3.) The Ebionite affirmed that the superseding, or as he preferred to term it, the annulling of the Old Testament law by the catholic Christianity, was in conflict with the doctrine of the divine origin of the law, and the immutable necessity of its observance.

As these objections proceeded from a defective and erroneous apprehension of the Jewish religion, the chief labour of the Christian apologist consisted in imparting more correct views of the inward and real nature of the Old Testament Dispensation, and thereby justifying his own denial of these positions of the Ebionite. The moment the spiritual character of Judaism, as portrayed in Moses, and especially in the Psalms and the Prophets, could be seen, its essential harmony with catholic Christianity would appear, and the assertion of an irreconcilable hostility between the two systems

would fall to the ground of itself. Hence the Christian apologist replied as follows to the Ebionite skeptic.

(1.) All that pertains to the person of Christ, as described in the canonical gospels, is essentially to be found in the Old Testament prophecies and types concerning the Messiah. The apologist was guided to this counter-assertion, and upheld in it, by such sayings of Our Lord as: "Search the [Old Testament] Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me. Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words" (John 5:39, 46, 47). He was also emboldened to make the counter-assertion, and to defend it, by that remarkable example set by Christ, when in his last conversation upon earth with his disciples, "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the [Hebrew] Scriptures, the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

The consequence was, that the Christian Apologist first of all took issue with the Ebionite opponent, in respect to the alleged fact itself, of a contradiction between the Messiah of the Old Testament and the Christ of the Gospels. The appeal was made directly to the Jewish Scriptures, and particularly to the prophecies in Isaiah respecting the supernatural birth, and exalted character, of the promised Messiah. The divinity of the Messiah being proved from this source, the Apologist harmonized it with monotheism by means of the doctrine of the trinity, though he made little attempt to construct this difficult doctrine.

(2.) The second and further reply to the Ebionite was, that the Old Testament itself teaches and expects the future superseding of Judaism by Christianity,—not however by annihilating that which was permanent and spiritual in Judaism, but by unfolding all this still more fully, and abrogating only that which was national, ceremonial, and local in it. The promise that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the seed of Abraham; the glowing and beautiful description in Isaiah of the calling of the Gentiles; the



prayer for the conversion of the whole world, as in Psalm 67; the emphasis laid upon a tender and contrite heart in comparison with a formal and hypocritical offering of sacrifice; and the repeated assertion of Christ that he came not to destroy, but to fulfill the Law and the Prophets,—all this set the Apologist upon the track of discovering the true relation of the two dispensations to each other, and imparted earnestness and confidence to the tone with which he made the counter-assertion.

Furthermore, the terrible and unexpected destruction of Jerusalem, so fresh in the experience of the Jewish nation, was cited by the Christian Apologist to prove that all that was national and external in Judaism, was destined to pass away. This was an *argumentum ad hominem* that had, as such arguments generally have, even more weight than those which were drawn from a deeper source, and are of more value for all time. The actual demolition of the Jewish temple and overthrow of the Jewish cultus, the destruction of a central point where the nation could gather itself together and maintain its religious nationality, and its dispersion to the four winds of heaven, were triumphantly cited by the early Christian apologete, as convincing arguments for the divinity of Christianity as the true crown and completion of Judaism.

### **3. Gnostic Skepticism, and Christian replies**

The second form of opposition to Christianity, during the Apologetic period, which also like Ebionitism involved the relation of the New to the Old Testament, was Gnosticism. The same fundamental questions were agitated in the controversy with this form of error, as in the contest with Ebionitism; and in reality the reply to the Ebionite, which resulted as we have seen in the clear exhibition of the connection between Judaism and Christianity, was a reply to the Gnostic.

The limits of this work do not, of course, permit a detailed account of that amorphous system of speculation which sprang up in the second

and third centuries, with an ingenuity of speculation, and a perverse perseverance of mental power, never excelled in the history of human errors. Only the most general characteristics can be specified.

The Gnostics claimed to be in possession of the true philosophy of Christianity. They were of two classes: Judaizing and Anti-Judaizing. The former, like the Ebionite, acknowledged the authority of the Old Testament, but unlike him was not satisfied with a literal interpretation of its teachings. The Judaizing Gnostic recognized the distinction spoken of by Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, and employed by the Christian Apologist himself against the Ebionite,—that, viz., of a Jew outwardly and inwardly. But this distinction he entirely misapprehended. He regarded it to be the same as that found in all Oriental philosophies (by which his own intellectual methods had been chiefly formed) between the esoteric and exoteric, the initiated and uninitiated, the philosophic and the unphilosophic mind. The consequence was a hyperspiritualizing of the Old Testament, in such a manner as to evacuate it of all its practical and salutary truths, and the introduction of a system of emanation, which was not only directly contrary to the Mosaic doctrine of creation *de nihilo* and the spiritual monotheism of the Old Testament, but was in reality a system of polytheism, resulting in that "worshipping of angels and voluntary (or gratuitous) humility" against which St. Paul warns the Colossians as early, probably, as the beginning of the seventh decade from the birth of Christ. This class of Judaizing Gnostics were originally Jews, who attempted to apply the doctrines of the Oriental theosophies in connection with those of New Platonism, to the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Hence their disposition like the Ebionite to proceed from the Old Testament as a point of departure.

The Anti-Judaizing Gnostics, on the other hand, were originally Pagan philosophers or theosophers, who passed over to a nominal Christianity directly, and not through Judaism, and hence cherished a profound contempt for the whole Old Testament Dispensation.

They tore Judaism out of all connection with Christianity, and regarded the true philosophic apprehension or γνῶσις of Christianity, as consisting in the elimination from it of everything distinctively Jewish or Mosaic. The consequence was, that those two doctrines which are the life and life-blood of Christianity,—the doctrines of guilt and atonement,—were thrown out of the scheme of the Anti-Judaizing Gnostic. These came down from the Old Testament, and in reality are the substance of pure spiritual Judaism. In their place the Gnostic inserted absurd theories respecting the origin of the universe and of evil; theories by which creation was no longer the created, and sin was no longer sinful.

It is plain that Gnosticism in both of its forms, like Ebionitism, was to be met most successfully, and overcome most triumphantly, by the plain and clear enunciation of the real relation of Christianity to Judaism. All three of these errors sprang out of a false conception, and were therefore to be overcome only by furnishing the true one. The thoroughness with which men like Irenaeus († 202), Tertullian († 220), Clement of Alexandria († 212–220), and Origen († 254), investigated the Scriptures, in order to exhibit Judaism and Christianity in the true light, and in their mutual connection and harmony, is worthy of all admiration, and it may be added of imitation in any age. For every age of the Church is somewhat exposed to a revival of Anti-Judaistic Gnosticism, from the disposition among men of a speculative turn to reject, or at least to neglect the Old Testament; chiefly upon the ground of the vividness of its representations of the Divine personality, and the severe spirituality of its conception of sin and atonement.

#### **4. Pagan Skepticism, and Christian replies**

While the Christian apologist of this period was thus called to defend Christianity against objections that originated in a formal and unspiritual apprehension of Judaism on the one hand, and a false spiritualism that rejected the Old Testament altogether on the other, he was at the same time compelled to meet that species of infidelity,

common to every age, which rejecting revelation altogether, contends that the principles of natural reason and natural religion are adequate to meet the religious wants of mankind, and affirms that the Christian system is contradictory to them.

We have therefore to consider the attacks and defences of this period, so far as concerns the purely Pagan Opposition to Christianity. These attacks, unlike those of Ebionitism and Gnosticism, stood in no sort of connection with the religion of the Jewish nation, but were founded upon those views of human nature and of God, which belonged to the entire heathen or Gentile world.

The principal objections urged against Christianity by such pagan philosophers and speculatists as Celsus (150), Porphyry († 304), and Hierocles (300), were the following:

(1.) Christianity they asserted was irreligious and unethical; because it was founded upon an anthropopathic idea of God, particularly in the Old Testament, and contained absurd representations of the deity that were unfavourable to religion,—for example, the account of the creation and fall of man, the birth of Christ, his miracles, his death, and especially his resurrection. Porphyry and Celsus compared the account of the life and actions of Christ recorded in the gospels, with the popular narrations in the Greek and Roman mythologies, and placed him in the catalogue of the pagan heroes and demi-gods. They did not deny his historical existence, it should be noticed, but asserted that his disciples had craftily given currency to an exaggerated and false picture of the life of a sincere and good man.

(2.) Christianity claimed to be a supernaturally revealed religion; but revelation of this species is impossible and irrational. The pagan skeptic would concede the possibility of a general communication from the deity, such as appears in nature, and the human mind, but denied the reality of such a special and written revelation as the church claimed to possess in the canonical Scriptures.

The first of these objections was chiefly of a practical character, and hence was met in a practical manner by the apologist. The earliest defenders of Christianity against the heathen skepticism, Justin Martyr († 163), Tatian († 174), Athenagoras († 177), laid much stress upon the transforming power of Christianity; upon the joyful deaths of Christians; and upon the greater safety in accepting Christianity, even if it should prove to be a delusion.

These were plain facts that could not be denied. The charge of immorality, which originated in unmixed malice and falsehood, and which Gibbon has re-stated with that minuteness of rhetorical amplification which accompanies a desire to convey an impression without daring to make an assertion, was easily refuted by a stern morality in the early church, that carried multitudes to the stake, or the amphitheatre, and a purity of life that was in dazzling contrast with the morals of heathenism. With respect to the theological representations of the Old and New Testaments, the early Christian Apologists had to perform a labour similar to that in the contest with the Ebionite and Gnostic,—the labour, viz. of bringing out to view the whole truth in the case. The objection that the Biblical representation of the deity is anthropopathic was met by directing attention to the fact, overlooked designedly or undesignedly by the Pagan skeptic, that the Jewish religion prohibited idolatry, and taught the unity and spirituality of the deity, at a time when the rest of the world was polytheistic and material in its theological conceptions, and employed these anthropopathic representations in a figurative manner only, as the inadequate but best means of communicating to a creature of time and sense the great spiritual idea with which it was labouring. Furthermore, living, as the first Christian Apologists did, so near to the age in which the events recorded in the Evangelists occurred, the historical argument for the authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament could be urged with even a greater confidence and success than it has been, or could be, since.

The answer to the second objection of the Pagan opponent, viz. that revelation is contrary to reason, involved a much deeper examination

of the whole subject upon grounds of reason and philosophy. This is the great standing objection of skepticism in all ages, and the history of Apologies, after the Apologetic period, is little more than the account of the endeavour of the Christian Mind to harmonize faith with science, religion with philosophy.

So far as concerns the defences of this earliest period in Apologetic History, it may be remarked, generally, that while the primitive fathers affirmed the intrinsic reasonableness of Christianity, and made some attempts to defend it upon philosophic grounds, it was not the favourite and predominant method with them. They feared philosophy as taught in the different ancient schools; and regarded the various and conflicting systems as the sources of heresy.

The abuse of philosophy by the Gnostics, especially, made them cautious in employing speculation in defending revealed religion, and even somewhat guarded in their assertion that it is defensible upon rational principles. They preferred, as we have seen, to employ the exegetical, historical, and practical arguments in opposition to the skeptic. This is true particularly of the defences that were composed in the second century by the Latin Apologists, Tertullian and Minucius Felix. They defined and defended Christianity more with reference to its practical nature, and its influence upon private and public life. Still, even the vehement Tertullian, whose abhorrence of Gnosticism led him to inveigh with a bitterness not always discriminating against philosophy, appeals to the "*testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae*,"—to the witness of that real and true human nature which is in favour of the truth. This he would find, previous to its corruption and sophistication by philosophy falsely so called, in the spontaneous expressions of man in his most serious and honest moments. "Soul," he says, "stand thou forth in the midst,—whether thou art a thing divine and immortal according to most philosophers, and therefore the less able to speak falsely, or as seems to Epicurus alone, whether thou art in no way divine, because material and mortal, ... whether thou hadst thy beginning with the body, or art sent into the body after it is formed,—

from whatever source, and in whatever manner thou makest man a rational creature, more capable than any of understanding and of knowledge, stand thou forth and testify. But I summon thee not such as when formed in the schools, trained in the libraries, nurtured in the academies and porches of Athens, thou utterest thy crude wisdom. I address thee as simple, and rude, and unpolished, and unlearned; such as they have thee who have nothing but thee; the very and entire thing that thou art in the crossroads, in the public squares, in the shops of the artisan. I have need of thy uncultivation (imperitia), since in thy cultivation however small no one puts faith. I demand of thee those truths which thou carriest with thyself into man, which thou hast learned to know either from thyself, or from the author of thy being, whoever he be. Thou art not, I know, a Christian soul; for thou art not born a Christian, but must be made one. Yet now the Christians themselves demand a testimony from thee, who art a stranger, against thy own friends, that they may blush even before thee, for hating and scoffing at us, on account of those very things which now detain thee as a party against them."

This eloquent and vehement North African father appeals in the same way to the spontaneous convictions of man, in proof of the Divine Existence. "God," he says, "proves himself to be God, and the one only God, by the very fact that he is known to all nations; for the existence of any other deity than he would first have to be demonstrated. The consciousness of God is the original dowry of the soul; the same and differing in no respect in Egypt, in Syria, and in Pontus; for the God of the Jews is the one whom the souls of men call their god. We worship one God, the one whom ye all naturally know, at whose lightnings and thunders ye tremble, at whose benefits ye rejoice. Will ye that we prove the divine existence by the witness of the soul itself, which although confined by the prison of the body, although circumscribed by bad training, although enervated by lusts and passions, although made the servant of false gods, yet when it recovers itself as from a surfeit, as from a slumber, as from some infirmity, and is in its proper condition of soundness, it calls God by this name only, because it is the proper name of the true God. 'Great

God,' 'good God,' and 'God grant' [deus not dii] are words in every mouth. The soul also witnesses that He is its judge, when it says 'God sees,' 'I commend to God,' 'God shall recompense me.' O testimony of a soul naturally Christian! [or monotheistic]. Finally, in pronouncing these words it looks not to the Roman capitol but to heaven; for it knows the dwelling place of the true God; from him, and from thence it descended." These are the affirmations of one who in another place denominates philosophers the "patriarchs of heretics," and Plato himself the author who "furnishes the sauce and seasoning of all the heretical speculations."

In the same strain of reasoning, Minucius Felix argues. He speaks of the natural rationality of man in which Christianity finds a corroboration, and describes it as a power of apprehension "that is not produced by study, but is generated by the very make and structure of the human mind." This writer, also, refers to the partial agreement of the heathen philosophy with Christianity, yet makes a violent attack upon Socrates, in which he speaks of him, after the phrase of Zeno probably, as that Attic jester (scurra Atticus).

Passing to the Greek Apologists of this period, Justin, Athenagoras, and Tatian, we find philosophy much more identified with Christianity, than in the Occidental defences. The distinction between natural and revealed religion is not very carefully made by them. They were somewhat inclined to regard all religious truth as a revelation from God, and referred it partly to a supernatural communication from the Divine mind, and partly to the light of nature. Hence they did not always discriminate with sufficient care between that which is the product of the human mind left to its spontaneous operations, and that which is communicated to it by a special revelation. Sometimes we find the same mind passing from one view to the other; at first blending natural and revealed religion together, and afterwards separating them. Justin Martyr is an example of this. In his earlier apologies, addressed to the Roman emperor, he recognizes the resemblance between the principles of natural religion and the ethics of Christianity, in order to render the



philosophic and virtuous Marcus Aurelius, or Antoninus Pius, indulgent towards the new religion. But in his later work, aimed against those who asserted that natural religion and ethics were adequate to meet the wants of man, and could therefore supersede Christianity, he takes the ground that the doctrines of a Plato and a Socrates had come to the Greeks by the way of the Jews through Egypt.

The Apologist thought himself to be conducted to this view of the homogeneity of reason and revelation, by certain representations in Scripture, particularly by those portions of the writings of the Apostle John which speak of the Logos as enlightening every man that comes into the world. Some modern writers have supposed that the idea of the Logos, or the manifested Reason of God, which appears so frequently in the apologetic writings of the primitive fathers, was chiefly derived from the Platonic philosophy, and the writings of the Jewish Philo. But it is the remark of Baumgarten-Crusius, who is not led to it by any merely theological interest or feeling, that the Logos-idea of the New Testament was more influential in forming the general philosophical notions of the church at this time, than was the department of secular philosophy itself. Clement of Alexandria, and the school of Origen generally, attribute the better religious knowledge of the heathen world, at one time to the Logos, and at another to the scriptures, because they held that it was one and the same Supreme Reason that communicated the knowledge in both forms. They are however careful to observe that the unwritten revelation is imperfect, sporadic, and inadequate to meet all the religious wants of a sinful race, while the written word is perfect, full, and sufficient.

## **5. Recapitulatory Survey**

Having thus sketched the course of apologetic thinking during the second and first half of the third centuries, we bring the results into the following recapitulation.

The scientific mind of the Church, so far as it contended with Ebionitism and Gnosticism, was occupied chiefly with a clear and consistent exhibition of the real nature of Judaism, and of its essential agreement and oneness with Christianity. This correct apprehension of the first form of special revelation was of itself a refutation of those arguments which attempted to prove, either that Christianity was in hostility to all preceding special revelations from God, and that therefore it must be rejected, or else that there had been no preceding special revelations, and that therefore it must expel and annihilate every element of Judaism from itself.

And so far as the Church had to contend with Pagan philosophy, which derived its arguments wholly from the operations of the human mind, and rejected both of the special revelations, the substance of its counter-argument was, that even if the principles of natural religion should be regarded as the pure efflux of the unassisted human mind, they did not run counter to the doctrines of Christianity, but really required them, in order to their own spread and efficiency among men; that the human mind, when its real and deep convictions were revealed, was monotheistic, or naturally Christian, as Tertullian states it; but that, more than all, it was most probable that this natural religion itself was the remains of a primitive revelation, which had been made to the race in the earliest ages of its existence, and which had been waning and growing dimmer and dimmer, as the process of corrupt human development went on.

## **CHAPTER II:**

### **DEFENCES OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE POLEMIC PERIOD: A.D. 254–A.D. 730**

#### **1. Preliminary Statements**

WE pass now, in the history of the Defences of Christianity, into the Polemic Period. In this age we shall find Apologetics assuming a more profound and scientific character, than it has hitherto borne. We perceive the beginning of that great methodical conflict between religion and philosophy, faith and science, which is renewed in every age, and in some form or other will probably continue to the end of human history.

Even in the last part of the Apologetic period, the distinctions between natural and revealed religion, faith and science, the supernatural and the natural, began to be drawn with more clearness. The controversy between Origen and Celsus, the ablest upon both sides of the great question that occurred in these first centuries, brought out these distinctions somewhat, from the latent state in which for the most part they had existed in the earlier defences, and compelled both parties to see that nothing but a more precise and scientific discussion of the contradictions between Christianity and skepticism could settle the questions at issue. Religion in the first two centuries had existed mainly in the form of feeling. It was now to take on the form of scientific cognition; and the commencement of the change, not in the matter of Christianity, for this remains the same in all ages, but, in the form of apprehending it, is seen first of all in the altered manner of defending it against the skeptic. In the school of Alexandria, with Origen at its head, the apologetic science of the first period set with a splendour that was the herald of a yet more glorious dawn in the Polemic age that was to follow.

As the dogmatic material now becomes more abundant and various, and the defences more systematic and elaborate, it will facilitate the investigation of the apologetic history of this period, to distribute it under the following principles of classification: (1.) The distinction between revelation and reason. (2.) The distinction between faith and science. (3.) The distinction between the natural and the supernatural. In exhibiting the mode in which the Apologetic Mind of this period apprehended these distinctions, and stated the relation of each idea to the other, we shall bring to view the whole course of doctrinal developement. For the ideas of revelation and reason, faith and science, the miraculous and the natural, were the leading ones in the controversy with the skeptic, and the whole dispute took form and character from them.

## **2. Mutual relations of Revelation and Reason**

1. In considering the manner in which the reciprocal relations of revelation and reason were conceived of in the Apologetic History of this period, the first characteristic that meets us is the fact, that the line between the two was now more strictly and firmly drawn, than it had been. The preceding age, as has been observed, referred everything to God, because its religious consciousness was of that warm and glowing character which is disinclined to distinguish, in a scientific manner, what proceeds from a supernatural and what from a natural source. All truth, provided it was truth, was conceived as coming from God, in some form or other. This view was sometimes expressed, even by the Christian apologist, in such a strong and unguarded manner as to expose Christianity to the charge of being but little superior to natural religion, if not identical with it. Justin Martyr, in his Apology addressed to the Roman emperor, expresses himself as follows: "They who live according to reason are Christians, even though they are regarded as godless (ἄθεοι); such for example were Socrates and Heraclitus among the Greeks." He probably ventured upon such an assertion from a partial understanding of corresponding ones in the scriptures. Paul (Rom. 2:14) remarks that, "whenever (ὅταν with subj. ποιῇ) the Gentiles, which have not the

law, do by nature the things contained in the law, they are a law unto themselves." Peter (Acts 10:35) affirms that, "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Overlooking the fact that these are both of them hypothetical statements introduced for the sake of an argument, and that whenever there is any categorical affirmation made in the scriptures respecting the actual fact of sinless obedience, the pagan man is represented as being disobedient to the law written on the heart, and that therefore every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God (Rom. 3:19, 20),—overlooking the concessive nature of the hypothesis, the apologist in this instance affirms what he could not know, that in the instances of Socrates and Heraclitus there had been a perfect obedience of the law of reason and righteousness.

Hence it became necessary to distinguish between those spontaneous workings of the human mind which are to be seen in the Pagan philosophy and theology, and those higher phenomena of the human soul which appear only after it has felt the influence of a higher manifestation of truth and spiritual influences. This naturally led to a technical distinction between natural and revealed religion, and to a demarcation of that which issues from man left to himself, from that which proceeds in a special and peculiar manner from the Divine Mind. As the Christian apologist was compelled to a still more close and rigorous defence, by an increasingly close and rigorous attack, he found it necessary to draw some lines that had not been drawn before, and to score more deeply some lines that had been but faintly described. Revelation now began to be taken in its stricter and narrower signification, to denote that communication of truth, by direct inspiration, which had been recorded in the Jewish scriptures, and in the New Testament canon,—which latter had by the beginning of the Polemic period been determined and fixed by the authority of the Church. The application of the term in its widest signification begins now to disappear, so that the contest between the Christian and the skeptic, became, what it has been ever since, the conflict between scripture on the one hand, and speculation on the other.

2. A second characteristic in the Apologetic History of this period is, that the question respecting the possibility of a revelation, in the generic meaning of communication between the human and the Divine, was not raised by the skeptic, and of course not by the apologist. This question, which enters so largely into the conflict between Christianity and infidelity in modern times, is wholly a modern one. The denial of the possibility of any revelation from God to man began with Spinoza, one of the most original and powerful of skeptics, and has been followed with more vigour and acuteness by Hume, than by any other succeeding mind.

But in this age of the Church, both parties acknowledged the possibility and reality of a revelation of some sort. The testimony of the Greek philosophers, particularly Plato, to the need of a divine communication in order that the darkness overhanging human life and prospects might be cleared away, was frequently cited by the Christian apologist, and admitted by the skeptical opponent. The confession of Plato in the *Timaeus*, "to find the maker and father of all this universe of existence, is a difficult work, and when he is found, it is impossible to describe him to the mass of mankind," was a classical passage, and often cited by the early fathers. Origen quotes the Platonic passage in which it is said: "human nature is not competent to seek out God and find him in his pure reality, unless the being seeking is assisted by the being sought" (μὴ βοηθηθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ ζητουμένου).

So far therefore as the acknowledgment of the need and possibility of a revelation is concerned, the apologist of this period was not required to elaborate a defence in this reference. His great labour was to convince the skeptic that those more general forms of revelation in nature, and in providence, were not sufficient to meet the wants of sinful man. A certain and reliable knowledge was craved by the human soul respecting some subjects about which the human mind of a Socrates or a Plato could give only conjectures and express strong hopes. The apologist contended that the doctrines of the soul's immortality, and of a future state of rewards and punishments,

though dimly appearing in the pagan philosophy, could be made an absolutely clear and certain knowledge, only by the testimony of one who like Christ came out from eternity, and went back into it; who came from God and went to God; who actually died, rose from the dead, re-appeared on earth for a season, and then ascended up where he was before. Hence the Christian apologist of this period made great use of the facts of Christ's incarnation and resurrection, to corroborate the truths of natural religion and make them absolutely certain,—a species of proof which the modern church does not emphasize with such energy as did the ancient, to the diminution of its faith, and lively realizing of invisible things.

But, more than this, the apologist contended that a knowledge was required by the human soul respecting still other subjects, about which natural religion was totally silent. Whether the deity could pardon sin; whether he would, and, if so, the method in which; whether the human race was to continue on from century to century in sin and sorrow and suffering, as it had for centuries and ages before, or whether any remedial system would be introduced, to interrupt this natural developement downward, and start a new order of ages, and begin a new species of history,—about such questions as these, which were far more vital and important than any others, the Christian apologist contended, and with truth, that human reason, and the general teachings of nature and providence were totally silent. Unless, therefore, a special communication should be made, man must be left without any answer to the most anxious and important of his questions. Such a special answer to such special questions had been made. It was contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to which the term revelation in the high and strict sense was now applied and confined.

3. A third characteristic of the Apologetics of this period is the insisting upon revelation, in this strict sense, as an infallible authority for the human mind. The idea of an infallible norm or rule of faith, though not a new one, by any means, in the mind of the church, now begins to be more clearly enunciated. The conception of

a special and peculiar revelation led to that of infallibility. Revelation, in the broad and loose signification in which, we have seen, it was sometimes employed by the earlier apologists, and acknowledged by their heathen opponents, leaves room and play for error and misconception. That general communication of truth which God makes to the human mind, through its own constitution and through the works of creation and providence, though reliable to a certain extent, is not reliable beyond the possibility of error; though true, is not infallibly true. For this species of revelation is mixed with human corruption, and darkened by human blindness. It is not as pure and accurate as it was in the beginning, because, as St. Paul teaches (Rom. 1:18–25), that which may be known of God in a natural manner and by natural reason has not been retained in its original simplicity and genuineness. While therefore the Christian apologist was disposed to give human reason its due, and to make use of all the statements of the pagan philosophers respecting the general truthfulness of man's natural intuitions, he at the same time insisted that natural religion could not be construed into a divine authority, and an infallible norm or rule. Being but a form of human consciousness, it was liable to all the fluctuations of consciousness, and to all the deteriorations of consciousness,—at one time being considerably free from foreign and contradictory elements, as in the instance of a Plato or a Plutarch; at another mixed and mingled with the most crude and absurd notions and opinions, as in the vagaries of New-Platonism, and the fanciful dreams of the Gnostic philosophers. Hence the apologist maintained that a further and peculiar species of revelation was needed, that should not only answer questions and supply wants that were unanswered and unsupplied by natural religion, but should also be fixed in a written form. In this way, it would be exempt from liability to corruption and alteration from the fluctuations of human consciousness, and would go down from age to age unchangeable amidst the changeable, and infallible amidst the fallible.

The Western Church, particularly, under the guidance of Augustine, urged the necessity of an infallible authority in matters of doctrine



and practice. This necessity was affirmed in connection with the doctrine of human apostacy and sinfulness. It was therefore a relative necessity. Had man continued in his primitive state, he would have remained in such a close and living union with his Creator that no special and written revelation would have been needed, but the spontaneous operations of his mind, and the holy communion of his heart with God, would have afforded all the religious knowledge necessary. But inasmuch as he had apostatized, and no longer enjoyed that original intercourse with his Creator, a special interposition was called for, to clear up and rectify his now only imperfectly correct natural conceptions, and still more to impart an additional knowledge, respecting the possibility and method of his restoration to the Divine likeness and favour.

This attribute of authority, which was now asserted of revelation, was emphasized all the more from the fact that the idea of the Church was now a more definite and influential one than it had been. The infallibility of the scriptures was urged in connection with the growing authority of the one only catholic Church, as opposed to schismatical and heretical sects. This connection we shall find in the next period to have become so close as to be converted into identity, and tradition together with ecclesiastical decrees takes the place of scripture. The beginnings of this may be seen in the last half of the Polemic period, but not in the first half. The theology of the 4th and 5th centuries was too much controlled by Augustine to allow of the co-equality of tradition with revelation. Much as that powerful mind was inclined to quote the general opinion of the Church, respecting the meaning of scripture, in opposition to the heretical parties with which he was in continued conflict, he never attributed infallibility to any human opinion. A saying of his which occurs in his controversy with the Manichaeans has been frequently quoted by Roman Catholic writers, to prove his substantial agreement with the Papal theory of the relation of biblical to ecclesiastical authority. It is this. "I should not believe (have believed) the gospel, unless the authority of the catholic Church moved (had moved) me to." Calvin, Bucer, and the elder Protestant writers generally, construe the imperfect as the

pluperfect in this passage, and interpret Augustine as affirming that when he was "an alien from the Christian faith, he could not be prevailed upon to embrace the gospel as the infallible truth of God, till he was convinced by the authority of the Church." In other words, if when examining into the claims of Christianity to be the absolute religion, he had found the Christian Church disputing within itself respecting the canon of scripture upon which this religion professed to be founded, and also in respect to the cardinal doctrines of Christianity contained in this canon, he as a pagan should have stood in doubt of the whole matter, and would not have received a book, and a system, respecting which those who professed to adopt it were constantly wrangling. But the entire unanimity of the Church respecting the authenticity and authority of the canonical scriptures determined him in their favour. Had he found the same diversity of opinion in the Church, that he saw among the heretical parties, respecting the written revelation, he should not have found rest in it. The passage read in its connections in the argument, and interpreted in the light of that stricter view of revelation which, we have seen, Augustine did so much towards establishing, merely affirms, in the words of Hagenbach, "a subjective dependence of the believer upon the authority of the Church universal, but not an objective subordination of the Bible itself to this authority." The individual, in the opinion of Augustine, is to respect the authority of the Church in seeking an answer to the questions: What books are canonical, and what apocryphal? and what is the doctrinal system contained in them? In answering these questions, he contended, that the Church universal had an authority higher than that of any one member; and higher, particularly, than a man like Manichaeus who claimed to be an inspired apostle.<sup>2</sup> When therefore, a single individual, or a particular party like the Manichaeans, insisted that they were right in rejecting certain portions of the canon that had been, and still were, deemed canonical by the Church at large, and in deriving from the portions of it which they acknowledged to be of divine authority, a set of doctrines respecting the origin and nature of evil, such as the apostolic and catholic Church did not find in the scriptures,—when the individual, and the heretical party, in this way opposed their

private judgment to the catholic judgment, Augustine denies the reasonableness of the procedure. He affirms the greater probability of the correctness of the Catholic Mind, in comparison with the Heretical or Schismatic Mind, and thereby the authority of the Church in relation to the individual, without dreaming however of affirming its absolute infallibility,—an attribute which he confines to the written revelation.

The position which the Church sustains to the individual is indicated, remarks Augustine, in the words of the Samaritans to the Samaritan woman: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42). The individual first hears the concurrent testimony of the great body of believers in every age, and then verifies it for himself. He finds a general unanimity in the Church catholic respecting the canonical and apocryphal books, and also respecting their meaning and doctrinal contents. He goes to the examination with the natural expectation of finding that the general judgment is a correct one, and in so far, he comes under the influence of traditional or catholic opinions. This is the "ecclesiastical authority" which has weight with him. At the same time he exercises the right of private judgment; the right namely to examine the general judgment and to perceive its correctness with his own eyes. The Samaritans put confidence in the testimony of the woman, but at the same time they went and saw, and heard for themselves. They came into agreement with her by an active, and not by a passive method. In employing this illustration, Augustine adopts the Protestant, and opposes the Papal theory of tradition and authority. The Papist's method of agreeing with the catholic judgment is passive. He denies that the individual may intelligently verify the position of the Church for himself, because the Church is infallible, and consequently there is no possibility of its being in error. The individual is therefore shut up to a mechanical and passive reception of the catholic decision. The Protestant, on the other hand, though affirming the high probability that the general judgment is correct, does not assert the infallible certainty that it is. It is conceivable and

possible that the Church may err. Hence the duty of the individual, while cherishing an antecedent confidence in the decisions of the Church, to examine these decisions in the light of the written word, and convert this presumption into an intelligent perception, or else demonstrate their falsity beyond dispute. "Neither ought I to bring forward the authority of the Nicene Council," says Augustine (*Contra Maximianum Arianum* II. xiv. 3), "nor you that of Ariminum, in order to prejudge the case. I ought not to be bound (*detentum*) by the authority of the latter, nor you by that of the former. Under the authority of the Scriptures, not those received by particular sects, but those received by all in common,<sup>2</sup> let the disputation be carried on, in respect to each and every particular."

Chiefly then through the stricter definition and limitation of the idea of Revelation, and partly through the need felt, in the controversies with the heretical and separating mind, of some infallible standard of appeal, did the authoritative character of the Scriptures come to be urged and established by the apologist of this Polemic period. Ever since this time, the Church has recognized the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only infallible source of religious knowledge; ever refusing to attribute this characteristic to any other form of knowledge, however true and valid in its own province. The only exception to this is found in that portion of the history of the Roman Catholic Church in which tradition and ecclesiastical authority are placed upon an equality with Scripture. But this portion of Church History is the history of a corruption. For the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church is of the same nature, with that of the infallibility of the Pope. Both doctrines alike imply an absolute exemption from error, on the part of the finite mind,—a doctrine which belongs to the history of heresies.

4. A fourth characteristic of the Apologetic History of the period is the fact, that the Church did not array Revelation and Reason in hostility to each other. Careful and firm as the apologist was, in distinguishing revealed from natural religion, and scripture from the spontaneous teachings and operations of the human mind, he

steadily refused to concede the position of his skeptical opponent, that Christianity is intrinsically irrational. It was one great aim of the skepticism of this age, as it has been in every age since, to establish if possible the fact of an inherent and necessary contradiction between the special revelation from God contained in the canonical scriptures, and those first principles of all reasoning which are involved in the rational understanding of man; and that consequently the alternative was either to accept Biblical Christianity in the face of all rational principles, or of rational principles in the face of Christianity. This alternative was not admitted. Neither horn of this dilemma was accepted by the Apologist. He denied that there is any inward and necessary contradiction between revelation and reason, or that the adoption of the evangelical system involves the rejection either of the first principles of ethics and natural religion, or of true philosophy. On the contrary he affirmed an inward harmony between the two, and bent the best energies of his intellect to demonstrate it. The Church by this time had a philosophy of its own; and henceforward we find the most rational and truthful philosophical systems originating not in Heathendom but in Christendom. The cultivation of theological science proceeded along with that of philosophy; and down to the present day the Christian Apologist contends that any system of philosophy that is anti-Christian is ipso facto irrational,—an affirmation that implies an essential agreement between revelation and reason, and which cannot be made good without evincing this agreement. The assertion that whatever is contradictory to Christianity is irrational, necessarily implies that Christianity itself is reasonable.

Single passages may be quoted from the Fathers to show the carefulness with which they strove to identify the interests of theology with philosophy, and vice versa. Gregory of Nyssa and Epiphanius speak of a truth corroborated by the holy scriptures and right reason. Augustine denounces an error as unsupported by either the authority of scripture or the reasonableness of truth. Single passages may also be quoted to prove that the Christian apologist disparaged reason and represented it as inimical to revelation. But

such passages must be read in their connection in the treatise, or the argument. Such expressions, disparaging the use of reason in religion, Baumgarten-Crusius remarks may be put into three classes: (1) Those in which reason is taken in its least extensive sense, to denote the reason of a particular system, party or school; (2) Those in which reason is taken in the sense of an arrogant private opinion which sets itself up against public sentiments, historical opinions, and authority generally; (3) Those in which reason is taken in the sense of a one-sided speculative disposition that is devoid of any profound religious feeling or want. It is against reason in this narrow and inadequate signification, against which it is as much the interest of philosophy to inveigh as it is of revelation, that the disparaging remarks frequently found in Tertullian of the Apologetic period, and in Athanasius and Augustine of the Polemic, are leveled. But against the common reason of mankind, the unbiassed spontaneous convictions of the race, no such remarks are aimed. On the contrary, a confident appeal is made to them by these very Apologists;<sup>2</sup> while those systems of philosophy, and those intellectual methods that flow most legitimately and purely from them, are employed by the Christian Mind in developing and establishing the truths of revelation.

The most powerful and grandest endeavour of the Apologetic Mind of this period to evince the harmony of revelation and reason is seen in the *De Civitate Dei* of Augustine. This is a treatise consisting of twenty-two books; the first ten of which contain a searching and extended critique of polytheism, in its principles and their influence, and the last twelve treat of Christianity as supernatural, and destined as the realized kingdom or city of God to overthrow all secular and earthly kingdoms and powers. It is a work which merits the study of the modern theologian perhaps more than any other single treatise of the Ancient Church; whether we consider the range and variety of its contents, the depth and clearness of its views, and especially the thoroughly supernatural point of view from which everything is looked at.

### **3. Mutual relations of Faith and Science**

We pass now to the second distinction which presents itself in the Apologetic History of the Polemic period,—the distinction, namely, between Faith and Scientific Knowledge.

In the Pagan world, faith was merely candour of mind, or a willingness to be convinced of the truth. In this sense, Aristotle remarks that, "it is necessary for one to believe, in order that he may learn." This form of faith, though indispensable to the scholar, and the condition of all genuine intellectual culture, is very far from coming up to the Biblical idea of this grace. Faith, in the Christian system, is a positive and certain conviction. It differs from the Pagan conception by being more than a merely negative readiness to be convinced. It is an actual assurance of the mind; an inward certitude. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). It differs again from the inquiring temper of the secular mind by being accompanied with humility,—a virtue which was unknown to the Pagan ethics, and which is so generally expelled from the human mind by the conscious increase of knowledge, whose tendency it is to "puff up." In the scriptures, moreover, faith is described as a matter of the heart and will, of life and feeling. It is a practical, and not a speculative act of the mind. And this view of it was taken by the apologist of this period, and we may add of all periods.

During this Polemic age, the Church laid much stress upon the definition of faith given in Hebrews, 11:1.: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is an immoveable belief in the reality and paramount importance of the future, the invisible, and the supernatural. Says Augustine, "quod est fides, nisi credere quod non vides." The object of faith is not cognizable by the senses; for this is the meaning of "invisible" in this connection. The eternal world with all its realities stands in no sort of relation to a sensuous organism, and is therefore inapprehensible by any or all of the physical media of knowledge. Faith therefore is the

direct contrary of infidelity, which tests everything by a sensuous experience, and does not believe at all except upon a sensuous knowledge of objects. Faith is not a sensuous but an intellectual act, and as the etymology denotes, is fidelity to the future and eternal; is fealty to the invisible, the spiritual, and the supernatural. It is the positive certainty that these are the most real and important of all objects, notwithstanding that they do not come within the sphere of sensuous observation.

But while the Christian apologist of this period thus regarded faith as different in kind both from the cold and speculative belief of the intellect, and the warm but low certainty of the five senses, he maintained that it is a rational act and state of the soul. This is the second characteristic to be noticed. We find in this, as in the former instance, the same disposition on the part of the defender of Christianity to contend for the intrinsic reasonableness of revealed religion in all its parts and departments. This believing state of the soul, which Christianity insists so much upon, and which constitutes the very life and heart of this religion, is not the credulity of an ignorant and unthinking devotee. Hence the apologist sometimes represents faith as the most natural state of the soul. It is the foundation of human society, argues Augustine; we are born in faith, and shut up to it. Origen presents the same view in his argument against the skepticism of Celsus.<sup>2</sup> Polycarp, in the very twilight of the controversy between faith and unbelief, calls faith "the mother of us all." Nonnus, in similar phraseology, terms faith "the boundless mother of the world."<sup>4</sup> These expressions relate, it will of course be understood, to faith in its most general signification. They were not made with any direct reference to that more restricted and peculiar act of the soul by which the justifying work of the Redeemer is appropriated; though, it deserves to be noticed, they are not without a valid application to the doctrine of justifying faith itself. But these and similar statements of the defender of Christianity were intended to specify the nature of that general attitude of the mind towards revealed truth, and invisible things, which is required of man, in order that he may apprehend them. The apologist claimed that this



recumbency of the soul upon the supernatural, the invisible, the specially revealed, was a most reasonable, and, in one sense of the word, as Augustine teaches, a natural act and state of the human mind. Employing the term "natural" to denote what belongs to man's original, created nature,—to what belongs to his first unfallen nature, in distinction from his second apostate nature,—the Apologete maintained, in opposition to the skeptic, that Christian faith does no violence to the constitution of a rational spirit, but on the contrary falls in with its deepest wants and necessities, and is therefore a natural act and condition. Faith, he said, corresponds to and satisfies the original needs of man and human society. It is the only safe and tranquil mental state for a creature who like man has not yet entered the eternal and invisible world, and who therefore must take eternal things for the present upon trust. And as matter of fact, so affirmed the defender of faith, we begin to exercise faith in some form or other, as soon as we begin to exist, either physically or morally. The child is the exhibitor and the symbol of this characteristic (Matt. 18:2–4); and in mature life those who cease from the trusting repose and faith of childhood, and become unbelieving and infidel, run counter to the convictions of the majority of mankind. In this sense, and by such and similar tokens, faith is perceived to be natural, and unbelief unnatural. The former consequently is rational, the latter irrational; so that the apparent contrariety between faith and reason disappears, as soon as a central point of view is attained.

The distinction itself between Faith and Science had already been formally made in the preceding Apologetic period, by the Alexandrine school. The great founder and head of this school, Origen, though one of the most speculative minds previous to the Schoolmen, was careful to lay down the position that faith precedes scientific knowledge in the order of nature. Though distinguishing so sharply between πίστις and γνῶσις as to lay the foundation for an exoteric and an esoteric knowledge in the Christian Church, thereby doing violence to the spirit of Christianity, which has no room within its communion, like the pagan philosophies, for a class of initiated persons,—though disposed to render to science its dues and more

than its dues,—Origen steadfastly taught that the Speculative is grounded in the Practical, and not vice versa, and that it is impossible to build up Christian science out of any other materials than those which are furnished by revealed truth wrought into the Christian consciousness. Hence evangelical faith in the heart must precede the philosophic cognition of Christianity. It does not exist prior to any and every species of knowledge, but prior to scientific knowledge. Faith is an intelligent act, but not a scientific act. The statements of the Alexandrine school upon this subject are very clear and positive. "Faith," says Clement of Alexandria, "is more elementary than scientific knowledge; it is the foundation and rudimental material of science." In another place, according to the well-known Aristotelian dictum he terms it "the test and criterion of science." And, on the other hand, science is represented by these highly adventurous and speculating Alexandrines as merely the developement and expansion of faith,—as the exact and logical opening up of what is contained potentially in the practical and living confidence of the mind in revealed truth and supernatural realities.

With these positions of Origen and his school, Augustine agreed entirely, as did the church generally, during the Polemic period. The same order of arrangement and degree of relative importance was affirmed to exist between faith and science, while there was far less of that disposition to extend the limits of Christian speculation beyond the powers and capacities of the finite mind which we perceive in Origen, and which in his pupils to a great degree, and in himself to no small degree, resulted in crude and irrational theories respecting the origin of the universe, the nature of matter, and above all the nature and origin of moral evil. Supernaturalism, says Hagenbach, in its most definite and intelligent opposition to rationalism, finds its ablest and most eloquent defender in Augustine. He postpones scientific knowledge to faith, and recognizes in Christianity the only absolute religion for mankind, to which he requires the human mind to submit itself; for faith in the object precedes the scientific cognition of the object. Reason, he says, would never have delivered man from darkness and corruption, if

God had not accommodated himself to the finite, and "*cum populari quadam clementia*" humbled the Divine intellect even to the human nature and the human body.

The following extracts from the great leader of opinions in the Western Church in this and succeeding ages, show the attitude of his mind towards the problems of faith and reason, and sound the key note to the harmony of philosophy and religion. "It cannot be that God hates that characteristic of reason in us, in respect to which he created us superior to the other animals. It cannot be, that we are to believe, in such a way as to preclude all use of our rational faculty. For we could not believe at all unless we had rational minds. It is therefore a reasonable act, when, in matters pertaining to salvation, which we are not able to completely understand as yet, but which we shall be able to understand some time or other, our faith precedes our reason, and so purifies the heart that we become capable of the light of the perfect and supreme Reason. Thus it is reasonably said by the prophet (Is. 7:9, Sept. Ver.): 'Unless ye believe ye shall not understand.' Without doubt he distinguishes here two things, faith and reason, and counsels us first to believe, that we may then be able to understand what we believe.... Faith should precede philosophic intelligence (*Fides intellectum precedere debet*). Man as a believer should first inquire into the hidden and secret things of the kingdom of God, in order that he may understandingly perform them. For faith is a species of intelligence; but scientific intelligence is the reward of faith (*Fides enim gradus est intelligendi; intellectus autem meritum fidei*). The prophet plainly says this to all who hastily and prematurely require science and neglect faith. For he says: 'Unless ye believe ye shall not understand' (Is. 7:9, Sept. Ver.). Ye desire to ascend, but overlook the steps by which it is to be done. How perverse is this! If, O man, I were able to show you here upon earth what is invisible, I should not exhort you to believe.... Although unless a man have some knowledge of God, he cannot believe in him, yet by this very faith itself his understanding is invigorated, so that it can obtain still more knowledge. For there are some things which we cannot believe in unless we understand them; and there are some

things which we cannot understand unless we believe in them. For unless there are some things which we cannot understand antecedent to belief, the prophet (Is. 7:9, Sept. Ver.) would not say: 'Unless ye believe ye shall not understand.' Our intellect, therefore, is of use for understanding what it believes, and faith is of use in believing what it understands."

Whether faith is prior or posterior, in the order of nature, to science is the test question that determines the character of all philosophizing upon Christianity. If faith, in the phrase of Clement, be regarded as elementary, the test and epitome of science, there is little danger that the substance of scriptural Christianity will be evaporated in the endeavour to exhibit its reasonableness. If, on the other hand, the order is reversed, and scientific knowledge is made to precede belief; if the dictum is laid down, as it was by Abelard in the next period, that there is no believing antecedent to scientific understanding, and consequently that the degree of posterior faith depends upon the degree of anterior science; then the all-comprehending mystery and depth of revealed religion will be lost out of sight, and the whole grand system of Christianity will be reduced down to that "simple" religion desired by the French Director, which consists of "a couple of doctrines,"—viz: the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul. As we follow the history of Apologies down to the present day, we perceive that leading minds have been supernaturalists or rationalists in their methods of defending and philosophizing upon Christianity, according as they have adopted or rejected the dictum first announced by Origen, repeated by Augustine, and most thoroughly expanded and established by Anselm,—the dictum, *fides preedit intellectum*. In the former class, we find the names of Origen, Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, Pascal. In the latter, the names of men like Scotus Erigena, Abelard, Raymund Lully, in whom the speculative energy overmastered the contemplative, and whose intuition and construction of Christian Doctrine was inadequate, and in some instances, certainly, fatally defective.

#### **4. Mutual relations of the Supernatural and the Natural**

The third distinction, by which we are aided in exhibiting the Apologetic History of this period, is that between the Supernatural and the Natural.

The same process went on in respect to this important distinction which we found took place in respect to the distinction between Revelation and Reason. The distinction became more clear and firm. The line that marked off the miracle from the ordinary course of nature grew more and more sharp, and distinguishing. In proportion as the Apologist insisted upon a special and peculiar revelation from the Divine Mind, was he led naturally to insist upon a special and peculiar working of the Divine Power. Indeed, all these fundamental distinctions by which we are examining and exhausting the doctrinal history of this period are so connected and sympathetic with each other, that the historic process is the same in reference to them all. Precision, science, and genuine developement affects them all alike; while looseness of conception, and heterodox or rationalizing notions are equally injurious to each and all of them.

The mind of the Church now insists that the Supernatural is so distinctive and peculiar, that it cannot be accounted for upon merely Natural principles. The miracle is not the common and ordinary working of the Deity, but his extraordinary and strange work. The miraculous is an intervention of Omnipotence into the sphere of the finite, precisely like the act of original creation; and not an evolution out of germes already in existence. The Apologist, looking at the subject from this point of view, set the Supernatural over against the Natural in the sharpest antithesis, and steadfastly refused to identify them as one and the same mode of the Divine Working. Each is a distinct and peculiar mode of the Divine efficiency, and neither one can be resolved or explained into the other. So positive and clear was the belief of the Christian Mind of this period, not only in the possibility but the reality of supernatural agency in the course of sacred history, that men like Ambrose and Augustine did not hesitate

to affirm the continuance of such agency; though they were careful to distinguish between biblical and ecclesiastical miracles. In this respect, the church of this period differed from the later Roman Church, which greatly multiplied the number of supposed miraculous occurrences in the lives of the saints, and what was of still more importance attributed a worth and authority to them greater than it attached to the scriptural supernaturalism itself.<sup>2</sup>

On the other side of the subject, we see in this instance, as we did in treating of the distinction between Revelation and Reason, the same disposition to connect the Supernatural with the Natural, so that the miracle shall not appear whimsical, but adapted to the end for which it is wrought; so that it shall not look like the arbitrary, capricious work of a merely magical agency. The same God is the author of the Supernatural and the Natural, and hence the desire to exhibit the relation between the two, and to show the point of contact between both, without however annihilating the distinction between them that had been seen, and firmly maintained. Hence the assertion, which is sometimes repeated in the Christian science of the present day, that the miracle is not contrary to all nature but only to nature as known to us, was made by the Apologist of this Polemic period. Says Augustine: "We are wont to say that all miracles and wonders are contrary to nature; but they are not. For how can that which occurs by the will of God be contrary to nature, when the will of God itself constitutes the nature of everything that exists? The miracle, consequently, does not take place contrary to universal nature, but contrary only to nature so far as it is known to us; although, even those things which occur in nature as known to us are not less wonderful, and stupendous, to those who would carefully consider them, were it not that men are accustomed to wonder only at things that are infrequent and rare.... That miracle of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which he made the water wine, is not wonderful to those who know that it was GOD who performed it. For He who made wine on that marriage day, in those six waterpots which he commanded to be filled with water, makes wine the whole year round in the grape

vines. But this latter we do not wonder at, because it occurs all the year round. By reason of the uniformity we lose our wonder."

The Apologist could safely take this ground, and not run the hazard of explaining away the Supernatural into the Natural, because he had started from the position of supernaturalism. Had he, as has been done in some later periods, made the Natural the first, and from this as a point of departure endeavoured to construct a philosophy of miracles, he would have been likely to end with the annihilation of all that is truly and distinctively Supernatural. As in the former instance in which the relations of Revelation and Reason were concerned, so in regard to this distinction between the Supernatural and the Natural, all depends upon the point of departure. The truth is reached, and a genuine harmony is evinced between the Natural and the Miraculous, both of which are equally modes of the Divine efficiency, by first of all holding with firmness, and without any equivocation or mental reservation, to the possibility and the reality of a direct interference of the Deity in the ordinary course of natural phenomena, by which the old every-day course of events is sometimes stopped short off, sometimes wonderfully altered and modified, but in every instance a perfect domination and control over the laws and processes of the natural world is evinced and exercised. When the mind is convinced of the reasonableness of an extraordinary divine efficiency, it then becomes comparatively easy for it to detect that point of contact between the miracle and the common course of nature where both join together, and both co-operate towards the accomplishment of the end proposed by that Divine Being who is the author of both. The Christian apologist of this period was thus thoroughly convinced of the reality of the Divine supernatural intervention; so much so, that, as we have noticed above, he did not regard the age of supernaturalism as entirely past; and hence his attempts at a philosophy of Miracles were upon the whole as successful as any that are to be found in the history of Apologies.

It is deserving of notice however, that the controversy with the skeptic, in regard to miracles, did not reach its height of vehemence and acuteness until modern times. It was not until modern Deism made its appearance, that the Christian Apologist was compelled to his most elaborate defences in this respect. The Ancient World seems to have found it more easy than the Modern, to believe in the immediate operation of the deity in the course of nature; perhaps because it was two thousand years nearer the creative fiat, not very far off in time from such awfully miraculous displays as the deluge, and quite near to that continued series of supernatural events and agencies which accompanied the advent and ministry, the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God. As a consequence, the ancient Apologete found a less unbelieving temper to contend with than his modern coadjutor does, in an age of the world which perhaps more than any other is inclined to that mere naturalism which puts the question: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," (2 Pet. 3:4).

## **5. Recapitulatory Survey**

A brief and rapid recapitulation will serve to report the progress which has been made by the Church, in these apologetic endeavours of the Polemic age. We shall perceive that during this period of five centuries, the Ecclesiastical Mind gained a clearer understanding of certain subjects fundamental to the establishment and defence of Christianity, than it possessed during the Apologetic period.

1. In the first place, a more distinct and profound knowledge of the relation which exists between human Reason and divine Revelation was the consequence of the very great intellectual activity of this period. The difficulties and objections urged by the skeptic and the heretic compelled the Apologist to reflect more deeply, and to speak more precisely respecting the nature and functions of both of these correlated objects. That somewhat vague idea of revelation, which obtained in the Apologies of Justin Martyr, which left too little room



for the distinction between natural and revealed religion, was now displaced by a more precise and scientific one, in which that which is attainable by the exercise of the unassisted finite faculty is distinguished from the products of the Supreme Reason. Here certainly is progress. It was a true and legitimate advance in Christian science to distinguish things that differ; to bring out into the clear light of knowledge, the exact difference there is between Revelation and Reason, and to state it in accurate and plain terms. It is not enough merely not to deny a fundamental distinction. Genuine science, be it Christian or secular, must positively affirm and establish fundamental distinctions. The earlier defenders of Christianity never denied the difference in kind between Revelation and Reason; but they did not discriminate and enunciate it with that scientific exactitude which is the result of sharp controversy. The peculiar form of infidelity which they were called upon to combat did not lead them to do so, but on the contrary inclined them somewhat in the other direction. For the chief accusation brought against Christianity in the first two centuries was, that it was altogether alien to humanity, a new and peculiar religion wholly foreign and antagonistic to all that the world had heretofore known, and aiming to operate upon the mind and heart of man with a merely magical influence, and with no appeal to his reason. It was therefore the task of the Apologist of this period, to exhibit the affinities of Christianity with human nature; to show the point of contact between the human and Divine minds. He was led, consequently, to emphasize the resemblance that could be found in natural religion, as this had unfolded in the various systems of pagan philosophy and ethics, with the doctrines of Christianity, in order to win the attention and favour of the thoughtful and serious-minded pagan.

But when this ceased to be the state of the controversy, and the unbeliever now passed over to the opposite extreme, and asserted that Christianity contained nothing new or distinctively its own, and that all the truth necessary for man to know could be developed out of natural religion and ethics, it became necessary for the Christian philosopher to take another step, and while not denying the affinities

between natural and revealed religion, exhibit the additional features, the divine and supernatural elements which the latter contained. But in doing this, the Apologist unfolded the system of revealed truth more fully than had been done before. He traced the fundamental distinction between ethics and the gospel more profoundly and nearer to the centre, and thereby made a positive advance upon his less exact and scientific predecessors.

2. In the second place, the relation of Faith to Science was better understood and defined than it had been in the preceding period. The church had now wrought out a sounder philosophy of Christianity. The mind of Augustine manages the argument with the philosophical skeptic or the acute heretic, more successfully than had been done by the mind of Irenaeus, or even the mind of Origen. The apologetic writings of this period furnish more that can be used with advantage by the modern theologian, in the ever new and ever old conflict with infidelity, than he can derive from the more ardent and glowing, but less self-consistent and profound defences of Justin Martyr and Tertullian. Infidelity and heresy had now made themselves felt in their more acute and skilful forms of attack, and the defence and repulse evoked from the Church, a depth of reflection, and a power of logic which it had never before exhibited.

3. And lastly, this same progress in the direction of a rational defence of Christianity brought along with it a clearer intuition of the difference in kind between the Supernatural and the Natural. This fundamental distinction, which had indeed been recognized in the Apologetic period, but which had not been reflected upon with that thoroughness of analysis and abstraction, which alone carries the mind to the inmost centre of an idea,—this distinction was now seen in its fulness of meaning, and asserted with a positiveness which all after Apologetics has only reiterated and heightened.

We perceive then, that during this second period in Apologetic History, the principal topics which constitute the subject-matter of Apologetics were discussed, and satisfactory positions were

established respecting each of them. During the first seven centuries, skepticism from without, and heresy from within the church, had been instrumental in forming and fixing those fundamental distinctions upon which all successful defences of Christianity must ultimately rest. We shall not find very great advance upon the Apologetics of the Ancient Church, so far as the foundations of Christian evidences are concerned. That portion of the department, which consists of the evidences from physical nature, has indeed made great progress since this period. But this progress has occurred mostly within the last two centuries; inasmuch as it is the natural consequence of the remarkable advance which during this time has been made in the whole department of natural science. If then, we except the physico-moral argument, we may say as the conclusion of our survey that the evidences for the reasonableness of Christianity were in substance, enunciated and established during the Apologetic and Polemic periods.

## **CHAPTER III:**

### **MEDIAEVAL DEFENCES OF CHRISTIANITY: A.D. 730— A.D. 1517**

#### **1. Preliminary Statements**

THE Mediaeval period, which includes 800 years from the first part of the 8th to the first part of the 16th century, was engaged chiefly in reducing the past results of theological investigation and controversy to a systematic form, and a scientific unity. Of this period, however, not more than four centuries witnessed any very great activity of the theological mind. Scotus Erigena, during the 9th century, shows signs of acute intellectual life, and by reason of his active and

inquiring spirit becomes a striking object in that age of growing superstition and ignorance. Alcuin, the brightest ornament of the court of Charlemagne, and the soundest thinker between John of Damascus and Anselm, also throws a pure and serene ray into the darkness of the dark ages. It is not however until Scholasticism appears, that we perceive in the Church the reappearance of that same deep reflection which in Augustine settled the principal questions in Anthropology, and that same subtle analysis which in Athanasius constructed the Nicene Symbol. For two centuries, extending from Anselm to Aquinas (1075–1275), we find the theologians of the Church collectively endeavoring to rationalize Christianity and construct a philosophy of religion, with an energy and intensity of thinking that is remarkable. We shall mention only the more general tendencies and results of this mediaeval speculation, in their relation to the History of Apologies.

The old attacks upon Christianity by the Jews and Pagans had now ceased. Mohammedanism, which had come into existence, although it boasted of some learning, and made some few literary attacks upon Christianity, was far more formidable with the sword than with the pen. Defences were now called out mainly against skepticism and doubts within the Church itself. This skepticism was sometimes open and sometimes concealed; sometimes it was conscious and intended, and sometimes it was unconscious and unintentional. This latter species of skepticism, which is a very interesting form of unbelief, and exists more generally than appears at first sight in all ages of the church, springs out of an unsuccessful endeavour to fathom the depths of theology, and to construct a true philosophy of Christianity. The thinker sometimes supposes himself to have solved the problem, when he has in reality only undermined the doctrine. In attempting with perfect seriousness and good faith to rationalize religion, he has in reality annihilated it.

Some of the Schoolmen are a striking example of this. Minds like Amalrich of Bena, and David of Dinanto, in attempting to discover and exhibit the true nature of the deity, and the relation between

creation and the creator, in reality enunciated a pantheistic theory of God and the universe. These men however were in and of the visible Church, and supposed that they were promoting the scientific interests of Christianity. There is reason to believe that they were sincere in this belief. They were unconsciously skeptical. Seeking to establish Christianity upon an absolutely scientific basis, they dug up the very lowest and most solid stratum upon which the entire structure rests,—the stratum of theism. On the other hand, Schoolmen like Anselm, Bernard, and Aquinas, more profound students of revealed truth, and possessing a deeper Christian experience, continued the defence of Christianity upon substantially the same grounds, and by the same methods, that we have seen to have been prevalent in the Ancient Church.

## **2. Apologetics of Anselm, Aquinas, and Bernard**

Anselm's view of the relation of reason to faith agrees thoroughly with that of Augustine, and was unquestionably somewhat shaped by it. His two tracts, the *Monologium* and *Proslogion*, indirectly exhibit his opinions upon this subject with great clearness and power, and defend the supernaturalism of Christianity with a metaphysical talent that has never been excelled. In the *Proslogion*, he says, "I desire certainly to [scientifically] understand that truth which my heart believes and loves; yet I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe that I may understand. For I believe the truth, because if I am unbelieving I cannot [philosophically] apprehend." Again he remarks, that "he who does not believe can have no experience, and he who has no experience cannot understand." Unless there be a consciousness, there can be no scientific analysis of consciousness or philosophical construction of its contents; and there can be no consciousness without faith in the object of consciousness. Yet, on the other hand, Anselm is as careful as was Augustine to insist upon the intrinsic rationality of Christianity, and to recommend the endeavour after a philosophical faith. In his tract upon the atonement, he assents to the assertion of his pupil Boso, that although the right order requires that we believe the profound

mysteries of the Christian faith before we presume to discuss them upon grounds of reason, yet it is a neglect of duty, if after we are confirmed in our belief we do not study to understand what we believe. If after we have obtained the inward experience and consciousness we do not then strive to interpret our own experience, and comprehend our own Christian consciousness, we are guilty of an indifference towards the truth that has in it far more of indolence than of grace, was the opinion of both Augustine and Anselm.

Aquinas takes the same general view of the relation of faith to scientific knowledge, though his intellectual tendency was more speculative than that of Anselm, and his theology has more of the Romish tone and spirit. He recognizes the fact that there are differences in the doctrines, some being more apprehensible than others, and in reference to such transcendent truths as the trinity, employs the phraseology so familiar in modern Apologetics, that though the Christian mysteries are above reason, they are not against reason. In his defence of the catholic faith against the infidel, he remarks, that "there are two classes of truths in the Christian system, respecting the being of God. First, those truths which transcend the entire power of human reason; such as that God is three and one. Secondly, those which even natural reason can attain to; such as that God is one, is infinite, is eternal, and such like, which even pagan philosophers have proved demonstratively, under the guiding light of natural reason." Yet even these latter truths, he says, need the corroboration and fuller unfolding of revelation, because this natural knowledge of God, when unaccompanied with the diffusing and realizing power of a supernatural dispensation gradually departs from the popular mind, and becomes confined to the schools of a few philosophers and sages; and because, furthermore, this philosophic knowledge in its best form is mixed with more or less of error.

That school of contemplative theologians, whom we have alluded to in a previous section under the designation of the Mystic Scholastics, also maintain the same view of the relation of faith to science, only with less regard for the scientific side. These men, because they were

somewhat mystical in their intuition, were less inclined than the more scientific Anselm and Aquinas to care for the interests of reason and philosophy, though they by no means disregarded or overlooked them, as does the Mystic in the restricted signification of the term.

Bernard is the greatest and noblest representative of this class of minds; and an extract or two from him will serve to show his attitude towards Christian science in its relations to Christian faith. "Science," says St. Bernard, "reposes upon reason; faith upon authority. Both, however, are in possession of a sure and valid truth; but faith possesses the truth in a close and involuted form, while science possesses it in an open and expanded one. Scientific cognition not only possesses the truth, but the distinct comprehension of it. Faith is a sort of sure and instinctive (voluntaria) intimation [Germanicé, Ahnung] of truth that is not yet opened up before the mind in clear analysis and outline. How then does faith differ from science? In this, namely, that although faith is not in possession of an uncertain or an invalid truth any more than science is, yet it is in possession of an undeveloped truth, while science has the truth in an unfolded form. Science does not desire to contradict faith; but it desires to cognize with plainness what faith knows with certainty." Hence, in another place, Bernard remarks of invisible and divine things, that "not disputation but holiness comprehends them."

Perhaps the relations of reason and faith have never been more concisely and accurately stated than in the pregnant and epigrammatic Latin of Anselm and Bernard. The practical belief of the truths of Christianity, according to these apologists, contains much that is latent and undeveloped. The Christian is wiser than he knows. The moment he begins to examine the implications and involutions of his own personal and certain consciousness, he finds that they contain the entire rudimental matter of Christian science. Faith, in the phrase of Clement of Alexandria, furnishes the στοιχεῖα, the elementary materials, of rational knowledge. The Christian, for

illustration, believes in the one living and personal God. He possesses the idea of the deity by virtue of his creation and rational constitution. His faith holds it in its unexpanded form. But the instant he commences the analysis of this idea of ideas, he discovers its profound capacity and its immense involution. Again he believes in God incarnate. But when he endeavors to scientifically analyse and comprehend what is contained in this doctrine and historical fact, he is overwhelmed by the multitude of its relations and the richness of its contents. His faith has actually and positively grasped these ideas of God and the God-Man. He is as certain of their validity as he is of any truth whatever. But his faith has grasped them, in the phrase of St. Bernard, in their undeveloped and pregnant form. If now, he would convert faith into science, and would pass from religion to philosophy, he has only to reflect upon the intrinsic meaning and substance of these ideas, until they open along the lines of their structure, and are apprehended philosophically, though not exhaustively. But in this process, faith itself is reinforced and deepened by a reflex action, while at the same time, the intellect is preserved reverent and vigilant, because the cognition, though positive and correct as far as it reaches, is not exhaustive and complete, only by reason of the immensity and infinitude of the object.

### **3. Apologetics of Abelard**

In this scholastic and systematizing period, as we have before remarked, the priority of faith in the order was not acknowledged by all minds. Men of a speculative and rationalistic tendency like Abelard and Raymund Lully regarded the intellectual comprehension of the truths of Christianity as necessarily antecedent to all belief in them. The dictum of Abelard (Intr. ii. 3), "non credendum, nisi prius intellectum," is the exact reverse of Anselm's "credo ut intelligam." It ought however to be observed that Abelard, in the outset, endeavoured to provide for the interests and claims of faith by giving a somewhat wide meaning to the term "knowledge," or "intelligence." It is undoubtedly true, as Bernard himself concedes



in describing the difference between the knowledge of faith and the knowledge of philosophy (ante, p. 183), that the human mind cannot believe a truth or a fact of which it has no species of apprehension whatsoever. Some degree of knowledge must ever be assumed, as simultaneous with the exercise of belief. The mind must at first know the object of its faith, by feeling (*anticipatio, praelibatio*), in distinction from conception; otherwise the object of faith is a nonentity for it. Had Abelard recognized this distinction, and thus guarded his statement that "knowledge is prior to faith," he might have come into agreement with his opponents. But, laying down his dictum as he did in terms exactly contrary to those of Origen, Augustine, Anselm, and Bernard, all qualifications were certain to be overborne by the logical proposition upon which he founded his method, and his school. The formal and theoretical precedence instead of postponement of knowledge to faith tended to rationalism in theology, and actually resulted in it. A position though erroneous, when held with moderation and qualifications, by its first author, may not be very injurious to the cause of truth. The element of truth which it contains may be prominent in the first stages of its history, while the elements of error recede from view and influence. But the tendency of the principle, after all, is to error, and as the course of its development goes on, the little truth that is contained in it is overborne, the principle itself is grasped more boldly and applied by a less moderate mind, until in the end it shows its real nature in the overthrow of all truth and belief. The class of men of whom we are speaking is an example. Abelard himself became more and more rationalistic in his views, until he passed the line that separates faith from unbelief, and the church, chiefly through the representations and arguments of the mild and tolerant, but devout and evangelical Bernard, formally condemned his philosophical and theological opinions.

The most serious defect in the Apologetics of this Mediaeval period sprang from the growing influence of traditional theology, at the expense of inspiration. Even devout and spiritual theologians like Anselm and Bernard, whose views of truth, with the exception of

their Mariolatry, were substantially scriptural, and whose religious experience had been formed and established by revelation, attributed too much weight to the opinions of distinguished church fathers, and to the decisions of Councils, in comparison with the infallible authority of Scripture. They by no means denied the paramount authority of revelation, and both in practical and theoretical respects are at a great distance from that distinctively Papal theology which received its first definite form and statement in the articles of the Council of Trent; yet it cannot be denied that their minds were not altogether unaffected by the influences of their time, and of their ecclesiastical connections. That direct and emphatic appeal to Scripture first of all, and only afterwards to authority, which is the characteristic of the Protestant theologian, and that constant renewal and revivification of scientific theology by fresh draughts at the fountain of theological knowledge, which has rendered Protestant science so vital and vigorous, is found in a too low degree in these men, who were yet the greatest and best minds of this systematizing period. In their successors, this tendency to exalt tradition increased with great rapidity, until error by its very excess brought about a reaction, and Protestantism once more set tradition and inspiration, historical theology and biblical doctrine, in right relations to each other.

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **MODERN DEFENCES OF CHRISTIANITY: A.D. 1517—A.D. 1850**

#### **1. Preliminary Statements**

THE Reformers themselves were too much occupied with stating and defending the Christian system in opposition to the corrupted theology of the Papal Church, to enter into a defence of it against the objections of skepticism. Hence the Reformatory age yields but little material of an apologetic character, and we pass directly to the most important section in the history of modern Apologetics, that, namely which relates to the English Deism of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The latter half of the 17th century was marked by great excitability and fermentation, both in the political and the religious world. England was passing through those revolutions which resulted in the restriction of the royal prerogative, the strengthening of the commonalty, and the settlement of the government in 1688 upon the basis of the Bill of Rights. Continental Europe was witnessing the great struggle by which the predominance of political power passed from the Southern to the Central nations,—from the Papal to the Protestant powers. Corresponding movements were occurring in the ecclesiastical world. The Lutheran church, at the close of the 17th century, was feeling an exciting influence of two very different kinds. The Pietists under the lead of Spener and Francke were infusing into the Old Lutheran orthodoxy some of the warmth and life that glowed in the Moravian Brethren; while, on another side, fanatical preachers and sectaries were breaking in upon the unity of the ancient ecclesiastical organization that had come down from the days of Luther. In the Reformed Church there was more or less reaction against the strict Calvinistic symbols; while in the Papal Church the Jansenists were attempting to revive the Augustinian orthodoxy which the council of Trent had covertly rejected, though pretending to receive it. Contemporaneously with this general excitement in the political and ecclesiastical world, there arose in England a class of minds, who with greater or less decision and bitterness rejected the Old and New Testaments as a revelation from God, and stood upon the principles of natural religion, though in some instances lapsing down from this position into that of sensualism and atheism.

## **2. Intellectual Deism of Herbert of Cherbury**

Deism, the name given to the system of these men, is the general belief in a God, coupled with the disbelief in a written revelation, and of all those particular views of God and man which are taught in the Scriptures. In its best form it would, therefore, include the doctrine of the divine existence, of the divine unity, of the immortality of the soul, and of indefinite rewards and punishments hereafter; and it would reject the doctrines of the trinity, of the deity and incarnation of the Son, of the apostasy of man, of redemption, and of endless rewards and punishments. Deism appears in this highest form in the system of Lord Herbert of Cherbury († 1648), who may be regarded as the founder of the school of English Deists, though holding a much more elevated skepticism than any of his successors. After a survey of the various religions that have appeared, he reduces them to one universal religion, which he maintains is adequate to meet all the religious wants of mankind. This universal system consists of five articles: 1. That there is one supreme God. 2. That he is to be worshipped. 3. That piety and virtue are the principal part of his worship. 4. That man should repent of sin, and that if he does so, God will pardon it. 5. That there are rewards for the good, and punishments for the evil, partly in this life, and partly in a future state. These articles Lord Herbert represents as sentiments inscribed by God on the minds of all men, and attempts to show that they have been universally acknowledged in all nations.

It is obvious, at the first glance, that this system is much in advance of the later forms of English infidelity. It contains a mixture of truth and error, so far as natural religion is concerned; but is erroneous so far as relates to revealed religion. That there is one Supreme Being, that he is to be worshipped, and that there are future rewards and punishments, are, indeed, truths that belong to the constitution of the human mind. But they have not been so generally acknowledged by all classes in all nations, as Lord Herbert represents. On the contrary, the recognition of these first truths of natural religion, like the recognition of the first truths of geometry, has been confined to a portion of mankind. They have been distinctly taught by only a few of the more thoughtful pagan philosophers, in different nations, and

have constituted an esoteric system for particular schools. The great masses of the pagan world, on the contrary, have adopted the mythological religions, in which these theistic teachings of natural reason and conscience glimmer only here and there, and even these are contradicted or neutralized by polytheistic views and representations. With respect to the specific nature and extent of future rewards and punishments, there is indefiniteness in the views of many of the pagan writers; although, in some instances, as in that of Plutarch, there is great decision in the assertion of a fearful and awful vengeance upon the guilty. And this indefiniteness appears in the representations of Lord Herbert himself, upon this important point.

The fourth tenet in Herbert's scheme, that of pardon upon repentance, is taught neither by natural nor revealed religion. For the light of nature gives no assurance that the deity will ever act upon any principles but those of justice. Hence the pagan religions were full of devices to propitiate justice; and yet they could never make it certain that justice had really been propitiated. With yet more emphasis than the inspired writer asserts it of the Jewish sacrifices, can it be said of all Pagan oblations, that they can never, though offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect in things pertaining to conscience (Heb. 10:1). The "universal consent" of mankind makes against the fourth article in Lord Herbert's creed rather than for it. The whole system of sacrifices in the pagan world, as well as the reasoning of some of the pagan philosophers, and particularly of the earlier Grecian poets, goes to prove that the pagan mind felt the natural incompatibility of pardon with justice, and by implication acknowledged the need of an atonement in order to its exercise.

The possibility of a special revelation from God Lord Herbert denies, except in its immediate form to each individual. This form he very singularly concedes, and claims for himself in the following remarkable passage from his very interesting Autobiography. Hesitating whether he should publish or suppress his principal work

he says: "Being thus doubtful, in my chamber, one fair day in the summer, my casement being open towards the south, the sun shining clear, and no wind stirring, I took my book *De Veritate* in my hands, and kneeling on my knees, devoutly said these words: 'O thou eternal God, author of this light which now shines upon me, and giver of all inward illuminations, I do beseech thee, of thine infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make: I am not satisfied enough, whether I shall publish this book; if it be for thy glory, I beseech thee give some sign from heaven; if not I shall suppress it.' I had no sooner spoken these words, but a loud, though yet gentle noise, came forth from the heavens (for it was like nothing on earth); which did so cheer and comfort me, that I took my petition as granted, and that I had the sign demanded; whereupon also I resolved to print my book. This, how strange soever it may seem, I protest before the eternal God, is true; neither am I any way superstitiously deceived herein; since I did not only clearly hear the noise, but in the serenest sky that ever I saw, being without all cloud, did, to my thinking, see the place whence it came."

The deism of Lord Herbert was evidently somewhat spiritualized by the Christianity in the midst of which it sprung up. He himself was the brother of the saintly George Herbert, whose religious poetry is among the purest expressions that have yet been made of the emotions and feelings of the penitent heart. And although the principles of his scheme, when logically carried out, conduct to the same conclusions to which the Tindals and Shaftesburys afterwards arrived, yet there is a serious and humane tone in the writings of Lord Herbert that elevates them much above the general level of deism.

### **3. Materialistic and Sensual Deism**

Disbelief in revealed religion, and reliance upon natural religion as sufficient to meet the necessities of human nature, showed themselves most energetically in that political and religious reaction which followed the Cromwellian period. Deism in its most extreme

forms now arises, and is characterized by bitter hatred of the church, both Established and Nonconforming, of the clergy, of theological science, and of the Scriptures as the source and support of all these. And inasmuch as the church in England was closely connected with the state, and the clergy were identified with the existing government, Deism was frequently found in alliance with the democratic, and sometimes the revolutionary, tendencies in the nation.

This was not always the case however. Thomas Hobbes († 1679) was a most servile advocate of kingly authority, and of the right of the state to coerce individual opinions. He is somewhat guarded in his treatment of the Scriptures, because the English state and church were founded upon them. Yet he expressly teaches that "we have no assurance of the certainty of scripture but by the authority of the church, and this he resolves into the authority of the commonwealth." Hobbes declares that until the sovereign ruler has prescribed them, "the precepts of scripture are not obligatory laws, but only counsel and advice"; Christians, he holds, are bound in conscience to obey the laws of an infidel king in matters of religion; "thought is free; but when it comes to confession of faith, the private reason must submit to the public, that is to say to God's lieutenant." Hence the subject, if commanded by the sovereign, may allowably deny Christ in words, if holding firmly in his heart the faith of Christ; for in that case "it is not he that denieth Christ before men, but his governor and the laws of his country."

Hobbes acknowledges the existence of God, but denies that we know any more of him than that he exists; denies free will to man, and asserts that he is by creation a necessitated agent; asserts the materiality and mortality of the human soul, and represents the distinction between soul and body as an error contracted from the demonology of the Greeks; teaches that the belief in a future state is merely "a belief grounded upon other men's saying, that they knew it supernaturally, or that they knew those, that knew them, that knew others, that knew it supernaturally." Thus in the general principles of

his system, Hobbes falls far below Lord Herbert. Herbert is serious in maintaining the more important truths of natural religion, though rejecting revealed religion altogether, while Hobbes lays down positions that result in sheer materialism and atheism. And such in fact was the practical result of Hobbism. The licentious age of the second Charles was characterized by a large class of minds who had no belief in God, or in man's accountability.<sup>2</sup>

From Hobbes downward, English Deism grows more and more materialistic and sensual; for error like truth runs its own natural course of developement, and expands by its own internal law into more and more extreme forms. Shaftesbury († 1713), in his work entitled "Characteristics of Man, Manners, Opinions, and Times," sets up ridicule as the test of truth, and labors hard to show the pernicious influence upon mankind of a belief in the doctrine of a future state, and of future rewards and punishments. Toland († 1722), a native of Ireland, in some of his works adopts the pantheism of Spinoza, and in others attempts to disprove the genuineness of the canonical scriptures by arguments built upon the apocryphal gospels and the forged writings of the first centuries. Collins († 1729) combats the proof for Christianity derived from the prophecies, which he represents as a species of mystical allegorizing peculiar to the Jewish mind. Woolston († 1733) seizes upon the allegorical method of interpreting the gospel narratives which many Christian writers had employed, and uses it as a medium of a coarse and ribald attack upon the person and character of Christ. Tindal († 1733) composed a work in which he argues against the very idea and possibility of revelation,—the earliest work of the kind, and written with more than ordinary ability and thoroughness. Tindal rejects from the Scriptures all that relates to man's apostasy and redemption, and regards the remainder as only the teachings of natural reason; so that "Christianity" is "as old as the creation," and the "Gospel" is only "a republication of the law of nature." The scheme of Tindal bears a close resemblance to that of Herbert. Morgan († 1743) follows Tindal in respect to his general principles, but devotes his attention mainly to an attack upon the Old Testament



and the religion of Moses. Chubb († 1747) also takes the same position with Tindal and Morgan, so far as natural religion is concerned, and labors strenuously to show that true Christianity has been entirely misapprehended, and that it needs to be cleared of a class of doctrines which are foreign to it. In this reconstruction, or "True Gospel asserted," as he entitles his work, Chubb, as would be expected, reduces Christianity to Deism. Bolingbroke († 1751) constructed a scheme of which the following are the principal features: 1. There is one Supreme Being of almighty power and skill, but possessing no moral attributes distinct from his physical. He has no holiness, justice, or goodness, nor anything equivalent to these qualities as they exist in man; and to deduce moral obligations from these attributes, or to speak of imitating God in his moral attributes, is enthusiasm or blasphemy. 2. God made the world and established the laws of nature at the beginning; but he does not concern himself with the affairs of men, or at most, if he does, his providence extends only to collective bodies and not to individuals. 3. The soul is not a distinct substance from the body, and the whole man is dissolved at death. The doctrine of future rewards and punishments is a fiction, though a useful one to mankind. 4. The law of nature is sufficient, and therefore there is no need of a special revelation, and none has been made. 5. The Old Testament history is false and incredible, and the religion taught in it unworthy of God, and repugnant to his perfections. The New Testament contains two different systems contradictory to each other,—that of Christ, and that of Paul. Only the first is genuine Christianity, and may be regarded as a republication of the law of nature, or rather of the theology of Plato. Yet that portion of Christ's teaching which relates to the redemption of mankind by his own death, and to future rewards and punishments, is absurd and contrary to the attributes of God.

The sentiments of these Deists penetrated the English literature of the 18th century to some extent, and exerted some indirect influence upon English theology itself. Alexander Pope, whose speculative opinions were very much shaped by Bolingbroke, his "guide, philosopher, and friend," has set forth natural religion and omitted

revealed, in the most brilliant and polished poetry that has yet been composed. Jonathan Swift, a member of the ecclesiastical establishment, though opposed to Deism because Deism was opposed to the English church and state, has yet left nothing in his religious or theological writings that betokens any sympathy with New Testament Christianity. In these instances, it would not be correct to charge an avowed adoption of deistical sentiments; for there was none in either. But the leaven of unbelief in the distinctively evangelical truths of Christianity, and the disposition to regard natural religion and ethics as sufficient for the religious necessities of mankind, had imperceptibly penetrated both the poet and the divine.

The skepticism of England reached its full developement in the system of David Hume († 1776). The views of this writer are too generally known to need stating. It is sufficient to say respecting the speculation of Hume, that it is a system of universal doubt, like that of the Greek Pyrrho. As a consequence, the truths of natural religion, as well as of revealed, are invalidated. Hume concludes his "Natural History of Religion" with the remark: "The whole subject [of religion] is a riddle and an inexplicable mystery; doubt, uncertainty, suspension of the judgment, are the sole result of our close investigation of this subject." Deism could not continue to stand upon the comparatively elevated position of its English founder, Lord Herbert of Cherbury. It deteriorates by its own law of evolution, as the latent elements are elicited one by one, and in its final form contains not even that small element of truth which is to be found in its earlier forms, and by means of which alone it could obtain any credence or acceptance among men. Had English infidelity made its first appearance in its last form; had the Pyrrhonism of David Hume, or the sensuality of Mandeville, instead of the comparatively elevated and ethical system of Lord Herbert or Matthew Tindal, been the first form of English Deism, the national mind would have started back in alarm and disgust. But the process was a gradual one. The English infidel himself was prepared for the invalidation and rejection of all religion, only by the slow movement of more than a hundred years.

#### **4. Replies to English Deism**

A brief sketch of the principal Apologetic Treatises composed in opposition to English Deism, will properly follow this account of the English deistical writers.

The views of Lord Herbert did not attract much attention in his own century. Cudworth and Locke merely allude to him as a writer of learning and talent, but enter upon no criticism of his religious system. Richard Baxter, in his apologetic treatise entitled "More reasons for the Christian religion, and no reason against it," cites some positions from Lord Herbert's work *De Veritate*, and controverts them. Baxter speaks with respect of Lord Herbert, and concedes that there is truth in what he says respecting the necessary nature of the doctrines of natural religion. The remark which Baxter makes, that he has replied to the positions of Herbert, lest "never having been answered, they might be thought unanswerable," would indicate that the writings of Lord Herbert had attracted but little attention.

The scheme of Herbert next received a criticism and reply from Thomas Halyburton, a professor in the Scotch university of St. Andrews. His work entitled "Natural religion insufficient, and revealed necessary to man's happiness," was published in 1714, and contains a detailed refutation of Herbert's sentiments. The following are Halyburton's principal positions: 1. Lord Herbert's five articles are not so universally acknowledged as he represents. 2. The clearness with which some pagans have perceived the truths of natural religion is not due solely to the workings of their own reason, but in part to the remnants of a primitive revelation. 3. Natural religion is not sufficient to secure the eternal welfare of man, because of man's apostasy and sinfulness. Human corruption is too deep and inveterate to be overcome by merely ethical principles. It requires a redemptive power and agency.

A learned and profound defence of the truths of natural religion, in opposition to the system of Hobbes, was made by two distinguished Platonists connected with the university of Cambridge; namely, Henry More († 1678), and Ralph Cudworth († 1688). The first-mentioned, in his "Antidote against Atheism," and tract upon the "Immortality of the Soul," presents both the a priori and a posteriori arguments for the divine existence, and the immateriality of the human mind, with great clearness and ingenuity. The "Intellectual System of the Universe," by Cudworth, aims to establish the doctrine of the divine existence, and the reality and immutability of the distinction between right and wrong upon an impregnable position; and in accomplishing this aim, the resources of a vastly learned, as well as profoundly contemplative intellect, are brought into requisition. The tenets of Hobbes and others are refuted, among other methods, by a most exhaustive citation of the views of pagan antiquity. The primary origin and source of natural religion was investigated by the learned Puritan, Theophilus Gale, in his work published 1669–1677 entitled, "The Court of the Gentiles." By a very extensive and minute examination of all the theism of the pagan world, he endeavours to show that what was correct in the religions of paganism sprang from sporadic portions of the Patriarchal and Jewish revelations,—that "Pythagoras's College, Plato's Academy, Aristotle's Peripatium, Zeno's Stoa, and Epicurus's Gardens were all watered with rivulets, which though in themselves corrupt were originally derived from the sacred fountain of Siloam;" and that "there was none that opened a more effectual door for the propagating of philosophical principle and light, than Moses, who laid the main foundations of all that philosophy, which first the Phenicians and Egyptians, and from them the Grecians, were masters of."

The celebrated natural philosopher Robert Boyle († 1691) left in his will a provision for an annual series of lectures, the object of which should be to defend the truth of the Christian religion against unbelievers of all kinds, viz: Atheists, Deists, Pagans, Jews, and Mohammedans. The first preacher upon this foundation was the

renowned classical scholar Richard Bentley, who endeavoured to show the "Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism," from the marks of design everywhere visible in the natural world. Bentley aimed more particularly at the sentiments of Hobbes. In the years 1704 and 1705, Samuel Clarke preached the Boylean lectures, and bent the whole force of his metaphysical mind and close logic, to a demonstration of the existence of God by the a priori method. In connection with this argument, he also endeavoured to demonstrate the immutable validity of the truths of natural religion, and the truth and certainty of Christianity. These arguments of Clarke enter as deeply into the first principles of all religion, as any that were called out by the English infidelity of the 17th and 18th centuries.

No portion of the English Deism, on the whole, gave the Christian Apologist more trouble and taxed his resources more, than did those productions which earnestly asserted the validity of natural religion, but just as earnestly affirmed that revealed religion is for this very reason unnecessary. The position of Tindal,—that the religion of nature is absolutely valid and cannot be dispensed with, but that the Gospel is only a republication of the law of nature, and that Christianity is therefore as old as creation and the mind of man,—made it necessary for the Apologist to show, first, precisely what is the difference between natural and revealed religion, and, secondly, that the additional truths of the latter are not a mere expansion of data and elements contained in the former. Among the most successful treatises upon this subject, is that of John Conybeare, in reply to the treatise of Tindal. It is characterized, says Lechler, by a distinctness in conception, a simplicity in the mode of presenting the subject, and a logical cogency in union with a dignified polemic attitude and a broad philosophic culture, that render it a masterly performance.

Conybeare, in the outset, directs attention to the two significations which the term "natural" may have, in the phrases "natural reason" and "natural religion." It may denote, first, that which is founded in the nature and reason of things, or, secondly, that which is

discoverable by the use of man's natural powers of mind. It is by confounding the two significations, and passing from one to the other, that Tindal, he shows, is led to attribute "absolute perfection" to natural religion. Truth, as a matter of course, is absolutely perfect, but man's perception of it is not necessarily so. Hence Conybeare concedes a relative perfection, but not "absolute" perfection, to that body of truth which is reached by the natural operations of the human mind, and which goes under the name of natural religion. For the law of nature, or natural religion, in this sense of the word "natural," cannot be more perfect than the human mind is. But the human mind is not absolutely perfect, since in this case it would be infallible and incapable of error. Natural religion, consequently, however much validity may be attached to it, cannot claim to be an infallible religion, inasmuch as it is liable to be vitiated by the medium through which it is apprehended,—viz: the powers of the human mind. Moreover, it must be remembered that this apprehension is itself only gradual and approximate. For we must distinguish between human reason as it is shared by all mankind, and human reason as it exists in single individuals. No individual, even of the highest capacities, has ever completely exhausted a single art or a single science. The same is true in morals. No merely human individual has ever yet published a perfect and complete code of morality, or completely fathomed the sphere of ethics. It is only through the successive and collective endeavours of many wise men, that even an approximate apprehension of the truths of natural religion is attained,—a completely exhaustive one being impossible.

In the second place, says Conybeare, there is required in order to the absolute perfection of a law, or a religion, perfect clearness and certainty in its sanctions; but in this respect the law of nature, or natural religion, is manifestly deficient. The effective power of law lies in the definite reward, or the definite penalty affixed to certain acts; in the good or evil consequences attending them. But in the actual course of events in this life, it often happens that the good are not rewarded, and the evil go unpunished. It was for this reason that the pagan philosophers postulated a retribution after death, to

balance the scales of justice left unbalanced upon earth. With regard, however, to the manner and amount of this future punishment, natural religion could give no authentic and infallible information from the Supreme Judge who appoints it. That absolute sanction of the moral law which consists in a precise statement of the nature and quantity of the penalty affixed to it by its Author, the unassisted human mind is unable to specify, however bold and impressive may be its intimations and expectations of such a sanction.

In the third place, Conybeare directs attention to the fact of human apostasy as bringing man into a condition of guilt and corruption, and necessitating a species of knowledge for which natural religion makes no provision, because natural religion is adapted only to a state of innocency and holiness. Man is a transgressor, is obnoxious to penalty, and needs assurance of pardon on the one hand, and of purification on the other. The law of nature, or natural religion, can give him no assurance of mercy, but only of stark rigid justice; and the mere imperatives of conscience cannot subdue the will, or cleanse the heart.

In reference, then, to these three particulars,—an imperfect perception upon the part of the human mind, an imperfect sanction of the moral law, and the lack of provision for human apostasy,—Conybeare argues, in opposition to Tindal, that natural religion is inadequate, and needs to be supplemented and perfected by revealed. The Scriptures impart an "absolutely perfect" religion, because their contents are the teachings of the Supreme Mind, and are not liable to those vitiating influences from sense and earth, which so often, as the history of human opinions shows, modify and pervert even the best natural intuitions of the human intelligence. Revelation also imparts an absolute validity to the sanctions of natural religion, by authoritatively announcing in distinct and definite terms an endless penalty, or reward, and a final adjudication in the day of doom. And, lastly, the written revelation alone makes known a remedial plan adapted to that fallen and guilty condition of mankind, for which the "light of nature" has no remedy.

Nearly contemporaneously with the appearance of this vigorous and logical treatise of Conybeare, Joseph Butler (+ 1752) published his "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed," in which he answers the objections of infidelity to revealed religion, by the negative method of pointing out equal or greater difficulties in natural religion. The argument is handled with great skill and fairness, and the work has had a more extensive circulation, and exerted a greater influence than any other apologetic treatise of the Modern Church. It supposes however that the objector concedes the truths of ethics and natural religion, and therefore is less effective as a reply to universal skepticism, or to such materialistic systems as those of Hobbes and Bolingbroke, than the work of Conybeare. The purely defensive attitude, moreover, which it assumes, in being content with merely showing that the same difficulty besets the religion of nature that lies against the religion of the Bible, imparts something of a cautious and timid tone to the work, though rendering it an exceedingly difficult one to be replied to.

The success with which the Christian Apologete conducted the controversy with the Deist depended very much upon the clearness and comprehensiveness of his views of revealed religion. In case he grasped with power the doctrines of the trinity, incarnation, apostasy, and redemption, it was a very easy task to show that revealed religion contains elements that are not to be found in natural religion, and ministers to moral wants for which natural religion has no supply. The assertion of the Deist, that Christianity is merely the republication of the law of nature, was easily disposed of by one who held, and could prove, that New Testament Christianity presupposes the fact of sin and guilt, and that its chief function is to provide an expiation for the one, and cleanse away the other. But if, as was the case sometimes, the Apologist himself adopted an inadequate and defective anthropology and soteriology, and his view of Christianity was such as to reduce it almost to the level of natural religion, it then became very difficult for him to show that it contains any additional elements, and thus to refute the most specious and subtle of all the positions of the skeptic. The 18th century was



characterized by a low evangelical feeling within the English Church, and an indistinct apprehension of the doctrine of the cross. It is not surprising, consequently, that some of the defences of Christianity that were made at this time should possess but little value, so far as concerns the distinctive doctrines of revelation, inasmuch as they are occupied almost entirely with those truths which revelation presupposes indeed, but with which it by no means stops. Moreover, in being thus silent upon the distinguishing truths, there was an implication that these do not constitute the essence of Christianity; and in this way, while professing to defend Christianity, the Apologist was in fact merely defending natural religion, and conceding the position of one class of skeptics, that the law of nature and Christianity are one and the same thing. As an example of an Apologist of this class, may be mentioned Thomas Sherlock, who in a "Sermon before the Society for propagating the Gospel" took the ground, "that Christ came into the world not merely to restore the religion of nature, but to adapt it to the state and condition of man; and to supply the defects, not of religion, which continued in its first purity and perfection, but of nature." This "adaptation" or reconstruction of the religion of nature, by the Author of Christianity, consisted according to the representations of this class of Apologists in a clearer statement of the doctrine of immortality, and of future rewards and punishments, together with the announcement of the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. It is not difficult to see how upon this ground, and in this mode of defending Christianity, the intellectual and serious deist of Lord Herbert's school might come to fraternize with the Christian divine.

The attacks of some of the English Deists upon the authenticity and genuineness of the Scripture Canon elicited replies from some of the Apologists. The English infidel criticism of the 18th century, however, falls far behind the infidel criticism of Germany in the 19th, in respect to learning and ingenuity. Toland is perhaps the most learned of these critics, but his ignorance and mistakes were clearly exposed by Samuel Clarke, and Nathaniel Lardner. The latter, in his work entitled, "The Credibility of the Gospel History," evinces the

genuineness of the New Testament Canon, and the spuriousness of the Apocryphal writings with which Toland had attempted to associate the received canonical scriptures, by a careful and learned exhibition of all the citations and references from the earliest authorities. Collins, in his "Discourse of Free Thinking," ventured, in one portion of it, upon a line of criticism upon the Canon, which called out a reply from Richard Bentley, in a tractate entitled "Remarks upon a late discourse of Free Thinking, by Phileleutherus Lipsiensis." This treatise of Bentley is a complete reply to the various positions of Collins, in his defence of skeptical thinking. The immensity and accuracy of the learning, the searching thoroughness of the analysis, the keenness and brilliancy of the retort, and the calm and conscious mastery of the whole ground, render this little work of the Master of Trinity College and the first classical scholar of his century, one of the most striking and effective in apologetic literature.

## **5. French Encyclopaedism, and German Rationalism**

The Deism of England lies at the root of the Continental infidelity, and having examined the former with some particularity, a very rapid survey of the course of skeptical thought in France and Germany will be all that will be attempted.

The materialistic philosophy of Bolingbroke had more affinity with, and exerted more influence upon the French mind, than any other one of the English skeptical theories. But upon passing into the less thoughtful French nation, this type of infidelity immediately assumed an extremely superficial, but striking and brilliant form. Helvetius († 1771), and Condillac († 1780) were the philosophers for the party, and Voltaire († 1778), and Rousseau († 1778) were its litterateurs. The "Système de la Nature" published by Condillac in 1740 exhibits materialism in its grossest form. The distinction between mind and matter is annihilated; all intellectual and spiritual processes are represented as purely sensational, or, in the phrase of a stern critic of the theory, "as the liver secretes bile so the brain

secretes thought." God is only a name for nature, and nature is a concourse of material atoms.

The application of these principles to social and political life, and the attempt to give them popular currency, was the task undertaken by the so-called Encyclopaedists, the chief of whom were d'Alembert († 1783), and Diderot († 1784). The "Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Universel," published in 1751 and onward, is an endeavour to construct a compendium of universal knowledge by the theories of materialism and atheism, and thereby to inject infidel ideas into all the history and products of the past. The literary treatment and decoration of this scheme fell into the hands of Rousseau and Voltaire; the former of whom by his fascinating sentimentality invested it with a strange charm for the young and dreaming visionary, while the latter, by the gayest of wit, and the sharpest and most biting of sarcasm, insinuated it into the hard and frivolous man of fashion, and man of the world.

This form of infidelity elicited hardly any reply from the Christian Church. The old defences produced in the preceding century in England were the principal reliance, so far as a literary answer was concerned; but the great and stunning reply was in the utter demoralization of social and political life, and the chaotic horrors of the French Revolution.

The skeptical direction which the German mind took in the last half of the 18th and first half of the 19th century is a much more important phenomenon than the infidelity of France. Taken as a whole, German Rationalism has been learned and serious, comparing it with ancient and modern skepticism generally. In the philosopher Kant († 1804), it resembles the deism of the school of Herbert. In such theologians as Ammon († 1850), Wegscheider († 1848), Röhr († 1848), and Paulus († 1851), we observe the influence of Biblical education, and ecclesiastical connections in restraining the theorist, and holding him back from all the logical consequences of his principles. Yet this intellectual and ethical unbelief operated

for a season all the more disastrously upon the interests of Christianity, from the very fact that, while it rejected the doctrines of sin and grace, and by a learned criticism attacked the canonical Scriptures, it maintained so loftily the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality, and urged so strenuously the imperatives of duty and the moral law. Had it taught the bald and sensual theories of Bolingbroke or Condillac, the popular mind of one of the most naturally devout and religious races would have revolted. But the substitution of an elevated ethics for the doctrine of Redemption was temporarily successful, by reason of the appeal that was made to conscience, and the higher religious aspirations. The secret of its final failure lay in the utter impotence of the human will to realize these ideas of the moral reason, which were so earnestly set forth as the only religion necessary for man. A system like Rationalism which holds up before mankind the ideal of virtue, while it rejects the only power by which that ideal can be made actual in character and life, is a ministry of condemnation. The principles of ethics and natural religion can become inward impulses of thought and action in the human soul, only through the regenerating influences of revealed religion. The serious and thoughtful Schiller, whose "muse was conscience" in the phrase of De Stael, and who presents one of the finest examples of a lofty and cultivated Rationalism, seems to have learned this truth after years of futile moral endeavour. In a letter to Goethe he thus enunciates the difference between morality and religion, ethics and the gospel: "The distinguishing characteristic of Christianity, by which it is differentiated from all other monotheistic systems, lies in the fact that it does away with the law, the Kantian imperative, and in the place of it substitutes a free and spontaneous inclination of the heart,"—a sentiment coincident with the Pauline affirmation, that the Christian, as distinguished from the moralist, is "not under the law but under grace" (Rom. 6:15).

# **BOOK THIRD:**

## **HISTORY OF THEOLOGY (TRINITARIANISM) AND CHRISTOLOGY**

"O blessed glorious Trinity,  
Bones to philosophy, but milk to faith,  
Which as wise serpents, diversly,  
Most slipperiness, yet most entanglings hath."

DONNE: The Trinity.

### **LITERATURE**

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## **CHAPTER I:**

### **GENERAL DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE EXISTENCE**

#### **1. Name of the Deity**

PRELIMINARY to the history of the doctrine of the Trinity, we shall cast a rapid glance at the doctrine of the Divine Existence in its more general aspects. Five topics will claim attention under this introductory division: viz., the name of the Deity; the amount of pantheism and dualism that has prevailed in connection with the development of the Christian doctrine of God; the species of arguments that have been employed by Christian theologians to prove the Divine Existence; the doctrine of the attributes; and the Pagan trinity.

In respect to the name of the Deity, as well as in respect to particular definitions of Him, the Christian church has always been

distinguished by freedom of views and conceptions. In the Pagan world we find a superstitious feeling which led men to attach a magical meaning and power to certain names of the Deity, and a disposition to cling to some particular one. Christianity, on the contrary, has ever been free to adopt as the name of the Supreme Being that particular one which it found in current use in the nation to which it came; thereby indicating its belief that there is no particular virtue in a name, and still more that no single term is sufficiently comprehensive to describe the infinite plenitude of being and of excellence that is contained in God. The latest missionary like the first takes the terms of the new language, and consecrates them to the higher meaning which he brings to the nation.

At the same time, however, it should be remarked that Christianity, on account of its connection with Judaism, prefers, and adopts when it can, that conception of the Godhead which denotes his necessary and absolute existence. The Hebrew Jehovah was translated in two ways in the Greek version of the Old Testament: ὁ ὢν, and τὸ ὄν. The personal and the impersonal forms were both employed; the former to denote the divine personality in opposition to pantheistic conceptions, the latter to denote an absolute and necessary being (οὐσία), in contradistinction to a conditioned and dependent γένεσις, or emanation. So far, consequently, as the Church gave currency to the Old Testament name of God, through the medium of the Alexandrine Greek, it made use of the same idea and name of the Deity that were employed by the Deity himself in his self-manifestation to his chosen people.

## **2. Pantheism and Dualism in the Church**

Respecting the amount and species of Pantheism that appears in connection with the development of the Christian doctrine of God, we remark the following.

The Church was not disturbed by any formal and elaborated Pantheism during the first eight centuries. Phraseology was,

however, sometimes employed by orthodox teachers themselves, that would be pantheistic if employed by an acknowledged pantheist. Tatian, a convert and disciple of Justin Martyr, and one of the early Apologists, speaks of God as ὑπόστασις πάντων. Hilary uses the phrase, "deus anima mundi." Some of the hymns of Synesius are decidedly pantheistic in their strain. Hippolytus addresses the Christian as follows, in his Confession of Faith. "Thou wilt have an immortal body together with an imperishable soul, and wilt receive the kingdom of heaven. Having lived on earth, and having known the Heavenly King, thou wilt be a companion of God, and a fellow-heir with Christ, not subject to lust, or passion, or sickness. For thou hast become God (γέγονας γὰρ θεός). For whatever hardships thou hadst to suffer when a man, He gave them to thee because thou wast a man; but that which is proper to God [παρακολουθεῖ, what pertains to God's state and condition], God has declared he will give thee when thou shalt be deified (ὅταν θεοποιηθῇς), being born again an immortal." Yet such expressions as these should be interpreted in connection with the acknowledged theistic and Christian character of their authors, and are to be attributed to an unguarded mode of expression, and not to a deliberate and theoretical belief.<sup>2</sup>

In the ninth century Scotus Erigena, the most acute mind of his time, in his speculations upon the mutual relations of the world and God, unfolded a system that is indisputably pantheistic. A tendency to pantheism is also traceable in the scholastic age, in both the analytic and the mystical mind. Rationalizing intellects like Duns Scotus and Occam prepared the way for it, though their own speculations are not strictly chargeable with pantheism. But in Amalrich of Bena, and his disciple David of Dinanto, we perceive an arid and scholastic pantheism distinctly enunciated; while imaginative and mystical minds like Eckart and Silesius exhibit this system in a glowing and poetical form. Pantheism, however, was firmly opposed by the great body of the Schoolmen, and was condemned by councils of the Church, and bulls of the Pope.



The most profound and influential form of this species of infidelity appears in the Modern Church. It began with Spinoza's doctrine of "substantia una et unica," and ended with Schelling and Hegel's so-called "philosophy of identity," in which Spinozism received new forms, but no new matter. Spinoza precluded the possibility of a secondary substance created de nihilo, by his fundamental postulate that there is only one substance endowed with two attributes, extension and thought. All material things are this substance, in the mode of extension; all immaterial things are this same substance, in the mode of cogitation. The first modification of the one only substance yields the physical world; the second, the mental world. There is but one Substance, Essence, or Being, ultimately; and this Being is both cause and effect, agent and patient, in all evil and in all good, both physical and moral. Schelling's system is Spinozism with a prevailing attention to the one only Substance as extended; i.e., to physical pantheism. Hegel's system is engaged with the one only Substance as cogitative, and yields intellectual pantheism.

The theology of Germany, since the middle of the 18th century, has been influenced by this system, to an extent unparalleled in the previous history of the Church; and from the effects of it, it has not yet recovered. Too many of the modes of contemplating the Deity, and of apprehending his relations to the universe, current in Germany, are rendered vague by the failure to draw the lines of theism with firmness and strength. The personality of God is not sufficiently clear and impressive for classes of theologians who yet ought not to be denominated pantheists; while, on the other hand, open and avowed pantheists have held position within the pale of the Lutheran Church. The English and American theologies have been comparatively little influenced by this form of error, so that the most consistent theism for the last century must be sought for within these churches.

The doctrine of the Divine Nature has experienced but little modification and corruption from Dualism. This is the opposite error to Pantheism. All deviations from the true idea of the Deity terminate

either in a unity which identifies God and the universe in one essence, or a duality which so separates the universe from God as to render it either independent of him, or eternally hostile to him. But it was only the Ancient Church that was called to combat this latter form of error. During the prevalence of the Manichaeian and Gnostic systems, dualistic views were current, but since their disappearance, the Biblical doctrine of the Godhead has had to contend chiefly with the pantheistic deviation.

### **3. Evidences of the Divine Existence**

The Ancient Church laid more stress upon faith, the Modern upon demonstration, in establishing the fact of the Divine Existence. This is the natural consequence of the increasing cultivation of philosophy. In proportion as science is developed, the mind is more inclined to syllogistic reasoning.

The Patristic arguments for the Divine Existence rest mainly upon the innate consciousness of the human mind. They magnify the internal evidence for this doctrine. Common terms to denote the species of knowledge which the soul has of God, and the kind of evidence of his existence which it possesses, are *ἐμφυτον* (Clemens Alex.), and *ingenitum* (Arnobius). Tertullian employs the phrase, "*anima naturaliter sibi conscia Dei.*" The influence of the Platonic philosophy is apparent in these conceptions. They imply innate ideas; something kindred to Deity in the reason of man. The doctrine of the Logos, derived and expanded from the gospel of John, strengthened the Early Fathers in this general view of God. God was conceived as directly manifesting himself to the moral sense, through that Divine Word or Reason who in their phraseology was the manifested Deity. In their view, God proved his existence by his presence to the mind. In the Western Church, particularly, this immediate manifestation and consequent proof of the Divine Existence was much insisted upon. Augustine in his Confessions implies that the Deity evinces his being and attributes by a direct

operation,—an impinging as it were of himself, upon the rational soul of his creatures. "Perculisti cor, verbo tuo" is one of his expressions.

But whenever a formal demonstration was attempted in the Patristic period, the *a posteriori* was the method employed. The physico-theological argument, derived from the harmony visible in the works of creation, was used by Irenaeus to prove the doctrine of the unity and simplicity of the Divine Nature, in opposition to Polytheism and Gnosticism,—the former of which held to a multitude of gods, and the latter to a multitude of aeons. The teleological argument, derived from the universal presence of a design in creation, was likewise employed in the Patristic theology.

The ontological argument, which derives its force from the definition of an absolutely Perfect Being, was not formed and stated until the Scholastic age. It then received a construction and statement by Anselm, in his *Monologium*, and more particularly in his *Proslogion*, which has never been surpassed. It is no disparagement to the powerful *a priori* arguments that have characterized modern Protestant theology, to say, that the argument from the necessary nature of the Deity, is unfolded in these tracts of Anselm with a depth of reflection, and a subtlety of metaphysical acumen, that places them among the finest pieces of Christian speculation.

The substance of the Anselmic argument is to be found in the following positions taken in the *Proslogion*.

The human mind possesses the idea of the most perfect Being conceivable. But such a Being is necessarily existent; because a being whose existence is contingent, who may or may not exist, is not the most perfect that we can conceive of. But a necessarily existent Being is one that cannot be conceived of as non-existent, and therefore is an actually existent Being. Necessary existence implies actual existence. In conceiving, therefore, of a Being who is more perfect than all others, the mind inevitably conceives of a real and not an imaginary being; in the same manner as in conceiving of a figure

having three sides, it inevitably conceives of a figure having three angles.

The force of this argument depends entirely upon the characteristic of "necessity of existence." This is an integral part of the idea of the most perfect Being, and does not enter into the idea of any other being. All other beings may or may not exist, because they are not the most perfect conceivable. Their existence is contingent; but that of the First Perfect is necessary. Hence the idea of God is a wholly unique idea, and an argument can be constructed out of it, such as cannot be constructed out of the idea of any other being. And one of its peculiarities is, that it must have an objective correspondent to itself. This is not the case with any other idea. When, for example, the mind has the idea of a man, of an angel, of a tree, or of anything that is not God, or the most perfect Being, there is no certainty that there is a real man, angel, or tree corresponding to it. It may be a wholly subjective idea; a thought in the mind, without a thing in nature agreeing with it. And this, because the idea of a man, an angel, or a tree does not involve necessity of existence. In the instance, then, of any other idea but that of God, the mere idea in the mind is not sufficient to evince the actual reality of the object. But in the instance of the solitary and totally unique idea of the absolutely Perfect, the mere idea is sufficient for this, because it contains the element of necessity of existence. If therefore, argues Anselm, we concede as we must that the mind possesses the idea of the most perfect Being conceivable, and also, that perfection of being involves necessity of being, and yet, at the same time, treat it as we do our ideas of contingent and imperfect existences, and say that it may or may not have an objective correspondent, we contradict ourselves. "Surely," remarks Anselm, "that, than which a greater cannot be conceived, cannot exist merely in the mind alone. For if we suppose that it exists only subjectively in the intellect, and not objectively in fact, then we can conceive of something greater; we can conceive of a being who exists objectively, and this is greater than a merely mental existence. If, therefore, that than which a greater cannot be conceived exists only in the conception or intelligence, and not

outwardly in fact, then that very thing than which a greater cannot be conceived is something than which a greater can be conceived,—which is self-contradictory. There exists, therefore, beyond doubt, both in the mind, and in reality, a Being than which a greater cannot be conceived."

Anselm goes a step further, and argues that the mind cannot conceive of the non-existence of God, without a logical contradiction. Here, again, the difference between the idea of the Supreme Being, and that of all other beings is apparent. There is nothing self-contradictory in supposing the non-existence of man, of angels, of trees, or of matter universally, because their definition does not imply that they must exist of necessity. But to suppose that a Being who is in his nature necessarily existent is not in existence is absurd. We can, therefore, think the creation out of existence, but we cannot even in thought annihilate the Creator. In the fourth chapter of the Proslogion, Anselm argues this point in the following manner. "A thing is conceived, in one sense, when the mere words that designate it are conceived; in another sense, when the thing itself is in its own nature understood and comprehended. In the former sense, God can be conceived not to exist; in the latter sense he cannot be. For no one who understands what fire is, and what water is, can conceive that fire is water; though he may conceive this as to the mere sound and meaning of the words. In like manner, no one who understands what God is, and clearly comprehends that he is a necessarily existent Being, can conceive that God is non-existent,—although, like the Psalmist's fool, he may say in his heart the words, 'There is no God.' For God is that, than which a greater cannot be conceived. He who properly understands this, understands therefore that this something exists in such a mode, that it cannot even be conceived of as non-existent. He therefore who understands that God exists as the most perfect Being conceivable, cannot conceive of him as a non-entity. Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, thanks be to Thee, that what I at first believed through thine own endowment, I now understand through thine illumination; so that even if I were unwilling to believe that thou art, I cannot remain ignorant of thine existence."

Anselm's argument was assailed by a monk Gaunilo, in a little work entitled, *Liber pro insipiente* (A plea for the fool); in allusion to Anselm's quotation from the Psalms: 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' His principal objection is, that the existence of the idea of a thing does not prove the existence of the thing. "Suppose," he says, "that we have the idea of an island more perfect than any other portion of the earth; it does not follow that because this island exists in the mind, it therefore exists in reality." This objection started by Gaunilo has been frequently urged since. The mere idea of a griffin, or of a chimaera, it has been said, does not evince the actual existence of a griffin or a chimaera. But an objection of this kind fails to invalidate Anselm's argument, because there is no logical parallelism between the two species of ideas. It overlooks the fact that the idea of the Deity is wholly solitary and unique; there is no second idea like it. As Anselm remarks in his reply to Gaunilo, if the island abovementioned were the most perfect thing conceivable, then he would insist that the existence of the idea in the mind would be evidence of the existence of the island itself. But the idea of the island does not, like the idea of God, contain the elements of absolute perfection of being, and necessity of being. And the same is true of the idea of a griffin, or of a chimaera, or of any imaginary or contingent existence whatever. The idea of a man, or an angel, does not carry with it that the man, or the angel, cannot but exist, and that his non-existence is inconceivable. But the idea of God, as a Being totally different from all created and contingent beings, does carry with it the property of necessary existence; and therefore an objection like that of Gaunilo, drawn from the province of contingent existences, does not hold. It is an instance of what Aristotle denominates μεταβάσις εἰς ἄλλω γένος,—a transfer of what is true of one species to a species of totally different nature. As if one should transfer what is true of the idea of matter, to the idea of mind; or should argue that because a solid cube is capable of being measured and weighed, therefore the invisible soul of man can be also. According to Anselm, the idea of God is wholly unique. It is the only idea of the species. No other idea, consequently, can be a logical parallel to it; and therefore all these arguments from analogy fail.

The idea of every other being but God contains the element of contingent existence, and therefore can afford no logical basis upon which to found an argument against an ontological demonstration that rests upon the element of necessary existence contained in the idea of the most perfect Being, who of course must be the only being of the kind.

The a priori mode of proving the Divine Existence was the favorite one in the Scholastic age, for two reasons. In the first place, it harmonized most with the metaphysical bent of the time, and afforded more scope for subtle thinking, and close reasoning. In the second place, the low state of natural science, and the very slight knowledge which men had of the created universe, left them almost destitute of the materials of a posteriori arguments. Arguments from the order, harmony, and design in the universe, cannot be successfully constructed, unless that order, harmony, and design are apparent. But this was impossible in an age when the Ptolemaic astronomy was the received system,—the earth being the centre of the solar system, and the starry heavens, in Milton's phrase,

"With, centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,

Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb."

The moral argument for the Divine Existence is found in its simplest form, in the very earliest periods in the Church. God is known by being loved; love then, or a right state of the heart, implies and contains a proof of the reality of the Divine Being that is incontrovertible certainly to the subject of the affection. The more elaborate form of this argument is not found until the time of Kant, who elevated it in his system to a high degree of importance.

In the modern Protestant theology, both the a priori and a posteriori methods of demonstrating the divine existence have been employed. The progressive development has been confined mostly to the a posteriori arguments. The cultivation and advancement of natural

science has furnished both matter and impulse to the evidences from design, order, and harmony in creation. Progress in the a priori argument depends so much upon purely metaphysical acumen, while the scope for variety in the construction and statement of the demonstration is so very limited, that the ontological argument remains very nearly as it was when Anselm formed it.

#### **4. The doctrine of the Attributes**

The Church early recognized the distinction between the essence and the attributes of the Deity. The former, in and by itself, was regarded as unknowable by the finite mind. The theologians of the first two centuries sometimes distinguished between the unrevealed and the revealed Deity. By the former, they meant the simple substance of the Godhead apart from the attributes, of which it was impossible to affirm anything, and which consequently was beyond the ken of the human mind. They intended to keep clear of that vague idea of an abstract Monad without predicates, which figures in the Gnostic systems under the name of the Abyss (Βυθός), and which has re-appeared in the modern systems of Schelling and Hegel, under the names of the Urgrund, and Das Nichts, but they did not always succeed. Their motive was a good one. They desired to express the truth that the Divine Nature is a mystery which can never be fathomed to the bottom by any finite intelligence; but in their representations they sometimes ventured upon the dangerous position, that the Godhead is above all essence, and without essence (ὑπερούσιος, and ἄνούσιος). As theological science advanced, however, it was perceived that the essence of the Deity cannot safely be contemplated apart from his attributes. The essence is in the attributes, and the attributes in the essence, and consequently Christian science must seize both ideas at once, and hold them both together. This led to the examination and exhibition of the Divine attributes, as real and eternal characteristics of the Deity.

We cannot follow out the developement of thought upon the Divine attributes; for this would require their being taken up one by one,



and their history exhibited through the various periods. A single remark, only, can be made at this point. In proportion as the attributes have been discussed in connection with the essence of the Deity, has the doctrine of God been kept clear from pantheistic conceptions. In proportion, on the contrary, as speculation has been engaged with the essence of the Godhead, to the neglect or non-recognition of the attributes in which this essence manifests itself, has it become pantheistic. It is impossible for the human mind to know the Deity abstractly from his attributes. It may posit, i.e. set down on paper, an unknown ground of being, like the unknown  $x$  in algebra, of which nothing can be predicated, and may suppose that this is knowing the absolute Deity. But there is no such dark predicateless ground; there is no such Gnostic abyss. The Divine Nature is in and with the attributes, and hence the attributes are as deep and absolute as the Nature. The substance and attributes of God are in the same plane of being. Neither one is more aboriginal than the other. Both are equally eternal, and equally necessary. Christian science, consequently, has never isolated them from each other. It distinguishes them, it is true, in order that it may form conceptions of them, and describe them, but it is ever careful to affirm as absolute and profound a reality in the Divine attributes as in the Divine essence. It never recognizes a Divine essence without attributes, any more than it recognizes Divine attributes without a Divine essence. The Gnostic and the Pantheistic speculatist, on the contrary, has bestowed but little reflection upon the personal characteristics of the Deity. He has been inclined to contemplate and discuss the bare predicateless Essence or Being,—τὸ ὄν rather than ὁ ὢν. Attributes like personality, unity, immutability, and, still more, moral attributes like holiness, justice, truth, and mercy, enter little, or none at all, into the ancient Gnostic, and the modern Pantheistic construction of the doctrine of God. Yet these constitute the very divinity of the Deity; and hence the Christian theologian made them the object of his first and unceasing contemplation. These attributes are personal qualities, and thus it is easy to see, that theism is inseparably and naturally connected with the developement of the doctrine of the Attributes.

## 5. The Pagan Trinity

Some of the theologies of pagan antiquity contain intimations of trinality in the Divine Being. The writings of Plato, particularly, in Occidental philosophy, and some of the Oriental systems, such as the Hindoo, contain allusions to this mode of the Divine Existence. But the Pagan trinity is one of figurative personification, and not of interior hypostatical distinctions in the Divine Essence constituting three real persons who may be addressed in supplication and worship. It is commonly constructed in one of two ways. Either the Triad is made out, by personifying three of the more fundamental faculties and attributes of God,—as Goodness, Intellect, and Will,—which is Plato's method; or else by personifying three of the powers of nature,—as the creating, preserving, and destroying forces of the Hindoo Trimurti. In these schemes, the faculties, attributes, and functions of the Deity take the place of interior and substantial distinctions in his Essence. There is, therefore, when the ultimate analysis is made, no true and proper tripersonality. There is merely a personification of three impersonalities. The Pagan trinity, consequently, is only a figurative and nominal one.

This examination of the Pagan trinitarianism refutes the assertion of Socinus that the Church derived the doctrine of the trinity from the writings of Plato. The two doctrines are fundamentally different. At the same time, however, they have just sufficient resemblance to each other, to justify the assertion, that the Biblical doctrine of the trinity cannot be so utterly contrary to the natural apprehensions of the human mind, as its opponents represent, inasmuch as the most elaborate and thoughtful of the pagan philosophies and theologies groped towards it, though they did not reach it. An inadequate and defective view of truth is better than none at all; and although it is insufficient for the purposes of either theory or practice, it is yet a corroboration, so far as it reaches, of the full and adequate doctrine. Both the copy and the counterfeit are evidences of the reality of the original.

# **CHAPTER II:**

## **ANTE-NICENE TRINITARIANISM**

### **1. Preliminary Statements**

THE early history of the Doctrine of the Trinity shows that Christian faith may exist without a scientific and technical expression of it. This ability comes in only as those heresies arise which necessitate the exact and guarded statements of systematic theology. Waterland, in alluding to the severity of the criticisms which Photius makes upon the trinitarianism of the Ante-Nicene writers, justly remarks, that he did not "consider the difference of times, or how unreasonable it is to expect that those who lived before the rise and condemnation of heresies should come up to every accurate form of expression which long experience afterwards found necessary, to guard the faith." Many a man in the very bosom of the church at this day cherishes a belief in the triune God, that involves a speculative definition of the three persons and their mutual relations, which in his present lack of theological discipline he could no more give with exactness, and without deviation towards Sabellianism on the right hand, and Arianism on the left, than he could specify the chemical elements of the air he breathes, or map the sky under whose dome he walks every day. The same fact meets us upon the wider arena of the Universal Church. The Christian experience is one and the same in all ages and periods, but the ability to make scientific statements of those doctrines which are received by the believing soul, varies with the peculiar demands for such statements, and the intensity with which, in peculiar emergencies, the theological mind is directed towards them. We do not, therefore, find in the first two centuries of the history of Christian Doctrine, so much fullness and exactitude of technical definition as in after ages, though there was undoubtedly full as much unity of internal belief. The Primitive Christians

received the doctrines in the general form in which they are given in Scripture, and were preserved from the laxness of theory, and the corruption of experience and practice so liable to accompany indefinite and merely general views, by the unusual vitality and vigour of the divine life within their souls. General statements of Christian doctrine satisfy two extremes of religious character. They are sufficient for a warm and glowing piety, which, because it already holds the truth in all its meaning and comprehensiveness within the depths of a believing spirit, can dispense with technical and scientific statements. They are satisfactory to a cold and lifeless religionism, which, because it rejects the essential truth in the depths of an unbelieving spirit, prefers an inexact phraseology, because of the facility with which it may be twisted and tortured to its own real preconceptions and prejudices. The absence of a scientific phraseology is characteristic, consequently, either of the most devout, or the most rationalistic periods in Church History.

The difference between the mental attitude of each of these two classes towards the truth is perceived in the difference in the feeling exhibited by each, respectively, when a systematic and technical statement is made. The catholic mind accepts the creed when constructed, because it sees in it only an exact and full statement of what it already holds in practical experience. The heretical mind, on the contrary, rejects the creed-statement when made, because it knows that it does not receive the tenets taught by it, and because the logical and technical articles of the creed preclude all equivocation or ambiguity. The Catholic welcomed, therefore, the explicit trinitarian statements of Nice, but the Arian rejected them. A recent writer exhibits the connection between the practical faith of the common believer, and the scientific statements of the theologian, in the following exceedingly clear and truthful manner. "No one professes to maintain that the disciples of St. John habitually used such words as 'hypostatic,' 'consubstantiality,' &c.—What proportion of the whole multitude of perfectly orthodox believers on earth, even at this hour, habitually use them, or have ever used them? It may be further admitted, that when a doctrine has come to be intellectually analysed

and measured, certain relations may be seen to be involved in it, the distinct expression of which may become thenceforth useful, and even necessary; and that until circumstances, usually heresy, have led to this close intellectual survey, these relations, though involved in the existing belief, and logically deducible therefrom, may not occupy a prominent position in the common expositions of the faith. In what precise degree this holds in such a statement of the doctrine of the trinity as the Athanasian Creed is another question; the principle is exemplified in every stage of the history of theology. Those,—not even to investigate their expressed dogmatic belief,—who were taught to equally worship the mysterious Three into whose single Divine Name they had been baptized,—to look on them habitually as Protecting Powers equally because infinitely above them, separate in their special titles, offices, and agency, and so a real Three, yet One (as the very act of supreme worship implied),—would probably see little in even that elaborate creed beyond the careful intellectual exhibition of truths necessarily involved in that worship. They would easily see that to contradict explicitly any proposition of that creed would be directly or indirectly to deny the faith; while at the same time they may have held, as the infinite majority of the Christian world have since held, the pure faith of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, without perpetually retaining a distinct explicit recollection of all the separate propositions that creed contains.... In short, that creed gives us, as it were, the intellectual edition of the doctrine held from the beginning,—the doctrine expressed (as mathematicians say) 'in terms of' the pure intellect.

"It would probably illustrate this process, if any one were to reflect upon the quantity of minute and refined thought, and the extreme accuracy of expression, required to fix and secure, so as at once to discriminate them from all rival hypotheses, some of those elementary and fundamental notions of simple theism, which yet no one doubts to be the real belief, not merely of all classes of Christians, but of the greater portion of the civilized world. For example, to fix the precise and formal notion of creation out of nothing (so as to distinguish it absolutely from, e.g., the hypothesis

of emanation); to state the precise relation of the Divine Power to the Divine Rectitude,—such, that the Almighty God can never do but what is right; to deliver with accuracy liable to no evasion the exact relation of the Divine Omnipotence and Goodness to the existence of moral evil, &c. On all such subjects, every ordinary Christian has a sufficiently decisive practical belief, a belief which would at once be shocked by any express assertion of its contradictory: he tells you, 'God made all things from nothing;' 'God can never do wrong;' 'God makes no man sin, it is the devil who tempts him, it is man's own corrupt choice to do evil:' and yet it is easy to conceive how very different an aspect these simple but profound truths would assume in an Athanasian creed of theism; how novel might appear doctrines, before almost too universally recognized to be laboriously insisted on, if it became necessary to exhibit them guarded at all points against the subtlety of some Arius or Sabellius of Natural Theology."

But although the doctrine of the trinity, like other doctrines of the Christian system, did not obtain a technical construction in those first two centuries and a half, during which the Church was called chiefly to a general defence of Christianity, rather than to define its single dogmas, it would be a great error to infer that there were no results in this direction. The controversies that were necessitated by the Gnostic heresies led indirectly to some more exact statements respecting the doctrine of the trinity; but the defective and inadequate trinitarianism of certain men of this period, some of whom were excommunicated because of their errors, while some still remained within the pale of the church, either because of the comparative mildness of their heterodoxy, or because a less vigorous and scientific spirit prevailed in those portions of the church to which they belonged, contributed far more than any other cause, to the scientific and technical enunciation of the doctrine of the three Persons in the one Essence.

Some writers have attempted to prove that the Ante-Nicene Church held only the most vague and shadowy species of trinitarianism. But a church that was capable of grappling with the emanationism of the

Gnostic, and saw the fatal error in the modal trinitarianism of the Patripassians,—the most subtle, and also the most elevated of all the forms of spurious trinitarianism,—must have possessed an exceedingly clear intuition of the true doctrine. The orthodoxy of the Primitive Church is demonstrated by the heterodoxy which it combatted and refuted. "Had we no other ways to know it," says Sherlock, "we might learn the faith of the catholic Church, by its opposition to those heresies which it condemned." We shall therefore, first specify and delineate those heterodox theories of the Apologetic period which elicited the clearest counter statements, and thereby contributed in a negative way, to the early orthodox construction of the dogma whose historical development we are describing.

## **2. Classes of Anti-Trinitarians**

In the course of the first three centuries, three sects were formed, with varieties of view and phraseology, all of whom were characterized by an erroneous apprehension of the doctrine of the trinity; owing, in most instances, to an attempt to fathom the depths of this mystery by a process of speculation, instead of by a comprehensive reflection upon the Biblical data for its construction. As we examine them, we shall perceive that the mind looked at only one side of the great truth, and dwelt upon only a single one of the several representations in the revealed word. Some sought to affirm, and that very strongly, the doctrine of the deity of Christ; but denied his distinct personality. Christ, they held, was God the Father himself, in a particular aspect or relationship. Essence and Person were identical, for them; and as there was but one Essence there could be but one Person. Others denied the proper deity of Christ, assumed only an extraordinary and pre-eminent connection of the man Jesus with the Divine Essence, and made two divine powers (δυνάμεις), not persons (ὑποστάσεις), of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Others still, held Christ to be a mere man. Anti-Trinitarians of this period were, consequently, of three classes; namely Patripassians or Monarchians, Nominal Trinitarians, and Humanitarians. The

Church, however, engaged in controversy with only the first two; because the third class did not pretend to hold the doctrine of the trinity in any form, while the others claimed to teach the true Biblical trinitarianism.

I. The first class of Anti-Trinitarians were denominated Patripassians or Monarchians, because they asserted the Monad and denied the Triad. They asserted the deity of Christ, but held the church doctrine of three persons to be irreconcilable with that of the unity of God. Hence they affirmed that there is only one divine Person. This one only Person conceived of in his abstract simplicity and eternity was denominated God the Father; but in his incarnation, he was denominated God the Son. Sometimes, a somewhat different mode of apprehension and statement was employed. God in his concealed unrevealed nature and being was denominated God the Father, and when he comes forth from the depths of his essence, creating a universe, and revealing and communicating himself to it, he therein takes on a different relation, and assumes another denomination: namely, God the Son, or the Logos.

In their Christology, the Patripassians taught that this single divine Person, in his form of Son or Logos, animated the human body of Christ; and denied the existence of a true human soul in the Person of Jesus Christ. It was, consequently, the divine essence itself in alliance with a physical organization and nature, that suffered for the sin of mankind; and hence the term Patripassians was given to the advocates of this doctrine.

The principal Patripassians were the following:

1. Praxeas of Asia Minor, originally, who appears at Rome about the year 200, and was opposed by Tertullian in his tract *Adversus Praxean*. The opening sentences of this treatise are characteristic. "The devil is jealous of the truth in various ways. Sometimes he affects it, in order by defending, to overthrow it. He maintains one only supreme Lord, the omnipotent former of the world, in order to



construct a heresy out of this unit (unico). He says that the Father descended into a virgin, was himself born of her, himself suffered, and finally that the Father himself is Jesus Christ."

2. Noetus at Smyrna, about 230, was excommunicated on account of heresy. His principal opponent was Hippolytus in his tractate, *Contra haeresin Noëti*.

3. Beryl, bishop of Bostra in Arabia, about 250. He was tried for heresy by an Arabian Synod, in 244, and by the arguments of Origen, whom the synod had called to their aid, was convinced of his error, and renounced his Patripassianism. According to Jerome, he sought further instruction from Origen, in a correspondence with him upon the doctrine of the trinity.

II. The second class of Anti-Trinitarians, whom we denominate Nominal Trinitarians, conceded no proper deity to Christ, but only a certain species of divinity. The distinction between deity and divinity is important in the history of Trinitarianism. The former is an absolute term, and implies essential and eternal godhood. The latter is relative, and is therefore sometimes applied to a created essence of a high order, and sometimes to human nature itself. This second class, who attributed divinity but denied deity to Christ, held that the concealed unrevealed God,—corresponding to the Father in the Patripassian theory,—reveals himself by means of two Powers which stream forth from him, as rays of light are rayed out from the sun: one an illuminating Power, the other an enlivening. The illuminating Power is the divine Wisdom, or Reason, or Logos, which exists in two forms: first, the indwelling reflective reason of the Deity, whereby he is capable of rational intelligence (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος); secondly the outworking self-expressive reason of the Deity, whereby he creates, and makes communications to his creation (λόγος προφορικός). The enlivening Power is the Holy Spirit. With the divine Logos, or the illuminating Power,—which is not an hypostasis, but only an emanation issuing from the essential Deity,—the man Jesus was united from his birth in a pre-eminent manner, and in a degree

higher than the inspiration of any prophet; and as a man thus standing under this pre-eminent illumination and guidance of the Logos, he is called the Son of God.

1. A representative of this second class of Anti-Trinitarians, is Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch for some time after 260, a man of great vanity and love of show. He was pronounced heretical by two Antiochian synods, in 264 and 269, and deposed from his bishopric by the last synod, but found powerful support from Queen Zenobia, and continued to discharge the functions of his office. On the conquest of the queen by the emperor Aurelian, the synodal decree of deposition was carried into execution, after a new preferring of charges by the bishops of the region, and the urgent co-operation of the bishop of Rome.

2. A second representative of this second class of Anti-Trinitarians is Sabellius, presbyter of Ptolemais in Pentapolis, 250–260; though he stands somewhat between the first and second classes. He belongs to the second class, so far as he understands by the Logos and the Holy Spirit two Powers (δυνάμεις) streaming forth from the divine Essence, through which God works and reveals himself; but departs from this class and approximates to the Patripassians, in denying that Christ was merely an ordinary man upon whom the divine Logos only exerted a peculiar influence, and affirming that the Logos-Power itself belonged to the proper personality of Christ, and thereby determined and shaped his personal consciousness during the period of his earthly life. The Logos entered into union with Christ's humanity, and not merely inspired it. But this more exalted view of the Person of Christ is immediately depressed again to the humanitarian level of the second class, by the further assertion, that this divine Logos-Power, which had thus issued forth from God, and united itself with a human body, and formed one communion of life and consciousness with it during the period of Christ's earthly existence, was at the ascension of Jesus again withdrawn into the depths of the Divine Nature. Sabellianism maintained itself down into the 4th century, chiefly at Rome and in Mesopotamia.

III. The third class of Anti-Trinitarians, whom we denominate the Humanitarians, were those who asserted the mere and sole humanity of Christ, and denied his divinity in any and every sense of the term; some of them holding, however, to an extraordinary humanity in Christ, and others only to an ordinary. The views of this class were so palpably in conflict with the representations of Scripture that the Church became engaged in no controversy with them. It was only with those parties who held a species of trinitarianism that the catholic mind entered into earnest and prolonged discussion.

Criticising the first two classes, in reference to whom the term Anti-Trinitarian has its weightiest application, it is obvious that the Patripassians or Monarchians approached nearer to the revealed doctrine of the absolute deity of Christ than did the Nominal Trinitarians. According to them, God in his essential being was in Christ. The Logos was not a mere emanation from the divine nature, but was the very divine nature itself. Their conception of Christ as to his deity was elevated, and hence, as Neander remarks, "the more profound pious feeling in those of the laity who were not well indoctrinated seems to have inclined them rather to that form of Monarchianism which saw in Christ nothing but God, and overlooked and suppressed the human element, than towards the other." In respect to Christology, the emanationism of the second class was further from the truth, than was the monarchianism of the first class. But in respect to Trinitarianism, the Patripassians admitted no interior and immanent distinctions in the Godhead. Their Supreme Deity was a monad,—a unit, without any inward and personal subsistences. This unit was only expanded or metamorphosed. A trinality in the Divine Nature itself was denied. The Nominal Trinitarians, on the other hand, approached nearer to the truth, so far as concerns the doctrine of a Trinity in the Unity. They admitted three distinctions of some sort. But they diverged again from the common faith of the church, in holding that these were only modal distinctions. The Logos and the Holy Spirit possessed no essential being. The only essence was the monad,—the

Father. The Logos and the Holy Spirit were merely effluences, radiations, powers, energies streaming out like rays from the substance of the sun, which might be and actually were retracted and re-absorbed in the Divine Essence. Tested rigorously, indeed, both classes held a common view. Both alike denied a trinity of essence, and affirmed only a monad without hypostatical distinctions, or persons in it. But having regard only to phraseology, it may be said, that Patripassianism approached nearest to orthodoxy upon the side of Christology; Nominal Trinitarianism nearest, upon the side of Trinitarianism.

### **3. Trinitarianism of the Apostolic, and Primitive Fathers**

The foundation of the doctrine of the trinity in the Primitive Church was the baptismal formula, and the doxologies in the Epistles, together with the Logos-doctrine of the apostle John. The creed-statement of the dogma did not go beyond the phraseology of these. The catechumen upon his entrance into the Christian Church professed his faith in "God the Father almighty, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." This is the formula employed in the so-called Apostles' Creed, and is as definite a statement of the doctrine of the trinity as was made in any public document, previous to those Sabellian and Arian controversies which resulted in the more exhaustive and technical definitions of the Nicene Symbol.

The construction of the doctrine of the trinity started not so much from a consideration of the three Persons, as from a belief in the deity of one of them, namely the Son. This was the root of the most speculative dogma in the Christian system. The highly metaphysical doctrine of the trinity, as Guericke remarks, "had its origin, primarily, in a living belief; namely, in the practical faith and feeling of the primitive Christian that Christ is the co-equal Son of God." For if there is any fact in history that is indisputable, it is that the Apostolic and Primitive Church worshipped Jesus Christ. This was the distinctive characteristic of the adherents of the new religion. Pliny's testimony is well known, that the Christians as a sect were

accustomed to meet before day-break, and sing a responsive hymn (*carmen dicere secum invicem*) to Christ, as to God (*Christo quasi Deo*). The earliest liturgies are full of adoration towards the sacred Three, and particularly towards the second and middle Person. The liturgy of the Church of Alexandria, which in the opinion of Bunsen<sup>2</sup> was adopted about the year 200, and the ground plan of which dates back to the year 150, teaches the "People" to respond: "One alone is holy, the Father; One alone is holy, the Son; One alone is holy, the Spirit." The religious experience of the Primitive Church was marked by joy at the finished work of redemption; and this joy was accompanied with profound and thankful adoration towards its Author. If regard be had to the emotional utterances and invocations of the first generations of Christians, there is full as much evidence for the deity of the Son as of the Father. The religious feeling in all its varieties terminated full as much upon the second Person of the trinity, as upon the first, in that early period in the history of Christianity that was nearest to the living presence and teachings of its Founder. The incarnation of the Logos,—God becoming man,—is the great dogmatic idea of the first Christian centuries, and shapes the whole thinking and experience of the Church. This accounts for the absence of such technical terms as appear in the Nicene Symbol; and explains why it was, that the general, and purely Biblical language of the Apostles' Creed was sufficient for the wants of the Apostolic and Primitive Church. The actual and reverent worship of the believer was constantly going out towards the Son equally with the Father and the Spirit; and in this condition of things, metaphysical terms and distinctions were not required. The faith and feeling of the catholic heart were sufficient. Until pretended and spurious forms of trinitarianism arose, that compelled it, there was no necessity of employing in the creed for the catechumens, a rigorous and exact trinitarian nomenclature,—no use for the terms "essence" and "hypostasis," "generation" and "procession." Hence the Ante-Nicene Church contented itself with embodying its reverence and worship of the Eternal Three, in hymns and liturgical formularies, and with employing in its creed statements the general and untechnical language of the Scriptures.

The Apostolic Fathers lived before the rise of the two principal Anti-Trinitarian theories described in a previous section, and hence attempted no speculative construction of the doctrine of the trinity. They merely repeat the Biblical phraseology, without endeavouring to collect and combine the data of revelation into a systematic form. They invariably speak of Christ as divine; and make no distinction in their modes of thought and expression, between the deity of the Son and that of the Father. These immediate pupils of the Apostles enter into no speculative investigation of the doctrine of the Logos, and content themselves with the simplest and most common expressions respecting the trinity. In these expressions, however, the germs of the future scientific statement may be discovered; and it is the remark of Meier, one of the fairest of those who have written the history of Trinitarianism, that the beginnings of an immanent trinity can be seen in the writings of the practical and totally unspeculative Apostolic Fathers.

The following extracts from their writings are sufficient to indicate the freedom with which the Apostolic Fathers apply the term God (Θεός) to the second Person, who is most commonly conceived of as the God-man, and called Jesus Christ by them.

"Brethren," says Clement of Rome (Ep. II. c. 1), "we ought to conceive of (φρονεῖν περὶ) Jesus Christ as of God (ὥς περὶ θεοῦ), as of the judge of the living and the dead." Ignatius addresses, in his greeting, the church at Ephesus, as "united and elected by a true passion, according to the will of the Father, and of Jesus Christ our God" (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν). Writing to the church at Rome, he describes them, in his greeting, as "illuminated by the will of Him who willeth all things that are according to the love of Jesus Christ our God" (τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν); and desires for them "abundant and uncontaminated salvation in Jesus Christ our God" (τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν). He also urges them (c. 3), to mind invisible rather than earthly things, for "the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. For even our God, Jesus Christ (ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἡμῶν, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς) being in the Father, [i.e. having

ascended again to the Father] is more glorified" [in the invisible world than when upon earth]. He enjoins it upon the Trallian Church (c. 7), to "continue inseparable from God, even Jesus Christ" (θεοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ); and says to the Smyrnaean Church, (c. 1), "I glorify Jesus Christ, even God (Δοξάζω Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν θεόν), who has given you such wisdom."

The following allusions to the trinity occur in the Apostolic Fathers. Clement of Rome, in his first epistle to the Corinthians (c. 46), asks: "Have we not one God, and one Christ? Is there not one Spirit of grace, who is poured out upon us, and one calling in Christ?" Polycarp, according to the Letter of the Smyrna Church (c. 14), closed his prayer at the stake with the glowing ascription: "For this, and for all things, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, together with the eternal and heavenly Jesus, thy beloved Son; with whom to thee, and the Holy Ghost, be glory, both now, and to all succeeding ages. Amen." Ignatius, in his epistle to the Magnesians (c. 13), places the Son first in the enumeration of the three Persons in the trinity: "Study, that whatsoever ye do, ye may prosper both in body and spirit, in faith and charity, in the Son, and in the Father, and in the Holy Spirit,"—following in this particular St. Paul in 2 Cor. 13:13. Barnabas (Epist. c. 5) finds the trinity in the Old Testament. "For this cause, the Lord endured to suffer for our souls, although he was Lord of the whole earth, to whom he [the Father] said before the making of the world: 'Let us make man after our own image and likeness.' "

Those of the Primitive Fathers who speculated at all upon the trinity confined their reflections mostly to the relations of the first and second Persons. Justin Martyr († 163), and Clement of Alexandria († about 220), whose literary activity falls between 150 and 250, represent the Greek trinitarianism of the second century; and Irenaeus († about 202), Hippolytus († 235), and Tertullian († about 220), represent the Latin trinitarianism of the same time. An examination of the writings of these Fathers will evince that they held the two fundamental positions of catholic trinitarianism:

namely, unity of essence between the Father and Son, and distinction of persons.

Justin Martyr affirms that the Person who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush was the Logos or Son, and not the Father. This Being, who then and there styled himself the self-existent I AM, or The Eternal, he maintains became incarnate in Jesus Christ. In his Dialogue with the Jew Trypho, he argues this position with great earnestness in the following manner. " 'And the angel of God spake unto Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and said, I am that I am, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of your fathers, go down into Egypt and bring up my people from thence.' ... These words were spoken to demonstrate the Son of God and Apostle, to be our Jesus Christ, who is the very pre-existing Logos; who appeared sometimes in the form of fire, sometimes in the likeness of angels, and in these last days was made man by the will of God, for the salvation of mankind, and was contented to suffer what the devils could inflict upon him, by the infatuated Jews; who, notwithstanding that they have these express words in the writings of Moses: 'And the angel of the Lord spake with Moses in a flame of fire out of the bush, and said, I am that I am, the self-existent, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;' notwithstanding this, I say, they affirm these words to be spoken by God the Father and Maker of all things. For which oversight the Prophetic Spirit thus charges them: 'Israel hath not known me, my people have not understood me;' and as I have said, Jesus taxed them again for the same thing, while He was amongst them: 'No man hath known the Father but the Son, nor the Son, but those to whom the Son will reveal Him.' The Jews, therefore, for maintaining that it was the Father of the universe who had the conference with Moses, when it was the very Son of God who had it, and who is styled both angel and apostle (Heb. 3:1), are justly accused by the Prophetic Spirit, and Christ himself, for knowing neither the Father nor the Son; for they who affirm the Son to be the Father, are guilty of not knowing that the Father of the universe has a Son, who, being the Logos, and first-begotten of God, is God (καὶ



θεὸς ὑπαρχει). And He it is who heretofore appeared to Moses and the rest of the prophets, sometimes in fire, and sometimes in the form of angels; but now under your empire, as I mentioned, was born of a virgin, according to the will of his Father, to save such as believe in Him."

Respecting the nature and dignity of the Logos, Justin remarks that "God in the beginning, before all creation (πρὸ παντῶν τῶν κτισμάτων), begat from himself a certain rational Power (γεγέννηκε δύναμιν τινὰ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ λογικὴν), who is called by the Holy Spirit, the Glory of the Lord, sometimes the Son, sometimes the Wisdom." "This rational Power," he says in another passage, "was generated from the Father by his energy and will, yet without any abscission or division of the essence of the Father." In these passages Justin teaches the Nicene doctrine of eternal generation, as distinguished from creation. For in asserting that God the Father begat the Son from Himself (ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ), he teaches that the Son's constitutional being is identical with that of the Father. If the Father had created the Son *de nihilo*, the Son's substance or constitutional being would not have been ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ, but would have been an entirely new and secondary one. Such phraseology is never applied either by Justin Martyr, or any of the Fathers, to the act of pure creation. Justin's idea of eternal generation, like that of Athanasius, is the direct contrary to that of creation. That which is eternally generated cannot be a created thing, because it is ἐκ θεοῦ ἑαυτοῦ,—in and of His own substance. And that which is created *de nihilo*, at a certain *punctum temporis*, cannot be an eternal generation, because it is a new substance willed into being from absolute nonentity. The statement that the Logos was generated from the Father "by his will" is one that appears occasionally in the writings of some of the Post-Nicene trinitarians, and is capable of an explanation in harmony with the doctrine of the absolute deity of the second Person. For it is qualified by the explanation, that the generation occurs without "any abscission or division of the essence of the Father." It must therefore be an immanent act in the Divine Essence; yet voluntary, in the sense

of not being necessitated ab extra. The generation is by both nature and will, which in the Godhead are one.

Concerning the distinct personality of the Logos, Justin makes the following statement: "This rational Power is not, like the light of the sun, merely nominally different [from the Father], but really another numerically (οὐκ ὡς τὸ ἡλίου φῶς ὀνόματι μόνον ἀριθμεῖται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀριθμῷ ἕτερόν τι ἐστὶ). In this passage, Justin teaches that the second Person does not merely sustain the relation to the Divine Essence that a sunbeam does to the sun. He is numerically distinct, ἕτερόν τι, a subsistence, and not a mere effluence or emanation. The pre-existence and eternity of the Logos are asserted by Justin in the following passages: "The Son of the Father, even he who is properly called his Son, the Word, was with him, and begotten of him before the creation (πρὸ τῶν ποιημάτων), because he in the beginning made and disposed all things." "This Being who was really begotten of the Father, and proceeded from him, existed before all creatures (πρὸ παντῶν ποιημάτων) with the Father, and conversed with him." Justin also repeatedly denominates the Logos, God. The passage in the First Apology (c. 63) has already been cited, in which he says that "the Logos is the First-Begotten of God, and he is God" (καὶ θεὸς ὑπαρχει). In the Dialogue with Trypho, Justin remarks concerning Joshua, that he distributed to the Israelites an inheritance which was not eternal, but only temporal, "forasmuch as he was not Christ who is God, nor the Son of God" (ἄτε οὐ Χριστὸς ὁ θεὸς ὢν, οὐδὲ υἱὸς θεοῦ).

Justin's recognition of the trinity appears in the following extracts. Defending the Christians against the charge of atheism, he says: "We worship the creator of this universe.... Again, we have learned that he who taught us these things, and who for this end was born (γεννηθέντα), even Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate the procurator of Judea in the time of Tiberius Caesar, was the Son of him who is truly God; and we esteem him in the second place (χώρα). And that we with reason honor the Prophetic Spirit in the third rank (τάξει), we shall hereafter shew." Again he says, "We bless

the creator of all, through his Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost.... We confess, indeed, that we are unbelievers in such pretended gods, but not of the most true God, the Father of righteousness and temperance, and of all other virtues, in whom is no mixture of evil. But we worship and adore Him, and his Son who came out from him, and has taught us respecting these things, and respecting the host of the other good angels who follow him, and are made like unto him; and [we worship and adore] the Prophetic Spirit; honoring them in reason and truth." Justin also represents baptism as administered in the church, "in the name of God the Father and Lord of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit."

Clement of Alexandria asserts unity of essence between the Father and the Logos in the most explicit manner. Speaking of the Father and the Son, he says: "The two are one, namely God." (ἐν γὰρ ἅμῳ, ὁ θεὸς.) Speaking of the Son, he describes him as "the Divine Word who is most manifestly true God (ὀντως θεὸς), who is equalized (ἐξισώθεις) with the Lord of the universe, because he was his Son, and was the Word of God.... There is one Unbegotten Being, even God, who rules over all (παντοκράτωρ); and there is one First-Begotten Being, by whom all things were made."

The following extracts from Clement contain very plain statements of the trinity in the Godhead: "There is one Father of the universe; there is also one Word of the universe; and one Holy Spirit, who is everywhere." "Be propitious to thy children, O Teacher, Father, Chariot of Israel, Son and Father both One, O Lord" (ὕψις καὶ πατήρ, ἐν ἅμῳ, κύριε). "Let us give thanks to the only Father and Son, Son and Father, our Teacher and Master, together with the Holy Spirit, one God through all things, in whom are all things, by whom alone are all things.... to whom be glory now and forever, Amen."

These early Greek Trinitarians, as did the early Latin to some extent, made use of figures and analogies borrowed from external nature, and from the mind of man, to illustrate, but not to explain, the

personal existence of the Logos, and his relation to the Father. They asserted that the Son was not created a new essence from nonentity, but was generated out of an eternal essence; and this generation they sought to render intelligible by a variety of images. The human logos, or word, they said, is uttered, is emitted from the human soul, without the soul's thereby losing anything from its essence. In like manner, the generation of the Son, or Logos as he was more commonly termed, left the Divine Nature unimpaired, and the same. The ray of light streams forth from the substance of the sun, without any waning or loss in the luminary itself. In like manner the Reason, or Wisdom, of God manifests and mediates God's absolute essence, without any subtraction from it.

It is evident that these analogical illustrations were not adequate to a complete statement of the doctrine of the trinity. They would serve for only one part of the dogma: that viz. of the unity of essence. Such illustrations would suffice to show how the generation of the Son did not infringe upon the oneness of the Divine Nature; but they would convey an inadequate notion of the hypostasis, or personal distinction. The word uttered from the lips of a human being does not, indeed, diminish anything from his soul; but then this word has no distinct subsistence like his soul. The ray from the sun is not a luminous centre like the orb itself. These figures, consequently, would not afford a just and full analogon to the personal distinction; for this, though discriminated from the Divine Essence, is yet substantial enough to possess and wield all the attributes of the Essence. Yet, so long as the distinct and real personality of Father and Son was not called in question, such illustrations as these were naturally and safely employed to guard against the notion, that the generation of the second Person implied abscission or division of the one eternal Essence of the Godhead. These figurative representations, moreover, prepared the way for the conceptional and technical statement of the doctrine of the trinity. They implied, and, so far as it could be done in this manner, they explained, that the Son is, in respect to constitutional substance, identical with the Father, and yet in a certain other respect, is different from the

Father. And these two positions constitute the substance of the doctrine of the trinity. But as trinitarian science advanced, under the pressure from Patripassianism and Arianism, distinct metaphysical conceptions of "essence" and "hypostasis" were formed, and were expressed in a technical nomenclature and dialectical propositions; and under these circumstances, the figurative representations of Justin and Tertullian gave way to the analytic and carefully guarded clauses of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

The trinitarian positions of Tertullian were called out by the Patripassian theory, and have reference chiefly to that heresy. As his opponents strongly asserted the doctrine of the unity of essence, and of the deity of Christ, there was no special necessity for him to discuss this side of the subject. Tertullian's main force is devoted to the doctrine of the distinct personality of the Son and Spirit. In so doing, he makes a real contribution to the scientific construction of the trinitarian dogma. In affirming sameness of essence between Father and Son, the church had from the first denied that the Son is a creature. The Patripassian also affirmed this, but at the expense of the Son's distinct personality. Tertullian grasps both conceptions, and while maintaining that the Father and Son are one in one respect, contends that they are two in another respect. The positiveness with which Tertullian defends the doctrine of unity of essence between the Father and Son, together with that of a personal distinction between them, is apparent in the following extracts from his writings. Having employed the examples of a river which is never separated from its source, and of a ray which is never separated from the sun, in order to illustrate the doctrine of the unity of the Divine Nature, he then proceeds to argue for the distinction of Persons in the following manner. "Wherefore, in accordance with these examples, I assert that there are two, God and his Word, the Father and his Son. For the root and the trunk are two things, but conjoined; and the fountain and stream are two phenomenal appearances (species), but undivided; and the sun and ray are two forms (formae), but coherent. Everything that issues from another thing (prodit ex aliquo) is a second thing in relation to that from

which it issues; but it is not for that reason separate from it. But where there is a second thing, there are two things; and where there is a third thing, there are three. For the third is the Spirit, from God and the Son; as the fruit from the trunk is third from the root, and the canal (rivus) from the stream is third from the fountain, and the scintillation (apex) from the ray is third from the sun. Nevertheless nothing becomes foreign to the source whence it derives its properties. In like manner the trinity (trinitas) flowing down (decurrens) from the Father, through continuous and connected gradations, interferes not with the Divine monarchy, and preserves the status of the Divine economy (monarchiae nihil obstrepat, et οἰκονομίας statum protegit)... I say that the Father is one, the Son is another, and the Spirit another. Nevertheless the Son is not another than the Father by diversity [of essence], but by distribution [of essence]; not another by division [of essence], but by distinction [of essence]; because the Father and Son are not one and the same [person], but one differs from the other in a certain special manner" (modulo).

On the other side of the subject, namely the unity of essence, Tertullian is equally explicit. "They [the Monarchians, or Patripassians] assume that the number and disposition of the trinity is a division of the unity; whereas the unity deriving the trinity out of itself is not destroyed, but is administered by it (quando unitas, ex semet ipsa derivans trinitatem, non destruitur ab illa, sed administratur)... I who derive the Son not from a foreign source (aliunde), but from the substance of the Father,—a Son who does nothing without the will of the Father, and has received all power from the Father,—how is it possible that I destroy the Divine monarchy? On the contrary, I preserve it in the Son, delivered to him from the Father.... In this way, also, One is All, in that All are One; by unity of substance, that is. Whilst, nevertheless, the mystery of the economy (οἰκονομίας) is guarded, which distributes the unity into a trinity, placing in their order three [persons], the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—three, however, not in condition (statu), but in degree (gradu); not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in

aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition (status), and of one power."

Tertullian also anticipates an argument for the doctrine of the three Persons in the one Nature, which we shall find employed by Athanasius, and others of the Nicene trinitarians. It is the argument that the eternity of the first person is conditioned by that of the second, and vice versa. If there be a time when there is no second Person, there is a time when there is no first Person. First and second are necessarily correlated to each other. Father and Son have no meaning except in co-existence and correlation; and the same argument that disproves the eternity of the Son, disproves the eternity of the Father. "It is necessary," says Tertullian, "that God the Father should have God the Son, in order that he himself may be God the Father; and that God the Son should have God the Father, that he himself may be God the Son. Yet it is one thing to have, and another thing to be" (*aliud est autem habere, aliud esse*).

Dorner, in summing up respecting Tertullian's trinitarianism, remarks that the fact that Tertullian distinctly teaches an essential trinity is very significant and important in the history of Trinitarianism, and exerted much influence upon the subsequent development of the doctrine. "Seine Trinität fällt nicht in die Sphäre des Werdens, ohnehin nicht der γενητά, sondern in die ewige Sphäre. Der Sohn ist ihm ewige Hypostase; Gott ist ihm statu, nicht erst gradu dreieinig."

Irenaeus, partly from his practical spirit, which inclined him to adopt traditional views, and partly from his abhorrence of Gnostic speculations, is disposed to accept the doctrine of the trinity as one of pure revelation. He affirms the eternal pre-existence of the Logos; regards him as the Jehovah of the Old Testament, agreeing in this with Tertullian, and Justin Martyr; attributes deity to him as to his essence; and represents him as an object of worship. He also distinctly teaches the doctrine of three Persons in the Godhead. The following extracts from his great work, written in defence of the

Christian system, in opposition to the heretical theories of his time, will exhibit the general character of Irenaeus's trinitarianism.

Irenaeus argues for the eternal pre-existence of the Son as follows: "Having shown that the Word who existed in the beginning with God, by whom all things were made, and who was always present to the human race, has in these last times become a patible man, ... the objection is excluded of those who say: 'If Christ was born at that time, then before that time he did not exist.' For we have shown that because he always existed with the Father, he did not at that time begin to be the Son of God.... Wherefore, in the beginning, God formed Adam, not as though God needed man, but that he might have one upon whom he could bestow benefits. For not only before Adam, but before all creation (*ante omnem conditionem*), the Word was glorifying his Father, being immanent (*manens*) in Him; and He himself was glorified by the Father, as he himself says: 'Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' ... The Jews departed from God, because they did not receive his Word, but supposed that they could know the Father alone by himself, without his Word, that is his Son; not knowing God who spake in a visible form (*figura*) to Abraham, and again to Moses, saying: 'I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and have come down to deliver them.' " After remarking that God does not need either men or angels as the medium by which to create, Irenaeus assigns as the reason, that He has as his medium, "his own offspring (*progenies*), and his own image (*figuratio*), viz: the Son and Holy Spirit, the Word and Wisdom; to whom all angels are servants and subject."

The trinality in the Godhead is taught by Irenaeus, in the following statements. "But if we are not able to find solutions of everything that is required in the Scriptures, we ought not to seek another God than him who is God. For this is the highest impiety. But we should commit such things to God who made us, and gave us accurate knowledge because the Scriptures are perfect, since they were uttered (*dictae*) by the Word of God, and his Spirit.... In the name



Christ [Anointed] is implied, He who anoints, He who is anointed, and the Uncction with which the anointing is made. The Father anoints, but it is the Son who is anointed, in the Spirit, who is the unction; as the Word (Sermo) says by Isaiah, 'The Spirit of God is upon me, because he hath anointed me.' ... Man is a tempering together of the spirit and flesh, formed after the similitude of God, and shaped by his hands, that is by the Son, and Holy Spirit, to whom he also said: 'Let us make man.' ... There is one God the Father, in all and through all, and one Word, and one Son, and one Spirit, and one salvation to all who believe in Him."

Irenaeus testifies to the worship of Christ by the church, and against the Papal doctrine of saint-worship, in the following passage, which is only one of multitudes in his writings. "The Church does nothing by angelic invocations or incantations, ... but directing its prayers purely and openly to the Lord who made all things, and invoking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, performs miracles for the benefit of mankind, but not for their seduction" [as do the Gnostics].

Tertullian and Irenaeus differ from Justin Martyr, in more frequently employing the term Son, in the discussion, and thereby introduce more of the personal element into the doctrine. Distinguishing, as they generally do, the second person in the Godhead by the name Son, rather than Logos, they prepared the way for that distinct enunciation of hypostatical or personal distinctions in the Divine Nature, which we find in the Polemic period. For the terms Logos, Reason, and Wisdom, while they direct attention to the eternity and essentiality of the second distinction in the Godhead, are not so well adapted to bring out the conception of conscious personality, as the term Son. Hence we shall find one great difference between the trinitarian writings of Justin Martyr in the middle of the 2d century, and those of the Nicene period, to consist in the comparative disuse of the term Logos, and the more common use of the term Son, to designate the second hypostasis.

Hippolytus, the disciple of Irenaeus, also, explicitly teaches the doctrine of the trinity, and argues for the catholic doctrine of interior distinctions, in opposition to the modalism of Noëtus. Having affirmed that Christ is the Word by whom all things were made, and having quoted the beginning of John's gospel in proof of this, he proceeds to say that, "we behold the Word incarnate in Him; we understand the Father by him; we believe the Son; we worship the Holy Ghost." He then encounters the argument of the Noëtians, who charged the orthodox with belief in two Gods, because they maintained that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and replies: "I will not say two Gods, but one God, and two Persons. For the Father is one; but there are two Persons, because there is also the Son, and the third Person is the Holy Ghost.... The Word of God, Christ, having risen from the dead, gave therefore this charge to his disciples, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' showing that whosoever omits one of these, does not fully glorify God. For through the trinity, the Father is glorified. The Father willed, the Son wrought, the Holy Spirit manifested. All the scriptures proclaim this." Hippolytus likewise affirms the deity of the Son, and carefully distinguishes between generation out of the Divine Essence, and creation from nothing. "The Word alone is God, of God himself. Wherefore he is God; being the substance of God. But the world is of nothing; wherefore it is not God. The world is liable to dissolution, also, when He who created it, so wills,"—ὁ Λόγος μόνος ἐξ αὐτοῦ· διὸ καὶ θεὸς, οὐσία ὑπάρχων θεοῦ. Ὁ δὲ κόσμος ἐξ οὐδενός· διὸ οὐ θεός.

We close this survey of the trinitarianism of the principal Ante-Nicene Fathers, with the following particulars mentioned by Waterland, which cannot be invalidated, and which prove conclusively that they held the same trinitarianism with the Nicene and Post-Nicene divines.

1. The Ante-Nicene Fathers employed the word God in the strict sense of signifying the Divine substance, and applied it to the Son in this sense.
2. They admitted but one substance to be strictly Divine,

and rejected with abhorrence the notion of inferior and secondary divinities. 3. They confined worship to the one true God, and yet worshipped the Son. 4. They attributed eternity, omnipotence, and uncreatedness to the Son, and held him to be the Creator and Preserver of the universe. 5. Had the Ante-Nicene Fathers held that the Son was different from the Father in respect to substance, eternity, omnipotence, uncreatedness, &c., they would certainly have specified this difference in the Sabellian controversy; for this would have proved beyond all dispute that the Son and Father are not one Person or Hypostasis. But they never did.

#### **4. Origen's Trinitarianism**

The speculations of Origen mark an epoch in the history of the doctrine of the Trinity, and we shall, therefore, examine them by themselves.

Origen joined on where his cautious and practical predecessors Tertullian and Irenaeus had left off; but seeking to unfold the doctrine by a speculative method, in which the scriptural data did not receive sufficient examination and combination, he laid the foundation for some radical errors, which it required a whole century of discussion to distinctly detect, explicitly guard against, and condemn.

Origen seized upon the idea of Sonship, which had shaped the views of his predecessors, and which it must be acknowledged is a more frequent idea in the New Testament than the Logos-idea, with great energy. This idea led him to discuss the doctrine of the eternal generation of the second Person in the trinity, which was afterwards authoritatively taught by the Nicene Symbol, and which enters into that construction of the doctrine of the trinity in the most thorough manner.

So far as Origen's general trinitarian position is concerned, it is past all doubt that he was himself sincerely concerned for the orthodox

statement of the doctrine of the trinity, as it had been made in the Apostles' Creed. He was the most intellectual and ablest opponent that the Monarchianism of his day had to contend with, and we have already noticed the fact, that by his logic and learning he brought off Beryl from his Patripassian position. At the same time he was always ready to attempt the difficult task of reconciling opposing views, and particularly of detecting and conceding the element of truth in the mass of heterodoxy, in order to conciliate the errorist, and carry him up to that higher orthodox position where the whole truth is to be seen without the mixture of foreign and contradictory opinions. Origen belonged to that enterprising and adventurous class of theologians, who attempt more than they accomplish, and more, perhaps, than the human mind is able to accomplish. In all his controversies,—and his whole life was a controversy,—he seems to have been actuated by a single steady theological endeavour,—the endeavour, namely, to exhibit the doctrinal system of the Church as the solvent, not only for all the problems that press upon the general human mind, but for all the doubts, difficulties, and errors of heresy itself. He strove with an energy of intellect, and a wealth of learning, that made him the greatest man of his century, to show the heretic that the scattered atoms of truth in his radically defective apprehension of Christianity were to be found in greater fulness, in the orthodox system, and, what was of still more importance, in juster proportions and more legitimate connections; and that only in the common faith of the church, was that all-comprehending and organic unity of system to be found, in which truth receives a developement in all legitimate directions, while no single constituent part is so magnified or distorted as to become, virtually, the sum-total.

That Origen did not succeed in this grand and noble endeavour, is evident from the fact that both parties claimed him as their authority. Arius insisted that the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, which Origen urged so earnestly, when fully unfolded, involved the constituent doctrine of his own scheme,—namely, that the Son is finite and created. The opponents of Arius, on the other

hand, affirmed that Origen intended, equally with the Nicene theologians who also maintained the doctrine of eternal generation, to distinguish between generation and creation in such a manner as to uphold the true and proper deity of the Son; and that even if he were not entirely successful, the will should be taken for the deed. Athanasius claims Origen, as teaching the same doctrine with that which he is himself maintaining. But we shall find the difference to be a marked one, between the Athanasian and the Origenistic definition of "eternal generation;" and it is a difference of the utmost importance in the history of the doctrine of the trinity.

In order to form a just estimate of Origen's scheme, it is necessary to consider the point from which he started, and the position from which he viewed the whole subject. Inasmuch as Monarchianism, and the denial of the hypostases, was the form of error to which the catholic statement of the doctrine of the trinity was most exposed in the time of Origen, it was natural that his speculations should take form from his endeavour to refute, and guard against this. Monarchianism, or Patripassianism, affirmed the unity, and denied the trinality, in the divine essence. The hypostatical distinctions in the nature of the Godhead would consequently be the side of the subject that would be most considered, and urged by an opponent of Monarchianism. Origen's great endeavor, consequently, was to defend the real personality of both the Father and the Son, the strict hypostatical character of each, against that confusion and mixture of subsistence which leaves for the mind, only a single essential Person in the Godhead. It was his aim to show, that the Son was as truly and distinctly a hypostasis as the Father, and that the personal pronouns could be applied as strictly and properly to one as to the other. In this particular, he made a positive advance upon the views of his teacher Clement of Alexandria, and upon the general views of this school, by more sharply distinguishing three hypostases,—an expression that had not previously been employed,—and rejecting every identification of the Logos with the Father, as if he were only a power proceeding from him, and working in Christ, as the Holy Spirit does in the believer. In Clement, the hypostatical distinction,

though asserted, is not so definitely and energetically asserted, but that the Logos, somewhat as in the trinitarian writings of Justin Martyr, runs some hazard of evaporating into the conception of the Universal Reason. Origen is not satisfied with any vagueness upon this side of the doctrine of the trinity, and firmly announces that the Father and Son are two real hypostases, or personal subsistences.

But how is the unity of the Godhead to be maintained in consistence with this trinal distinction, was a question which must be answered. The attempt to answer it introduced a radical defect into the Origenistic construction of the doctrine of the trinity. In opposing the Monarchianism which fixed its eye too exclusively upon the unity of the Divine Essence, Origen, while doing a valuable work for Christian trinitarianism, in forming and fixing the doctrine of hypostatical distinctions, at the same time, by his inadequate statements, laid the foundation for the Arian heresy of a created Son of God.

Origen endeavoured to harmonize the doctrine of three Persons, with the doctrine of one Essence, by employing the idea of eternal generation, suggested by the term Son, which is so generally used in the New Testament to designate the second distinction in the trinity. In so doing, he took the same method with the Nicene theologians. But unlike the Nicenes, he so defined this phrase as to teach the subordination of the second to the first hypostasis, in respect to essence. He explained his view in the following manner. It is necessary, he said, to distinguish between θεὸς and ὁ θεός. The Father alone is ὁ θεός; the Son is θεός. The Son is not God in the primary and absolute sense; and hence the apostle John omits the article (John 1:1), when he denominates the Logos God, but employs it when speaking of the absolute God, in the same verse. The Son does not participate in the self-subsistent substance of the deity, and therefore it is not proper to denominate him consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father. He is God only by virtue of the communication of a secondary grade or species of divinity, which may be termed θεός, but not ὁ θεός. The first Person in the trinity,

alone, possesses the absolute and eternal essence of the Godhead. The eternal generation does not communicate this to the second Person. That which is derived by the Father to the Son, in the eternal generation, is of another essence than that of the Father,—ἕτερος κατ' οὐσίαν καὶ ὑποκείμενον ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς. Accordingly, Origen sometimes denominates the Son θεὸς δεύτερος. He will call the Son αὐτοσοφία, αὐτοαλήθεια, etc., but will not call him αὐτόθεος. God the Father of the Truth is greater than the Truth itself, and God the Father of Wisdom is greater than Wisdom itself.

A few extracts will exhibit Origen's mode of reasoning upon this distinction so fundamental in his scheme, and so fatal to the co-equality of the second Person. "Αὐτόθεος is God per se, God with the article. Wherefore the Saviour, in his prayer to the Father, says: 'That they may know thee, the only true God.' But whatsoever is deified (deificatum) over and beside him who is denominated αὐτόθεος or God per se, by a participation and communion of that divinity, is not to be denominated God with the article, but more properly God without the article; which latter designation belongs to the First-Begotten of every creature, because inasmuch as he first attracted divinity to himself, he is more honourable than the other gods who exist besides himself; according as it is said: 'God the Lord of gods spake and called the earth.' " "Him [Jesus], we affirm to be the Son of God, of God, I say, whom (to employ the phrase of Celsus) we worship supremely (magnopere); and his Son we acknowledge as exalted (auctum) by the Father, by the greatest honours. Grant that there are some, as might be expected in so great a multitude of believers, who differing from the others, rashly affirm that the Saviour himself is God the Lord of the universe: we certainly do not do this, for we believe the Saviour himself when he says: 'My Father is greater than I.' Wherefore we do not subject him whom we denominate the Father, to the Son of God, as Celsus falsely alleges.... For we plainly teach that the Son of the Creator who formed this sensible world is not mightier than the Father, but inferior. This we affirm, on the authority of the Son himself, who says: 'The Father who sent me is greater than I.' Nor is there any one of us so

demented as to say, that the Son of Man is the Lord of God. Yet we ascribe divine authority (imperium) to him as the Word, Wisdom, Justice, and Truth of God, against all who are suspicious of him under this name, but not against God the omnipotent Father of all."

At the same time, Origen denied that the Son is a creature. In his treatise against Celsus, he maintains that the second Person in the trinity is not to be numbered with the γενητά, or created existences, but "he is of a nature midway between that of the Uncreated, and that of all creatures,"—μεταξὺ τὴν τοῦ ἀγενήτου καὶ τῆς τῶν γενητῶν πάντων φύσεως. As such he is higher than the whole series of creatures from the lowest to the highest. For Origen held to the existence of "a world of spirits, who, as they are allied to the absolute deity by nature, are also by their communion with him deified, and raised superior to the limitations of a finite existence. By virtue of this divine life, the more exalted of these spirits may be denominated in a certain sense divine beings, gods." The difference between the Son and the created universe lies in the fact, that the Son derives his (secondary) divinity immediately from the absolute deity (ὁ θεός), while the created universe, including the highest celestial spirits or "gods," derives its existence mediately through the Son, from the Father, who is the first ground and cause of all things. The Logos is the creator of the universe, in Origen's theory, because, according to his citation of Christ's words, God the Father has given to God the Son, to have life in himself, and he who has life in himself is capable of creating.

1. In this distinction between ὁ θεός and θεός, lies the first defect in Origen's construction of the doctrine of the trinity. Two species of divinity are sought to be maintained; two grades of divine existence are attempted to be established. That idea of deity, which is the simplest, as it is the most profound of all ideas, is made a complex notion, so as to include species under a genus. The distinction between the finite and infinite is annihilated; so that there is a variety of grades and a series of gradations of existence, in the sphere of the infinite and eternal, as there is in that of the finite and



temporal. Instead of leaving the conception of Godhood in the pure and uncompounded form in which a true theism finds it and leaves it, Origen, in reality, though without intending it, brought over into the sphere of Christian speculation a polytheistic conception of the deity. Godhood, in his scheme, as in polytheism, is a thing of degrees. The Father possesses it in a higher grade than the Logos; and the nature of Logos again, is more exalted than that of the descending series of the heavenly hierarchies. The gulf between the finite and infinite is filled up by an interminable series of intermediates; so that when this theogony is subjected to a rigorous logic and examination, it is found not to differ in kind from the pagan emanation-scheme itself.

2. The second defect in Origen's construction of the doctrine of trinity is the position, that the generation of the Son proceeds from the will of the Father. There is some dispute among writers whether Origen did actually adopt this view; but the great preponderance of opinion is in favour of the affirmative. Neander remarks that Origen "affirmed that we are not to conceive of a natural necessity in the case of the generation of the Son of God, but, precisely as in the case of the creation, we must conceive of an act flowing from the divine will; but he must have excluded here all temporal succession of the different momenta. From this view of the subject, Origen was also led to object emphatically to the notion of a generation of the Son out of the essence of the Father." Neander takes the ground, that the doctrine of the unity of essence of the Son with the Father, was the distinctive peculiarity of the Western theology, and that the subordination-theory, which, he thinks, denied unity of essence and affirmed only similarity of essence,<sup>2</sup> was peculiar to the Eastern, and that Origen's writings were the principal source of this view. Ritter thinks that Origen held to a generation by the will of the Father, but out of his essence. Baur is of opinion that Origen really wavered in his own mind, between the doctrine of a generation out of the divine essence, and a generation by the divine will,—an opinion which certainly has something to support it, in the apparently contradictory statements of this mind so desirous of reconciling opposing views,

and of bringing all partial statements into the full comprehensiveness of an all-embracing theological system. Meier agrees with Neander in his judgment; while Dorner differs from all these authorities, and by a minute examination of Origen's positions, and an ingenious specification of subtle distinctions, endeavours to establish the position that Origen did not hold that the existence of the second hypostasis is dependent upon the will of the first. Yet after all his investigation, Dorner himself is compelled to acknowledge that Origen's scheme does in reality make the Father the Monad,—not merely one of the three hypostatical distinctions, but the Godhead itself in its original and absolute unity, in respect to which the second and third hypostases have only a relative existence. Comparing Origen's opinions with those of the later Semi-Arian party, who unquestionably drew their opinions in a great measure from Origen's writings, Dorner concedes, that as the Semi-Arians made the Father more than a single member of the trinity,—in their phraseology, ῥίζα πάσης θεότητος,—so Origen regards the Father alone the πηγὴ πάσης θεότητος, while the Son is πηγὴ θεότητος only for the world, or creation.

But the decisive evidence that Origen did not clearly see, and firmly assert the doctrine of an immanent trinity, so far as the true and proper deity of the second hypostasis is concerned, is found in the fact of his opposition to the fundamental position that the Son is of the same essence, ὁμοούσιος, with the Father. It is indeed true, that he opposed the doctrine of an identity of essence between the Father and the Son, primarily because he deemed it to be Sabellian, and incompatible with hypostatical distinctions in the Deity; but it was the duty of a scientific theologian, as it ever has been the problem of scientific theology, to rise above this erroneous supposition, and evince the logical consistency of three personal distinctions in one and the same essence. While, therefore, due weight is to be given to the motive that impelled Origen to oppose the catholic doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, his scientific merits must be judged of by the results at which he actually arrived, and the

critical estimate which came to be put upon his views, as the developement of the revealed dogma proceeded.

Origen's views respecting the third Person in the trinity were still farther removed from the catholic type of doctrine. Those who would defend his orthodoxy in regard to the Son, hesitate to do so in regard to the Spirit. "Basil," remarks Waterland, "thought Origen's notion of the Holy Ghost not altogether sound." Redepenning, who we have seen is inclined to maintain the orthodoxy of Origen in respect to the deity of the second Person, remarks that in Origen's scheme, "the Holy Ghost is the first in the series of creatures, but it is peculiar to him to possess goodness by nature;" and that "the Holy Ghost is a creature in the literal sense of the term, the first creature made by the Father through the Son,"—τάξει πάντων (lege πρώτον) τῶν ὑπο τοῦ πατρὸς διὰ Χριστοῦ γεγεννημένων (Tom. in Joann. II. 60).

We close this sketch of Origen's trinitarianism, by summing up in the words of Meier. "The meaning and importance of Origenism, in the history of the doctrine of the trinity, does not lie in the intrinsic worth of the system, so much as in its connections, and relations, and general influence. If the system itself is followed out with rigour, it conducts to a deity who is involved in a constant process of developement,—a doctrine which is utterly incompatible with an immanent and eternal trinity in the Godhead. Its chief value consists in its connection with the antecedent trinitarianism of Tertullian and Irenaeus; first, by its frequent use of the term Son, as well as Logos, to denote the true personality of the second distinction, and, secondly, by its strenuous resistance of the Sabellian doctrine of only one Person, and its assertion of real hypostatical distinctions."

# CHAPTER III:

## NICENE TRINITARIANISM

### 1. Preliminary Statements

WE pass now to the examination of that more completely scientific statement of the doctrine of the trinity which was the consequence of the Arian controversy, and was fixed in a creed-form in the Nicene Symbol.

Origen, we have seen, rejected the doctrine of identity of essence between the Father and Son (ὁμοούσιον), and took the ground that the Son is of another essence, or nature, than the Father. In his scheme, "eternal generation" is the communication of a secondary substance. The Son, consequently, does not participate in the Father's primary essence. The nature of the second Person is not identical or equal with that of the first. It is another nature, and inferior to that of the Father, the αὐτοθεός, though highly exalted above the nature of creatures. Upon this notion of a secondary essence, Arius, a man of less devout spirit and less profundity than Origen, seized, and, contending with logical truth that there can be no third species of essence midway between that of God and that of the creature, deduced the doctrine that the Son is not divine in any sense, but is strictly a creature, though the very highest and first of all.

The opposition to Arianism began at Alexandria, from Arius's own bishop Alexander. This theologian contended for the true and proper deity of the Son, at the same time maintaining the doctrine of eternal Sonship, or generation. He agreed with Origen in respect to the latter point, but differed from him, by asserting that eternal generation is a communication, not of a secondary essence, but of the identical and primary substance of the Father, and that, consequently, there must

be a perfect equality between the first and second hypostatical distinctions. Furthermore, as Arius had advanced the doctrine, never advanced it should be observed by Origen, that the Son has only a temporal nature and existence, though running back indeed ages upon ages into the past eternity, Alexander insisted very fully upon the eternity of the Logos. The Son as Logos, he says, must be eternal, otherwise the Father must originally have been ἄλογος,—a being without reason. This is a form of argument which we find often employed in the controversy.

The views of Arius were condemned by the Synod of Alexandria in 321; but so many difficult questions were involved in the whole subject, that it was impossible for a provincial synod to answer them all, or still more to construct a creed that should secure the confidence of the universal Church, and be generally authoritative. This led to the summoning of an oecumenical council at Nice, in 325; composed of upwards of three hundred bishops.

## **2. Problem before the Nicene Council**

The problem to be solved by the Nicene council was to exhibit the doctrine of the trinity in its completeness; to bring into the creed statement the total data of Scripture upon the side of both unity and trinity. Heresy had arisen, partly, from incomplete exegesis. Monarchianism, or Patripassianism, had seized only upon that class of texts which teach the unity of God, and neglected that other class which imply His real and not modal trinality. This led to an assertion of the consubstantiality of the Son, at the expense of his distinct personality. Origenism and Arianism, at the other extreme, following the same one-sided exegesis, had asserted the distinct personality of the Son, at the expense of his unity of essence, and equal deity with the Father. It now remained for the catholic scientific mind, to employ an all-comprehending exegesis of the Biblical data, and assert both consubstantiality and hypostatical distinction; both unity and trinity.

In doing this, the Nicene Council made use of conceptions and terms that had been employed by both of those forms of error, against which it was their object to guard. Sabellianism had employed the term ὁμοούσιος, to denote the conception of consubstantiality. The Monarchians were strong in their assertion that God is one Essence or Being. On the side of the Divine Unity, they were scriptural and orthodox. The Nicene trinitarians recognized this fact, and hence adopted their term. Athanasius insisted as earnestly as ever Sabellius did, that there is but one Essence in the Godhead; that there is but one Divine Substance, or Nature, or Being. Hence the Nicene Council adopted that very term ὁμοούσιος, which the orthodox mind one hundred years before, in the controversy with Paul of Samosata and the Anti-trinitarianism he represented, had rejected as a distinctively heretical term. The persistence with which Athanasius sought to establish the doctrine that the Son is of the very same substance with the Father, evinces the depth and subtlety of that remarkable mind, which exerted so great an influence upon the scientific construction of the Trinitarian creed of the church. Two creeds, one by Eusebius of Nicomedia, and another by Eusebius of Caesarea, were introduced, which conceded everything except the single position that the Son is of the very same and identical substance with the Father. The position of Eusebius of Caesarea was, that the Son is of "similar" essence (ὁμοιούσιος) with the Father; he is "God of God, Light of Light, and begotten of God the Father before all worlds." But the essence of the human soul is "like" that of the Deity, and, consequently, there was nothing in the term ὁμοιούσιος that would imply that the essence of the Son differs in kind and grade from that of any finite spirit made after the likeness of Deity. The time had now come, when silence on the highly metaphysical but vitally fundamental point of the substance of the second Person in the trinity could not be allowed. It was now necessary to employ a technical term that could not by any possibility be explained or tortured into an Arian signification. The term ὁμοούσιος could not by any ingenuity be made to teach anything but that the essence of the Son is one and identical with that of the Father; and this placed

him in the same grade of uncreated being with the Father, and made him αὐτοθεός.

The two Eusebiuses, and many of the Oriental bishops, were Origenistic in their views upon this part of the doctrine. With some of this party, which was considerably numerous, and, as it afterward appeared, able to re-open the subject, and involve the church in another controversy, the difficulty was a speculative one, certainly to some extent. They were afraid of Sabellianism, and supposed that by affirming a unity and sameness of essence between the Father and the Son, they necessarily denied the distinction of persons between them. This portion, consisting of the more devout minds, who practically held very exalted views of the Person of Christ, were the true representatives of Origen in this council. Others probably held low and latitudinarian views, and in reality desired that the council should dissolve without a distinct condemnation of Arianism. These mid-way statements were rejected by the council, and it was laid down as the scriptural doctrine to be universally received, that "the Son is begotten out of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God (θεὸν ἀληθινὸν [ὁ θεὸς of Origen]), begotten not created (γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα), consubstantial with the Father (ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ)." This last important clause was added to the preceding statement that the Son is "God of God, begotten and not created," in order so to define the idea of eternal generation as to preclude the possibility of mistaking it, either for the creation of a substance confessedly temporal and finite, or the communication of a secondary substance midway between the finite and infinite. This clause contained the metaphysical kernel of the dogma, and was the crucial test of trinitarian orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

### **3. Nicene doctrine of Eternal Generation**

The Nicene Symbol, while adopting from Monarchianism a conception and a term that had been vehemently opposed by Origen, at the same time adopted with Origen the idea of eternal generation.

This idea, suggested by the Biblical terms "Son," "Only Begotten," and "First Begotten," all of which the Nicene theologians maintained to be literal and not metaphorical terms, and descriptive of the eternal and metaphysical relations of the second Person, they technically distinguished from that of creation, by the clause: "begotten not created." In conducting the discussion of the doctrine of the trinity upon the side of the personal distinctions, it was necessary for the Nicene theologians to correct two errors that were current among their opponents. In the first place, the Essence of the Godhead was confounded with a personal distinction in that Essence. For those who were involved in this confusion of ideas, the "generation" of a Person would be the same as the generation of the Essence; and the "procession" of a Person would be the same as the procession of the Essence. And this would result in the destruction of the Divine Unity, and the multiplication of deities. The second error consisted in supposing that generation is the same as creation from nothing. For those who took this view, the "generation" of a Person would be the same as the origination of a creature; and since the definition of the term "procession" was inevitably determined by that of "generation," the "procession" of a Person would also be the same as making a creature *de nihilo*. And this would result in the degradation of the Son and Spirit to the rank of creatures. The Nicene trinitarians directed the best energies of their vigorous and metaphysical intellects to a correction of these two errors. They carefully discriminate the Divine Essence from a Divine Person. They are not the same. They are two distinct conceptions; to one of which unity relates, and to the other trinality. This being so, unity of Essence could be combined with the generation of a Person, or with the procession of a Person, without any self-contradiction. Athanasius and his co-adjutors did not pretend to explain either the eternal generation, or the eternal procession. They supposed that in these ineffable and immanent activities in the Godhead lies the heart of the trinitarian mystery. At the same time, however, they laid down certain positions for the purpose of precluding the false inferences which the Arians were drawing from the doctrine of eternal



generation; and these positions give some clue to the idea itself, as it lay in the Nicene mind.

The Nicene theologians distinguish eternal generation from creation, by the following particulars: 1. Eternal generation is an offspring out of the eternal essence of God; creation is an origination of a new essence from nothing. 2. Eternal generation is the communication of an eternal essence; creation is the origination of a temporal essence. 3. That which is eternally generated is of one essence with the generator; but that which is created is of another essence from that of the creator. The substance of God the Son is one and identical with that of God the Father; but the substance of a creature is diverse from that of the creator. The Father and Son are one Nature, and one Being; God and the world are two Natures, and two Beings. 4. Eternal generation is necessary, but creation is optional. The filiation of the second Person in the trinity is grounded in the nature of deity; but the origination of the world depends entirely upon arbitrary will. It is as necessary that there should be Father and Son in the Godhead, as that the Godhead should be eternal, or self-existent; but there is no such necessity for creation. 5. Eternal generation is an immanent perpetual activity in an ever-existing essence; creation is an instantaneous act, and supposes no elements of the creature in existence.

By these characteristics the eternal generation of the Son was differentiated from creation *de nihilo*, and raised entirely above the sphere of material and created existence. The idea of time is excluded, for it is an activity immanent and perpetual in the Divine Essence, and is therefore as strictly eternal as any activity of the Godhead. The idea of contingency is excluded, because the generation of the Son does not depend upon the optional will of either the first or the third Persons, but is a necessary act underlying a necessary relationship. Eternal generation, therefore, according to the Nicene theologians, is the communication of the one eternal essence of deity by the first Person to the second Person, in a manner ineffable, mysterious, and abstracted from all earthly and human

peculiarities. And the peculiarity in the manner in which the communication takes place, in the instance of the second Person, constitutes "filiation;" and in the instance of the third Person constitutes "procession."

In the Nicene trinitarianism, the terms Father and Son are held as correlates; so that one has no meaning except in reference to the other, and the one hypostasis has no existence without the other. The Father is not, as in Origen's scheme, a Monad existing anterior in the order of nature to the Son, but is simply one member of the trinity. Though his relation to the Son implies an inequality in respect to the order and relative position of the hypostases, it implies no inequality in respect to their constituent substance or nature. The characteristic of Sonship is second to that of Paternity; but so far as concerns the essence of Father and Son, both alike, and in precisely the same degree, participate in the eternal and uncreated substance of the Godhead. An entire and perfect co-equality in respect to the constitutional being of both is affirmed. The Son does not belong to a grade of being inferior to that of the Father, for the Origenistic distinction of θεός and ὁ θεός is not allowed, but he is of the very same identical species: "very God of very God." But when we dismiss the conception of constituent essence, and take up that of hypostatical character, and mutual relationship, Athanasius and the Nicene trinitarians contend that subordination may be affirmed, without infringing upon the absolute deity of the Son. The filial peculiarity and relation is second and subordinate to the paternal, though the filial essentiality is equal and identical with the paternal. As in the human sphere, father and son belong to the same grade of being, and so far as their constitutional nature is concerned, neither is superior to the other, both being alike and equally human beings, yet the latter is second in dignity to the former, so far as personal attitude and relationship are concerned; so in the sphere of the divine and uncreated, God the Father and God the Son are on the same common level of eternal and necessary existence, both alike being of one and the same essence or substance, while yet the latter

stands second in the order, and relationships, of the three personal distinctions.

In endeavouring to establish the consistency of the doctrine of eternal generation with the doctrine of the true deity of the Son, Athanasius relies much upon the phrases, ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας, and ὁμοούσιος, as explanatory of the difference between generation and creation. "Let it be repeated," he says, "that a created thing is external to the nature of the being who creates; but a generation is the proper offspring of the nature. The Son, not being a creation from nothing, but proper to the Father's substance, always is. For since the Father always is, whatever is proper to His substance must always be; and this is his Word and his Wisdom. And that creatures should not be in existence, does not disparage the Creator,—for He has the power of framing them out of nothing when he wills,—but for the Son not to be ever with the Father is a disparagement of the perfection of his substance."<sup>2</sup> In such statements as these, which, in these Discourses against the Arians, are repeated and enforced in a great variety of ways, and with great earnestness, Athanasius argues that as it is the very definition of the eternal Son to be connatural with the eternal Father, so is it the very definition of a creature to be from nothing, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων; and that while it was not necessary from the very nature of the Godhead, that there should be eternally a Creator, and eternally a creation, it was necessary, from the very nature of the Godhead, that there should be eternally a Father, and eternally a Son.

Hence the Nicene theologians harmonized the doctrine of eternal generation with that of unity of essence, by teaching the necessity of this generation. The Arians insisted that the generation of the Son must be dependent upon the arbitrary choice of the Father,—that it was optional with the first Person in the Godhead, whether the second Person should be, or not be. To this Athanasius replies, that because the being of the Son is in and of the eternal substance of the Deity, it cannot be a contingent being. Whatever necessity of existence attaches to the substance of the Godhead, attaches equally

to the hypostatical distinctions in it, because these distinctions are in and of this substance. When, therefore, the Arians asserted that the Son is a pure product of the Father's will, and was consequently a creature, the Nicene trinitarian affirmed that the generation of the Son was as independent of an arbitrary volition of the Father, as is the existence of any one of the divine attributes, or even the divine existence itself. Athanasius, in his third Discourse against the Arians, argues as follows: "When the Arians themselves say that God is good and merciful, does this attribute attach to Him by optional will, or by nature? if by optional will, we must infer that He began to be good, and that his not being good is possible: for to counsel and choose implies an inclination two ways. But if it be too extravagant to maintain that God is good and merciful by optional will, then what the Arians have said themselves [in regard to the Nicene doctrine of eternal generation] must be retorted upon them [in regard to the attribute of divine goodness and mercy]: 'Therefore by external necessity, and not voluntarily, God is good,' and: 'Who is it that imposes this necessity upon Him?' But if it be extravagant to speak of compulsory necessity in the case of God, and therefore it is by nature that He is good, much more is He Father of the Son by nature and not by optional will. Moreover let the Arians answer us this: The Father himself, does He exist, first having counselled, and then being pleased to come into being? For they must know that their objections reach even to the existence of the Father himself. If, then, they shall say that the Father exists from optional will, what then was He before he counselled and willed, or what gained He after such counselling and option? But if such a question be extravagant, and absurd, in reference to the Father, will it not also be against reason to have parallel thoughts concerning God the Word, and to make pretences of optional will and pleasure in respect to his generation? For, as it is enough only to hear God's name, for us to know and understand that He is that He is [i.e., that His existence is necessary], so, in like manner, it is enough only to hear the name of the Word, to know and understand that He who is God not by optional will, has His proper Word, not by optional will, but by nature." In another place, Athanasius employs the following

phraseology to teach a necessity of existence in the Son, that is equal to that of the Father: "The Son is the Father's All; and nothing was in the Father before the Word."

In this way, the Nicene symbol sought to guard the doctrine of eternal generation, against those conceptions of creation, and contingent existence, which, we have seen, were latent in the scheme of Origen, and were developed in the scheme of Arius. When the ideas of consubstantiality and immanent necessity are combined with the idea of eternal generation, they so regulate and control it, as to preclude a degradation of the second Person in the trinity, either to the level of a secondary divinity, or of a creature. If, instead of holding that the Father communicates a secondary essence to the Son, Origen had maintained that the second Person participates in the absolute essence of the Godhead, just as fully as the first Person does, it would have been impossible for Arius to have derived the doctrine of a created Son of God from his scheme. For the absolute divine essence is confessedly uncreated, and eternal; and any personal hypostasis that possesses it as the constituent substance of his own being is by this very fact, real deity, and "very God." It was because they so perceived, and so thought, that the Nicene theologians retained in the catholic creed of the Church that doctrine of eternal generation which was so prominent in the defective scheme of Origen, and which in later times, in some individual instances, has been misunderstood, and construed after the Origenistic, as distinguished from the Athanasian manner.

With respect to the explanation of the term "generation," suggested by the Biblical word "Son," and employed to denote the relation existing between the second and the first hypostasis in the trinity, the Nicene theologians are not full in their statements, and did not pretend to be. A complete definition of the term would, in their judgment, involve an explanation of the mystery of the trinity. They held that an exhaustive comprehension of the mode in which the Person subsists in the Essence is possible only to the Infinite Mind. The Trinal Unity is self-contemplative, and self-comprehending.

Only God can comprehend the Godhead. Athanasius, in his Epistle to the Monks, written about 358, thus expresses himself respecting the mysteriousness of the trinity. "The more I desired to write, and endeavoured to force myself to understand the divinity of the Word, so much the more did the knowledge thereof withdraw itself from me; and in proportion as I thought that I apprehended it, I found myself to fail of doing so. Moreover, I was unable to express in writing, even what I seemed to myself to understand; and that which I wrote was unequal to the imperfect shadow of the truth which existed in my conceptions. Considering, therefore, how it is written in the book of Ecclesiastes: 'I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me; that which is far off, and exceeding deep, who shall find it out?' and what is said in the Psalms: 'The knowledge of Thee is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it,' I frequently designed to stop, and to cease writing: believe me, I did. But lest I should be found to disappoint you, or by my silence to lead into impiety those who have made inquiry of you, and are given to disputation, I constrained myself to write briefly, what I have now sent to your piety. For although a perfect apprehension of the truth is at present far removed from us, by reason of the infirmity of the flesh; yet it is possible, as the Preacher himself has said, to perceive the madness of the impious, and having found it, to say that it is 'more bitter than death' (Eccles. 7:26). Wherefore, for this reason, as perceiving this, and able to find it out, I have written, knowing that to the faithful, the detection of error is a sufficient information wherein truth consists." The Patristic statements, consequently, respecting the meaning of the term "generation" are generally negative. Says Cyril, "How the Father begat the Son, we profess not to tell; only we insist upon its not being in this manner, or that." Says Augustine, "If asked to define the trinity, we can only say, it is not this or that." Says John of Damascus, "All we can know about the divine nature is, that it is not to be known."

Yet the Nicene trinitarians did make some approximations to a positive statement, of which the two following particulars embrace the substance.

1. In the first place, they held that the term "Son" is employed in Scripture, to denote the deity of the second Person. The Logos is eternally, really, and naturally the Son of God, and not metaphorically or adoptively. For the term "Father," they argued, denotes the eternal and real, and not the temporal and metaphorical character of the first Person,—a position conceded by their opponents. But the term "Son" is correlative to the term "Father," and hence must have the same literal force. If the godhood of the first hypostasis is not invalidated by his being truly and properly the Father, neither is the godhood of the second hypostasis vitiated by his being truly and properly the Son. Furthermore, the Scripture texts which are relied upon to establish the divinity of the first and second Persons in the Godhead employ the terms Father and Son, by which to designate them. But if these terms denote only temporal and finite relationships, it is impossible to harmonize the subject with the predicates,—to justify the attribution of omnipotence, omnipresence, and infinity to a Person whose very name signifies limitation and finiteness. "Unto the Son, He saith, thy throne O God is forever and ever" (Heb. 1:8). Here the second Person in the trinity is denominated "Son," and as so denominated is addressed as Deity. This could not have been, they argued, unless Sonship in the Godhead is eternal. To a merely temporal hypostasis, it could not have been said: "Thy throne O God is forever and ever." Again, baptism was to be administered in the name of the "Son;" but this would have been impious, had filiation in the Godhead denoted only a finite and created relationship. The candidate would, in this case, have been baptized into a name that designated nothing eternal or divine; and, furthermore, a merely finite and temporal hypostasis would thereby have been associated, in a solemn sacramental act, in the eternal trinity. In the controversy respecting the validity of heretical baptism, the Church came to the decision that baptism in the name of Christ is not valid. It must be administered according to the Scriptural formula, in the name of the Eternal Three. But if baptism in the name of the God-man, solely, is not justifiable; still less would it be proper to baptize in the name of the "Son," if that

term denoted a merely temporal and transitory distinction and relationship.

Hence, the Nicene trinitarians regarded Paterternity and Filiation as immanent and necessary relationships in the Godhead, and the ineffable divine archetypes of all that corresponds to these relationships in the sphere of created existence. Sonship, in its abstract and generic definition, is participation in a common nature or essence. The manner in which this participation is brought about in the Godhead is spiritual, and in accordance with the transcendence of the Deity; while in the sphere of the creature it is material, and mediated by sex. But in both spheres alike, Sonship implies sameness of nature. The eternal Son is consubstantial with the eternal Father; and the human son is consubstantial with the human father. For this reason, the Nicene trinitarians represent Sonship in the Godhead as the absolute Sonship, of which all created and finite sonship is only a faint and imperfect pattern; even as the finite individuality is only a faint and imperfect pattern of the Divine personality, and as human justice, mercy, and love, are merely shadows of the absolute justice, mercy, and love of God. Athanasius interprets the text: "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14, 15), as teaching that God the Father of the Son is the only absolute Father, in the same manner that he is the only absolute Good, and that all created paternity is only a shadow of the divine and uncreated. "It belongs," he says, "to the Godhead alone, that the Father is Father absolutely and in the highest sense (*κυρίως*); and the Son is Son absolutely and in the highest sense (*κυρίως*); for in them, and in them only, does it hold, that the Father is ever Father, and the Son is ever Son." The eternity of the Divine Fatherhood and the eternity of the Divine Sonship, constitutes an absoluteness and perfection in the relationship such as cannot be found in the sphere of the creature. Paterernity and filiation belong to the deity of necessity. God is not God without them. But in the sphere of the creature, paternity and filiation are only temporal and contingent. There is no such relation in the angelic world, and man



may not be a father and yet be human, as was Adam at the moment of his creation.

The following train of reasoning, employed by Athanasius in his "Defence of the Nicene Faith," throws light upon the doctrine of the natural and eternal Sonship of the second Person, as held and maintained against the Arians, who denied it. There are two senses, in which the Scripture employs the word son. The first is found in passages like Deuteronomy, 13:18, and John, 1:12: "When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God ... ye shall be children of the Lord your God." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." The other sense is that in which Isaac is the son of Abraham. If, now, the Son of God is a son only in the first sense, as the Arians assert, then he does not differ in his nature and grade of being from any creature, and could not be denominated the Only-Begotten. To the Arian answer, that the Son is called the Only-Begotten because he was brought into existence by God alone, while all other things were created by God through the Son, Athanasius replies that this certainly could not be because God had exhausted himself in creating the Son, and needed rest, and so devolved the creation of all other things upon him. But perhaps it was because all other creatures could not endure to be produced by the unapproachable and transcendent deity,—a reason assigned first by Asterius, and afterwards adopted by Arius. But if created things cannot be created directly by the deity, and must come into existence through a middle Being, then the Son (since he is a creature) would need a mediator to his creation. And this medium would also require a medium, and so on ad infinitum; and thus there could be no creation at all. The Son of God, is, therefore, so called, in the sense in which Isaac was the son of Abraham,—by nature and participation in the same substance. "What is naturally begotten from any one, and does not accrue to him from without, that, in the nature of things, is a son." But the generation of the Eternal Son differs from a human generation, in the following particulars. The offspring of men are portions of their progenitors; since their bodies are not uncompounded, but transitive. But God is without parts, and is

Father of the Son without partition or passion. Again, men lose substance in generation, and gain substance again from the accession of food; and thus become the parents of many children. But God, being without parts, neither loses nor gains substance; and thus he is the Father of one Only-Begotten Son. "Let every corporeal thought be banished upon this subject, and, transcending every imagination of sense, let us, with the pure understanding and mind alone, apprehend the Son's genuine relation towards the Father, and the Word's individuality (ἰδιώτητα) in reference to God, and the unvarying likeness of the radiance to the light. For, as the words 'Offspring' and 'Son' bear, and are meant to bear, no human sense, but one suitable to God, in like manner when we hear the phrase, 'one in substance,' let us not fall upon human senses, and imagine partitions and divisions of the Godhead; but as having our thoughts directed to things immaterial, let us preserve undivided the oneness of nature, and the identity of light. For this is the individuality, or hypostatical character, of the Son in relation to the Father; and in this is shown that God is truly the Father of the Word. Here, again, the illustration of light and its radiance is in point. Who will presume to say that the radiance is unlike, and foreign to, the sun? Rather, who thus considering the radiance relatively to the sun, and the identity of the light both in the sun and the sunbeam, would not say with confidence: 'Truly the light and the radiance are one, and the radiance is in the sun, so that whoever sees this sees the sun also?' But what should such a oneness and personal peculiarity (ἰδιότης) be called but 'Offspring,' 'one in substance'? And what should we fittingly consider God's Offspring, but the Divine Word, and Wisdom?"

Similar arguments and illustrations are also set forth by Athanasius, in his singularly logical and powerful "Orations against the Arians." "We must not understand," he says, "those words, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me,' as if the Father and the Son were two distinct essences or natures, blended or inlaid into one another; as if they had that property which philosophers call penetration of parts: that is to say, as if they were a vessel, supposed to be capable of being

doubly filled at once; as if the Father occupied the same quantity or region of space with the Son, and the Son the same as the Father. The Father's personality is infinitely perfect and complete; and the Son's personality is the plenitude of his Father's substance. The Son has not his Sonship derived or communicated to him by any sort of intervention, or mediation. No; it is of the Son's very nature, of the Father's substance, and immediate from the Father.... There is an entire propriety and community of nature between the Son and the Father, in like manner as there is between brightness and light, between the stream and the fountain; and, consequently, he that sees the Son, sees in him the Father, and cannot but know that the Son is in the substance of the Father, as having his subsistence (ὕπόστασις) communicated to him out of that substance (οὐσία); and, again, that the Father is in the Son, as communicating his substance to the Son, as the nature of the solar substance is in the rays, the intellectual faculty in the rational soul, and the very substance of the fountain in the waters of the river.... The Son cannot be otherwise than begotten of the Father, and consequently, cannot be the Father; yet as being begotten of the Father, he cannot but be God; and as being God, he cannot but be one in essence with the Father: and therefore he and the Father are One,—one in propriety and community of nature, and one in unity of Godhead. Thus brightness is light; the splendour or radiance of the sun is coeval with the body of the sun. It is of its very substance. It is not a secondary flame kindled or borrowed from it, but it is the very offspring and issue of the sun's body. The sunbeams cannot be separated from that great fund of light. No man in his senses can suppose them subsisting, after their communication with the planet is cut off. And yet the sun and the brightness that flows from it are not one and the same thing. They are at once united, and yet individual, in the substance of that total light and heat which cherishes the world, and paints the face of nature. And this is an imperfect emblem of the all-glorious divinity of the Son of God, which is essentially one with that of his Father. They are one numerical substance. They are one God, and there are no other Gods besides that one. And both being one in essence and divinity, it follows that whatever can be affirmed of the Father may as truly and

properly be affirmed of the Son, except only the relation of Paternity.... That the Son is co-eternal with the Father is evinced by the very nature of the relation of sonship. For no one is father of a son, nor can in a physical sense be called so, until he has a son. The relationship of artist or workman does not necessarily imply a co-existence of mechanical works or productions with their maker; and therefore it does not follow that God could not be a Creator, before the existence of his creatures. But he could not be a Father before he had a Son of his very substance; and therefore his Paternity must have been co-eternal with his Godhood." From such reasonings as these, it is evident that the Nicene trinitarians regarded "generation" and "procession" as necessary and immanent activities in the Eternal Essence, and held that the Godhead cannot be conceived of without them, any more than without the activities of reason and will. Cyril of Alexandria, in answer to the inquiry whether the Son existed before his generation, says: "The generation of the Son did not precede his existence, but he always existed, and that by generation."

2. In the second place, the Nicene trinitarians rigorously confined the ideas of "Sonship" and "generation" to the hypostatical character. It is not the essence of Deity that is generated, but a distinction in that essence. And, in like manner, the term "procession," applied to the Holy Spirit, pertains exclusively to the third hypostasis, and has no application to the substance of the Godhead.

The term "begotten," in the Nicene trinitarianism, is descriptive only of that which is peculiar to the second Person, and confined to him. The Son is generated with respect only to his Sonship, or, so to speak, his individuality (ἰδιώτης), but is not generated with respect to his essence or nature. The term "generation," being thus rigorously confined to the hypostatical character, as distinguished from the unity and community of essence, denotes only a relationship between the first and second Persons. It, consequently, no more implies a subordination with respect to the essence of the second Person, than it does with respect to the essence of the first. For if the Son is the generated, the Father is the generator. The idea

of "generation," consequently, has an application to the first Person as much as to the second; and if there is nothing in the fact of being a Father that infringes upon the essential deity of the first Person in the trinity, then there is nothing in the fact of being a Son, that infringes upon the essential deity of the second Person. Hence Athanasius represents filiation in the Son as the necessary and eternal antithesis to paternity in the Father, and argues that the passivity, or the being a Son, on the part of the second hypostasis, no more infringes upon his participation in the essence of the Godhead, than the activity, or the being a Father, on the part of the first hypostasis, infringes upon his participation in the same essence of the Deity. The Father and Son are of one and the same uncreated and infinite essence, even as the human father and son are of one and the same created and finite essence. The participation in the same identical nature or essence, or, in the Nicene phrase, the consubstantiality (ὁμοούσιον), places the first and second persons in the Godhead in the same class or grade of being. Both are equally divine, because they share equally in the substance of deity; as, in the sphere of the finite, both father and son are equally human, because participating equally in the substance of humanity. The category of substance determines the grade of being. That which is of a divine substance is divine; and that which is of a human substance is human. And the mere relationship in each case,—the mere being a father, and the mere being a son,—does not in the least affect the grade or species of being to which each belongs. The human son is as truly a man as is the human father; and the Divine Son is as truly God as is the Divine Father. "We men," says Athanasius, "consisting of a body and a soul, are all μίας φύσεως καὶ οὐσίας, of one nature or essence; but we are many persons." Again, when his Anomoean opponent compares the Father, Son, and Spirit, to a bishop, presbyter, and deacon, Athanasius directs his attention to the fact that these latter have all the same nature, being each of them man.

In this way, the term "generation" was employed to discriminate the hypostatical character from the essential nature, in the triune Godhead, and in all use of the term, or criticism upon it, it should

carefully be remembered that it is limited, in the Nicene trinitarianism, to the personal subsistence, and has no legitimate application to the eternal essence. The trinity is not generated. The essence or substance of deity is not generated. The first and third hypostases are not generated. But the second hypostasis is generated, and is alone. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, is true of the term "procession." And with reference to the first hypostasis or Person, the agency on his part denoted by the term "beget," the correlate to "only-begotten," is hypostatical agency solely. It sustains no relation to the trinity as a whole. For God the Father does not generate the trinity. He is not the Father of the triune Godhead, or of the Divine Essence. Neither is he the Father of the third Person. He is only the Father of the Son. So that the term "generate," or "beget,"—which is the necessary antithesis to the term "only-begotten," so often applied in the Scriptures to the second Person,—merely denotes the individuality of the first Person, or that which is peculiar to him, and confined to him, as the first in the series of three. Thus, from first to last, in the Nicene construction of the doctrine of the trinity, the terms "beget," "begotten," and "proceed," are confined to the hypostatical distinctions, and have no legitimate, or technical meaning when applied to the trinity as a whole, or, in other words, to the Essence in distinction from the hypostasis.

Perhaps the relationship of the Person to the Essence, in the Nicene scheme, has not been expressed more succinctly than by Hooker, in a sentence which condenses the whole reasoning of the Nicene controversy. "The substance of God, with this property, to be of none, doth make the person of the Father; the very self-same substance, with this property, to be of the Father, maketh the person of the Son; the same substance, having added to it the property of proceeding from the other two, maketh the person of the Holy Ghost. So that in every person, there is implied both the substance of God, which is one, and also that property which causeth the same person really and truly to differ from the other two.... Each person hath his own subsistence (ὕπόστασις) which no other person hath, although there be others besides that are of the same substance (οὐσία). As no man

but Peter can be the person which Peter is, yet Paul hath the selfsame nature which Peter hath. Again, angels have every one of them the nature of pure and invisible spirits, but every angel is not that angel which appeared in a dream to Joseph."

The nearest approximation to a metaphysical definition of the ideas of eternal generation, and procession, by the Nicene theologians, is found in the idea of "intercommunion," and "inter-agency." A common word employed by them, as a suggestive rather than exhaustive term, is περιχώρησις (circulatio). Starting from the Scriptural idea and term of the "living" God, the trinitarian thinker endeavored to convey to the mind of the Arian the truth, that the one Essence is all in each of the Persons, so that the three Persons constitute but one Essence or Being, by representing this threefoldness as an immanent circulation (περιχώρησις) in the Divine Nature,—an unceasing and eternal movement in the Godhead, whereby each Person co-inheres in the others, and the others in each,—so that the Essence is equally the substance of all, while yet each Person preserves and maintains his own distinctive hypostatical character. The Father begets, but is not begotten. The Son begets not, but is begotten. The Spirit neither begets nor is begotten, but proceeds. Such is the phraseology employed to hint at, rather than explain, the mystery of the eternal interaction, and intercommunion, which was conceived to be going on in a Being whom the Nicene theologian was found of contemplating under the idea of a living Unity, rather than under the notion of a lifeless Unit. He employed this term περιχώρησις, to intimate that the Arian notion of singleness does not come up to the Scriptural idea of the Divine fullness and infinitude of being. God, he claimed, is a plural Unit. He is not "one" in the same sense in which an individual of a species in material nature is "one." The Deity is not a member of a species, and the term "individual" is inapplicable to him. And yet the Arian objections to the doctrine of the triunity of God proceeded upon the assumption that strict individuality, or singleness, is attributable to the Godhead, and consequently that the same modes of reasoning that apply to the finite, with its species, and individuals,

apply equally to the Infinite. It was to correct this erroneous and shallow conception of that Eternal One who belongs to no species, but whose infinite plenitude of being sets him above finite modes of existence, that the Nicene theologians, when they were tempted as they sometimes were by the arithmetical rather than philosophical objections of the Arian to venture upon some positive statements and definitions, employed a term that hinted at the eternal and unchanging circumincession and intercommunion of the three Persons in the Godhead, whereby the Essence is all in each, and each is in the Essence; whereby the One is Three, and the Three are One.

But such endeavors to explain the incomprehensible mystery of the trinity were not carried any further than to this point and degree. The catholic mind followed out its thoughts in this direction just far enough to show, that the truth, though transcending reason, did not contradict reason,—in other words that the charge of palpable absurdity and self-contradiction, so often advanced by the Arian, could not be made good respecting one of the plainest doctrines of revelation, and most fundamental truths of Christianity; but that even before the bar of metaphysical reason something valid might be said in favour of it. But when this had been done, the mind of an Athanasius was disposed to stop, and allow speculation to pass over into worship.

The last and most comprehensive results of the controversy and investigation were embodied in a creed, which by its negative clauses denied, rejected, and in some instances anathematized, the false statements of the doctrine, because these were known to be unscriptural and untrue, and by its positive clauses endeavoured, though inadequately, to convey some distinct apprehension of the abysmal truth. The so-called *Symbolum Quicumque*, falsely ascribed to Athanasius, and which probably originated in the school of Augustine, affords a fine specimen of this sort of dialectic statement. It runs as follows: "1. Whoever would be saved, must first of all take care that he hold the catholic faith. 2. Which, except a man preserve whole and inviolate, he shall without doubt perish eternally. 3. But



this is the catholic faith, that we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity. 4. Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. 5. For the person of the Father is one; of the Son, another; of the Holy Spirit, another. 6. But the divinity (divinitas) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is one, the glory equal, the majesty equal. 7. Such as is (qualis) the Father, such also is the Son, and such the Holy Spirit. 8. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, the Holy Spirit is uncreated. 9. The Father is infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite. 10. The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. 11. And yet, there are not three eternal Beings (aeterni), but one eternal Being. 12. As also there are not three uncreated Beings (increati), nor three infinite Beings (infiniti), but one uncreated and one infinite Being. 13. In like manner, the Father is omnipotent, the Son omnipotent, and the Holy Spirit omnipotent. 14. And yet, there are not three omnipotent Beings, but one omnipotent Being. 15. Thus the Father is God, the Son, God, and the Holy Spirit, God. 16. And yet, there are not three Gods (dii), but one God only. 17. The Father is Lord, the Son, Lord, and the Holy Spirit, Lord. 18. And yet, there are not three Lords (domini), but one Lord only. 19. For as we are compelled by christian truth to confess each person distinctively to be both God and Lord, we are prohibited by the catholic religion to say that there are three Gods, or three Lords. 20. The Father is made by none, nor created, nor begotten. 21. The Son is from the Father alone, not made, not created, but begotten. 22. The Holy Spirit is not created by the Father and Son, nor begotten, but proceeds. 23. Therefore, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. 24. And in this trinity there is nothing prior or posterior, nothing greater or lesser, but all three persons are coeternal, and coequal to themselves. 25. So that through all (omnia), as was said above, both unity in trinity, and trinity in unity, is to be adored. 26. Whoever therefore would be saved, let him thus think concerning the trinity."

By this continual laying down of positions, and equally continual retraction of them, up to a certain point, in order to prevent their

being pushed too far, the theological mind endeavored to keep clear of the two principal deviations from the exact truth,—Sabellianism and Arianism,—not denying the unity while asserting the trinity, nor denying the trinity while asserting the unity. It is the opinion of Hagenbach, that so far as the first two hypostases are concerned, the doctrine of the trinity has not received any clearer or fuller scientific statement than that which is contained in the Nicene Symbol, and the kindred Symbolum Quicumque, and he seems to intimate that it is impossible for anything more to be said in the way of dialectic and scientific statement, than is enunciated in these creeds. It appears to be his opinion, that the principal if not all the fundamental errors to which the human mind is liable in the construction of the doctrine of the trinity are specified, rejected, and condemned, in the negative side of the symbol; while, so far as concerns the positive definition and enunciation, the human mind has here gone as far in this direction as is possible for it. "Against this bulwark of the faith," he says, "all further attempts of the human understanding to reconcile the opposing antitheses in the statement of the doctrine, and to afford a full direct intuition that shall clear up all the mystery of the subject, must dash and break themselves, as do the waves of the sea against the inexorable cliffs and rocks."

#### **4. Nicene Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

The Nicene Symbol is remarkably reticent respecting the third Person in the trinity. It contains but a single clause respecting Him, in these words: "And we believe in the Holy Spirit." But so little was the theological mind occupied with the discrimination and definition of this hypostasis, that after this brief statement respecting the Holy Spirit, it immediately recurs again to the second Person, and affirms, that "those who say that there was once a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten, he was not in being, or that he became existent out of nonentity, or that he is of another substance or essence [than that of Deity], or that he is created, or mutable, or changeable: all such, the catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes."

The controversy had been so deep and earnest, respecting the true nature and position of the Son that, although the views of Arius were as erroneous in respect to the Holy Spirit as in respect to the Logos, the Nicene theologians passed by his heresy on this point, without noticing it in their systematic symbol. Two reasons seems to have operated with them. First, they were not willing, unless compelled to do so, to embarrass the already highly abstract and metaphysical discussion of the doctrine of the trinity with further matter and questions, at this time, preferring to leave the unsettled points for a future discussion, after the present subject had been fully disposed of. Secondly, it is possible that that considerably large body of Semi-Arian theologians, to whom we have alluded, would have hesitated to extend the doctrine of consubstantiality to the Holy Spirit. Hence the leading Nicene theologians, knowing that the doctrine of the equal deity of the second hypostasis would logically lead to the equal deity of the third, could afford to postpone the discussion of this part of the subject. The personality and hypostatical character of the Son had been brought to view, and insisted upon, in the Origenistic scheme, and in all the earlier Trinitarianism, while that of the Holy Ghost had been left comparatively without examination, or specification. The consequence was, that at the time of the Nicene Council the opinions of many theologians were vague and indefinite with respect to the third Person in the trinity.

The mind of the leading catholic theologians, however, was fully made up, even at this period. Athanasius distinctly affirms the hypostatical character, and proper deity of the third Person. His four Epistles to Serapion, bishop of Thmuis, were written to prove the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit. In the fourth Epistle, he endeavours to show, in opposition to those who held that the Holy Spirit is a creature (κτίσμα), that Arianism is not fully renounced, unless the fact is explicitly acknowledged that there is nothing in the Triad foreign to the essence of God,—no substance from without mingled in, that is not in harmony with the pure essence of Deity, and consubstantial with it. He refers to passages of Scripture, and also draws an argument from the Christian experience. "How can

that," he says, "which is sanctified by nothing other than itself, and which is itself the source of all sanctification for all rational creatures, be of the same species of being and kind of essence, with that which is sanctified by another than itself?" In and by the Holy Spirit the creature obtains communion with God, and participation in a divine life; but this could not be the case if the Holy Spirit were himself a creature. So certainly as man through him becomes a partaker of the divine (θεοποιεῖ), so certainly must He himself be one with the divine Essence.

Basil the Great († 379) wrote a tract upon the divinity of the Holy Spirit, in which he denominates the Spirit, God, and refers to passages of Scripture in support of his view, and particularly to the baptismal formula, in which the Spirit forms the third in the series, with the Father and Son. His brother Gregory of Nyssa († 394?), in the second chapter of his larger Catechism, employs the comparison suggested and warranted by the etymology of the word Spirit, and which had been much enlarged upon by earlier writers, particularly Lactantius,—the comparison of the Spirit to the breath. Unlike Lactantius, this writer, though not inclined to a strict and high trinitarianism, does not identify the Word and the Spirit, but marks the hypostatical distinction between them. Gregory Nazianzen († 390), also, agrees in opinion and in statement with Basil, and Gregory of Nyssa.

A portion of the Semi-Arians, however, in the further discussion of the general doctrine, would concede only a relative divinity to the Son (adopting the doctrine of resemblance or kindredness of essence, ὁμοιούσιον), and denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, in any and every sense. The leading bishop in this party was Macedonius, and hence the name of Macedonians was given to it. Of this man, Sozomen remarks, that he "taught that the Son is God,—in every respect, and according to essence, like the Father; and that the Holy Spirit is not a sharer in these prerogatives, but a minister and servant." Theodoret states that Macedonius expressly denominated the Spirit a creature. Some of the objections which the Macedonians

made to the doctrine of the deity and hypostatical character of the Holy Spirit were of a frivolous, as well as blasphemous nature. The following is a specimen of their argumentation. "The Holy Ghost is either begotten or unbegotten; if he is unbegotten, there are two unoriginated beings (δύο τὰ ἀνάρχα), namely, the Father and the Spirit; if he is begotten, he must be either from the Father, or the Son; if he is from the Father, then there are two Sons in the Triad, and consequently brothers,—when the question arises, whether one is older than the other, or whether they are twins; but if on the other hand the Spirit is begotten from the Son, then there is a grandson of God." Such objections as these betray a confusion of generation with creation, and show, also, that the mind of the objector is moving in the low range of finite existence, and is unable to rise to the transcendence of the Deity. Such a mind associates temporal attributes, and material qualities, with all the terms that are applied to the Godhead; and should it carry its mode of conception into all the discussions that relate to the Divine Nature, it could not stop short of an anthropomorphism that would be no higher than the grossest polytheism.

These Macedonian views, and similar ones, led to the calling of a second Council at Constantinople, in 381, which, under the guidance and influence principally of Gregory Nazianzen, made more precise statements respecting the Holy Spirit. The term ὁμοούσιον did not appear, however, in the creed drawn up at this time, though the Holy Spirit is represented as proceeding from the Father, and being equal in honour and power to both the Father and the Son. The phraseology of the clause relating to the third Person runs thus: "And [we believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Life-Giving, who proceeds from the Father, who is to be worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son, and who spake through the prophets."

It was owing to this failure to expressly assert the consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, by the use of the technical term ὁμοούσιον, that the Constantinopolitan Symbol was not satisfactory to all parties. The position of the Holy Spirit in the trinity

generally had indeed been established by it. He was acknowledged to be one of the Eternal Three, co-equal in power and glory; but his special relation to the Father and Son was left indefinite. While the creed asserted that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, it did not indeed expressly deny that He proceeds from the Son; and yet the omission of the Son seemed to look in this direction. The arguments for and against the procession of the third Person from the first and second were the following. On the one hand, the assertion that the Spirit proceeds from the Father only, and not from the Son, looked like an essential inferiority of the Son to the Father; while on the other hand the assertion that He proceeds from the Father and the Son seemed to place the Spirit in a more dependent attitude,—his hypostatical existence issuing from two hypostases instead of one. The endeavour to vindicate the deity of the Son, by asserting the procession of the Holy Spirit from Him as well as the Father, looked like infringement upon that of the Holy Spirit; and conversely the endeavour to give to the Spirit a greater independence, by disconnecting his procession from the second Person, endangered the dignity and deity of the Son. The Greek theologians, Athanasius, Basil, and Gregory Nyssa, asserted procession from the Father, without, however, opposing the doctrine of procession from the Son. Epiphanius, on the contrary, derived the Spirit from Father and Son, with whom Marcellus of Ancyra agreed, though holding to a Sabellian trinity.

The Western theologians, and among them Augustine, held the doctrine of procession from Father and Son, and this statement established itself so firmly and generally in the West, that at the third Synod of Toledo, in 589, the clause filioque was added to the Constantinopolitan Symbol. This formed one of the dogmatic grounds for the division between the Western and Eastern Churches,—the former of which to this day asserts, and the latter denies, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son.

## **5. Terminology of the Nicene Trinitarianism**

The deity of the Son and Spirit having thus been enunciated in a creed form, the discussions among trinitarian theologians after the Councils of Nice and Constantinople had reference to the specific relations of the three Persons to each other, and especially to fixing the terminology of the subject. Certain terms had been employed during this controversy of two hundred years' duration, which it was important to define, and thereby establish their technicality, and scientific authority. The success and enduring influence of any systematic construction of truth, be it secular or sacred, depends as much upon an exact terminology, as upon close and deep thinking itself. Indeed, unless the results to which the human mind arrives are plainly stated, and firmly fixed in an exact phraseology, its thinking is to very little purpose in the end. "Terms," says Whewell, "record discoveries." There may be the most thorough analysis, and the most comprehensive and combining synthesis; the truth in its deepest and most scientific form may be reached by the individual mind; and yet the public mind and after ages be none the wiser for it. That which was seen it may be with crystal clearness, and in bold outline, in the consciousness of an individual thinker, may fail to become the property and possession of mankind at large, because it is not transferred from the individual to the general mind, by means of a precise phraseology, and a rigorous terminology. Nothing is in its own nature more fugacious and shifting than thought; and particularly thought upon the mysteries of Christianity. A conception that is plain and accurate in the understanding of the first man becomes obscure and false in that of the second, because it was not grasped, and firmly held, in the form and proportions with which it first came up, and then handed over to other minds, a fixed and scientific quantity.

The following terms compose the scientific nomenclature employed in defining and fixing the oecumenical statement of the Doctrine of the Trinity:

1. Ὁυσία, with its equivalent φουσις; to which the Latin correspondents are substantia, essentia, natura, and in some

connections res; and the corresponding English terms, essence, substance, nature, and being. 2. Ὑπόστασις, with its equivalents τὸ ὑποκείμενον, and πρόσωπον; to which correspond the Latin hypostasis, substantia, aspectus, and persona, and the English hypostasis and person. 3. The term ἰδιώτης was employed to designate the individual peculiarity of the hypostasis,—the hypostatical character by which each divine Person is differentiated from the others. 4. Γέννησις, generatio, generation, as has been sufficiently explained, designates the eternal and immanent activity by which the first Person communicates the divine essence to the second. 5. Ἐκπόρευσις with its equivalent ἔκπεμψις; to which correspond the Latin processio and missio, and the English procession and mission.

Ὀυσία, or Essence, denotes that which is common to Father, Son, and Spirit. It denominates the substance, or constitutional being, of the Deity, which is possessed alike, and equally, by each of the personal distinctions. The Essence is in its own nature one and indivisible, and hence the statement in the creed respecting it affirms simple unity, and warns against separation and division. The terms "generation" and "procession" do not apply to it.

Ὑπόστασις, or Hypostasis, is a term that was more subtile in its meaning, and use, than οὐσία. It denotes, not that which is common to the Three in One, but, that which is distinctive of and peculiar to them. The personal characteristic of the Hypostasis, or "subsistence" in the Essence, was denoted by the Greek word ἰδιώτης, and if we use our English word "individuality" somewhat loosely, it will convey the idea sought to be attached to the Person in distinction from the Essence.

Inasmuch as the meaning of the term Person was more difficult to reach and state, than the meaning of the term Essence, more imperfection and indefiniteness appear in the terminology employed. The three-foldness is more difficult to grasp than the unity. The human mind quite readily apprehends the notion of substance, and



of attributes. These two conceptions apply to all forms of created being, and are familiar to the reflection of the human understanding,—though when examined they baffle a perfectly metaphysical comprehension. But the doctrine of a "subsistence" in the substance of the Godhead brings to view a species of existence that is so anomalous, and unique, that the human mind derives little or no aid from those analogies which assist it in all other cases. The hypostasis is a real subsistence,—a solid essential form of existence, and not a mere emanation, or energy, or manifestation,—but it is intermediate between substance and attributes. It is not identical with the substance, for there are not three substances. It is not identical with attributes, for the three Persons each and equally possess all the divine attributes. "We know," says Howe, "that the hypostatical distinction cannot be less than is sufficient to sustain distinct predicates or attributions, nor can it be so great as to intrench upon the unity of the Godhead." Hence the mind is called upon to grasp the notion of a species of existence that is totally *sui generis*, and not capable of illustration by any of the ordinary comparisons and analogies.

The consequence of this was, that the term ὑπόστασις was sometimes attended with ambiguity, though the meaning attached to the idea was uniform. The distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις, though made in fact, was not always made in form, by the first trinitarians. Some little time was required to set off each term to its own idea. Thus, the Nicene Symbol itself anathematizes those that teach that the Son is ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας. Athanasius employs the two terms as equivalents. "As to those who receive all else that was defined at Nice, but doubt about consubstantiality only, we must not feel as towards enemies.... for in confessing that the Son is from the substance of the Father, and not of other subsistence (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς εἶναι, καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως τὸν υἱόν), they are not far from receiving the phrase ὁμοούσιον also." Again, he remarks: "Hypostasis (ὑπόστασις) is substance (οὐσία), and means nothing else than simple being." But Athanasius continually denies that there are three οὐσίαι, so that his use of ὑπόστασις must be

determined in each instance from the connection in which he employs it. His object in asserting that "hypostasis is substance" was to deny that the personal distinction in the Godhead is merely an energy or effluence, such as the Nominal Trinitarians maintained it to be.

Although the Latin trinitarians discriminated Person from Essence with full as much clearness as the Greek Nicene Fathers, yet there was some confusion of terms among them, owing to the poverty of the Latin language. One and the same word, *substantia*, was often employed in the Latin trinitarianism, to denote both the essentiality, and the personality. Had the term *essentia* been used from the very first, and invariably, to translate *οὐσία*, and *substantia* to denote *ὑπόστασις*, the confusion would have been avoided. But the term *substantia*, in the Latin, was so commonly exchangeable, and entirely synonymous with *essentia*, (as the term *substance*, in English, is with *essence*,) that no term was left to denote that peculiar mode of existence which is intermediate between essence and attributes, unless these two synonymes should be distinguished from each other, and one rigorously confined to one conception, and the other to the other.

This however was not done at first, and the consequence was, that other terms came to be employed, occasionally, to hint at and suggest the meaning of the hypostatical distinction. Such a term is *πρόσωπον*. This corresponds to the Latin *persona*, from which the English "person" is derived. This term, it is obvious to remark, though the more common one in English, and perhaps in Protestant trinitarianism generally, is not so well adapted to express the conception intended, as the Greek *ὑπόστασις*. It has a Sabellian leaning, because it does not with sufficient plainness indicate the subsistence in the Essence. The Father Son and Spirit are more than mere aspects or appearances of the Essence. The Latin *persona* was the mask worn by the actor in the play, and was representative of his particular character for the particular time. Now, although those who employed these terms undoubtedly gave them as full and solid a

meaning as they could, and were undoubtedly true trinitarians, yet the representation of the eternal and necessary hypostatical distinctions in the Godhead, by terms derived from transitory scenical exhibitions, was not the best for purposes of science, even though the poverty of human language should justify their employment for popular and illustrative statements.

That the distinction between Essence and Hypostasis became a fixed one, and thus came down in the trinitarian nomenclature of the Modern Church, was owing, in a great measure, to the Western theologians Augustine and Hilary, whose treatises upon the doctrine of the trinity were the principal text-books for the Schoolmen in their speculations.

Ἐκπόρευσις and ἔκπεμψις were terms employed to denote the hypostatical character and relationship of the Holy Spirit. They were derived from John 15:15, and kindred passages. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send (πέμψω) unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth (ὃ ἐκπορεύεται) from the Father, he shall testify of me." The attempt to define the term "procession" was even less frequent than to define the term "generation." The same predicates, however, were applied to both. It was an eternal procession, out of the essence. It was a necessary procession grounded in the absolute nature of the Deity, and not dependent upon arbitrary and optional will.

## **6. Critical Estimate of the Nicene Controversy**

We have now traced the history of this great doctrine of revelation through the period of its theoretic construction, and establishment. We have seen the theological mind, partly from its own impulse, and partly from the necessities of its position, first, collate from the written word the various and scattered data there given, then combine them into a general statement as in the Apostles' Creed, and then expand them into a more special form of doctrine, as in the Nicene and Athanasian Symbols. Collation, combination, and

expansion are the parts of the scientific process. This process went on slowly, but continuously, for a period of five centuries,—as long a time as was required for pagan Rome to conquer and subjugate the Italian tribes, and lay the foundations of a nationality that was to last a millennium in its own particular form, and another millennium in mixture with still other nationalities,—as long a time as was required for the thorough mixing and fusion of British, Saxon, and Norman elements into that modern national character which in the Englishman and Anglo-American is, perhaps, destined to mould and rule the future more than even Rome has the past. These historic parallels are interesting and illustrative. Though the processes are totally unlike,—though the one is metaphysical, and relates to the mysterious nature and essence of the Ancient of Days, before whom all the nations and all the centuries of time are as nothing and vanity, while the other is political, and relates to the rise and formation of merely secular sovereignties, exceedingly impressive to the natural mind and dazzling to the carnal eye, constituting the very splendor and glory of secular history, yet, in comparison with the eternal years of God, passing away like a morning vapor,—though these processes are in their own nature so different, the mind is aided in forming a just estimate of the slowness and grandeur of their movement, by the comparison of one with the other. The theological controversies that resulted in forming and fixing the theoretic belief of Christendom in the Triune God appear unprofitable and valueless to the merely secular mind,—to the mind that is absorbed in the finite, and making no comparisons between time and eternity. The sneer that this whole contest of five centuries was merely about a single letter, merely whether the term should be ὁμοούσιον or ὁμοιούσιον, expresses the feeling of many a mind, for which, notwithstanding all its culture in other directions, the invisible is less august than the visible, and the temporal more impressive than the eternal.

But he who feels a proper practical and philosophic interest in the paramount questions and problems of Christianity, and in their bearing upon the destiny of man as immortal and everlasting, will always look upon these centuries of intense metaphysical

abstraction, and profound moral earnestness, with more veneration than upon any section of merely pagan and secular history, however striking or imposing. These bloodless metaphysical victories secured to the Church Universal a correct faith, and obtained for her all those benefits that flow perennially from the possession of the real and exact truth,—from the revealed idea and definition of the Triune God.

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **POST-NICENE TRINITARIANISM**

#### **1. Mediaeval and Papal Trinitarianism**

THE history of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Scholastic and Modern Churches can be compressed into a brief statement, the more readily, because this doctrine, more than is the case with any other, reached its approximately full developement in the first stages of its history. After the year 600, expansion in theory, and technical accuracy in statement, can be detected much more plainly in Soteriology, and even in Anthropology, than in Theology. The Scholastic and Protestant systems have unfolded the doctrines of sin and redemption, far more than they have the doctrine of the trinity.

In the Middle Ages, the character of the investigation of the doctrine of the trinity was determined by the general bent of the individual mind, or of his school. Men like Anselm, Bernard, and Aquinas joined on upon the views of the past. The writings of the Western Latin trinitarians, particularly Hilary and Augustine, as we have already remarked, were resorted to, and their general type of

doctrine prevailed among thinkers of this class. The Greek language was but little cultivated, and hence the speculations of the Greek Fathers exerted comparatively little direct influence. In regard to the opinions of the leading theologians of the Mediaeval Church, it may be summarily remarked, that the trinitarianism that had been formed and authoritatively established during the first six centuries was adopted and defended.

In that class of speculative minds, to which we had occasion to allude in the history of Apologies, we find more or less deviation from the catholic creed and faith. That adventurous thinker of the ninth century, Scotus Erigena, whose philosophizing upon the general doctrine of the Deity was pantheistic, presented views of the trinity that were Sabellian. Abelard was charged with the same tendency. Roscellin was accused of tritheism, and Gilbert of Poitiers of Damian's old heresy of tetratheism. But such opinions were regarded by those who controlled the public sentiment of the church, and by the church itself as represented in councils, as heterodox. The Anselms, Bernards, and Aquinases of the Mediaeval Church were one in sentiment upon this doctrine, with the Athanasiuses, Basils, Gregories, Augustines, and Hilaries of the Ancient Church.

## **2. Trinitarianism of the Continental and English Reformers**

At the Reformation, the Roman and Protestant churches adopted the same dogmatic statement of the doctrine of the Trinity. This is the only cardinal truth of revelation in respect to which, both parties stood upon the same ground. The anthropology, soteriology, and eschatology, of the Council of Trent are different from those of the Reformers; but its theology is the same. The Tridentine scheme presents Semi-Pelagian views of sin, teaches the doctrine of justification in part by works, and nullifies the doctrine of endless punishment by its purgatorial fires. But it adopts the trinitarian symbols of the Ancient Church, not so much from any vital interest in them, as because they have come down from the past, and there is no motive for alteration, and no intellectual adventurousness

prompting to the formation of new theories. That the Roman Church is trinitarianly orthodox, because it has no motive to be otherwise, is proved by the fact that a doctrine which lies so near the heart of Christianity as the doctrine of the trinity, and which appeals even more directly to the heart of the Christian,—the doctrine of forgiveness solely through the atonement of Christ,—has been remorselessly mutilated, and in effect annihilated by it.

The Augsburg Confession, the chief Lutheran symbol, adopts the decisions of the Nicene Council respecting the unity of the divine Essence, and the three Persons, in its statement that there is "one divine Essence which both is, and is called God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power wisdom and goodness, the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible; and yet, there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, co-eternal, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

The Second Helvetic Confession, drawn up by Bullinger in 1564, is as fair an expression of the Reformed or Calvinistic doctrine as any. Its teaching upon the doctrine of the trinity is as follows: "We believe that God, one and indivisible in Essence, is without division or confusion distinct in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so that the Father generates the Son from eternity, the Son is begotten by an ineffable generation, but the Holy Spirit proceeds from each and that from eternity, and is to be adored together with each; so that there are not three Gods, but three Persons, consubstantial, coeternal, and coequal, distinct as hypostases, and one having precedence of another as to order, but with no inequality as to essence."

The trinitarianism of Calvin, as enunciated in his Institutes, is a very clear exhibition of the Nicene type of doctrine, under the additional light that had been thrown upon the subject by the thinking of Hilary and Augustine, and by his own profound and patient study of the Scriptures. "What I denominate a Person," he says, "is a subsistence in the Divine essence, which is related to the others, and yet

distinguished from them by an incommunicable property. By the word subsistence we mean something different from the word essence. For if the Word were simply God, and had no peculiar property, John had been guilty of impropriety in saying that he was always with God. When he immediately adds that the Word also was God, he reminds us of the unity of the essence. But, because he could not be with God without subsisting in the Father, hence arises that subsistence, which, although inseparably connected with the essence, has a peculiar mark, by which it is distinguished from it. Now, I say that each of the three subsistences has a relation to the others, but is distinguished from them by a peculiar property. We particularly use the word relation (or comparison) here, because when mention is made simply and indefinitely of God, this name pertains no less to the Son and Spirit, than to the Father. But whenever the Father is compared with the Son, the property peculiar to each distinguishes him from the other. Thirdly, whatever is proper to each of them, I assert to be incommunicable, because whatever is ascribed to the Father as a character of distinction, cannot be applied or transferred to the Son."

Calvin, as did the Nicene theologians, carefully confined the term "generation" to the hypostatical character. "We teach," he says, "according to the Scriptures, that there is essentially but one God; and therefore, that the essence of both the Son and the Spirit is unbegotten. But since the Father is first in order, and hath of himself begotten his Wisdom, therefore, as has before been observed, he is justly esteemed the original and fountain of the whole Divinity. Thus God, indefinitely [i.e. the Godhead, the Essence in distinction from the Persons], is unbegotten; and the Father also is unbegotten with regard to his Person.... The Deity [the Essence] is absolutely self-existent; whence we confess, also, that the Son, as God, independently of the consideration of Person is self-existent; but as the Son, we say, that he is of the Father. Thus his essence is unoriginated; but the origin of his Person is God himself."<sup>2</sup>



Notwithstanding the clearness and explicitness of Calvin's views, he was accused by Caroli of both Arianism and Sabellianism. He defended himself before the synod of Lausanne. Caroli held it to be heresy that Calvin, in his confession there presented, affirmed that Christ is that Jehovah who of himself, alone, is always self-existent. "Certainly," said Calvin in reply, "if the distinction between the Father and the Word be attentively considered, we shall say that the one is from the other. If however the essential quality of the Word be considered, in so far as He is one God with the Father, whatever can be said concerning God may also be applied to Him, the second person in the glorious Trinity.... We teach, certainly, that Christ is the true and natural Son of God, who has possessed the like essential deity with the Father from all eternity."

The Nicene trinitarianism passed also into the symbols of the English Churches; both the Established and the Non-Conforming. The Thirty-Nine Articles teach that "in the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity;" and that the Son "is begotten from eternity of the Father, very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father." The Westminster Confession teaches that "in the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."

### **3. Unitarianism**

In the 16th century, an opposition to the church doctrine of the trinity arose in the modern Unitarianism. The two brothers Socini (Laelius and Faustus), by their writings and endeavours in other ways, associated and centralized those in the midst of Protestantism who agreed in their rejection of the doctrine of the trinity, and gave the party an external form and position. The growing spirit of toleration in the Protestant Church favoured them, and permitted the Socini to do what was forbidden to their predecessor Servetus, at

the time of the Reformation, and for attempting which he lost his life at the stake,—a measure, it should be observed, that was approved in that age by theologians of all parties, both Roman and Protestant, and was by no means a distinctively Calvinistic procedure. One of the Polish Palatines afforded this party an asylum, and encouraged it in many ways. It flourished to such an extent as to produce a body of theologians, and to construct a creed. The writings of the *Fratres Poloni* are to this day the ablest in the Unitarian theology, and the *Racovian Creed* and *Catechism*, drawn up by them, contain an explicit and logical announcement of the Unitarian scheme, which it would be for the interest of their modern successors to adopt, and of their modern opposers to examine. The only statement of Unitarianism that has any interest for the scientific theologian must be sought for in that period of its history when it had both a creed and a catechism.

This scheme of doctrine did not, however, attract any very considerable attention on the part of the church. It was a less profound form of error, than that Sabellianism and Arianism which in the first centuries had compelled the theologian to employ his most extensive learning, and his subtlest thinking. As a consequence, it has been, and still is, confined to but a small portion of the Protestant world. Had Unitarianism adopted into its conception of Christ those more elevated views of his nature and person which clung to Sabellianism, and even to Arianism, it would have been a more influential system. But merely reproducing that low humanitarian view of Christ which we found in the third class of Anti-Trinitarians of the 2d and 3d centuries,—the Ebionites, Artemonites, Theodotians, and Alogi,—the Unitarian Christ possessed nothing that could lift the mind above the sphere of the merely human, and nothing that could inspire the religious affections of veneration and worship.

#### **4. Latitudinarian Trinitarianism in the English and German Churches**

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the history of the Doctrine of the Trinity presents little that is new. The English Church during the 18th century was called upon to defend the catholic faith from the attacks of Socinians and Arians,—the former mostly in the Dissenting Churches, and the latter within its own communion. The opinions and statements of Priestley were reviewed and refuted in a superior manner, by Horsley, bishop of St. Asaph. Those of Samuel Clarke, who was court preacher to Queen Anne, and by her deposed from his office, were examined by Waterland, Master of Magdalen College.

Clarke's views were, in reality, a reproduction of the Origenistic and High-Arian doctrine of subordination, as distinguished from the Athanasian. His positions were the following. The supreme and only God is the Father, the sole origin of all being, power, and authority. "Concerning the Father, it would be the highest blasphemy to affirm that he could possibly have become man; or that he could possibly have suffered in any sense, in any supposition, in any capacity, in any circumstance, in any state, or in any nature whatsoever." With the Father, there has existed "from the beginning" a second divine Person, who is called his Word or Son, who derives his being or essence, and all his attributes, from the Father, not by mere necessity of nature, but by an act of the Father's optional will. It is not certain whether the Son existed from all eternity, or only before all worlds; neither is it certain whether the Son was begotten from the same essence with the Father, or made out of nothing. "Both are worthy of censure, who, on the one hand, affirm that the Son was made out of nothing; or, on the other, affirm that he is the self-existent substance." Clarke will not be positive upon these points, because of the danger of presuming to be able to define the particular metaphysical manner of the Son's deriving his essence from the Father. With the Father, a third Person has also existed, deriving his essence from him through the Son; this Person has higher titles ascribed to him than to any angel, or other created being whatsoever, but is nowhere called God in Scripture, being subordinate to the Son, both by nature, and by the will of the Father.

The error of Clarke originated in his failure to discriminate carefully between the essence and the hypostasis. Hence, in quoting from the Scriptures, and the Fathers, he refers to the essential nature phraseology that implies subordination, and which was intended by those employing it, to apply only to the hypostatical character. He even cites such high trinitarians as Athanasius and Hilary, as holding and teaching that the subordination of the Son to the Father relates to the Son's essence. The term "unbegotten" he also held, as did the Arians, to be a synonyme with "uncreated," so that the term "begotten" must necessarily signify "created." Thus misconceiving the Nicene use of these two terms, he endeavours to prove that the Nicene trinitarians taught that the Father alone possesses necessary existence, while the Son exists contingently. But both of these terms, as we have seen, were limited by the council of Nice to the Person, and have no relation to the Essence. The Essence, as such, neither begets, nor is begotten. They merely indicate the peculiar manner in which the first and second hypostases participate in one and the same eternal substance or nature. In this use of the terms, consequently, "begotten" signifies "uncreated" as much as does "unbegotten." The Begotten Son is as necessarily existent as the Unbegotten Father, because the Essence is the seat and source of necessary existence, and this is possessed alike by both,—in the instance of the first Person by paternity, and of the second by filiation.

In the controversy between Clarke and Waterland, a distinction was made by the latter between self-existence, and necessary existence, which it is important to notice. Waterland attributes necessary existence to the Son, but denies self-existence to him. The second Person, he maintains, is necessarily existent, because he participates in the one substance of the Godhead; but he is not self-existent, because he participates in it, not by and from himself, but by communication from the Father. The first Person is both necessarily existent and self-existent, because he not only participates in the Divine Essence, but does so without any communication of it to him by either of the other two Persons in the trinity. According to this

distinction and discrimination, "self-existent" simply means "unbegotten." "I suppose," says Waterland, "the Father to be Father of his Son; which expresses a relation of order, and mode of existence; not any difference in any essential perfection. Neither is there any greater perfection in being a Father, in this case, than in being a Son; both are equally perfect, equally necessary, in respect of existence,—all things being common, but the personal characters. And self-existence, as distinct from necessary existence, is expressive only of the order and manner in which the perfections are in the Father, and not of any distinct perfection. With this answer the catholic Fathers baffled the Arians and Eunomians." Waterland thus sums up the difference between himself and his opponent. "We say the Son is not self-existent, meaning that he is not unoriginate [or unbegotten]. You not only say the same, but contend for it, meaning not necessarily existing. We say, not unoriginate, meaning that he is not the head or fountain, not the first Person of the trinity. You take up the very same word, and zealously contend that the Son is not unoriginate, understanding it in respect to time or duration. We say the Son is subordinate, meaning it of a subordination of order, as is just and proper. You also lay hold of the word subordinate, and seem wonderfully pleased with it, but understanding by it an inferiority of nature. We say, that the Son is not absolutely supreme or independent, intimating thereby that he is second in order as a Son, and has no separate, independent existence from the Father, being coessentially, and coeternally one with him. You also take up the same words, interpret them in a low sense, and make the Son an inferior dependent Being,—depending at first on the will of the Father for his existence, and afterwards for the continuance of it."

On the Continent, the doctrine of the trinity has been most discussed, during the present century, within the German Church. The Rationalists have rejected trinitarianism altogether, and have adopted the Deistical conception of God,—substantially that of Socinianism. So far as the Orthodox theology has been affected by the pantheistic systems of philosophy, it is easy to see a leaning in it towards the Sabellian construction of the trinity. The attempt of

Schleiermacher to evince the substantial accordance of the Sabellian with the catholic scheme, while unsuccessful before the bar of science, had the effect to modify the views of his school. Some of the essays upon the trinity that are occasionally appearing in German periodical literature, betoken an inclination towards the theory of a modal trinity. At the same time, it is worthy of notice, that the learned and logical histories of the Doctrine of the Trinity that have been produced in Germany, within the last half century, whether proceeding from a friend or an enemy of the orthodox creed, from a Dorner or a Baur, show very conclusively, by their manner of construing the historical facts, that it is the received opinion that, whether true or false, the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan symbol contains the historical trinitarianism adopted by the Ancient, the Mediaeval, and the Modern Church.

## **CHAPTER V:**

### **DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST**

#### **1. Principal Heresies in Christology**

FOUR factors are necessary in order to the complete conception of Christ's Person: 1. True and proper deity; 2. True and proper humanity; 3. The union of deity and humanity in one Person; 4. The distinction of deity from humanity, in the one Person, so that there be no mixture of natures. If either of these is wanting, the dogmatic statement is an erroneous one. The heresies which originated in the Ancient Church took their rise, in the failure to combine all these elements in the doctrinal statement. Some one or more of these integral parts of the subject were adopted, while the others were

rejected. The classification of the ancient errors in Christology will, therefore, very naturally follow the above enumeration.

I. The Arians would not concede the existence of a truly and properly divine nature in the Person of Jesus Christ. Even the Semi-Arians, who allowed that the Son of God, or the Logos, was of a nature similar to that of God, yet not identical with it, could not attribute absolute divinity to the Redeemer of the world. That exalted and pre-existent being who became incarnate in Christ, even upon the Semi-Arian theory could not be called God-man with technical accuracy. But the Arian Christ was confessedly lacking in a divine nature, in every sense of the term. Though the Son of God was united with human nature, in the birth of Jesus, yet that Son of God was a κτίσμα. He indeed existed long before that birth, but not from eternity. The only element, consequently, in the Arian construction of Christ's Person that was preserved intact and pure was the humanity. Upon this point the Arians were orthodox.

Into the same class with the Arians, fall the earlier Nominal Trinitarians. Inasmuch as, in their construction of the doctrine of the trinity, the Son is not a subsistence (ὕπόστασις) in the Essence, but only an effluence (δύναμις) or energy issuing from it, they could not logically assert the union of the divine nature, or the very substance of the Godhead, with the humanity of Jesus. A merely effluent energy proceeding from the deity, and entering the humanity of Christ, would be nothing more than an indwelling inspiration kindred to that of the prophets. The element of true essential deity, in union with true essential humanity, in the Person of Christ, was, consequently, wanting in the Christology of the Nominal Trinitarians.

II. The Monarchians, or Patripassians, went to the opposite extreme of error. They asserted the true and proper deity in Christ's Person, but denied his humanity. According to them, the one single Person of the Godhead, the true and absolute deity, united itself with a human body, but not with a human rational soul. The humanity in Christ's

Person was thus incomplete. It lacked the rational part,—the spirit as distinguished from the flesh.

This Patripassian Christology received a slight modification from Apollinaris bishop of Laodicea († 382), who has given the name of Apollinarism to the scheme. The threefold division of human nature, into body (σῶμα), soul (ψυχή), and spirit (πνεῦμα), had become current, and Apollinaris supposed that it would be easier to conceive of, and explain Christ's Person, if the Logos were regarded as taking the place of the higher rational principle in the ordinary threefold nature of man, and thereby becoming an integral portion of the humanity. But upon this scheme, the Divine did not take to itself a complete and entire human nature, any more than in the original Patripassian theory. The material body, with the animal soul, or the vital principle, is by no means the whole of man. The Logos, upon this theory, was united with a fundamentally defective and mutilated humanity. For if the rational part be subtracted from man, he becomes either an idiot or a brute. It is true that Apollinarism supplies the deficiency with the Divine Reason; but it is no less true, that at the instant of the union of the two natures, the human part is merely the body (σῶμα), with its vital principle (ψυχή). It is irrational, and God assumes into personal union with himself a merely brutal nature. The human factor, consequently, was defective in the Apollinarian Christology.

III. The third general error in Christology, that arose in the Ancient Church, is the Nestorian. By this we mean the theory that was finally eliminated by the controversies between Nestorius and his opponents. Whether it was a theory which Nestorius himself would have accepted in the opening of the controversy, or one that he intended to construct, is certainly open to debate. But Nestorianism was a definite scheme, when ultimately formed, and is wanting in some essential elements and features.

The defect in the Nestorian Christology relates not to the distinction of the two natures, but to the union of the two in one Person. A true



and proper deity and a true and proper humanity are conceded. But they are not united in a single self-conscious personality. The Nestorian Christ is two persons,—one divine, and one human. The important distinction between a "nature" and a "person" is not observed, and the consequence is that there are two separate and diverse selves in Jesus Christ. Instead of a blending of the two natures into only one self, the Nestorian scheme places two selves side by side, and allows only a moral and sympathetic union between them. The result is that the acts of each nature derive no character from the qualities of the other. There is no divine humiliation, because the humanity is confessedly the seat of the humiliation, and the humanity is by itself, unblended in the unity of a common self-consciousness. And there is no exaltation of the humanity, because the divinity is confessedly the source of the exaltation, and this also is insulated and isolated for the same reason. There is God, and there is man; but there is no God-Man.

IV. The fourth of the ancient heresies in Christology is the Eutychian or Monophysite. This is the opposite error to Nestorianism. It asserts the unity of self-consciousness in the Person of Christ, but loses the duality of the natures. Eutyches taught that in the incarnation the human nature was transmuted into the divine; so that the resultant was one person and one nature. For this reason, the Eutychians held that it was accurate and proper to say that "God suffered,"—meaning thereby that He suffered in God's nature. When the Catholics employed this phrase, as they sometimes did, it was with the meaning that God suffered in man's nature. "When the apostle," remarks Hooker, "saith of the Jews that they crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2:8), we must needs understand the whole person of Christ, who, being Lord of Glory, was indeed crucified, but not in that nature for which he is termed the Lord of Glory. In like manner, when the Son of Man, being on earth, affirmeth, that the Son of Man was in heaven at the same instant (John 3:13), by the Son of Man must necessarily be meant, the whole person of Christ, who being man upon earth, filled heaven with his glorious presence, but not according to that nature for which the title of Man is given him."

The councils of Nice and Constantinople, in determining the true statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, assisted to settle the doctrine of Christ's Person, indirectly. So far as his deity was concerned, the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan creed furnished material that must necessarily go into a scriptural Christology. But it did not come within the purpose of these councils to make statements respecting Christ's humanity, or to determine the relations of the two natures to each other. It was for this reason, among others, that the subject of Christology was less developed than that of the Trinity; and that men like Apollinaris, who were correct in their Trinitarian views, should embody an error in their Christological theory. These various errors and deficiencies in the statement of the doctrine of Christ's Person were finally corrected and filled out, in the creed drawn up by the Council of Chalcedon, in 451. The Council of Ephesus, in 431, had made some beginning towards the settlement of the questions involved; but this, though summoned as such, was not strictly an oecumenical council, and was too much under the influence of the then Monophysitizing Cyril to yield a comprehensive and impartial result.

## **2. The Chalcedon Christology**

The Chalcedon Symbol defines the Person of Christ as follows. "We teach that Jesus Christ is perfect as respects godhood, and perfect as respects manhood; that he is truly God, and truly a man consisting of a rational soul and a body; that he is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with the Father as to his divinity, and consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with us as to his humanity, and like us in all respects sin excepted. He was begotten of the Father, before creation (πρὸ αἰώνων), as to his deity; but in these last days he was born of Mary the mother of God (θεοτόκος), as to his humanity. He is one Christ, existing in two natures without mixture (ἀσυγχύτως), without change (ἀτρέπτως), without division (ἀδιαιρέτως), without separation (ἀχωρίστως),—the diversity of the two natures not being at all destroyed by their union in the person, but the peculiar properties (ιδιώτης) of each nature

being preserved, and concurring to one person (πρόσωπον), and one subsistence (ὕπόστασιν)."

This statement not only asserts that there are two natures in Christ's Person, but also adjusts their relation to each other.

1. In the first place, according to the Chalcedon symbol, the uniting of the two natures in one personality does not confuse or mix them, in such a manner as to destroy their distinctive properties. The deity of Christ is just as pure and simple deity, after the incarnation, as before it. And the humanity of Christ is just as pure and simple human nature as that of Mary his mother, or any other human individual, sin being excluded. The unifying act, by which the nature of God, and the nature of man, are blended into one personal subsistence, does not in the least alter their constituent properties. The human nature is not transmuted into the divine; the divine nature is not transmuted into the human; neither is there a tertium quid formed by mixing the two,—a third Divine-human nature that is neither human nor divine.

2. In the second place, the Chalcedon statement prohibits the division of Christ into two selves or persons. The incarnating act, while it makes no changes in the properties of the two united natures, gives as a resultant a Person that is a tertium quid, a resultant that is neither a human person, nor a divine person, but a theanthropic person. For, if we have reference merely to his self-consciousness, or personality, Jesus Christ is neither human, nor divine, but is Divine-human. Contemplating him as the resultant of the union of God and man, he is not to be denominated God, and he is not to be denominated man; but he is to be denominated God-Man. The "person" of Jesus Christ, as distinguished from the "natures" that compose it, is a theanthropic person. Says Leo the Great: "Two natures met together in our Redeemer, and while the properties of each remained, so great a unity was made of either substance, that from the time that the Word was made flesh in the virgin's womb, we may neither think of Him as God without this

which is man, nor as man without this which is God. Each nature certifies its own reality under distinct actions, but neither disjoins itself from connexion with the other. Nothing is wanting from either towards the other; there is entire littleness in majesty, entire majesty in littleness; unity does not introduce confusion, nor does propriety divide unity. There is one thing passible, another impassible, yet his is the contumely whose is the glory. He is in infirmity who is in power; the self-same Person is both capable, and conqueror, of death. God did then take on Him whole man, and so knit Himself into him, and him into Himself, in pity and in power, that either nature was in the other, and neither in the other lost its own property."

This union of two natures in one self-conscious Ego may be illustrated by reference to man's personal constitution. An individual man is one person. But this one person consists of two natures,—a material nature, and a mental nature. The personality, the self-consciousness, is the resultant of the union of the two. Neither one of itself makes the person. Both body and soul are requisite in order to a complete individuality. The two natures do not make two individuals. The material nature, taken by itself, is not the man; and the mental part, taken by itself, is not the man. But only the union of the two is. Yet, in this intimate union of two such diverse substances as matter and mind, body and soul, there is not the slightest alteration of the properties of each substance or nature. The body of a man is as truly and purely material, as a piece of granite; and the immortal mind of a man is as truly and purely spiritual and immaterial, as the Godhead itself. Neither the material part, nor the mental part, taken by itself, and in separation, constitutes the personality; otherwise, every human individual would be two persons in juxtaposition. There is, therefore, a material "nature," but no material "person;" and there is a mental "nature," but no mental "person." The person is the union of these two natures, and is not to be denominated either material or mental, but human. In like manner the Person of Christ takes its denomination of theanthropic,

or Divine-human, neither from the Divine nature alone, nor the human nature alone, but from the union of both natures.

One very important consequence of this statement of the Council of Chalcedon is, that the properties of both natures may be attributed to the one Person. If the Person be called Jesus Christ, then it is proper to say, that Jesus Christ wept, and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday to-day and forever. The first statement denotes a characteristic of humanity, which is attributable to the Person; the last statement a characteristic of deity which is attributable to the Person; and both alike are characteristic of one and the same theanthropic Person. If, again, the Person be called the God-Man, then it is accurate to say that the God-Man existed before Abraham and the God-Man was born in the reign of Augustus Caesar; that He was David's son, and David's Lord. The characteristics of the finite nature, and of the infinite nature, belong equally to that Ego, that conscious self, which is constituted of them both.

Another equally important consequence of this Chalcedon adjustment of the relations of the two natures was, that the suffering of the God-Man was truly and really infinite, while yet the Divine nature is impassible. The God-Man suffered in his human nature, and not in his divine. For, although the properties of each nature may be attributed to the one Person, the properties of the one nature cannot be attributed to the other nature. The seat of the suffering, therefore, must be the humanity, and not the divinity, in the Person. But the Person suffering is the God-Man; and his personality is as truly infinite as it is truly finite. Jesus Christ really suffered; not in his Divine nature, for that cannot be the seat of suffering, but in his human nature, which he had assumed so that he might suffer. The passion, therefore, is infinite because the Person is infinite; although the nature which is the medium through which the Person suffers is finite.

Here, again, the analogies of finite existence furnish illustrations. A man suffers the sensation of heat from a coal of fire; and a brute

suffers the same sensation from the same coal. The seat of the sensation, the sensorium, in each instance is a physical nature. For the mental and immaterial nature of the man is not burned by the fire. The point of contact, and the medium of suffering, in each instance, is a material and fleshly substance. But the character and value of the suffering, in one instance, is vastly higher than in the other, by reason of the difference in the subject, the Ego. The painful sensation, in the case of the man, is the suffering of a rational and immortal person; in that of the brute, it is the suffering of an unreasoning and perishing creature. The former is human agony; the latter is brutish agony. One is high up the scale, and the other low down, not because of the sensorium, or "nature," in which it is seated (for this is the same thing in both), but because of the person or subject to which it runs and refers back.

Now the entire humanity of Christ,—the "true body and reasonable soul,"—sustained the same relation to his Divinity, that the fleshly part of a man does to his rational part. It was the sensorium, the passible medium or "nature," by and through which it was possible for the self-conscious EGO, the theanthropic Person, to suffer. And as, in the instance of an ordinary man, the mere fleshly agony is converted into a truly human and rational suffering, by reason of the humanity that is united with the animal soul and body, so, in the instance of Jesus Christ, the mere human agony is converted into a truly divine suffering, by reason of the divinity that is united with the human soul and body, in the unity of one self-consciousness.

Another important implication in the Chalcedon Christology is, that it is the Divinity, and not the humanity, which constitutes the root and basis of Christ's personality. The incarnation is the humanizing of deity, and not the deification of humanity. The second subsistence in the Divine Essence assumes human nature to itself; so that it is the Godhood, and not the manhood, which is prior and determining in the new complex-person that results. The redemption of mankind is accomplished, not by the elevation of the finite to the infinite, but by the humiliation of the infinite to the finite.

It is further to be noticed, that, according to the Chalcedon doctrine, the Logos did not unite Himself with a distinct individual, but with a human nature. An individual man was not first conceived and born, with whom the second Person in the Godhead then associated himself, but the union was effected with the substance of humanity in the womb of a Virgin: Says Hooker: " 'He took not angels, but the seed of Abraham.' If the Son of God had taken to himself a man now made and already perfected, it would of necessity follow, that there are in Christ two persons, the one assuming, and the other assumed; whereas the Son of God did not assume a man's person into his own [person], but a man's nature to his own person; and therefore took semen, the seed of Abraham, the very first original element of our nature, before it was come to have any personal human subsistence. The flesh and the conjunction of the flesh with God, began both at one instant; his making and taking to himself our flesh was but one act, so that in Christ there is no personal subsistence but one, and that from everlasting." The distinction between a "nature" and a "person" is of as great consequence in Christology, as in Trinitarianism; and the Chalcedon divines were enabled, by carefully observing it, to combine all the Scripture data relating to the Incarnation, into a form of statement that has been accepted by the church universal ever since, and beyond which it is probable the human mind is unable to go, in the endeavor to unfold the mystery of Christ's complex Person, which in some of its aspects is even more baffling than the mystery of the Trinity.

## **BOOK FOURTH:**

### **HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY**

## **LITERATURE**

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# CHAPTER I:

## THEORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUL

### 1. Pre-existence

THE inquiry and the theory respecting the origin of the human soul exerted a decisive influence upon the formation of the Doctrine of Sin, and hence we commence with this topic.

The views of the Ancient Church concerning the origin of the soul ran in three directions; though not with equal strength, or to an equal extent. The three theories that appear in the Patristic period are: Pre-existence, Creationism, and Traducianism.

The theory of Pre-existence teaches that all human souls were created at the beginning of creation,—not that of this world simply, but of all worlds. All finite spirits were made simultaneously, and prior to the creation of matter. The intellectual universe precedes the sensible universe. The souls of men, consequently, existed before the creation of Adam. The pre-existent life was Pre-Adamite. Men were angelic spirits at first. Because of their apostasy in the angelic sphere, they were transferred, as a punishment for their sin, into material bodies in this mundane sphere, and are now passing through a disciplinary process, in order to be restored, all of them without exception, to their pre-existent and angelic condition. These bodies, to which they are joined, come into existence by the ordinary course of physical propagation; so that the sensuous and material part of human nature has no existence previous to Adam. It is only the rational and spiritual principle of which a Pre-Adamite life is asserted.

The principal defender of this theory was Origen. Some things akin to it are to be found in the Pythagorean and Platonic speculations,—

particularly in the doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls from one body into another; and in the theory that man's innate ideas are reminiscences of an antecedent life in a higher world than that of sense of time. But Origen endeavored to defend the theory of Pre-existence upon Scripture grounds, though he was undoubtedly much influenced by the speculations of pagan philosophy in adopting it. The Mosaic narrative of the temptation and apostasy, in Genesis 3, according to him, is an allegorical representation of the fall of the finite spirit from the higher into the lower sphere. Adam in the Hebrew is a generic term, and denotes not an actual historical individual, but the image and representative of the race. The serpent emblemizes the devil; the death threatened is not temporal but eternal death, of which the death of the body is the shadow and symbol; the expulsion from paradise is the loss of the pre-existent blessedness, and the "coats of skins" signify the clothing of the fallen spirit in a material body. That the narrative is to be explained in this manner, and not to be understood literally, is plain, says Origen, to every one who penetrates into the real meaning of Scripture, and takes worthy views of the Divine Being. Such allegorical costume for the higher truths is not strange; it is found in the Greek symbolism. Plato's myths of Poros and Penia, in the Symposium, have much similarity with this Mosaic account of the fall. Origen also interprets the language of the apostle Paul respecting the creation "groaning and travailing in pain together" (Rom. 8:19), as referring to the low and degraded condition of spirits who once occupied a higher sphere. Alluding to the fall of some of the angelic spirits, he says: "Hence God the creator made them bodies suited to a most degraded condition (*congrua humilibus locis*), and fabricated the visible world for them, and sent into this world ministering angels, for the care and discipline of those who had fallen." Origen also cites Rom. 9:11 sq., in proof of the pre-existence of the human soul, remarking that "there was no injustice in Jacob's supplanting Esau in the womb, in case we suppose him to have been chosen of God on the ground of merit acquired in a preceding life (*ex praecedentis vitae meritis*), so that he deserved to be preferred to his brother." Another proof for the soul's pre-

existence is derived by Origen, from the parable of the vineyard and the laborers, in Matthew 20:1 seq. They who are hired first are Adam and those of that time. They who are hired at the third hour are Noah and his generation. Abraham and his generation are hired at the sixth hour; Moses and his generation at the ninth. All mankind at, and since, the time of Christ, are represented by the laborers employed at the eleventh hour. But these are described as having been standing idle all the day long,—that is during the entire saeculum represented by the "day" spoken of in the parable. "If therefore," says Origen, "the soul has no existence anterior to the body, but is generated with it (συνεσπάρη), how could those who were born since the birth of Christ have been in existence, to stand idle previous to that event?"

The theory of Pre-existence may be said to rise and set with Origen. Only here and there was a voice heard in its favor after his death; and during his life-time it was confined chiefly to the Alexandrine school. Cyril of Alexandria and Nemesius of Emesa,<sup>4</sup> defend the doctrine of the simple pre-existence of the soul, but not of its fall in a pre-existent state. The theory, however, was generally refuted and combatted, so that by the latter part of the 4th century it had become obsolete. Jerome denominates it a *stulta persuasio* to believe "that souls were created of old by God, and kept in a treasury;" and Philastrius enumerates it among the heresies. Augustine<sup>3</sup> opposes the doctrine of a fall in a pre-existent state, as contradicting the Scripture statement that "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good." He also remarks that if earthly bodies were given to fallen spirits on account of the sins they have committed, the bodies should be proportioned to the degree of the sins; and that the devils, therefore, should have worse bodies than men,—which Augustine thinks is not the fact.

The theory of Pre-existence, it is obvious, is the most extreme form of individualism as applied to the origin of man. It rejects the idea of race-connection, and race-unity, in every form. Each human individual is created by a distinct fiat at the very beginning of

creation, and antecedent to all material worlds. As such, it has no physical or generic connection with other souls; but is a pure unit alone and by itself. And this individualism, pure and simple, pervades its entire history. It apostatizes alone and by itself; it is associated with a material body, as a disciplinary infliction, alone and by itself; and it is redeemed alone and by itself, only to be still liable to another and yet another apostasy, alone and by itself. The notion of a created species, a common human nature, is wholly and energetically excluded by the theory of Pre-existence. The material body, into which the rational spirit descends from its antecedent sphere of existence, is, indeed, propagated; but this is only a temporary prison, and not a permanent constituent of humanity. The sensuous and earthly part of man, according to the Origenistic theory, is not a part of his real and proper humanity.

## **2. Creationism**

2. The theory of Creationism maintains that God immediately creates *de nihilo* a new soul, in every instance that a new individual of the human family is born. But the human body is not created *de nihilo*, in this successive manner. This part of man is created in and with Adam, and is propagated from him.

Creationism met with far more favor in the Ancient Church, than the doctrine of Pre-existence. Its advocates cited in favor of it, the declaration of Christ, in John 5:17: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,"—interpreting the "work" here spoken of as that of creation, and not providence merely. They also quoted Ps. 33:15: "He fashioneth their hearts alike;" and Zech. 12:1: "The Lord ... formeth the spirit of man within him."

Speaking generally, the theory of Creationism was the dominant one in the Eastern Church, and found advocates in the Western. Jerome asserts that God "*quotidie fabricatur animas*," and cites in proof the above mentioned texts of Scripture. He remarks that Creationism is the true church doctrine (*ecclesiasticum est*), though not much

received as yet by the Western bishops. In another place, however, he refers the inquirer upon the subject of the soul's origin to Augustine, whose work *De origine animae*, although it does not explicitly decide the question, he praises, and shows an inclination to Augustine's views. Hilary of Pictavium is the most explicit advocate of Creationism in the West. In his tractate upon Psalm 91 (§ 3), he lays down the position that the souls of men are daily (*quotidie*) originated by the secret and unknown operation of divine power.

Creationism, it is obvious, is a mixed theory. As respects the human soul, it teaches that there are as many repeated and successive *fiats* of creation, as there are individuals in the series of human beings; while so far as the human body is concerned, there is but a single creative *fiat*. In the instance of each and every individual soul after Adam, there is creation, but not procreation or propagation. In the instance of each and every individual body after Adam, there is procreation or propagation, but not creation. The physical part of every man, considered as a creation *de nihilo*, dates back of birth and individual existence, to the creative act mentioned in Genesis 1:27; but his spiritual part, as a creation *de nihilo*, dates back only to birth, or to the commencement of individual existence, in whatever generation, or year of the world, that may happen to be. Reckoning from the strict and absolute creation of each, the body of a man of this generation, upon the theory of Creationism, would be six thousand years older than his soul; for there is this interval of time between the creative *fiat* that originated the former, and the creative *fiat* that originated the latter. The theory, therefore, is a composite one. It has affinities with Traducianism, in adopting the idea of race-connection, and generic unity, so far as respects man's sensuous nature. And it has affinities with Origen's theory of Pre-existence, in excluding the idea of species when applied to the human soul, and in adopting the idea of pure individuality alone. The tenet of pre-existence in the angelic world, it rejects.

### **3. Traducianism**

The theory of Traducianism maintains that both the soul and body of the individual man are propagated. It refers the creative act mentioned in Gen. 1:27 to the human nature, or race, and not to a single individual merely. It considers the work of creating mankind *de nihilo*, as entirely completed upon the sixth day; and that since that sixth day the Creator has, in this world, exerted no strictly creative energy. He rested from the work of creation upon the seventh day, and still rests. By this single act, all mankind were created, as to both their spiritual and their sensuous substance, in and with the first human pair, and from them have been individually procreated and born, each in his day and generation. According to Traducianism, creation is totally distinct and different from birth. Creation relates to the origination *de nihilo* of the total substance or nature of mankind, considered as a new and hitherto non-existent species of being. Birth is subsequent to creation, and refers only to the modifications which this substance undergoes,—its individualization in the series of generations. Hence man can be created holy, and be born sinful. By creation he may be endowed with the moral image and righteousness of his Maker; while by birth, or rather at birth, he may be possessed of a moral guilt and corruption that was originated after creation, and before birth.

This view of the origin of the soul was first stated with distinctness by Tertullian, and from his time onward gained ground and authority in the Western Church; while the Eastern Church, as has been remarked, preferred the theory of Creationism. The Biblical support for Traducianism was derived from Paul's statement of the Adamic connection and the origin of sin, in Romans 5:12–19, corroborated by 1 Cor. 15:22: "In Adam all die," Eph. 2:3: "And were by nature children of wrath," Heb. 7:10: "For Levi was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedec met him," Ps. 51:5: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me," and Gen. 5:3: "And Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image."

Tertullian was the first to state this theory in express terms, and defend it upon speculative grounds. He does it in a somewhat crude

and materializing manner, because he attempts to explain and illustrate the manner in which the individual life is deduced from the generic. In this respect, he falls into the same error into which Justin Martyr, and the first theoretic Trinitarians, generally, fell, in the speculative construction of the doctrine of the Trinity. In his tract *De Anima* (c. 19), Tertullian remarks that "the soul of man, like the shoot of a tree, is drawn out (*deducta*) into a physical progeny from Adam the parent stock." In another place (c. 27), in this same tract, he asserts that "both substances (body and soul) are conceived, finished, and perfected together;" and holds to both a corporeal and a psychical generation, each proceeding from its own appropriate base, though each is inseparable from the other, and both are simultaneous.

The Traducian theory continued to gain ground in the North-African, and in the Western European Church, by reason of its affinity with that particular mode of stating the doctrine of sin which prevailed in these churches. Jerome remarks that in his day it was adopted by "*maxima pars occidentaliū*." Leo the Great († 461) asserts that the "catholic faith teaches that every man, with reference to the substance of his soul as well as of his body, is formed in the womb." Among the Orientals, this theory obtained little currency. Gregory Nyssa,<sup>3</sup> and Anastasius Sinaita, alone, were inclined to adopt it.

But the theologian who contributed most to the currency and establishment of Traducianism was Augustine. And yet this thinker, usually so explicit and decided, even upon speculative points, nowhere in his works formally adopts the theory itself. In his *Opus imperfectum* (IV. 104) he replies to Julian: "You may blame, if you will, my hesitation because I do not venture to affirm or deny that of which I am ignorant; you may say what you please concerning the profound obscurity of this subject; nevertheless let this doctrine be fixed and unshaken that the guilt of that one man is the death of all, and that in him all died." Yet Augustine's entire speculation upon the origin and nature of sin is indirectly, and by implication, an earnest defence of the Traducian theory. His anthropology, as we shall see

when it comes up for examination, is both illogical and inconceivable without it. The transmission of sin, to which Augustine held, logically involves, as Tertullian had perceived before him, the transmission of the sinning soul; and this implies the Adamic existence and unity.

The attitude and tendency of Augustine's mind, in respect to the two systems of Creationism and Traducianism (for the theory of Pre-existence he expressly rejects and argues against), may be seen from an analysis of the first book of his treatise *De Anima*. Renatus had sent Augustine the work of Vincentius Victor, in which the doctrine of Creationism was defended. Augustine in his critical reply takes the ground that Victor cannot demonstrate from Scripture, the position that souls are created and in-breathed in every instance of birth, and asserts that we are in ignorance upon the whole matter. He examines one by one those texts which Victor has quoted, and contends that they are insufficient to prove Creationism. In summing up, he remarks, that if any one prefers to hold that souls are created in each individual instance, he must take care not to hold the four following errors: 1. That the souls thus immediately created are made sinful at the instant of creation, by the Creator, through an original sin, or sinful disposition, that is infused into them, and which is not truly their own sin; 2. That those who die in infancy are destitute of original sin, and do not need that baptism which puts them in possession of the merits of Christ; 3. That souls sinned in some other sphere before their connection with flesh, and that for this reason they were brought down into sinful flesh; 4. That the newly-created souls of those who die in infancy are not punishable for existing sin, but only for sins which it is foreknown they would have committed had they been permitted to arrive at a suitable age.

The difficulties that beset the subject of the origin of the individual soul, whether the theory of creation or of traduction be adopted, are very clearly stated by Augustine in his epistle *Ad Optatum*, his treatise *De peccatorum meritis et remissione*, his tract *De anima*, and his exegetical work *De Genesi ad literam*. We will briefly give the line of remark in these treatises, which we take from the learned and



discriminating work of Gangauf upon the Metaphysical Psychology of Augustine.

So far as the question of the divine agency in creation is concerned, says Augustine, we may accept either Creationism or Traducianism. By either theory, God is recognized as the creator; for even in case the theory of traduction or generation be adopted, God is still the absolute origin and author, inasmuch as in the primal act of creating the human soul he so created it that it possesses the power of reproducing and perpetuating itself in individual souls, just as in the sphere of nature and matter the first seed is indued with the power to reproduce individuals after its own kind. This endowment of reproductive power, says Augustine, as much requires creative energy to account for its existence, as does the existence of the first seed, or the first soul; "for who can make a seed to produce individuals invariably after its kind, except that Being who made the seed itself from nothing?" Nevertheless, continues Augustine, both theories have their difficulties. In reference to Traducianism, the question arises, how it is possible to hold to such a propagation of the soul without falling into materialism, and regarding the soul as a corporeal entity, after Tertullian's example, whose fancies in this respect need not awaken our wonder, since he represents God the creator himself as corporeal. On the other hand, he who adopts Traducianism finds little difficulty with the doctrine of original sin, while the advocate of Creationism finds a great difficulty here. For the soul as newly created (and it is newly-created in every individual instance according to the Creationist) cannot be anything but a pure and perfect soul. It cannot be tainted with evil of any kind; but on the contrary, as coming immediately from the creator's hand, must possess his holy image and likeness. If, now, it be thus pure and perfect, the question arises: Why does it deserve to be associated at very birth with a diseased and dying body, and to be stained and polluted with a corrupted sensuous nature?<sup>2</sup> The fact that its connection with such a body does not depend at all upon the soul, but rests entirely upon the will of the creator, would seem to imply that God himself is the cause of the soul's deteriorated state and

condition. But if so, its restoration would be no act of grace. It would, rather, be a matter of obligation, since the creator would be merely healing a wound which he himself had made. Furthermore, in the case of infants who die without baptism,—a thing that occurs in thousands of instances, and with the Divine foreknowledge,—how is the justice of God to be vindicated, if such infantile souls, without any agency and fault of their own, are visited with disease, sickness, pain, and death temporal and eternal? Can we believe that the creator makes these newly-created spirits guilty at the time of creating them, and then inflicts these evils upon them as a punishment? How, upon the theory of Creationism, shall we find an interval of time between the act that creates the soul and the act that unites it with a diseased and mortal body, of sufficient length for Satan to present his temptation, and the newly-created spirit to yield and fall? Neither is it any relief to say that God punishes the souls of unbaptized infants upon the ground of those sins which they would have committed had they lived, and which he foreknew they would commit. For this would conflict with the nature of retribution and the idea of justice. Punishment supposes some actual offence in the past. It is always retrospective. Hence penalty cannot be anticipated. No being can be justly punished in advance. If he can be, then there is nothing to prevent a child who dies at the age of three years, from being punished for all the sins which he would have committed had he lived upon earth to the age of forty, or sixty, or sixty thousand years. With respect to such questions as the following, which were urged against the theory of Creationism: Why does God create souls for children who die at birth, or immediately after? and why does he create souls in the instance of adulterine offspring? Augustine remarks, that he thinks he could give an answer from the position of Creationism. But to the question: Why does God punish an infant soul? he can give no answer from this position.

Augustine finally remarks, that if one goes to the Scriptures for a decisive settlement of the question at issue between Creationism and Traducianism, he does not obtain it. In respect to the doctrine of original sin, the preponderance of Scripture proof is upon the side of

Traducianism. But passages may be quoted in favor of the soul's new creation in each individual instance; still, no one of them is so decisive that it might not be interpreted in favor of its traduction. All such passages prove, indeed, that God is the giver, the creator, the former of the human soul. But how he is, whether by in-breathing them newly-created, or by the traduction (trahendo) of them from the parent, the Scriptures nowhere say. "As yet," says Augustine (Ep. CXC, Ad Optatum), "I have found nothing certain and decisive in the canonical Scriptures, respecting the origin of the soul."

It is evident from these trains of remark, which are drawn from a very wide surface in Augustine's writings, that his mind felt the full force of the mysteries that overhang the origin of the individual soul, and its inborn sinfulness. That his mind inclined to Traducianism, the course of reasoning which has been delineated plainly shows. That he was not averse to Creationism, provided the problem of sin could be solved in a way to accord with what he believed to be the teaching of Scripture and the Christian experience, is evident from the following remark which he makes respecting this theory in his letter to Jerome: "Ecce volo ut illa sententia mea sit, sed nondum esse confirmo." Again, in this same letter he says to Jerome: "Teach me now, I beg of you, what I shall teach; teach me what I shall hold; and tell me if souls are every day, one by one, called into being from nonentity, in those who are daily being born."

#### **4. Mediaeval and Modern Theories**

In the Middle Ages, the theory of Creationism prevailed over the rival theory. Traducianism fell into disrepute with the Schoolmen, for two reasons: 1. Because they regarded it as conflicting with the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and as materializing in its influence. 2. Because, rejecting as most of them did, the anthropology of Augustine, and adopting the Greek anthropology, they had less motive than Augustine had, for favoring the theory of the soul's traduction.

The revival of the Augustinian anthropology at the Reformation naturally led to the re-appearance of the Traducian theory. The symbols of both the Lutheran and the Calvinistic divisions, so far as they make any speculative statement at all upon the subject, generally enunciate, or at least logically involve, the doctrine of the Adamic unity in respect to both soul and body. But as we have seen Augustine himself hesitating to take a decided position respecting the origin of the individual soul, it is not strange that minds in the Protestant Church that were agreed upon the doctrine of original sin, should differ upon this metaphysical question. Advocates of both Traducianism and Creationism are to be found among the early Protestant divines. The subject itself, like other purely speculative ones, has attracted less attention for two centuries past, than it did in the previous history of the Church. One of the most decided of modern advocates of Traducianism is the American theologian Edwards, in his treatise *On Original Sin*.

# **CHAPTER II:**

## **THE GREEK ANTHROPOLOGY**

### **1. Preliminary Statements**

THE universality of human sinfulness, and the need of divine grace in Christ in order to deliverance from it, were acknowledged in the doctrinal system of the Christian Church from the beginning. There was no denial, except among the confessedly heretical sects, of the doctrines of Sin and Redemption stated in this general form. In constructing the more specific statements there was, however, a difference of opinion in the Ancient Church, which showed itself in two great tendencies. The one resulted in what we shall denominate the Greek Anthropology; the other in the Latin Anthropology. These types of doctrine were not rigorously confined, the one to the Eastern and the other to the Western Church. But each was the predominating scheme within its own borders, while yet each found some advocates, and exerted some influence within the limits of the other.

The two questions upon which the controversy turned were the following: 1. Is man's power to good diminished by sin, and if so to what extent? 2. What is the precise relation which the agency of the human will sustains to the workings of the Holy Spirit, in regeneration?

The views of the entire Church, both the Western and Eastern, upon these points, during the 2d and 3d centuries were shaped very much by the controversy with Gnosticism. The dualistic theory of the universe, held by the Gnostic, involved the eternity of evil as well as of good, and the further tenet that man is sinful by creation, because all creation is the work of the Demiurge. In opposition to this view, the Christian Fathers contended for the biblical doctrine that man

was created holy, and a free moral agent, and that by the misuse of his moral freedom he is himself the author of his own sin. Again, the Gnostic, dividing mankind into three classes,—οἱ πνευματικοὶ, οἱ ψυχικοὶ, οἱ ὑλικοὶ,—asserted that only the first class were capable of being redeemed, and that the other two classes, who constituted the great mass of mankind, were hopelessly given over to evil lusts and satanic powers. In opposition to this theory, the Christian Fathers maintained the essential moral equality and similarity of all men, and contended that the varieties of character seen in human society are varieties in the manifestation only, and not of the inward disposition, and that even these are owing to circumstances, and to the different use which individuals make of their faculties and powers.

It was a natural consequence of this polemic attitude towards Gnosticism, that the anthropology of the 2d and 3d centuries of both the Western and the Eastern Church was marked by a very strong emphasis of the doctrine of human freedom. At a time when the truth that man is a responsible agent was being denied by the most subtle opponents which the Christian theologian of the first centuries was called to meet, it was not to be expected that very much reflection would be expended upon that side of the subject of sin which relates to the weakness and bondage of the apostate will. The Gnostic asserted that man was created sinful, and that he had no free will. The Ancient Father contented himself with rebutting these statements, without much reference to the consequences of human apostacy in the moral agent, and the human will itself. When, therefore, the question respecting these consequences was raised, it is not surprising that there was some variety in the answers that were given by the different theological schools, and parties, of Primitive Christendom.

## **2. The Alexandrine Anthropology**

The most unqualified position, in reference to the power of free will in apostate man, was taken by the Alexandrine School. This was

partly the result of the excessive speculative tendency by which this school was characterized, and partly of its collision with Gnosticism. The Alexandrines represent the will of man as possessed, notwithstanding its apostasy in a pre-existent state, of a plenary power to good, and able to turn from sin by the exercise of its own inherent energy (αὐτεξούσιον). Clement of Alexandria asserts that "to believe or to disbelieve is as much at the command of our will as to philosophize or not to philosophize." "Man, like every other spiritual being, can never lose the power of arbitrary choice. By means of this power, noble minds, at all times, here and hereafter, aided by that Divine Power which is indispensable to success, are lifting themselves up from ignorance and deep moral corruption, and are drawing nearer to God and the truth."

Yet these statements undergo some modification. Clement also insists upon the necessity of divine influences in order to deliverance from sin, because, although man is able to commence moral improvement by the resolute decision of his will, he cannot bring it to completion without the aid of divine grace. "God," he remarks, "co-operates with those souls that are willing." "As the physician furnishes health to that body which synergizes towards health [by a recuperative energy of its own], so God furnishes eternal salvation to those who synergize towards the knowledge and obedience of the truth." In these extracts, which might be multiplied, Clement teaches that the initiative, in the renewal and change of the sinful heart, is taken by the sinner himself. The first motion towards holiness is the work of man, but it needs to be succeeded and strengthened by the influences of the Holy Spirit. Whenever, by virtue of its own inherent energy, the soul is itself willing, then God co-operates, and concurs with this willingness.

These views of Clement, respecting the power to good in apostate man, were shared by Origen. In the third book of the *De Principiis*, he argues that the assertion of the apostle that man's salvation "is not of him that willeth," but "of God that showeth mercy," means merely that the existence of the will as a faculty depends upon Divine power,

and not that the use of the faculty is thus dependent. "As we derive it from God that we are men, that we breathe, that we move, so also we derive it from God that we will. But no one would infer from the fact that our capacity to move, the hand, e.g., is from God, that therefore the motion of our hand in the act of murder, or of theft, is from God." Throughout this first chapter of the third book of the *De Principiis*, in which Origen enunciates his view of human freedom, and examines the Scripture texts that relate to this subject, he holds that the relation which the human will sustains to moral good is precisely the same as that which, it sustains to moral evil. The will initiates both holiness and sin; so that, in Origen's view, it is as incorrect to deny to the human will, be it fallen or unfallen, the power to holiness, as it would be to deny it the power to sin. Origen's position is, that the will of man is the ultimate efficient in either direction, or else it is the ultimate efficient in neither direction.

Origen's view of the relation which the agency of the human will sustains to Divine power in regeneration, coincides with that of Clement. The finite faculty begins the process of right action, and divine grace perfects and completes it. The faculty by which to will the right, man has from God; but the decision itself is his own act. God's part is therefore greater than man's; as the creation of a faculty is greater than the use of it. Moreover, every right beginning of action on the side of man, requires a special succor and assistance from God. Through the Holy Spirit this succor is granted, according to the worthiness of the individual; and thus every right act of man is a mixture of self-choice and divine aid.

The views of Clement and Origen respecting original sin harmonized with these views of free will and regeneration. To understand their theory of original sin, it will be necessary first to exhibit their psychology. They subdivided the constitution of man into σῶμα, ψυχή, and πνεῦμα. The first, was the material part; the second included the principle of animal life, together with the sensuous appetites and passions that relate to the physical world; while the third was the rational and spiritual principle, including the will and



the moral affections of human nature. Original sin, according to the Alexandrine theologians, was confined to the two first subdivisions in the trichotomy. It was an inherited corruption which has its seat in the body and the sensuous nature, but does not inhere in the πνεῦμα, because this is not propagated, and therefore cannot inherit anything. Adopting then, as the Alexandrine anthropologist did, the theory of pre-existence, it was easy to see that the rational part, the πνεῦμα, coming down from the angelic sphere, would be kept, more or less, in isolation from the body and its sensuous corruption, and might thus be regarded as able by its intrinsic energy to rule and overcome this "original sin," this corrupted sensuousness, that was all around it, but was not in it.

Original sin, being only physical corruption, and pertaining only to the bodily and physical nature, was not regarded as truly and properly culpable by the Alexandrine school. There is no guilt except in the wrong action of the πνεῦμα. Sin, in the strict sense, therefore, has no origin in Adam, but is the act of the individual will, either in a previous world, or in this one. That the individual will, in every instance, yields to the solicitation of the corrupt sensuousness, Origen accounts for by the force of example and education, and not by any connection or union between the posterity and the progenitor. "Parents," says Origen, "not only generate their children, but also imbue them; and they who are born are not merely the children, but the pupils, of their parents; and they are urged to the death of sin, not so much by natural connection (natura), as by training. For illustration, if a man apostatizing from Christianity should take up the worship of idols, would he not teach the children that should be begotten, to worship demons and offer sacrifice to them? This is what Adam did when he apostatized from God."

### **3. Later-Alexandrine and Antiochian Anthropology**

The Anthropology indicated in these statements of Clement and Origen, in a modified form, became the type of doctrine in the Oriental Church generally. It received a modification in three

particulars: 1. The theory of pre-existence was rejected, and that of creationism was substituted. 2. There was more recognition of the indirect effects of the Adamic transgression upon the soul itself, including the will (πνεῦμα). 3. There was a more qualified assertion of power to holiness in the fallen man.

These modifications are apparent in the writings of the Later-Alexandrine School, composed of those Greek theologians who had felt the influence of Origen, viz.: Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssa, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Cyril of Alexandria. These Fathers endeavored to exhibit the doctrine of the universality of sin in its relation to the sin of Adam, yet did not adopt that doctrine of a propagated sinfulness of the will (πνεῦμα) which we shall meet with in the Latin Anthropology. Original Sin, with them also, is not culpable. It is only an inherited disorder of the sensuous nature, from which temptation issues, and to which the will yields; and not until this act of the will is there any sin, properly so called, in man. Athanasius was engaged with the discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity all his life, and exhibits his anthropological opinions only rarely, and in passing. But his view of original sin would probably be summed up in the above-mentioned statement. Hagenbach (*Dogmengeschichte*, § 108) quotes a remark of Athanasius, to the effect that "many men have become pure from all sin," in proof of his own statement that Athanasius did not hold to the universality of sin. But the remark of Athanasius when read in its original connection shows that he was speaking not of the unregenerate, but of those who were the subjects of renewing divine influence. "Many," he says, "have been made holy and clean from all sin; nay Jeremiah was hallowed from the womb; nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," and thus "man remained mortal and corruptible as before, liable to the affections proper to his nature."

Cyril of Jerusalem makes the following statements respecting original sin: "When we come into the world we are sinless

(ἀναμάρτητοι), but now we sin from choice." "Where God first sees a good conscience there he bestows the saving seal." "We did not sin before our souls came into the world; but coming into it free from evil, we transgress by the choice of our mind. There is no kind of souls that are either sinful or righteous by nature, but that we are either the one or the other proceeds only from free choice." "The sentence of death threatened against Adam extended to him and all his posterity, even unto those who had not sinned as Adam did when he disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit." Cyril here implies, that as infants have not sinned by a conscious and deliberate act of choice they have not sinned at all, and that death passes upon them not as penalty, but for other reasons. Gregory Nazianzen denominates unbaptized children ἀσφραγίστους μὲν, ἀπονήρους δέ. Gregory Nyssa asserts a universal tendency to sin in mankind, but denies sin in the sense of guilt, in infants.

The Antiochian School, represented by Theodore of Mopsuestia, Chrysostom, and Theodoret, adopted substantially the same anthropology with the Later-Alexandrines. They held the doctrine of the Adamic connection only so far as the physical nature is concerned, and taught that there is an inherited evil, or corruption, but not an inherited sin. The best representative of this school, and perhaps of the Greek anthropology generally, is Chrysostom. He concedes that the mortal Adam could beget mortal descendants, but not that the sinful Adam could beget sinful descendants. The doctrine of propagation, according to him, applies to the physical nature of man, but not to his spiritual and voluntary. The first progenitors of the human race brought corruption, i.e. a vitiated sensuousness, but not a sinful will into the series of human beings, and these latter universally adopt it, and strengthen it, by the strictly individual choice of their will. In his Commentary upon Romans 5, Chrysostom thus expresses his views. "It is not unbefitting (οὐδὲν ἀπεικός) that from that man who sinned, and thereby became mortal, there should be generated those who should also sin, and thereby become mortal; but that by that single act of disobedience another being is made a sinner, what reason is there in this? No one

owes any thing to justice, until he first becomes a sinner for himself (οἰκοθεν). What, then, is the meaning of the word ἁμαρτολοὶ, in the phrase 'were made sinners?' It seems to me, to denote liability to suffering and death." Here, plainly, Chrysostom limits the connection of Adam with his posterity to that part of man which is other than the strictly voluntary part. The union of Adam and his posterity accounts for the origin of strong animal passions, of inordinate sensual appetites, but not for the origin of voluntary wickedness. This, as it is the act of will, and not the mere working of sensuous appetite, has a purely individual origin.

Chrysostom's theory of regeneration was firmly synergistic. If man upon his side works towards holiness, God's grace will come in to succor and strengthen him. In his 16th Homily on Romans, his exegesis is as follows: "The phrase 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth' does not denude man of power altogether, but indicates that the whole power is not of man. Assisting grace is needed from above. For, it is necessary that the man himself should both will and run; but he is to be courageous (θάρρεῖν) and constant [in well doing], not by his own efforts, but through God's loving kindness." Again, Chrysostom remarks, that "it is necessary for us first to choose goodness, and when we have chosen it, then God introduces (εἰσαγεί) goodness from himself.... It is our function to choose beforehand, and to will, but it is God's function to finish and bring to completion."

#### **4. Recapitulatory Survey**

The Greek Anthropology, commencing with the extreme positions of Clement and Origen, and passing from these into the more guarded statements of the Later-Alexandrine and Antiochian Schools, became the general type of doctrine for the Eastern Church; and under new forms and names has perpetuated itself down to the present time. Christendom from the very beginning became divided into two great dogmatic divisions; in one of which the Greek, and in the other, the Latin Anthropology has prevailed. A recapitulatory survey of the

cardinal points of the former presents the following particulars: 1. Original Sin is not voluntary, and, therefore, is not properly sin in the sense of guilt. 2. The Adamic connection relates only to the corporeal and sensuous nature, and not to the voluntary and rational. 3. The voluntary and rational πνεῦμα is not propagated, but is created in each individual instance, and its action is individual altogether. 4. The Adamic connection exerts no immediate effect upon the will; it affects it only mediately, through the fleshly corruption. 5. Infants are guiltless, because they possess only a propagated physical corruption. 6. The will takes the initiative in regeneration; but though the first to commence, it is unable to complete the work; and hence the need of the Divine efficiency, with which the human will co-operates as itself an efficient power.

## **CHAPTER III:**

### **THE LATIN ANTHROPOLOGY**

#### **1. Tertullian's Traducianism**

AS has been observed, the Greek anthropology was the dominant theory in the Eastern Church, and prevailed extensively in the Western. In the 2d and 3d centuries, many of the Occidental Fathers, judging from their writings, would not have quarrelled with a statement of the doctrines of sin and regeneration substantially like that of Chrysostom. But in the writings of the leading minds at the West, in the 3d and 4th centuries, we can discover the swelling germs of that other theory which afterwards became dominant in the Latin Church. The fathers in whom this tendency is most apparent are Tertullian, Cyprian, Hilary, and Ambrose.

Tertullian's Traducianism, which gradually became the received psychology of the Latin Church, paved the way for the doctrine of innate sin, in distinction from innate evil, and also for the theory of monergism in regeneration. This Father, starting from the fact that from birth man is constantly inclined to sin, deduced from it his famous maxim: *Tradux animae, tradux peccati*,—the propagation of the soul implies the propagation of sin.

His argument, drawn out in full, was as follows. If there can be a traduction of the soul, there can be a traduction of sin. If a free-agent can be propagated, then free-agency can be; for the agency follows the agent, and shares in all its characteristics. If, therefore, there be nothing in a continuous process of transmission from a generic unity that is incompatible with the nature of a rational and voluntary essence like the soul, then there is nothing in such transmission that is incompatible with the activity of such an essence, or, in other words, with the voluntariness of sin. If God can originate the entire human nature by the method of creation, and then can individualize this nature by the method of procreation, it follows that he can preserve all the qualities of the nature,—its rationality, its immateriality, its freedom, &c.,—in each of its individualizations, and from one end of the process to the other; for preservation is comparatively less difficult than creation from nothing. In other words, if mind, considered as an immaterial substance, does not lose its distinctive qualities by being procreated, but continues to be intelligent, rational, and voluntary at every point in the process, and in every one of its individualizations, then it follows that the activities and products of such a mental essence do not cease to be rational and responsible activities and products, though exhibiting themselves in that unbroken continuity which marks a propagation. It is evident that everything depends upon the correctness of the hypothesis that there is a *tradux animae*,—that man is of one generic nature as to his spiritual part as well as his physical, and that his entire humanity is procreated. Hence the importance attached to the Traducian theory of the origin of the soul, by Tertullian, and the earnestness with which he maintained it.

It is only the beginnings, however, of the Latin or Augustinian anthropology, that we can trace in Tertullian's writings. In some instances, he still speaks of original sin in the same terms with the Greek theologians. His well-known plea for the delay of paedobaptism rests upon the comparative innocence of infancy. "Why should the age of innocence be in haste to obtain remission of sin?" Yet it would not be correct to infer from this phraseology, that Tertullian held to an absolute innocence upon the part of infants. The innocence is relative only; the infant has not committed "actual" sins, though possessed of a sinful bias, which Tertullian held to be condemning, certainly to the extent of needing the remission of baptism.

Tertullian at times, also, employs phraseology that looks towards the synergistic theory of regeneration. "Some things are by virtue of the divine compassion, and some things are by virtue of our agency." Yet, in his writings, generally, the human efficiency is a minimum, and almost disappears, so that the rudiments of the monergistic theory of regeneration are distinctly visible in the anthropology of the North-African Church, which was mainly shaped by them. In his tract *De Anima*, Tertullian, with allusion to Scripture phraseology, remarks: "And thus stones shall become the children of Abraham, if they be formed by the faith of Abraham, and the progeny of vipers shall bring forth the fruits of repentance, if they spit away the poison of their malignity. But this involves the energy of divine grace, more powerful than that of nature, and which holds in subjection to itself that free power of will within us which is denominated αὐτεξούσιον."

## **2. Anthropology of Cyprian, Ambrose, and Hilary**

The writings of Cyprian († 258) exhibit an increasing tendency in the Western Church towards the doctrine of an original sinfulness, and a monergistic renovation of the human soul. The pressure from Gnosticism was now less heavy, and the attention of theologians was being turned more to the effects of sin upon the will itself. As a consequence, less emphasis was placed upon the doctrine of human

power, and more upon that of Divine grace. "All our ability," says Cyprian, "is of God. In him we live, in him we have strength. Our heart merely lies open and thirsts. In proportion as we bring a recipient faith, do we drink in the inflowing grace." Respecting the guilt of original sin, Cyprian is fluctuating, and not entirely consistent with himself. He seems to hold that original sin is not so culpable as actual sin, and yet teaches that it needs remission. "The infant," he remarks, "has committed no sin. He has only contracted the contagion of death from his progenitor, and hence remission of sin is more easy in his case, because it is not his own but another's sin that is remitted to him."

In the writings of Ambrose († 397) and Hilary († 368), the two most distinguished Latin theologians of the 4th century, we find the doctrine of a sinful, as distinguished from a corrupt, nature still more distinctly enunciated than in Tertullian and Cyprian, and more use made of the ideas and phraseology of the fifth chapter of Romans. The following passages from Ambrose will indicate his general view of original sin, and of the Adamic connection. Quoting Romans 5:12, which in the version of his day was rendered "in whom all have sinned," he remarks: "Adam existed (fuit), and we all existed in him; Adam perished, and all perished in him." "We all sinned in the first man, and by the succession of nature, the succession of guilt (culpae) was transfused from one to all." "Before we are born, we are stained with contagion, and before we see the light we receive the injury of the original transgression." " 'In whom all sinned,'—thus it is evident that all sinned in Adam, as if in a mass; for having corrupted by sin those whom he begat, all are born under sin. Wherefore we all are sinners from him (ex eo), because we all are [men] from him." Statements similar to these are made by Hilary.

We find, then, the germinal substance of the Augustinian theory of sin, so far as concerns the Adamic connection, in the century previous to that in which Augustine's principal dogmatic influence falls. Indeed, it is evident that this latter Father was the recipient as well as the propagator of that particular system which goes by his



name. He only developed an anthropology that had been gradually forming in preceding centuries, out of that remarkable dogmatic material which is contained in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

Respecting the other anthropological question: viz. To what degree is the power of the human will weakened by sin? both Ambrose and Hilary teach the synergistic theory; although with less firmness, and more self-contradiction, than we have found in the earlier Latin Fathers. The following passages from Ambrose illustrate his vacillation. "The apostle says, 'Whom he foreknew, them he also predestinated:' for he did not predestinate before he foreknew, but to those whose merit he foreknew, he predestinated the rewards of merit." "The will of man is brought into a state of recipiency (*praeparatio*) by God. For that God may be honored by a holy will is through God's grace." A comparison of the latter passage with the former evinces a mental wavering between synergism and monergism. Hilary is more explicit and firm in favor of the theory of co-operation; although asserting the weakness of the apostate will. The following passages indicate his views. "In preserving our righteousness, unless we are guided by God, we shall be inferior through our own nature. Wherefore, we need to be assisted and directed by his grace in order to attain the righteousness of obedience." "The persevering in faith is of God, but the origin and commencement of faith is from ourselves." "It is the part of divine mercy to assist the willing, to confirm those who are making a beginning, to receive those who are approaching. But the commencement is from ourselves, that God may finish and perfect."

### **3. Anthropology of Augustine**

The anthropology indicated in these extracts from Tertullian, Cyprian, Hilary, and Ambrose, grew more and more definite in the Latin Church, and became theoretically the established faith within it. It was wrought out into its most distinct form, and received its

fullest statement, in the Patristic period, in the Augustinian anthropology, of which we shall now make a detailed examination.

In the first part of his Christian life, Augustine was influenced by the views of his teacher Ambrose, and occasionally attributed a certain amount of co-operating efficiency to the human will in the work of regeneration. In his earlier writings, some tendency to synergism is apparent. For example, in his Exposition of certain points in the Epistle to the Romans he remarks: "It is nowhere said that God believes all things in us. Our faith, therefore, is our own; but the good works that we perform are of him who gives the Spirit to those who believe ... It is ours to believe and to will; but it is his to give, through his Spirit, to those who believe and will, the power of performing good works.... God gives his holy Spirit to one whom he foreknows will believe, so that by performing good works he may attain eternal life." The two last statements, Augustine formally retracts in his final revision of his works.<sup>2</sup>

The external cause of this synergism in Augustine's earlier writings, besides the influence of the undecided views of Ambrose and Hilary, was the Manichaeism from which he had just escaped, and against which he felt a strong repugnance. This scheme, like the Gnosticism of the 2d and 3d centuries, made sin a thing of creation and natural necessity, so that the same motive for emphasizing the doctrines of free-will and human responsibility existed in the case of Augustine, that existed in the instances of Origen and Tertullian. On the other hand, his growing experience of the depth of moral evil within his own soul, and the whole course of his Christian life so vividly portrayed in his Confessions, were forcing upon his notice the fact, that the will, the higher spiritual faculty, as well as the lower sensuous nature, has felt the effects of the apostasy in Adam. The Greek anthropology, we have seen, excepted the voluntary part of man when speaking of the consequences of Adam's transgression, and limited them to the bodily and sensuous part. But the severe conflict which Augustine was called to wage with his bodily appetites, and his old heathen habits, revealed to him the fact that the

governing power of the soul, the will itself, has been affected by the same apostasy that has affected the other parts of human nature. "I was bound," he says, "not with another's irons, but by my own iron will. My will the enemy held, and thence had made a chain for me, and bound me. For of a perverse will came lust; and a lust yielded to becomes custom; and custom not resisted becomes necessity (*necessitas*). By which links, as it were, joined together as in a chain, a hard bondage held me enthralled." In this way, Augustine's attention was directed to the reflex influence of sin itself upon the voluntary faculty, whereby its energy to holiness is destroyed, and it becomes by its own act an enslaved will. His experience of the truth that even after regeneration, "to will is present," but "how to perform," the will "finds not," led Augustine to his fundamental position, that original sin is in the will as well as in the sensuous nature, and has vitiated the voluntary power along with all the other powers of man. This practical experience, and the important speculative conflict with Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism, were the causes of Augustine's transition from the Greek anthropology of his earlier days, to that other view to which his own name has been affixed.

The following are the essential points in the Augustinian anthropology. Man was created in the image of God,—that is with a will inclined and determined to holiness, and positively holy. The primitive holiness of man was not his own product, in the sense that he is the ultimate author of it, because he would then be entitled to the glory of it. All finite holiness, be it in man or angel, is only relatively meritorious, because it is the result of God's working in man or angel to will and to do. As possessed of this con-created holiness, man was immortal, both in regard to body and soul. He was not liable to death in any form. With this condition of holiness, was coupled the possibility of originating sin *de nihilo*. This, in relation to the existing determination to goodness, was the power of contrary choice. This power was not added for the purpose of making man a free agent, but a probationary agent. Adam was already free, in his inclination to good. When God works in the finite will, to will and to

do, there is no compulsion. But man could not be put upon probation, unless a power to the contrary, or a power to create sin out of nothing, were superadded to his freedom. The power to the contrary, therefore, was not the substance of moral freedom, but only an accident existing for a temporary purpose merely. Man, though endowed with this power of contrary choice, was commanded not to use it,—which is another proof that it is not needed in order to moral freedom. Man would not have been forbidden to use a power that belongs necessarily, and intrinsically, to free will. But if the power were used, Adam would become both sinful and mortal. His original righteousness would be totally lost; original sin would take the place of it in his soul; his body would be subject to temporal death, and his soul to eternal.

Augustine distinguished between absolute perfection, and relative perfection. The former is the perfection of God, who is destitute of the power of sinning. Those angels who have passed through probation successfully are also absolutely perfect; not, however, because of a self-subsistent energy like that of God, but because they are "kept from falling." But the primitive state of man was that of relative perfection only. Though holy, his holiness was neither self-derived nor self-subsistent; and neither was it so established by divine power that he could not apostatize. Whether he should become absolutely perfect, like God and the elect angels, depended upon the use which he should make of his probationary power to the contrary, during the period of probation. If Adam had continued to will holiness, his power to will sin would have diminished, by the operation of a natural law, until it reached the minimum point, and would then have vanished forever. When his probation was thus over, his will would have become so profoundly harmonized with that of God, that the hazards of apostasy would no more pertain to him, than to the Deity. The relative perfection with which he had been endowed by creation, would have resulted in absolute perfection; that is, the incapability of sinning, which belongs to God and the holy angels.<sup>2</sup>

But this was not the actual result. Adam was tempted, and induced by Satan to use the power of contrary choice. He thereby originated sin *de nihilo*, and by ultimate efficiency. He is now sinful in the inclination and determination of his will. His body has become mortal, and his soul is condemned to everlasting death. His condition is now directly contrary to what it would have been, had he continued in holiness. Had he passed through probation safely, he would have become unable to sin; but having failed to do so, he is now unable to originate holiness and recover himself from apostasy.<sup>2</sup> According to the Augustinian anthropology, there are two reasons for this. In the first place, the power to the contrary, in either direction, is only an accident of voluntariness, and not its substance. Voluntariness, whether it be holy or sinful, consists in self-motion with absence of compulsion. Adam's righteousness was spontaneous self-motion, and the power to originate sin did not render it any more so, by being bestowed, nor would it have rendered it any less so, by being withheld. Adam's sinfulness was pure and simple self-will, self-decision, and did not require the additional power to originate holiness, in order to be self-will. Voluntariness consists in positively willing the one thing that is willed, and not in the bare possibility of willing a contrary thing. If a person walk by his own self-decision, this self-decision would be neither strengthened nor weakened by endowing him with another power to fly. His voluntariness depends upon the single fact that he is walking without external compulsion, and of his own accord. There are many other things which might be denied to his option, yet the denial would not invalidate the fact that he is moving of, and from, his own determination. In the second place, the power to the contrary, in reference to a sinful will, would be a power to originate holiness by an ultimate efficiency. But this power, according to Augustine, belongs solely to the Deity, and is as incommunicable to any created will human or angelic, as omnipotence or omniscience itself. For any being who originates holiness by his own ultimate efficiency is worthy of the veneration and worship due to holiness. The finite will can be the ultimate efficient of sin; and hence unfallen Adam could be endowed with a power to originate sin,—or, with the power to the

contrary, downward. But holiness in the creature must always be the result of God working in him to will. Hence fallen Adam could not be endowed with the power to originate holiness by ultimate efficiency, —or, with the power to the contrary, upward. The power of contrary choice, therefore, according to the Augustinian anthropology, can be given in only one direction. It is a transient and accidental characteristic of the human will, which is intended to belong to it only during the middle or probationary stage in its history, and which disappears either in a state of immutable holiness, or immutable sin. The assertions of Augustine are frequent upon this point, and very explicit. "God," he remarks, "was able to make man so that he should not be able to sin; but he chose rather to make him so that it should lie in his power to sin, if he would, and not to sin, if he would not; forbidding the one, enjoining the other; that it might be to him, first, a merit not to sin, and afterwards a just reward to be unable to sin. For in the end, he will make all his saints to be without power to sin."

It is here that we notice the marked difference between the Latin and the Greek anthropology, in respect to the idea, and definition, of the will. The Latin anthropology regards the will as always in a state of decision, by its very nature. Voluntariness belongs as intrinsically to the faculty of will, as intelligence does to the faculty of understanding. A will that is characterless would be an involuntary will; which is as great a solecism as an unintelligent understanding. The Greek anthropology, on the contrary, conceives of the voluntary faculty as intrinsically undecided. At and by creation, it is without character, because it is in a state of indifference. Taken and held at the instant of creation, the human will is an inactive and involuntary essence, because it is undetermined either to good or evil. From this unelective and inactive state, it starts out an election, a voluntariness, either of good or evil. Hence, God cannot create a holy will, any more than he can create an evil will; because this would imply a determined will. In brief, the Greek idea of the will is, that it is a vacuum which is to make itself a plenum by a vacuum's activity.

Again, the Latin definition of freedom is wholly diverse from the Greek. In the Latin anthropology, freedom is self-determination; in the Greek anthropology, it is in-determination, or indifference. According to Augustine, a faculty is free when it acts purely from within itself, and is not forced to act from without. If, therefore, the human will moves towards a proposed end, by its own self-motion, this self-motion alone constitutes its voluntariness. It is not necessary to endow it with an additional power to move in a contrary direction. Such a super-addition of power would add nothing to the already existing fact of an unforced self-motion. Even when the power to the contrary, or the *possibilitas peccandi*, is given for purposes of probation, the real freedom of the will, according to Augustine, is seen in not using it, rather than in using it,—in continuing to will the right, and refusing to will the wrong. Persistency in the existing determination, and not a capricious departure into another determination, is the token of true rational liberty. "*Velle et nolle, propriae voluntatis est*,"—by which Augustine means that, to will holiness and to nill sin, not, to will either holiness or sin, is the characteristic of the will. In the Greek anthropology, on the contrary, the substance of moral freedom consists in what the Latin anthropologist regards as the accident,—viz., in the power to do another thing, or to do differently. It is not sufficient that the will be uncompelled, and self-moved. It must possess, over and above this, a power of alternative choice,—the *possibilitas utriusque partis*. Hence the human will, by creation and structure, is indifferent and undetermined. Having no choice by and at creation, it can choose with equal facility either of the two contraries, holiness or sin. And in this fact, and not in its positive self-motion, consists its freedom.

To recapitulate, then, the principal points in the Augustinian anthropology are the following. Adam as created and unfallen was positively holy, in the sense of possessing a holy inclination or determination of his will. This holy inclination or determination was accompanied, for merely probationary purposes, with an accidental and negative power to the contrary, or a possibility of originating sin *de nihilo*. His freedom consisted solely in this holy inclination,—in

this unforced self-motion of his will to good. Neither the presence nor the absence of a power to do something other than the right, could affect the fact that he was doing the right, and without compulsion. Hence, according to Augustine, Adam's power to the contrary, which was the power to ruin himself and his posterity, was not necessary to constitute him a voluntary agent. He would still have been willingly holy, even if God had not placed him upon probation, and super-added the power of willingly sinning. The *possibilitas peccandi*, therefore, was an accident, and not the essence, of moral agency. God is a moral agent, and yet can neither apostatize, nor be put upon probation. Hence Adam was commanded not to use this accident of moral agency. It was intended to disappear in and with the process of probation; and when it had so disappeared, Adam would have still been, as before, willingly holy, without the possibility of sin and self-ruin. The relative perfection of a creature placed upon temporary trial, to see if he would retain his virtue, would have become the absolute perfection of a creature who has safely passed through probation. On the other hand, Adam the fallen is positively sinful; in the sense of possessing a sinful inclination or determination of will. This inclination is the activity of the will, and not its substance. It is the creature's unforced, self-moved energy. It is not, as holiness is, the activity of the will when under the influence of God "working in it to will." On the contrary it is the creature's merest self-will, uninfluenced by the Holy Ghost. It is, consequently, the most extreme kind of self-motion. It is self-will, or wilfulness, in its most intense form. It is voluntariness in the strongest manner conceivable. This wrong inclination of the will is not accompanied with a power to the contrary, as the primitive right inclination was. And this for two reasons. First, the power to the contrary is not necessary in order to voluntary action. It is needed only for purposes of probation; and after probation has been ended by an act of apostasy there is no further need of it, because it has answered the purpose for which it was bestowed. Secondly, a power to the contrary possessed by a will with a sinful inclination, would be a power to originate holiness *de nihilo*. The creature, in this case, would be the ultimate efficient of holiness as he is of sin, and be



capable of an absolute merit as he is of an absolute demerit. But such a power is incommunicable to the finite will, because it would place the creature upon a level with the Creator, in respect to moral excellence, and desert of worship. The guilt of sin consists in its unforced wilfulness; and this guilt is not in the least diminished by the fact that the will cannot overcome its own wilfulness. For this wicked wilfulness was not created in the will, but is the product of the will's act of apostasy. The present impotence to holiness is not an original and primitive impotence. By creation Adam had plenary power, not indeed to originate holiness, for no creature has this, but to preserve and perpetuate it. The present destitution of holiness, and impossibility of originating it, is due therefore to the creature's apostatizing agency, and is a part of his condemnation.

Augustine's theory of regeneration is, consequently, entirely monergistic. The work of the Holy Spirit is necessary not merely to supplement a deficiency in the power of fallen man, but to take the very initiative, and renovate the will itself. Divine agency is the sole originating cause of holiness in fallen man. The only righteousness which the unrenewed will is able to work out is that external righteousness which Augustine denominates *justitia civilis*, and which the modern denominates "morality." That internal righteousness, which consists in a spiritual and total conformity to law, Augustine contended is beyond the competence of the apostate will to produce. Grace is imparted to sinful man, not because he believes, but in order that he may believe; for faith itself is the gift of God. The method of regeneration, in Augustine's scheme, is as follows. The Holy Spirit is the efficient; the human spirit is the recipient. The former acts independently; the latter acts only as it is acted upon. The consequence of the divine efficiency is regeneration; the consequence of the human recipiency is conversion. God regenerates, and as a sequence therefrom man converts.

The following are the several degrees of grace, which mark the several stages in the transition of the human soul from total depravity to perfect holiness. The first is that of prevenient grace

(*gratia praeveniens*). In this stage of the process, the Holy Spirit employs first the moral law, as an instrumental agent, and produces the sense of sin and guilt; and then, by employing as a second instrumentality the gospel promise of mercy, it conducts the soul to Christ, in and by the act of faith. The second stage in the transition is the result of what Augustine denominates operative grace (*gratia operans*). By means of faith, thus originated by prevenient grace, the Divine Spirit now produces the consciousness of peace and justification through Christ's blood of atonement, and imparts a new divine life to the soul united to Christ. In this manner, a will freely and firmly determined to holiness is restored again in man, and the fruits of this μετάνοια, or change of heart and will, begin to appear. But the remainders of the apostate nature still exist in the regenerate soul, though in continual conflict with the new man. In the life-long struggle that now commences, the now renovated and holy will is efficiently operative for the first time, and co-works with the Holy Spirit. Hence this third degree of grace is denominates co-operating grace (*gratia co-operans*). The final and crowning act of grace results in the entire cleansing of indwelling sin from the soul, and its glorified transformation into complete resemblance to its Redeemer, —a state of absolute perfection, as distinguished from the relative perfection with which man was created, and characterized by the incapability of sinning and dying (*non posse peccare et mori*). This grade of grace is never witnessed this side of the grave.

Experience and observation show that all men are not regenerated. Now, since, according to the above theory, the sinner can contribute nothing in the way of efficiency towards his own regeneration, because he acts holily only as he is acted upon, it follows that the difference between man and man, in respect to regeneration, must be referred to God. Hence Augustine accounts for the fact that some men are renewed, and some are not, by the unconditional decree (*decretum absolutum*), according to which God determines to select from the fallen mass of mankind (*massa perditionis*), the whole of whom are alike guilty and under condemnation, a portion upon whom he bestows renewing grace, and to leave the remainder to

their own self-will and the operation of law and justice. This is a method of pure sovereignty upon his part, wherein are manifested both the "goodness and severity of God,"—upon them who were not interfered with, and were left to their own self-will, severe and exact justice; upon them whose obstinate and hostile self-will was overcome by the Holy Spirit, unmerited pity and compassion. The ground and reason of this selection of only a portion of mankind, according to Augustine, is God's wise good-pleasure, and not a foreseen faith upon the part of the individual man. For faith itself is a gift of God. It is the product of grace, and grace results from the unconditional decree.<sup>2</sup> As the mere consequent of electing mercy, faith can no more determine the divine decree of election, than the effect can determine its cause. "Predestination," says Augustine, "is the preparation for grace, but grace is the gift itself." "God elected us in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinating us to the adoption of sons, not because he saw that we should become holy and spotless through ourselves, but he elected and predestinated us that we might become so. But he did this according to the good pleasure of his will; that man might not glory in his own will, but in the will of God towards him." "How can it be," he writes to Vitalis,<sup>2</sup> "that God waits for the wills of men to move first, that he may then impart grace to them; since we properly give him thanks in reference to those whom while unbelieving and persecuting his truth with an ungodly will he anticipates with his mercy, and with an almighty facility converts unto himself, and out of unwilling makes them willing? Why do we give him thanks for this, if he really does not do this?"

The unconditional decree, in reference to the non-elect, according to Augustine, is one of preterition, or omission merely. The reprobating decree is not accompanied, as the electing decree is, with any direct divine efficiency to secure the result. And there is no need of any; for according to the Augustinian anthropology there is no possibility of self-recovery from a voluntary apostasy, and, consequently, the simple passing by and leaving of the sinful soul to itself renders its

perdition as certain, as if it were brought about by a direct divine efficiency.

Not all grace, but the grace which actually regenerates, Augustine denominates irresistible (*gratia irresistibilis*). By this he meant, not that the human will is converted unwillingly or by compulsion, but that divine grace is able to overcome the utmost obstinacy of the human spirit. "When God wills to save any one, no will of man resists him." "No man is saved but he whom God wills to be saved; it is necessary, therefore, to pray that he may will it, because if he wills it, it must come to pass." "It is not to be doubted that the human will cannot resist [so as to overcome and defeat] the will of God."<sup>2</sup> Divine grace is irresistible, not in the sense that no form of grace is resisted by the sinner; but when grace reaches that special degree which constitutes it regenerating, it then overcomes the sinner's opposition, and makes him willing in the day of God's power. The only sure sign that an individual is one of the elect is his perseverance in the Christian life; for he is elected to holiness, as well as to happiness. Perseverance, like faith, is the gift of God, and Augustine denominates it *donum perseverantiae*. In answer to the objection urged against the doctrine of unconditional election, according to which it is impossible for any but the elect to be saved, drawn from the text, "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), Augustine explains this passage to mean: "all who are predestinated." "It is said that he wills all men to be saved, that it may be understood that predestination is no respecter of persons, but that all classes, ages, and conditions of mankind are among the elect."

Augustine denies that the heathen are saved, although he is particular to remark that there are degrees in the scale of their condemnation. He takes this position, in opposition to Pelagianism, which contended that natural virtue may be a ground of salvation, and asserted that some of the more virtuous pagans were saved by their personal excellence, and irrespective of redemption. Arguing against Julian, who was a much more able defender of Pelagianism

than Pelagius himself, he remarks: "In the day of judgment, the consciences of the heathen will 'excuse' them (Rom. 2:15) only to the degree that they will be punished more mildly, in case they have been a law unto themselves, and have obeyed it in some measure. Fabricius will be less severely punished than Catiline; not because Fabricius is good, but because he was less wicked than Catiline. Fabricius was less sinful than Catiline, not because he possessed true holiness, but because he did not depart so far from true holiness." In the fifth book of the *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine shows that God rewarded the natural virtues of the early Romans with temporal prosperity; yet that their frugality, contempt of riches, moderation, and courage, were merely the effect of the love of glory that curbed those particular vices which are antagonistic to national renown, without ceasing to be a vice itself. He concedes the praise of external rectitude (*justitia civilis*) to many actions of the heathen, yet he maintains that when these are viewed in the motive or principle from which they sprung they are sins; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). "It is sin, then," objects Julian, "when a heathen clothes the naked, binds up the wounds of the infirm, or endures torture rather than give false testimony?" Augustine replies that the act in itself, or the matter of the act, is not sin; but as it does not proceed from faith, and a purpose to honor God, the form of the act, which contains the morality of it, is sin. Augustine supposed that unbaptized infants are lost,<sup>2</sup> although he believed that the punishment allotted to them is the mildest possible of all (*omnium mitissima*). Yet he is explicit in asserting that "there is no middle place; so that he who is not with Christ, must be with the devil." This he affirms in opposition to that middle sort of state which the Pelagians denominated "eternal life," in distinction from the world of perfect blessedness, which they held to be denoted by the "kingdom of heaven."

We have seen that Augustine refused to declare for either Creationism or Traducianism, when the question came up before him as a purely speculative and philosophical one. When, however, he is defending his view of the doctrine of Original Sin, he makes

statements that are irreconcilable with any theory of the origin of the human soul, but that of creation by species, and the propagation of both soul and body. When endeavoring to justify his position that all men are guilty of the Adamic transgression, or "Adam's sin," he distinctly teaches that all mankind were created in Adam. "God the author of nature, but not of sin (vitium), created man upright, but he having through his own will become depraved and condemned, propagated depraved and condemned offspring. For we were all in that one man, since we were all that one man who lapsed into sin through that woman who was made from him, previous to transgression. The particular form in which we were to live as individuals had not been created and assigned to us man by man, but that seminal nature was in existence from which we were to be propagated." "All men at that time sinned in Adam, since in his nature all men were as yet that one man." "Adam was the one in whom all sinned." "The infant who is lost is punished because he belongs to the mass of perdition, and as a child of Adam is justly condemned on the ground of the ancient obligation."

These passages, which might be multiplied indefinitely, are sufficient to indicate Augustine's theory of generic existence, generic transgression, and generic condemnation. The substance of this theory was afterwards expressed in the scholastic dictum, "*natura corrumpit personam*,"—human nature apostatizes, and the consequences appear in the human individual. In the order of nature, mankind exists before the generations of mankind; the nature is prior to the individuals produced out of it. But this human nature, it must be carefully noticed, possesses all the attributes of the human individual; for the individual is only a portion and specimen of the nature. Considered as an essence, human nature is an intelligent, rational, and voluntary essence; and accordingly its agency in Adam partakes of the corresponding qualities. Hence, according to Augustine, generic or original sin is truly and properly sin, because it is moral agency. The Latin anthropology extended the doctrine of the Adamic connection to the whole man, instead of confining it, as the Greek did, to a part only. Chrysostom, for

example, conceded a union between the physical part of the individual, and the first progenitor. But this logically involved an existence, as to the body, in Adam; because it is impossible to unite two things, one of which is an absolute non-entity. Even according to the Greek anthropology, the physical nature of the individual must have existed generically in the physical nature of Adam, in order to such a union and propagation. But what the Greek anthropologist affirmed of a part, the Latin affirmed of the entire man. The rational and voluntary principle, equally with the physical and animal, existed in Adam. A mystery overhangs the existence of the posterity in the progenitor, even when the existence is limited to the body, and not extended to the soul; yet the mere fact of mystery did not prevent the Greek anthropology from adopting the doctrine of the Adamic unity up to the line that separates the sensuous from the rational part. And, in like manner, the mere fact of mystery did not deter the Latin anthropology from extending the oneness and connection to the whole man, both body and soul.

The principal source of this theory was the fifth chapter of Romans. Augustine's Platonic studies may have exerted some influence upon his development of the Scripture data, but those writers mistake greatly who suppose that he would have favoured one of the most difficult of all theories to understand and defend, if he had had no higher authority to embolden him, than that of Plato. And as it was, we have seen that he shrank from adopting it, as a philosopher, however he might as a theologian. But the fifth chapter of Romans, it was universally conceded, teaches an Adamic union of some kind; and Augustine contended that it was of the most comprehensive species, and included both the soul and the body. He was led to this exegesis, by a theological, and not by a philosophical interest. In no other way could he account for sin at birth, and for the sufferings and death of infants.

It was one consequence of this theory of the Adamic unity, that Augustine held that all sin, both original and actual, is voluntary,—meaning thereby, in accordance with the Latin idea of freedom, that

it is unforced self-will, without power to the contrary, or the power of originating holiness *de nihilo*. There is no author in the whole theological catalogue, who is more careful and earnest than Augustine, to assert that sin is self-activity, and that its source is in the voluntary nature of man. Sin, according to him, is not a substance, but an agency; it is not the essence of any faculty in man, but only the action of a faculty. The Manichaeon theory that sin is a substance created, and infused into man by creative power, Augustine refuted and combatted with all the more energy because he had at one time been entangled in it. Hence, he was careful to teach that original sin itself, as well as the actual transgressions that proceed from it, is moral agency. But in order to agency there must be an agent; and since original sin is not the product of the individual agent, because it appears at birth, it must be referred to the generic agent,—i.e. to the human nature in distinction from the human person, or individual. Hence the stress which he laid upon the act of transgression in Adam. At this point in the history of man, he could find a common agent, and a common agency; and only at this point. Ever after, there are only portions or individualizations of the nature, in the series of generations. This one common agent yields him the one common agency which he is seeking. In this manner, original sin is voluntary agency, as really as actual sin is,—the difference between the two being only formal. Both are equally the product of human will; but original sin is the product of human will as yet unindividualized in Adam, while actual sin is the product of human will as individualized in his posterity.

In proof that Augustine held to the voluntariness of sin in both its forms, original and actual, we mention, the following of his positions.

1. In the first place, he carefully distinguishes between the work of the Creator and that of the creature, and designates the former by the term "*natura*." In this sense and use of the word, he denies that sin is by "*nature*," or belongs to "*nature*." "*All fault or sin (vitium),*" he says, "*is an injury to nature, and consequently is contrary to nature.*" "*In one and the same man, the intention [i.e. the inclination] may be*



blamed, but the nature praised; for they are two different things. Even in a little child, that nature which was created by the good and holy God is not the only thing that exists; but he has also that fault (vitium sc. intentio), i.e. intention or disposition, which through one man passed over to all."<sup>2</sup> For this reason, Augustine prefers the phrase "peccatum originale," to the phrase "peccatum naturale" or "peccatum naturae," as the designation of the Adamic sin; and employs it, particularly when the Pelagians charge him with holding to a "natural," in the sense of a "created" sin. "The good," he remarks, "which is in nature as such, cannot be destroyed, unless nature itself is destroyed. But if nature is destroyed [i.e. as to its substance] by corruption, then corruption itself will no longer remain; for there is then no nature in which corruption can exist." "If man had lost the whole divine image [as to substance, i.e.], there would be nothing remaining, of which it could be said, 'Though man walketh in an image he is vainly disquieted (Ps. 39:6).' " "That is good which deplores the lost good; for if there were nothing of good remaining in nature, there would be no pain for the lost good, as punishment." "Everything good is from God; there is therefore no nature that is not from God (omne autem bonum ex Deo; nulla ergo natura est quae non sit ex Deo)." In these passages, which might be multiplied, in which "nature" is synonymous with "creation," sin is denied to be natural, or to belong to the course and constitution of nature; while yet, in the secondary signification of a natural disposition or inclination (intentio), Augustine, it is needless to say, constantly affirms that sin is both "natural" and a "nature." In harmony with these statements, Augustine also distinguishes between "substance" and "quality," and asserts that sin is not substance but quality. Arguing with Julian of Eclanum, he says: "Julian speaks as if we had said that some substance was created in men by the devil. The devil persuades to evil as sin, but does not create it as nature. But evidently he has persuaded nature, as man is nature; and by persuading has corrupted it. For he who inflicts wounds does not create limbs, but injures limbs. But wounds inflicted on bodies make the limbs falter or move feebly, but do not affect that voluntary faculty (virtutem) by which the man is or does right; but the wound

which is called sin, wounds that voluntary faculty (vitam) by which man leads a holy life.... And yet that weakness (languor) by which the power of living holily perished, is not nature, but a corruption; just as bodily infirmity is not a substance or nature, but a vitiation." "Evil is not a substance; for if it were a substance, it would be good."

2. Secondly, Augustine denies that God can himself sin, or efficiently cause sin in his creatures. He maintains that moral evil must, from the nature of the case, originate within the sphere of the finite solely. Only a finite will can sin, or be the author of sin. The only relation which the Infinite Will can sustain to moral evil is permissive and regulative. "Evil does not arise except in a good being; and this, too, not in the Supremely and Immutably Good, but in a being made from nothing, by the wisdom of God." Every finite rational being, in other words, must be created holy. From this position he lapses into evil. Holiness is thus always from the creator; and sin always from the creature. Hence, says Augustine, the efficient cause of sin cannot be found back of the will of the creature, and must not be sought for at any point more ultimate than this. The caption of the seventh chapter of the twelfth book of the *De Civitate Dei* runs as follows: "The efficient cause of an evil will is not to be sought for." By this Augustine means, as his argument goes on to show, that it contradicts the idea of sin to ask for an originating cause of sin other than the sinner himself. To seek an efficient cause of an evil will, is to ask for the efficient cause of an efficient cause. The whole argument in the sixth chapter of the twelfth book of the *De Civitate Dei* aims to prove that moral evil is the purest possible self-motion, and consequently cannot be referred to anything, or any being, but the self. "Let no one," Augustine says, "seek an efficient cause for the evil will; there is no efficient cause, only a deficient one." In other words, the sinful inclination of the human will is not a product originated by a positive external cause, but it is a deficiency, or falling away, within the will itself. Augustine then goes on to show how God's agency, the agency of an Infinite Being, can never be a deficiency, but must always be an efficiency; and thereby evinces the impossibility of sin in the Divine will. It is in such speculations as these, that the Latin

Father laid the foundation of the scholastic doctrine that sin is a negation.<sup>2</sup> By this it was not meant that sin is a non-entity; but only a negative, or privative, entity. It has existence, and is to have it endlessly, now that it has come into existence. But evil has not that intrinsic and positive excellence of being, that eternal right to be, which good possesses. Hence evil, unlike good, is eternal only a *parte post*. Holiness is from eternity to eternity, like God. But sin is from time, and of time, to eternity.

3. Thirdly, Augustine expressly asserts that all sin, both original and actual, is voluntary. "If sin, says Julian, is from will, then it is an evil will that produces sin; if from nature, then an evil nature. I quickly reply: Sin is from will. Then he asks whether original sin also [is from will]? I answer, certainly, original sin also; because this too was transmitted (*seminatum est*) from the will of the first man, that it might both be in him, and pass over to all." Here, it is plain that Augustine proceeds upon the ethical maxim, that that which springs from a voluntary cause is itself to be reckoned voluntary, and places voluntariness beneath all the sin of man,—voluntariness either generic or individual. Hence he remarks, in another place, that "moral evil would not be in infants except by the voluntary action of the first man, and the traduction of original sin." Speaking, in his *Confessions*, of his erroneous views of evil when involved in Manichaeism, he says: "I maintained that Thy unchangeable substance did err compulsorily, rather than confess that my changeable substance had gone astray voluntarily, and now for punishment, lay in error." Arguing with Julian, he remarks: "We, too, say that there cannot be sin without free will. Nor does our doctrine of original sin contradict this position; because we arrive at this kind of sin through free will,—not, indeed, through the will of the individual at birth, but through the will of him in whom all were originally, at the time when he vitiated the common human nature, by an evil act of will. Hence, infants do not, at their birth, originate the sinful will which they have; but Adam in that time of his apostasy committed that great common sin (*magnum illum peccatum*) with a free will." Again, in this treatise *Contra Julianum*, he says: "In vain,

therefore, do you imagine that there is no guilt (*delictum*) in infants, for the reason that guilt cannot be without voluntariness, and there is no voluntariness in infants. This is true, so far as individual transgression (*proprium cujusque peccatum*) is concerned; but not so far as concerns the original contagion of the first [Adamic] sin. But if this Adamic sin is a nullity, infants would not be involved in any evil, and certainly would not be exposed to any species of evil, either of body or soul, under the government of a perfectly just God. The guilt that is in original sin, therefore, takes its origin from the sinful will of the first pair (*priorum hominum*). Thus, neither original nor individual sin can originate but from a wrong will." In his treatise *De Vera Religione*, Augustine remarks that "sin is an evil so voluntary, that there can be no sin but what is voluntary; and this is so very manifest, that none of the learned few or the unlearned many ever dissent. In fine, if we do not perform evil with our will, then ought no person to be reprov'd or admonish'd; but if you deny this fact, the Christian law and the discipline of every religion must be set aside." In his *Epistle Ad Sixtum*, Augustine represents the Pelagian as objecting that "men will excuse themselves by saying, 'Why should we be blamed if we live ill, since we have not received grace to live well?' " To this he answers: "Those who live ill cannot truly say that they are not to blame; for if they do no ill, they live well. But if they live ill, it proceeds from themselves, either from their original evil, or from that which they have themselves added to it. If they are vessels of wrath, let them impute it to themselves as being formed out of that mass (*massa*) which God has justly condemned for the sin of that one man, in whom all men have sinned.... Every sinner is inexcusable, either by his original sin, or because he has added to it of his own will, whether knowingly or ignorantly; for even ignorance itself is without doubt a sin in those who have chosen not to know; and in those who have not been able [to know], it is the punishment of sin. The just judgment of God does not spare even those who have not heard [the law]: 'For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law' (Rom. 12). And although they may seem to have an excuse for their disobedience, yet God does not admit this excuse, because he knows that he made man upright and gave him the rule of

obedience, and that it is only by the abuse of free will that sin originated and passed over to the posterity." Julian cites the passage in Deut. 24:16: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin," in proof that the sin of Adam cannot be imputed and punished. To this Augustine replies, that this refers to the fathers and the children in their individual capacity, and not as existent in a common unity, or nature. It refers to a condition of things subsequent to the existence in Adam. The individual sins of a father cannot be imputed to the son, and vice versa; because in this capacity, the father and son are not one. The doctrine of oneness does not apply in this instance. But, previous to birth, and as existing in the first man, parents and children, says Augustine, are one numerical human nature, and the imputation of the sin of this nature is not, therefore, the imputation of another's sin. Original sin is a common act of transgression; and in charging it upon the posterity, the very principle enunciated by Moses is carried out, viz.: that no agent shall be punished for another's agency. Augustine concedes that if Adam and his posterity did not, at the time of the apostasy, constitute one human nature and one indivisible agent, it would not be just to impute the primitive act of apostasy to the posterity. In other words, he charges the posterity with the Adamic transgression, upon the principle of *sum cuique*.

#### **4. Recapitulation**

The Latin anthropology, in a recapitulation, presents the following points. 1. Man was created holy, and from this position originated sin *de nihilo* by a purely creative act. Original sin is voluntary in the sense of being self-will, and is therefore properly punishable as guilt. 2. Man was created as a species, in respect to both soul and body; and hence the Adamic connection relates to the entire man,—to the voluntary and rational nature, equally with the corporeal and sensuous. 3. By the Adamic connection, the will, the *πνεῦμα*, is corrupted, as well as the *ψυχή* and *σῶμα*. 4. Infants are guilty, because they possess a sinful bias of will, and not merely a corrupt

sensuous nature. 5. The corruption of the sensuous nature is the consequent, and not the antecedent, of apostasy in the rational and voluntary; so long as the voluntary and rational powers are in their created holy condition, there is nothing disordered or corrupt in the lower nature. The corruption of the flesh (σῶμα) is not the cause, but the effect, of the corruption of the reason and will (πνεῦμα). 6. The Holy Spirit takes the initiative in the change from sin to holiness, and there is no co-operation of the human with the Divine agency in the regenerating act. The efficiency or activity of the human will up to the point of regeneration is hostile to God, and therefore does not co-work with Him.

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **PELAGIANISM AND SEMI-PELAGIANISM**

#### **1. Pelagianism**

PELAGIUS, a British monk, directly by his own teachings, and indirectly by the controversy to which he gave occasion, and the adherents who developed his views, constructed an anthropology totally antagonistic to the Augustinian.

The fundamental points in his theory are the following. The soul of man by creation is neither holy nor sinful. His body by creation is mortal. The fall of Adam introduced no change of any kind into either the souls or the bodies of his posterity. Every man, therefore, when born into the world is what Adam was when created. At birth, each man's physical nature is liable to disease and death, as was Adam's at creation;<sup>2</sup> and, at birth, each man's voluntary faculty, like Adam's at creation, is undetermined either to sin or holiness. Being thus characterless, with a will undecided either for good or evil, and

not in the least affected by Adam's apostasy, each individual man, after birth, commences his own voluntariness, originates his own character, and decides his own destiny, by the choice of either right or wrong. Temporal death is no part of the punishment of sin, because it befalls man by creation. His body is mortal per se, and irrespective of sin. Eternal death is therefore the whole of the punishment of man's sin.

The general, but not strictly universal prevalence of sin in the world is accounted for, by the power of temptation, and the influence of example and of habit. It is possible for any man to be entirely sinless, and there have been some such, even among the heathen. The grace of the Holy Spirit is not absolutely, but only relatively necessary, in order to holiness; it renders its attainment easier to man. Regeneration does not consist in the renewal of the will by an internal operation of Divine efficiency, but in the illumination of the intellect by the truth, the stimulation of the will by the threatenings of the law and the promise of future rewards, and by the remission of sin through the Divine indulgence. God's grace<sup>2</sup> is designed for all, but man must make himself worthy of it by an honest striving after virtue. The Son of God became man, in order, by his perfect teaching and example, to afford the strongest motives for self-improvement, and thereby redeems us. As we are imitators of Adam in sin, so we are to become imitators of Christ in virtue.

Pelagius held that infant baptism is necessary in order to the remission of future sins; but children who died without baptism he thought would be saved, although they would experience a less degree of felicity than the redeemed enjoy.<sup>2</sup> Respecting the doctrines of the trinity and the deity of Christ, of revelation, of prophecy, and of miracles, Pelagius adopted the supernaturalism of the Church, although his anthropology logically developed would have brought him to the rationalistic view upon these subjects.

Pelagius advanced his views first at Rome, from 409 to 411, principally through a commentary upon the Pauline Epistles. His

system was brought to the notice of the North-African Church, in 411, by his pupil Coelestius, who was judged heretical by a council at Carthage in 412, and was excommunicated upon his refusal to retract his opinions. Pelagius in 411 went to Palestine. The Eastern Church were suspicious of his views, and he was accused of heresy before the synods of Jerusalem and Diospolis. But he succeeded in satisfying his judges, by qualifying his assertions respecting the possibility and the actual fact of human sinlessness. The North-African Church, however, under the leadership of Augustine, were not satisfied with Pelagius's explanations, and followed up the discussion. Pelagianism was condemned as a heresy by the synods of Mileve and Carthage, in 416, and this decision was ultimately endorsed by the vacillating Roman bishop Zosimus, in 418, and thus by the Latin Church. The Eastern Church, as represented at the Council of Ephesus, in 431, also condemned Pelagianism.

But though the Eastern Church came into this decision, its opposition to Pelagianism was not so earnest and intelligent as that of the Western, and particularly as that of the North-African Church. There were two reasons for this. In the first place, the Greek anthropology was adopted by the Oriental bishops. This, we have seen, maintained the position that original sin is not voluntariness but physical corruption, together with the synergistic view of regeneration. The Greek anthropology would therefore come in conflict with the theory of Augustine upon these points. In the second place, the doctrine of unconditional election and predestination, which flowed so naturally from the Augustinian view of the entire helplessness of human nature, was extremely offensive to the Eastern mind. Hence we find that when the controversy between Augustinianism and Pelagianism was transferred from the West to the East, and the examination was conducted in the Eastern synods, there were bishops who either asserted that the matters in dispute were unessential, or else sided with Pelagius, if the choice must be made between Pelagius and Augustine. The Antiochian School, as represented by Theodore of Mopsuestia and Isidore of Pelusium, stood midway between the parties, and the condemnation



of Pelagianism which was finally passed by the Council of Ephesus seems to have been owing more to a supposed connection of the views of Pelagius with those of Nestorius, than to a clear and conscientious conviction that his system was contrary to Scripture, and the Christian experience.

Such a settlement, consequently, of the strife could not be permanent. Moreover, the views of Augustine respecting predestination were misstated by some of his followers, and misrepresented by some of his opponents, in such a manner as to imply the tenet of necessitated sin,—evil being represented as the product of an efficient decree, instead, as Augustine taught, of a permissive one. The doctrine of election was construed into a motive for indifference, instead of fear and supplication for mercy. The same abuse was made of the doctrine of sovereign grace in the salvation of the human soul that was anticipated and warned against by the Apostle Paul. These causes, and this condition of things, led to the revival, by a party in the West, of the synergistic theory of regeneration, as the only thing which, it was supposed, could relieve the honest-minded of their difficulties respecting predestination and election, and make conversion an intelligible and practical matter. This party were the so-called Semi-Pelagians.

## **2. Semi-Pelagianism**

The Semi-Pelagian controversy arose in the following manner. The monks of the cloister of Adrumetum, in North-Africa, were most of them advocates of the Augustinian theory, but had fallen into dispute respecting its meaning. Some of them, by the doctrine of absolute predestination, had been thrown into great mental doubt and despair. Others were making this doctrine the occasion of entire indifference, and even of licentiousness. A third class were supposing that some virtuous efficiency, even though it be very slight, must be ascribed to the human will, in regeneration. The abbot of the cloister referred the case to Augustine, in 427, who endeavored in his two treatises, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, and *De correptione et gratia*, to

relieve the difficulties of the monks, and appears to have been successful.

But, contemporaneously with this occurrence, a far more extensive opposition to Augustine's theory arose in Southern Gaul. A theological school was formed among these enterprising and active French churches which, in fact, reproduced with modifications the Greek anthropology of the preceding centuries. A Scythian monk, John Cassian, a pupil and friend of Chrysostom, and the founder and president of the cloister at Marseilles, stood at the head of it. It became a vigorous party, of which the most distinguished members and leaders were Vincent of Lerins, Faustus of Rhegium, Gennadius, and Arnobius the Younger.

Augustine, also, had his disciples and adherents in these same churches of Southern Gaul. Among them were two influential theologians, viz.: Hilary and Prosper. These informed Augustine of the controversy that was going on in the French churches, and he endeavored, as in the instance of the monks of Adrumetum, to settle the dispute by explanatory treatises. He addressed to the Massiliensians the two tracts: *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, and *De dono perseverantiae*. He meets the objection that the doctrine of predestination ministers to moral indifference and licentiousness, by teaching that the decree of election is not a decree to bestow eternal happiness upon men full of sin, but that only he can be sure of his election who runs the Christian race, and endures to the end. The divine decree includes the means as well as the end, and therefore produces holiness in order to secure happiness. Handled in this manner, the doctrine, Augustine claims, is not a dangerous one for the common mind; but on the contrary affords the only strong ground of confidence to a helpless and despairing spirit. Augustine, however, did not succeed in convincing his opponents, and the controversy was afterwards carried on with some bitterness between Prosper and Vincent of Lerins.

The ablest advocate of the Semi-Pelagian theory was Faustus of Rhegium. His treatise *De gratia et libero arbitrio* greatly influenced the decisions of the council of Arles, in 475, and of Lyons, in the same year,—both of which councils sanctioned Semi-Pelagianism. The fortunes of this system, however, declined in Southern Gaul, from two causes. In the first place, the later defenders of Augustinianism, particularly Fulgentius, while holding the doctrine of predestination with entire strictness in its relation to holiness, were more reserved respecting its relations to sin,—thus affording less opportunity for the charge of necessitated evil. Secondly, the personal influence of some highly respected and excellent bishops, such as Avitus of Vienne, and Caesarius of Arles, was thrown in favor of the views of the North-African Father. By these means, a change was effected in the churches of Southern Gaul, to such an extent, that in the year 529, a little more than fifty years after the councils of Arles and Lyons, they declared for the Augustinian anthropology, in the two councils of Orange and Valence. The following are some of the decisions of the council of Orange, and indicate in their condemnatory clauses the Semi-Pelagian positions, particularly respecting grace and free-will. "If any one assert that by reason of man's prayer the grace of God is conferred, but that it is not grace itself which causes that God is prayed to, he contradicts the prophet Isaiah (61:1), and the apostle Paul (Rom. 10:20) saying the same thing: 'I was found of them that sought me not, and have been made manifest to them that asked not after me.' If any one maintains that God waits for a willingness in us to be purged from sin, and does not allow that the very willingness to be cleansed from sin is wrought in us by the infusion and operation of the Holy Spirit, he resists the Holy Ghost saying by Solomon (Prov. 8:35, Septuagint ver.), 'The will is prepared by the Lord;' and by the apostle (Philip. 2:13), 'It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.' If any man say, that we believe, will, desire, endeavor, labor, watch, study, ask, seek, and knock, without and previous to grace, and that grace is conferred by God upon this ground, and does not confess that it is wrought in us by the infusion and operation of the Holy Ghost, that we believe, will, desire, endeavor, and do all the above-

mentioned things as we ought, and thus makes the aid of grace to follow after man's humility or obedience, and does not allow that it is the gift of grace itself, that we are obedient and humble: he resists the apostle (1 Cor. 4:7; 15:10) saying: 'What hast thou, that thou hast not received,' and: 'By the grace of God I am what I am.' It is God's gift both when we think aright, and when we hold our feet from falsehood and unrighteousness. For as often as we do good things, God worketh in us, and with us, that we may work. There are many good things done in man which are not done by man (*multa in homine bona fiunt, quae non facit homo*). But man doth no good things which God does not cause man to do (*quae non Deus praestet, ut faciat homo*). In every good work, we do not begin, and are helped afterwards by the grace of God, but he first of all, no good merits of ours going before, inspires into us both faith and love of himself, that we may both believingly seek the sacrament of baptism, and after baptism, by his help, may fulfil the things that are pleasing to him."

Respecting the Semi-Pelagian theory itself: It was intended by its advocates to be a middle-position between Augustinianism and Pelagianism. The essence of the theory consists in a mixture of grace and free-will. There are two efficient agencies concerned in the renovation of the human will: viz., the will itself and the Holy Spirit. Hence, the product can not be referred either to one or the other, as the sole originating cause. Upon this co-existence of two co-efficients and their co-operation, Cassian lays great stress, as the distinguishing and essential position which would retain the element of truth that, in his judgment, was in Augustinianism and in Pelagianism, and would exclude the errors into which, he believed, both fell. Hence, in answer to the test question: Which agency begins the work of regeneration? Cassian affirms that sometimes it is the divine, and sometimes it is the human. Sometimes he ascribes the commencement of good in man, to man, and its completion to God; and sometimes he derives the first desire after grace itself from God. Sometimes he even ascribes to the human spirit a compulsion to good. "Sometimes," he remarks, "we are drawn to salvation against our will (*inviti*)." In another place,<sup>2</sup> he asks: "What was that which

stood in the way of Paul, because he seems to have been attracted to the way of life, as it were unwillingly; though afterwards consummating and perfecting this initial compulsion (necessities), by a voluntary devotedness."

Semi-Pelagianism was the revival in the Western Church of the Greek anthropology, though made somewhat more guarded by the discussions and statements of the Pelagian controversy. The following recapitulation, taken from Wiggers' representation, embraces the principal points in the system. In his primitive state, man was possessed of certain physical, intellectual, and moral advantages which he does not now possess. His body was immortal; he lay under no earthly ills or burdens, such as the curse of labor, and in the instance of woman the pains of child-bearing; he possessed remarkable knowledge of nature and the moral law; and was entirely sinless. The sin of the first pair, to which they were tempted by the devil, resulted, not only for them but also for their posterity, in both physical and moral disadvantages. The body became mortal, and a moral corruption entered which was propagated to the posterity, and gradually becomes greater and greater. Freedom of will, in the sense of power to good, is not wholly lost, but it is very much weakened. Man in his present condition is morally diseased. The imputation of original sin is removed in baptism, and without baptism no one attains salvation. Owing to his morally diseased and weakened condition, man needs the assistance of divine grace, in order to the practice of holiness, and the attainment of salvation. The moral freedom of man, or his power to good, works in connection with divine grace. The two things are not to be separated from each other. There is no unconditional decree of God, but predestination to salvation or to perdition depends upon the use which man makes of the remainder of his freedom to good. The decree of election is therefore a conditional one; God determines to bestow forgiveness and assisting influences upon those who he foresees will make a beginning. And yet the merit of his salvation man must not ascribe to himself, but to the grace of God, because without this grace man's endeavors would be unsuccessful.

Wiggers compares the three systems with each other as follows: Augustinianism asserts that man is morally dead; Semi-Pelagianism maintains that he is morally sick; Pelagianism holds that he is morally well.

## **CHAPTER V:**

### **THE ANSELMIC ANTHROPOLOGY**

"Many things have carried the appearance of contradiction, and inconsistency, to the first view of our straitened minds, which afterwards we have, upon repeated consideration and endeavor, found room for, and been able to make fairly accord, and lodge together."—JOHN HOWE.

#### **1. Anselm's theory of Original Sin**

THE Augustinian theory of sin and grace, we have seen, was adopted as the anthropology of the Western Church, at the councils of Orange and Valence. But it would be an error to suppose that the Western Church as a body continued to adhere strictly to the views of the North-African father. The more devout and evangelical minds in the 5th and 6th centuries, like Leo and Gregory, and even in the 8th and 9th centuries, like Bede and Alcuin, propagated the teachings of Augustine respecting the corruption of human nature, and the agency of the Holy Spirit in its regeneration; but were less distinct and bold, in their statements respecting the preterition and reprobation of the lost. They were content with affirming, in the most unqualified manner, the doctrine of an enslaved will, and the need of divine efficiency in order to its renewal and liberation, and left the darker and more difficult side of the doctrine of predestination, without explanation. So far, therefore, as the practical part of the

Augustinian anthropology,—its relations, namely, to the renewal and salvation of men,—is concerned, the more distinguished Fathers of the Western Church, during the two or three centuries succeeding that of Augustine, were steady adherents to his opinions. But the general decline that was advancing in all the great interests of the church brought with it a departure from the high vantage-ground which had been gained in the contest with Pelagianism. The middle theory of Semi-Pelagianism, even in Augustine's own century, we have seen, found some able defenders, and was oftentimes associated with genuine devotion and piety. Its less rigorous and scientific character, together with its comparative silence upon the more difficult parts of the doctrines of original sin, predestination, and free-will, recommended it to a large class of minds; while the element of human efficiency which it introduced into the doctrine of regeneration was thought to render it a more intelligible and practical doctrine. It was not strange, consequently, that in course of time, the Latin Church, though holding the name of Augustine in high respect, should have lapsed down very generally upon the Greek anthropology.

That brief chapter in the doctrinal history of the Middle Ages which records the attempt of Gottschalk (†868) to revive the Augustinian anthropology evinces how alien this system had at length become to the thinking and feeling of the Papal Church. This serious and earnest-minded monk contended for a two-fold predestination, in accordance with the teachings of the revered bishop of Hippo. He simply applied the doctrine of predestination to the lost as well as to the saved, being careful at the same time to limit the divine efficiency, to the production of holiness. His statement of the doctrine of predestination was that of a permissive decree, only, in respect to sin, and yet it was condemned as heretical by a church which had rejected Semi-Pelagianism.

Upon passing, however, into the period of Scholasticism, we find one thinker who both reproduces the Augustinian anthropology, and makes a positive contribution towards the metaphysical solution of

the difficult problems involved in it. This thinker is Anselm, a man who, in reference to the doctrine of original sin, as in reference to that of the atonement, belongs not to the Papal but to the Protestant Church.

The anthropology of Anselm is stated in his two tracts, *De conceptu virginali et originali peccato*, and *De libero arbitrio*. A rapid analysis of a portion of each of them, which we derive from the excellent monograph upon Anselm, by Hasse, will be sufficient to indicate the position of this profound and devout Schoolman, respecting the doctrine of original sin, and the kindred doctrine of regeneration.

The phrase "original sin," says Anselm, may direct attention, by the use of the word "original," either to the origin of human nature, or to the origin of the individual man. But so far as the origin of human nature itself is concerned, this is pure and holy. The phrase "original sin," therefore, has no reference to man as he was originated or created by his Maker. It must refer, consequently, only to the origin of the individual man,—either to his nearer, or his more remote origin; either to his birth from immediate ancestors, or his descent from the first human pair. For every man possesses that universal quality which is common to all men, viz.: human nature; and also that peculiar quality, which distinguishes him from all other men, viz.: his individuality. Hence, there is a two-fold sin to be distinguished in man; that sin, viz.: which he receives in the reception of human nature at the very first moment of his individual existence, and that which he afterwards commits as this or that particular individual. The first may be also denominated the sin of nature, *peccatum naturale*; yet it does not belong to the original essence of human nature, but is only a condition or state into which that human nature has come since the creating act. In the same manner, there is an original righteousness, and an individual righteousness. For human nature would have been propagated in its original con-created state or condition of holiness, had the first human pair kept their first estate. But as they did not, original sin, instead of original righteousness, has passed upon all men. In this



way, each individual man is now characterized by both corruption and guilt. By corruption, because the act of apostasy has vitiated his nature, both upon the physical and the spiritual side. By guilt, because inasmuch as he was created in a righteous state, the obligation still lies upon him, even in his apostasy, to have all that he was originally endowed with by his Maker, and he is a debtor to this obligation. Hence, the requirement rests upon human nature as individualized in every child, and in every adult, to fulfil that original and perfect righteousness which belonged to it at creation, and which it was under no necessity of losing; and also to make satisfaction to justice for that sin which it was commanded not to commit. The inability of apostate human nature, in the child, or the adult, to fulfil this perfect righteousness, and atone for this sin, does not excuse it, because this inability is its own product, and because it ought not to have lost the power with which it was previously endowed.

Thus, all sin, original as well as actual, is unrighteousness and guilt. But sin supposes the existence of will. How then can original sin be imputed to the infant, and why is the infant baptized for its remission? Anselm recurs to the Augustinian doctrine of the Adamic unity for his answer. Three facts, he remarks, must be taken into account, in endeavoring to solve this difficult problem. First, the fact that there is a common human nature. Secondly, there is a particular individuality. And, thirdly, the individual is a production from the nature. As merely possessing the common human nature, the infant participates in no sin, guilt, or condemnation. For abstract human nature is the pure creation of God. If the mere fact of being human were sufficient to constitute an individual man a sinner, then Adam himself would have been a sinner before his act of apostasy. Neither is the second characteristic, viz.: that the infant possesses individuality, sufficient to account for his birth-sin; for this equally with the generic nature is a creation of God. The third fact, consequently, alone remains by which to explain the sin and guilt that belong to every man at birth: the fact, viz.: that the individual is produced out of the nature, and the nature has apostatized subsequent to its creation. Adam differed from all other human

individuals by containing within his person the entire human nature out of which the millions of generations were to be propagated, and of which they are individualized portions. He was to transmit this human nature which was all in himself, exactly as it had been created in him; for propagation makes no radical changes, but simply transmits what is given in the nature, be it good or bad. If therefore he had not apostatized, human nature would not have apostatized, and would have been procreated, or individualized from generation to generation in the same holy and perfect condition in which it came from the hand of God. If, on the contrary, the first father, by an act of apostasy, should introduce a total moral change into the human nature that was included in him, then the same law of propagation must operate, and the individuals produced out of it must be characterized by a sinful state and condition. Hence Anselm speaks of a necessity of being sinful which now, since the apostasy, overhangs the individual, though it did not overhang the nature. The nature in Adam was under no compulsion to apostatize. There is no original and created necessity for sin. But if human nature in Adam does by a free act lose its original righteousness, then the individual, inasmuch as he is produced out of the nature, cannot possibly escape depravity. The greater inevitably includes the less; and no individual can be sinless in case the nature out of which he is produced, and of which he is a portion, has lapsed into sin. Since apostasy, it is impossible that any child of Adam should be born sinless; and in this sense, and with this explanation, Anselm asserts a necessity of sin in reference to the individual,—not a necessity founded in creation, but in the unavoidable relation which an individual sustains to his race. Descent, then, or the propagation of an apostate nature, is the fact by which Anselm would account for the existence of sin in every individual man at birth. And he holds that the miraculous and anomalous birth of Christ, by which he was kept out of the line of ordinary human generation, indicates that sin now unavoidably flows down within that line.

In endeavoring to impart a notion of the precise relation of that which is individual to that which is generic, Anselm theorizes in the

vein of Augustine. That the posterity have sinned in and with the progenitor, supposes an original existence in him. Nonentity cannot sin. The first forefather seminally contained his posterity. Their essence, both on the spiritual and the physical side, was part and particle with his; their nature was consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with his. But this one common nature or essence is not yet individualized. The posterity do not exist in the progenitor as so many distinct persons. Hence a distinction must be made between the sin which the nature in Adam originates, and the sin which the individual after Adam commits; or, in the technical phrase, between "original" and "actual" sin. In the case of Adam, an individual transgression resulted in a sin of nature; while in the case of his posterity, a sin of nature results in individual transgressions. Adam by a single distinct transgression introduced a corruption into that entire human nature which was in, and one with, himself. Here, the individual vitiates the generic, because the generic is included in the individual. Adam's posterity, as so many distinct individualizations of this vitiated human nature, act out this corruption, each in his day and generation. Here the generic vitiates the individual. In the instance of the progenitor, the "actual" sin, or the sin of a single act, originates the "original" sin, or the sin of nature and disposition. In the instance of the posterity, the "original" sin, or the sin of the nature, originates the sin of single acts, or "actual" transgressions. In the first instance, the individual corrupts the nature; in the last instance, the nature corrupts the individual.

Anselm next raises the question, whether the sins of the immediate ancestors are imputed to the posterity, as well as the sin of the first father. This question he answers in the negative; because the individual sins, be they of immediate or of remote ancestors, are not committed by the common nature in Adam. The entire nature, at the moment of the temptation and apostasy, was in two persons. All mankind fell in the first human pair, who are conjointly denominated Adam,—"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). The first act of transgression was unique. There was

never a second like it. The sins of Cain, or Abel, or of any other individual, were not the transgressions of an individual who included within himself the entire humanity. Even the individual transgressions of Adam, subsequent to the first act of apostasy, were only manifestations in his particular person of the generic sin, and sustained the same relation to it that the transgressions of any other individual do. There is, therefore, no imputation of the strictly individual sins of Adam to his posterity. That only is imputed to all men which all men have committed; and the only sin which all men have committed is that one sin which they committed when they were all, "*ille unus homo*," one human nature, in the first human pair.

Thus, in Anselm's anthropology, as in Augustine's, everything starts from the original unity of the human race. If this idea is not conceded, the whole doctrine of original and transmitted sin, as Anselm constructs it, falls to the ground. Original sin is original agency; but original agency supposes an original agent; and this original agent is the whole human nature undistributed and unindividualized, in distinction from this or that individualized part of it. Original sin, coming into existence by the single primitive act of apostasy, is then transmitted along with the nature, from generation to generation,—the generation being so many individualizations of the common humanity. The first pair of individuals are created, and contain the substance of the entire race, both upon the spiritual and the physical side. All the posterity, as individualizations, are propagated, not created. Herein consists the possibility of a transmission of sin from the first human pair, to the whole posterity, and also of a transmission of holiness. For had there been no apostasy, or change in the moral character of human nature, as it existed in Adam, the propagation of human nature would have simply transmitted holiness,—that original righteousness with which man was endowed by the creative act. For Anselm did not hold the doctrine of the later Schoolmen, that the primitive man was only negatively holy,—that is, created in *puris naturalibus*, without either holiness or sin. Hence, if human nature in the person of Adam had

remained as it was created, it would of course have been propagated as it had remained. Original righteousness instead of original sin would have been the inherited and native character of the posterity. For propagation makes no changes in the type or kind. Propagation does not originate either sin or holiness, but simply transmits it. Had holiness, consequently, continued to be the intrinsic quality of human nature as generically in Adam, it would have continued to be that of all the individualizations of that nature. But the original righteousness with which mankind in the person of Adam was endowed, was only a relative perfection. It was positive holiness, and not the mere negative destitution of any character either good or evil; yet it was not that immutable and absolute perfection which belongs to God and the angels who have kept their first estate. The power of a contrary choice, or the possibility of apostasy, was attached to it, for purposes of probation merely, and not to complete moral freedom. Thus, along with the possibility of the transmission of original holiness to all the posterity, there was also established the possibility of the transmission of original sin; and which of these it should be, was left by the Creator to depend upon the decision of the human race itself in the person of its progenitor. Hence the uncommon and strange influence which the first parents exert upon the whole future of the posterity. A sinful character having been determined by a voluntary act for the entire race in the persons of the first human pair, nothing but the instantaneous intervention of God, by a renewing act, could have prevented the transmission of the sin thus originated. For propagation inevitably conveys human nature precisely as it finds it, and hence if human nature has, within itself and by its own act, substituted original sin for original righteousness, the fact must appear in every individual instance. Thus the individual is born in sin, because he is born an individual; but he was not created in sin, because he was created in Adam who was created holy.

Another fact urged by Anselm is, that in the progenitors the guilt of the nature, or of original sin, rests upon the guilt of the individual, but in the posterity the guilt of the individual rests upon the guilt of

the nature. The guilt, in both instances, results from the loss of that primitive holiness with which mankind was endowed by the Creator. But in the instance of the first pair, this loss and lack of original righteousness is the consequence of an individual act, while in the posterity it is the consequence of a generic act. Adam was an individual that included the species. By an act of his will, as an individual thus inclusive of humanity he vitiated human nature. But the posterity of Adam are none of them individuals inclusive of the species. They are purely and simply individuals. As such they cannot perform a generic act. Hence, in the individual determinations of their will, they merely manifest, but do not originate the generic sin. In the instance of the progenitor, the individual corrupts the nature, because the individual includes the nature; but in the instance of the posterity, the nature corrupts the individual, because the individual does not include the nature but receives it. The first act of the individual, in the instance of the posterity, must consequently be a sinful act, from the nature of the case; because original sin, or the sin of nature, has already been brought into existence, and now lies as the potential basis of the individual life; and from such a source as this, nothing but sin can issue. The origin of this original sin must not be sought for within the sphere of the individual life and experience, but in the primary unity of the race in the person of Adam. At this point, mankind were free to stand or fall, and were endowed with plenary power to do either. But when the election has been made, and the apostasy of the entire race is a foregone conclusion, an accomplished fact, nothing but sin can appear in the individual life, except there be an act of divine interference immediately succeeding the act of apostasy, to prevent. The Creator puts forth no such act, and hence the transmission of original sin proceeds parallel with the individualization of that common humanity that was created in Adam.

## **2. Anselm's idea of the will, and freedom**

The anthropology of Anselm would be incompletely represented, if we failed to exhibit his views respecting the nature of freedom and

the human will. These are contained in his Dialogue De libero arbitrio, from which we derive the following particulars.

The pupil, with whom the dialogue is held, brings forward the popular definition of freedom, as the power of sinning and of not sinning,—*potestas peccandi et non peccandi*, or the *possibilitas utriusque partis*. This definition Anselm asserts to be altogether inadequate. For it does not hold good when applied to God and the holy angels. These possess moral freedom, and yet are destitute of the power to sin. If, therefore, there is a species of freedom from which the power to sin is absolutely excluded, then this power is not a necessary or essential element in the idea of moral freedom. That this is so, says Anselm, is evident from the nature of the case. For he who possesses that which is right and excellent, in such a manner that he cannot lose it, is freer than he is who can lose it, and exchange it for that which is shameful and evil. Therefore that will which, of itself, and without external compulsion, is so strongly determined to the right as to be unable to desert the path of rectitude, is freer than that will which is so feebly determined to the right as to be able to do this. Hence the power to sin, if attached to a will, diminishes its liberty, but if subtracted from it increases it. Hence it is neither liberty itself, nor a part of liberty. But, objects the pupil, if the possibility of sinning does not belong to the essence of freedom, can we call that act by which the evil angels and our first parents apostatized a free act? Was it not, rather, an act of necessity? For there is no medium between a free and a necessary act. And if, according to our Lord's saying, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," can we properly call such an one free? In other words, is not sin a compulsion, if the power to sin is no part of freedom? To this Anselm replies, that the evil angels and the first human pair certainly sinned without being forced to do so; and in this sense they were free in the act of apostasy. It was unquestionably an act of spontaneity, and of pure untrammelled self-will; though not an act of genuine freedom. For they sinned not because of their freedom,—for their freedom consisted in their holiness, and their power not to sin,—but in spite of their freedom. They apostatized not

by virtue of their power to be holy, which constitutes the positive substance of moral freedom, but by virtue of the *possibilitas peccandi*, which was merely a negative accident attached to the positive substance of moral freedom, for purposes of probation. This negation, this power to do otherwise than they were already doing, did not add anything to their freedom, because they were voluntarily holy without it. Neither did it bring them under necessity, or force them to the act of sin. Nay, they were commanded not to use it. "Hence," says Anselm to his pupil, "you draw a wrong inference, when you infer that because the power to sin is not an essential part of moral freedom, therefore the apostate angels and man were necessitated in the act of sin. For to sin was merely a possibility, but not a necessity. A rich man cannot be denominated poor, merely because he has the power to give away all his property; neither can the apostate angels and man be regarded as necessitated, merely because they were endowed with the power of losing their true freedom,—that is, their holy disposition and determination." "Very well," replies the pupil, "before the fall man was voluntary, but is he after it?" "Yes after it also," answers Anselm. "For although he has made himself the servant of sin, yet he has not thereby destroyed the voluntary faculty itself." His will still exists, and his sin is the unforced action of his will; but sinful activity excludes holy activity from the nature of the case. Self-motion in the direction of sin is incompatible with self-motion in the direction of holiness. At this point, Anselm enters upon an elaborate investigation of the nature and true destination of the will, in order to show yet more clearly how the apostate will may be both guilty in reference to sin, and impotent in reference to holiness.

The true end and destination of the will is not to choose either good or evil, but to choose good. The voluntary faculty was intended by its Creator to will the right, and nothing else. Its true freedom, consequently, consists in its self-determination to holiness; in its acceptance of the one single righteous end which the Creator has prescribed to it. The notion that freedom is caprice, that the will is created with the liberty of indifference, and that the choice of either



right or wrong is granted to it by the Creator, Anselm rejects. By creation, the will has no option of choosing either of two contrary objects, but is shut up to the choice of but one, namely, holiness. But its acceptance of this one object must be uncompelled. It must be a self-determination, and not a compulsion from without. If it chooses holiness *proprio motu*, by its own inward self-activity, then it exercises true and rational freedom, and the power to choose an entirely contrary object like sin would not add anything to this freedom, because, by the terms of the statement, there is already a self-election of the one true and proper object. On the contrary, the power to choose the wrong, when given for purposes of probation, subtracts from the perfection of voluntary freedom, because it exposes it to the hazards of an illegitimate choice. The human will, according to Anselm, was created in possession of true and rational freedom. It was made with a determination to the one sole proper object, with an inclination to holiness, with a choice of the right. It was not created characterless, and left to form a character subsequently. Man was "made upright," in the possession of positive rectitude, of which he was not himself the ultimate and therefore adorable author, but only the receptive and willing subject. Hence, with respect to holiness, though there was freedom, self-decision, and the entire absence of compulsion, on the part of the will of the unfallen Adam, there was yet no absolute merit. The Creator was the primal author of man's concreated holiness, and consequently man's desert could only be of a secondary and relative species. Accordingly, the chief duty of the unfallen Adam was to keep what had been given to him by the creative act,—not to originate holiness, but to retain holiness. He was simply to maintain that set and bias of his will towards God and goodness with which he had been endowed by his Maker. He was not, from an undetermined, indifferent, and characterless state of his voluntary faculty, to originate holiness *de nihilo*; but was merely to stay where he was put, to continue just as he was made. His true freedom consisted in the unforced determination of his will to holiness, and of course the perpetuity of his freedom depended simply and solely upon his perseverance in this. And neither temptation, nor external compulsion, can force the

human will out of its holy state and determination. If it leaves rectitude, it does so of its own volition. Man cannot sin against his will. So long as his will perseveres in its right decision and determination, there is no power that can force it in any other direction, and there is nothing that can force it to continue in its holiness; for the efficiency of the Holy Spirit is not a compulsory force. If it is holy, it is so by self-decision. If it is sinful, it is so by self-decision. And it is this self-activity, in each instance, which constitutes the substance of voluntariness. When, therefore, a holy will is exposed to temptation, as Adam's was in the garden, it is at perfect liberty, and possesses plenary power, to persist in its existing holiness, in which case it resists the temptation, or to desert its existing holiness and take a contrary choice. In both courses alike, it is voluntary, though not truly free in both, according to Anselm. If it persists in holiness, it is both voluntary and free. If it deserts its holiness, it is voluntary but not free, because freedom is the choice of the right object, and not of the wrong one.

The pupil, at this point, alludes to the very great power which temptation has over man's will, and the great difficulty which it finds in resisting temptation, and suggests whether the will is not, after all, under a necessity of sinning. Anselm in answer replies, that it certainly cannot be a created and excusable necessity; because a holy will, such as Adam's was by creation, certainly had plenary power to continue in holiness, and therefore if it yields to temptation, and becomes sinful, it must be by its own pure and mere self-decision. But that by the exercise of this pure and mere self-will it does bring itself under a species of necessity, under a moral and guilty necessity of sinning, Anselm does not deny. And to make this plain, he distinguishes between the faculty of the will and the act of the will,—the two things being frequently confounded. As the term "vision" is sometimes employed to denote the organ of vision and sometimes the act of vision, sometimes the eye and sometimes the eyesight, so also the term "will" sometimes means a particular faculty of the human soul,—as when the soul is divided into understanding and will,—and sometimes it means the exercise of this faculty. The

former is the instrument itself; the latter is the use which is made of the instrument. We remain, says Anselm, in possession of the faculty of will, even though we perform no act of will,—as, for example, when we are asleep. The voluntary faculty is always one and the same; but the acts are as various as the objects and motives by which the voluntary faculty is influenced. When, therefore, we are speaking generally of the strength of the will, we mean by it the natural force of the faculty itself, and not any particular act of the faculty. "Suppose," says Anselm to the pupil, "that you knew a man who was strong enough to hold a wild lion so still that he could not stir, would you call this man a weak man because upon a certain time a little lamb which he was leading slipped away from him?" "No," replies the pupil, "because in this instance he did not make a right use of his strength." "Just so is it," says Anselm, "with the will. As a faculty, it is irresistible in the sense that no temptation can force it to yield in opposition to its own determination. It cannot be made to sin against its own choice. But the use which is made of the faculty, the activity of the faculty itself, is oftentimes weakening and enslaving in the highest degree; and having reference to a particular act of willing, such as the act of conversion to God, we certainly find the will powerless in the extreme. But in this case, the ground and cause of the impotence is always in the misuse, or abuse, of the original energy of the will." Anselm concludes his reply to the query of the pupil whether the will is not under a necessity of yielding to temptation and of sinning, with the strong assertion that even God himself cannot turn the will of man from the willing of right to the willing of wrong. God can reduce to nothing the entire universe which he has created from nothing; but he cannot turn a holy will away from the right. For what is the right? Is it not that which the will ought to choose? And is not that which the will ought to choose that which God wills that it should choose? To will the right, therefore, is to will what God wills that we should will. To say, then, that God could by the exercise of his efficiency lead us, or force us, away from willing the right, would be the same as saying that God wills that we should not will what he himself wills that we should will,—in other words, that he does not will his own will. There can be

nothing freer therefore, says Anselm, than the holy free will of the unfallen Adam. For there is absolutely no power out of itself, either finite or infinite, that can alter its self-determination to the right. Nothing but itself can bring this thing about. And the only connection that the Divine causality has with the origin of sin in the human will is the merely negative fact that God does not hinder. His agency in reference to human apostasy is merely permissive. He could prevent the apostasy of the holy will of Adam, because he could concur with Adam's choice of holiness in such a degree as to render Adam's relative perfection an absolute one, like his own. But he does not exert this degree of concurrence, and thus establishes for purposes of probation a possibility of apostasy, but no necessity. Whether this possibility shall become reality, God does not decide by any efficiency of his own, but leaves wholly to the self-decision of the creature.

The will of man, thus having been created positively holy, and endowed with a plenary power of repelling all temptation, and remaining holy, it is fitting and just, continues Anselm, that if it does surrender its original holiness, it should then fall into the bondage of sin,—such a state of the will as disables it from the re-origination of perfect holiness. "But how," interrupts the pupil, "can this bondage into which the will falls, in case it apostatizes, be reconciled with its continued and perpetual freedom? Can the will be both enslaved and free at one and the same time?" "Certainly," answers the teacher; "it is always in the power of the finite will to preserve its righteousness, in case it possesses righteousness; though never in its power to originate righteousness, in case it is destitute of it. If therefore it loses its righteousness by a voluntary act, it still remains as true as ever, that it would have the power to maintain itself in righteousness, if it had righteousness, and it had righteousness by creation. Its enslavement arises not from creation, but solely from the fact that it has dispossessed itself of its original dowry of holiness. Having thus become destitute of inward holiness, it cannot, of course, do anything but sin. But this does not alter the fact, that there was no necessity of its losing its righteousness, and that if it had not lost it, it

could do right as easily as it now does wrong. An evil tree, to employ the figure of Christ, cannot bring forth good fruit; but then there was no original created necessity that the tree should be an evil one.

It will be seen from this analysis of the Anselmic anthropology, that everything is made to depend upon the primitive act of apostasy described in Genesis. The sin of man, considered as an evil principle or nature, was originated at the beginning of human history; and all the acts of individual transgression, since the act of eating the forbidden fruit, have been the developement of that principle. A total change in the moral character of human nature was made by an unforced act of self-will upon the part of Adam, whose person included the nature, and hence every individual at his very birth is characterized by original sin, or innate depravity; and as his powers unfold, he acts out this inherent sinfulness in daily life and conduct. But the whole process from first to last, according to Anselm, is voluntary; provided that the term be made to include the activity of the common nature, as well as the activity of the particular individual. Original sin is the self-will of human nature while in Adam, and not yet individualized. Actual sin is the self-will of this same human nature individualized in the series of its generations.

The harmony of Anselm's doctrine of Original Sin with that of Augustine is apparent. Had the anthropology of the Mediaeval Church been shaped by the profound contemplations of Anselm, instead of the superficial speculations of Lombard,—had the archbishop of the then unknown and insignificant see of Canterbury been accepted by the Latin Church as its leader and thinker, instead of the Master of Sentences,—the history of the Western Church would have been that of a gradual purification and progress, instead of a gradual corruption and decline.

# CHAPTER VI:

## THE PAPAL ANTHROPOLOGY

### 1. Tridentine Theory of Original Sin

As there had been two tendencies within the Roman Catholic Church,—a stricter one inclining to the Augustinian anthropology, and a laxer one inclining to the Semi-Pelagian,—the Council of Trent adopted an ambiguous method of treating the vexed subject of original sin. The phraseology of their canons favors the Augustinian theory, but the exposition of the canons in the negative anathematizing clauses, and by their leading theologians, supports the Semi-Pelagian doctrine. Chemnitz, after a brief specification of the Pelagianizing sentiments of many of the schoolmen, remarks, "I, for my part, should judge that these profane opinions were condemned in the language of the decrees [of Trent]. But Andradius, the expositor of the council, says that 'the decrees were composed with such ingenuity, that neither these nor similar opinions of Papal theologians respecting original sin were condemned, but were left free to be received or rejected.' " A glance at the Canones, and then an examination of the explanations of them, particularly by Bellarmin, will corroborate the remark of the learned Lutheran divine.

The Tridentine theologians give their general statement of the doctrine of Original Sin in the following terms. "If any one shall not confess that the first man Adam, when he had transgressed the command of God in paradise, lost immediately the holiness and righteousness in which he had been created, and incurred through the offence of this disobedience the wrath and indignation of God, and thus the death which God had previously threatened, and with death captivity to the power of him who has the kingdom of death, that is the devil, and that the entire Adam, both soul and body, through this transgression was changed for the worse (in deterius):

let him be accursed. If any one assert that the transgression of Adam injured himself alone, and not his posterity, and that he lost the holiness and righteousness which he had received from God, for himself alone and not for us, or, that having been polluted by the sin of disobedience he transmitted death and the punishment of the body only to the whole human race, but not sin itself, which is the death of the soul, let him be accursed, because he contradicts the apostle who says: 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all sinned' (in quo omnes peccaverunt). If any one assert that this sin of Adam, which is one in origin, and, being transmitted by propagation not imitation, is inherent in all and belongs to each, is removable by the power of man's nature, or by any other remedy than the merits of the only Mediator our Lord Jesus Christ ... let him be accursed." This assertion of apostasy and need of redemption taken by itself, and with the construction which the phraseology naturally suggests, could have been accepted by the Reformers themselves.<sup>2</sup> But the doctrine of Original Sin as actually formed by the leading Roman Catholic divines evinces plainly, that this construction was not intended to be put upon it.

1. The first peculiarity in the Papal anthropology consists in the tenet, that original righteousness is not a natural, but a supernatural endowment. The germ of this view appears in one of the statements of the Roman Catechism,—a work which followed the Tridentine Canons, and is of equal authority with them in the Papal Church. "Lastly," says the Catechism, "God formed man out of the clay of the earth, so made and constituted as to his material body, that he was immortal and impassible, not indeed by the force of nature itself, but by a Divine favor. But as to his soul, he formed him after his own image and likeness, endowed him with free-will, and so tempered within him all the emotions of his mind and his appetites, that they would never disobey the rule of reason. Then he added the admirable gift of original righteousness, and decreed that he should have the pre-eminency over other animals." Bellarmin<sup>2</sup> explains very clearly what he understands by original righteousness as a supernatural

endowment; and his explanation is as authoritative as any individual opinion can be within the Papal Church. "In the first place it is to be observed that man naturally consists of flesh and spirit.... But from these diverse or contrary propensities, there arises in one and the same man a certain conflict, and from this conflict great difficulty of acting rightly.... In the second place, it is to be observed that Divine Providence, in the beginning of creation (*initio creationis*), in order to provide a remedy for this disease or languor of human nature, which arises from the nature of a material organization (*ex conditione materiae*), added to man a certain remarkable gift, to wit, original righteousness, by which as by a sort of golden rein the inferior part might be easily kept in subjection to the superior, and the superior to God; but the flesh was thus subjected to the spirit, so that it could not be moved so long as the spirit was unwilling, nor could it become a rebel to the spirit unless the spirit itself should become a rebel to God, while yet it was wholly in the power of the spirit to become or not to become a rebel to God.... We think that this rectitude of the inferior part was a supernatural gift, and that, too, intrinsically, and not accidentally, so that it neither flowed nor could flow from the principles of nature (*ex naturae principiis*)."

Upon examining this statement, it will be found to conflict with the Latin anthropology. Man as created is a synthesis of body and soul; but the two are in antagonism at creation. Creation is thus imperfect. The addition of the original righteousness, which is not a part of the creative act, is requisite in order that the higher shall obtain the victory over the lower nature, and the creature be made perfect. It is true that this supernatural endowment is bestowed "*initio creationis*,"—still the work of creation proper does not include it, but this is super-added, in the phrase of Bellarmin, "to provide a remedy for the disease or languor of human nature." The Papal idea of creation, therefore, differs from the Augustinian, in that it involves imperfection. We have seen that the Latin anthropology regards man as created with a will that is holy, and which thereby possesses entire domination over the lower physical and bodily nature. It also teaches that the physical nature by creation has in it nothing corrupt or



imperfect. Original righteousness, according to Augustine's theory, enters into the very idea of man as coming from the hands of the Creator. It is a part of his created endowment, and does not require to be superadded. The work of the Creator is perfect, and needs no improvement. There is no "disease" or "languor" in it. But in the Papal anthropology, man as he comes from God, is imperfect. He is not created sinful indeed, but neither is he created holy. To use the Papal phrase, he is created in *puris naturalibus*; without positive righteousness, and without positive unrighteousness. The body is full of natural carnal propensities, and tends downward. The soul as rational and immortal tends upward. But there is no harmony between the two by creation. An act subsequent to that of creation, and additional to it, is necessary to bring this harmony about; and this is that act by which the gift of original righteousness is superadded to the gifts of creation. In and by this act, the higher part is strengthened to acquire and maintain dominion over the lower, and a positive perfection is imparted to human nature that was previously lacking in it. Original righteousness is thus, in reference to the created and natural characteristics of man, a supernatural gift.

2. The second peculiarity in the Papal anthropology consists in the tenet, that apostasy involves the loss of a supernatural, but not of a natural gift. By the act of transgression, human nature lapses back into that condition of conflict between the flesh and the spirit in which it was created. In losing its original righteousness, therefore, it loses nothing with which it was endowed by the creative act, but only that superadded gift which was bestowed subsequently to this. The supremacy of the higher over the lower part is lost by the Adamic transgression, and the two parts of man, the flesh and the spirit, fall into their primitive and natural antagonism again. Original righteousness being a supernatural gift, original sin is the loss of it, and in reality the restoration of man to the state in which he was created. Original sin brings man back again to a negative condition, in which he is neither sinful nor holy. It is a state of conflict, indeed, between the flesh and the spirit; but the flesh has nothing in it which was not created in it, and nothing that does not naturally and

necessarily belong to the flesh as such. And the spirit, in like manner, contains only its own intrinsic characteristics. So that the conflict is one that arises from the nature of things, or by creation itself, and not from any act of apostasy on the part of man. Here appears another marked point of difference between the Papal and the Latin anthropology. The latter does not concede that by creation and the nature of things the flesh must be in conflict with the spirit. It regards this as a relic of the Gnostic idea of matter and of a fleshly organism. On the contrary, the Augustinian anthropology maintains that the "flesh" as it comes from the creative hand contains nothing corrupt or disordered in it. It is a just tempering and mixture, which is in perfect harmony with the higher laws of mind and of God. If, therefore, there is ever found to be a conflict between the flesh and the spirit, this is proof positive that some change, some disorder, has been introduced into the flesh by the action of the spirit itself. Corruption begins in the spirit or will itself, and descends into the sensuous and bodily parts. The Augustinian anthropology regards the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, as a consequence and evidence of an apostasy. The Papal anthropology, on the contrary, considers it as the primitive and natural condition in which man was created, and which required to be remedied by the addition of a supernatural gift.

3. A third characteristic, consequently, of the Papal anthropology is that it does not regard original sin as truly and properly sin. This follows necessarily from the position that human nature is not created with holiness, but that holiness is a supernatural endowment specially bestowed after the act of creation proper is complete. For the loss of this endowment simply puts man back to the negative and characterless position upon which he stands by creation. But this cannot be a position of guilt and sin properly so called. If so, then God creates man in a sinful state. Original sin, according to the Tridentine theologians, is, indeed, a conflict between the flesh and the spirit, between the body and the mind. It is a state of corruption, and of inordinate physical desires. But this is not a state of sin and guilt. This conflict is necessary from the nature of the case. For by

creation, the flesh is inordinate, and the spirit is weak. It is not until something subsequent to creation is bestowed,—viz.: the supernatural gift that subdues the lower to the higher part,—that righteousness or positive moral character exists. That act, therefore, whereby this righteousness is lost, the act of original transgression, is not one that plunges man into guilt proper, but only into corruption or an inordinate and ungoverned condition of the lower nature,—which inordinate condition belongs to the flesh by creation, just as the properties of matter belong to matter by creation. Hence, Bellarmin remarks that "the state of man after the fall of Adam differs no more from the state of man as created in *puris naturalibus* [i.e. previous to the bestowment of the supernatural gift of original righteousness], than a man originally naked differs from one who was once clothed, but has been stripped of his clothing; neither is human nature any worse, if we except the guilt of the act of transgression in eating the forbidden fruit, than it was made by God, nor does it labor under any more ignorance or infirmity than it labored under as created in *puris naturalibus*. Hence, the corruption of nature results, not from the subtraction of any gift belonging to nature by creation, nor from the addition to it of any evil quality, but solely from the loss of a supernatural gift which was over and above the gifts of nature." In conformity with this, the Council of Trent decide that indwelling sin in the regenerate is not properly sin. After stating that concupiscence (*concupiscentia vel fomes*) remains in the baptized, they add that "this concupiscence, which the apostle sometimes denominates sin (Rom. 6:12, 7:8), the holy synod declares the catholic church never understood to be called sin because it is really and truly sin in the regenerate, but because it is from sin, and inclines to sin."

## **2. The Tridentine Theory of Regeneration**

Holding such views of the nature of original sin, it was logical that the Tridentine theologians should combat the doctrine of human impotence, and the helpless dependence of the apostate will upon the Divine efficiency in order to its renewal. They adopt the theory of

synergism in regeneration, and defend it with great earnestness. "If any one," say the Tridentine Canons, "shall affirm that the free will of man was lost, and became extinct, after the sin of Adam.... let him be accursed. If any one shall affirm that the free will of man, moved and excited by God, co-operates nothing by assenting to God thus exciting and calling, so that it disposes and prepares itself for obtaining the grace of justification, but like some inanimate object does nothing at all, but is merely passive, let him be accursed. If any one shall affirm that all works that are performed before justification, from whatever reason they are done, are really and truly sins, and merit the displeasure of God, or that the more a man endeavors to dispose himself for grace, the more does he sin, let him be accursed. If any one shall affirm that the sinner is justified by faith alone, in the sense that nothing else is requisite which may co-operate to the attainment of the grace of justification, and that the sinner does not need to be prepared and disposed by the motion of his own will, let him be accursed."

There was no part of the anthropology of the Reformers which the divines of Trent opposed with more vehemence, than the monergistic theory of regeneration. The theory that man cannot co-operate efficiently in the regenerating act was, and is to this day, represented by the Papal theologians as fatalism. This is the charge made by Bellarmin, and by Möhler.

## **CHAPTER VII:**

### **ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE REFORMERS**

#### **1. Lutheran-Calvinistic Theory of Original Sin**

THE Reformers constructed the doctrines of Sin and Regeneration after the same general manner with Augustine and Anselm; so that the somewhat minute account which we have given of the Augustinian and Anselmic anthropologies renders a detailed representation of the Protestant anthropology unnecessary. The principal Lutheran and Calvinistic symbols agree in their definitions of sin and grace, and from them we shall derive our account.

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation reëffirmed, in opposition to the Papal anthropology, the Augustinian doctrine that original sin is truly and properly sin, and also that it was committed in Adam. The Augsburg Confession is explicit respecting the guilt of original sin, in the following terms. "The churches teach that after the fall of Adam, all men propagated according to ordinary generation, are born with sin, that is without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence (επιθυμία), and that this disease (morbus) or original depravity (vitium originis) is truly sin, damning, and bringing eternal death upon those who are not regenerated by baptism and the Holy Spirit. They also condemn the Pelagians and others, who deny this original depravity to be sin." The explanatory defence of the Augsburg Confession, which goes under the name of the Apologia, explains what the authors of this Confession meant by their assertion that original sin is "concupiscence." "Some persons assert that original sin is not a depravity (vitium) or corruption in the nature of man, but only a condition of servitude or mortality which the descendants of Adam come into without any proper and personal guilt. Furthermore, they assert that no one is under condemnation to eternal death on account of original sin. It is as when slaves are born of a slave woman, and come into this servile condition without any fault of their nature, but through the misfortune of their mother. In opposition to this view, we have made mention of concupiscence, and have called it desire, to indicate that the nature of man is born corrupt and vitiated."

The Papal opponents of the Reformers had converted the doctrine of original sin into the doctrine of original evil, and had defined original

sin as fomes,—not sin itself, but the fuel of sin; not the depravation of the will, but the corruption of the sensuous nature only. Taking this merely physical theory of the Adamic sin, they had gone so far as to raise the questions: "What is the particular quality of the body in which this fomes consists; was it contracted from eating the apple (*contagio pomi*), or from the breath of the serpent; and can it be cured by medicines?" Alluding to these notions, Melanchthon, the author of the Apology, remarks that the "scholastic doctors" bury up the real matter in discussion. "When they speak of original sin, they do not specify the greater and graver faults of human nature,—namely, ignorance of God, contempt of God, destitution of the fear of God and of trust in Him, hatred of the government of God, terror at the justice of God, anger against God, despair of God's favor, reliance upon things visible." It is this class of sins which the Symbol has in view, when it speaks of original sin, and which it sums up under that term and name.

The same view of original sin is taught with yet greater decision and particularity, in the Formula Concordiae. This symbol carries out the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession to their logical results, and is the best expression of scientific Lutheranism. After distinctly rejecting the view of Flacius, which made original sin to be the substance of the human soul, and after asserting that sin in all its forms is the soul's agency and not the soul's essence, the Formula Concordiae affirms, that "Christians ought not only to acknowledge and define actual faults and transgressions of the commands of God to be sins, but they ought also to regard that hereditary disease (*morbus*) by which the whole nature of man is corrupted, as a specially dreadful sin, and, indeed, as the first principle and source of all other sins, from which all other transgressions spring as from their root." The first position in the statement of the doctrine of original sin, according to the Formula Concordiae, is that "this hereditary evil is guilt (*culpa*) or crime (*reatus*); whence it results that all men, on account of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, are odious in the sight of God, and are by nature the children of wrath, as the apostle testifies."

The same view of original sin was adopted by the Calvinistic division of the Protestants. Calvin defines original sin to be "an hereditary pravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all the parts of the soul, rendering us obnoxious to the Divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scripture calls 'works of the flesh.' And this is, indeed, what Paul frequently denominates 'sin;' while the works which proceed thence, such as adulteries, fornications, thefts, hatreds, murders, revellings, he calls the 'fruits of sin,'—though they are also called 'sins' in many passages of Scripture, and even by himself. This thing, therefore, should be distinctly observed: namely, that our nature being so totally vitiated and depraved, we are, on account of this very corruption, considered as convicted, and justly condemned in the sight of God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and purity. And this liability to punishment arises not from the delinquency of another; for when it is said that the sin of Adam renders us obnoxious to the Divine judgment, it is not to be understood as if we, being innocent, were undeservedly loaded with the guilt of his sin; but, because we are all subject to a curse, in consequence of his transgression, he is therefore said to have involved us in guilt. Nevertheless, we derive from him, not the punishment only, but also the pollution to which the punishment is justly due. Wherefore Augustine, though he frequently calls it the sin of another, the more clearly to indicate its transmission to us by propagation, yet at the same time also asserts it properly to belong to every individual. And the apostle himself expressly declares, that 'death has therefore passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,'—that is, have been involved in original sin. And therefore infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation into the world with them, are rendered obnoxious to punishment by their own sinfulness, not by the sinfulness of another. For though they have not yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet they have the seed of it within them.... Whence it follows that this native depravity is properly accounted sin in the sight of God, because there could be no guilt without crime."

Calvin does not examine the metaphysical grounds for the imputation of the Adamic sin, so fully as do Augustine and Anselm. But the extract cited above involves the doctrine of the unity of the race in the primitive apostasy. It teaches that original sin is not a mere individual sin, but is common or generic; otherwise, the individual "being innocent" would be "undeservedly loaded with the guilt of a sin not his own," and foreign to him. We derive from Adam, "not the punishment only, but also the pollution to which the punishment is justly due."

The clearest and most explicit statement of the doctrine of original sin in its relations to the Adamic connection, that was made in any of the Calvinistic symbols of the 16th and 17th centuries, is found in the *Formula Consensus Helvetici*. This creed sustains the same relation to the Calvinistic system that the *Formula Concordiae* does to the Lutheran. It is confined to the doctrines of original sin and grace, and upon these subjects makes statements that are more exhaustive and scientific than are found in any of the other creeds drawn up by the Reformed or Calvinistic theologians. It was composed by the distinguished Swiss divines Heidegger, Turretine, and Gereker, primarily to oppose a particular theory of original sin and election which was obtaining some currency, and which these theologians regarded as a deviation from genuine Calvinism. In order to a proper understanding of the positions of the *Formula*, it is necessary to give a brief account of this theory.

In the year 1640, Joshua Placaeus, a distinguished theologian of Saumur, in the west of France, published the theory, that God cannot justly, and therefore does not actually, impute Adam's sin itself to his posterity, but only the consequences of that sin. And inasmuch as punishment follows imputation, God cannot justly and does not actually punish Adam's sin itself in the posterity, but only the consequences of that sin,—viz.: the corruption of nature resulting from it, and transmitted by propagation. The apostatizing act itself was the act of the individual Adam simply and solely. The posterity, therefore, did not participate in it, and therefore it could not be



immediately imputed to them as guilt. But the consequences of that individual apostatizing act of Adam,—viz.: the corruption of the whole nature, issuing from it and transmitted to the posterity,—are imputed to them. This imputation of the effects of Adam's act of apostasy, Placaeus denominated "mediate;" while the imputation of the apostatizing act itself, or of the cause of these effects, he called "immediate." "If," says Placaeus, "by the first sin of Adam, his first actual sin be meant, and not his habitual sin which followed it, then imputation must be distinguished into immediate or antecedent, and mediate or consequent. The first imputation occurs immediately, that is without the medium of any corruption. The last imputation occurs mediately, that is through the medium of hereditary and inward corruption. The former precedes inward and hereditary corruption, in the order of nature; the latter follows it. The former is the cause of inward and habitual corruption; the latter is the effect." Placaeus rejects the former, and admits the latter.

In opposition to this theory of "mediate" imputation, the Formula Consensus makes the following statements. "As God entered into a covenant of works with Adam, not only for himself but also with the whole human race in him as the head and root, so that the posterity who were to be born of him would inherit the same integrity with which he was created, provided he should continue in it; so Adam by his sad fall sinned not for himself only, but for the whole human race who were to be born 'of blood and the will of the flesh,' and lost the blessings promised in the covenant. We are of opinion, therefore, that the sin of Adam is imputed to all his posterity by the secret and just judgment of God. For the apostle testifies that 'In Adam all have sinned. By the disobedience of one man many were made sinners;' and, 'In Adam all die' (Rom. 5:12, 19; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22). But it does not appear how hereditary corruption, as spiritual death, could fall upon the entire human race by the just judgment of God, unless some fault (*delictum*) of this same human race (*eiusdem generis humani*), bringing in the penalty of that death, had preceded. For the most just God, the judge of all the earth, punishes none but the guilty. Wherefore man, previous to the commission of any single or 'actual'

transgression, is exposed to the divine wrath and curse from his very birth (ab ortu suo), and this in a twofold manner; first, on account of the transgression (παράπτωμα) and disobedience which he committed in the loins of Adam; and secondly, on account of the hereditary corruption inherent in his conception, which is the consequence of this primitive transgression, and by which his whole nature is depraved and spiritually dead. Thus it appears that original sin, by a strict discrimination, is twofold, and consists of the imputed guilt of Adam's transgression and the inherent hereditary corruption consequent upon this. For this reason, we are unable to assent to the view of those who deny that Adam represented his posterity by the ordinance of God, and, consequently, deny that his sin is immediately imputed to them, and who, under the notion of a 'mediate' and consequent imputation, not only do away with the imputation of the first sin, but also expose the doctrine of innate and hereditary corruption itself to grave peril."

According to this statement of Turretine and Heidegger, mediate imputation must rest upon immediate; and both imputations must be asserted. They did not consider it conformable to justice, to impute an effect without imputing the cause. The posterity could not properly be regarded as guilty for their inward corruption of heart and will, unless they were guilty for that primal Adamic act of apostasy which produced this corruption. It does not appear reasonable, they say, that a corrupt nature should be transmitted and imputed to the universal race of mankind, "unless some fault" (delictum), some voluntary and culpable act, "of this same human race had preceded." The attempt, therefore, of Placaeus, to sever the inherited depravity from the Adamic act of apostasy, to impute the effect but not the cause of the effect, appeared to them in the highest degree illogical. More than this, it brought the doctrine of innate depravity itself into "grave peril." For, according to the theory of "mediate imputation," moral corruption together with temporal and eternal death come upon the posterity, while yet the posterity have no part in that primitive act of apostasy which is the originating cause, and sole justifying reason of this very corruption and death.

The justice of the Divine procedure, according to Turretine and Heidegger, is imperilled by a method that permits the misery and corruption that issue from an act of sin to fall upon a posterity who do not participate in that act, and are innocent of it. The Adamic sin itself must, therefore, be imputable to the posterity, in order to legitimate the imputation of its consequences. And, furthermore, this act, they imply, must be imputed upon real and not nominal grounds. The imputation of Adam's sin must not be a "gratuitous" imputation, for this would yield only a "gratuitous" condemnation. Righteousness may be imputed when there is no righteousness; but sin cannot be imputed when there is no sin. "David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works: saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:6–8). The imputation of righteousness when there is no inherent and real righteousness, according to this explanation of St. Paul, is simply the forgiveness of iniquity, or the non-imputation of sin. It is a gratuitous imputation, and a gratuitous justification. But when Placaeus proposed to carry the doctrine of a gratuitous imputation, such as holds true of Christ's righteousness, over to Adam's sin, and proposed to impute the Adamic guilt without any real and inherent demerit upon the part of the posterity, in the same manner that the righteousness of Christ is imputed without any real and inherent merit upon the part of the elect, Turretine and Heidegger opposed him. The doctrine of a gratuitous justification is intelligible and rational; but the doctrine of a gratuitous damnation is unintelligible and absurd. Hence the Formula Consensus taught that "man previous to the commission of any single or 'actual' transgression, is exposed to the divine wrath and curse from his very birth, ... first, on account of the transgression and disobedience which he committed in the loins of Adam." The posterity must be really, and not fictitiously, in the person of the progenitor, in order that they may be "immediately" and justly charged with a common guilt.

## **2. Lutheran-Calvinistic Theory of Regeneration**

The leading Protestant symbols adopt the Augustinian view of regeneration, and particularly of the impotence to good of the apostate will. One of the most striking characteristics of the anthropology of the first Protestant theologians is the marked difference which they find between the unfallen and the fallen Adam, or between man by creation and man by apostasy. Man as created has plenary power to be perfectly holy. Man as apostate is destitute of this power. According to Luther and Calvin, the loss of power to good is one of the inevitable effects of sin, so that sin might be defined to be an inability to holiness. Hence they refuse to attribute to fallen man those gifts and energies of unfallen humanity which they held to have been lost in and by the voluntary act of apostasy. After this act of self-will, which is subsequent to the creative act, they concede to man no power to become spiritually perfect and holy. The utmost to which he is competent, without renewing grace, is acts of external morality. "The churches," says the Augsburg Confession, "teach that the human will has a certain liberty sufficient for attaining morality (*civilem justitiam*), and choosing things that appear reasonable. But it has not the power, without the Spirit of God, to attain holiness or spiritual righteousness, because the carnal man cannot (*οὐ δύναται*) know spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14). Augustine says this in the same words (*Hypognosticon*, lib. iii.), 'We acknowledge that free will is in all men; that it has indeed a rational judgment by means of which it is able to begin and finish, without God's grace, not those things which pertain to God, but those works that relate to this present life,—the good as well as the bad. The good, I say; meaning those which are in their place right and proper: e.g.: to choose to work in the field, to choose to eat and drink, to choose to have a friend, to choose to have clothes, to choose to build a house, to marry a wife, to learn an art, or whatever allowable and proper thing it may be that pertains to the present life.' The churches also condemn the Pelagians and others who teach that without the Holy Spirit, by natural powers (*naturae viribus*) alone, we are able to love God supremely." Consonant with these statements of the Augsburg Confession, is the following from the Apology. "The human will is able, after a certain sort (*aliquo modo*), to attain civil righteousness,

or the righteousness of works: It is able to converse about God, to render to God an external worship, to obey magistrates and parents in externals, to keep the hands from murder, adultery, and theft.... We concede, therefore, to the will of man the power to perform the external works of the law, but not the inward and spiritual works,—as, for example, to truly revere God, to truly trust in God, to truly know and feel that God regards us with pity, hears our prayers, and pardons our sins, &c. These are the genuine works of the first table of the law, which no human heart is able to perform without the Holy Spirit, as Paul says (2 Cor. 2:14): 'The natural man, that is man using only his natural powers, perceiveth not the things of God.' " The Formula Concordiae, the symbol of High Lutheranism, teaches that "before man is illuminated, converted, regenerated, and drawn by the Holy Spirit, he can no more operate, co-operate, or even make a beginning towards his conversion or regeneration, with his own natural powers, than can a stone, a tree, or a piece of clay." Luther's expressions respecting the impotence of the sinful will are marked by his usual decision and boldness. At the Leipsic Disputation, he compared man to a saw in the hand of the workman; and in his commentary upon Genesis 19 he says: "In spiritualibus et divinis rebus, quae ad animae salutem spectant, homo est instar statuae salis, in quam uxor patriarchae Loth est conversa; imo est similis trunco et lapidi, statuae vita carenti, quae neque oculorum, oris, aut ullorum sensuum cordis usum habet." In his work *De servo arbitrio*, written against Erasmus, he compares the divine exhortations to obedience addressed to men, to the irony of a parent who says 'Come now,' to a little child, although he knows that he cannot come.

The Reformed or Calvinistic division of the Protestants were equally positive and clear, in their assertion of the bondage of the apostate will, and of the monergistic theory of regeneration.

The First Helvetic Confession, an important Calvinistic symbol drawn up under the influence of Bullinger, makes the following statement. "We attribute free will to man in this sense, viz.: that when in the use of our faculties of understanding and will we attempt

to perform good and evil actions, we are able to perform the evil of our own accord and by our own power, but to embrace and follow out the good, we are not able, unless illuminated by the grace of Christ, and impelled by his Spirit. For it is God who works in us to will and to do, according to his good pleasure; and from God is salvation, from ourselves perdition." The Second Helvetic Confession, drawn up entirely by Bullinger, is yet more explicit and detailed upon the subject of regeneration, and the relations of the human will to it. It considers the state of man in three respects: first, his state before his fall; second, his state after his fall; third, the nature of his agency in regeneration. Its language is as follows: "Man before the fall was upright (*rectus*) and free; he was able to remain holy, or to decline into evil. He declined to evil, and involved in sin and death both himself and the whole race of men. Next, we must consider the condition of man after the fall. The intellect of man was not taken away by the fall, neither was he robbed of his will and changed into a stock or stone; but his intellect and will were so changed and enfeebled (*imminuta*), that they cannot any longer perform what they could before the fall. The intellect is darkened, and the will has been converted from a free into an enslaved faculty. For it is the servant of sin; not unwillingly, but willingly. For it is still a will, and not a nill (*voluntas, non noluntas dicitur*). Hence, in respect to sin, man is not coerced either by God or by Satan, but does evil of his own voluntariness (*sua sponte*); and in this respect exercises the freest possible choice. But in respect to holiness, the intellect of man does not of itself rightly judge concerning divine things. The scripture requires regeneration in order to salvation. Hence our first birth from Adam contributes nothing to our salvation. Paul says, 'The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' The same apostle asserts, that 'we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any good thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.' But it is evident that the mind or intellect is the guide and leader of the will; if therefore the guide is blind, it is easy to see how far the will also is affected. Wherefore, there is no free will to good in an unrenewed

man; no strength for acting holily. Our Lord, in the Gospel says: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.' And the apostle Paul asserts that 'the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' In the third place, we are to consider whether the regenerate have free will, and how far (*an regenerati sint liberi arbitrii, et quatenus*). In regeneration, the intellect is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that it apprehends the mysteries and will of God. And the will itself is not only changed (*mutatur*) by the Spirit, but is strengthened in its energies (*instruitur facultatibus*), so that it spontaneously wills and performs the good. Unless we concede this we deny Christian liberty, and bring in legal servitude. The prophet (Jer. 31; Ezek. 36) represents God as saying: 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.' Our Lord (John 7) also says: 'If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' Paul, also, says to the Philippians (Phil. 1:29): 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;' and again (Phil. 1:6): 'I am confident that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perfect (*ἐπιτελέσει*) it until the day of Jesus Chris;' and again (Phil. 2:13): 'It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do.' "

Respecting man's agency in regeneration, the Second Helvetic Confession teaches that the human activity is the effect of the Divine activity. "The regenerate," says this creed, "in the choice and working of that which is good, not only act passively, but actively also (*regeneratos in boni electione et operatione, non tantum agere passive, sed active*). For they are acted upon by God, that they themselves may act what they do act (*aguntur enim a Deo, ut agant ipsi, quod agant*). Rightly does Augustine adduce the fact that God is styled our helper (*adjutor*). But no one can be helped, except as there is activity in him (*nequit autem adjuvari, nisi is, qui aliquid agit*). The Manichaeans despoil man of all activity, and make him as a stock or stone."

By the above phrase "acting passively," the formers of this creed appear to mean, that the sinful will, in relation to the strictly renewing agency of the Holy Spirit, is recipient, or is acted upon, while yet it is a will and not a stone; and by "acting actively," they mean that as a consequence of this passivity it becomes spontaneously active in holiness. The regenerating energy does not find or leave the human will inert and lifeless, like a stock or stone, but makes it willing and energetic to good, with the same energy and intensity with which it had been willing and energetic to evil.

### **3. Melanchthon's Synergism**

Melanchthon took a leading part in the construction of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology; both of which asserted the Augustinian doctrine of original sin, and the monergistic theory of regeneration. But when the difficult points involved in the doctrine of grace and regeneration came to be discussed among the Protestants, and the Calvinistic division, in particular, asserted the helplessness of the human will with great energy, and emphasized the tenet of election and predestination, Melanchthon receded somewhat from his earlier opinions, and adopted a species of synergism. He expressed his views in a revised form of the Augsburg Confession, which goes under the name of the Variata, and in his important theological manual, entitled *Loci Communes*. Instead of explaining regeneration as Luther and Calvin did, and as he himself did when the Augsburg Confession was drawn up, as the effect of the Divine efficiency simply and solely, he asserts that "*concurrent tres causae bonae actionis, verbum Dei, Spiritus Sanctus, et humana voluntas assentiens nec repugnans verbo Dei.*" The human soul, according to Melanchthon, though apostate, yet retains an appetency faint and ineffectual, yet real and inalienable, towards the spiritual and the holy. Into this seeking, or faint striving (*clinamen*) in the right direction, the grace of God enters, and brings it to a result. This form of synergism, though the nearest to monergism of any, because it reduces down the human factor to a minimum is, yet, not the monergism of Luther and Calvin. Hase, who is certainly not biassed in favor of monergism,



remarks that "the synergism emanating from Melanchthon may be regarded as a remote tendency to Pelagianism; first, in that the co-operation of man toward his own change of character (Bessrung) appears to be founded upon natural endeavors, and not upon the inward operation of the Holy Spirit; and secondly, in that the non-resistance of the sinner at the commencement of the change of heart is represented as a positive active concurrence of will."

#### **4. Zuingli's Doctrine of Original Sin**

The only one of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation who did not accept the Augustinian doctrine of original sin was Zuingli. This active and energetic mind seems to have inclined to that theory, prevalent in the second and third centuries, which we have designated by the general name of the Greek anthropology, and which reappeared in Semi-Pelagianism. But the opinions of Zuingli upon original sin were confined to the circle of his own personal influence, and did not spread like those of Luther and Calvin through the Protestant churches. They were not adopted into any symbol, and did not constitute the foundation of any ecclesiastical body.

Zuingli sent a statement of his theological sentiments to the diet at Augsburg in 1530, where so many religious parties were represented. It is entitled Zuingli's *Fidei Ratio*, and from it we extract the following representation of his views of original sin. "I think this in regard to original sin. That is properly sin which is transgression of the law; for where no law is there is no transgression; and where there is no transgression there is no sin properly so called,—that is to say, so far as by sin is meant wickedness, crime, villainy, or guilt. I acknowledge, therefore, that our first father sinned a sin that is truly sin,—that is, wickedness, crime, and turpitude. But those who are generated from that person did not sin in this manner,—for what one of us bit with his teeth the forbidden apple in Paradise? Hence, whether we will or no, we are compelled to admit that original sin, as it is in the posterity of Adam, is not truly sin, in the sense already spoken of; for it is not a crime committed against law. Consequently,

it is properly speaking a disease and condition. A disease, because as Adam fell from love of himself, so also do we fall. A condition, because as he became a slave, and obnoxious to death, so also we are born slaves and children of wrath, and obnoxious to death ... Adam died, on account of sin, and being thus dead, that is sentenced to death, in this condition [status] he generated us. Therefore we also die,—so far as he is concerned, by his fault and culpability; but so far as we are concerned, by our condition and disease, or, if you prefer, 'sin,'—but sin improperly so called. Let us illustrate by an example. A man is taken captive in war. Upon the ground of his own personal hostility to his captors, and treachery towards them, he deserves to be made a slave, and is so held. Now they who are born of him in this condition are slaves,—not by virtue of their own fault, guilt, or crime, but by virtue of their condition [status], which condition is the consequence of the guilt of their father, who had deserved to come into it by his individual fault. The children in this instance are not laden with crime itself, but with the punishment, fine, loss, or damage of crime,—that is, with a wretched condition of servitude."

The difference between this view, and that of the Lutheran and Calvinistic symbols from which we have quoted, is plain. So far as the will is concerned, Zuingle does not hold the doctrine of the Adamic unity, and hence he cannot concede from his position the doctrine of a common apostasy and guilt. The Adamic transgression, according to the Zuinglian theory, was only nominally and by a mental fiction the transgression of the posterity, and hence the sinfulness of it when attributed to the posterity, is only nominal. At the same time, he left unanswered that question which drove Augustine towards the theory of Traducianism, viz.: Why are the posterity of Adam, who by the supposition are entirely innocent of Adam's act of apostasy, visited with all the dreadful temporal and eternal consequences of that act? For Zuingle expressly says that the posterity, though guiltless of the primitive act of apostasy, are "born slaves, and children of wrath, and obnoxious to death."

# **CHAPTER VIII:**

## **THE ARMINIAN ANTHROPOLOGY**

### **1. Arminian theory of Original Sin**

THE Protestant Reformation reinstated, we have seen, the Augustinian anthropology. Both the Lutheran and Calvinistic creeds teach the doctrines of the Adamic unity, both as to soul and body, of the imputation of the original act of apostasy to all men and the guilt of original sin, and of monergism in regeneration.

The Arminians were a Protestant party who receded from this dogmatic position of the first Reformers, and made some modifications of the doctrines of sin and grace which were in the direction of the Greek anthropology and the Semi-Pelagianism of the Ancient Church, though not identical in every respect.

The clearest and most particular statement of the Arminian system, in its first form, is found in the Confession or Declaration, drawn up by Episcopius, and in the Apology which he subsequently composed in explanation and defence of it. The writings of Arminius, although they do not furnish any formal creed-statement, nevertheless throw much light upon the process by which Arminianism was gradually formed by a mind that had been trained up under Beza, and had reacted from his supra-lapsarianism.

The Arminian anthropology accepts the doctrine of the Adamic unity, and states it in substantially the same phraseology with the Lutheran and Calvinistic symbols; but it explains the phraseology very differently from them. The language of the Confession or Declaration, upon this subject, is the following. "Adam together with

Eve transgressed the law of God. By this transgression, man, in accordance with the divine threatening, was made liable to eternal death and manifold miseries, and was deprived of that primitive felicity which he had received in creation ... But since Adam was the stem and root of the whole human race ... he involved all his posterity who, as it were (quasi), had been shut up in his loins and were to issue from him by natural generation, in the same death and misery, and implicated them with himself, so that all men, indiscriminately, the Lord Jesus Christ alone being excepted, through this one single sin of Adam (*per hoc unicum Adami peccatum*) have been deprived of that primitive felicity, and have lost that true righteousness which is necessary in order to eternal life, and thus are born even now exposed to that death which we have mentioned, and to manifold miseries. And this is commonly denominated original sin. In respect to which, nevertheless, the doctrine must be held, that the most benevolent God has provided for all a remedy for that general evil which was derived to us from Adam, free and gratuitous in his beloved Son Jesus Christ, as it were a new and another Adam. So that the hurtful error of those is plainly apparent, who are accustomed to found upon that [original] sin the decree of absolute reprobation, invented by themselves."

The doctrine of Redemption seems to be brought to view in the above statement, in such a connection as to imply, that the evil which has come upon the posterity of Adam is of the nature of a misfortune, and not of a fault. It is not a sin that intrinsically merits eternal reprobation, so that God would have been just had he provided no redemption from it. Mankind are indeed subject to loss by their connection with the progenitor, but the Divine compassion has granted a compensation in the method of salvation.

Hence, when this phraseology respecting the Adamic connection and sin comes to be interpreted in the Apology, we find that the Arminian theologians hold original sin to be original evil only, and not guilt. The following extracts from the careful explanation given by Episcopius show this. "The Remonstrants do not regard original sin

as sin properly so called, which renders the posterity of Adam deserving of the hatred of God; nor as an evil which by the method of punishment properly so called (*per modum proprie dictae poenae*) passes from Adam to his posterity; but as an evil, infirmity, injury (*infirmitas, vitium*), or by whatever other name it may be called, which is propagated to his posterity by Adam devoid of original righteousness. Whence it results, that all the posterity of Adam, destitute of the same righteousness, are wholly unfit for, and incapable of attaining eternal life,—either to return of themselves into favor with God, or to discover a way whereby they may return,—except God by his new grace go before them, and restore as well as supply (*restituatur ac sufficiatur*) new strength by which they can attain it. And this the Remonstrants believe to have been signified by the expulsion of Adam from paradise, the type of heaven. For this calamity (*calamitas*) happened not only to Adam, but was common with him to all the posterity of Adam. But that original sin (*peccatum originis*) is not evil in any other sense than this,—that it is not evil in the sense of implying guilt and desert of punishment (*malum culpae, aut malum poenae*),—is plain. It is not evil in the sense of implying guilt, because to be born is confessedly an involuntary thing, and therefore it is an involuntary thing to be born with this or that stain (*labes*), infirmity, injury, or evil. But if it is not an evil in the sense of implying guilt, then it cannot be an evil in the sense of desert of punishment; because guilt and punishment are correlated ... So far, therefore, as original sin is an evil, it must be in the sense in which the Remonstrants define the term; and is called original sin by a misuse of the word 'sin' (*καταχρηστικῶς*). And this was the very sentiment of Zuingli,—at least that which he at first asserted, and defended; whether he afterwards retracted it, is not certain."

In defining the doctrine of imputation, the author of the *Apology* denies that the posterity were one with Adam in the primal act of apostasy, and, consequently, affirms that the Adamic transgression cannot be imputed to the posterity as truly and properly their sin. "The Remonstrants acknowledge that the sin of Adam may be said to be imputed to his posterity, so far forth as God has willed that the

posterity of Adam should be born subject to the same evil to which Adam subjected himself by his sin, or, so far forth as God has permitted the evil, which had been inflicted upon Adam as a punishment, should flow and pass over to his posterity [not as punishment, but as propagated evil]. But there is no ground for the assertion, that the sin of Adam was imputed to his posterity in the sense that God actually judged the posterity of Adam to be guilty of, and chargeable with (*reos*), the same sin and crime (*culpa*) which Adam had committed. Neither scripture, nor truth, nor wisdom, nor divine benevolence, nor the nature of sin, nor the idea of justice and equity, allow that they should say that the sin of Adam was thus imputed to his posterity. Scripture testifies that God threatened punishment to Adam alone, and inflicted it upon Adam alone; the Divine benevolence, veracity, and wisdom, do not permit that one person's sin should be imputed, strictly and literally, to another person; it is contrary to the nature of sin, that that should be regarded as sin, and be properly imputed as sin, which was not committed by individual will (*propria voluntate*); it is contrary to justice and equity, that any one should be charged as guilty, for a sin that is not his own, or that he should be judged to be really guilty who in respect to his own individual voluntariness is innocent, or, rather, not guilty. And the injustice is the greater, in proportion as the punishment which follows the imputation is severer. Consequently, it is the height of injustice, when the penalty is an eternal suffering." Arminius, also, in his *Apology or Defence*, remarks: "It may admit of discussion, whether God could be angry on account of original sin which was born with us, since it seems to be inflicted upon us by God as a punishment of the actual sin which had been committed by Adam, and by us in him [putatively or nominally, i.e.] ... I do not deny that it is sin, but it is not actual sin ... We must distinguish between actual sin and that which is the cause of other sins, and which on this very account may be denominated 'sin.' " In further proof of the position, that the hereditary evil which is transmitted by propagation does not render the soul worthy of eternal damnation, as it would if it were really and properly sin, the *Apology* makes the following statement respecting the character of

infants: "The Remonstrants decide with confidence, that God neither will, nor justly can, destine to eternal torment any infants who die without actual and individual sins, upon the ground of a sin which is called 'original,' which is said to be contracted by infants by no individual fault of theirs, but by the fault of another person, and which is believed to be theirs for no other reason than that God wills arbitrarily to impute it to them. This opinion is contrary to the Divine benevolence, and to right reason; nay it is uncertain which is greater, its absurdity or its cruelty."

These extracts are sufficient to prove that the Arminian theologians did not believe that the unity between Adam and his posterity, which they asserted in their Confession or Declaration, was of such a nature as to make the first sinful act of Adam a common act of mankind, and thereby justify the imputation of original sin as truly and properly sin. Though employing the Augustinian phraseology respecting the Adamic connection, they put a different interpretation upon it from that which is found in both Lutheran and Calvinistic symbols. Their objection to the doctrine that original sin is guilt, proceeds upon the assumption that Adam's act of apostasy was purely individual, and that the posterity were not in the progenitor in any such real sense as the phraseology of their own doctrinal statements, if taken in its strict and literal acceptation, would imply.

## **2. Arminian Theory of Regeneration**

The Arminian anthropology also accepts the doctrine of the impotence to good of the apostate will, and states it in substantially the same phraseology with that of the Lutheran and Calvinistic symbols; but it makes explanations and modifications that bring it into conflict with some fundamental positions of the Reformers upon this subject.

The Confession or Declaration of the Remonstrants makes the following statement: "Man has not saving faith from himself, neither is he regenerated or converted by the force of his own free will; since,

in the state of sin, he is not able, of and by himself, to think, will, or do any good thing,—any good thing that is saving in its nature, particularly conversion and saving faith. But it is necessary that he be regenerated, and wholly renewed, by God in Christ, through the truth of the gospel and the added energy of the Holy Spirit,—in intellect, affections, will, and all his faculties,—so that he may be able (possit) rightly to perceive, meditate upon, will, and accomplish that which is a saving good." This taken by itself, and understood in its literal obvious sense, would express the monergism of Augustine, Anselm, and the Reformers; but a theory of grace is associated with it that differs essentially from theirs. This theory is presented in the following extract from the Confession: "Although there is the greatest diversity in the degrees in which grace is bestowed in accordance with the Divine will, yet the Holy Spirit confers, or at least is ready to confer, upon all and each to whom the word of faith is ordinarily preached, as much grace as is sufficient for generating faith and carrying forward their conversion in its successive stages. Thus, sufficient grace for faith and conversion is allotted not only to those who actually believe and are converted, but also to those who do not actually believe, and are not in fact converted.... So that there is no decree of absolute reprobation." This view of grace is synergistic. Every man that hears the gospel receives a degree of grace that is sufficient for regeneration. If, therefore, he is not regenerated it must be from the want of some human efficiency to co-operate with the Divine; and therefore the difference between the saved and the lost, the elect and the non-elect, is ultimately referable to the human will. So far as the divine influence is concerned, the saved and lost stand upon the same position, and receive a degree of grace that is sufficient to save. But the former makes the grace effectual by an act of his own will; while the latter nullifies it by the same method. According to the monergistic theory, on the contrary, no man receives a grace that is sufficient for regeneration who does not receive such a degree of Divine influence as overcomes his hostile will; so that regeneration is not conditioned upon any human efficiency, but is the result of a sovereign and irresistible energy. The dependence upon grace, in regeneration, in the Arminian



anthropology, is partial; in the Calvinistic anthropology, is total. "Grace," says Limborch, "is not the solitary, yet it is the primary cause of salvation; for the co-operation of free will is due to grace as a primary cause; for unless the free will had been excited (excitatum) by prevenient grace, it would not be able to co-operate with grace." Here the influence of grace upon the will is that of excitation or stimulation, and not of renovation. Hence Limborch can properly denominate the will's activity, co-operation. The faculty is inert and sluggish, as distinguished from averse and hostile, and hence it can co-work in its own regeneration.

The doctrine of human inability and divine grace is still further modified by the Arminian theologians, by the position that God cannot demand faith irrespective of the bestowment of grace. This is very explicitly asserted by Arminius, in his answer to the question: 'Can God, now, in his own right, require from fallen man faith in Christ, which he cannot have of himself? Or does God bestow on all and every one, to whom the gospel is preached, sufficient grace by which they may believe if they will?' This was one of 'Nine Questions' that were presented to the professors of divinity in the university of Leyden, for the purpose of obtaining their views; and to it Arminius gave the following reply: "The parts of this question are not opposed to each other; on the contrary they are in perfect agreement. So that the latter clause may be considered as giving the reason, why God may require from fallen man faith in Christ which he cannot have of himself. For God may require this, since he has determined to bestow on man sufficient grace by which he may believe. Perhaps, therefore, the question may be thus stated: 'Can God, now, in his own right, demand from fallen man faith in Christ which he cannot have of himself, though God neither bestows on him, nor is ready to bestow, sufficient grace by which he may believe?' This question must be answered by a direct negative. God cannot by any right demand from fallen man faith in Christ which he cannot have of himself, except God has either bestowed, or is ready to bestow, sufficient grace by which he may believe if he will."

This doctrine that the obligation to faith does not rest upon fallen man irrespective of the aids of the Holy Spirit grew logically out of the Arminian definition of original sin. The inherited corruption has indeed brought man into such a condition that he cannot renew and save himself; but his corruption is an 'infirmity' or 'injury' and not a sin and fault. It is physical evil, and not culpable transgression. It is the result of Adam's individual act of apostasy, and not of an agency common to him and his posterity. The disability, therefore, under which man labors at birth is a misfortune, and not a crime. Original sin is not guilt. As a consequence, it is no more than equitable, that God should furnish a grace that shall be a sufficient assistance to overcome the inherited evil. In accordance with this view, the Apology of the Remonstrants teaches that God grants a common grace to the heathen, which if rightly used is sufficient to secure moral virtue and salvation. The argument is as follows: "In order that an act may be morally good, it is sufficient if it accords with right reason,—i.e., if it proceeds from a mind which, though it be ignorant of the written law and the gospel, is really actuated by a desire for virtue, honesty, and probity, and does not intend to do anything contrary to the divine will, and is not influenced by vain glory and self-love. For that a morally good act does not necessarily include the distinct intention to do only that which the written law or gospel commands,—viz.: the positive desire to promote the divine glory, and faith in Christ,—is evident from the nature of the case; for there have been many in every age, and still are to this day, who never even heard of the written law and gospel, who, nevertheless, no one would venture to deny, were and are morally good and virtuous (*quos tamen moraliter bonos ac virtuosos esse aut fuisse, nemo facile negaverit*)." In answer to the objection drawn from the text: "Without faith it is impossible to please God," the Apology explains this to refer to a special divine approbation, such as was shown to Enoch in his translation. It has no general reference. Again, the text: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," does not refer to justifying faith, but to sincerity and confidence in the mind. With this, accords the following statement of Limborch, who ranks with Episcopius as authority in the estimation of the Dutch Arminians. The question is

asked: Are all those who are destitute of the knowledge of the gospel to be numbered among the lost, upon the ground that they have no means whereby they can attain to eternal life? To this Limborch answers: "This does not appear at all conformable to truth.... On the contrary, if certain [pagans], in proportion to the measure of strength granted to them through that grace which is common to all men, strive after natural uprightness (*honestati naturali operam dent*), we believe that they also are pleasing to God (*Deo gratos esse*), in proportion to the kind of life they lead, nor are certainly excluded from salvation, and at the very least are not to be adjudged to eternal fire."

Such being the Arminian theory of original sin and regeneration, it was natural and logical that the Arminian statement of the doctrine of predestination and election should also differ from that of Augustine and Calvin in a very marked degree. Arminius's first doubts in respect to the Calvinism in which he had been educated took their origin in this part of the system. Beza, under whom he had studied theology, had adopted the supra-lapsarian statement of the doctrine of predestination, which renders the doctrine more austere and repelling than the infra-lapsarian representation. In his reaction, he, and his followers after him, adopted a theory of election and predestination which differs essentially from that of the Reformers, and from the Augustinian. It is the theory of conditional election; or of election upon the ground of a foreseen faith.

Arminius's views are explicitly stated by himself, in his Declaration of Sentiments, which he delivered before the States of Holland in 1608, and are as follows: "The first decree of God concerning the salvation of man is that by which he decreed to appoint his Son, Jesus Christ, for a Mediator. The second decree of God is that by which he decreed to receive into favor those who repent and believe ... but to leave in sin, and under wrath, all impenitent persons and unbelievers. The third divine decree is that by which God decreed to administer, in a sufficient and efficacious manner, the means which were necessary for repentance and faith. The fourth divine decree is

that by which God decreed to save and damn certain particular persons. This decree has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who would believe through his preventing grace, and through his subsequent grace would persevere, ... and by which foreknowledge, he likewise knew those who would not believe and persevere."

Upon examining this phraseology it will be found to teach that the decree of election is not a decree to originate faith in the sinner, but to reward faith in him. So far as the production of faith itself is concerned, the electing decree only furnishes the "means" which are necessary for repentance and faith. The efficiency that is to use these means is partly the energy of the Holy Spirit,—implied in the administration of the means "in a sufficient and efficacious manner,"—and partly the energy of the human will. By this last, the decree of election is conditioned. God decrees to bestow salvation upon those who make the "means" which he bestows, and the degree of divine influence which he grants, actually efficacious by their own self-decision.

### **3. Recapitulation**

A recapitulation of the principal characteristics of the Arminian anthropology, as derived from the original sources, gives the following particulars:

1. The Arminians, in the controversy with the Calvinists, asserted that original sin is not guilt; and that a decree of reprobation to eternal punishment could not be founded upon it.
2. The Arminians held that original sin does not include a sinful inclination of the will; it is an inherited corruption whose seat is the physical and intellectual parts, but not the voluntary.
3. The Arminians asserted that by reason of original sin, man of himself is unable to be morally perfect and holy; but inasmuch as the inherited corruption which is the cause of this inability is involuntary, the inability is a misfortune and not a fault, and therefore man is not obligated to be morally

perfect without the renewing grace of the gospel. 4. Adam's act of apostasy was purely individual, and therefore cannot be imputed to his posterity as guilt. 5. The will of man, though not competent to perfectly obey the law of God without the assisting influence of the Holy Spirit, is competent to co-operate with that assistance.<sup>2</sup> 6. The influence of the Holy Spirit is granted upon condition that the human will concurs and co-works. The success of the divine influence depends upon the use which man makes of his own will; consequently, election is conditional upon a foresight that a particular man will co-operate with the Holy Spirit.

## **CHAPTER IX:**

### **TOTAL SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY**

A REVIEW of the ground we have gone over in Anthropology will help to generalize, and classify, the materials which we have thus collected from the various sources and authorities.

In the first place, the doctrines of sin and grace, in their more difficult and scientific aspects, did not seriously engage the attention of the Church during the first three centuries after the closing of the New Testament Canon. No controversy arose respecting original sin and regenerating grace, until the opening of the 5th century. The Church, both East and West, generally held the doctrine of an inherited corruption as distinguished from an inherited guilt, the doctrine of synergistic regeneration, and was silent upon the doctrine of election and predestination. Secondly. At the same time, in these first centuries, previous to the Pelagian controversy, there were two tendencies at work, that had reference to the doctrine of original sin. One was, to convert the doctrine of inherited corruption or evil, into that of inherited guilt. The other was, to abolish the doctrine of inherited corruption altogether. The first tendency reached its terminus in Augustinianism; the second in Pelagianism. Thirdly. The theory of Pelagius, which rejected the doctrine of original sin in any definition of it, was condemned by the whole Church, East and West. This left within the Church two main currents of opinion in anthropology,—that of the 2d and 3d centuries, and that of Augustine; or, the Greek and Latin Anthropologies. The first was the doctrine of inherited evil but not inherited guilt, with its logical corollaries. The last was the doctrine of inherited guilt, with its logical results. Fourthly. The Augustinian anthropology was rejected in the East, and though at first triumphant in the West, was gradually displaced by the Semi-Pelagian theory, or the theory of inherited evil, and synergistic regeneration. This theory was finally

stated for the Papal Church, in an exact form, by the Council of Trent. The Augustinian anthropology, though advocated in the Middle Ages by a few individuals like Gottschalk, Bede, Anselm, and Bernard, slumbered until the Reformation, when it was revived by Luther and Calvin, and opposed by the Papists. Fifthly. After Protestantism had become established, the old antagonism between the two theories of inherited guilt and inherited evil, again revived in the Calvinistic and Arminian controversy, and has perpetuated itself down to the present time,—the whole of modern evangelical Christendom being ranged partly upon one side, and partly upon the other side of the line that separates these two systems.

The opposing currents of opinion in Anthropology, then, have been the following. In the Ancient Church, the Greek and Latin anthropologies in their more general forms prevail at first, and gradually pass over into the more distinct statements of Augustinianism and Semi-Pelagianism,—Pelagianism being rejected by both parties. In the Mediaeval Church, Semi-Pelagianism has full sway, with the exception of a few individual minds. At the Reformation, the Protestants re-instate Augustinianism, and the Papists maintain the mediaeval Semi-Pelagianism. In the Modern Church, the Calvinists re-affirm the positions of the first Protestant symbols, while the Arminians recede from them towards the Semi-Pelagian theory,—both parties alike rejecting the Socinianism which had come into existence, and which corresponds to the Pelagianism of the Ancient church.

## **BOOK FIFTH:**

## **HISTORY OF SOTERIOLOGY**

## **LITERATURE**

ANSELMUS: Cur Deus Homo?

PETAVIUS: De theologicis dogmatibus, Liber XII.

BELLARMINUS: Disputationes de controversiis fidei adversus hujus temporis haereticos.

GERHARDUS: Loci Theologici, Tom. IV.

CANONES CONCILII TRIDENTINI: in locis.

GROTIUS: Defensio fidei catholicae de satisfactione.

CURCELLAEUS: Institutio religionis Christianae, Liber VII.

SOCINUS: Praelectiones Theologicae, Cap. XVI.–XVIII.

HOOKE: On Justification.

DAVENANT: Disputatio de justitia (translated by Allport).

OWEN: On Justification.

MAGEE: On Atonement and Sacrifice.

BAUR: Versöhnungslehre.

MÖHLER: Symbolik (translated by Robertson).

BAUR: Der Gegensatz des Katholicismus und Protestantismus.

EVANGELISCHE KIRCHENZEITUNG, 1834: Geschichtliches aus der Versöhnungs-und Genugthuungslehre.

HASSE: Anselm von Canterbury, Bd. II.



REDEPENNING: Origenes.

## **CHAPTER I:**

### **SOTERIOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH**

#### **1. Preliminary Statements**

IN presenting the history of the Doctrine of Atonement, we shall use the term in its strict signification, as denoting the expiatory work of Christ. Soteriology has sometimes been made to include the subjects of Christology and the Incarnation in such a manner that the distinctively piacular agency of the Redeemer constitutes only a very subordinate part of this division of Dogmatic History. The doctrinal history of Petavius furnishes a striking example of this. This writer treats of the work of Christ under the general head of the Incarnation. While the entire work comprises sixteen books, each containing upon an average fifteen chapters, the sacrificial work of Christ is briefly discussed in one, or at most in two, of the chapters of the twelfth book. This was owing partly to the fact that the Person of Christ, in this history of ecclesiastical opinions, was far more in the eye of the historian, than the work of Christ; and partly because the distinctively Protestant doctrine of vicarious satisfaction was not very much a matter of interest for the strenuous though learned Jesuit. While, therefore, the history of the Arian and Sabellian heresies, and of the Monophysite and Monothelite controversies, is thoroughly written, and drawn from the immediate sources, the opinions of the apostolic, patristic, and scholastic periods, respecting the relations of the work of Christ to Divine justice, are exhibited in a very meagre and unsatisfactory manner.

Taking the term atonement in its technical signification, to denote the satisfaction of Divine justice for the sin of man, by the substituted penal sufferings of the Son of God, we shall find a slower scientific unfolding of this great cardinal doctrine than of any other of the principal truths of Christianity. Our investigations in this branch of inquiry will disclose the fact, that while the doctrines of Theology and Anthropology received a considerably full development during the Patristic and Scholastic periods, it was reserved for the Protestant church, and the Modern theological mind, to bring the doctrines of Soteriology to a correspondent degree of expansion.

## **2. Gnostic and Ebionite Theories of the Atonement**

During the first two centuries, the Christian theologian was led to investigate the doctrine of the work of Christ, either by the attacks of heretics, or the defective statements of pretended believers. As in the history of the doctrine of the Trinity, we found exact statements to be forced upon the church by the inaccurate statements of false teachers, so we shall see in the history of the doctrine of Atonement, that the truth received its scientific development no faster than the Christian mind was urged up either to a defensive, or a polemic position, by the activity of the heretic or the latitudinarian. There were two heretical views of the Atonement, during the first two centuries, which, inasmuch as they affected the true view of the work of Christ, gave direction to the orthodox statements of it. These were the Gnostic and the Ebionite.

Gnosticism appeared in two forms, and broached two theories respecting the Person and work of Christ. That of Basilides (A.D. 125) affirmed only a human suffering in the Redeemer, which was not expiatory, for two reasons: first, because as merely human it was finite, and inadequate to atone for the sins of the whole world of mankind; and, secondly, because the idea of substituted penal suffering is inadmissible. Penal suffering, or suffering for purposes of justice, Basilides maintained, of necessity implies personal criminality in the sufferer, and therefore can never be endured by an

innocent person like Christ. The principle of vicarious substitution, in reference to justice, is untenable. The Gnosticism of Marcion (A.D. 150) affirmed a divine suffering in the Redeemer, which however was only apparent, because the Logos having assumed a docetic, or spectral human body, only a seeming suffering could occur. This suffering, like that in the scheme of Basilides, could not of course be expiatory. It was merely emblematical,—designed to symbolize the religious truth, that man in order to his true and highest life must die to the earthly life. The Ebionite denied any connection between man and God in the Person of the Redeemer, other than that which exists in the life of any and every man. Rejecting the doctrine of expiation altogether, he occupied the position of the Jew, whom Paul so constantly opposes, and insisted upon a purely legal righteousness.

If now we examine these Gnostic and Judaizing theories, we find that they agree in one capital respect,—viz.: in the rejection of the Scripture doctrine of a real and true expiation of human guilt. The Gnostic and the Ebionite, though differing much in their general notions respecting the Person of Christ, both agreed in regard to his atoning work. Both alike rejected the doctrine of atonement, in the strict and proper meaning of the term, as signifying the satisfaction of justice.

### **3. Soteriology of the Apostolic Fathers**

The first endeavour of the orthodox mind, in opposition to these heretical opinions, was, consequently, to exhibit the nature and purpose of the sufferings and death of Christ. So far as their nature is concerned, they were uniformly and distinctly affirmed to be the sufferings and death of a theanthropic Person,—i.e., a being in whom Deity and humanity were mysteriously blended in the unity of a single personality. With respect to their purpose, the point with which we are more immediately concerned, we shall find less distinctness in the earlier than in the later periods of the history of this doctrine; yet at the same time, an unequivocal statement that the purpose of Christ's death is judicial, and expiatory of human guilt.

In the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, we obtain the views of the Church upon the doctrine of the Atonement during the first half century after the death of the last inspired apostle (A.D. 100–150). Examining them, we find chiefly the repetition of Scripture phraseology, without further attempt at an explanatory doctrinal statement. There is no scientific construction of the doctrine of Atonement in the writings of these devout and pious disciples of Paul and John; yet the idea of vicarious satisfaction is distinctly enunciated by them. Polycarp († 168), the pupil of John, writes in his Epistle to the Philippians: "Christ is our Saviour; for through grace are we righteous, not by works; for our sins, he has even taken death upon himself, has become the servant of us all, and through his death for us our hope, and the pledge of our righteousness. The heaviest sin is unbelief in Christ; his blood will be demanded of unbelievers; for to those to whom the death of Christ, which obtains the forgiveness of sins, does not prove a ground of justification, it proves a ground of condemnation." "Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered himself to be brought even to death for our sins; ... let us, therefore, without ceasing, hold steadfastly to him who is our hope, and the earnest of our righteousness, even Jesus Christ, 'who bare our sins in his own body on the tree.' " Ignatius († 116), the pupil of John, is perhaps somewhat less urgent than Polycarp, in respect to the point of vicarious satisfaction. He seems more inclined to consider the work of Christ in reference to the sanctification than the justification of the believer. It is a favourite view with him, that the death of Christ brings the human soul into communion with Christ. It is the means of imparting that principle of spiritual life which was lost in the fall. Christ's redemptive work is a manifestation of love, of self-denying and self-imparting affection on the part of the Redeemer, by which a corresponding affection is wrought in the heart of the believer. And yet the expiatory agency of Christ is explicitly recognized by Ignatius. In one passage, he speaks of Christ as the One "who gave himself to God, an offering and sacrifice for us." In another place, he bids believers to "stir" themselves up to duty, "by the blood of God." In another place, he remarks that "if God had dealt with us according to our works, we should not now have had a

being;" but that now under the gospel, we "have peace through the flesh, and blood, and passion of Jesus Christ." In Barnabas, the pupil of Paul, we find a clear expression of the atoning agency of the Redeemer. Such phraseology as the following contains the doctrine of justification as distinguished from sanctification: "The Lord endured to deliver his body to death, that we might be sanctified by the remission of sins which is by the shedding of that blood." Clement of Rome, a disciple of Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians speaks, generally, more of Christ's work than of other parts of the Christian system, and dwells particularly upon his death. The view of Christ's sufferings, he says, consumes pride, teaches us humility, and draws us to the death of penitence (c. 7). Hence it is a chief sign and duty of a Christian continually to have the death of Christ before his eye. His meaning in this, says Dorner, is not merely that Christ has presented us an example of humility and patience, though this thought is not foreign to Clement (c. 16); but his death is the principle, or efficient cause of true repentance,—i.e., works that repentance which in faith receives actual forgiveness of sins. For "his blood was given for us, was poured out for our salvation; he gave, by the will of God, his body for our body, his soul for our soul" (c. 49). Every explanation of these passages, continues Dorner, is forced, which does not find in them the idea of vicarious substitution, and this not merely in the sense of a subjective disposition, like that which led Christ to suffer for the good of others, but an objective work producing objective results, in reference to the Divine nature and government. Hence, the name so frequently given to Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews of "high priest" is very common in Clement. The following extracts exhibit the distinctness with which Clement discriminated justification from sanctification: "Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious his blood is in the sight of God, which being shed for our salvation hath obtained the grace of repentance to the whole world.... We are not justified by ourselves, neither by our own wisdom, or knowledge, or piety, or the works which we have done in holiness of heart, but by that faith by which almighty God hath justified all men from the beginning." In the statement that "we are not justified by the works which we have

done in holiness of heart," the most subtle form of the doctrine of justification by works is precluded, fourteen centuries before its enunciation at Trent.

It is evident from this examination of the very brief writings of the Apostolic Fathers, that they recognized the doctrine of atonement for sin by the death of the Redeemer as one taught in the Scriptures, and especially in the writings of those two great apostles, John and Paul, at whose feet they had most of them been brought up. They did not, however, venture beyond the phraseology of Scripture; and they attempted no rationale of the dogma. Their unanimous and energetic rejection of the doctrine of justification by works evinces that they did not stand upon the position of legalism. The evangelical tenet was heartily and earnestly held in their religious experience, but it was not drawn forth from this its warm and glowing home, into the cool and clear light of the intellect, and of theological science. The relations of this sacrificial death to the justice of God on the one hand, and to the conscience of man on the other,—the judicial reasons and grounds of this death of the most exalted of Personages,—were left to be investigated and exhibited in later ages, and by other generations of theologians.

#### **4. Early Patristic Soteriology**

Passing from the Apostolic to the Primitive Fathers, we find some progress in the scientific statement of the doctrine of Atonement. Yet, taken as a whole, the body of Patristic theology exhibits but an imperfect theoretic comprehension of the most fundamental truth in the Christian system,—imperfect, that is, when compared with the very able scientific construction of the doctrine of the Trinity which we have found in the Patristic writings.

One characteristic of the Early Patristic Soteriology which strikes the attention is the important part which the doctrine of Satan plays in it. The death of Christ is often represented as ransoming man from the power and slavery of the devil. Such passages as Colossians 2:15,

and Hebrews 2:14,—“Having spoiled principalities and powers [Satanic dominion], he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.... That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,”—were made the foundation of this view. The writer who exhibits it more plainly and fully than any other, is Irenaeus († 200?). As an illustration of his sentiments, we quote a passage from the first chapter of the fifth book of his important work, *Adversus Haereses*: “The Word of God [the Logos], omnipotent and not wanting in essential justice, proceeded with strict justice even against the apostasy or kingdom of evil itself (*apostasiam*), redeeming from it (*ab ea*) that which was his own originally, not by using violence, as did the devil in the beginning, but by persuasion (*secundum suadelam*), as it became God, so that neither justice should be infringed upon, nor the original creation of God perish.”

Two interpretations of this phraseology are possible. The “persuasion” may be referred to Satan, or to man; and the “claims” alluded to may be regarded as those of the devil, or of law and justice. The first interpretation is that of Baur, who thinks that he discovers a heretical idea in Irenaeus, the great opponent of heretics; a Gnosticising tendency in the most vehement opposer of Gnosticism. According to Baur, Irenaeus substitutes the Devil for the Demiurge, in his scheme, so that the difference between himself and his opponents is merely nominal. The Gnostic, with his crude notions of a Supreme Deity, and a descending series of inferior divinities, very naturally attributed to the inferior being what properly belongs only to the Supreme God. Creation, for example, was the work of a subordinate divinity, the Demiurge in his terminology. The Creator of the world and the God of Christianity, in the Gnostic scheme, were two distinct beings, in necessary and irreconcilable hostility to one another. Man has fallen into the power of the Demiurge and his demons, and redemption, according to the Gnostic, is the endeavor of the Highest Divinity to deliver man from their power.

Now, according to Baur, Irenaeus, living in the very midst of the heat and glow of this ingenious and imposing system of speculation, though intending to oppose it with all his might, was yet unconsciously affected by the spirit of the time, and moulded into his own system elements that were purely Gnostic. The notion of a conflict between the Redeemer and the Demiurge, Baur contends, laid the foundation for the first form of the orthodox theory of the atonement. The ransoming of man from the power and slavery of Satan, in the view of this writer, is equivalent to the ransoming of man from the power and bondage of the Demiurge and his demons; and, accordingly, we have in the treatise of Irenaeus, though written professedly against the Gnostic scheme, only an expansion of the same general notions that appear in the Ophite and Marcionite Gnosticism.

But the other view which may be taken of this phraseology of Irenaeus, and of the Early Fathers is unquestionably the correct one, and to this we turn our attention; first making some preliminary remarks respecting the Early Patristic Soteriology. It is not to be denied that in the writings of the first three centuries, disproportionate attention is bestowed upon the connection between redemption and the kingdom of darkness, and upon the relation of apostate man to Satan. The attribute of divine justice ought to have been brought more conspicuously into view by the theologian of this period, and the person and agency of the devil have retired more into the back-ground. It was reserved for a later age, as we shall see, to make this modification in the mode of apprehending the doctrine, and thereby bring the Soteriology of the church into closer agreement with the general instructions of revelation. For it is very plain that in seizing so rankly, as the theological mind of this age did, upon those few texts in which the connection and relations of Satan with the work of Christ are spoken of, and allowing them to eclipse those far more numerous passages in which the Redeemer's work is exhibited in its reference to the being and attributes of God, it was liable to a one-sided construction of the doctrine. Redemption unquestionably in one of its aspects looks hell-ward. The kingdom of



Satan does feel the influence of the mediatorial plan, and any theory that should entirely reject this side and relation of the atonement would be destitute of some features that are distinctly presented in the Scripture representations of the general doctrine. But it was an error in the Soteriology of these first ages that a subordinate part of the subject should have been made so prominent, and in some instances so exclusive a characteristic. Having made this concession, however, in respect to the scientific value of the Early Patristic theory of the atonement, we proceed to show that there was a difference in kind between it and the Gnostic theory, and no essential difference between it and the later Protestant theory. This difference consists in the recognition of the judicial and piacular nature of Christ's work.

All true scientific development of the doctrine of the Atonement, it is very evident, must take its departure from the idea of divine justice. This conception is the primary one in the Biblical representation of this doctrine. The terms, "propitiation" and "sacrifice," and the phraseology, "made a curse for us," "made sin for us," "justified by blood," "saved from wrath," which so frequently occur in the revealed statement of the truth, immediately direct the attention of the theologian to that side of the divine character, and that class of divine attributes, which are summed up in the idea of justice. And as we follow the history of the doctrine down, we shall find that just in proportion as the mind of the Church obtained a distinct and philosophic conception of this great attribute, as an absolute and necessary principle in the divine nature, and in human nature, was it enabled to specify with distinctness the real meaning and purport of the Redeemer's Passion, and to exhibit the rational and necessary grounds for it.

Now turning to the writings of the Patristic period, we shall see that the sufferings and death of the Redeemer are, in the main, represented as sustaining their most immediate and important relation to the justice of God. It is not to be disguised that the distinctness with which this is done varies with different writers. We shall find in this period, as in every other one, some minds for whom

the pollution of sin is more impressive than its criminality, and in whose experience the doctrine of justification is less formative than the doctrine of sanctification. For, in tracing the construction of a systematic doctrine, we are to observe that there may be agreement between the views of two different writers, while yet one grasps the subject with much greater firmness, discriminates with much greater distinctness, and affirms with much greater confidence and certainty, than the other. Again, the neglect to make the positive and scientific statement is by no means tantamount to a denial of the positive and scientific statement. The mind may merely be in obscurity, and unable to take a clear scientific view, much more, to present one. But its tendency is towards the thorough systematic statement, and though unable to make it itself would cordially accept it when made by another mind. Compare Irenaeus with Anselm, for example. That part of the work against the Gnostic heretics which treats of the atonement is by no means equal in clearness, discrimination, and fullness, to the *Cur Deus Homo*; and yet it would be incorrect, for this reason, to represent the soteriology of Irenaeus as contradictory to that of Anselm. In these instances, in which the difference between two writers is owing to further expansion, and not to intrinsic contradiction in opinions, the text applies, "He that is not against us, is for us."

Consider, for example, the following extract from the Epistle Ad Diognetum. "God himself gave up his own Son a ransom for us (ὁ ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἑκράνεν ὑμῶν), the holy for the unholy, the good for the evil, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal. For what else could cover our sins, but his righteousness? In whom was it possible for us the unholy and the ungodly to be justified, except the Son of God alone? O sweet exchange! O wonderful operation! O unlooked for benefit! That the sinfulness of many should be hidden in one, that the righteousness of one should justify many ungodly." Is not the whole doctrine of vicarious satisfaction contained in these words? Would not the attempt to find their full meaning short of this require the same sort of effort, and ingenuity, which must be employed in order to explain away the

element of vicariousness from such Scripture texts as teach that the Redeemer was "made sin," was "made a curse," and is a propitiatory sacrifice? The silence of the writer respecting those questions which arise when the scientific construction of the doctrine is attempted,—such as: How is the penal suffering of the Divine substitute made efficacious to the sinner? How is this suffering an infinite and adequate one?—the silence upon these and kindred questions, the answer to which would involve a fuller development of the doctrine of the Person of Christ than had yet been made, and the neglect to enter into a systematic construction, is very far from being evidence that the writer of this Epistle rejected the doctrine of pardon through expiation, as Baur contends.<sup>2</sup> For one needs only to ask the question: Would a theologian who positively and totally rejected the doctrine of satisfaction have expressed himself at all in the terms of this extract? to see that the faith and feeling of an Anselm and a Luther dwelt in the heart of this writer of the second century.

Returning again to Irenaeus, we find in the very extract cited by Baur as proof that Irenaeus substituted the Devil for the Demiurge in his soteriology, the evidence that he too took his departure from the attribute of divine justice. For why could not the Deity deliver man from Satan by force, by the mere exercise of the divine omnipotence? Because, in the words already cited, "the Logos, omnipotent and not wanting in essential justice, proceeded according to strict justice even towards the kingdom of evil (apostasiam), redeeming from it that which was His own originally, not by violence but by persuasion, as it became God, so that neither justice should be infringed upon, nor the original creation of God perish." In this extract, Baur asserts that *diabolum* is the elliptical word, so that the "persuasion" exercised by God terminates upon Satan. The Deity persuades the Devil to relax his grasp upon a being who originally belonged to God, and has come into the power of Satan only by deception, and consequently by injustice. To this interpretation there are three objections.

1. This mode of representing the relation between the Supreme Being and the Satanic Spirit implies a dualistic theory of God and universe; but there is no dualism in the system of Irenaeus. In the Gnostic theory, the two beings, and the two kingdoms of light and darkness, stand very nearly upon an equality. It would be in keeping with Gnostic ideas, to represent the Holy One as plying the Evil One with arguments and entreaties to release a creature whom he could not deliver by virtue of resources within himself. But there is no such dualism in Irenaeus. No one can peruse the five books against the Gnostic heresies, without seeing on every page evidences of that exalted idea of the Supreme Being which pervades the Scriptures, and which utterly forbids that leveling process by which the Infinite Jehovah is degraded to a mere rival of Satan, and by which the kingdom of darkness becomes as eternal and independent as the kingdom of light. If we do not find the Soteriology of Irenaeus as fully elaborated as that of the Reformers, we do find that his Theology, in respect to the point of the absolute supremacy of God over evil as well as good, is as distinct and scriptural as that of Calvin himself. We must therefore refer the "persuasion," spoken of in this extract from Irenaeus, to man; such indeed is indisputably the reference in other passages. Irenaeus means to teach, that as man fell freely, by the deception and persuasion of the Devil, so he must be recovered from his fall in a manner consistent with moral freedom. Mankind did not apostatize through compulsion, but by persuasion (*suadendo*); consequently their redemption must take the same course, even though Satan should derive advantage from this renunciation of the use of power on the part of the Almighty, and the consequent possibility, by reason of the appeal to the free will of the creature, of man's still remaining his slave.

2. Again, the "justice" spoken of in this extract, by which the method of salvation is limited, is plainly an attribute in the Divine Nature, and not a mere claim of the Devil upon either man or God which requires satisfaction. The two attributes of omnipotence and justice are exhibited side by side, and the latter limits the former, by virtue of its necessary moral character. The former is merely a natural

attribute, and unallied with a moral one like justice, or still more if opposed to it, would not be the attribute of a holy and good Being. Isolated omnipotence is isolated force, and as such belongs properly to the pantheistic conception of the Deity. In the theistic conception, all the natural attributes are regulated by the moral, and cannot be regarded as operating in isolation from each other, or in opposition to each other. This Irenaeus clearly teaches, in saying that the "Logos all powerful, and perfectly just, yet proceeds in strict justice even in respect to the apostate world itself." The doctrine taught in this phraseology is the same that is contained in the Protestant statement of the doctrine of the atonement, viz.: that the work of Christ preserves the harmony of the divine attributes in the plan of redemption, so that the omnipotence of the Deity shall not overthrow the justice of the Deity, by arbitrarily remitting the penalty due to transgression without any satisfaction of law.

3. Still another evidence that Irenaeus contemplated the "justice" whose claims were to be satisfied by the atonement of the Son of God, as intrinsic in the Deity, and not extrinsic in Satan, is found in the fact that he held to the absolute and not merely relative necessity of the death of Christ, in order to human salvation. We shall have occasion hereafter to allude to this point, and therefore shall touch it briefly here.

In discussing the nature of the atonement, the question naturally arises: Does the necessity of expiation in order to pardon arise from the nature of the case, or from an arbitrary arrangement? could the Deity have dispensed with any or all satisfaction of justice, or is justice of such an absolute and necessary character, that it would be as impossible to save the guilty without an antecedent satisfaction of this attribute, as it would be for God to lie? Now, in answering this question, Irenaeus is found among that class of the Fathers who affirm the absolute necessity of an atonement;—another class inclining to the view of a relative necessity, or a necessity dependent upon the optional will and appointment of God. This is conclusive evidence that he could not have regarded the chief and sole obstacle

in the way of human redemption as consisting in Satan's character and claims. For nothing extrinsic to the Deity could thus inexorably limit the divine omnipotence. Yet, according to Irenaeus, this omnipotence is thus limited. The necessity of atonement is absolute and unavoidable. The limitation must, therefore, be a self-limitation, and proceed from an immanent attribute in the Deity, and this attribute is eternal justice.

We conclude this sketch of the opinions of Irenaeus with a paraphrase and expansion of Dorner's summing up. "Justice, in the scheme of Irenaeus, stands between the physical attributes of infinity, omnipotence, etc., and the ethical attributes of compassion and love, as a protector and watch. For this reason, God will and can accomplish no work that is spiritual in a merely physical manner; he must win over man by the manifestation of that which is spiritual,—that is, by the highest and fullest possible exhibition of his love. But love is of two kinds, active and passive; the former manifests itself by doing something to its object, the latter by suffering something for it. The highest and fullest manifestation of love would consequently include the passive form of the affection, as well as the active form,—an endurance namely, of suffering in behalf of the object of benevolence, if suffering is necessary from the nature of the case. But suffering is absolutely necessary, because now that sin and guilt have come into the world divine justice cannot be satisfied except by penal infliction. Consequently the manifestation of the love of God takes on a passive as well as active form, and vicariously bears the penalty of guilt in the place of the criminal."

For these reasons, therefore, it is impossible to concede the position of Baur, that the foundations of the Church doctrine of the atonement were laid in the theory of the satisfaction of the claims of Satan, and not of divine justice. If this theory can be found in any of the Christian Fathers, it must be in Irenaeus. But this writer shows no traces of such a dualism as is implied in a struggle between God and Satan. He represents the limitations in the method of redemption as being of an absolute and inexorable nature, such as

can proceed only out of an immanent attribute of the Godhead. One of the most important portions of his work is devoted to the proof that the sufferings of Christ were real, and not, as the Gnostic maintained, spectral and docetic; and this for the purpose of showing that the satisfaction made for sin was real and absolute. It cannot, therefore, be supposed that this influential church Father of the early centuries was involved, without being aware of it, in the errors of Gnosticism, and that his Soteriology is only a modification of a scheme which he spent his best strength in combating.

## **5. Alexandrine Soteriology**

Passing from Irenaeus to the school of Alexandrine theologians, we come to less correct and discriminating views of the atonement. This school, of whom Clement of Alexandria and Origen were the founders and heads, felt the influence of the Gnostic systems to some extent, besides being itself animated by a remarkably strong speculative spirit. The Alexandrine theologian was unduly engaged with those questions respecting the origin of the material universe, and of moral evil, which had so bewildered the mind of the Gnostic. Men like Origen desired to answer these questions, and in the endeavour oftentimes lost sight of those more strictly theological subjects which address themselves to the moral consciousness of man, and are connected with his religious character and future destiny. Such thinking upon such subjects falls more properly within the sphere of cosmogony and theosophy, than of theology.

We had occasion to observe, that the Gnostics all agreed in denying the vicariousness and judicial intent of Christ's suffering, however greatly they differed among themselves upon other points. Neander remarks that Basilides "admitted no such thing as objective justification in the sight of God, or forgiveness of sin in the sense of deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin. Every sin, whether committed before or after faith in the Redeemer, or baptism, must, according to his scheme, be in like manner expiated by the sufferings of the individual himself." But though the word "expiate" is

employed in this statement of the opinions of Basilides, it is plain from the fact that a forensic justification is excluded, that it can be employed only in the sense of purification. Suffering is disciplinary only. The scheme of Basilides did not recognize sin in the form of guilt, and thereby related to law and justice. It was evil, disharmony, corruption, and bondage; but not a crime originated by the free will of a responsible creature, distinct from, and accountable to his creator. The "expiation" of sin spoken of was only the disciplinary suffering which the individual sinner undergoes, in the process of purification. It was not penal, or satisfactory to justice.

The school of Valentinus held the same general views upon this point, with that of Basilides. Ptolemaeus, one of the leading disciples of Valentinus, writing to Flora, a Christian woman whom he endeavoured to convert to Gnostic views, represents punitive justice as something irreconcilable with the perfect goodness of the Supreme God, from whom he contends this world with its evil and suffering could not have sprung. On the contrary, he represents justice, in the strict sense, to be the peculiar attribute of the Demiurge, and hence a sort of medium quality lying between the perfect goodness of the supreme Deity, and unmixed evil. In accordance with these views, he supposed that that portion of the Old Testament economy which was penal and judicial in its nature proceeded from the Demiurge; and, as contradicting the essential character of the Supreme God who is unmixed benevolence, was afterwards wholly abolished by the Saviour. In consistency with these views, he regarded the capital punishment of the murderer as only a second murder, because it is retributive instead of disciplinary and educational, and the state generally as belonging only to the kingdom of the Demiurge, because it is founded upon and represents that retributive justice which is altogether foreign from the Supreme God.

There is no need to quote from the opinions of other schools of Gnosticism, in further proof that the attribute of justice was subtracted from the nature of the Supreme Being, and placed in that



of an inferior, and, to some extent if not entirely, hostile one. Justice is regarded in this scheme as something unjust, tyrannical, not founded in reason, and therefore not found in the Supreme Deity. That such a view should be taken of an attribute so fundamental to all sovereignty and dominion, is not strange, when we consider the radical error and fatal defect of the system. Gnosticism did not hold the doctrine of creation from nothing; it held only that of development out of antecedents. As a consequence it could not logically hold the doctrine of a free finite will. There was for it no truly and strictly accountable moral agent. Man, like nature, was an evolution from the essence of the Supreme Deity, not directly indeed, but really, through a descending and a degenerating series of powers and attributes. The successive grades of this evolution become feebler and feebler as they recede further from the aboriginal fountain of existence, until man appears, the last link and refuse of the interminable series, the feeble vanishing point of a primarily tremendous process of life and energy. Now where upon this scheme, is there any free will or free agency for man? Where, any finite unit distinct from the Deity, capable of self-determination, left free to remain holy as created or to fall into evil, and held responsible for the use of this high but hazardous endowment? Is it strange that such a being as this, the poor remnant and dreg of a course of development that has been degenerating and corrupting for ages upon ages, a miserable wreck thrown upon the shores of existence by the ebb and flow of tides fluctuating through infinite space and everlasting time,—is it strange that such a being as this, with no true centre and starting point of its own, should be affirmed to sustain no legitimate relations to such an awful attribute as retributive justice? Is it strange that in the plan by which such a being was to be redeemed from the evil and misery which are inevitably connected with such a descending series of evolutions, no provision was needed or was made for guilt or crime, and that only a purifying process constitutes the entire process of human restoration, according to the Gnostic?

Now the school of Clement and Origen, though opposing the Gnostic system with earnestness, was nevertheless influenced and affected by it to some extent. To how great an extent, is a somewhat disputed question amongst dogmatic historians. We are inclined to regard the views of Origen concerning the doctrine of Atonement and all the related topics, as being at a greater remove from the scriptural data and view, than concerning the other doctrines of Christianity. This was the weak point at which the latitudinarian tendencies of this remarkable man showed themselves with most distinctness and energy,—as indeed the doctrine of Atonement was not the strongest side of the Patristic system generally.

There were several opinions in the scheme of Origen which tended to confuse and injure his general view of the doctrine whose history we are investigating. They were the following:

1. The opinion that all finite spirits were created in the beginning of creation, that their number undergoes no increase, and that their history is that of alternate fall and redemption, from eternity to eternity. Origen held that God could not create an infinite number of rational beings, because his providence could not extend to every particular of a series as boundless as himself. Hence, all the variety that is to be seen in the history of the created universe does not spring from the continual production of new creatures, but from changes in the old and preëxisting number. God did not create by new and different orders of beings, as angel and man. The history of man is only the change which has resulted from the apostasy of a determinate number of angelic spirits, in the angelic world, who are to be both punished and redeemed in this their mundane state of existence.

The effect of such a theory as this would naturally be, to diminish the degree and amount of evil involved in the apostasy of a rational spirit. It makes the event too common. If alternate fall and recovery is the order of the universe, then it is impossible that the former should be the most dreadful of catastrophes, or the latter the most

wonderful of divine interferences. If when the responsible creature falls, he falls for once and for evermore, and there is from the nature of the case no salvation except by a divine intervention, which constitutes a remarkable anomaly in the Divine economy, and does not at all belong to the natural order of the universe, then sin and redemption have a stupendous meaning upon both sides. But if apostasy is to be expected with regular uniformity as the cycles roll around, and redemption is to be repeated with the same uniformity whenever the occasion occurs, and the occasion occurs repeatedly, it is evident that nothing but very low conceptions can result of the nature of moral evil, and of its expiation and removal. The doctrine of the preëxistence and apostasy of a fixed number of rational spirits in one mode of being, and their post-existence and redemption in another mode of being, and so onward endlessly, is wholly unfavourable to just views of the awful nature of moral evil as crime before law, and of the tremendous nature of spiritual apostasy as an event that can be remedied only by the most unusual and extraordinary efforts of the Supreme Being.

2. A second opinion of Origen which tended to a defective and erroneous conception of the doctrine of Atonement was, that punishment is not judicial but disciplinary. In his Homilies upon Ezekiel he makes the following statement: "If it had not been conducive to the conversion of sinners to employ suffering, never would a compassionate and benevolent God have inflicted punishment upon wickedness." Here, plainly, the judicial and retributive nature of punishment is entirely overlooked, and by implication, denied. In other places, he represents reformation as being the object of punishing the sinner; but since punishment fails, God sends his Son to break the strength of sin, so that man's suffering may be spared. The death and sufferings of Christ are represented as operating in a mystic, and somewhat magical way, upon the world of demons and of evil, so that the power of sin over mankind is shaken, and they are thereby redeemed. The righteousness of God, says Origen, is seen in the fact that God does not declare sinners to be righteous and show them favour, but in the

fact that he first makes them holy, and then remits their punishment. Men are justified by being sanctified. Such statements show that the judicial relations of sin are omitted in Origen's soteriology. The remission of sin is made to depend upon arbitrary will, without reference to retributive justice, as is evinced by his assertion that God might have chosen milder means to save man, than he did; e.g., that he might by a sovereign act of his will have made the sacrifices of the Old Testament to suffice for an atonement for man's sin.<sup>2</sup>

3. A third opinion of Origen conducing to a defective view of the atonement was, that the punishment of sin is not endless. This opinion flows logically from the preceding one that punishment is not penal, but disciplinary. For an eternal suffering for sin, from the nature of the case, cannot consist with the amendment of the sinner. When, therefore, owing to the exceeding strength of human sinfulness, punishment has so lost its reforming power that even if continued forever no change of character could be wrought by it, God sends the Redeemer who by his death in a mysterious way breaks this power of sin, and thereby restores him to holiness. The death of Christ is thus a manifestation of love alone, and not of love and justice in union. Clement of Alexandria, the teacher of Origen, makes the following representations, according to Redepenning. "The deep corruption of mankind fills God, whose compassion for man is as unlimited as his hatred towards evil, not with anger, for he is never angry, but with the tenderest and most pitiful love. Hence he continually seeks all men, whom he loves for their own sake and their resemblance to God, as the bird seeks her young who have fallen from the nest. His omnipotence, to which nothing is impossible, knows how to overcome all evil, and convert it into good. He threatens, indeed, and punishes, but yet only to reform and improve; and though in public discourse the fruitlessness of repentance after death be asserted, yet hereafter not only those who have not heard of Christ will receive forgiveness, but it may be hoped that the severer punishment which befalls the obstinate unbelievers will not be the conclusion of their history. For man, like every other spiritual being, can never lose his free will. By means of this power,

at all times, here and hereafter, noble minds, aided by that divine power which is indispensable to success, are lifting themselves up from ignorance and deep moral corruption, and are drawing nearer in greater or less degree, to God and the truth."

Upon looking carefully at each of these three opinions of Origen, it is easy to perceive that they are incompatible with the doctrine of a satisfaction of divine justice. The repeated fall of the soul being a part of the course and constitution of the universe, it is absurd to put this event into any sort of relation to such an attribute as that of eternal justice, except it be a figurative one. If punishment is merely corrective, it is impossible to regard it as retributive, and to provide for its remission by the judicial suffering of a substituted victim, and that, too, an infinite one. And if punishment is not in its own nature endless and absolute, but may be stopped at any point at the option of the sovereign, then it is absurd to speak of any such claims of justice as necessitate an infinite suffering for moral evil, such as can be endured only by the finite transgressor in an endless duration, or by the infinite substitute in a limited period.

Still it ought to be added, that oftentimes the phraseology of Origen, and many of his representations taken by themselves, favour the doctrine of vicarious atonement,—so much so that Thomasius, who has composed a valuable monograph upon Origen, contends that this doctrine may be found in this Father, as well as in Irenaeus. Were it not that the opinions which have been specified enter as constituent parts into the theological system of the Alexandrine School, it would not be difficult to quote many passages from the writings of Clement and Origen whose most natural meaning would imply the strict and technical doctrine of vicarious satisfaction. But these fundamental principles, that have been mentioned, are so contrary to the doctrine of Christ's expiation, that we are compelled to give these passages a modified meaning, and to acknowledge that only a very defective and erroneous conception of this cardinal truth of Christianity is to be found in the Alexandrine Soteriology.

## **6. Soteriology of Athanasius, and the Greek Fathers**

Before proceeding to exhibit the history of the doctrine of Atonement in the Polemic period (A.D. 254–730), it is pertinent to make an introductory remark respecting the general course of theologizing in this age. The subjects upon which the ecclesiastical mind expended most reflection during these five centuries were those of Theology with the cognate subject of Christology, and Anthropology. It was natural, consequently, that in the polemic heat and energy of the period, those parts of the Christian system which were most vehemently assailed, and which stood in greatest need of exact definition and strict phraseology, should acquire the fullest development, and somewhat at the expense of other portions. Hence, the subtle and profound statement of the doctrine of the two natures in the one Person of Christ employed the mind of the theologian of this period, more than the exhibition of the doctrine of the work of Christ. The anthropological doctrine of sin, during the controversy with Pelagius, was discussed with a prevailing reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. Its subjective relations to the will of the creature, more than its objective relations to the justice and moral government of the creator, constituted the subject-matter even of this controversy, which was yet better fitted than any other one of this Polemic period to result in a more scientific construction of the doctrine of Atonement.

We need not, therefore, be surprised to find that even in this age of great theological activity, the cardinal truth of Christianity did not receive its fullest examination and clearest statement. Still, in this instance as in the previous one, we are not to regard mere silence, or a failure to make a distinct statement, as tantamount to the denial and rejection of the truth. This we found to be the error in the judgment which the school of Baur passes upon the soteriology of the Apologetic period (A.D. 100–254); and although there is less liability to commit it in reference to the Polemic period, because an evident advance in the mode of apprehending the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction is apparent, still the same species of argument, derived

from the failure to reduce the doctrine to a perfectly scientific form, might be built upon the yet incomplete soteriology of the Polemic period. The argument in this case is precisely the same in kind with that which should seek to prove that the unlettered believer, whose theological knowledge is mostly in his heart and experience, positively rejects the doctrine of atonement, or the doctrine of the trinity, because he is unable to analyse and combine its elements, and place them in the unity of a comprehensive system. Having made this prefatory remark, we proceed now to take the measure of the attainments of the ecclesiastical mind of this period, respecting the doctrine in question. And in the outset, it is obvious to the investigator, the moment he passes over from the one period to the other, that some scientific progress has been made. The tone is firmer and bolder, the discrimination is clearer and truer, and the dogma stands out with greater prominence from the mass of heretical and opposing theories.

Turning to the works of the leading theologians of this age, we are able to determine how far the catholic mind had advanced toward a scientific and self-consistent theory of the atonement.

Athanasius († 373), though laying out the chief strength of his powerful intellect in the trinitarian controversy, is distinct and firm in maintaining the expiatory nature of the work of Christ. He recognizes its relations to the attribute of divine justice, and has less to say than his predecessors respecting its relations to the kingdom and claims of Satan. The more important bearings of the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, it is evident, were now beginning to receive a closer attention, while less stress was laid upon its secondary aspects. We can find in the representations of Athanasius, the substance of that doctrine of plenary satisfaction of eternal justice by the theanthropic sufferings of Christ which acquired its full scientific form in the mind of Anselm, and which lies under the whole Protestant Church and theology.

Athanasius composed no tract or treatise upon the Atonement, and we must consequently deduce his opinions upon this subject from his incidental statements while discussing other topics. In his Discourses (Orationes) against the Arians, there are frequent statements respecting the work of Christ, in connection with those respecting his person and dignity, and from these we select a few of the most distinct and conclusive. "Christ as man endured death for us, inasmuch as he offered himself for that purpose to the Father." Here, the substitutionary nature of his work is indicated. "Christ takes our sufferings upon himself, and presents them to the Father, entreating for us that they be satisfied in him." Here, the piacular nature of his work is taught, together with his intercessory office. "The death of the incarnate Logos is a ransom for the sins of men, and a death of death." "Desiring to annul our death, he took on himself a body from the Virgin Mary, that by offering this unto the Father a sacrifice for all, he might deliver us all, who by fear of death were all our life through subject to bondage."<sup>2</sup> "Laden with guilt, the world was condemned of law, but the Logos assumed the condemnation (κρίμα), and suffering in the flesh gave salvation to all." Here, the obligation of the guilty world is represented not as relating to Satan but to law; and the Redeemer assumes a condemnation, or in the modern Protestant phraseology becomes a voluntary substitute for the guilty, for purposes of legal satisfaction.

There are two other portions of the writings of Athanasius which are very valuable, as indicating the opinions that prevailed in the Church during the 4th century respecting the being of God and the person of Christ, and incidentally respecting the doctrine of Atonement. They are the Λόγος κατὰ Ἑλλήνων (Oratio contra Gentes), and the Περί τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Λόγου (De incarnatione Dei). These tracts exhibit a remarkable union of the best elements of the Grecian philosophy, with the most inward and cordial reception of Christianity; and show that the "father of orthodoxy," as he was called, did not shrink from a metaphysical construction of Christian doctrines, and believed that they could be defended and maintained upon the necessary grounds of reason. In his Oratio contra Gentes,



aimed against the erroneous views of the popular skeptical philosophy of the day, he endeavors to evince the absolute independence and self-sufficiency of the Deity, in opposition to a theory that would identify him with creation, or make him a part of it. Having established this fundamental position of religion, he then proceeds in his tract *De Incarnatione* to show that the Logos, both before and after his incarnation, partakes of this same self-sufficiency, which he has shown in his previous discussion belongs to the necessary idea and definition of God. This leads him indirectly to speak of the atonement of Christ, in its relations to the necessary nature and character of the Godhead, and in so doing he gives expression to views which harmonize exactly with the modern Protestant view of the doctrine.

"Suppose," he says, "that God should merely require repentance in order to salvation? This would not in itself be improper, did it not conflict with the veracity of God. God cannot be untruthful, even for our benefit. Repentance does not satisfy the demands of truth and justice. If the question pertained solely to the corruption of sin, and not to the guilt and ill-desert of it, repentance might be sufficient. But since God is both truthful and just, who can save, in this emergency, but the Logos who is above all created beings? He who created men from nothing could suffer for all, and be their substitute. Hence the Logos appeared. He who was incorporeal, imperishable, omnipresent, manifested himself. He saw both our misery and the law's threatening; he saw how inadmissible (ἀτοπον) it would be for sin to escape the law, except through a fulfilment and satisfaction of the law. Thus beholding both the increasing depravity of men, and their condemnation to death, he had compassion upon them, and assumed a body not from any necessity of nature (φύσεως ἀκολουθίᾳ), for his essence is incorporeal." In another place, in this treatise upon the Incarnation, he makes the statement that "the first and principal ground of the Logos' becoming man was that the condemnation of the law, by which we are burdened with guilt and eternal punishment, might be removed by the payment of the penalty."<sup>2</sup> This is the strongest possible statement of the doctrine of

penal satisfaction. For Athanasius is by no means disposed to overlook or underestimate the fact that one purpose of the incarnation was to reveal the Godhead to man. He emphasizes the truth that the Word became the "light of men." And yet in this passage he asserts that the first and principal ground of the incarnation is not the illumination of the human soul, but the expiation of its guilt. In this extract, the prophetic office of Christ is set second to his priestly, as distinctly as in the writings of the Reformers themselves. Comparing Athanasius, then, with the theologians of his century, we find that his view of the Atonement, with respect to the two vital points of substitution and satisfaction, was second to none in explicitness and firmness. He refers the death of Christ to the necessary nature and attributes of God without any ambiguity, embarrassment, or confusion of mind, and joins on upon the Biblical idea of a sacrifice to satisfy offended law and justice, with as much clearness and energy as any theologian previous to the time of Anselm.

The historical development of the doctrine, however, evinces as we follow it down the centuries that the same gradual progress in acquiring a scientific understanding of the Scripture representations is going on, which we have found in other branches of dogmatic history. Queries now begin to be made whether the representation of a ransom paid to Satan has not been too prominent in the catholic soteriology, and whether the other relations of the work of Christ should not be investigated and exhibited. We find, for example, Gregory Nazianzen († 390) expressing doubts, and raising inquiries, that indicate that the theological mind was sinking more profoundly into the substance of revelation, and drawing nearer to a correct logical construction of the great doctrine. "We were," he says, "under the power of the Evil One, since we had sold ourselves to sin, and had received in exchange the lust for iniquity. If, now, a ransom is given only to the one who has possession of the thing to be ransomed, then I ask to whom was the price of ransom given? To the Evil One himself? Shame on the rash thought (φεῦ τῆς ὑβρεως)! Then the robber would receive not merely from God, but God himself as a

ransom and exceeding rich reward for his tyranny. Or is the ransom paid to the Father? But here the question arises, in the first place, why should it be? for God is not the being who is forcibly retaining us in his power. And, in the second place, what reason can be assigned why the Father should take delight in the blood of his only-begotten Son? since he did not even accept Isaac who was offered to him by his father Abraham, but changed the sacrifice of a rational being into that of an animal? Or, is it not plain that the Father received the ransom, not because he himself required or needed it, but for the sake of the divine government of the universe (δι' οἰκονομίαν), and because man must be sanctified through the incarnation of the Son of God." Here, although the completely adequate statement contained in the Anselmic and Reformed soteriology is not made, there is an approximation to it. The divine government requires this death of Christ, though the divine nature does not. But it would be impossible to follow out the position that the principles by which the administration of the universe is conducted require an atonement for sin, without coming to the yet deeper and more ultimate position of the Anselmic theory that the nature and attributes of the Godhead also require it. For what is God's moral government but an expression of God's moral character; and that which is needed in order to satisfy the objective principles of the former is needed to satisfy the subjective qualities of the latter.

If we examine the soteriology of the Greek Church during the last half of the 4th and the first half of the 5th centuries, we meet with very clear conceptions of the atonement of Christ. The distinctness of the views of Athanasius upon this subject undoubtedly contributed to this; for this great mind exerted as powerful an influence upon the Eastern doctrinal system, generally, as Augustine exercised over the Western. Athanasius, we have seen, referred back, in his analysis of the doctrine, to the veracity of God. God had threatened death as the punishment of sin. If, now, sin were remitted without any infliction of any kind, either upon the sinner or his Redeemer, the truth of God would be turned into a lie. The next step, consequently, was to the conception of an exchange or substitution of penalty; and Athanasius

himself took this step. The substitute (κατάλληλον) for the death of the sinner was the death of the Saviour. This idea of substitution runs through all the Greek soteriology of the 4th and 5th centuries, and prepared the way for further statements concerning the nature and worth of Christ's sufferings, some of which we will now specify.

Cyril of Jerusalem († 386), and Eusebius of Caesarea († 340), in the earlier part of the 4th century, had already urged the point that Christ took the penalty of sin upon himself, and furthermore that his sufferings were not of less worth than those of mankind, because he was a theanthropic Person in whom divinity and humanity were perfectly blended. In this connection, Cyril gives utterance to a statement respecting the value and sufficiency of Christ's sufferings which reminds of those strong statements of Luther upon this subject, which a legal spirit finds it so difficult to interpret or understand. He thus expresses himself. "Christ took sin upon his own body. He who died for us was no insignificant (μικρὸς) creature, he was no mere animal victim (οὐκ ἦν πρόβατον αἰσθητὸν), he was no mere man, he was not an angel, but he was God incarnate. The iniquity of us sinners was not so great as the righteousness of him who died for us; the sins we have committed are not equal to the atonement made by him who laid down his life for us." Eusebius reasons as follows upon Christ's satisfaction: "How then did he make our sins to be his own, and how did he bear our iniquities? Is it not from thence, that we are said to be his body, as the apostle speaks, 'Ye are the body of Christ, and members, for your part, or of one another.' And as when one member suffers all the members suffer, so the many members sinning and suffering, he, according to the laws of sympathy in the same body, seeing that being the Word of God he would take the form of a servant and be joined to the common habitation of us all, took the sorrows or labours of the suffering members on him, and made all their infirmities his own, and according to the laws of humanity, bore our sorrow and labour for us. And the Lamb of God did not only these things for us, but he underwent torments, and was punished for us (ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κολασθεὶς καὶ τιμωρίαν ὑποσχων, ἦν αὐτός μὲν οὐκ ὠφειλεῖν); that

which he was no ways exposed to for himself, but we were so by the multitude of our sins; and thereby he became the cause of the pardon of our sins; namely, because he underwent death, stripes, reproaches, transferring the thing which we had deserved to himself; and was made a curse for us, taking to himself the curse that was due to us; for what was he, but a price of redemption for our souls? In our person, therefore, the oracle speaks,—whilst freely uniting himself to us, and us to himself, and making our (sins or) passions (πάθη) his own, he says, 'I have said, "Lord be merciful to me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." ' " The conceptions of vicariousness and infinite worth, in connection with the sufferings of the Redeemer, were very plainly at work in the mind of the Eastern theologians, so far as it was represented by men like Cyril of Jerusalem, and Eusebius of Caesarea.

But these conceptions were wrought out into still greater clearness in the Eastern Church, by those controversies respecting the Person of Christ which commenced soon after the Trinitarian controversy was ended, and continued for more than two centuries. The student of doctrinal history is generally wearied by the minuteness and tediousness of those pertinacious analyses which were connected with the Nestorian, the Monophysite, and Monothelite controversies. They were undoubtedly too much prolonged, and, what is of more importance, were too often prosecuted with an ambitious, an envious, or a malignant temper. But they were nevertheless productive of some good results, to the general system of Christian doctrine. The Nestorian controversy, in particular, had the effect to bring in juster views of the nature of Christ's Person, and consequently of the real nature of his sufferings. The error of Nestorianism was the exact opposite to that of Eutychianism, so far as concerns the sufferings of Christ. The Eutychians held that the suffering was purely and solely of deity, while the Nestorian party taught that it was purely and solely of humanity. For although Nestorianism acknowledged the alliance of God with man in Jesus Christ, it so separated the two natures from each other in his Person, that the suffering which the Redeemer endured derived no character

or value from his divinity, and was in reality not different from that of any mere man. The Church, in opposition to Nestorianism, contended that the mere juxtaposition of two natures, so that each should still remain a personality by itself, was inconsistent with the catholic doctrine of a peculiar species of suffering which must not be attributed either to sole deity or sole humanity, but to a theanthropic Person combining both species of being.

In this controversy, Cyril of Alexandria († 444) took a leading part, and in his writings we find very exalted conceptions of the worth and efficacy of Christ's atoning death, springing naturally out of his apprehension of the union of the two natures in one personality. Since, in the scheme of Cyril the two elements, the divine and the human, were blended in the most thorough manner possible, short of a mixture or confusion which should change each into a third species of substance neither human nor divine (an error against which the catholic mind was careful to guard),—since there was this thorough union and personal interpenetration of deity and humanity in the theory of Cyril,—it is easy to see that the sufferings of a Personage so constituted could be regarded as of strictly infinite value. Hence a very common idea, and one frequently emphasized in the writings of Cyril, is, that Christ did not suffer as a mere ordinary man suffers, that his blood was not the blood of a common man,—for if it were, it could not suffice for the salvation of the whole world,—and that only a God-Man could suffer, One for all, and once for all.

We find this same distinct recognition of the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings, and of their adequacy for purposes of atonement, in that distinguished theologian of the 8th century, John of Damascus († 750). The opinions of this mind were highly esteemed in the Greek Church, and in the Oriental Church generally. His *Ἐκθesis πίστεως* (*Expositio fidei*) was long the text-book in systematic theology at the East, and exerted no little influence upon the Scholastic theology of the Latin Church. After the division of the two churches, the Western theologians devoted less and less attention to the writings of the Greek Fathers, but John Damascene,

standing as he did at the opening of the era of Scholasticism, and partaking strongly of the systematic spirit which prevailed in it, was studied with interest and effect by the Latin Schoolmen. Upon the subject of the atonement, this writer follows the general views of the preceding Greek theologians, especially Athanasius and Gregory Nazianzen. We have already noticed the doubts expressed by this latter writer, whether the death of Christ sustained so much relation to the claims of Satan as the earlier soteriology had implied, and whether its highest and principal reference was not to the attribute of justice in the Divine Nature. John Damascene does not merely raise the query, but expresses himself with energy upon the point. "He, who assumed death for us, died, and offered himself a sacrifice to the Father; for we had committed wrong towards him (αὐτῷ πεπλημμελήκαμεν), and it was necessary for him to receive our ransom (λύτρον), and we thus be delivered from condemnation. For God forbid that the blood of the Lord should be offered to the tyrant!"

## **7. Soteriology of Augustine, and Gregory the Great**

Augustine († 430) is a writer whose opinions upon any subject deserve examination, and especially upon the cardinal truth of the Christian system. He marks the period immediately succeeding that represented by the Greek theologians of the 4th century, during which the spirit of investigation and of science was passing from the declining Oriental, to the strengthening Western churches. His prominent position, moreover, in the history of the Christian system generally, would lead us to infer a very great influence from his writings in the construction of so fundamental a doctrine as that of the Atonement. Upon examination, however, this expectation is somewhat disappointed. The strength and energy of Augustine's intellect were expended upon other parts of the Christian system; so that the subject of Soteriology did not receive such a profound and satisfactory treatment from him, as did that of Anthropology. Augustine's view of the work of Christ is essentially that of the Fathers who had preceded him; neither falling short, nor making any

marked advance in scientific respects. Indeed, he seems to take very nearly the view which we have seen to have been held by Irenaeus respecting the judicial aspects of the doctrine. The claims of Satan are sometimes recognized in connection with those of justice, as in the following passage, which is very similar in its phraseology to that of Irenaeus. "God the Son being clothed with humanity subjugated even the devil to man, extorting nothing from him by violence, but overcoming him by the law of justice; for it would have been injustice if the devil had not had the right to rule over the being whom he had taken captive." In other passages, as also in Ignatius, the claims of Satan are not noticed, and only the connection between man's sin and God's justice is alluded to,—the reconciliation between the two antagonisms being effected, as in the Protestant statement of the doctrine, by an expiatory sacrifice. "All men," he says, "are separated from God by sin. Hence they can be reconciled with him, only through the remission of sin, and this only through the grace of a most merciful Saviour, and this grace through the one only victim of the most true and only priest." In another place, alluding to our Lord's comparison of his own crucifixion with the lifting up of the serpent by Moses, Augustine thus expresses himself: "Our Lord did not indeed transfer sin itself into his flesh as if it were the poison of the serpent, but he did transfer death; so that there might be, in the likeness of human flesh, the punishment of sin without its personal guilt, whereby both the personal guilt and punishment of sin might be abolished (*solveretur*) from human flesh."

These passages, and many others like them scattered all through his writings, prove indisputably that Augustine held the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction. That he did not hold it, however, in a form as perfectly well-discriminated as that in which it appears in the Anselmic theory, and still more in the soteriology of the Reformation, there is equally clear proof. Augustine sometimes confuses justification with sanctification, from not limiting the former term to its strict signification as the antithesis of sanctification. He sometimes employs "*justificatio*" as equivalent to the whole work of redemption. The difference between the judicial



and the renovating side of redemption was not always kept in view by that usually sharp and aquiline eye. We find some few passages in Augustine which can be construed, and are by the Papal writers, to mean that man is justified in part by an inherent or subjective righteousness. This inward righteousness is indeed regarded as the work of God in the soul, and not the product of the human will. This we should expect, of course, from a mind holding with such energy and firmness as did Augustine to the doctrines of total depravity, and prevenient grace. Man cannot, indeed, attribute this inward and subjective righteousness to himself as the author, and, so far, a sense of merit and a legal spirit would be excluded. But Augustine, judging from a few passages in his works, was not always careful, as were Luther and Calvin when treating of the grounds of justification, to direct attention to the fact that so far as the guilt of man is concerned, no possible amount of inward righteousness, even though wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, can be an atonement, or ground of acquittal from condemnation. Holiness of heart contains nothing of the nature of an expiation. This is found only in judicial suffering.

It is not an adaptation of means to ends, therefore, when justification is sought to be accomplished by sanctification. The "justification of the ungodly," of which St. Paul speaks,—i.e. the judicial acquittal from condemnation, of a soul that is still polluted with indwelling sin, and will be more or less until it leaves the body,—cannot of course be founded upon any degree of holiness that has been wrought within it by the Holy Spirit. It must rest altogether upon an outward and finished work, namely the atoning suffering of the Son of God. This declarative act of God, whereby, on the ground of the objective satisfaction made to law by the Redeemer, he forgives the past, must be carefully distinguished from the subjective transforming work of God in the soul, whereby he secures its holiness for the future.

Augustine is not always careful to mark this distinction. The term "justification" is sometimes confused with that of "sanctification," by

being made to include it. The following passage from his treatise against Julian is in point. "God justifies the ungodly not only by remitting the sins he commits, but also by giving him inward love, which causes him to depart from evil, and makes him holy through the Spirit." According to the Reformed symbols, justification rests only upon remission of sins, and remission of sins only upon the atonement of Christ. To implant a principle of love, is no part of justification. It is with reference to this occasional confusion of the two constituent parts of redemption, and the attribution to one of what belongs to the other, that Calvin makes the following remark: "The opinion of Augustine, or at least his manner of expression, is not to be altogether praised. For though he excellently despoils man of all the praise of righteousness, and ascribes the whole to the grace of God, yet he refers grace to sanctification, in which we are regenerated by the Spirit to newness of life." The implication of Calvin's criticism here evidently is that the grace which remits penalty should be referred solely to the atoning work of Christ, and not at all to the sanctifying agency of the Holy Ghost. God acquits the human soul from condemnation because the Son of God has expiated its guilt, and not because a holy character has been produced within it. This latter is the consequent and not the antecedent. "Whom he justifies," upon an entirely objective ground, him he sanctifies by a subjective operation in the soul.<sup>2</sup>

Another evidence that Augustine's view of the doctrine of Atonement shared in the imperfect science of the Patristic period, is found in the fact that in some places, at least, he teaches only a relative necessity for an atonement. "They are foolish," he says, "who say that the wisdom of God could not liberate men otherwise than by God's assuming humanity, being born of a woman, and suffering at the hands of sinners." In another place, he thus expresses himself: "When the question is asked whether there was no other way whereby God could liberate man, than by his Son's becoming incarnate and undergoing the suffering of death, it is not enough merely to say that this is a good way, but also to show, not that no other mode was in the power of him who can subject all things to his

control, but that no more suitable mode could have been adopted." Here, the divine omnipotence is separated from the divine justice, and the possibility of an infringement upon the moral attribute by the arbitrary might of the natural attribute is conceded within the sphere of the infinite. But this is to degrade the infinite to the level of the finite, by subjecting it to the same limitations and hazards with the finite. The necessity of an atonement is made to depend ultimately upon the divine option. It is not founded in the divine nature, or in the attribute of justice. This theory, if logically carried out, conducts to the position of Origen, that God might by an act of mere will have constituted the sacrifice of bulls and goats a sufficient sacrifice for human guilt. But logic could not stop even at this point. For inasmuch as there is no absolute and metaphysical necessity of an atonement, and the whole provision for satisfying justice is resolved in the last analysis into an optional act on the part of God, it follows that, so far as the Divine Being is concerned, an atonement might be dispensed with altogether. For the same arbitrary and almighty will that was competent to declare the claims of justice to be satisfied by the finite sacrifice of bulls and goats would be competent, also, to declare that those claims should receive no satisfaction at all. Any principle that is surrendered in part is surrendered entirely. But it would be unjust to impute to Augustine, and those other Fathers who in this period hesitated to assert the absolute necessity of the sufferings of Christ in order to the salvation of man, the logical consequences of their position. They were afraid of limiting the power of God, and the more so, in contrast with the claims of Satan, of which we have seen they made far too much; and the indiscriminating statements which fall from them in such connections can be properly cited only to show, that it was reserved for an eye that saw more profoundly than did theirs into the idea of eternal justice, and a mind that apprehended the Pauline distinction between justification and sanctification more accurately and adequately than did theirs, to make the final scientific construction of the doctrine of Atonement.

This deficiency in Augustine's soteriology compared with the Anselmic and Protestant finds its natural explanation in the fact, that the energy of his mind was almost entirely absorbed in the doctrine of the soul's renovation by divine influence. In the first place, his own inward experience had been eminently that of spiritual bondage, corruption, and pollution. The need of grace in the form of a renewing, strengthening, and purifying power had been very vividly and painfully felt by him. In the second place, the controversy with Pelagius directed the attention of Augustine still more earnestly to the doctrine of renovation and sanctification by the Holy Ghost. The doctrine of the atonement, though consequentially involved and in peril if the views of Pelagius should be rigorously run out to their ultimate, did not, nevertheless, come very much into the controversy. From these two causes then,—by reason of a peculiarity in his own religious experience, and the polemic interest which he felt,—the force and depth of Augustine's intellect were drawn off from the atonement proper, and expended upon that side of the general doctrine of redemption which relates to the delivery of the soul from the power and pollution, as distinguished from the guilt and condemnation, of sin.

Following the history of the doctrine of Atonement downward in the Latin Church, we find in the century succeeding that in which Augustine produced his principal treatises, one writer whose tone is firm, and whose views are discriminating, but from whom, however, such a tone and view would not have been expected considering his ecclesiastical position and circumstances. This writer is Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome († 604). He stands at the opening of that era of power and influence which the Roman Church was destined to pass through, as the acknowledged head of Western Christianity. Occupying such a position, and being the first marked representative of the hierarchical spirit which was now to mould and corrupt Christianity for a thousand years to come, we are naturally surprised to find in the theological writings of one whom some regard as the first pope, representations of the atoning work of Christ so much in accordance with the Pauline conception of it. The views of Gregory

are expressed with even more clearness and firmness than those of some preceding theologians, who were yet less immediately connected with that distinctively Roman Church whose greatest guilt consists in mutilating and nullifying the most strictly evangelical of all the Christian doctrines, that of justification solely through the atonement of the Son of God.

In his writings, Gregory lays great stress upon the idea of a sacrifice offered in the death of Christ. He starts from the conception of guilt, and from this derives immediately the necessity of a theanthropic sacrifice. "Guilt," he says, "can be extinguished only by a penal offering to justice. But it would contradict the idea of justice, if for the sin of a rational being like man, the death of an irrational animal should be accepted as a sufficient atonement. Hence, a man must be offered as the sacrifice for man; so that a rational victim may be slain for a rational criminal. But how could a man, himself stained with sin, be an offering for sin? Hence a sinless man must be offered. But what man descending in the ordinary course would be free from sin? Hence, the Son of God must be born of a virgin, and become man for us. He assumed our nature without our corruption (*culpa*). He made himself a sacrifice for us, and set forth (exhibuit) for sinners his own body, a victim without sin, and able both to die by virtue of its humanity, and to cleanse the guilty, upon grounds of justice."

With regard to the question: To whom is this sacrifice offered? in other words: To what extent do the claims of Satan come into view in Gregory's scheme? even Baur, with all his determination to find the doctrine of Satan's claims in the Catholic soteriology, makes the following remark upon the passage from the *Moralia* just quoted: "It is not indeed expressly said that the sacrifice is offered to God, but this is implied in the conception of a sacrifice. Not in the devil consequently (though Gregory cannot indeed altogether get rid of the notion of a devil), but only in God, does the cause lie why Jesus must die for the sin of man."

## **8. Recapitulatory Survey**

We have now traced the history of the doctrine of Atonement down to the opening of the Scholastic Era, and before commencing the account of the course of this great truth of Christianity during this, and the following period of the Reformation, we will briefly cast a glance backward over the course we have travelled.

It was remarked in the beginning of this history, that the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction acquired its scientific form more slowly than did the other great truths of Christianity, and that it was reserved for the Modern Church to give it an expansion and definition equal to that which the doctrines of Theology and Anthropology had received in the Ancient Church. The history thus far verifies the remark. We have seen that the Apostolic Fathers merely repeated the Scripture phraseology which contained the truth that was warm and vital in their Christian experience, but did not enunciate it in the exact and guarded statements of a scientific formula. Next, we find the Primitive Fathers of the 2d and 3d centuries endeavouring to exhibit the doctrine in a more speculative form. Their success was but partial; for secondary elements and truths were made too prominent, while strictly primary elements and truths, though not denied or rejected, were yet not presented with sufficient boldness in their scientific schemes. The claims of God and of the attribute of justice were thrown too much into the background, by those of Satan. And yet the judicial aspects of the subject were continually pressing themselves with increasing force upon the reflection of theologians. A more moderate and scriptural view of the kingdom of Evil, and of its head and prince, was gradually taking the place of that exaggerated conception which, in reality, bordered too much upon the dualism of the East, to be entirely consonant with that truth which the prophet sought to enforce upon the Persian monarch, when he proclaimed that God "makes peace and creates evil." Satan and his kingdom, while a real existence was conceded to both, were beginning to be seen in their true relations to Jehovah, who is as supreme in reference to the kingdom of sin, as to the kingdom of holiness. The sufferings of the God-Man began to be contemplated by the scientific mind more exclusively in their relations to the

attributes and government of God. Though the claims of Satan were still, to some extent, regarded as the ground of the necessity of Christ's death, the drift of speculation was steadily towards the simple position, that the atonement was made for the satisfaction of justice alone, and that the only claims that are cancelled by it are the claims of law and of God.

It is necessary, however, to call attention to a new phenomenon which begins to appear in the 5th and 6th centuries, in order to obtain a full view of the state of this doctrine at the close of the Patristic period, and particularly in order to account for the great change that came over it, in the Papal period which succeeded. The religious experience of the church itself, during the last half of the first six centuries, was undergoing a great change. In the first place, the sense of sin was declining generally. The more secular and temporal aspects of Christianity, owing partly to the alliance between Church and State, and still more to the corrupt tendencies of human nature itself, were eclipsing its more directly spiritual relations to the character and necessities of sinful humanity. Hence there was a declining sense of the need of redemption, in the church at large. Moreover, to aggravate the evil, the attention of the earnest and thoughtful minority was somewhat drawn away from the atoning work of Christ, to human substitutes for it in the form of penances. What little sense of guilt there was in the church, was somewhat dissipated, or at least made more shallow, by being expended upon those "sacrifices which can never take away sin."

In the second place, as we have had occasion to observe in the instance of Augustine, there was some confusion of ideas coming into the theoretical construction of the doctrine itself. This was partly a cause, and partly an effect of that decline in the popular experience which we have just spoken of; for we are reminded at this point, as we are at every point in the internal history of the Church, that the process of decline is one of development, and that the relation of the corrupting elements to each other is not that of mere cause and effect, but of action and reaction. Perhaps, if the feeling of guilt in

Augustine's mind had been as poignant and penal as it was in Luther's, or if his eye had been as penetrating and judicial upon this single topic as was that of Calvin; perhaps if this great theologian of the Patristic period had been as thorough and profound upon this side of the subject of sin, as he was upon the other, a statement of the doctrine of justification by faith without works might have been originated in the 5th century, that by the blessing of God would have prevented the Papacy, and precluded those ten centuries of "voluntary humility," worshipping of saints, and justification by works. When the popular feeling of a period is becoming less correct and healthy, nothing in the way of means does so much towards a change and restoration, as strict accuracy, which is the same as strict orthodoxy, in the popular creed. The creed may, indeed, in the outset be far in advance of the general sentiment and feeling, but being not only the truth but the whole truth, and not only the whole truth but nothing but the truth, it begins to draw magnetically upon the human mind, until it eventually brings it close and entirely up to its own height and vantage ground. In the period of which we are speaking, or more properly in the latter part of it, it was coming to be the popular feeling, that the pardon of past sin must depend, to some extent at least, upon the character and works of the individual; that the atonement of the Son of God must, in some slight degree at least, be supplemented, or strengthened, or perfected, by the works or the feelings of the believer. Even when there was the strictest orthodoxy in referring the holy character or works to the influences of the Holy Spirit, there was error, and in reality the germ of the Papal theory, in referring the remission of past transgression to renovated character and righteous works, as a procuring cause in connection with the death of the Redeemer. It was defective soteriology, to represent sanctification in conjunction with the atonement of Christ as a ground of pardon. A keener vision, that could see the distinction between the guilt of sin and its pollution, would not have confounded the work of the Sanctifier with that of the Atoner. A clearer discrimination, which could separate the penal and retributive elements of sin from its blinding, corrupting, and enslaving effects upon a rational spirit, would not have blended and confused the two



parts of redemption in such a manner that one was liable to disappear from the mind and reflection of the Church. In short, a more scientific and technical accuracy, a stricter reference of each of the two elements in sin to the two corresponding sides of redemption, would have contributed greatly to fasten the eye of the individual upon his relations to eternal justice, and upon that infinite oblation which, alone and of itself, sets the criminal once more in right relations with this fundamental attribute. In this way, the notion that a finite sacrifice can expiate guilt, either wholly or in part, or that the struggle after holiness, even if successful, can offset transgression and pacify conscience, would have been more likely to have been banished from the Church.

These germs of corruption in the soteriology of the Church, which we have thus noticed as beginning to appear during the last half of the Patristic period (A.D. 400–600), were gradually unfolded during the four centuries that intervened between the decline of the Patristic theology, and the breaking forth of the Scholastic. With the exception of John of Damascus in the Greek Church, and Alcuin and Scotus Erigena in the Western, this period of four hundred years (A.D. 600–1000) is marked by no individual minds of much historic character and power. Of these, the Greek theologian and the spiritual guide of Charlemagne are by far the most biblical in their opinions concerning the doctrine whose history we are investigating. The views of John Damascene we have already briefly noticed, and those of Alcuin agreed with those of Augustine. The soteriology of Erigena was essentially defective, and could not be otherwise, springing as it did from a pantheistic view of the Trinity and of the Person of Christ. According to him, the incarnation was merely the immanence of God in the world,—a popular way of expressing the philosophic truth that God acquires distinct self-consciousness in the creature. All that was said, in a former part of this history, respecting the incompatibility of the Gnostic pantheism with the doctrine of man's distinct existence, real freedom, and amenability to retributive justice, applies with full force to the pantheism of this remarkable man, who seemed to stand

by himself, and whose pantheistic views, it ought to be observed, were rejected and opposed by the church and the clergy of his time.

But the decline in respect to true views of the vicarious atonement of Christ, during this intermediate period, was owing to more general causes, than merely the opinions and influence of leading individuals. The masses of merely nominal Christians who began to be brought into the Church, after its triumph over Paganism was complete and its alliance with the State was perfected, constituted a body without a soul,—an aggregate of professing Christians without any religious experience. That painful process of self-knowledge, of conviction of guilt and sense of need of divine grace, which ought to initiate and precede all profession of Christianity, was too generally unknown in those large masses of population who in these centuries bore the name, and enjoyed all the external rights and privileges of church members. Here and there, undoubtedly, there were individual minds, or a community, in whom the experience of the day of Pentecost was to be found,—a consciousness of sin, a cry for mercy, and a self-despairing recumbency upon the atonement of the Redeemer, even though confused and beclouded by the notions of the time respecting the additional need of personal penances and ecclesiastical absolutions. But the Church as a whole knew little of this experience, and hence, while holding in a passive and hereditary manner the Patristic statements respecting the Trinity and the Person of Christ, it was coming to hold a theory respecting Sin and Redemption that was altogether opposed to that form of doctrine which had prevailed during the first four centuries, in both the Eastern and the Western Church.

## **CHAPTER II:**

## **SOTERIOLOGY OF THE MEDIAEVAL CHURCH**

### **1. Anselm's Theory of Satisfaction**

AFTER this rapid glance at the condition of the doctrine of atonement during the last half of the first ten centuries, we pass to the examination of the soteriology of the Scholastic age. It begins with Anselm's († 1109) theory of satisfaction, elaborately wrought out in his *Cur Deus Homo*? It is remarkable that the bursting forth of a new spirit of inquiry, the dawning of a new era after five hundred years of stagnation and darkness, should have commenced with the sudden appearance of a mind of such remarkable depth, clearness, and living piety, as that of Anselm. We do not find the usual antecedents and gradual preparation, for the advent of such a spirit. The sun rises without a dawn, or a morning twilight. In the very opening of a new era which followed close upon a period of great superstition, and misapprehension of the true nature of sin and atonement, we find a view of the work of Christ, decidedly in advance of the best soteriology of the Patristic age, and agreeing substantially with that of the Reformation. Such phenomena as these, in the history of the church, seem to conflict with the doctrine of historical development, because it is so difficult to discover any connection between antecedents and consequents. The truth is, however, that we are not able to detect the connection, because of the deficiency in our knowledge of the interior life of those distant and dark ages. God undoubtedly, in this as in all other instances in which he does not employ a miraculous agency, conducted the process upon the ordinary principles of his administration, and made it a continuity, though marked by sudden and striking changes. It finds its analogy in those processes in the vegetable world, in which the one common principle of life, after periods of long external slumber, breaks forth into unusual external power and splendour; as when the dull and prickly cactus suddenly, and to all outward appearance without any preparation, bursts into a gorgeous flower.

In this tract, entitled *Cur Deus Homo?*, Anselm begins and ends with the idea of an absolute necessity of an atonement, in order to the redemption of man. Everything is referred to a metaphysical, or necessary ground, and hence we have in this theory the first metaphysique of the Christian doctrine of Atonement. Not that the idea of a metaphysical necessity in reference to the atonement was entirely unknown up to this time. We have already noticed, that an Athanasius had distinctly urged that necessity of an expiation in order to forgiveness of sin which is founded in the divine attributes of justice and veracity, and we have found this view, for substance and informally, in all the better Patristic soteriology. But we have this view, now for the first time, in Anselm's tract, reduced to a systematic and scientific form, and cleared of those excrescences which were connected with it in the Ancient Church. Anselm is the first instance in which the theologian plants himself upon the position of philosophy, and challenges for the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, both a rational necessity, and a scientific rationality. The fundamental position of the *Cur Deus Homo* is, that the atonement of the Son of God is absolutely or metaphysically necessary in order to the remission of sin. Anselm concedes by implication, throughout his work, that if it cannot be made out that the vicarious satisfaction of divine justice by the theanthropic suffering of Jesus Christ is required by a necessary and immanent attribute of the Divine Nature, then a scientific character cannot be vindicated for the doctrine; for nothing that is not metaphysically necessary is scientific. Hence, in the very beginning of the tract, he affirms that a mere reference to the divine benevolence, without any regard to the divine justice, cannot satisfy the mind that is seeking a necessary basis in the doctrine of atonement. For benevolence is inclined to dispense with penal suffering, and of itself does not demand it.

It is not the attribute of mercy, but the attribute of justice, which insists upon legal satisfaction, and opposes an obstacle to the salvation of a sinner. Setting aside, therefore, the divine justice, and taking into view merely the divine compassion, there does not appear to be any reason why God should not by an act of bare omnipotence

deliver the sinner from suffering and make him happy. This conducts Anselm to that higher position from which the full-orbed nature and character of the Deity is beheld, and he proceeds to show that compassion cannot operate in an isolated and independent manner in the work of redemption, and that if anything is done for the recovery and weal of the transgressor, it cannot be at the expense of any necessary quality in the divine nature, through the mere exercise of an arbitrary volition, and an unbridled omnipotence.

The leading positions, and the connection of ideas, in this exceedingly profound, clear, and logical tract of the 11th century, are as follows.

Beginning with the idea of sin, Anselm defines this as the withholding from God what is due to him from man. Sin is debt. But man owes to God the absolute and entire subjection of his will, at all times, to the divine law and will. This is not given, and hence the guilt, or debt, of man to Deity. The extinction of this guilt does not consist in simply beginning again to subject the will entirely to its rightful sovereign, but in giving satisfaction for the previous cessation in so doing. God has been robbed of his honour in the past, and it must be restored to him in some way, while at the same time the present and future honour due to him is being given. But how is man, who is still a sinner and constantly sinning, to render this double satisfaction, viz.: satisfy the law in the future by perfectly obeying it, and in the past by enduring its whole penalty? It is impossible for him to render it; and yet this impossibility, argues Anselm, does not release him from his indebtedness or guilt, because this impossibility is the effect of a free act, and a free act must be held responsible for all its consequences, in conformity with the ethical maxim, that the cause is answerable for the effect. But now the question arises: Cannot the love and compassion of God abstracted from his justice come in at this point, and remit the sin of man without any satisfaction? This is impossible, because it would be irregularity (*aliquid inordinatum*), and injustice. If unrighteousness is punished neither in the person of the transgressor, nor in that of a

proper substitute, then unrighteousness is not subject to any law or regulation of any sort; it enjoys more liberty than righteousness itself, which would be a contradiction and a wrong. Furthermore, it would contradict the divine justice itself, if the creature could defraud the creator of that which is his due, without giving any satisfaction for the robbery. Since there is nothing greater and better than God, there is no attribute more just and necessary than that primitive righteousness innate to deity which maintains the honour of God. This justice, indeed, is God himself, so that to satisfy it, is to satisfy God himself.

Having in this manner carried the discussion into the very heart of the divine nature, and shown that a necessary and immanent attribute of the Deity stands in the way of the non-infliction of punishment and the happiness of the transgressor, Anselm proceeds to consider the possibility of satisfying the claims of justice,—the claims of Satan being expressly denied. There are two ways, he says, in which this attribute can be satisfied. First, the punishment may be actually inflicted upon the transgressor. But this, of course, would be incompatible with his salvation from sin, and his eternal happiness, because the punishment required is eternal, in order to offset the infinite demerit of robbing God of his honour. It is plain, therefore, that man cannot be his own atoner, and render satisfaction for his own sin. A sinner cannot justify a sinner, any more than a criminal can pardon his own crime. The second, and only other way in which the attribute of justice can be satisfied is by substituted or vicarious suffering. This requires the agency of another being than the transgressor. But here everything depends upon the nature and character of the Being who renders the substituted satisfaction. For it would be an illegitimate procedure to defraud justice by substituting a less for a more valuable satisfaction. It belongs, therefore, to the conception of a true vicarious satisfaction, that something be offered to justice for the sin of man that is greater than the finite and created, or, in Anselm's phrase, is "greater than all that is not God." In other words, an infinite value must pertain to that satisfaction which is substituted for the sufferings of mankind. But he who can

give, and has the right to give, out of his own resources, something that is greater than the finite universe, must himself be greater than all that is not God, or than all that is finite and created. But God alone is greater than all that is not God, or the created universe. Only God therefore can make this satisfaction. Only Deity can satisfy the claims of Deity. But, on the other hand, man must render it, otherwise it would not be a satisfaction for man's sin. Consequently, the required and adequate satisfaction must be theanthropic, i.e., rendered by a God-Man. As God, the God-Man can give to deity more than the whole finite creation combined could render. Furthermore this theanthropic obedience and suffering was not due from the mere humanity of Christ. This was sinless and innocent, and justice had no claims, in the way of suffering, upon it. And, moreover, only a man's obedience, and not that of a God-Man, could be required of a man. Consequently this Divine-Human obedience and suffering was a surplusage, in respect to the man Christ Jesus, and might overflow and inure to the benefit of a third party,—in other words, to the benefit of the transgressor for whom it was voluntarily rendered and endured.

This satisfaction made by incarnate Deity to meet the claims of one of his own attributes, Anselm represents as even more than an equivalent for the sin of mankind. We meet with phraseology in the second book of the *Cur Deus Homo?*, upon this point, that is strikingly like that which we have noticed in Cyril of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> "You have indeed most plainly proved," says the pupil with whom the dialogue is carried on, "that the life of this man is of so sublime, and so precious a nature as to suffice for satisfying what is due to justice for the sins of the whole world, and infinitely more." In another place, it is remarked that "the life of the God-Man is greater incomparably than those sins which are exceeded beyond all power of estimation by his death." And in another passage, the infinite dignity and worth of the atoning death of the incarnate Deity is sought to be exhibited, by the following questions and answers. "If that God-Man were here present before you, and, you meanwhile having a full knowledge of his nature and character, it should be

said: 'Unless you slay that Person the whole world and the whole created universe will perish,' would you put him to death, in order to preserve the whole creation? I would not, even if an infinite number of worlds were spread out before me. But suppose again, it were said to you: 'You must either slay him, or the guilt and misery of all the sins of the world will come upon you'? I would say, in answer, that I would sooner incur the aggregated guilt and misery of all the sins, past and future, of this world, and also of all the sin in addition that can possibly be conceived of, rather than incur the guilt of that one sin of killing the Lord of Glory."

The limits of this work do not permit a fuller examination of this remarkable composition, which exhibits a depth, breadth, and rigour of thinking, that is not surpassed by any production of the same extent in theological literature, and deserves to be studied and pondered by every Protestant divine. For it is obvious to remark that such a view of the atonement as is here exhibited is thoroughly Biblical, and thoroughly Protestant. There may be incidental views and positions in this tract, with which the modern theologian would not wholly agree; but certainly so far as the general theory of vicarious satisfaction is concerned this little treatise contains the substance of the Reformed doctrine; while at the same time, it enunciates those philosophical principles which must enter into every scientific construction of this cardinal truth of Christianity. On both the theoretic and the practical side, it is one of the Christian classics.

For in distinctly denying the claims of Satan, and in distinctly asserting the absolute and indefeasible claims of justice, the Anselmic theory imparts a necessary and metaphysical character to the doctrine of Atonement, by virtue of which it becomes scientific, and defensible at the bar of first principles. It enables the inquirer to see that no other mode is possible,—that there is no alternative for the divine benevolence, but either to leave the guilty transgressor to the natural and ordinary course of justice, or else to deliver him from it by satisfying its claims for him and in his stead. Baur, indeed,



makes the objection that the attribute of justice entirely overrides and suppresses that of love; and that this exact and absolute satisfaction of all the claims of legal justice, though imparting great compactness and self-consistence to the theory, yet denudes it of all its tender and merciful features and aspects. He remarks, that according to the Anselmic theory of satisfaction, the whole work of redemption is carried out "not for the sake of man, but solely for the sake of God,"—for the sake of an inward necessity grounded in the essence of Deity. But this does not follow by any means. On the contrary, the compassion of God is seen in its most tender, because its only self-sacrificing form, in this light and flame of justice and law. The "inner necessity" of the divine nature does, indeed, require that justice be maintained by the punishment of sin. But Baur forgets that, in Anselm's view there are two ways in which sin can be punished. And the fact that God chooses the one that spares man and tasks God,—the fact that he satisfies his own justice for the sinner, instead of leaving the sinner to satisfy it by an endless misery in his own person,—shows in the most conclusive and affecting manner that Redemption has man's welfare in view, as well as the best interests of the universe, and the majestic glory of the divine nature. With good right does Anselm say, at the close of his investigation, "the compassion of God, which appeared to be lost entirely when we were considering the justice of God and the sin of man, we have now found to be so great and so consistent with justice, that nothing greater or more just can be conceived of. For what compassion can equal the words of God the Father addressed to the sinner condemned to eternal punishment, and having no means of redeeming himself: 'Take my only-begotten Son, and make him an offering for thyself'; or the words of the Son: 'Take me, and ransom thy soul'? For this is what both say, when they invite and draw us to faith in the gospel. And can anything be more just than for God to remit all debt, when in this way he receives a satisfaction greater than all the debt, provided only it be offered with the right feeling?"

In closing this brief sketch of Anselm's theory of the Atonement, it is evident that if his views and experience, as exhibited in the *Cur Deus*

Homo?, could have become those of the church of which he was a member and an ornament, the revival of the doctrine of justification by faith in the Lutheran Reformation would not have been needed. Such a profound and spiritual conception of sin, such a clear and penetrating consciousness of guilt, such adoring and humbling views of the divine majesty, such calm and searching apprehensions of the divine justice, such annihilation of human merit in the eye of law, and such an evangelic estimate of the atonement of the God-Man, if they could have been made elements and influences in the general religious experience of the Western Church, that eleventh century would have exhibited a spirit of judgment and of burning, of profound humility and self-denial, of purity and self-consecration, that would have been a dazzling contrast to the actual religious character which it presents. But the soteriology of Anselm, though exerting no little influence through his immediate pupils, did not pass over into the church at large. The sphere of his activity was the Norman and Anglo-Norman Churches. These were then upon the frontiers of Christendom, and the metropolitan clergy, as well as the imperial church, knew little or nothing of that vigorous and vital piety, and that profound and thorough theologizing, which in one of the darkest centuries in church history was radiating from the cloister of Bec, and the see of Canterbury.

## **2. Soteriology of Abelard and Lombard**

The Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, as does every ecclesiastical organization of the present day that is connected with the state, contained within its communion a variety of opinions and views, some of which were directly opposed to others. To the theory of Anselm which we have just exhibited, stands in the very sharpest contrast the theory of Abelard († 1142). The acuteness of this Schoolman was not sufficiently regulated by moral earnestness, and informed by a profound religious experience. We perceive immediately, in passing from the writings of Anselm to those of Abelard, that we are in communication with a very different spirit. The lofty heights of contemplation and the abysmal depths of

experience have vanished. Attributes like that of justice, and facts like that of sin, are far less transcendent in their meaning and importance. The atonement is looked at from a much lower level.

Abelard begins and ends with the benevolence of God. This is divorced from and not limited by his holiness, and is regarded as endowed with the liberty of indifference. The deity can pardon upon repentance. There is nothing in the Divine Nature which necessitates a satisfaction for past transgression, antecedently to remission of penalty. Like creating out of nothing, redemption may and does take place by a fiat, by which sin is abolished by a word, and the sinner is received into favour. Nothing is needed but penitence in order to the remission of sin. The object of the incarnation and death of Christ, consequently, is to produce sorrow in the human soul. The life and sufferings of the God-Man were intended to exert a moral impression upon a hard and impenitent heart, which is thereby melted into contrition, and then received into favour by the boundless compassion of God. Abelard attributes much to the intercessory agency of the Redeemer. As the God-Man who has perfectly obeyed the divine law, Christ possesses a weight of influence with the Father which secures blessings for the sinful. In such connections, he alludes to the idea of justice. Christ was perfectly holy and just himself, and it is "just" that such a being should be heard in behalf of those for whom he became incarnate and suffered. But by justice is here meant merely fitness or propriety. When it comes to the properly judicial and retributive attribute in the Divine Nature, Abelard denies the doctrine of satisfaction, and contends that God may remit the penalty by a sovereign act of will. The only characteristic which the theory of Abelard possesses in common with that of Anselm is its denial that the claims of Satan were satisfied by the death of the Redeemer. "If a slave," says Abelard, "should desert his master, his master could justly demand that he be given up. But if a slave should seduce his fellow-slave from obedience to the master of both of them, how absurd it would be for this slave to set up a claim to the services of the one whom he had seduced."

That very celebrated Schoolman Peter Lombard († 1164), whose influence and authority in the Roman Church is hardly second to that of Aquinas himself, declared decidedly for the soteriology of Abelard, and against that of Anselm. In his theory, the influence of the death of Christ is spent upon the subjective character of the individual soul, in softening, subduing, and sanctifying. At the same time, however, Lombard's representation apparently, but only apparently, verges towards the Anselmic theory. The claims of justice are met to a limited extent by the sufferings of the Redeemer. They deliver man from the temporal penal consequences of sin, provided baptism be administered and penance be performed. Lombard's principal work, entitled *Liber Sententiarum*, is a collection of all the views of the Roman Catholic Church, and an attempt to combine them into one system. But such an eclecticism as this, which endeavours to harmonize the theory of Anselm with that of Abelard, must necessarily fail. Lombard's real views were the same as those of Abelard, and the fact that the work of Christ must be supplemented by baptism and penance accounts for the remarkable popularity which the *Liber Sententiarum* has always enjoyed in the Papal Church.

### **3. Soteriology of Bernard and Hugh St. Victor**

In the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux († 1153), we meet a more evangelical view of the atoning work of Christ. He combats the soteriology of Abelard, as he also does his other doctrinal opinions. First, he opposes the view which Abelard held in common with Anselm, that Satan has no claims upon man, and that no Satanic claims are met by the sacrifice of Christ. Bernard, though not a mystic proper, had a mystical tendency. He belonged, as was noticed in the history of Philosophical Systems, to the Mystic Scholastics. Deeply devout in his spirit, he also cherished a high veneration for the opinions of the Fathers, especially Augustine. The rejection of a theory which entered so extensively into the soteriology of the Primitive Fathers, as did that of Satan's claims, was regarded with disfavour by Bernard, even though the pious and orthodox Anselm

had given it his sanction. Connected, moreover, as it was in the instance of Abelard with other views that were undoubtedly heterodox, and with a rationalistic spirit, it was natural that a mind inclined like Bernard's to rest in a traditional and received orthodoxy should oppose this rejection of the old doctrine of Satan's claims.

Secondly, Bernard opposes the opinion of Abelard that remission of sins may occur by a sovereign act of will, without any satisfaction of the claims of law. His own religious experience was too thorough, and his respect for the opinions of the past too implicit, for him to adopt a theory that renders the Old Testament sacrificial ceremony an inexplicable enigma, deprives the New Testament representations of their meaning, and agrees substantially with the later Socinian theory of redemption. At the same time, we do not find Bernard agreeing with Anselm respecting the metaphysical necessity of satisfaction. He hesitates to denominate sin an infinite evil, and to attribute to it an infinite guilt. As a consequence, he is not boldly distinct in asserting the infinite worth of the satisfaction of Christ. He is not ready, with Anselm, to assert an absolute necessity, intrinsic to the divine nature, for an atonement, but prefers to stand with Augustine upon the ground of a relative necessity founded upon the optional will and arrangement of God. In short, the difference between these two theologians, who undoubtedly were much alike so far as concerns their religious experience and practical use of truth, consists in the fact that Anselm was a metaphysician, and could not stop until he had traced back his faith to the eternal and necessary principles of the divine nature and government; while Bernard could hold the doctrine at a middle position, without subjecting it to the rigorous tests and conclusions of science, to whose methods he was somewhat disinclined, from his mystical tendency.

Of similar general character with Bernard, was that other interesting Mystic Scholastic, Hugo St. Victor († 1140). His view of the atonement, however, approaches somewhat nearer, in technical respects, to that of Anselm, than did that of Bernard. While unwilling to give up the old patristic notion of a satisfaction of Satan's claims,

he is distinct in asserting and exhibiting the relations of the work of Christ to the divine nature. The sacrificial element, as distinguished from the legal, is very apparent in this Schoolman. He speaks often of the Deity as propitiated, and fastens upon those passages of Scripture in which this Old Testament idea is presented. "The Son of God," he says, "by becoming a man paid man's debt to the Father, and by dying expiated man's guilt." Here, both the legal and the sacrificial elements are combined in one proposition.

#### **4. Soteriology of Bonaventura**

Thus far, we have been examining the opinions prevalent in the first part of the Scholastic Age,—viz., in the 11th and 12th centuries. The highest intensity and energy of the systematizing spirit does not display itself until we pass into the last half of the period. The Schoolmen of the 13th and 14th centuries, though originating no views of more originality, on either side of the subject, than those of Anselm and Abelard, yet put the existing materials, whether derived from the Patristic or the Earlier Scholastic soteriology, into a more systematic and comprehensive form. Among these later Schoolmen, we shall direct attention first, and with some particularity, to Bonaventura († 1272).

This author, following the analytic and exhaustive method introduced by Peter Lombard, discusses the subject of the atonement under the six following questions. First: Whether it was fit in itself (*congruum*) that human nature should be restored by God. Secondly: Whether it was more fitting that human nature should be restored by a satisfaction of justice, than by any other method. Thirdly: Whether any sinless creature could render satisfaction for the whole human race. Fourthly: Whether any sinful man assisted by divine grace could make satisfaction for his own sins. Fifthly: Whether God was under obligation to accept the method of satisfaction by the death of Christ. Sixthly: Whether God could have saved the human race by some other method. We present the entire plan of his work, not for the purpose of following it out into each of its divisions, but in order

to show by an example the acute, analytic, and all-comprehending method of handling subjects which was so peculiar to the later Schoolmen like Bonaventura, Alexander Hales, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas. When subjected to the torture of such a scrutinizing and searching analysis, a doctrine or truth must necessarily be torn into pieces, and examined down to its minutest filaments and elements. The invention of the Scholastic method had the same effect in the intellectual world, that the invention of the cotton gin, and of the roller with revolving knives, has had in the material. Subjects are reduced to their fibre.

In order to give, within as brief a space as possible, the views of Bonaventura, we will exhibit the trains of thought in his answer to the second of these questions, viz.: "Was it more fitting that human nature should be restored by a satisfaction of justice, than by any other method?" In answering this question in the affirmative, Bonaventura proves that the restoration of human nature by a satisfaction is the most fitting method, because most conducive to the maintenance: 1. of the Divine justice; 2. of the Divine wisdom; 3. of the Divine omnipotence; 4. of the Divine honour and majesty. He comes to his conclusion, by the following train of reasoning. Redemption by the method of legal satisfaction is the most fitting method, because God is both merciful and just, and consequently both attributes should be manifested and maintained together. Hence it was fitting that God should demand satisfaction for the dishonour and injury done to himself by man's transgression, and if man could not render this satisfaction, to provide a Mediator who could satisfy for him and in his stead. If God had been inherently unwilling to pardon sin, and had inexorably insisted upon the infliction of penalty upon the criminal, he could not have manifested his attribute of mercy. If, on the other hand, he had pardoned sin without any satisfaction of law, he could not have manifested his attribute of justice. Thus the method of forgiveness through a satisfaction is the most befitting, taking into view the entire nature and character of God. But the same fitness is apparent if we take into view the nature and character of man. The object in restoring the

human race is to conduct it from a state of guilt to a state of justification, and from a state of misery to a state of glory. Inasmuch as man has done dishonour to the majesty of God, it is fitting that he should do honour to the justice of God by enduring punishment; and as it is more praiseworthy in the innocent man to obtain eternal life by merit than without merit, so also it is more praiseworthy in the guilty man to be reconciled to God through a satisfaction of all legal claims, than by a method that disregards and tramples upon them.

After having in this manner established the affirmative of the question, Bonaventura proceeds to specify and refute some objections to his position. 1. It is first objected, that nothing can be so fitting and proper in God as the manifestation of his kindness and compassion, and that the forgiveness of sin without a penal satisfaction would be the greatest proof of such compassion. To this it is replied, first, that the fitness of anything is founded in its necessity. It is necessary that God should be just, but not necessary that he should show mercy. Hence, it follows that compassion towards a criminal is not more fitting and proper than justice towards him. But, secondly, it is not true that remission by a mere volition that involves no sacrifice upon the part of God is a greater evidence of love, than remission through the blood of his Only-Begotten Son. There is no benevolence greater than that which endures suffering and death for another's welfare. 2. It is secondly objected, that the Divine independence and self-sufficiency would appear in a finer light, if God were to pardon without any satisfaction. To this it is replied, that the requirement of an atonement does not imply any conditioning of the Creator by the creature, for it is a divine attribute which demands the satisfaction of law. God is wholly independent of man in the work of redemption, though not independent of his own nature and character. As God requires obedience to his law, not because he is dependent upon his creatures, but because his nature and attributes demand it, so he requires an atonement for the same reason. 3. It is thirdly objected, that the Divine omnipotence would be more impressively exhibited in pardoning sin without a satisfaction, than with one. To this it is



replied, that if the Divine omnipotence should abolish the claims of the Divine justice by an act of arbitrary will, one attribute in the Godhead would destroy another. But this would be suicidal; and a suicidal exercise of power is not the most impressive mode of exhibiting power. Even if this could be conceived as possible, and the Divine omnipotence were regarded as able to restore the human race by a word, in the exercise of a naked and lawless almightiness, God would yet be obliged to prefer the more difficult because the more regular method of restoration through an atonement. 4. It is objected, in the fourth place, that the restoration of man without a satisfaction of justice would lay him under greater obligation to love and praise God. This is denied, because the surrendry of the Only-Begotten Son of God obligates the redeemed far more than a mere remission of sin without any substituted suffering would. That God incarnate endured the pains of death for us is a fact of even greater impressiveness than the forgiveness of sin itself. The foundation of human salvation is even greater than the salvation. 5. Fifthly, it is objected that God by forgiving sin without an atonement sets an example that can be imitated by man, while on the other scheme he cannot be imitated by his creatures. To this it is replied, that man in his private and individual capacity is not required to imitate God in all respects, and particularly when the judicial attributes of his character are involved. Punishment and retribution belong solely to the Godhead. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). This attribute cannot be wielded at all by man, except as delegated to civil power and authority. But in respect to benevolence, and the disposition to sacrifice self for the good of another,—the chief attribute which the individual man needs to have in view for imitation,—God in giving his Son as a judicial substitute for his rebellious creatures has set forth the highest possible example for imitation. 6. It is objected, in the sixth place, that it would be more fitting in God to restore the human race immediately, and without any such intervention of the creature as occurs in the assumption of human nature by the Son. Immediate rather than instrumental agency is more worthy of God. This is denied, because it is characteristic of Infinite Goodness to permit the creature to co-work

with itself, so far as the nature of the creature allows of this. In the work of redemption, such a co-operation is not only possible but necessary, in order to sympathy between the Redeemer and the redeemed. In the work of creation no such co-operation of the Finite with the Infinite is possible, because the energy is not spent upon already existing materials.

In answering the third and fourth questions, viz.: whether a sinless created being could make satisfaction for the human race, and whether a sinful man if assisted by divine power could atone for his own sins,—Bonaventura takes the negative with energy and decision. Any single individual, however exalted he might be, is still finite, and compared with God, whose honour has been injured, is on a common level with all other creatures. Consequently, his suffering would not be equivalent to the sufferings of an entire race of beings. Moreover, the idea of a satisfaction requires that it be rendered by the same species of being by whom the offence was committed. Consequently, the atonement for man's sin must be made in man's nature, and not in an angelic. It would not be fitting that the human race should owe its salvation to another species of created beings. Hence only a God-Man can render satisfaction,—man, that humanity may suffer; God, that the suffering may be of infinite value. In answer to the objection, that the life of Christ was of more value than his death, as life generally is better than death, and that consequently the life without the death would have been a more adequate satisfaction, Bonaventura asserts that the idea of satisfaction necessarily involves that of penal suffering, thus identifying those two conceptions, satisfaction and expiation, which Baur, we have noticed, mistakenly asserts are not identified with each other in the Anselmic theory.

To conclude this notice of Bonaventura, we remark that the influence of Anselm upon him is very apparent, and very great. He is on the side of Anselm St. Victor and Bernard, against Abelard and Peter Lombard, and exhibits the truth with a clearness of understanding, an acuteness of analysis, and a systematizing talent that render him one of the most interesting writers among the Schoolmen. At the

same time, this writer, like others of whom we have spoken, differed from Anselm in respect to the question: Is this conceded necessity of a satisfaction of divine justice, absolute or relative? Is satisfaction of law necessary because God wills it, or does he will it because it is necessary? We have found Anselm maintaining the absolute and metaphysical necessity of satisfaction in order to remission, and declaring it to be impossible from the very nature of God to dispense with it, if the guilty is to be saved. As the necessary nature of right and wrong does not depend upon the optional will of God, neither does the necessity of an atonement rest upon it. He was led to this because he regarded it as contradictory to the idea of God, to conceive of a schism in the Deity, and an intestine conflict between the divine attributes. He held that the philosophical idea of God excludes that possibility of acting contrary to truth and justice, by the exercise of bare will, which attends a finite and probationary nature like that of man. Anselm, consequently, could not distinguish as did Bonaventura and some of the later Schoolmen, two kinds of omnipotence in the divine nature, one of which is regulated, and the other unregulated, by the other attributes of the Godhead. Alexander Hales († 1245), in answering the standing question: Can human nature be restored without a satisfaction? brings out this distinction of an abstract and a concrete omnipotence in the following manner. "When it is said that God cannot restore human nature without a satisfaction, it is to be observed, with due respect to the opinion of the blessed Anselm, that divine power is to be contemplated in two forms,—absolutely, or by itself alone, and relatively, or in connection with other attributes (*cum ordine*). In contemplating the divine power as absolute, we conceive of a certain infinite energy (*virtus*) in the Deity that is abstracted from the rest of his nature, and transcends all limitations; and with respect to this form, the divine power cannot have terms set to it (*non est determinare*); and it is conceded that considered in this mode, the divine omnipotence is able to restore human nature without a satisfaction. But in contemplating the divine power relatively, we consider it in its references to justice and mercy, and so considered, it is conceded

that omnipotence can do nothing except in accordance with justice and mercy."

The doctrine that there is an abstract omnipotence in God by which he might have pardoned sin without an atonement, if applied by a rigorous logic, would neutralize all that clear and cogent argumentation which we have seen Bonaventura employed to show, that it is "more fitting that human nature should be restored by a satisfaction of justice, than by any other method." For it implies that it is possible for the natural attributes of God to be at war with his moral ones; in other words, that the Infinite Creator is subject to that same possibility of illegitimate action that pertains to a finite and mutable creature. It implies that the philosophical idea of the Deity does not prevent his being conceived of as acting contrary to a part of his own nature.<sup>2</sup> The doctrine of the metaphysical possibility of the remission of sin without a satisfaction of justice, furthermore, implies that the natural attributes of God are more central and ultimate than his moral and ethical,—that might in the Deity is more fundamental and absolute than right. Logically, it takes the key-stone out of the arch upon which the whole doctrine of an atonement rests. For on this scheme, when the final centre of truth is reached, a satisfaction of justice can be dispensed with; omnipotence in God "cannot have terms set to it," and therefore it can abolish the claims of law, without satisfying them. It was, however, merely a speculative opinion in many instances. For many of its advocates were equally earnest with their opponents, in contending for the inexorable necessity of a satisfaction, when the attribute of justice is taken into view; but they were not equally consistent with them, in holding the opinion that justice itself might be abstracted, and the problem solved at a yet more central point in the divine nature, at which power is isolated from all the ethical attributes of Deity, and becomes lawless, and capable of doing anything and everything.

## **5. Soteriology of Aquinas**

Thomas Aquinas († 1274) deserves particular attention, in the history of the doctrine of atonement. He is the strongest systematizer among the Schoolmen, and on account of his important position in the Mediaeval Church and theology merits a detailed examination. But inasmuch as his opinions upon the atonement resemble so closely those of Bonaventura, whose views we have discussed somewhat at length, we are relieved from the necessity of a minute investigation.

The dogmatic views of Aquinas respecting the atonement are found in the third part of his *Summa Theologiae*, or system of divinity. He employs the same analytic method so common to the Schoolmen, and exhausts the subject by a series of questions and their answers. The first inquiry is concerning the nature of Christ's Passion. He endeavours to exhibit its nature, by proposing twelve queries, of which we give only the two following: 1. Was it necessary that Christ should suffer in order to the salvation of man? 2. Was any other method of human salvation possible? Aquinas answers the first of these questions, in accordance with the metaphysics of Aristotle, by distinguishing the different modes of conceiving of "necessity." If, by necessity be meant that which from its very nature cannot but be, and whose non-existence cannot be conceived of, then there was no necessity for the sufferings of Christ. That the Logos should become incarnate, and die upon the cross, is not founded in any antecedent and a-priori necessity in the constitution of the Divine Being or of the universe. The necessity is subsequent and a posteriori,—i.e., is consequent upon the origin of moral evil, and even then only in case it is proposed to save transgressors from the consequences of their transgression, a procedure which is itself entirely optional upon the part of God, inasmuch as he is under no necessity to redeem mankind from their sins. Again, if by necessity external compulsion be meant, then the sufferings of Christ were not necessary. But, thirdly, a thing is necessary when it is indispensable in order to the attainment of some other thing, and in this sense the death of Christ is necessary. It is not, indeed, a matter of necessity, that man's sin should be pardoned, but if it be pardoned, it is necessary that Christ should first make satisfaction to justice for its commission.

Supposing the fact of sin and the fact of a divine intention to deliver man from it be given, then, says Aquinas, the sufferings of Christ become necessary, both in respect to the attribute of justice, and the attribute of mercy,—in respect to justice, because Christ by his sufferings must completely satisfy its claims; in respect to mercy, because, in man's condition of inability to satisfy the demands of the law for himself, God can display no higher compassion than in providing a satisfaction for him, and in his stead.

In answering the second question, viz.: Whether redemption could have been accomplished in some other method? Aquinas defines his position respecting the metaphysical necessity of atonement. Even though it is, abstractly considered, possible to save man in some other manner, it becomes impossible, he says, when once God has determined to accomplish the work in the way and manner he has. Aquinas, like Bonaventura, holds only to a relative necessity of the atonement. He, too, while contending with great earnestness and intellectual acumen, that a satisfaction for sin must be made to justice before sin can be remitted, if, and so long as, justice is taken into the account, yet asserts the possibility of throwing this attribute out of the account, in a determination of what the Supreme Being is able to do. His reasoning is as follows. "If God had willed to liberate man from sin without any satisfaction, he would not have done anything contrary to justice. For he is not like a human or finite judge. The human judge cannot, without injury to justice, dismiss a criminal without punishment, because it is his function to inflict punishment upon crime committed against another than himself,—say, against another man, or against the general weal, or against a higher officer than himself. But God is the supreme judge and chief good of the whole universe, and there is no other being than himself with whose interests he, as a judge, is intrusted. Consequently, if God sees fit to remit that penalty which has been affixed to law only for his own glory, no injustice is done, more than when a man forgives his fellow-man an injury done to himself alone, without requiring any satisfaction at his hands." This reasoning, it is evident, is founded upon the same view with that of Bonaventura, respecting

the relation of the physical to the moral attributes of God. It assumes that the former are more central and fundamental than the latter, and asserts the possibility of their disjunction in the Divine administration. It implies the right of omnipotence to abolish justice; the right of power to nullify law. For although the offence of sin is committed against the same Being who is the judge and punisher of sin, yet if as sovereign he should pardon it without the satisfaction of law, he would unquestionably put honour upon his omnipotence and dishonour upon his justice. The physical attribute would thus be all-controlling, and the Divine nature would become a mere unlimited and characterless force. An inward schism and self-defection would take place in the Deity, whereby one part of his nature, by a purely arbitrary act of his own, would be set in contradiction to another part; whereby the physical attributes would be arrayed in hostility to the ethical, in the very place of their harmony and equilibrium.

We find in Aquinas several new points raised, respecting the work of Christ. The first relates to the mode in which the atonement of the Son of God becomes available to the believer. Aquinas answers the objection that merit and demerit are personal, and that therefore vicarious satisfaction is impossible, by the doctrine of the *unio mystica* existing between the believer and the Redeemer. Founding his view upon the statement of St. Paul (Eph. 5:30), that believers are members of the body, the flesh, and the bones of the Lord, he supposes, that a peculiar species of connection exists between the Church and its Head, by virtue of which the common principles and maxims that pertain to individual and secular life cease to be applicable. The relation of the believer to the Son of God is not the external one, of one individual to another individual, but an anomalous one, whereby a communion of interest and moral life is established, so that the sinner united by faith to his Saviour may become a ground and cause of judicial infliction upon his atoning Substitute, and the incarnate Word may become the sinner's sin-offering, and atonement. We do not find in Aquinas very full, or very clear, representations upon this difficult point; but this idea of the mystical oneness between Christ and the Church pervades his

soteriology with considerable boldness. Though allusions are made to it in the earlier writers, especially in connection with the cognate doctrine of the unity of Adam and his posterity, yet it may be said that the "angelic doctor," as he was termed in the panegyrical phraseology of the time, was the first to give it prominence in the theory of Redemption.

The second new point we notice in this writer is the distinction between *satisfactio* and *meritum*. In the Anselmic theory, the work of Christ was contemplated in its relations to justice solely. The deliverance of man from condemnation was the great object in view. This is the prevalent mode of contemplating the subject in the Patristic, and the Earlier Scholastic soteriology. But we find Aquinas raising that question which was afterwards so earnestly discussed in the Calvinistic and Arminian controversies of the 17th century,—the question, namely, whether Christ did not earn for the believer a title to eternal life, as well as of freedom from condemnation to eternal death. Aquinas answers this question in the affirmative, and makes the technical distinction between the satisfaction which Christ made by his sufferings to justice, and the merit of his obedience to the law by virtue of which the redeemed are entitled to the rewards of eternity. In other words, we find in the theory of Aquinas an anticipation of the later distinction between the "active" and "passive" righteousness of Christ.

A third new point observable in the soteriology of Aquinas is the doctrine of a superabundance in the merits of Christ. The Passion of the Redeemer was not merely sufficient, it was also a superabundant satisfaction for the sins of the human race. This position needs to be carefully distinguished from the statements of Anselm, in which he gives expression to his view of the infinite worth of Christ's satisfaction. There was little danger of magnifying the value of the Redeemer's Passion, in connection with the infinite demerit of sin, and hence the Anselmic theory is far more satisfactory than that of Aquinas, in respect to the point under review. This later Schoolman, though intending to follow the opinions of the earlier, imperceptibly



departs from him, by reason of a less spiritual and profound view of the nature of moral evil. Hence, in regard to the distinction between justification and sanctification, we find Aquinas involved in the confusion which we have noticed in Augustine. There is much less affinity between the soteriology of the Reformation and that of the "angelic doctor," than between it and that of Anselm; and, to this day, the Roman Catholic theologians of the more intelligent and devout class, who are not satisfied with the lowest forms of the Papal soteriology, and yet are not prepared for the New Testament theory in its purity, appropriate the opinions of Aquinas rather than those of Anselm. There is little doubt that the doctrine of a superabundance in the satisfaction of Christ, in connection with a defective view of the degree and amount of evil that was to be atoned for by it, contributed toward the distinctively Papal theory of works of supererogation, and of a treasury of merit at the command of the Church.

The distinctively Romish soteriology of Aquinas is betrayed when he comes to treat of the remission of sin, and particularly when he specifies the ground of it. Anselm, we have seen, referred it solely to the atoning work of Christ. In his theory, justification is the simple and sole act of God, whereby he acquits the guilty on the ground of the infinite satisfaction that has been made for sin. So far as the pardon of sin is concerned, man can do nothing. The criminal cannot pardon himself, neither can he purchase or earn a pardon by satisfying the claims of law. He cannot do this in part. The sinner is totally dependent upon God for the remission of sin, both in respect to the declarative act by which he is acquitted, and in respect to all that judicial procedure and apparatus of atonement which must precede the declarative or justifying act. In the Anselmic scheme, as in the Protestant, remission of sin is the pure, simple, and sole act of Deity, without any co-operation or assistance from humanity. But not so in the theory of Aquinas. Notwithstanding all that he has said, and well said, respecting the claims of justice, and the vicarious satisfaction of the Son of God, Aquinas, as does the subsequent Tridentine scheme, vitiates all that he has hitherto maintained on these points, by teaching that the remission of sin depends to a

certain extent upon the character and conduct of the individual, as a ground, or procuring cause. The confusion of justification with sanctification, which we have observed in some passages of Augustine, re-appears in Aquinas in a more distinct and settled statement. In conformity with this view, Aquinas represents the expiatory value of the atonement as dependent upon the believer's conformity to law. In order that the satisfaction of Christ may be an adequate one for the sinner, he must be "configured" to Christ. The atonement is not sufficient alone and by itself. It must be supplemented by personal character and good works, and in some cases by penances. This "configuration" to Christ, requisite in order that His satisfaction may be complete, is brought about in a sacramental manner by baptism. In case of sin after baptism, the believer must be "configured" to Christ by a personal suffering in the form of penance, as well as by the acceptance of the sufferings of the Redeemer. Aquinas concedes that the suffering of Christ is of far greater value than that of the man himself, yet plainly teaches that the latter enters as a co-operating factor with the former, in laying the foundation for the remission of the committed sin. It is not in itself sufficient to atone for sin, but in connection with the sacrifice of Christ it has a value of its own which cannot be dispensed with in making up the full sum of legal satisfaction. The penance of the baptized man is imperfect; it has not the merit of condignity (*condigna peccato*); but it is graciously accepted in connection with, and reliance upon, the satisfaction of Christ.

We have in these views of Aquinas sufficient reason for asserting, that notwithstanding the correctness of his soteriology up to a certain point and in certain relations, the fatal error of the Romish theory is contained in it. This error, to state it in a word, does not consist in denying the need of a satisfaction of justice, or even the great value of Christ's satisfaction for sin, but in asserting in connection with this, the necessity of a co-operating and completing satisfaction on the part of man. The amount of this finite element varies in different writers and ages of the Romish Church, "but the presence of the element itself in any amount is what distinguishes

the distinctively Papal from the distinctively Protestant theory of the atonement.

## **6. Soteriology of Duns Scotus**

A controversy respecting the atonement sprang up between Duns Scotus and the followers of Aquinas, which involved fundamental principles in ethics and religion, and divided the Romish Church into two great parties of Thomists and Scotists. Duns Scotus denied the Anselmic doctrine that sin is of infinite demerit, and consequently denied that the suffering of Christ is of infinite value. The relation of the atonement of the Son of God to the sin of mankind, he maintained, is merely an arbitrary and constituted one. The principle upon which he founded his theory was: "*Tantum valet omne creatum oblatum, pro quanto acceptat Deus illud, et non plus.*" There is no interior fitness and adaptation between Christ's atonement and man's sin. God was pleased to accept this particular sacrifice as an offset and equivalent for human transgression, not from any intrinsic value in it, but because he so pleased. He might have accepted any other substitute, or he might have dispensed with accepting any substitute at all. In opposition to this view, the followers of Aquinas maintained the old Anselmic theory of the infinite demerit of sin, and the infinite and objective value of Christ's satisfaction. In this controversy, the soteriology of the adherents of Aquinas is more in harmony with the Protestant view and feeling; so that we might reverse what Melanchthon remarks of Augustine, and say, that "the opinion of Aquinas is more pertinent, fit and convenient when he disputed than it was when not disputing." And yet it would be difficult to see how the followers of Aquinas could in the end avoid the conclusions of Duns Scotus, if they started from that doctrine of a relative necessity of satisfying justice which we have seen Aquinas held, in common with all the Schoolmen excepting Anselm. If omnipotence and bare will are more ultimate in the Divine Nature than justice and truth are, then it is difficult to see how Scotus can be censured for holding, that in the last analysis God can dispense with an atonement altogether, and that whatever value the existing

judicial provision possesses in the divine plan, it possesses not in itself, but solely by virtue of its optional acceptance by the Omnipotent One who is not limited by anything, not even by his own moral attributes. The controversy, however, ran high between the adherents of Aquinas and Scotus,—the Dominican order generally siding with the former, and the Franciscan with the latter. The Nominalists in philosophy also naturally favoured the views of Scotus, as his theory was that of a nominal and putative satisfaction, in distinction from a real and objective one. The extravagantly speculative minds of the age, those who have given the reputation of hair-splitting and excessive dialectics to Scholasticism, also adopted the positions of Scotus.

## **7. Recapitulatory Survey**

Casting a swift glance backward over this Scholastic period, we recapitulate the following facts, as the summary of what we have found in the history of the doctrine of Atonement.

1. The doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, or substituted penalty, was the general form of doctrine among all classes of minds within the pale of the Church, as it was in the Patristic period. All profess to adopt it, and its explicit denial or rejection was deemed heresy. The Socinian position was not taken or defended by the Mediaeval theologians.
2. The doctrine of vicarious satisfaction was held in the purely Biblical form by Anselm, without mixture of foreign elements, or subtraction of intrinsic and essential characteristics. Had the Anselmic soteriology prevailed in the theory and practice of the Church generally, the Reformation of the 16th century would have occurred in the 11th.
3. The doctrine of vicarious substitution was not maintained in this pure and unqualified form by the successors of Anselm. Some of them, and those nearest to him in time, did not adopt his theory in its strictly scientific form, while yet they retained in feeling and practice its substantial features. Others, and these the later Schoolmen, while retaining the doctrine nominally and in phraseology, in reality essentially altered it; first, by confounding

sanctification with justification, and, secondly, by teaching that an additional merit derived either from the church through its sacraments, or from voluntary penance on the part of the individual, is requisite in order that the satisfaction of Christ may be a complete and efficacious one. 4. In the departure from the Anselmic theory of an absolute as distinguished from a relative satisfaction, we find the germs of the subsequent Papal soteriology which during the middle and latter part of the Scholastic period shoot up with rankness and luxuriance.

## **CHAPTER III:**

### **THE PAPAL SOTERIOLOGY**

#### **1. Preliminary Statements**

THE history of the doctrine of Atonement in the Middle Ages has disclosed two tendencies within the Western Church, in respect to the nature of Christ's work,—the one strict, and the other lax. The first has its representative in Anselm, and its expression in the theory of an infinite and real satisfaction. The second has several representatives, because it involves a descending scale. Some of the immediate successors of Anselm,—such as Bernard, the St. Victors, and Bonaventura,—retained the substance of the Anselmic view in their practical representations, yet at the same time in their theoretic statements made some modifications of the scientific positions of Anselm; of which the most important was the adoption (by Bonaventura for example) of the doctrine of the "relative" necessity of the atonement. The logical force and implication of these modifications was neutralized, in a great measure, by the reliance of the heart upon the Person and work of the Redeemer, in the

instances, certainly, of the penitent and devout Bernards and St. Victor. But the tendency itself was off and away from the strict exactitude of science, and it could not remain stationary. We have already noticed in Aquinas, and still more in Lombard, the theory of a mixed justification, resting partly upon the work of Christ, and partly upon the works of the individual; while the Abelards and Scotuses made statements of the doctrine of atonement that were regarded by Bernard and the adherents of Aquinas as positively heretical. The consequence was that in process of time the strict tendency was entirely overcome by the lax one. The Anselmic theory disappeared entirely from the heart of the Roman Church, and remained concealed in, at most, a very narrow circle, until it burst forth with renewed energy and vitality in the soteriology of the Reformation. The lax theory prevailed, becoming more loose and latitudinarian as the corruption of both theory and practice advanced within the Papal Church, until it finally obtained a distinct expression, and an ecclesiastical authority, in the Soteriology of the Council of Trent.

## **2. Soteriology of the Council of Trent**

The Tridentine theory makes inward holiness in conjunction with the merits of Christ the ground of justification. It founds human salvation upon two corner-stones. The doctors of Trent construct their exact and formal definition of justification out of that one element of error which, we have seen, somewhat vitiated the soteriology of Augustine. The unintentional confounding of the distinction between justification and sanctification, which appears occasionally in the Patristic writers, becomes a deliberate and emphatic identification, in the scheme of the Papal Church.

The Anselmic and Protestant soteriologies mean by the term "justification," that divine act, instantaneous and complete, by which sin is pardoned. If we distinguish the entire work of redemption into two parts, a negative and a positive, justification in the Pauline and in the Reformed signification would include the former and would

include nothing more. Justification is the negative acquittal from condemnation, and not in the least the positive infusion of righteousness, or production of holiness. This positive element, the Reformers were careful to teach, invariably accompanies the negative; but they were equally careful to teach that it is not identical with it. The forgiveness of sin is distinct and different from the sanctification of the heart. It is an antecedent which is always followed, indeed, by its consequent; but this does not render the consequent a substitute for the antecedent, or one and the same thing with it. But the Council of Trent resolved justification into sanctification, and in the place of a gratuitous justification and remission of sins through the expiation of the Redeemer, substituted the most subtle form of the doctrine of justification by works that has yet appeared, or that can appear. For the doctors of Trent do not teach, in their canonical statements, that man is justified and accepted at the bar of justice by his external acts of obedience to the moral or the ecclesiastical law. This is, indeed, the doctrine that prevails in the common practice of the Papal Church, but it is not the form in which it appears in the Tridentine canons. According to these, man is justified by an inward and spiritual act which is denominated the act of faith; by a truly divine and holy habit or principle infused by the gracious working of the Holy Spirit. The ground of the sinner's justification is thus a divine and a gracious one. God works in the sinful soul to will and to do, and by making it inherently just justifies it. And all this is accomplished through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ; so that, in justification there is a combination of the objective work of Christ with the subjective character of the believer. This statement is the more subtle, because it distinctly refers the infused grace or holiness to God as the author, and thereby seems to preclude the notion of self-righteousness. But it is fundamentally erroneous, because this infused righteousness, or holiness of heart, upon which remission of sins rests in part, is not piacular. It has in it nothing of the nature of a satisfaction to justice. So far forth, therefore, as infused grace in the heart is made a ground and procuring cause of the pardon of sin, the judicial aspects and relations of sin are overlooked, and man is received into the Divine

favor without any true and proper expiation of his guilt. The Papal theory of justification, consequently, stands upon the same level in the last analysis with the Socinian, or with any theory that denies the necessity of a satisfaction of justice.

The following extracts from the Canones of the Council of Trent enunciate the Roman Catholic soteriology. "Justification is not the mere remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renovation of the inward man through the voluntary reception of grace and gifts of grace; whereby an unjust man becomes just, the enemy a friend, so that he may be an heir according to the hope of eternal life ... The only formal cause of justification is the justice (justitia) of God, not that by which he himself is just, but that by which he makes us just,—that namely by which we are gratuitously renewed by him in the spirit of our minds, and are not only reputed, but really are and are denominated just, receiving justice into ourselves each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Spirit imparts to each as He pleases, and, also, according to each one's own disposition and co-operation ... When the Apostle asserts that man is justified by faith and gratuitously, his language is to be understood in that sense which the constant agreement of the Catholic Church has affixed to it; in such a manner, namely, as that we are said to be justified by faith, because faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification [i.e. of all virtue], without which it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). And we are said to be justified gratuitously, because none of those things which precede justification, whether faith or works, merits the grace itself of justification." These citations from the Canons of the Council of Trent are sufficient to show that the theologians there assembled regarded justification as a renewing and sanctifying act on the part of God, and not a declarative one. It is not that Divine act whereby sin is pardoned, but whereby sin is purged.

But that the doctrine of gratuitous remission of sin upon the sole ground of Christ's satisfaction was thrown out of the Tridentine theory of justification, is yet more apparent from the anathematizing



clauses which were added to explain and guard the so-called catholic faith. "If any one shall say that the sinner is justified by faith alone, in the sense that nothing else is required which may co-operate towards the attainment of the grace of justification, and that the sinner does not need to be prepared and disposed [for the reception of the grace of justification], by the motion of his own will: let him be accursed.... If any one shall say, that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the righteousness of Christ, or by the sole remission of sin, to the exclusion of that grace and charity which is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and which inheres in them, or shall say that the grace whereby we are justified is merely and only the favor of God: let him be accursed. If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing but confidence in the divine mercy remitting sin on account of Christ, or that this faith is the sole thing by which we are justified: let him be accursed." It will be perceived from these extracts, that the Tridentine theologian regarded "justification" as prospective and not retrospective, in its essential nature. It is not the forgiveness of "sins that are past," but the cure and prevention of sins that are present and future. The element of guilt is lost sight of, and the piacular work of Christ is lost sight of with it; and the whole work of redemption is interpreted to be merely a method of purification. Thus the Tridentine theory implies, logically, that sin is not guilt, but only disease and pollution. Furthermore, according to the Papal theory, justification is not instantaneous but successive. It is not a single and complete act upon the part of God, but a gradual process in the soul of man. For it is founded upon that inward holiness or love which has been infused by divine grace. But this advances from one degree to another, never being perfect in this life, and never standing still. The consciousness of being justified before God, even if it could rest upon such an imperfect foundation at all, must fluctuate with all the changes in the internal experience. And as matter of fact, the Council of Trent declares that a man cannot be certain of being justified, and condemns those who affirm such certainty in the following terms: "Although it is necessary to believe that no sin is, or ever has been, remitted except gratuitously by the Divine mercy on account of Christ, yet no one who affirms with

confidence and certainty (jactat) that his sins are remitted, and who rests in this confidence alone, is to be assured of remission." According to the Papal soteriology, the assurance of the remission of sins, and of acceptance at the bar of God, must rest upon the degree of holiness that has been infused, and not simply and solely upon Christ's oblation for sin. Hence it cannot in this life attain to certainty, because the inward holiness never in this life attains to perfection. Justification is not instantaneous and complete, but gradual and incomplete, because the infused righteousness out of which it issues is imperfect. This is distinctly taught in the tenth chapter of the "decree" concerning Justification. "Therefore being thus justified, and made friends of God and members of his household, and going from strength to strength, they are renewed, as the Apostle teaches, day by day: that is to say, by mortifying their fleshly members, and yielding them as instruments of righteousness unto sanctification, through the observance of the commands of God and the church, their righteousness itself being accepted through the grace of Christ, and their faith co-operating with their good works, they grow [in holiness], and are justified more and more. This increase of justification (justitiae), the Holy Church seeks when she prays: 'Give unto us, O Lord, increase of faith, hope, and charity.' " By these positions of the Council of Trent, the effect of justification is substituted for the cause. That inward holiness which succeeds the forgiveness of sins is made to take the place of the atoning death and the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer. The ground of justification is thus a personal and subjective one. It is, consequently, imperfect and incomplete, and must be supplemented by greater measures of holiness and attainments in piety, and also by the external penances and good works required by the Church. "If any one shall assert," says the 24th Canon concerning Justification, "that the righteousness received [in justification] is not preserved and also increased before God by good works; but that good works are only the fruit and signs of a justification already attained, and not the cause of an increase of justification: let him be accursed."

### **3. Soteriology of Bellarmin**

The theory enunciated at Trent received a further expansion and defence from Roman Catholic theologians. Of these, the most distinguished was Robert Bellarmine, whose *Disputationes*, published in 1581, constitute the most elaborate explication and defence that has yet been made of the Papal Dogmatics. The theory of justification as stated in detail by the expounders of the Decrees and Canons of Trent embraces the following particulars. Justification is two-fold, and is denominated the "first" and "second." The first justification is the infusion or communication of an inherent principle or habit (*habitus*) of grace or charity; the second justification is the good works, or right life, that results from this. By the first justification original sin is extinguished, and the habits of sin are expelled. This justification is obtained by the exercise of faith, of which the meritorious and procuring cause is the obedience and satisfaction of Christ. But at this point, the Romish theory introduces a distinction that wholly neutralizes the evangelical element introduced by this latter statement. This distinction is one borrowed from the later Schoolmen, particularly Thomas Aquinas,—the distinction, viz., between *meritum ex condigno*, and *meritum ex congruo*, or merit from desert, and merit from fitness. This distinction is thus defined by Aquinas, with his usual acuteness and clearness. "A meritorious work of man may be considered in two aspects; first, as proceeding from the free will of man, and secondly, as proceeding from the grace of the Holy Spirit. If it be considered from the first point of view, there can be in it no merit of condignity or absolute desert; because of the inequality between man and God, whereby it is impossible for the creature to bring the Creator under absolute obligations. But if it be considered from the second point of view, as proceeding from the influence of the Holy Spirit, the work of man may have the merit of congruity or fitness; because it is fitting that God should reward his own grace as a thing excellent in itself." This distinction between two species of merit is connected, in the Tridentine theory of justification, with the doctrine of a "preparation" and predisposition for justification, in such a manner that although the name of merit is warily avoided, the thing itself is not. Man is prepared for justification, i.e. for the infusion of righteousness, by the common

operations of his mind under common or prevenient grace. But this grace of preparation merits more grace, not by virtue of the merit of condignity indeed, but of congruity. And so onward, step by step, to the very end of the process of justification. It is easy to see how this subtle distinction, when coupled with the doctrine of an antecedent preparation, nullifies all the force of the statement that the obedience and satisfaction of Christ is the meritorious cause of a sinner's justification. For this antecedent preparation, as defined by the Canons of the Council, amounts to nothing more than a historical faith, or an assent to divine revelation.<sup>2</sup> But this is called a species of believing, which, upon the principle of congruity or fitness, deserves more grace. And this increase or fresh accession of grace is a *gratia gratum faciens*,—that is, an infused grace that expels the habit of sin, and thus justifies or makes acceptable to God. So that justification in the last analysis takes its start from the ordinary operations of the human mind, under the common influences of God's Spirit and Providence, and ends with being an inward and infused righteousness, upon the ground of which the ungodly is set in right relations to God.

The difference between the Papal and the Protestant soteriology is enunciated by Baur with his usual strength and discrimination, in the following terms. "The Protestant doctrine of justification starts from the most profound consciousness of sin as guilt. Man is justified, subjectively, through the confident assurance that his sins are forgiven, and this assurance is through the act of faith, which is a purely receptive act; and he is justified, objectively, through a purely declarative act of God, which has reference to him as an individual. In both its subjective and its objective aspect, justification is consequently the imputation, merely, and not the infusion, of the righteousness of Christ, and is instantaneous and complete. The great difference between this view and the Papal theory of justification lies in the fact, that the Papal theory is not occupied with the negative side of the subject, viz.: the pacification of the conscience in respect to a guilt that lies in the past, but rather with the positive side, viz.: the imparting of a new principle and habit of

sanctification. The principle of justification, in the Tridentine soteriology, is not faith, in the carefully discriminated and deep sense of the Protestant doctrine of justifying faith,—in reality it is not faith in any sense, but is love,—and justification is not a mere instantaneous and complete declaration of being righteous, but a making righteous by the infused grace of the Holy Ghost, which is successive and gradual in its nature."

# CHAPTER IV:

## SOTERIOLOGY OF THE REFORMERS

### 1. Forerunners of the Reformation

IN the age immediately preceding the century of the Reformation, we have had occasion to notice a few men who were forerunners of that great movement. They were minds that had become weary of the fruitless dialectics into which Scholasticism had degenerated, and that craved a warmer and more vital Christianity than was prevailing in the great mass of the Church. We should naturally expect to meet with evangelical views of the Atonement in the writings of these men, and the expectation is not disappointed.

Wickliffe († 1404?) the English Reformer presents the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction with distinctness, though in connection with some speculations respecting the nature of sin that are somewhat peculiar. But the most remarkable of these early reformers, so far as the doctrine of atonement is concerned, is John Wessel († 1489), a man whom Hagenbach describes in the following terms: "Trained up in Scholasticism, he announced the coming end of Scholasticism, insisted upon Scripture as the sole foundation of belief, upon faith without works as the ground of justification, and upon an inward and vital piety in the heart." So much has this remarkable man in common with the great German reformer, that Ullmann has entitled his interesting biography of him: "John Wessel, a forerunner of Luther." Wessel is Lutheran indeed, in his conceptions and statements of the doctrine of atonement. "It is," he says, "the greatest of wonders that the very same divine justice which is armed with an eternal law of threatening and condemnation towards the transgressor, should in the day and hour of judgment not only hold back the sword of vengeance, and absolve from the punishment threatened, but should raise the criminal to heights of glory and

happiness. Who does not wonder to see the truthfulness of threatenings converted into the truthfulness of promises, so that strict truth is kept on both sides, and in both aspects? These two contradictions are reconciled in the Lamb of God, the infinite atonement of Christ. Christ, himself God, himself the priest, himself the sacrifice, has made satisfaction to himself, for himself, and of himself. In Christ we behold not only a reconciled but a reconciling deity; an incarnate God who, in the sinner's place, and for the sinner's salvation, furnishes what his own attributes of holiness and justice require."

## **2. The Protestant and Anselmic Soteriologies Compared**

The Reformation of the Church in the 16th century begins and ends in the doctrine whose history we are investigating. So much has been written, and so much is known, concerning the general aspects of the doctrine of atonement during this era in Church History, that we shall confine our examination to what was special and peculiar in the soteriology of the Reformers.

We have seen that the dogmatic substance of the Protestant theory may be traced from the beginning. The constituent elements are, it is true, much more apparent in some theories and ages, than in others; but the doctrine itself of vicarious satisfaction cannot be said to be the discovery of any one age. Having a Biblical origin, and finding all its data and grounds in the revealed word, we trace its onward flow from this fountain through the centuries, sometimes visible in a broad and gleaming current, and sometimes running like a subterranean river silent and unseen in the hearts and minds of a smaller number chosen by Providence to keep alive the apostolic faith, and to preserve unbroken the line of the invisible and true Church, even though the external continuity were interrupted and broken. Men like Anselm and Wessel prepare us for men like Luther and Calvin; and in taking up the thread of our narrative we proceed to a comparison of the Anselmic with the Protestant construction of the doctrine of atonement.

1. There is a difference between them, but this difference is formal and not material. The Anselmic view is predominantly objective in its character. Sin is contemplated in its relations to the being and attributes of God, and consequently the atonement is viewed in the same reference chiefly. This is the excellence of the theory, and in this consists its validity before the bar of reason and science. The eternal and necessary grounds of Christ's work, as they exist in the nature of Deity and in the constitution of the moral universe, are clearly exhibited, and thus the whole domain of soteriology is made to rest upon the metaphysical and universal principles of reason and justice. The soteriology of the Reformation, while adopting with equal heartiness this objective view of the Anselmic theory, unites with it in a greater degree than did this latter, the subjective element of faith. The attention of the theologian in the latter part of the Scholastic period, as we have seen in the sketch of Aquinas, had been directed to the mode in which the sinner comes into possession of that atoning work by which sin is expiated; but this point did not engage the thoughts of Anselm to any very great extent. Aquinas solved the difficulty by the doctrine of the *unio mystica*; but this, with him, possessed too much of a sacramental and magical quality, and was disjoined from the principle of intelligent belief. One of the first characteristics of the Protestant view of the atonement that strikes the attention is the part which the principle of faith plays in all the discussions. The attention is now turned to that act in man by which the act and work of God is appropriated. This was a natural consequence of the change that was taking place in the general religious views of Christendom. The mind was not satisfied with an objective and outward salvation, however valid and reliable it might be. It desired a consciousness of being saved. It craved an experience of salvation. The Protestant mind could not rest in the Church; neither could it pretend to rest in an atonement that was unappropriated. The objective work of Christ on Calvary must become the subjective experience and rejoicing of the soul itself. If we may, in this connection, employ the simple and affecting phraseology of the dying "Young Cottager," we may say that Protestantism reposes upon "Christ there and Christ here," Christ on



the mediatorial throne, and Christ in the believing heart,—that it unites in a living synthesis the objective atonement with the subjective faith in it.

While, however, the principle and act of faith occupies such a prominent place in the soteriology of the Reformation, we should not fail to notice that it is never represented as a procuring cause of justification. It is only the instrumental cause. Protestantism was exceedingly careful to distinguish justification from legal righteousness on the one hand, and from sanctification by grace on the other. It could not, consequently, concede to any species of human agency, however excellent, a piacular and atoning efficacy. Hence, we find none of that supplementing or perfecting of the work of Christ, by the work of the creature, which we noticed in the Papal soteriology. And this applies to the highest of acts, the act of faith itself. Faith itself, though the gift and the work of God, does not justify, speaking accurately, but merely accepts that which does justify. A few extracts from the principal symbols of the Reformation will set this in a clear light. The Formula Concordiae, a Lutheran creed drawn up to explain more fully the views of the Augsburg Confession and guard them against misapprehension, thus defines the term "justification." "The word justification signifies to pronounce just, to absolve from the eternal punishment of sin, on account of the satisfaction of Christ... Sometimes the word regeneration is used for the word justification; in this case, it is necessary to explain carefully, lest the renovation which follows justification should be confounded with justification.... The order and distinction between faith and good works, between justification and renovation, or sanctification, should be carefully observed. For good works do not precede faith, and sanctification does not precede justification. But in the instance of conversion by the Holy Spirit, faith is first enkindled by hearing the gospel promise of pardon. This faith then apprehends and appropriates the grace of God in Christ; by which faith, the man (persona) is justified. But when the man is justified (i.e. declared free from condemnation) then he is renovated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and then from this renovation and

sanctification the fruits, that is the good works, follow spontaneously. Neither, [though thus distinguished from each other, and set in a series] can these parts of salvation be separated from each other in actual experience, as if, e.g., true faith in Christ's atonement could stand for a while in conjunction with an unrenewed will; but in the order of causes and effects, of antecedents and consequents, they are so distributed. For, as Luther says, 'faith and works are inseparably connected; but it is faith alone and without works that appropriates the atonement, and thereby justifies, and yet faith does not remain alone, [but acts itself out, and thus produces works].' " The *Confessio Belgica*, a Calvinistic creed, thus defines the doctrine of justification. "We believe that the Holy Spirit kindles true faith in our hearts, which faith embraces Jesus Christ with all his merits, makes him its own, and peculiar (*proprium*) to itself, and seeks nothing further beyond him. Hence we rightly say with Paul, that we are justified by faith alone, or by faith without works. At the same time, if we speak with strict accuracy, we by no means understand that our act of faith is that which justifies us [i.e. obtains for us the remission of sin], but that the act of faith is the instrument by which we seize hold of the atonement of Christ, which alone satisfies the law and thereby obtains the remission of sin."

In this way, the Protestant soteriology was an advance upon the Anselmic, by being more comprehensive and complete. Agreeing with it perfectly so far as the objective work of Christ is concerned, it made further and fuller statements respecting the mode in which the external becomes internal, in the experience of the individual. It also differed from the Anselmic, in respect to a secondary topic, in rejecting the notion of Anselm that the number of the saved exactly equals the number of the fallen angels, and that redemption was intended to keep the number of pure and holy spirits good.

2. A second difference between the Anselmic and the Protestant soteriology is seen in the formal distinction of Christ's work into his active and his passive righteousness. By his passive righteousness is meant his expiatory sufferings, by which he satisfied the claims of

justice, and by his active righteousness is meant his obedience to the law as a rule of life and conduct. It was contended by those who made this distinction, that the purpose of Christ as the vicarious substitute was to meet the entire demands of the law for the sinner. But the law requires present and perfect obedience, as well as satisfaction for past disobedience. The law is not completely fulfilled by the endurance of penalty only. It must also be obeyed. Christ both endured the penalty due to man for disobedience, and perfectly obeyed the law for him; so that he was a vicarious substitute in reference to both the precept and the penalty of the law. By his active obedience he obeyed the law; and by his passive obedience he endured the penalty. In this way his vicarious work is complete. Some writers contend that the distinction between the active and passive righteousness can be traced in the Patristic soteriology, and would find it wherever they find a substantially correct view of the atonement. But this is undoubtedly an extreme statement that cannot be made good. The utmost that can be claimed is, that there are passages in the Fathers, in which the beginnings of such a distinction may perhaps be detected by logical implication, but the distinction itself is nowhere formally made in the Patristic soteriology. The only writer in whom it appears with any distinctness previous to the Reformation is Aquinas, whose distinction between *satisfactio* and *meritum* has been noticed. Up to the time of the Reformation, the Christian mind was engaged with a prominence that amounted to exclusiveness with the question: "How is the soul to be delivered from condemnation?" The further question: "How is the soul to acquire a title to eternal life?" was not answered, and probably did not come much into the mind. The earliest symbol of the Reformation does not make the distinction in question. The Augsburg Confession, and the Apology drawn up in defence of it (A.D. 1530), treat only of the expiation of guilt, and Christ's passive or atoning righteousness. The larger and smaller Catechisms of Luther do the same. The Formula Concordiae, drawn up in 1576, is the only Lutheran symbol in which the distinction in question appears. Its statement is as follows: "That righteousness which is imputed to faith, or to the believer, of mere grace, is the obedience,

suffering, and resurrection of Christ, by which he satisfied the law for us, and expiated our sins. For since Christ was not only man, but truly God and man in one undivided person, he was no more subject to the law than he was to suffering and death [i.e. if his Person, merely, be taken into account, without any reference to his vicarious relations], because he was the divine and eternal Lord of the law. Hence, not only that obedience to God his Father which he exhibited in his passion and death, but also that obedience which he exhibited in voluntarily subjecting himself to the law and fulfilling it for our sakes is imputed to us for righteousness, so that God, on account of the total obedience which Christ accomplished (*praestitit*) for our sake before his heavenly Father, both in acting and in suffering, in life and in death, may remit our sins to us, regard us as holy and righteous, and give us eternal felicity." Here, Christ's fulfilment of the law is represented as the ground and procuring cause of eternal blessedness for the believer.

In the Reformed or Calvinistic symbols, we find the fact to be similar. The earlier confessions do not make the distinction, while the later do. The Second Helvetic Confession, drawn up by Bullinger in 1564, the most authoritative of the Reformed symbols, contains only a hint of the doctrine of the active righteousness, if indeed it contain one at all. The phraseology is as follows: "By his passion or death, and thus by everything which he did and performed for our sakes by his advent in the flesh, our Lord reconciled the celestial Father to all believers, expiated sin, conquered death, broke the power of condemnation and of hell, and by his resurrection from the dead brought back and restored life and immortality. For he is our righteousness, life, and resurrection, in fine the fullness and absolution of all believers, as well as their most abundant safety and sufficiency." The Heidelberg Catechism, composed in 1562, by Olevianus and Ursinus, seems to regard the holiness and obedience of Christ as a part of the atonement for sin which he made. The answer to the 36th question runs as follows: "Because he is our Mediator, and by his innocence and perfect holiness covers my sin, in which I was conceived, that it may not come into the view of God."

The Formula Consensus, drawn up by Heidegger and Turretine in 1675, and adopted by the Swiss Churches, expressly distinguishes between the active and passive righteousness of Christ; and it, moreover, reckons the former in with the latter as constituting part of the entire work of satisfaction, in opposition to the views of Piscatorius, who contended that the holiness of Christ does not justify in the forensic and objective sense, but only as it becomes the inward principle of the soul,—adopting substantially the Tridentine theory of justification by sanctification. The statement of the Consensus is as follows. "Christ rendered satisfaction to God the Father, by the obedience of his death, in the place of the elect, in such sense that the entire obedience which he rendered to the law through the whole course of his life, whether actively or passively, ought to be reckoned into the account of his vicarious righteousness and obedience."

### **3. Recapitulatory Survey**

We have thus traced the history of this cardinal truth of Christianity down to the Reformation,—a point at which it received its fullest expansion, and became entirely free from those foreign elements which we have seen mixing with it in its preceding history. The doctrine was now that of pure and complete satisfaction of law. The claims of Satan, which so interfered with the full exhibition of the truth in the Ancient Church, exerted no influence upon the Protestant construction of the doctrine. The Atonement was referred solely to the divine attribute of justice, and was held to be absolutely necessary,—though the Scholastic controversy respecting relative and absolute necessity was not revived. Again, that vitiating element in the Tridentine soteriology,—the combination of human works, either internal or external, in greater or in less degree, with that of Christ, in making up the sum of satisfaction,—was now entirely purged out. The human soul was delivered from condemnation, solely by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God. Faith itself does not justify, but only accepts and appropriates that satisfaction of law made by Christ which completely justifies, alone and of itself.

# **CHAPTER V:**

## **THE GROTIAN SOTERIOLOGY**

### **1. Preliminary Statements**

WE have seen that the assertion of a relative necessity, only, for the satisfaction of Christ was made in its most unqualified form, and drawn out to its last consequence, by Duns Scotus in his controversy with the followers of Aquinas. He laid down the proposition that "every created oblation or offering is worth what God is pleased to accept it for, and no more." Upon this proposition, he founded the theory of "acceptilation." The term *acceptilatio*, or *accepti latio*, is borrowed from the Roman law. In the *Pandects* of Justinian, it is defined to be "an acquittance from obligation, by word of mouth, of a debtor by a creditor;" and in the *Institutes* of Justinian, it is called "an imaginary payment." Primarily, the term does not belong to the province of criminal, but of commercial law. A creditor is an absolute owner of his own property, and if he pleases to discharge his debtor from his obligation to pay the debt which he owes him, he can do so by a word without any literal payment being made. He can call the debt paid, and it is paid. Or he can cancel the entire debt upon the payment of a part only. This arbitrary and optional acceptance of nothing for something, or of a part for the whole of a debt, is "acceptilation." The term *acceptilatio*, when transferred as it was by Scotus to the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, signifies that God accepts this satisfaction, not because a strictly infinite value belongs to the sufferings of the God-Man (for Scotus denied this), but because, in his infinite benevolence, he is willing to content himself with a satisfaction that is not strictly infinite. Hence, in Scotus's theory, the atonement of Christ is sufficient to satisfy the claims of

law because God is willing to regard it as such, although in strict fact it is insufficient. This is justified upon the principle which Scotus lays down, that any oblation is worth what the Deity is willing to rate it at. Its value is not intrinsic and real, but acquired and nominal.

The controversy between the Thomists and Scotists, upon this and kindred points, was continued down to the Reformation, and has never been settled to this day within the Romish Church. At the time of the Reformation, we have seen that both Lutheran and Calvinistic theologians adopted the Anselmic theory of a strict satisfaction. This soteriology enters into all the Lutheran and Calvinistic symbols of the continent, and into the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregational symbols of England and America. So far, therefore, as the principal Protestant creeds are concerned, the theory of an absolute necessity of atonement, and a strict satisfaction of justice by the suffering of Christ, is the prevalent one. But the theory of a relative necessity was revived in the 17th century, and stated in an elaborate manner, by the distinguished scholar and jurist Hugo Grotius († 1645). It was also adopted and maintained by the leaders of the Arminian party, Episcopius, Limborch, Curcellaeus, and constituted one of the distinctive points of difference between their soteriology, and that of the Reformers. As the Grotian theory is the best form in which the doctrine of a relative necessity of the atonement has been stated, and as it has exerted considerable influence upon the history of this doctrine during the last two centuries, it merits a particular examination.

## **2. Grotian idea of law and penalty**

The soteriology of Grotius is founded upon his idea of law and punishment, and the relation which these sustain to God. Law, according to Grotius, is a positive statute or enactment. "It is not," he says, "something inward in God, or in the Divine will and nature, but is only the effect of his will" (*voluntatis quidam effectus*). Law, therefore, is a mere product on the part of God, by which he himself is not bound, because it is his own work. As the enactor of a positive

statute, he has the same power to alter it, or to abrogate it, which the law-making power among men possesses. The penalty of law, consequently, is likewise a positive, and not a natural and necessary arrangement. It does not spring inevitably and naturally out of the very nature of law, and the very being of God, but is attached to the statute by a positive decision of the Deity,—which decision is optional and mutable. Hence, both law itself, and the penalty of law, in Grotius's view, may be modified in part, or even abolished altogether by an act of the Governor of the universe, because the workman has plenary power over his work. The following extracts from the writings of Grotius exhibit his opinions with sufficient clearness, "All positive laws," (and Grotius has mentioned the law of Eden as such,) says Grotius, "are relaxable. Those who fear that if we concede this we do an injury to God, because we thereby represent him as mutable, are much deceived. For law is not something internal in God, or in the will itself of God, but it is a particular effect or product of his will. But that the effects or products of the Divine will are mutable is very certain. Moreover, in promulgating a positive law which he might wish to relax at some future time, God does not exhibit any fickleness of will. For God seriously indicated that he desired that his law should be valid and obligatory, while yet at the same time he reserved the right of relaxing it, if he saw fit, because this right pertains to a positive law from the very nature of the case, and cannot be abdicated by the Deity. Nay more, the Deity does not abdicate the right of even abrogating law altogether, as is apparent from the instance of the ceremonial law ... It is objected to this view, that it is naturally just that the guilty should be punished with such a punishment as corresponds to their crime, and therefore that punishment is not a matter of optional choice, neither is it relaxable. In answer to this objection, it is to be noticed that it does not always follow that injustice is done when justice is not done. For as it does not follow that if a king is to be called generous who has given a thousand talents to some one, he is therefore to be called ungenerous if he has not given it, so it is not a universal truth that if a thing may be done with justice, it cannot therefore be omitted without injustice. As in physics, so in morals, a thing may be called 'natural and



necessary' in a strict sense (*proprie*), and in a less strict sense (*minus proprie*). In physics, that is strictly natural and necessary which belongs to the very essence of a thing,—as, for example, for a sentient creature to have sensation; and that is less strictly natural which is as it were fitted and accommodated to a thing,—as, for example, for a man to use his right hand. In like manner, there are in morals certain things which are strictly natural and necessary, which follow necessarily from the relation of the things themselves to rational natures,—as, for example, that perjury is unlawful; and there are other things which are less strictly natural and necessary,—as, for example, that the son should succeed the father [in the government]. That, therefore, he who sins deserves to be punished, and is therefore punishable, follows from the very relation of sin and the sinner to a superior power, and is strictly natural and necessary. But that any and every sinner be punished with such a punishment as corresponds with his guilt is not absolutely (*simpliciter*) and universally necessary; neither is it strictly natural, but only fitted and accommodated to nature (*sed naturae satis conveniens*). Whence it follows, that nothing prevents the relaxing of the law which orders this punishment. There is no mark or sign of irrevocability in the law, in the case of which we are speaking, neither is the law accompanied with a promise; therefore, neither of these two things stands in the way of a relaxation of the law. Furthermore, a threat to punish is not like a promise to reward. For from the promise to reward, there accrues a certain right or claim on the part of him to whom the promise is made; but the threat of punishment only declares the transgressor's desert of penalty, and the right to punish on the part of him who threatens. Neither is there any reason to fear lest God's veracity should suffer in case he does not fulfil all his threatenings. For all threatenings, excepting those to which the token of irrevocability attaches, are to be understood as in their very nature diminishing nothing from the right of the author to relax them, if he shall think proper ... At the same time, there are reasons that dissuade from the exercise of this right. These may arise from the nature of law in the abstract, or from the nature of a particular law. It is common to all laws, that in relaxing them something seems to be

worn away from their authority. It is peculiar to this law [i.e. the moral law given in Eden], that although it is not characterized by an inflexible rectitude as we have remarked, it is yet very consonant to the nature and order of things. From which it follows, not indeed that this law is never to be relaxed, but that it is not to be relaxed with facility, or for a slight cause. And the all-wise Legislator had a most weighty cause for relaxing this law, in the fact that the human race had lapsed into sin. For if all mankind had been given over to eternal death, as transgressors, two most beautiful things would have utterly perished out of the universe,—reverence and religion towards God, on the part of man, and the exhibition of a wonderful benevolence towards man, on the part of God. But in relaxing the law, God not only followed the most weighty reasons for so doing, but also adopted a peculiar and singular mode of relaxing it, concerning which we shall speak hereafter."

This idea of the Divine law as a positive enactment, Grotius borrowed from the province of human jurisprudence. As the earthly law-making power, be it despotic or republican, promulgates a statute, and constitutes a certain act, which is otherwise innocent, criminal by a positive enactment forbidding it, so does the heavenly law-giver. The law-maker in both instances, consequently, is higher than the law, because the law is the effect or product of his volition. By this idea and definition of law, Grotius reduces everything back to the arbitrary and optional will of God, and thus differs from Anselm and the Reformers. According to them, the Divine will cannot be separated from the Divine nature, in this manner. God's law is not positive and arbitrary but natural and necessary, because it flows out of his essential being. The Divine will is the executive of the Divine essence. Law, therefore, is not the effect or figment of mere and isolated will, but of will in immutable harmony with truth and right. Both law and penalty, consequently, in the theory of the Reformers are the inevitable and inexorable efflux of the Divine Essence, and contain nothing of an optional or mutable nature. They can no more be "relaxed," or waived, than the attributes of omnipotence or omniscience can be. They are not below the Deity, as a positive

statute respecting banking, or commerce, is below the law-making power, but they are the pure and necessary issue of the principles of justice in the Divine Mind. Neither is law above the Deity. For it is the Divine Nature itself, proclaiming and manifesting itself throughout the universe. It, therefore, possesses the same necessary, natural, and immutable qualities that the Divine Essence itself possesses, and is incapable of "relaxation."

### **3. Grotian theory of relaxation and substitution**

Having laid down this definition of law and penalty, and stated the relation which God sustains to both, Grotius next proceeds to the deduction upon which he builds his theory of satisfaction, viz.: that it is competent for God to relax the claims of the law, and save the transgressor. The notion of relaxation (*relaxatio*), and not satisfaction, of law shapes the whole scheme of Grotius. The principal points, and the course of thought in it are as follows.

Man, on account of sin, deserves to be punished with eternal death, in accordance with the divine statute and penalty announced in Gen. 2:17. But this statute, as matter of fact, is not executed, for believers are free from eternal death and condemnation. At the same time there is no abrogation of the law, because we see it executed upon unbelievers. The fact then is, that between the execution of the law at the one extreme, and the entire and formal abrogation of the law at the other, there comes in a medium course of procedure on the part of the Lawgiver. This middle course, Grotius denominates a "tempering" (*temperamentum*) of the law, a "relaxing" (*relaxatio*) of its claims, "so that although the law still continues to exist, its rigorous and exact obligatoriness is dispensed with, in reference to a certain class of persons," viz. believers. Such a tempering or relaxation can occur, because that statute in Gen. 2:17 belongs to the class of positive laws, which are relaxable (*relaxabiles*) at the pleasure of the legislator. And besides this, it is neither necessary nor required by justice, that the sinner should suffer a punishment exactly correspondent to his transgression, but only that he be punished.

Relaxation of law then is possible. This relaxation consists in merely dispensing with the penalty,—the law as a precept or rule of duty is untouched and unrelaxed.

But if these positions are correct, and there is nothing in the being and attributes of God that necessitates the strict and exact infliction of a threatened penalty,—if God by an act of will can relax, and even abrogate, a positive enactment of his own, then why does he not do it merely and simply? Why the sufferings of Jesus Christ? Why the relaxation in and by an atonement? In answering this question, Grotius gives the remainder of his scheme.—Although the Deity can remit the entire penalty without any satisfaction or penal infliction so far as his own inward nature is concerned, he cannot prudently do so, so far as the created universe is concerned. God does not exist in the solitude of his own eternity; if he did, he might dispense with an atonement, and relax or abrogate law by a mere act of will. He has called a creation into existence, and towards that creation he sustains the relation of Ruler and Governor. The necessities and requirements of the created universe render it unsafe to exercise his power and right to remit the penalty of law without any satisfaction of any kind. On the ground, therefore, that the interests of the creature need it, and not on the ground that the attributes of the Creator require it, must there be an atonement in order to remission. God possesses the right to relax and even to abrogate the penalty of law; but this is prejudicial to the creature. Hence the relaxation of law must be accompanied with a provision that shall prevent the evil consequences of such a procedure. So many and so great sins cannot be remitted with safety to the interests of creation, unless God at the same time give some kind of expression to his detestation of sin. The sufferings and death of the Son of God are an exemplary exhibition of God's hatred of moral evil, in connection with which it is safe and prudent to remit that penalty, which so far as God and the Divine attributes are concerned, might have been remitted without it.

The idea of "satisfaction" in the scheme of Grotius is thus a very different one from that of Anselm and the Reformers, and a

comparison of the two will throw light upon both. According to Anselm, vicarious satisfaction is the substitution of a strict equivalent for the penalty due to man. The sufferings and death of God incarnate are equal in dignity and value to the endless sufferings of a race of creatures. In Anselm's view, there can be no relaxation of law, because it flows from the divine nature itself, and therefore "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The vicarious satisfaction of law in the Anselmic theory, consequently, denotes the substitution of an exact and literal equivalent,—as when a debt of one hundred dollars in silver is paid with one hundred dollars in gold. That which is substituted is of literally equal value, though not identical in kind. The sufferings of Christ are not identical with those of the sinner,—for the very idea of substituted sufferings excludes identity, even if it were possible for the God-Man to suffer remorse,—but they are of strictly equal value, and hence are a literal and exact satisfaction; so that in the substitution there is not the slightest relaxation or waiving of the claims of justice, any more than there is in the above-mentioned instance in which a loan of silver is exactly and literally repaid in gold.

According to Grotius on the other hand, vicarious satisfaction is not a strict equivalent, but an accepted and nominal equivalent. It is not a *quid pro quo*, which in and of itself extinguishes legal claims, but an *aliud pro quo*, which prevents the evil consequences of a relaxation of legal claims. In the Grotian theory, whenever a guilty person is released by the substituted sufferings of another, it is not upon the ground of the intrinsic sufficiency of these sufferings, but because of their being accepted as sufficient by the law-making power. "It is necessary," says Grotius, "that an act of the ruler should come in, in order that the punishment (*poena*) of one person should obtain the deliverance of another. For the law requires, that he who committed the fault should receive the punishment. Now, this act of the ruler, so far as it relates to the law, is relaxation, but so far as it relates to the criminal is remission." This "interfering act," Grotius extends to the value of the thing substituted, and not merely to the principle of

substitution. For the Anselmic theory concedes that the substitution of penalty must occur by an "interfering act" of the Supreme Judge; but it differs from the Grotian, in that it maintains that when the principle of vicariousness has been adopted, it then becomes necessary that that which is substituted should be a literal and not a nominal equivalent. According to Grotius, the "interfering act" of the Supreme Judge not only establishes the principle of vicariousness, but also imparts to that which is offered in the place of the sinner's punishment a nominal and accepted value, by which, though intrinsically insufficient, it becomes a sufficient compensation or satisfaction.

Grotius's idea of satisfaction appears yet more clearly in what he says in reply to an objection of Socinus. Socinus urged against the theory of a strict satisfaction that it is incompatible with compassion,—that if the claims of justice are rigorously and completely satisfied, then there is no mercy. Grotius, instead of giving the reply which Anselm and the Reformers gave,—viz.: that it is God and not man who makes the satisfaction, and that God's mercy consists in satisfying justice in the sinner's place,—answers as follows: "What Socinus says is, indeed, not altogether destitute of truth; but it is true only in case the term 'satisfaction' is taken, contrary to its signification as a legal term, to denote the strict and complete payment (*solutio*) of all that is due. But when one takes the place of the debtor, and gives something different (*aliud*) from what is due, then there is a relaxation and remission." At this point, the difference between Grotius and Anselm is plainly apparent. Anselm maintains, that that which is substituted must be of strictly equal value with that for which it is substituted. The sufferings of Christ endured in the place of the sinner's sufferings strictly and completely satisfy the claims of law. They do not satisfy nominally and because God pleases to regard them as an equivalent; but they really are a full equivalent, and he accepts them because they are. Grotius, on the contrary, maintains, that that which is substituted need not be of strictly equal value with that for which it is substituted. God can "relax" or waive the full demands of justice, and by his arbitrary decision (*acceptilationem*)

constitute a partial equivalent a full and complete one. Hence, he explains 1 Cor. 6:20,—“ye are bought with a price,”—by, “*solutione aliqua liberati sumus*,” and defines the “ransom” spoken of in 1 Tim. 2:6, as a λύτρον or price of such a sort (tale λύτρον seu pretium) that the deliverer endures something similar to that which impends upon the guilty; and remarks that Christ has freed men from the penalty of eternal death, “*aliquid dando*.” This “*aliquid*,” he defines to be such a suffering of Christ as is a remedy for the evil consequences of relaxing the strict claims of law; but not such a suffering as is a strict and plenary satisfaction of all the claims of justice, rendering relaxation of law unnecessary, and having no evil consequences to be remedied. Grotius entitles his work, a defence of the doctrine of “satisfaction;” but it is rather a defence of the doctrine of “relaxation.” He combats the theory that the claims of justice are “satisfied” to their full extent, and upholds the theory that they are “waived” to a certain extent. The vicarious sufferings of Christ are a device by which to escape the ill effects of relaxing legal claims, and not a method of completely cancelling those claims. The demands of law, in accordance with Grotius's idea of law and of the power of the law-giver, are set aside, instead of being met. There is nothing in the Divine nature that prohibits this. And this power and right to relax the exact claims of justice enables God to accept a nominal for a real satisfaction,—to make the expression of his detestation of sin take the place of the strict infliction of the penalty of sin. This secures the welfare of the created universe, which is the only thing to be provided for.

We have spoken of the Grotian theory as the final statement of the doctrine of a relative satisfaction, and as the re-appearance of the Scotist doctrine of acceptilation. Yet Grotius disclaims this. “For acceptilation,” says Grotius, “denotes the act by which a creditor without any compensation at all, without any payment of any sort (*citra ullam solutionem*), absolutely extinguishes an indebtedness. Hence this conception has application only in civil law, and not at all in criminal. For, first, no one ever heard of any of the old writers who has denominated the remitting of punishment an ‘acceptilatio.’ An

act of acceptilation presupposes something that can be accepted. But in the case of punishment, the ruler merely executes an infliction, but receives nothing. Secondly, acceptilation is the opposite of every sort and kind of satisfaction. But Christ has offered a satisfaction of some sort; consequently the idea of acceptilation has no place in a theory of the atonement." In reply to this, it is to be observed that it is the principle involved in the notion of acceptilation, and not the mere term itself, which is the matter of importance. Scotus transferred the term from the commercial to the judicial province, when he taught that the Deity could accept a nominal satisfaction as a real one. In doing this, the Deity acts upon the same principle that the commercial creditor does, when he accepts an imaginary payment, or a partial payment, in lieu of a complete one. It is really an act of acceptilation, when God regards as an equivalent for the sufferings of man that which is not a strict equivalent for them, as it is when a creditor accepts a part of the debt as a complete payment. But this principle of a nominal and accepted value is confessedly the constituent principle in the Grotian soteriology. Grotius's definition of law as a positive enactment, of penalty as a positive and arbitrary matter, of the consequent power of the Divine legislator to relax or even abrogate the law and the penalty, and his denial that the sufferings of Christ are a strict equivalent,—all the elementary parts of his theory are so defined and put together, as to allow of that "interfering act" by which a nominal satisfaction may be accepted as a sufficient and a real one. The Grotian theory cannot, therefore, escape the charge of adopting Scotus's doctrine of acceptilation, by the remark that acceptilation pertains to the province of commercial law, while substituted penalty belongs to that of criminal law. The fact that within the province of soteriology it is judicial suffering that is exchanged, while within the province of trade and commerce it is money that is exchanged, does not at all affect the principle upon which the exchange is made. And if, in the former sphere, a kind of suffering that is not a strict legal equivalent is accepted as such by an arbitrary act of will, it is ethically, and in principle, precisely the same kind of transaction with that in which only a part of a pecuniary debt is accepted as full payment, by an act of will on the



part of the creditor, or, in the phrase of the Roman law, "by word of mouth."

#### **4. Critical estimate of the Grotian Soteriology**

The Grotian soteriology, it is evident from this investigation, is a middle theory which participates in the peculiarities of the two theories between which it endeavours to steer,—viz. the Anselmic and the Socinian. 1. It is allied with the soteriology of Anselm and the Reformers, by its assertion that the atonement is required by the interests of the universe. In contemplating God as a Ruler, who protects the welfare of his creation by a moral government, and who will not, therefore, relax the penalty of transgression without making an expression of his abhorrence of sin, Grotius rejects the system of Socinus which altogether excludes vicarious suffering and combats it. This feature enters into the soteriology of the Reformers, also, though only as a secondary and subordinate one. According to the Anselmic view, the sufferings of Christ are required primarily by the imperatives of the Divine Nature, and this is the reason why they are required by the Divine Government. In adopting, therefore, the secondary reasons and grounds for the atonement, the Grotian theory, so far, harmonizes with the soteriology of the Reformation. 2. The Grotian theory is allied with that of Socinus, in its denial that the satisfaction of Christ is required by the nature and attributes of God. The departure of Grotius from the Church doctrine consists in what he denies, and not in what he asserts. The assertion that the welfare of the universe necessitates the sufferings of Christ in order to the remission of sin would be agreed to by Anselm and Calvin, but would be dissented from by Socinus. And, on the other hand, the assertion that the attribute of justice immanent in the Divine Nature, does not inexorably require a strict and full satisfaction in order to the remission of sin, would be dissented from by Anselm and Calvin, but would be agreed to by Socinus. The assertion that the moral law is a positive enactment, the mere product of the Divine will, that consequently it can be relaxed or even abrogated by the law-maker, and that consequently there is no intrinsic necessity for the

atonement in the being and character of God,—all these are Socinian positions.

From these positions, there flow certain logical conclusions that affiliate the Grotian scheme with that of Socinus, and set it in antagonism to that of the Reformers. They are the following. 1. The death of Christ, according to Grotius, is exemplary and not retributive; because it is not required by the Divine nature, but solely by the external necessities of the universe, and that outward relation which God sustains to his creatures as a protector of their welfare. But according to Anselm, and the Reformers, the death of Christ is both retributive and exemplary. Its primary characteristic is that it satisfies judicial claims; and its exemplary aspect is its secondary one. The Reformers contended that the Deity exhibits his abhorrence of sin in the ordinary course of his administration and that, therefore, the incarnation and suffering of Deity in the flesh, being an extraordinary procedure, must have, for its primary purpose, something more than merely teaching that God is displeased with sin. There is no doubt upon this point; for this lesson is taught by the punishment of the fallen angels, and by the judgments of God in the earth,—all of which are exemplary of God's abhorrence of sin, and have a direct and strong tendency to prevent sin. The atonement, according to Anselm, is expiatory first, and exemplary afterwards; according to Grotius it is exemplary only. 2. In the Grotian scheme, the sufferings of Christ occur for the purpose of preventing future sin, and not for the purpose of atoning for past sin. The guilt of past sin may be abolished without strict satisfaction, because there is no immanent necessity in the Divine Nature, inexorable and such as cannot be relaxed or waived, for the infliction of plenary penalty for sins that are past; and hence only an exemplary expression of God's abhorrence of sin is required in order to deter from sin in the future. But where the Grotian soteriology finds no difficulty at all, there the Anselmic finds the chief difficulty in the way of human salvation. According to Anselm, the primal necessity of the incarnation and theanthropic suffering of the Eternal Son of God lies in the fact that the very nature and attributes of Deity require that the guilt of past

sin be completely expiated. Were the prevention of sin in the future the sole, or the chief obstacle, this could be secured by the agency of the Holy Spirit, in renewing and sanctifying the human heart. In respect, then, to the relations which the atonement sustains to the being and attributes of God, the Grotian soteriology adopts substantially Socinian principles and positions; while, so far as concerns the relations of the atonement to the external universe and the welfare of the finite creature, it adopts the positions of the Anselmic-Protestant soteriology.

## **CHAPTER VI:**

### **THE ARMINIAN SOTERIOLOGY**

#### **1. Positive Statements**

THE Arminian soteriology was formed after Grotius had published his, and the two theologians most concerned in its construction were Curcellaeus and Limborch. Their aim was to avoid what they deemed to be the extremes of the Socinian doctrine and that of the Church. "Sententia nostra," they say, "inter duas hasce extremas media est."

The leading idea of the Arminian soteriology is that of a sacrificial offering. The death of Christ, like the death of the animal victim in the Mosaic economy, has for its purpose the deliverance of the guilty from punishment. And at this point, the Arminian theologian would remedy what he regarded as a defect in the Grotian scheme. According to Grotius, the death of Christ was designed to protect the interests of the created universe solely, and did not stand in relations to the Divine Nature. But the Arminian divine contended that Christ's death, as that of a sacrifice, had reference to God as well as to the universe. Limborch in criticising Grotius's *Defensio Fidei*, which the latter had sent to him, remarks that the gist of the matter

in respect to the doctrine of the atonement lies in the question: "An Christus morte sua, circa Deum aliquid effecerit?" and contends that he did. In this respect, the Arminian theory looks in the direction of the Anselmic and Reformed. But it differs from it, when it proceeds to specify what it is that the death of Christ effects in reference to the Divine Nature. This is done in the following particulars. 1. The death of Christ is denominated a sacrifice, but a sacrifice is not the payment of a debt, nor is it a complete satisfaction of justice for sin. It is merely the divinely-appointed condition which precedes the forgiveness of sin. God saw fit under the Mosaic economy to connect the remission of sin with the previous death of a lamb or a goat. If the Israelite would offer up the victim in the way and manner appointed, then God promised to forgive him. In the same way, God in the new dispensation connects the pardon of transgression with the death of Jesus Christ. In neither instance, are the claims of justice satisfied. They are waived by an act of compassion that is exerted in connection with the offering of the Son of God as a sacrifice. "Christ," says Curcellaeus, "did not make satisfaction by enduring the punishment which we sinners merited. This does not belong to the nature of a sacrifice, and has nothing in common with it. For sacrifices are not payments of debts, as is evident from those offered under the law. The beasts that were slain for transgressors did not expiate the penalty which they merited, nor was their blood a sufficient λύτρον for the soul of man. But they were oblations only, by which the transgressor endeavoured to turn (flectere) the mind of God to compassion, and to obtain remission from him. Hence the formula in the law applied to those who had expiated their sins by offering a sacrifice: 'And it shall be forgiven him.' (Leviticus 4:26, 31, 35, &c.)" 2. Respecting the question, whether the sufferings of Christ were penal and judicial, the Arminian divines made the following statements. Christ as a real and true offering for our sins endured the greatest sufferings in our stead, and thereby warded off the punishment which we merit. The sufferings of Christ may be regarded as penal, or of the nature of punishment, not in the sense that he endured the same thing which man deserved to endure, but in the sense that by the will and appointment of God the sufferings

which he underwent took the place of a penalty, so that his sufferings have the same effect in reconciling God to man, and procuring the forgiveness of sin, that the sinner's endurance of the punishment due to his sins would have had. "Jesus Christ," says Curcellaeus, "may be said to have been punished (*punitus*) in our place, in so far as he endured the greatest anguish of soul, and the accursed death of the cross for us, which were of the nature of a vicarious punishment in the place of our sins (*quae poenae vicariae pro peccatis nostris rationem habuit*). And it may be said that our Lord satisfied the Father for us by his death, and earned righteousness for us, in so far as he satisfied, not the rigor and exactitude of the divine justice but, the just as well as compassionate will of God (*voluntati Dei justae simul ac misericordiae*), and went through all that God required in order to our reconciliation." According to these positions, the sufferings of Christ were not a substituted penalty, but a substitute for a penalty. A substituted penalty is a strict equivalent, but a substitute for a penalty, may be of inferior worth, as when a partial satisfaction is accepted for a plenary one, by the method of acceptilation; or, as if the finite sacrifice of the lamb and the goat should be constituted by the will of God an offset for human transgression. And the term "satisfaction," also, is wrested from its proper signification, in that the sufferings of Christ are asserted to be a satisfaction of benevolence. "Our Lord satisfied ... not the rigor and exactitude of divine justice, but the just and compassionate will of God,"—a use of language as solecistical as that which should speak of smelling a sound.

## **2. Arminian Objections to the Theory of Satisfaction**

Having made these positive statements respecting the vicariousness of Christ's sufferings and their penal aspect, the Arminian divines make the following negative statements explanatory of their use of these terms.

1. Christ did not endure the full penalty due to man, because he did not endure eternal death, either in degree or in time. He did not

endure it in degree, because he did not undergo absolute despair while under the burden of the wrath of God. And he did not endure it through an endless duration. 2. If Christ has completely atoned for our sins by enduring the full penalty, then there is nothing more that Divine grace can do for us. The remission of our sins is no longer a matter of Divine compassion, but of the Divine justice, which has been fully satisfied. 3. If Christ has made plenary satisfaction for us, God has not the right to demand either faith or obedience from us. Neither has he the right, in case we do not render obedience, to deprive us of the benefits of Christ's death, and punish us for our sins, because it would be unjust to exact a double punishment for one and the same sin.

The first of these objections, it is obvious to remark, overlooks the divinity of the substitute for man. An infinite person suffering in a finite time yields an infinite suffering, with even more exactitude than a finite person or race suffering in an endless time. The Person of Christ in respect to his divinity is strictly infinite; but man's punishment though endless is not strictly infinite. The woe of the lost is eternal only a *parte post*. Though it has no ending, it has a beginning, and therefore is not metaphysically infinite. The second objection is answered by the consideration, that the plenary satisfaction of Divine justice for the sinner by the Divine Being himself is the highest conceivable form of compassion,—because it is the compassion of self-sacrifice. And the fact, that after the claims of law have been completely met by the voluntary sacrifice of the Son of God, there are, of course, no further claims to be "relaxed" or "waived," does not disprove the infinite pity that vicariously satisfied them. The third objection proceeds upon the baseless assumption, that because God has made an atonement for human sin, each and every man by that mere fact is entitled to its benefits. After the atonement has been made, it is still the property and possession of the Maker, and he may do what he will with his own. He may elect to whom he will apply it, and to whom he will not apply it.

# CHAPTER VII:

## THE SOCINIAN SOTERIOLOGY

### 1. Socinian Idea of Justice

THE theory of Socinus respecting the work of Christ is stated with great directness and clearness. Rejecting, as he did, all mystery, and reducing Christianity to the few first principles of natural ethics, it was comparatively easy for him to be explicit in his statements, and transparent in his style.

The foundation of his theory is seen in his idea and definition of Divine justice. The doctrine of atonement, as held in the Church, rested upon the position that justice is of a necessary nature, and is an immutable attribute of God. If now it could be shown that this definition of justice is an erroneous one, the main support of the theory of satisfaction falls away. Hence Socinus bent his efforts to remove this foundation. "There is no such justice in God," says Socinus, "as requires absolutely and inexorably (*omnino*) that sin be punished, and such as God himself cannot repudiate. There is, indeed, a perpetual and constant justice in God; but this is nothing but his moral equity and rectitude, by virtue of which there is no depravity or iniquity in any of his works. This is the justice which the Scriptures speak of, and which is as conspicuous in forgiving sins, as in punishing them. But that kind of justice which we are accustomed to call by this name, and which is seen only in the punishment of sin, the Scriptures by no means dignify with this name, but denominate it sometimes the severity of God, sometimes vengeance, sometimes wrath, fury, indignation, and by other terms of this sort. Hence, they greatly err who, deceived by the popular use of the word justice, suppose that justice in this sense is a perpetual quality in God, and affirm that it is infinite. For they do not perceive that if this were the

fact, God must eternally be severe and inflict retribution, and could never forgive sin; all which is contrary to the Scriptures, which teach that God is slow to anger and of great mercy. Hence it might with much greater truth be affirmed that that compassion which stands opposed to justice is the appropriate characteristic of God; and the very opposite doctrine to that maintained by our opponents might be asserted, viz.: that God could not punish sin, because his mercy requires that sin in any event (omnino) be forgiven. But in fact both positions are false. For, as that justice which commonly goes under this name, and which is opposed to mercy, is not an immanent characteristic of God, but only the effect or product of his volition, so that mercy which is opposed to justice is not an internal (*propria*) quality of God, but only the effect and product of his volition. Hence, inasmuch as that mercy which is often attributed to God does not prevent him from punishing any one whom he pleases to punish for sin, still less does that punitive justice which is very rarely (*raro admodum*) attributed to God prevent him from pardoning any one whom he pleases, without any satisfaction of its claims."

From this extract, it is plain that Socinus conceived of the attributes of justice and mercy as less central than will. By a volition, God may punish a sin, or he may let it go unpunished. He has as much right to do the latter as the former. There is no intrinsic right or wrong in either case that necessitates his action. Justice like mercy is the product of his optional will. It is easy to see that by this definition of justice Socinus takes away the foundation of the doctrine of atonement; and that if it be a correct definition, the Socinian theory of forgiveness upon repentance is true. If sin is punishable only because God so determines; and if he decides not to punish it, then it is no longer punishable,—if punitive justice is the product of mere will, and may be made and unmade by a volition, then it is absurd to say that without the shedding of blood, or the satisfaction of law, there is no remission of sin.

## **2. Socinian Objections to the Theory of Satisfaction**



The first objection of Socinus to the doctrine of satisfaction was, that it excludes mercy. If sin is punished it is not forgiven, and conversely if sin is forgiven it is not punished. The two ideas of satisfaction and remission exclude and expel each other. If God's justice is satisfied by the infliction of judicial suffering, there is no room for the exercise of his mercy. If God has received a complete equivalent for the punishment due to man, then he does not show any compassion in remitting his sin. But this objection overlooks the fact, that the equivalent is not furnished by man, but by God. Were the atonement of Christ the creature's oblation to justice, Socinus's objection would have force. But it is God, and not man who satisfies the claims of justice for the sinner. According to the Church doctrine, therefore, the ideas of satisfaction and mercy are combined and harmonized in a vicarious atonement, or the assumption of penalty by a competent person. If the sinner himself should pay the penalty (as the objection of Socinus implies if it is to have any force), there would be no vicariousness in the suffering, and there would be the execution of justice merely without any mercy. But when the principle of vicariousness, or substituted penalty, is introduced, and the incarnate Son of God endures the punishment due to sin, in the sinner's stead, both attributes are exercised and manifested together. For justice is satisfied by the suffering which is undergone by the Substitute, and the Substitute certainly shows the height of love and compassion in undergoing it. "Righteousness and peace meet together." The truth is, that this objection of Socinus, which is one of his most plausible, begs the whole question in dispute by defining mercy in its own way. It assumes that the ideas of satisfaction and mercy exclude each other, in such a manner that they never can be harmonized in any plan of redemption. It assumes that mercy consists in waiving and abolishing justice by an act of pure will. From this premise, it follows of course that where there is any satisfaction of justice by the endurance of its demands, there is no mercy; and where there is any waiving or abolishing of these demands, there is mercy. A complete atonement, consequently, would exclude mercy entirely; a partial atonement would allow some room for mercy, in partially waiving legal claims; and no atonement at all would afford

full play for the attribute, by the entire nullification of all judicial demands.

2. The second objection of Socinus to the Church doctrine of atonement was, that substitution of penalty is impossible. An innocent person cannot endure penal suffering, cannot be punished, because sin is personal (*corporalis*). God himself asserts (Deut. 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20), that "the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." If, then, by the sentence and decree of God, neither the son ought to be punished for the sins of the father, nor the father for the sins of the son, how can it be possible that God should be willing to exact the punishment of man's sins from any other being (*ab alio ullo*). Penalty is not like a pecuniary debt. One person can pay a sum of money for another, because money is impersonal. But one being cannot satisfy justice for another, because punishment is personal. Justice permits no vicariousness and no substitution; but requires that the very identical soul that has sinned shall suffer. There is no way, therefore, to deliver the guilty from penalty, but by an act of sovereign will. Justice is made by will, and can therefore be abolished by will whenever the Supreme Sovereign pleases to do so. God possesses the right, if he chooses, to arrest the stroke of law, because both the law and its penalty are his own product. And when, and only when, he thus arrests the operation of law by a sovereign volition, and without any substitution of penalty, he shows mercy.

3. The third objection which Socinus made to the doctrine of vicarious atonement was, that even if vicarious penalty were allowable and possible, Christ has not rendered an equivalent for the sin of man. The law threatens eternal death. Every individual transgressor owes an endless punishment to justice. It would be

necessary, therefore, that there should be as many substitutes as there are sinners, because one substitute could suffer but one endless suffering. But that Christ did not endure endless death is evident from the fact that he rose from the dead. Moreover, the Scriptures assert (1 Cor. 15:17) that "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." But if it be Christ's death that saves man, as the Church theory teaches, there is no need of his resurrection. Since, therefore, Christ did not suffer eternal death, but rose again from the dead, and since it is said that unless he had risen from the dead, sin would not have been forgiven, it follows that he did not obtain the forgiveness of man's sins by the method of judicial satisfaction through his sufferings and death. It is indeed said that the dignity of Christ's person makes his sufferings of infinite worth. But God is no respecter of persons. Christ simply endured a finite pain, which of course could not be an equivalent for the sin of a whole world. His suffering was disciplinary, and not judicial. It was not a penal agony endured for purposes of justice, but was a natural and necessary part of his personal preparation for eternal glory. The captain of our salvation was made perfect in his own character by suffering (Heb. 2:10). Being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, etc. (Phil. 2:9.)

4. Socinus contended, in the fourth place, that the obedience of Christ could not be a vicarious obedience. Christ was obligated to obey the law for himself as an individual, and therefore he could not obey it for others. This is evident from the fact that he was rewarded for his obedience and for his sufferings, as any other individual is. But even if his obedience could avail for another, it could avail for only a single individual of the human family. The alleged dignity of his Person does not relieve the difficulty. A human nature is incapable of rendering an infinite obedience; and that the Divine Nature which is Supreme and receives obedience from all creatures should itself render obedience, is absurd.

5. A fifth objection urged by Socinus against the Church soteriology is, that the ideas of satisfaction and imputation which are associated in it are self-contradictory. If a complete satisfaction of the claims of justice has been made, this settles the matter. To make this objective and finished payment of a debt to depend upon an act of imputation upon the part of God, and of faith upon the part of man, is self-contradictory. If Christ has endured the penalty due to man for sin, this is a fact, and cannot be affected by either the belief or the unbelief of the creature. An atonement that cancels the sin of the world, logically frees that world from condemnation. But according to the Church doctrine none are saved from condemnation unless this satisfaction is imputed by God, and received in the act of faith by man.

6. Sixthly, Socinus contended that if Christ made complete satisfaction for all the sin of man, both past and future, it follows that not only no other satisfaction is required, but that personal holiness is not necessary. Inasmuch as the Scriptures teach that without righteousness no one can enter the kingdom of God, the advocates of the doctrine of satisfaction betake themselves to the notion of an imputed righteousness, by means of which man, though sinful and polluted, is accounted or reckoned to be holy. Hence it follows from the Protestant doctrine of imputed righteousness, that even without true and actual holiness future blessedness is attainable.

The positive part of Socinus's soteriology is found in the position, that forgiveness is granted upon the ground of repentance and obedience. There are no legal obstacles in the way of pardon, because the will of God is sovereign and supreme over law and penalty. Nothing is necessary, consequently, but sorrow for sin, and an earnest purpose to obey the commandments. Christ has set an example of obedience, and man is to follow it in the exercise of his natural powers.

# **BOOK SIXTH**

## **HISTORY OF ESCHATOLOGY**

### **CHAPTER I:**

#### **SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST**

##### **1. Millenarianism**

Millenarianism, or Chiliasm, is the doctrine of two resurrections (Rev. 20),—the first, that of the righteous dead at the time of the second advent of Christ, and the second that of the righteous and the wicked at the end of the world,—and a personal corporeal reign of Christ between them, for a thousand years, upon the renovated earth. It is substantially the same with the Later-Jewish doctrine of a Messianic kingdom upon earth. The Jews at the time of the Incarnation were expecting a personal prince, and a corporeal reign, in the Messiah who was to come; and one of the principal grounds of their rejection of Christ was the fact that he represented the Messiah's rule as a spiritual one in the hearts of men, and gave no countenance to their literal and materializing interpretation of the Messianic prophecies. The disciples of Christ, being themselves Jews, were at first naturally infected with these views, and it was not until after that Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit which so enlarged their conceptions of the kingdom of God, and with which their inspiration properly begins, that they rose above their early Jewish education. In none of their inspired writings do we find such an expectation of Christ's speedy coming as prompted the question: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). For the answer of Christ to this inquiry had given them to

understand, that before this event could occur Christianity must be preached in "Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

There being this affinity between Millenarianism and the Later-Jewish idea of the Messiah and his kingdom, it is not surprising to find that Millenarianism was a peculiarity of the Jewish-Christian, as distinguished from the Gentile-Christian branch of the church, at the close of the first century. It appears first in the system of the Judaistic-Gnostic Cerinthus, the contemporary and opponent of the apostle John. Of the Apostolical Fathers, only Barnabas, Hermas, and Papias exhibit in their writings distinct traces of this doctrine,—the latter teaching it in its grossest form, and the first two holding it in a less sensuous manner. There are no traces of Chiliasm in the writings of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Tatian, Athengoras, and Theophilus of Antioch. The inference from these facts, then, is, that this tenet was not the received faith of the church certainly down to the year 150. It was held only by individuals. These, in some instances, as in that of Cerinthus, were in hostile and positively heretical relations to the church. And in the instance of those whose general catholicity was acknowledged—as Barnabas, Hermas, and Papias,—there was by no means such a weight of character and influence, as would entitle them to be regarded as the principal or sole representatives of orthodoxy. On the contrary, these minds were comparatively uninfluential, and their writings are of little importance. The ecclesiastical authority of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp is certainly much greater than that of Barnabas, Hermas, and Papias. So far as concerns the Apostolic age, then, the testimony of history goes to show that the literal and materializing interpretation put upon the teachings of Isaiah and St. John concerning the second coming of Christ, by the Millenarian, was not the most authoritative one,—although prevalent among the Jewish as distinguished from the Gentile Christians, and gradually becoming prevalent in the church generally, from a cause that will be noticed hereafter. A further incidental proof of the position, that Millenarianism was not the received and authoritative faith of the

church from the death of the Apostles to the year 150, is found in the fact that it does not appear in the so-called Apostles' Creed. This symbol was not, indeed, drawn up by the Apostles, but it is undoubtedly the substance of the short confessions of faith which the catechumens of the Apostolic Church were accustomed to make upon entering the church; so that it is a full statement of what passed for the substance of Christianity with them. But in this symbol there is not the slightest allusion to two resurrections and a corporeal reign of Christ between them. The only specifications are, that Christ shall come from heaven "to judge the quick and the dead;" and that there is a "resurrection of the body," and a "life everlasting" [immediately succeeding, is the implication].

The period between the year 150 and 250 is the blooming age of Millenarianism; and yet even in this period it does not become the catholic faith, as embodied in the catholic creed. Some minds now adopt the literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies, and subject them to a very sensuous exegesis. Irenaeus and Tertullian give glowing descriptions of the Millennial reign. Anti-Christ together with all the nations that side with him will be destroyed. All earthly empires, and the Roman in particular, will be overthrown. Christ will again appear, and will reign a thousand years, in corporeal presence on earth, in Jerusalem, which will be rebuilt and made the capital of his kingdom. The patriarchs, prophets, and all the pious, will be raised from the dead, and share in the felicity of this kingdom. The New Jerusalem is depicted in the most splendid colors. The metaphors of Isaiah (54:11, 12), are treated as proper terms. Irenaeus describes the foundations of the rebuilt Jerusalem as literally carbuncle and sapphire, and its bulwarks crystal; and regards it as actually let down from heaven, according to Rev. 21:2. Tertullian puts the same interpretation with Irenaeus upon this text, and for confirmation refers to the report, that in the Parthian war, in Judea a city was observed to be lowered down from the sky every morning, and to disappear as the day advanced. The earth was to become wonderfully fertile. Irenaeus cites with approbation from Papias the statement, that there would be vines having ten thousand

branches, and each branch ten thousand boughs, and each bough ten thousand shoots, and each shoot ten thousand clusters, and each cluster ten thousand berries, and each berry would yield twenty-five measures of wine.

The Millenarian tendency became stronger as the church began, in the last half of the second century, to feel the persecuting hand of the government laid upon it. The distressed condition of the people of God led them to desire and pray for an advent of the Head of the church that would extinguish all his enemies. It was natural that the doctrine of the personal reign of Christ should be the most prevalent when the earthly condition of the church was the most intolerable. So general had the tenet become in the last half of the 2d century, that Justin Martyr declares that it was the belief of all but the Gnostics. But Irenaeus,<sup>2</sup> on the contrary, speaks of opposers of Millenarianism who held the catholic faith, and who agreed with the Gnostics only in being Anti-Millenarians; although he is himself desirous to make it appear that Anti-Millenarianism is of the nature of heresy. Gaius, a presbyter of Rome about the year 200, attacks the Millenarian views of the Montanist Proclus, and declares Millenarianism to be the invention of Cerinthus, and the Apocalypse a writing of this heretic. Cyprian maintains the Millenarian theory with his usual candor and moderation. Yet, Millenarianism does not appear in the catholic creed as an article of faith. Both Irenaeus and Tertullian, in their writings against heretics, present brief synoptical statements of the authorized faith of the church; but in none of them do we find the Millenarian tenet. In their synopses, there is nothing more said upon eschatological points, than is contained in the Apostles' Creed.

The 3d century witnessed a very decided opposition to Millenarianism,—a fact which evinces that its blooming period was a brief one of about a hundred years. The Alexandrine School, under the lead of Clement and Origen, made a vigorous attack; and in the last part of the 3d century, Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, succeeded by dint of argument in repressing a very gross form of



Millenarianism that was spreading in his diocese, under the advocacy of Nepos and Coracion. After the 3d century, the tenet disappears very generally. Lactantius († 330) is the only man of any note in the 4th century who defends the system. Augustine adopted the theory in his earlier days, but rejected it afterwards. That Chiliasm could not have been generally current in the beginning of the 4th century, is proved by the manner in which Eusebius speaks of it. Describing the writings of Papias, he remarks that they contain "matters rather too fabulous." Among these "matters," he enumerates the opinion of Papias, that "there would be a certain millennium after the resurrection, and that there would be a corporeal reign of Christ on this very earth; which things he appears to have imagined, as if they were authorized by the apostolic narrations, not understanding correctly those matters which they propounded mystically, in their representations. For he was very limited in his comprehension, as is evident from his discourses, yet he was the cause why most of the ecclesiastical writers, urging the antiquity of the man, were carried away by a similar opinion,—as, for instance, Irenaeus, or any other that adopted similar sentiments." Had Millenarianism, in the first quarter of the 4th century, been the received belief of any considerable portion of the catholic church, a writer like Eusebius, whose respect for everything catholic and ecclesiastical was very high, would not have spoken of it as "fabulous."

The history of Millenarianism after the year 400 is reduceable to a very short compass. During the Middle Ages, it can hardly be said to have had any existence as a doctrine; though at the close of the tenth century, there was an undefined fear and expectation among the masses that the year 1000 would witness the advent of the Lord. In the period of the Reformation, Millenarianism made its appearance in connection with the fanatical and heterodox tendencies that sprang up along with the great religious awakening. Hence, the symbols when they notice the doctrine at all do so in terms of condemnation. The Augsburg Confession condemns Chiliasm in conjunction with the doctrine of a limited future punishment; both

tenets being held by the Anabaptists of that day. "Damnante Anabaptistas, qui sentiunt hominibus damnatis ac diabolis finem poenarum futurum esse. Damnante et alios, qui spargunt Judaeas opiniones, quod ante resurrectionem mortuorum pii regnum mundi occupaturi sint, ubique oppressis impiis." The English Confession of Edward vi., from which the Thirty Nine Articles were afterwards condensed, condemns it in nearly the same terms as the Augsburg. "Qui millenariorum fabulam revocare conantur, sacris literis adversantur, et in Judaica deliramenta sese praecipitant." The Belgic Confession guards the statement respecting the second advent of Christ, by teaching that the time of its occurrence is unknown to all created beings, and that it will not take place until the number of the elect is complete. "Credimus Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, quando tempus a Deo praestitum, quod omnibus creaturis est ignotum, advenerit, et numerus electorum completus fuerit, e caelo rursus venturum, etc."

The history of Chiliasm since the Reformation presents few points of importance. During the present century, individual minds in England and America, and upon the Continent of Europe, have attempted to revive the theory,—in some instances, in union with an intelligent and earnest orthodoxy; in others, in connection with an uneducated and somewhat fanatical pietism. The first class is represented by Delitzsch and Auberlen in Germany, and by Cumming, Elliott, and Bonar in Great Britain; the second class by the so-called Adventists and Millerites in the United States.

The facts, then, established by this account of Millenarianism in the Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern Churches, are the following: 1. That Millenarianism was never the oecumenical faith of the church, and never entered as an article into any of the creeds. 2. That Millenarianism has been the opinion of individuals and parties only,—some of whom have stood in agreement with the catholic faith, and some in opposition to it.

## **2. Catholic Theory of the Second Advent**

The pressure of persecution being lifted off, the church returned to its earlier and first exegesis of the Scripture data concerning the end of the world, and the second coming of Christ. The representations in Rev. 20 were once more interpreted by those in Matt. 25, which speak only of an advent at the day of judgment; and by the instructions given by St. Paul, in 2 Thess. 2, to correct the erroneous inference which the Thessalonian Church had drawn from his first Epistle to them, "that the day of Christ is at hand." The personal coming of Christ, it was now held, is not to take place until the final day of doom; until the gospel has been preached "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8); until the Jews have been converted to Christianity, after "the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in" (Rom. 11); and until that great apostasy has occurred which is mentioned by St. Paul (1 Thess. 2:3). The eschatology of the oldest symbol became the oecumenical doctrine, and the Church in all its ages, without even a hint of any other appearance of the risen Redeemer, has confessed in the phraseology of the Apostles Creed its belief, that "He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

## **CHAPTER II:**

### **THE RESURRECTION**

#### **1. The Intermediate State**

THE opinions of the Early Fathers concerning the residence of the soul in its disembodied state, between death and the resurrection, were somewhat fluctuating. The idea of a Hades, or under-world, where departed spirits dwell, was familiar to the Hebrew mind as it was to the Greek, and so far as this idea passed over to Christianity it tended to the doctrine of a state intermediate between this earthly

life, and the everlasting abode of the soul assigned to it in the day of judgment. Justin Martyr represents the souls of the righteous as taking up a temporary abode in a happy, and those of the wicked in a wretched place; and stigmatizes as heretical the doctrine that souls are immediately received into heaven at death. Tertullian held that the martyrs went at once to the abode of the blessed, but that this was a privilege peculiar to them, and not granted to other Christians. Cyprian, on the other hand, says nothing of an intermediate state, and expresses the confident belief that those who die in the Lord, by pestilence or by any other mode, will be at once taken to him. In the Alexandrine School, the idea of an intermediate state passed into that of a gradual purification of the soul, and paved the way for the later Papal doctrine of purgatory.

The doctrine of an intermediate state not only maintained itself, but gained in authority and influence during the Polemic period (250–730). Ambrose taught that "the soul is separated from the body at death, and after the cessation of the earthly life is held in an ambiguous condition (*ambiguo suspenditur*), awaiting the final judgment." Augustine remarks that "the period (*tempus*) which intervenes between the death and the final resurrection of man, contains souls in secret receptacles, who are treated according to their character and conduct in the flesh." "The majority of ecclesiastical writers of this period," Hagenbach remarks, "believed that men do not receive their full reward till after the resurrection of the body." Here and there, however, there was a dissenting voice. Gregory Nazianzen supposed that the souls of the righteous, prior to the resurrection of the body, are at once admitted into the presence of God; in which opinion he seems to be supported by Gennadius, and Gregory the Great. Eusebius also declares that Helena, the mother of Constantine, went immediately to God, and was transformed into an angelic substance.

In the Middle Ages and the Papal Church, the doctrine of an intermediate state was, of course, retained and defended in connection with that of purgatory. In the Protestant Church, the

doctrine of purgatory was rejected; but some difference of sentiment appears respecting the intermediate state. Calvin combatted the theory of a sleep of the soul between death and the resurrection (Psychopannychy), which had been revived by some of the Swiss Anabaptists, and argues for the full consciousness of the disembodied spirit. The Second Helvetic Confession expressly rejects the notion that departed spirits reappear on earth. Some theologians endeavored to establish a distinction between the happiness which the disembodied spirit enjoys, and that which it will experience after the resurrection of the body. They also distinguished between the judgment which takes place at the death of each individual, by which his destiny is immediately decided, and the general judgment at the end of the world. Speaking generally, the doctrine of an intermediate state has found most favour in the Lutheran division of Protestants. In the English Church, since the time of Laud, the doctrine has found some advocates, chiefly in that portion of it characterized by high church views, and a Romanizing tendency. The followers of Swedenborg adopt the tenet, in a highly gross and materializing form.

## **2. The Resurrection Body**

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body was from the beginning a cardinal and striking tenet of the Christian Church. The announcement of it by Paul at Athens awakened more interest, and provoked more criticism, than any other of the truths which he taught (Acts 17:32). All the early Fathers maintain this dogma with great earnestness and unanimity, against the objections and denial of the skeptics,—of whom Celsus is the most acute and scoffing in his attacks. Most of them believed in the resuscitation of the very same body that lived on earth. Only the Alexandrine School dissented upon this point. Justin Martyr affirms that the body will rise again with all its members. Even cripples will rise as such, but at the moment of resurrection will be made physically perfect. Irenaeus asserts the identity of the future with the present body. Tertullian wrote a tract upon the resurrection, maintaining that the very same

body will be raised that was laid in the grave. He answers the objection that certain members of the body will be of no use in the future life, by the remark that the bodily member is capable of both a lower and a higher service. Even upon earth, the mouth serves not only for the purpose of eating, but also of speaking and praising God. Cyprian follows Tertullian in his representations. Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, on the other hand, adopt a spiritualizing theory of the resurrection. Origen teaches that a belief in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is not absolutely essential to the profession of Christianity, provided the immortality of the soul be maintained. Yet he defended the church dogma against the objections of Celsus, rejecting, however, the doctrine of the identity of the bodies, as giving a handle to scoffers. These idealizing views of the Alexandrine School were adopted by several of the Eastern theologians; for example, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssa, and perhaps Basil. But they were combatted at both the East and the West, with great vehemence. Jerome maintained the identity of the resurrection-body with that laid in the grave, in respect to the very hairs and teeth. This last he proves by the "gnashing of teeth" in the world of woe. Augustine, in the earlier part of his Christian life, was somewhat inclined to the spiritualizing view of the Alexandrine School; but afterwards defended the more sensuous theory, though being careful to clear the doctrine of gross and carnal additions. Chrysostom asserted the identity of the two bodies, but directs particular attention to the Pauline distinction of a "natural body" and a "spiritual body." Gregory the Great maintained substantially the same views with Augustine.

The doctrine of the Ancient Church, that the human body will be raised with all its component parts, passed into the Middle Ages, and was regarded as the orthodox doctrine. Thomas Aquinas, founding upon the Patristic theory, goes into details. "The resurrection will probably take place toward evening, for the heavenly bodies which rule over all earthly matter must first cease to move. Sun and moon will meet again at that point where they were probably created. No other matter will rise from the grave than what existed at the

moment of death. If all that substance were to rise again which has been consumed during the present life, it would form a most unshapely mass. The sexual difference will exist, but without sensual appetites. All the organs of sense will still be active, with the exception of the sense of taste. It is, however, possible that even this latter may be rendered more perfect, and fitted for adequate functions and enjoyments. Hair and nails are one of the ornaments of man, and are therefore quite as necessary as blood and other fluids. The resurrection bodies will be exceedingly fine, and be delivered from the corpulence and heavy weight which is now so burdensome to them; nevertheless, they will be tangible, as the body of Christ was touched after his resurrection. Their size will not increase after the resurrection, nor will they grow either thicker or thinner. To some extent they will still be dependent on space and time; yet the resurrection bodies will move much faster, and more easily, from one place to another, than our present bodies; they will be at liberty to follow the tendencies and impulses of the soul. They are glorified, bright, and shining, and can be perceived by glorified eyes alone. But this is true only in reference to the bodies of the blessed. The bodies of the damned are to be ugly and deformed, incorruptible, but capable of suffering, which is not the case with the bodies of the saints." These representations afterwards found their vivid embodiment in the poetry of Dante, and the painting of Raffaele and Michael Angelo. Scotus Erigena endeavoured to revive the ideas of Origen, but his opinions found no favour.

The Patristic theory of the resurrection body was transmitted, also, to the Protestant churches, and the history of the dogma in modern times exhibits comparatively few variations from the traditional belief,—and these, mostly in the line of Origen's speculations.

# **CHAPTER III:**

## **THE FINAL STATE**

### **1. Day of Judgment**

THE doctrine of a general judgment was, from the first, immediately connected with that of the resurrection of the body. Mankind are raised from the dead, in order to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. The Fathers founded their views of the day of doom upon the representations and imagery of Scripture. They believed that a general conflagration would accompany the last judgment, which would destroy the world; though some ascribed a purifying agency to it. Some of them, like Tertullian and the more rhetorical of the Greek Fathers, enter into minute details, while others, like Augustine, endeavour dogmatically to define the facts couched in the figurative language of Scripture. These two classes also perpetuate themselves in the Mediaeval Church. In the Middle Ages, it was a popular opinion that the judgment would take place in the valley of Jehosaphat. But it was found difficult to unite in a single scene all the various imagery of Scripture,—such for example, as the darkening of the sun and moon, and yet the effulgence of light accompanying the advent of the judge. Hence theologians like Aquinas (Qu. 88, Art. 2.) maintained that the judgment would take place *mentaliter*, because the oral trial and defence of each individual would require too much time. In the Modern Church, the course of thought upon this doctrine has been similar to that in the Ancient and Mediaeval. The symbols of the different Protestant communions explicitly affirm a day of judgment at the end of the world, but enter into no details. Individual speculations, as of old, vibrate between the extremes of materialism and hyper-spiritualism.

### **2. Purgatory**

The doctrine of purgatory was intimately connected with that of an intermediate state, and was developed along with it. In proportion as



the condition of the soul between death and the resurrection was regarded as very different from its condition after the final judgment, it was natural that the intermediate state should be looked upon as one in which the everlasting destiny is not irrevocably fixed, and in which there might possibly be a deliverance from evil and peril. Those of the early Fathers who held the doctrine of an intermediate place, made no practical distinction between the condition of the soul previous to the resurrection, and its condition after it. The wicked were miserable, and the good were happy,—and that eternally. The chief difference between the intermediate state, and the final state, for either the sinner or the saint was, that in the former the soul is disembodied, and in the latter it is "clothed upon" (2 Cor. 5:2). But in course of time, the difference between the intermediate and the final state of the soul became greatly magnified. The Scripture doctrine that there are degrees of reward and punishment in the future world was construed by some of the later Fathers in such a manner, as to bring the lowest grade of reward into contact with the lowest grade of punishment, and thereby to annihilate the difference in kind between heaven and hell. Thus, the intermediate state gradually came to be regarded as the region in which the spirit is in a vague and undecided position in respect to endless bliss and woe, and consequently as one in which the escape from everlasting misery is still possible.

The doctrine of a purification of believers, only, in the intermediate state, shows itself as early as the 4th century. The cleansing was confined to those who had become partially sanctified in this life. Augustine supposes that the teachings of St. Paul in 1 Cor. 3:11–15 imply, that the remainders of corruption in the renewed soul may be purged away in the period between death and the final judgment. The idea of a purifying fire is distinctly presented by Gregory Nazianzen. But the Papal doctrine of purgatory does not yet appear. It is not until the time of Gregory the Great († 604), that the doctrine attains its full form. He lays it down as an article of faith, and is the first writer who clearly propounded the idea of a deliverance from purgatory by intercessory prayer, and masses for the dead (sacra

oblatio hostiae salutaris). "Comparing," says Hagenbach, "Gregory's doctrine with the earlier, and more spiritual notions concerning the efficacy of the purifying fire of the intermediate state, we may adopt the statement of Schmidt, that 'the belief in a lasting desire after a higher degree of perfection, which death itself cannot quench, degenerated into a belief in purgatory.' "

The dogma of purgatory, thus gradually formed, passed into the Middle Ages, and was embodied firmly in the Papal system by the decisions of the Council of Trent. Its place and influence in the Papal Church are well known.

### **3. Eternal Rewards and Punishment**

That the blessedness of the good is unchanging and eternal, has been the uniform faith of the Church in all ages. Representations concerning the nature of this happiness vary with the culture, and intellectual spirit, of the time or the individual. Justin Martyr regards the blessedness of heaven as consisting mainly in the continuation of the happiness of the millennial reign, heightened by the enjoyment of immediate intercourse with God. Origen holds that the blessed dwell in the aërial regions, passing from one heaven to another as they progress in holiness. At the same time, he condemns those who expect sensuous enjoyment in the heavenly state. The soul will "have a clear insight into the destinies of men, and the dealings of Providence. Among the teachings of God in that higher state, will also be instruction about the stars, 'why a star is in such and such a position, why it stands at such and such a distance from another,' etc. But the highest and last degree is the intuitive vision of God himself, the complete elevation of the spirit above the region of sense." The Greek theologians, like Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory Nyssa, adopted the views of Origen, and taught that the blessedness of heaven consists in enlarged knowledge of divine things, intercourse with the saints and angels, and deliverance from the fetters of the earthly body. Augustine believed that the heavenly happiness consists in the enjoyment of peace which passes knowledge, and the

vision of God which cannot be compared with bodily vision. One important element in the happiness of the redeemed, according to him, is deliverance from all hazards of apostasy, sin, and death,—the *non posse peccare et mori*.

The Schoolmen, while holding the essential features in the Patristic theory, endeavoured to systematize this subject, as they did every other one. They divided heaven into three parts,—the visible heaven, or the firmament; the spiritual heaven, where saints and angels dwell; and the intellectual heaven, where the blessed enjoy the beatific vision of the Trinity. Degrees of happiness are bestowed according to the grade of perfection. Aquinas supposed different gifts of blessedness, denoted by the *corona aurea* which is bestowed upon all the blessed, and the particular *aureolae* for martyrs and saints, for monks and nuns. Some of the Mystics, as Suso, describe the heavenly happiness under imagery derived from lovely Alpine valleys, and bright meadows, and the joyful abandonment of heart incident to the opening of the vernal season. But they are careful to remark, that all such descriptions are only an image of an ineffable reality.

The Modern Church maintains the doctrine of everlasting blessedness in essentially the same form with the Ancient and Mediaeval. The tendencies to materialize, or to spiritualize it, vary with the grades of culture and modes of thinking. The popular mind still instinctively betakes itself to the sensuous imagery and representations, with Justin Martyr and Tertullian; while the educated intellect seeks, with Origen, the substance of heaven in the state of the soul. "Most certainly," says one of this class, "there is perfect happiness beyond the grave, for those who have in this world begun to enjoy it, and this is by no means different from that which we may here at any time begin to possess. We do not enter into this state of happiness, merely by being buried. Many will seek happiness in the future life, and in the infinite series of future worlds, as much in vain, as in the present life, if they think it can be found in any thing but that which is now so near to them, that it can never be brought nearer,—viz., the Eternal."

The punishment inflicted upon the lost was regarded by the Fathers of the Ancient Church, with very few exceptions, as endless. Clement of Rome (Ep. 8:3) affirms, that "after we leave this world, we are no longer able to confess sin, and to turn from it" (οὐκ ἔτι δυνάμεθα ἐκεῖ ἐξομολογήσασθαι ἢ μετανοεῖν ἔτι). Justin Martyr (ante, Vol. i. p. 128) asserts the eternity of future punishments, in opposition to Plato's doctrine, that they would last a thousand years. Minucius Felix (Cap. 35) remarks of the damned: "Nec tormentis, aut modus ullus aut terminus." Cyprian (Ad. Demetr.), in similar terms, says of the lost: "Cremabit addictos ardens semper gehenna, et vivacibus flammis vorax poena, nec erit, unde habere tormenta vel requiem possint aliquando, vel finem. Servabantur cum corporibus suis animae infinitis cruciatibus ad dolorem.... Quando istinc excessum fuerit, nullus jam poenitentiae locus est, nullus satisfactionis effectus: hic vita aut amittitur, aut tenetur; hic saluti aeternae cultu Dei, et fructu fidei, providetur." Augustine argues that the misery of the lost will be endless, from the use of the word αἰώνιος in Matt. 25:41, 46, which, he maintains, must have the same signification when applied to the punishment of the evil, as to the recompense of the good. "If both things are alike αἰώνιος, then the term must be interpreted to mean either that both are transitory, or that both are everlasting. 'Eternal' punishment and 'eternal' life are contrasted with each other. To say that 'eternal' life will have no end, but that 'eternal' punishment will have an end, is absurd." Respecting the nature of the punishment, Augustine considers that separation from God constitutes the severity and dreadfulness of it; but leaves it to the individual to choose between the more sensuous, or the more spiritual mode of interpretation,—adding, that it is better to unite them together. Chrysostom employs his powerful eloquence in depicting the everlasting torments of the lost; but remarks that it is of more consequence to know how to escape hell, than to know its locality or its nature.

The only exception to the belief in the eternity of future punishment, in the Ancient Church, appears in the Alexandrian School. Their denial of the doctrine sprang logically out of their anthropology.

Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, we have seen, asserted with great earnestness the tenet of a plenary and inalienable power in the human will to overcome sin. The destiny of the soul is thus placed in the soul itself. The power of free will (αὐτεξούσιον) cannot be lost, and if not exerted in this world, it still can be in the next; and under the full light of the eternal world, and the stimulus of suffering there experienced, nothing is more probable than that it will be exerted. Hence, in opposition to the catholic faith, Origen maintained the doctrine of the final restoration of all human souls. At the same time, he acknowledged that this doctrine might easily become dangerous to the unconverted, and sometimes speaks of an eternal condemnation, and the impossibility of conversion in the world to come. Yet, in close connection with this very statement, he calls the fear of eternal punishment a beneficial "deception" appointed by God. "For many wise men," he says, "or such as thought themselves wise, after having apprehended the real and absolute truth respecting endless punishment, and rejected the delusion, have given themselves up to a vicious life. So that it would have been much better for them to have continued in the delusion, and believed in the eternity of future punishment."<sup>2</sup> The views of Origen concerning future retribution were almost wholly confined to his school. Faint traces of a belief in the remission of punishments in the future world are visible in the writings of Didymus of Alexandria, and in Gregory Nyssa. The annihilation of the wicked was taught by Arnobius. With these exceptions, the Ancient Church held that the everlasting destiny of the human soul is decided in this earthly state.

The Mediaeval Church received the traditional doctrine respecting endless retribution. Heaven and hell were separated by an absolute and impassable gulf, but the intermediate space between them was subdivided into purgatory, which lies nearest to hell; the limbus infantum, where all unbaptized children remain; and the limbus patrum, which is the abode of the Old Testament saints, and the place to which Christ went to preach redemption to the spirits in prison. This last limbus was also called Abraham's bosom. Aquinas considers the torments of the damned to consist in useless repining

and murmuring. They can change neither for the better, nor for the worse. They hate God, and curse the state of the blessed. Mystics like Suso describe the misery of the lost, in the same vivid and sensuous phrase in which they depict the happiness of the saints. "O! separation, everlasting separation, how painful art thou! O! the wringing of hands! O! sobbing, sighing, and weeping, unceasing howling and lamenting, and yet never to be heard.... Give us a millstone, say the damned, as large as the whole earth, and so wide in circumference, as to touch the sky all around, and let a little bird come once in a hundred thousand years, and pick off a small particle of the stone, not larger than the tenth part of a grain of millet, after another hundred thousand years let him come again, so that in ten hundred thousand years he would pick off as much as a grain of millet, we wretched sinners would ask nothing but that when this stone has an end, our pains might also cease; yet even that cannot be!" The *Inferno* of Dante delineates the Mediaeval ideas of final retribution in letters of fire. The Dantean inscription upon the infernal gate: "Leave all hope behind, ye who enter here," expresses the sentiment of the Mediaeval Church, with scarcely an exception. Even the adventurous Scotus Erigena, though suggesting a revival of Origen's theory of the restitution of all things, did not deny the eternity of the punishments of hell. He attempted to combine both doctrines, by asserting the abolishment of evil considered as a kingdom, or a system, while yet it might continue to exist forever in certain incorrigible individuals.

The Modern Church has accepted the traditional faith upon this subject. In proportion as the inspiration and infallibility of Revelation have been conceded, the doctrine of an absolute and therefore endless punishment of sin has maintained itself,—it being impossible to eliminate the tenet from the Christian Scriptures, except by a mutilation of the canon, or a violently capricious exegesis. The denial of the eternity of future punishments, in modern times, has consequently been a characteristic of those parties and individuals who have rejected, either partially or entirely, the dogma of infallible inspiration.

# **BOOK SEVENTH:**

## **HISTORY OF SYMBOLS**

### **LITERATURE**

GUERICKE: Allgemeine Christliche Symbolik.

WINER: Comparative Darstellung des Lehrbegriffs der verschiedenen Christliche Kirchenparteien.

WALCH: Introductio in libros Ecclesiae Lutheranae symbolicos.

CALOVIVS: Synopsis Controversiarum.

HASE: Libri Symbolici Ecclesiae Evangelicae (Lutheran Symbols).

MEYER: Libri Symbolici Ecclesiae Lutheranae.

NIEMEYER: Collectio Confessionum in Ecclesiis Reformatis publicatorum (Calvinistic Symbols).

AUGUSTI: Corpus Librorum Symbolicorum (Calvinistic Symbols).

STREITWOLF: Libri Symbolici Ecclesiae Catholicae (Roman Catholic Symbols).

KIMMEL: Libri Symbolici Ecclesiae Orientalis (Greek Symbols).

# **CHAPTER I:**

## **ANCIENT AND MEDIAEVAL SYMBOLS**

### **1. Preliminary Statements**

THE subject of Symbolism naturally follows that of Special Dogmatic History. The construction of single doctrines by the thinking of the Church is succeeded by their combination into creeds and confessions of faith; and, therefore, the history of the first process should be completed by that of the second. The importance of this topic is apparent, in the first place, from its very close connection with that of systematic theology. It differs from it, as the process differs from the product; as the history of a science differs from the science itself. Theology constructs the compact and solid creed, while Symbolism gives an account of its plastic and flowing construction. The two subjects are therefore reciprocally related, and connected, by that great law of action and re-action which prevails in the mental world, as that of cause and effect does in the material. Hence, one serves to explain, verify, or modify, the other.

Again, the history of Creeds is important, because it imparts clear and precise conceptions of the differences between ecclesiastical denominations. Each particular branch of the Christian Church possesses its peculiarities, by virtue of which it is denominational and particular. It is sometimes difficult to specify this point of difference; so much so, that the hasty observer oftentimes concludes, from the general similarity in their religious experience, that there is really no difference between the doctrinal bases of all those denominations who "hold the head," and are properly called evangelical. The peculiarities of evangelical churches appear with



more distinctness in their creeds, than in their religious experience; and hence the scientific observer must leave the sphere of feeling and practice, and pass over into that of theory and dogmatic statement, in order to reach the real difference between the varieties of Christians. For there is a difference. Organizations cannot be founded, and, still less, maintained from age to age, upon mere fictions and imaginary differences. Tried by the test of exact dogmatic statement, there is a plain difference between the symbol of the Arminian, and that of the Calvinist; but tried by the test of practical piety and devout feeling, there is but little difference between the character of John Wesley and that of John Calvin. And this for two reasons. In the first place, the practical religious life is much more directly a product of the Holy Spirit, than is the speculative construction of Scripture truth. Piety is certainly the product of divine grace; but the creed is not so certainly formed under a divine illumination. Two Christians, being regenerated by one and the same Spirit, possess one and the same Christian character, and therefore, upon abstract principles, ought to adopt one and the same statement of Christian belief. On attempting its construction, however, they pass into the sphere of the human understanding, and of human science, and it is within this sphere that the divergence begins, and the foundation for denominational existence is laid. In the second place, the divergence is seen in the creed rather than in the character, because one mind is more successful in understanding and interpreting the Christian experience itself, than another is. Unquestionably, evangelical denominations would be much more nearly agreed in their dogmatic theology, if the power of accurate statement were equally possessed by all. But one individual Christian comprehends the Christian experience more clearly and profoundly than another, who yet, by virtue of his regeneration, is equally a subject of it; and, as a consequence, he comprehends the Scriptures more profoundly, and is better qualified than his fellow Christian to construct a clear, comprehensive, and self-consistent creed. All doctrinal history evinces, that just in proportion as evangelical believers come to possess a common scientific talent for expressing their common faith

and feeling, they draw nearer together so far as regards their symbolic literature. While, on the contrary, a slender power of self-reflection and analysis, together with a loose use of terms, drives minds far apart within the sphere of scientific theology who often melt and flow together within the sphere of Christian feeling and effort. Science unites and unifies wherever it prevails; for science is accuracy in terms, definitions, and statements.

In the third place, the history of Symbols is important, because it contributes to produce this talent of clear apprehension, and power of accurate statement. Symbolism affords a comparative view of creeds. It is therefore to theology, what comparative anatomy is to physical science, or comparative philology is to linguistic. When languages began to be compared with languages, many obscurities were cleared up which overhung the old method of investigating them, and the whole subject of definitions underwent a great improvement. The meaning of language became much more precise and full, than it had been, under this light thrown backwards and forwards, and in every direction, from a great number of languages investigated together. The same effect is produced by the comparative study of confessions of faith. Probably nothing in the way of means would do more to bring about that universal unity in doctrinal statement which has been floating as an ideal before the minds of men amidst the denominational distractions of Protestantism, than a more thorough and general acquaintance with the symbols of the various denominations, and the history of their origin and formation. There would be less misapprehension and misrepresentation of the views of other parties, which is one of the chief obstacles to uniformity in confessions of faith. The honest objections that trouble the minds of those who refuse to adopt a particular form of statement would be seen, and, thus, would be more likely to be answered, instead of overlooked or perhaps ridiculed. On all sides, and for all minds, more light would be poured upon the profound mysteries of a common Evangelical Christianity, if theologians were in the habit of looking over the whole field of symbolic literature, instead of merely confining themselves to the

examination of a single system. Such study would by no means result in destroying confidence in any one system, and induce that eclecticism which results in a mere aggregation that possesses no fundamental unity, and no self-subsistent force of its own. On the contrary, the theological mind would become immoveably settled in its conviction, that this or that confession of faith is the closest to Scripture data, and when asked for its symbol would exhibit it, and defend it. But, at the same time, this very confidence would beget calmness and moderation in dealing with a mind of different doctrinal views; and calmness and moderation do much toward bringing controversialists to that point of view where they see eye to eye.

## **2. Apostles' Creed**

The Apostle Peter, in his answer to the inquiry of Christ: "But whom say ye that I am?", made the first formal confession of faith under the Christian dispensation. The answer: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), was regarded by the Redeemer as the doctrinal basis of his kingdom upon earth; for "upon this rock,"—this cordial acknowledgment of his character and redeeming work,—he informed his disciples he would found his church.

A short and simple confession similar to this was made by the early converts to Christianity. The candidate for admission to the church, at his baptism, professed his faith in Christ as the Redeemer of the world. The eunuch baptized by Philip said solemnly, in connection with the administration of the rite: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts, 8:37.) Along with this recognition of the deity of Christ and his mediatorial work, admission into the church was also connected with a confession of belief in the doctrine of the trinity. The baptismal formula, which was invariably used, in accordance with the solemn and explicit command of Christ, naturally led to the adoption of this doctrine into the confession made by the new convert from Paganism or Judaism. And it would have been the deepest hypocrisy and dishonesty in the candidate for baptism, to

reject a doctrine that was taught and commended to him by the officiating minister, at the very moment of his reception into the church, and in the very phraseology of his initiation. In this way, the confession of faith made in the Apostolic age, by the neophyte, combined the doctrine of the trinity with that of the deity of Christ, and his mediatorial Person and work. This confession, at first, was exceedingly brief and simple, and not adopted by any formal action of the church in its public capacity,—for, as yet, general councils, or even local ones, were unknown. There is every reason, nevertheless, for believing that the practice of confessing one's faith was general and uniform among the churches. Paul reminds Timothy of the "good profession" which he had made before many witnesses (1 Tim. 6:12); and in 1 Tim. 3:16, there seems to be a summary that indicates a current creed-form. The concurrent testimony of the primitive Fathers goes to show that from the first, admission into the church was connected with the public acknowledgment of certain truths.

Out of these confessions, which each church adopted and used in the reception of its members, there was formed, at a very early date, what is called the Symbolum Apostolicum. The term σύμβολον, from συμβάλλειν (conferre), denotes that the formula was a collocation and combination. Rufinus, at the end of the 4th century, would find in this etymology the proof of the apostolic authorship of this creed. It was constructed, he maintained, out of matter which each one of the Apostles brought in, and threw into a common stock; σύμβολον ὅτι ἕκαστος συνέβαλε.

The objections to this view of Rufinus, which maintained itself down to the Reformation, that the Apostles formally and verbally drew up the creed which goes under their name, are the following. 1. No mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles, of any synod of the Apostles in which they composed a creed for the Christian Church,—a synod far too important to be unnoticed. 2. The Fathers of the first three centuries, in disputing with the heretics, while endeavoring to prove that the doctrine of this creed is apostolic in the sense of scriptural and true, never assert that the Apostles personally

composed it. Eusebius, for example, would certainly have cited it as the Apostles' work, if he had known or believed it to be theirs. 3. This creed is cited by the Primitive Fathers with minor variations. Some of them omit the clause relating to the "descent into hell;" others, those concerning the "communion of saints," and the "life everlasting." This they would not have ventured to do, had they known the creed to be an inspired document.

But that this symbol is of the very earliest antiquity cannot be doubted; and that it is apostolic in the sense of harmonizing with the Apostles' doctrine in Scripture, is equally clear. The words of Luther respecting it are lively. "This confession of faith we did not make or invent, nor did the Fathers before us; but as a bee collects honey from the beautiful and fragrant flowers of all sorts, so is this symbol briefly and accurately put together out of the books of the prophets and apostles, i.e. out of the whole sacred Scripture, for children and simple hearted Christians. It is called the Apostles' symbol or confession, because Christian truth could not possibly be put into a shorter and clearer statement than this. And it has been in the church from the beginning; since it was either composed by the Apostles themselves, or else brought together from their writings or preaching, by some of their best pupils."

The Apostles' Creed runs as follows: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting."

Several facts of great importance, in connection with the Apostles' Creed, are worthy of notice. 1. In the churches founded by the

Apostles and their pupils, a confession of faith, and therefore the formal adoption of a creed, was required of the candidate for admission to the church. 2. Although the department of scientific theology can hardly be said to have been formed, yet this oldest creed is very distinct concerning the essential doctrines of Christianity. The Apostles' Creed teaches the doctrine of the existence of God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; of the incarnation of the Son; of his atoning death; of his mediatorial power and kingdom; of the resurrection; and of the final judgment. 3. The Apostles' Creed is the earliest attempt of the Christian mind to systematize the teachings of Scripture, and is, consequently, the uninspired foundation upon which the whole after-structure of symbolic literature rests. All creed-development proceeds from this germ. Being little more than a collection of Scripture phraseology, it contains fewer speculative elements than the later creeds which the church was compelled to form by the counter-speculation of the human mind; and yet, because it is composed wholly of Scripture data, it is capable of an indefinite expansion by the scientific mind in all ages. 4. This symbol contributed indirectly to the collection and fixing of the Canon. In the 1st and 2d centuries, but very few copies of the gospels and epistles were in existence. The Ancient Church had no opportunity to peruse them as the Modern has, and, consequently, the entire Biblical knowledge of the common Christian of that period was obtained from the public reading and explanation of the religious assembly. It is easy to see that in such a condition of things, a brief compendium, or summary statement of the essential truths of Christianity, that could be committed to memory and repeated by all, would be the best substitute for the lack of manuscripts. Hence, the confession of faith that might pass from mouth to mouth, like the sacramentum of the ancient soldier. But in course of time, the heretical or schismatical parties who advanced doctrines contrary to those embodied in these brief creeds, and who appealed to the Scriptures for justification, compelled the catholic defenders of the simple original creed, to collect and fix the Canon, and to multiply copies of it. For, in order to make out his ease, the heretical or schismatical opponent of the creed cited mutilated or garbled

portions of the Scripture, or writings which like the apocryphal gospels and epistles could lay no claim to inspiration. In this way, the defence of the Apostolic Creed contributed to the spread and authority of the inspired writings themselves. 5. This earliest creed has been honoured and adopted more generally than any other single confession of faith, by all Christian denominations. It makes part of the liturgies of the various churches, and its doctrinal matter enters as a component into all the scientific creeds of Christendom.

### **3. Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Symbol**

The history already given of the formation of the doctrine of the Trinity renders a detailed account of this creed superfluous. This confession is closely confined to theology, or the doctrine of the Trinity and the Person of Christ; while the Apostles' Creed, though devoting more attention to this subject than to any other, yet makes statements respecting topics in Soteriology and Eschatology. There is no fundamental variance between the trinitarian statements of these two creeds. The Nicene symbol contains a fuller expansion of the doctrine of the Apostles' Creed, that God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This was necessitated, as was evinced in the history of Trinitarianism, by the defective or contradictory explanations given of the doctrine of the trinity. For it should be remembered, that men like Praxeas, Noetus, Beryl, and Sabellius, and even men like Arius, did not reject the doctrine of the trinity altogether and in flat terms, like the ancient Theodotian and the modern Socinian. They held to a trinity, and contended that their mode of apprehending the subject was both scriptural and ecclesiastical. They claimed that they themselves, and not their opponents, were putting the right construction upon the teachings of Scripture, and also upon those of the Apostles' Creed. They could do this last the more readily, because the Apostles' Creed does not employ explanatory and technical terms. The biblical terms, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were freely used by the Sabellian and Arian of early times, because they put a Monarchian or Arian construction upon them. Sabellius and Arius maintained that the Apostles' Creed was intended to be understood

in their sense, and hence did not object to it as a confession of faith; just as the modern Socinian interprets the doxologies of the New Testament and the baptismal formula, in accordance with his anti-trinitarian views, and does not altogether reject them as spurious portions of revelation. It became necessary, consequently, to define the doctrine with scientific precision, and to employ terms that could not by any possibility be taken in two senses. Here was the great power of the term ὁμοούσιον. Arians and Semi-Arians, alike, confessed their belief in "God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his Son, and in the Holy Ghost;" holding, however, that only to the first was the word deity properly applicable. But no honest Arian or Semi-Arian could confess his belief in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, accompanied with the explanatory definition of the Nicene symbol, that these three terms denote three distinct persons in one essence, each consubstantial with the others. An Arian could assent to the Scripture phraseology of the Apostolic Symbol as he understood it, but not as it was interpreted by the Nicene Council, as teaching that the Son is "very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father."

Hence the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Symbol introduces scientific conceptions, and technical terms, in order to preclude that possibility of two interpretations of language which was connected with the earlier symbol. And this is the principal difference between the earlier and the later creed. The Primitive Church, not yet troubled with heresy upon this subject, found in the simple untechnical creed all that its religious necessities required. The Later Church required, both for its scientific wants and its defensive and polemic purposes, a more elaborate and explanatory statement, in which the terms "essence," and "substance," and "hypostasis," and "personal subsistence," and the like, were used to define beyond possibility of misapprehension, or equivocation, or evasion, the terms Father, Son, and Spirit.

The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Symbol was the work of two oecumenical councils in 325 and 381, and had oecumenical authority



in both the Greek and Latin Churches, and in modern times is the received creed-statement among all trinitarian churches. For although doubts have been expressed by individual writers, respecting the tenet of "eternal generation," contained in the Nicene Symbol, this tenet has never been formally rejected by any trinitarian denomination.

#### **4. The Chalcedon Symbol**

It will be remembered, that the doctrine of the Person of Christ began to engage the speculative inquiry of the church, so soon as the doctrine of the Trinity had been established. Two councils, one at Ephesus in 431, and one at Chalcedon in 451, formed dogmatic statements upon this subject which have been regarded as biblical and authoritative by the church since that time, both Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern. The Ephesian creed condemned the Nestorian theory of two distinct persons in Christ, and re-affirmed in the place of it the old theory of one Person consisting of two natures. The Chalcedon creed condemned the Eutychian or Monophysite theory of but one nature in Christ, and re-affirmed the old theory of two natures in the unity of one Person. The results to which these two councils came are to this day regarded as correct, and the theological mind has not ventured beyond the positions established at this time, respecting the structure and composition of Christ's most mysterious Person,—a subject in some respects more baffling to speculation than that of the Trinity proper.

#### **5. Athanasian Creed (Symbolum Quicumque)**

The authorship of this creed is uncertain. Though Athanasian in its trinitarianism, it is generally conceded that Athanasius is not its author. It does not contain the word *ὁμοούσιον*, though it teaches the truth intended by this term. It also teaches the doctrine of the procession of the Spirit from both the Father and Son. These two peculiarities are evidence of a later origin than the time of Athanasius. For it is improbable that this theologian, in drawing up a

creed, would have omitted the term upon which the whole controversy in his day turned, or that he would have expressed himself so positively as does this symbol, in regard to the question of the procession of the Spirit, still mooted at that time even among the orthodox. The structure of the creed would indicate that it was drawn up at a later date, in order to furnish a symbol that would be received by both the Eastern and Western Churches. Hence it omits the term  $\delta\mu\omicron\upsilon\beta\omicron\sigma\iota\omicron\nu$ , while it retains the thing, in order to propitiate the Eastern bishops who feared Sabellianism, and teaches the procession of the Spirit from both Father and Son, to meet the views of the Western Church. This creed also contains the results of the Ephesian and Chalcedonian councils respecting the Person of Christ,—a fact which goes to prove an origin later than the time of Athanasius. It is most probable that it originated in the Western Church, and in the school of Augustine and Hilary, whose trinitarianism it embodies. The Athanasian creed was current among the French churches in the 9th century, and in the 10th century was somewhat used in Italy, and in those churches which were under the influence of Rome, particularly the English. It never prevailed to much extent among the Greek and Oriental Churches.

## **6. Recapitulatory Survey**

Casting a glance backward over the history of Symbols anterior to the Reformation, we find that the confessions of faith constructed by the Church are few in number, considering the length of the period included, and are inferior as to comprehensiveness. Only four symbols, (perhaps we might say three, for the Athanasian creed is substantially the same with the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan,) were the product of fifteen hundred years. Of these, only the first one covers the whole field of systematic divinity,—the others being confined to the departments of trinitarianism and christology. And even the Apostles' Creed makes the doctrine of the trinity by far the most prominent of Christian doctrines; presenting less distinct, and to some degree, only implied statements respecting the topics of sin and redemption. The history of Symbols, then, previous to the

Reformation, shows that while the Church was diligent and careful in constructing the doctrine of the trinity, and its cognate truths, it was comparatively negligent in regard to the doctrines of anthropology and soteriology. The results to which the catholic mind came in investigating the doctrines of theology and christology were carefully and fully expressed in a creed form, and as a consequence we find that the trinitarian heresies of Sabellianism on the one hand, and of Arianism on the other, did not trouble the Church, even though it grew more and more corrupt in faith and practice. The Papal Church is orthodox to this day, upon the doctrine of the trinity and the Person of Christ. But the results to which the catholic mind came, during the first four centuries, in investigating the doctrines of anthropology and soteriology, were not thus carefully enunciated and fixed in a creed-form. The controversy between Augustine and Pelagius, though it resulted in a body of clear and profound discussion of the very first importance to theological science in all time, did not result in the announcement of any distinct and definite symbol. Hence, there was no barrier, of a theoretical kind, to the entrance of the Pelagian theory of sin, and the legalistic theory of justification, which, are characteristic of the Papal as distinguished from the Primitive and Patristic Churches. It is indeed true, that a creed enunciating the Augustinian anthropology as distinctly and unequivocally as the Nicene Symbol does the Athanasian theology would not necessarily have prevented the Church from lapsing into that defective view of human nature which appears in the Tridentine system. The doctrine of sin is more immediately practical than that of the trinity, though not more so ultimately. Deterioration in doctrine is more likely to commence in anthropology than in theology, and is more difficult of prevention, because of certain well-known tendencies of human nature. Still, it is plain that a theoretical barrier to error is better than none at all, and is certainly better than a theoretical barrier to truth. If those few advocates of the true Scripture doctrine, who appear here and there in those darkening centuries which intervene between John of Damascus and the forerunners of the Reformation, could have fortified themselves by an appeal to a symbol of authority and antiquity, in which the moral

state and condition of man were distinctly represented in opposition to the Pelagian views that were becoming dominant in the Latin Church, their protest against error would have been much more effective than it was. And the same is true in reference to the doctrine of justification by faith. It would have been more difficult to have constructed a satisfactory symbol concerning this doctrine than that of sin, owing to that confusion of justification and sanctification which, we have seen, vitiates to some extent the soteriology of Augustine himself. But if a clear evangelical statement of this great truth, such as meets us in the symbolic literature of the Reformation, could have been made and authorized in the 4th century, it is certain that it would have exerted a great influence upon minds so disposed as were those of the Middle Ages to respect authority. It is not to be asserted, that of itself it would have prevented the corruption and heresy of the Papal Church upon this subject. A higher Power, alone, working in the heart, could have prevented this, and preserved the primitive faith. But the symbol would have been a nucleus and support for those few who stood firm, and at any rate a standing witness of decline and corruption in doctrine, and a loud protest against it. It is to this day, an advantage to the Romish polemic, and a disadvantage to the Protestant, that the latter cannot point his adversary to a symbol of the first four centuries which is as distinct and Scriptural upon the subjects of sin and justification, as the Nicene Symbol is upon that of the trinity.

## **CHAPTER II:**

### **MODERN SYMBOLS**

#### **1. Lutheran Confessions**

THE period of the Reformation is richer in its symbolic literature, than any other one in the history of the Church. After the first conflict and fermentation of the religious elements was over, the ecclesiastical mind, being now purified from the false and anti-Christian doctrines of the Papacy, felt the need of a clear and scientific statement of the results to which it had arrived. And inasmuch as the Protestants became divided among themselves upon minor and unessential points, though agreeing perfectly in their estimate of the Roman Church and system, a great number of creeds and symbols was called into existence, by the endeavor of each party to explain its own sentiments, and to justify its own position. It is for this reason, that the inquirer will find in this age by far the most massive and solid part of Christian Symbolism. The denominations of Modern Protestantism derive their creed-forms, either directly or indirectly, from this fertile period.

The Lutheran Church adopted with decision, the results to which the Patristic Church had come in the departments of theology and christology. The Apostles' Creed, together with the Nicene and Athanasian, were laid down as the foundation of the symbol which was to consolidate the new evangelical church into one external unity, in opposition to that of Rome. But the doctrines of sin and redemption had been left, to some extent, undeveloped by the Patristic mind, and entirely without definite symbolic statement, and had been misstated by the Papal mind at Trent; and hence the principal part of the new and original work of the Lutheran divine was connected with these.

Of all the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, the most important, as well as the first in time, is the Augsburg Confession, sometimes denominated the *Confessio Augusta*, from the term *augusta*, or *augustissima* applied to it because it was drawn up under the sanction and authority of the imperial diet.

Nearly fifteen years had elapsed since Luther had made his first public appearance as a reformer, by nailing up his ninety-five theses

upon the door of the church at Wittenberg (A.D. 1517), and yet the Protestant Church had no public and received confession of its common faith. This was first made at the diet at Augsburg in 1530. There had, however, been some preparation made for the construction and adoption of this important symbol. The steps that were previously taken are interesting, and evince the wise and prudent manner in which the leading minds of that stormy and excitable period of reform proceeded, when laying the dogmatic foundations of the future church.

The process began with a commission from John, Prince of Saxony, given in March, 1530, to his favourite theologians, Luther, Justus Jonas, Bugenhagen, and Melanchthon, to prepare a series of succinct and comprehensive articles to be discussed and defended as the Protestant form of doctrine. These theologians joined on upon work that had already been performed by one of their number. In the preceding year (1529), Luther, at a convention, of Protestants at Schwabach, had proposed 17 articles to be adopted as the doctrinal bond of union. These articles, this body of commissioners appointed by Prince John adopted, and having added to their number some new ones that had respect to certain ecclesiastical abuses, presented the whole to the crown prince in Torgau, in March, 1530. Hence, they are sometimes denominated the Articles of Torgau. This draft of a confession was then brought before the imperial diet at Augsburg, for examination and adoption. Here, it received revision, and some slight modifications, under the leadership of Melanchthon, who was present at the discussions before the diet, and who was aided during the progress of the debate by the advice and concurrence of Luther, then in Coburg, in a free and full correspondence. The symbol having been formed in this manner was subscribed by the princes and authorities of the Protestant interest, and in their name publicly read in German before the imperial assembly, and a copy in both German and Latin presented to the emperor. The Augsburg Confession thus became the authorized doctrinal basis of Protestantism in Germany.

The general tone and spirit of this first creed of the Reformation is a union of firmness and mildness. The characteristics of Luther and Melancthon, the two minds most concerned in its formation, are harmoniously blended in it. It is divided into two parts; the one, positive and didactic in its contents, the other negative and polemic. The first division is composed of 21 articles, in which the positive doctrines of Scripture are enunciated as the Lutherans understood and confessed them, in connection, moreover, with an express condemnation of those unevangelical and heretical views and tendencies which were already beginning to appear within Protestantism itself. The second division is composed of 7 articles, directed against those errors of the Romish ritual and worship which the Lutherans rejected,—viz., the refusal of the cup to the laity; the prohibition of the marriage of priests; the superstitious use of the mass; auricular confession; meritorious fasts; monastic vows; and the union of ecclesiastical with secular power in the office of bishop.

An analysis of the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession yields the following particulars. In theology, this symbol enunciates the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan trinitarianism, and the Chalcedon christology. In anthropology, it adopts the Augustinian theory, as the following extracts show. "The churches teach that after the fall of Adam all men propagated according to ordinary generation are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence, and that this disease (*morbus*) or original vitiosity is truly sin, damning, and bringing eternal death upon those who are not regenerated by baptism and the Holy Spirit. The churches also condemn the Pelagians and others who deny this original vitiosity (*vitium originis*) to be sin."

Respecting the degree and intensity of sin, and its effect upon the human will, the Augsburg Confession teaches the following. "The churches teach that the human will has some liberty, sufficient for attaining morality and choosing things that appear reasonable (*ad efficiendam civilem justitiam et deligendas res rationi subjectas*). But it has not the power, without the Spirit of God, of attaining holiness

or spiritual excellence (*efficiandae justitiae dei, seu justitiae spiritualis*), because the carnal man does not perceive those things that are spiritual (1 Cor. 2:14). This Augustine says in the same words, 'We acknowledge that free will is in all men; that it has, indeed, a rational judgment, by means of which it is able to begin and to finish without God's grace not those things which pertain to God, but only those works which pertain to this present life, the good as well as the bad,—the good I say, meaning those which are in their place right and proper; e.g. to will to work in the field, to will to eat and drink, to will to have a friend, to will to have clothes, to will to build a house, to will to marry a wife, to will to raise cattle, to learn an art, or whatever good it may be that pertains to this present life.' The churches also condemn the Pelagians and others who teach, that without the Holy Spirit, by natural powers alone, we are able to love God supremely." This Confession, then, exhibits the Latin in distinction from the Greek anthropology, and favours the monergistic theory of regeneration.

In its soteriology, the Augsburg Confession, as would be expected, is eminently evangelical. "The churches teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own power, merit, or works, but are justified on account of Christ, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favour and their sins are remitted for Christ's sake, who made satisfaction for our sins by his death. This faith God imputes for righteousness before Him (Rom. 3 and 4)." After alluding to the alteration made by the Papists in their statement of the doctrine of good works,—viz., that man is justified not by works alone, nor by faith alone, but by faith and works together, which is the Tridentine theory,—the Confession proceeds to speak thus concerning good works: "Our good works cannot reconcile God, or merit remission of sins, grace, and justification, but we obtain all these by faith alone; by believing that we are received into favour for the sake of Christ, who alone is the mediator and propitiation by which the Father is reconciled. This doctrine respecting faith is everywhere taught by Paul 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, &c.' ... Our



churches also teach that it is necessary to perform good works, not however in order to merit pardon and remission of sins, but because God wills and commands them."

In its eschatology, the Augsburg Confession enunciates the catholic doctrine concerning future retribution and the second advent of Christ. "The churches condemn the Anabaptists, who are of opinion that there will be an end to the punishment of lost men and devils. They likewise condemn those who are disseminating Jewish opinions, that prior to the resurrection of the dead the saints are to possess the kingdoms of the world, the wicked being everywhere overcome" (oppressis).

Though decidedly Protestant upon the cardinal doctrines, the Augsburg Confession contains some remnants of that unscriptural system against which it was such a powerful and earnest protest. These Popish elements are found in those portions particularly which treat of the sacraments; and more particularly in that article which defines the sacrament of the Supper. In Article XIII., the Augsburg Confession is careful to condemn the popish theory, that the sacraments are efficacious "ex opere operato,"—that is, by their intrinsic efficacy, without regard to faith in the recipient, or to the operation of the Holy Spirit,—but when in Article X. it treats of the Lord's Supper, it teaches that "the body and blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who partake of the Supper." This doctrine of Consubstantiation, according to which there are two factors,—viz., the material bread and wine, and the immaterial or spiritual body of Christ,—united or consubstantiated in the consecrated sacramental symbols, does not differ in kind from the Papist doctrine of Transubstantiation, according to which there is indeed but one element in the consecrated symbol, but that is the very body and blood of Christ into which the bread and wine have been transmuted. The Lutheran theory, like the Popish, promotes a superstitious feeling in reference to the Eucharist, and does much towards nullifying the meaning and effect of Article XIII., in which a magical effect ex opere operato is denied to the sacraments.

Another feature in this symbol evincing that the riddance of Papal errors was not complete, is the point of Absolution. Article XII. thus defines it. "Repentance properly consists of these two parts; the first is contrition, or the terrors of an awakened conscience, together with the acknowledgment of sin; the second is faith, which is conceived by an apprehension of the gospel promise, or by absolution, and which believes that the individual's sin is remitted on account of Christ, consoles the conscience, and delivers from fear." By "absolution" is meant the official declaration of the clergyman to the penitent that his sins are forgiven him, upon finding or believing that he is exercising a godly sorrow, and is trusting in the blood of Christ. The creed adopts this practice from the custom of the Roman Catholic Church, and like this finds its warrant for it in the words of Christ: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). In their explanation and defense of the Augsburg Confession, entitled *Apologia Confessionis*, the Lutheran divines, speaking of this power of the keys, say: "And since God really renews the soul by his word, the keys really remit sin, according to Luke 10:16: 'He that heareth you heareth me.' Wherefore the voice of him who gives absolution is to be believed not otherwise than as a voice sounding from heaven." Now, although this act of absolution is merely declarative, and the most thoroughly evangelical view is taken of the ground and cause of the remission of sins, it is evident that this act and practice puts the penitent into wrong relations to the church and the clergy, and paves the way for the distinctively Papal theory upon these points. It is true, indeed, that if there be godly sorrow for sin and a hearty faith in the work of Christ, the soul is forgiven; but no human authority can pronounce a person to be actually pardoned, and absolve him as such, without pronouncing at the same time, by implication, that the said person is truly penitent and believing,—a fact that cannot be unqualifiedly asserted by any but the Searcher of hearts. In retaining this power of absolution, and in exercising it, the Lutheran Church unintentionally tempted its members to an undue reliance upon a human decision, and drew them away from a simple trust upon the work of Christ, contrary to its own theory and faith.

In the year 1540, ten years after the adoption of the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon put forth an edition of the symbol, in Latin, which goes under the name of the *variata*,—the original edition being denominated the *invariata*. The changes introduced into it by Melanchthon relate to the subjects of regeneration and the sacraments. Melanchthon, as the controversy went on between the Lutherans and the Calvinists, became more and more inclined to synergism. The original Confession, as we have seen in the history of anthropology, was decidedly monergistic, but the altered edition leans to the theory of co-operation in regeneration. With respect to the sacraments, it inclines to the Calvinistic theory, showing the reaction against the Semi-Popish theory of consubstantiation. The original unaltered Confession, alone, has symbolical authority in the Lutheran Church; but parties and individuals within it have received the *Confessio variata* with favour. The influence of Melanchthon's synergism is very apparent in some of the Lutheran theologians of Germany of the present generation, in the assertion of the existence of a recipiency, or preparation for the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is referred to the instinctive strivings of the human soul by virtue of its divine origin. The adoption of this view shows itself in decided opposition to the Augustino-Calvinistic doctrines of election and predestination, and a strongly polemic attitude towards the Calvinistic system.

The next document possessing symbolical authority in the Lutheran Church is the *Apologia Confessionis*.

The Protestants having thus put forth the Augsburg Confession as the summary of their belief, the Papal theologians who were present at the diet were summoned by the emperor Charles V. to prepare a critical examination and refutation of it. This they did in a document entitled *Confutatio Confessionis Augustanae*, which was read in the imperial assembly on the 3d of August, 1530. The emperor approved it, and demanded that the Protestants should return to the doctrinal basis of the Catholic Church. They asked for a copy of the *Confutation*, for examination, which was refused. Melanchthon then

entered upon a detailed refutation of the *Confutatio*, so far as he could reconstruct the document from his own recollection on hearing it read, and from notes that had been taken by others who were present at the reading,—afterwards revising and perfecting his work, by the aid of an authentic copy of the Papal treatise that finally came into his possession. This defence of the Augsburg Confession contains an expansion of the dogmatic positions of this document, together with some attacks upon the Papal system; although the work, as a whole, breathes the mildness and moderation of the peace-loving theologian who composed it. In doctrinal respects, it is even more decided than the original Confession, particularly upon the two points most at issue between Protestants and Papists, viz.: sin and justification.

The Protestants proposed to present this Apology at the diet held on Sept. 22d, 1530; but the emperor declared that he would neither hear, nor receive, any more documents from the Protestants. Thus, the Apology received no public adoption at that time. It was from the first, however, regarded by the Protestant theologians as a symbolical document, and in 1537 was subscribed as such by them at Smalcald. In connection with the Augsburg Confession, it constitutes the sum and substance of the Lutheran theology, and both together constitute the doctrinal basis of the Lutheran Church.

The results to which the Protestants had come in these two productions were wrought over, and presented at other times, before other bodies, and in other forms, according as the interests of the Protestants required. In this way, a series of symbolical writings resulted which constitute a part of Lutheran Symbolism. The following are the most important of these. 1. The *Confessio Saxonica*, or *Repetitio Confessionis Augustanae*, was drawn up by Melanchthon for the use of the Council of Trent, in 1551, and is a repetition of the Augsburg Confession, as the title indicates. 2. The *Confessio Wurtembergica* was composed by Brenz for the use of the same council, in 1552. 3. The Articles of Smalcald were drawn up by Luther in 1536, and subscribed by the evangelical theologians, in

February, 1537. They contain, in substance, the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, presented in a decidedly polemic form. For their purpose was both defensive and aggressive. By this time, the Protestant cause had become strong politically as well as morally, and when the pope, at the suggestion of the emperor, sought to call a general council at Mantua, in 1537, these Articles served to consolidate the Protestant opposition, and to prevent the Protestant churches from taking any part in an ecclesiastical assembly in which their own opinions were already condemned beforehand. In the second part of these Articles, Luther, with his characteristic energy, attacks the claims of the pope to be a universal bishop, as contrary to the nature and spirit of the true evangelical church. Melanchthon signed the articles with the conciliatory remark, that he for himself should be willing to concede to the pope the bishopric of bishops *jure humano*, and on the ground of past usage and for the sake of peace, if the pope would concede evangelical doctrine to the Protestants. This disturbed the mind of the earnest reformer, who saw that reconciliation with Rome was now impossible and undesirable, and on parting with Melanchthon, after the convention at Smalcald, Luther left him the blessing: "May God fill you with hatred of the pope." 4. Luther's two Catechisms, Major and Minor, were published in 1529,—the first for the use of preachers and teachers, the last a guide in the instruction of youth. These, it will be noticed, were published before the Augsburg Confession. 5. The Formula Concordiae was drawn up by Andreä and others, in 1577, and presented to the Elector Augustus, who sought to secure its adoption by the entire Lutheran Church. In this he was unsuccessful. It is a polemic document, constructed by that portion of the Lutheran Church that was hostile to the Calvinistic theory of the sacraments. It carries out the doctrine of consubstantiation into a technical statement,—teaching the ubiquity of Christ's body, and the *communicatio idiomatum*, or the presence of the Divine nature of Christ in the sacramental elements. The Lutheran Church is still divided upon this symbol. The so-called High Lutherans insist that the Formula Concordiae is the scientific completion of the preceding

Lutheran symbolism; while the moderate party are content to stand by the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, and the Smalcald Articles.

## **2. Reformed (Calvinistic) Confessions**

The Reformed, or Calvinistic, Churches were less successful than the Lutheran in maintaining an outward and visible unity, and one consequence is a much more varied symbolical literature.

The oldest Confession of that branch of Protestantism which was not satisfied with the Lutheran tendency and symbol is the *Confessio Tetrapolitana*,—so called, because the theologians of four cities of upper Germany, Strasburg, Costnitz, Memmingen, and Lindau, drew it up, and presented it to the emperor at the same diet of Augsburg, in 1530, at which the first Lutheran symbol was presented. The principal theologian concerned in its construction was Martin Bucer, of Strasburgh. It consists of 22 articles, and agrees generally with the Augsburg Confession. The points of difference pertain to the doctrine of the sacraments. Upon this subject it is Zuinglian. These four cities, however, in 1532 adopted the Augsburg Confession, so that the *Confessio Tetrapolitana* ceased to be the formally adopted symbol of any branch of the church, although it was always held in high repute among the Swiss churches, particularly on account of its Zuinglian attitude upon the sacramental controversy. And this brings us to the views of Zuingle himself, who exerted a great influence upon the Reformed Churches, in the opening period of Protestantism.

Zuingle sent a confession of faith, entitled *Fidei Ratio*, embodying his own individual opinions, to that notable diet at Augsburg in 1530, where so many religious parties and interests were represented. Previously to this, Zuingle had exhibited his views in sixty-seven articles drawn up in 1523, but almost wholly upon points pertaining to the externals of Christianity, and particularly the sacraments. But in this document he discussed the cardinal subjects of religion, and laid the foundation of that peculiar aspect of Protestantism which goes under his name.

On examination, this creed is found to differ from the Augsburg Symbol. 1. Upon the subject of original sin, the language of Zuingle is as follows. "I think this in regard to original sin. That is properly sin which is a transgression of the law; for where there is no law, there is no transgression; and where there is no transgression, there is no sin properly so called,—that is to say, so far as by sin is meant wickedness, crime, villainy, or guilt. I acknowledge, therefore, that our father sinned a sin that is truly sin, i.e., wickedness, crime, and turpitude. But those who are generated from that person did not sin in this manner; for what one of us bit with his teeth the forbidden apple in Paradise? Hence, whether we will or not, we are compelled to admit that original sin, as it is in the sons of Adam, is not truly sin, in the sense already spoken of, for it is not a crime committed against law. Consequently, it is, properly speaking, a disease and a condition. A disease, because, as he lapsed from love of himself, so also do we lapse; a condition, because, as he became a slave and obnoxious to death, so also we are born slaves and children of wrath, and obnoxious to death.... Adam died on account of sin, and being thus dead, that is sentenced to death, in this condition he generated us. Therefore we also die,—so far as he is concerned, by his fault and criminality; but so far as we are concerned, by our condition and disease, or, if you prefer, sin, but sin improperly so called. Let us illustrate by an example. A man is taken captive in war. On the ground of his own hostility to his captors, and treachery towards them, he deserves to be made a slave, and is so held. Now, they who are born of him in this condition are slaves, not by virtue of their own fault, guilt, or crime, but by virtue of their condition, which condition is the consequence of the guilt of their father, who had deserved to come into it by his fault. The children in this instance are not laden with crime, but with the punishment, fine, loss, or danger of crime,—i.e., with a wretched condition, a servitude." The difference between Zuingle's theory of original sin, and that of Luther and his associates as exhibited in the extracts given from the Augsburg Confession, is apparent. It is the reappearance of the old difference between the Greek and Latin anthropologies, upon this subject. 2. The second principal point of difference between Zuingle's Fidei Ratio, and the

Augsburg Confession, relates to the sacrament of the Supper. Zuingle's mind was a remarkably clear one, and made distinctions with great luminousness. Respecting the Romish theory, that there is an intrinsic efficacy in the sensible sign and material symbol, he makes the same general statement with the Lutheran confession, only in a more vivid and keen style. "I believe," he says, "nay I know, that all sacraments, so far from conferring grace, do not even bring or dispense it. In this, O Cæsar, I may perhaps seem to you to be too bold and confident. But this is my opinion. For inasmuch as grace comes, or is given, by the Divine Spirit, the entire gift of grace in the end is resolved into the influence of the Holy Ghost alone. For a vehicle or guide is not necessary to the Spirit; for that is the real virtue and power in any instance which conveys or moves other things, and not that which needs to be conveyed or moved. We never read in the Scriptures that sensible and material things, such as the sacraments are, certainly and in every instance convey the Holy Spirit; but if sensible things, are themselves ever conveyed and made operative by the Spirit, then it is this Spirit, and not the sensible thing, that is the ultimate efficient energy. If, when the mighty wind rushed onward, the tongues of flame were borne onward by the wind, then the wind was not lifted and conveyed by the tongues of flame. So, likewise, it was the wind that brought the quails and blew away the locusts; but no quails or locusts ever possessed such wings as to bear onward the winds."

To the sacrament of the Supper, Zuingle applies the principle thus stated and illustrated, with great energy and decision, in such a manner as to exclude both the theory of consubstantiation and transubstantiation. His reasoning is full and detailed. He argues from scripture, from reason, and from history; and maintains that view of the eucharist which is now widely prevalent in the Protestant churches. "I believe," he says, "that in the eucharist the body of Christ is truly present to the eye of faith,—that is, that those who thank God for the benefits conferred in Christ do acknowledge that he assumed real human flesh, really suffered in it, really washed away our sins by his blood, and thus all that was done by Christ



becomes, as it were, a present reality to those who behold these symbols with the eye of faith. But that the body of Christ is present in essence and real substance,—in other words, that the natural body of Christ is present in the Supper, and is masticated by our teeth, as the Papists and certain persons who look back to the flesh pots of Egypt assert,—we not only deny, but affirm to be contrary to the word of God." Zuingli concludes with specifying the particulars in respect to which the bread and wine are symbolical, and his whole theory may be summed up in the statement, that the sacrament is commemorative by means of emblems.

The *Fidei Ratio* of Zuingli was the work of an individual mind, and as such bears a private and not a public character. Though not adopted by any secular or ecclesiastical body, it nevertheless exerted great influence among the Swiss churches, and upon one branch of the Reformed doctrine. In this same year, 1530, Zuingli also drew up, for the use of the Swiss, a briefer statement of doctrine, substantially the same with the *Fidei Ratio*, under the title of *Fidei brevis et clara Expositio*.

The Zuinglian system prevailed in the Swiss cantons, and especially in the city of Basle and its neighbouring ally Mühlhausen. Oswald Myconius drew up, as early as 1532, a Confession in twelve articles, after a sketch which Oecolampadius had made, which goes under the name of the First Basle Confession (*Basiliensis prior Confessio Fidei*). The cities of Basle and Mühlhausen adopted it, but it never obtained general currency. It is a brief and simple creed in its structure, presenting with distinctness the evangelical view of justification and the sacraments, and is considerably reserved respecting the more speculative aspects of Christian doctrine. Concerning the character of man, it speaks as follows: "We confess that man in the beginning was made upright, after the image of God's righteousness and holiness, but that he has fallen wilfully into sin, by which the whole human race has become corrupt and subject to condemnation, our nature has been weakened, and has acquired

such an inclination to sin, that whenever it is not restored by the Spirit of God, the man of himself never will do anything good."

The most important of all the Reformed Confessions that were constructed previous to the public appearance of Calvin, is the First Helvetic Confession (*Confessio Helvetica Prior*), sometimes denominated the Second Basle Confession. It originated as follows. In the year 1535, the most distinguished Reformed theologians of Switzerland assembled at Aarau, to counsel with reference to a union with the Lutherans of Germany. The first step to be taken in order to this was, of course, to draw up a creed expressive of their own views, and indicating how far they could go towards meeting the Lutherans upon controverted points. In 1536, deputies were sent for this purpose, from Basle, Zurich, Berne, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Mühlhausen, and Biel. They met in Basle, and appointed three theologians of their number to draft a confession of faith. These three were Bullinger of Zurich, Oswald Myconius and Simon Grynaeus of Basle, with whom were afterwards associated Judä of Zurich, and Groszman of Berne. This confession was subscribed March 26, 1536, by the authorities secular and ecclesiastical of the seven above-named cantons, and was adopted by all the Reformed cantons of Switzerland as their symbol. In 1537, it was sent to the Lutheran theologians at Wurtemberg, and at Smalcald, without effect, however, so far as the union of the two parties was concerned.

The First Helvetic Confession is pacific in its tone. When compared with the views of Zuingli, it is easy to see that the Swiss theologians advanced toward the Augsburg Confession in no inconsiderable degree, without, however, taking exactly the same position respecting the controverted points. Its language upon the subject of original sin is as follows. "Man, the most perfect image of God on the earth, and having the primacy of all visible creatures, consisting of soul and body, of which the last is mortal and the first immortal, having been created holy by God, lapsing into sin (*vitium*) by his own fault, drew the whole human race into the same with himself, and rendered it obnoxious to the same calamity. And this disease (*lues*)

which is termed 'original,' so pervaded the whole human race, that the child of wrath and enemy of God can be cured by no power except the divine granted through Christ. We attribute free will to man in this sense, viz.: that when in the use of our faculties of knowing and willing we attempt to perform good and evil actions, we are able to perform the evil of our own accord and by our own power, but to embrace and follow out the good we are not able, unless illuminated by the grace of Christ, and impelled by his Spirit, for it is God who works in us to will and to do according to his good pleasure; and from God is salvation, from ourselves perdition."

In its anthropology, then, the First Helvetic Confession agrees with the Augsburg in recognizing the Adamic connection. It differs from the Augsburg Symbol, in asserting by implication instead of directly, that original sin is guilt, and agrees with it in denying a recuperative power in the fallen will,—a point upon which Zuingli's *Fidei Ratio* is silent, neither affirming nor denying. The approximation of this principal Swiss Confession to the Lutheran is not so near upon the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, though it is easy to see some slight modification of the Zuinglian theory. The phraseology is as follows. "In the mystic supper, the Lord offers his body and blood, that is, himself, to those that are truly his, that they may live more and more in him and he in them. Not that the bread and wine are, in their own substance, united with the substance of the body and blood of the Lord; but the bread and wine, by the institution of our Lord, are symbols through which is exhibited a true communication by the Lord himself, through the ministers of the church, of his own body and blood, not as the perishing food of the flesh, but as the nourishment of eternal life."

The Reformed Confessions thus far examined were constructed previously to the public appearance of Calvin, and without any direct influence from him. We come now to those which were drawn up, more or less, under his influence. The *Consensus Tigurinus* was composed by Calvin himself, in 1549, and was adopted by the Zurich theologians. It comprises twenty-six articles, which treat only of the

sacrament of the Supper. It grew out of a desire upon the part of Calvin, to effect a union among the Reformed upon the doctrine of the Eucharist. The attitude of Calvin respecting the Sacramentarian question was regarded by the Lutherans, as favourable rather than otherwise to their peculiar views. His close and cordial agreement with Luther upon the fundamental points in theology, together with the strength of his phraseology when speaking of the nature of the Eucharist, led the Swiss Zuinglians to deem him as on the whole further from them than from their opponents. In this Consensus Tigurinus, he defines his statements more distinctly, and left no doubt in the minds of the Zurichers that he adopted heartily the spiritual and symbolical theory of the Lord's Supper. The course of events afterwards showed that Calvin's theory really harmonized with Zuingle's; for as the Lutheran scheme of consubstantiation expanded, the two parties became less and less cordial, so that the High Lutheran of the present day exhibits a temper towards the Calvinistic theory of the sacraments hardly less inimical than that which the early Lutheran manifested towards the Papacy.

Calvin, in 1551, drew up a confession entitled the Consensus Genevensis, which contains a very full exhibition of his theory of Predestination, to which topic it is confined. Its purpose was, to unite the Swiss churches in the reception of his own views, upon a topic far more difficult of comprehension than the sacraments, and respecting which there was some difference of opinion among the Swiss theologians. Zuingle had taught the doctrine of absolute predestination, and so far as his views had prevailed in Switzerland there was a readiness to receive those of Calvin. In this Consensus, which the Genevan theologians adopted, and which acquired almost universal authority among the Reformed churches of Switzerland, the Calvinistic theory of Predestination is presented with great clearness and comprehensiveness.

The Second Helvetic Confession (*Confessio Helvetica Posterior*) is one of the principal symbols of the Reformed Church. It was constructed by Bullinger, in 1564, who was intrusted with this labour

by a body of Swiss theologians, mostly from the cantons of Zurich, Berne, and Geneva. It was adopted by all the Reformed churches in Switzerland, with the exception of Basle (which was content with its old symbol, the First Helvetic), and by the Reformed churches in Poland, Hungary, Scotland, and France. It enunciates the strictly Calvinistic view of the sacraments in opposition to the Lutheran view, and maintains the Calvinistic theory of predestination. As this creed represents the theology of that great division of Protestantism which received its first formation under the guidance of Zuingli and the Swiss theologians, and was completed under that of Calvin and his coadjutors, it merits some detailed examination.

1. Upon the doctrine of the Trinity, its teaching is as follows. "We believe that God, one and indivisible in essence, is, without division or confusion, distinct in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so that the Father generates the Son from eternity, the Son is begotten by an ineffable generation, but the Holy Spirit proceeds from each, and that from eternity, and is to be adored together with each, so that there are not three Gods, but three persons, consubstantial, co-eternal, and co-equal, distinct as hypostases, and one having precedence of another as to order, but with no inequality as to essence." 2. Respecting the doctrines of Predestination and Election, the Helvetic statement is as follows. "God, from eternity, predestinated or elected, freely and of his own mere grace, with no respect of men's character, the saints whom he would save in Christ, according to that saying of the apostle: 'God chose us in himself before the foundation of the world.' Not without a medium, though not on account of any merit of ours. In Christ, and on account of Christ, God elected us, so that they who are engrafted in Christ by faith are the elect, but those out of Christ are the reprobate."<sup>2</sup> 3. Upon the topics of Sin, Free Will, and Justification, the Helvetic Confession makes the following statements. "Sin we understand to be that native corruption of man, derived or propagated to us all from our first parents, by which, immersed in evil concupiscence and averse from good, but prone to all evil, full of all wickedness, unbelief, contempt and hatred of God, we are unable to do or even to

think anything good of ourselves. In the unrenewed man there is no free will to do good, no power for performing good. The Lord in the gospel says, 'Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.' The apostle Paul says, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' " "Justification, in the meaning of the apostle, signifies remission of sins, absolution from guilt and punishment, reception into favour, and pronouncing just,"—all upon the ground of the fact, that "Christ took the sins of the world upon himself, endured their punishment, and satisfied divine justice."<sup>2</sup> Concerning the Eucharist, this symbol is Zuinglian. It teaches that the elements are signs,—not vulgar or common, but "sacred" "consecrated" emblems. "He who instituted the Supper, and commanded us to eat bread and drink wine, willed that believers should not perceive the bread and wine only, without any sense of the mystery (*sine mysterio*), as they eat bread at home, but they should partake spiritually of the things signified, i.e. be washed from their sins through faith in Christ's blood and sacrifice."

The Second Helvetic Confession, besides having great currency among the Reformed churches within and without Switzerland, was recast and condensed into two other symbols: 1. The *Confessio Palatina*; 2. The *Repetitio Anhaltina*. These were local confessions, drawn up for the use of provincial churches only.

The *Formula Consensus Helvetici*, one of the most scientific of Calvinistic symbols, was composed at Zurich, in 1675, by Heidegger, assisted by Francis Turretin of Geneva, and Gereler of Basle. It was adopted as their symbol by nearly all the Swiss churches, though with hesitation on the part of some of them. Controversies, however, continued without abatement among them, so that this symbol did not prove to be the bond of union which it was designed to be, and since 1722 it has ceased to have authority as an authorized symbol, though much esteemed by the High Calvinistic party.

This Confession was called out by that modified form of Calvinism which, in the 17th century, emanated from the school at Saumur,

represented by Amyraut, Placaeus, and Daillé. Concerning the Atonement, its language is as follows. "We do not agree with the opinion of those who teach that God purposes the salvation of all men individually, provided only they believe, by reason of his philanthropic benevolence, or because he is moved by a certain love of the fallen race of mankind that is prior to his purpose of election; by a certain 'conditional will,' or 'primal compassion,' as they term it, —that is, by a wish or desire on his part that is inefficacious." Upon this, follows a statement of the doctrine of atonement that limits its application to the individual by the electing purpose of God, which purpose infallibly secures the saving acceptance of the atonement by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Respecting the doctrine of Original Sin, the Formula Consensus teaches, that the ground of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity as guilt, is a real and not a nominal one; in other words, that the charge of original sin upon the individual, as true and proper sin, is founded upon its commission by the race in the person of the progenitor, and not upon its fictitious imputation to the individual by an arbitrary act of God. The phraseology is as follows. "We are of opinion, that the sin of Adam is imputed to all his posterity by the secret and just judgment of God. For the apostle testifies that all sinned in Adam; that by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners; and that in the same man all die. But it does not appear how hereditary corruption, as spiritual death, could fall upon the entire human race, by the just judgment of God, unless some fault (*delictum*) of this same human race, bringing in (*inducens*) the penalty of that death, had preceded. For the most just God, the judge of all the earth, punishes none but the guilty."

The Heidelberg Catechism (*Catechismus Palatinus*) possesses the double character of a symbol, and a book for systematic instruction. In connection with the Second Helvetic Confession, it is the most generally adopted of the Reformed Confessions, and has great authority outside of the particular communions that adopt it.

As early as the middle of the 16th century, the Palatinate of the Rhine, a large and important division of Germany lying upon both banks of the river, had adopted the Augsburg Confession, chiefly under the influence of its crown princes. In the year 1560, the crown prince Frederick III. introduced the Swiss doctrine and worship. His successor, Lewis VI., in 1576 carried the Palatinate back again to a Lutheran symbol, the Formula Concordiae. John Casimir, the successor of Lewis, restored the Reformed doctrine, which after that time became the prevalent one in the Palatinate. In order to give the Reformed party a definite and established organization, Frederick III. commissioned two Heidelberg theologians to compose a catechism. These were Ursinus, a student of Melancthon's, and Olevianus,—the first of whom performed the principal labour. The catechism was laid before the superintendents or bishops, and preachers, in 1562, for their acceptance; and in the following year it was published, in the name of the crown prince, as the doctrine of the Palatinate, and was introduced into the churches and schools of the land.

The Heidelberg Catechism is one of the best of the many systems of Christian doctrine that were constructed in the prolific period of the Reformation. Though not composed directly for such a purpose, as were the Lutheran Formula Concordiae and the Calvinistic Formula Consensus, it is better fitted than either of them to unite both branches and tendencies of Protestantism. It consists of three parts. The first treats of the misery of man; the second of his redemption; the third of his happy condition under the gospel. It contains 129 questions and answers, arranged for the 52 Sabbaths of the year. In doctrine, it teaches justification with the Lutheran glow and vitality, predestination and election with Calvinistic firmness and self-consistency, and the Zuinglian theory of the sacraments with decision. It was originally composed in German; has been translated into Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, as well as into nearly all the languages of modern Europe; was approved by the highly Calvinistic synod of Dort, and is regarded with great favour by the High Lutheran party of the present day.



The *Confessio Belgica* was first drawn up as a private confession by Von Bres, in 1561. It contains 37 articles, and is thoroughly Calvinistic. It was composed in French, and was first printed in Walloon French and Dutch in 1562. In 1571, it was revised, and adopted by the entire Holland Church in the 16th century. After another revision of the text, it was publicly approved by the synod of Dort in 1618.

The *Confessio Gallicana*, a Calvinistic symbol, was composed by a synod of the Reformed party convened at Paris in 1559. Theodore Beza sent a copy of it to Charles IX. It was subscribed by a synod at Rochelle in 1571, and is the adopted confession of the French Protestant Church. The French Reformed churches in Holland also receive this as their symbol.

The *Confessio Scoticana* was constructed in 1560, by the Scottish preachers,—principally by John Knox. It is Calvinistic in substance and spirit, and was introduced throughout Scotland by state enactment.

The Canons of the Synod of Dort constitute a highly important portion of the Calvinistic symbolism. In the beginning of the 17th century, Arminianism had arisen in Holland, and to oppose it this synod was convened. Besides the Holland theologians, there were representatives from many of the foreign Reformed or Calvinistic churches,—though the former had the preponderating influence. The synod met Nov. 13, 1618, and continued in session until May 9, 1619; held discussions with the Remonstrants, or Arminians, who appeared in synod by 13 deputies headed by Episcopius; and drew up, during the 154 sessions, 93 Canones which combat the principal tenets of the Arminians, and develop the Calvinistic system. The Reformed churches in the Netherlands, France, the Palatinate, the greater part of Switzerland, and the Puritans in Great Britain received these canons as the scientific and precise statement of Christianity. The English Episcopal Church, in which at that time the Arminian party was dominant, rejected the decisions of this synod,

and a royal mandate of James I, in 1620, forbade the preaching of the doctrine of predestination.

The Dort Canons are composed in a positive, and a negative form. After the statement of the true doctrine according to Calvinism, there follows a rejection of the opposing Arminian errors. The following extracts from the *Rejectio errorum* indicate the views of the Synod upon the doctrines of Original Sin, Free Will, and Atonement. "The synod rejects the error of those who teach that it is not true that original sin of itself is sufficient to condemn the whole human race, and merits temporal and eternal punishment.... The synod rejects the error of those who teach that spiritual gifts, that is good dispositions and virtues, such as holiness and justice, could have had no place in the will of man when first created, and consequently could not be separated from it in the fall.... The synod rejects the error of those who teach that spiritual gifts are not lost from the will of man in spiritual death, because the will was not corrupted, but is only impeded by the darkness of the mind, and the inordinate appetites of the flesh,—which impediments being removed, the will is able to exert its innate freedom, i.e. of itself either to will or to choose, or not to will or not to choose, whatever good is set before it.... The synod condemns the error of those who teach that grace and free will are each partial and concurrent causes at the commencement of conversion; that grace does not precede the efficiency of the will, in the order of causality,—i.e., that God does not efficiently aid the will of man to conversion, before the will itself moves and determines itself.... The synod rejects the error of those that teach that Christ by his satisfaction has not strictly merited faith and salvation for those to whom this satisfaction is effectually applied, but that he has only acquired for the Father the authority or plenary power of treating *de novo* with mankind, and of prescribing whatever new conditions he pleases, the performance of which depends upon the free will of man, so that it may be that no man will fulfil them, or that all men will."

The Thirty-Nine Articles of the English Church, like the constitution of the English State, were a gradual formation. Under King Edward

VI., archbishop Cranmer and bishop Ridley drew up a symbol, in 1551, for the Reformed Church in England, which was entirely Calvinistic in substance and spirit. This was adopted by a synod at London, in 1552, and thereby received public sanction. It goes under the name of "The Forty-Two Articles of Edward Sixth." This symbol was revised by the bishops of the English Church under Queen Elizabeth, in 1562. The revision comprised a creed of thirty-nine articles, which was sanctioned by a synod in London in 1562, and by act of Parliament in 1571. It is a Calvinistic creed upon all points of doctrine with the exception of the sacraments. With respect to this subject, it was intended to be a mean between the Lutheran and Calvinistic theories. Its polity is prelatical episcopacy, the reigning sovereign being the earthly head of the church.

The Westminster Confession is the result of the deliberations of the Westminster Assembly, a synod of divines called by Parliament, in opposition, however, to the will of Charles I., for the purpose of settling the government, liturgy, and doctrine of the Church of England. It met July 1, 1643, and sat till February 22, 1648, four years six months and twenty-two days, in which time it held 1163 sessions. The members were chosen from the several counties of England, and thus the council contained representatives of the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian, and the Independent parties. The great preponderance, however, was on the part of the Presbyterians, since many of the Episcopal divines, though elected, refused to attend, upon the ground that as the king had declared against the convocation it was not a legal assembly; and the Independents were a far smaller body than either of the other two. The system of doctrine constructed by this Assembly is thoroughly Calvinistic, and bears a close resemblance to the canons of the synod of Dort. The Westminster Confession was adopted as their doctrinal basis by the Presbyterians of England, and took the place of the *Confessio Scoticana* in Scotland. It is also the symbol of the Presbyterian Church in America.

The Savoy Confession is a symbol adopted by the Puritan Independents in England, who were not satisfied with the Westminster Confession so far as the polity and discipline of the churches was concerned. As yet they had formally adopted no common creed. The Presbyterian assembly had urged them to this, reminding them that their brethren in New England had already done it. Under the authority of Cromwell, an assembly was convened at the Savoy, in London, October 12, 1658, composed of above one hundred ministers and delegates from the Independent churches, among whom were John Howe, then Cromwell's chaplain, John Owen, Joseph Caryl, and Thomas Goodwin, who is styled by Anthony Wood "the very Atlas and patriarch of Independency." A committee was chosen, of whom Goodwin and Owen were at the head, to draw up a new confession, with the instruction to keep as close to the Westminster upon doctrinal points as possible. This they did, saying in their preface that they fully consent to the Westminster Confession, for the substance of it.

The Savoy Confession differs from the Westminster upon the subject of polity. It teaches "that every particular society of visible professors agreeing to walk together in the faith and order of the gospel is a complete church, and has full power within itself to elect and ordain all church officers, to exclude all offenders, and to do all other acts relating to the edification and well-being of the church.... The way of ordaining officers, that is, pastors, teachers or elders, is, after their election by the suffrage of the church, to set them apart with fasting and prayer, and imposition of the hands of the eldership of the church, though if there be no imposition of hands, they are nevertheless rightly constituted ministers of Christ; for it is not allowed that ordination to the work of the ministry, though, it be by persons rightly ordained, does convey any office-power, without a previous election of the church. No ministers may administer the sacraments but such as are ordained and appointed thereunto. The power of all stated synods, presbyteries, convocations, and assemblies of divines, over particular churches is denied; but in cases of difficulty, or difference relating to doctrine or order, churches may

meet together by their messengers, in synods or councils, to consider and give advice, but without exercising any jurisdiction."

The connection between the Calvinism of the Continent and the Puritanism of England, we have seen, is very close and intimate; that between the Puritanism of Old England and of New England is equally close, so that this is a proper place in this history of Symbols to introduce the creeds of the New England churches. The oldest of them, and one of the most important, is the Cambridge Platform. In 1646, a bill was presented to the General Court of Massachusetts, for calling a synod of the churches to draw up some platform of discipline and church government. The bill was passed, but owing to scruples of some of the deputies the law did not take effect. The matter was then propounded to the churches, and by them a synod was convened. It met, sat fourteen days, and then adjourned to June 8, 1647. Owing to epidemical sickness it soon adjourned, and met again August 15, 1648. At this session, the Platform was constructed and adopted. The synod consisted of the clergy of Massachusetts, with as many others as could be collected from the other New England colonies. Hubbard and Higginson, who personally remembered them, describe them as "men of great renown in the nation from whence the Laudian persecution exiled them. Their learning, their holiness, their gravity, struck all men that knew them, with admiration. They were Timothies in their houses, Chrysostoms in their pulpits, and Augustines in their disputations."

The Platform prepared by this synod, which sat fourteen days, was presented in October, 1648, to the churches and the general government, for their consideration and acceptance. It was adopted by the churches, and after some discussion by the general court,—the latter declaring "their approbation of the said form of discipline, as being, for the substance thereof, what they had hitherto practised in their churches, and did believe to be according to the word of God." Thus, the document received in Massachusetts the sanction of law, and was adopted and in force in all the New England colonies, until superseded in Connecticut by the Saybrook Platform, in 1708.

The Cambridge Platform is wholly confined to polity. It makes no statements of doctrine whatever. Like the Savoy Confession, it refers to the Westminster Symbol for a dogmatic statement. In their preface, the authors of the Cambridge Platform say: "Having perused the public confession of faith agreed upon by the reverend assembly of divines at Westminster, and finding the sum and substance thereof, in matters of doctrine, to express not their own judgment only, but ours also; and being likewise called upon by our godly magistrates, to draw up a public confession of that faith which is constantly taught and generally professed amongst us; we thought good to present unto them, and with them to our churches, and with them to all the churches of Christ abroad, our professed and hearty assent and attestation to the whole confession of faith, for substance of doctrine, which the reverend assembly presented to the religious and honourable parliament of England, excepting only some sections in the 25th, 30th, and 31st chapters of their confession, which concern points of controversy in church discipline, touching which we refer ourselves to the draft of church discipline in the ensuing treatise." Respecting the subject of church government and discipline, this Platform agrees with the polity of the Savoy Confession,—teaching as that does, that the individual church possesses all political power within itself, even to the ordination of its minister, and that councils or synods have nothing but advisory powers.

The second New England symbol, both in time and importance, is the Boston Confession. A synod of the churches in the province of Massachusetts, called by the General Court, assembled in Boston September 10, 1679, in which the Cambridge Platform was re-adopted as the form of church polity. This synod then held a second session, May 12, 1680, for the purpose of forming a confession of faith. On the 19th of May, 1680, the result of the deliberations of this synod was presented to the General Court for acceptance, whereupon the following order was passed: "This court having taken into serious consideration the request that hath been presented by several of the reverend elders, in the name of the late synod, do approve thereof,

and accordingly order the confession of faith agreed upon at their second session, and the platform of discipline consented unto by the synod at Cambridge anno 1648 to be printed for the benefit of the churches in present and after times." This is the only dogmatic confession that has been drawn up in the New England churches and by the New England divines, and for this reason it deserves some particular notice and examination.

The Cambridge Synod of 1648 adopted the Westminster Symbol, in place of forming a new one for themselves. This Boston Synod of 1680 both adopt an antecedent symbol, and construct another of their own. In their preface to their Confession, the Boston Synod employ the following language. "It hath pleased the only wise God so to dispose in his providence, as that the elders and messengers of the churches in the colony of Massachusetts in New England, did, by the call and encouragement of the honoured general court, meet together September 10, 1679. This synod at their second session, which was May 12, 1680, consulted and considered of a confession of faith. That which was consented unto by the elders and messengers of the Congregational churches in England who met at the Savoy (being for the most part, some small variations excepted, the same with that which was agreed upon first by the assembly at Westminster, and was approved of by the synod at Cambridge in New England, anno 1648, as also by a general assembly in Scotland), was twice publicly read, examined, and approved of,—that little variation which we have made from the one, in compliance with the other, may be seen by those who please to compare them. But we have, for the main, chosen to express ourselves in the words of those reverend assemblies, that so we might not only with one heart, but with one mouth, glorify God and our Lord Jesus Christ. As to what concerns church government, we refer to the platform of discipline agreed upon by the messengers of these churches anno 1648."

Having thus re-affirmed the Calvinism of the Westminster and Savoy Confessions, this synod proceed to the formation of a confession of faith in their own language and terms; from which the following

citations exhibit the views of the New England churches and divines of that period. "In the unity of the God-head, there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son." This confession, it is obvious, like the Calvinistic confessions generally, adopts the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Trinitarianism. The Anthropology of the Boston Confession is indicated in the following extracts, "God having made a covenant of works and life thereupon, with our first parents, and all their posterity in them, they being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan did wilfully transgress the law of their creation, and break the covenant in eating the forbidden fruit. By this sin, they and we in them fell from original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root, and by God's appointment standing in the room and stead, of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal.... God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to do good or evil. Man in his state of innocency had freedom and power to will and do that which is good and well pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it. Man by his fall into a state of sin hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation, so as a natural man being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.



The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only." The Boston Confession agrees, then, with the Latin in distinction from the Greek anthropology, in maintaining the two positions that original sin, equally with actual, is guilty transgression of law, and deserves the punishment of eternal death; and that the will of man after the fall does not possess that power to good which it had by creation and anterior to its apostasy.

The Soteriology of this confession is seen in the following extract. "Christ by his obedience and death did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified, and did by the sacrifice of himself, in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper real and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners."

Upon the topics, then, of trinitarianism, anthropology, and soteriology, the Boston Confession of 1680 is in harmony with the Protestant confessions of the Old World. And what is especially worthy of notice, with regard to those shades and differences of doctrinal statement which prevailed within the wide and active mind of Protestantism, the New England churches, as represented by this Synod, adopted the more strict and not the more latitudinarian statements of doctrine. Respecting the more difficult and disputed points in dogmatic theology, the Boston Confession gives the same definitions, and takes the same positions, with the Augsburg Confession of the German Lutherans, the Second Helvetic of the Swiss Calvinists, the Dort Canons of the Dutch Calvinists, and the Westminster Confession of the English Puritans.

A synod of the churches in the Connecticut colony met in 1703, which adopted the Westminster and Savoy Confessions, and drew up certain rules of ecclesiastical discipline. This synod was only

preparatory, however, to another more general one which they had in contemplation. In 1708, a synod was convened by the legislature, and met at Saybrook. This body adopted for a doctrinal confession the Boston Confession of 1680, and drew up the Say-brook Platform of government and discipline which approximates to the Presbyterian, in delegating judicial powers to churches organized into a "Consociation." The confession of faith and platform were approved and adopted by the legislature of Connecticut, in October, 1708.

### **3. Papal Confessions**

The fountain-head of the modern Papal theology is the *Canones et Decreta Concilii Tridentini*. The need of a general synod to counteract the progress of the Protestant churches had long been felt by the Papal body, and after considerable delay pope Paul III. convened one at Trent, on the 13th of December, 1545, which with intermissions continued to hold its sessions until the year 1563. A papal bull of Pius IV., issued on the 26th of January, 1564, confirmed the decisions of the synod; forbade, under the severest penalties, all clergymen and laymen from making explanations or commentaries upon them; and reserved to the pope the further explication, as need might be, of the more obscure points of doctrine contained in them. The Tridentine Symbol did not immediately acquire equal authority in all Roman Catholic countries. In the greater part of Italy, in Portugal, in Poland, and by the German emperor, the council of Trent was formally declared to be oecumenical. But in Catholic Germany its decisions were only tacitly accepted; in Spain, Naples, and Belgium, they were adopted with a special reservation of royal rights; and in France, where the council met with strong opposition, they were received only by degrees, and with respect to strictly dogmatic points. The decisions of the Tridentine Council, which were passed not unanimously but by a majority vote, fell into two classes. The first, entitled *Decreta*, contain detailed statements, in positive propositions, of the Papal doctrine; the second, entitled *Canones*, explain in a brief manner the meaning of the *Decreta*, and condemn

the opposite tenets of the Protestant church,—ending, always, with the words "anathema sit." Their teachings in theology, anthropology, soteriology, and eschatology, have been indicated in the several divisions of this history.

A second document possessing symbolical authority in the Papal Church is the *Professio fidei Tridentina*, which pope Pius IV., in a bull issued in 1564, required all public teachers in the Romish Church, all candidates for clerical or academical honours, and all converts from other churches, to subscribe. It is composed of the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan symbol, together with extracts from the Tridentine Canons. It obligates the subscriber to belief in the Nicene doctrine; in the entire body of ecclesiastical tradition; in the interpretation which the Church has given to the Scriptures; in the seven sacraments and their Catholic administration; in the statements of the Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification; in the mass, transubstantiation, purgatory, invocation of saints, and worship of images; in the authority of the church to give absolution; in the Roman Church as the mother and teacher of all other churches; and in the pope as the vicegerent of Christ to whom obedience is due.

A third document of a symbolical character in the Papal Church is the *Catechismus Romanus*, drawn up at the command of the pope by three distinguished Papal theologians, under the supervision of three cardinals. It was published in Latin, under the authority of Pius IV., in 1556, and introduced into Italy, France, Germany, and Poland, by the votes of provincial synods. It adheres closely to the Tridentine Canons; though it enters into details upon some points respecting which the Tridentine Canons are silent, such as the sovereignty of the pope and the *limbus patrum*. Although this catechism was published by papal authority, several other catechisms have attempted to supplant it. The Jesuits, toward the close of the 16th century, during the controversies that arose respecting predestination, endeavored to weaken the influence of the Roman Catechism, by the two Catechisms of Canisius, a member of their body. One of these was

intended to be a dogmatic manual for clergymen, and the other a book of instruction for children and youth. They were translated into many languages, and exerted a great influence in connection with the educational system of the Jesuits. The pope, however, refused to give them papal authority, though strongly urged to do so by the Jesuit party. The Catechism of Bellarmine, published in 1603, also the work of a Jesuit, was authorized by pope Clement VIII. as a true exposition of the Roman Catechism, and obtained a wide circulation. Besides these documents, the *Confutatio Confessionis Augustanae* or answer to the Augsburg Confession, the bull *Unigenitus* of Clement XI. issued in 1711, and the liturgical books of the Roman Church, particularly the *Missale Romanum* and the *Breviarium Romanum*, are important auxiliary sources of the Papal doctrine.

#### **4. Confessions of the Greek Church**

The Greek Church lays at the foundation of its dogmatic system the Apostles' Creed, and the decisions of the seven oecumenical councils which were held previous to the schism between the East and the West,—viz., the first and second Nicene, in 325 and 787; the first, second, and third Constantinopolitan, in 381, 533, and 680; the Ephesian in 431, and the Chalcedon in 451. It differs from the Roman Church, in rejecting the decisions of all councils held at the West since the division of the two churches.

Besides these, there are several symbolical documents which the Greek Church adopts as the expression of its faith. The most important of them is the *Confessio Orthodoxa*, drawn up in 1642, by Peter Mogilas, the metropolitan bishop of Kiev, to counteract a tendency towards Protestantism that was showing itself in the Russian Church. It was published first in Russian, then in Modern Greek, and afterwards in Latin and German. Another creed is the *Confessio Dosithei*, composed by a Greek patriarch of Jerusalem, in opposition to the Calvinistic system. Still another is the *Confessio Gennadii*, which the patriarch Gennadius of Constantinople composed and presented to the sultan Mohammed II., on his

conquest of Constantinople in 1453, as the statement of the Christian faith. It does not enter into the differences between the Greek and Latin systems, but is an expression of the general truths of the Christian religion.

## **5. Arminian Confessions**

The Arminians take their name from Arminius (†1609), first a pastor at Amsterdam, afterwards professor of divinity at Leyden. He had been educated by Beza in the opinions of Calvin, but as early as 1591 began to express his dissent from Calvinism, upon the points of free-will, predestination, and grace, as being too rigid and severe. The Arminians were also called Remonstrants, because in 1611 they presented a remonstrance to the States-General of Holland, praying for relief from the harsh treatment of their opponents.

The Arminians formally adopted no symbol. One of their characteristics was a lower estimate than the Reformed churches cherished, of the value of confessions generally. Hence, their opinions must be sought in the writings of their leading minds. The principal sources are the following: 1. The writings of Arminius; particularly his controversy with Francis Gomar, his colleague. 2. The *Confessio Pastorum qui Remonstrantes vocantur*, drawn up by Episcopius († 1643). 3. The *Remonstrantia* of Peter Bertius,—a specification of the five articles (*Quinque articulares*) held by the Arminians, in opposition to the Calvinistic five points. 4. The writings of Grotius (apologetical and exegetical); of Limborch (dogmatical); of Curcellaeus, Wetstein, and Le Clerc (exegetical).

The controversy between the Arminians and Calvinists turned chiefly upon three Calvinistic points, viz.: the absolute decree of election; the irresistibleness of special grace; and the limitation, in the divine intention, of the merit of Christ's death to the elect. 1. The Arminians held that the decree of election is conditional, or dependent upon the divine foreknowledge that grace will be rightly used in the instance of the elect. The Dort Canons maintain that the electing decree secures

the right use of grace itself, as well as bestows grace. 2. The Arminians held that the atonement of Christ is intended for all men alike and indiscriminately. As matter of fact, however, it saves only a part of mankind. The reason why the atonement does not save all men alike and indiscriminately lies in the fact, that the will of the finally lost sinner defeats the divine intention. There is no such degree of grace as is irresistible to the sinful will. The effectual application of the atonement, therefore, depends ultimately upon the decision of the sinner's will, and this decision in the case of the lost defeats the divine purpose. In opposition to this view, the Dort Synod held that the atonement, though sufficient in value for the salvation of all men, was intended only for those to whom it is effectually applied, viz.: the elect. The Holy Spirit possesses a power that is irresistible, in the sense that it can subdue the obstinacy of any human will however opposed to God. Hence, the application of the atonement depends, ultimately, not upon the sinner's decision but the divine determination to exert special grace. There is, therefore, no defeat of the divine intention, and the atonement saves all for whom it was intended. 3. The Arminians held that grace is necessary in order to salvation, but that regenerating grace may be both resisted and lost. The Dort Synod, on the contrary, held that regenerating as distinct from common grace is able to subdue all opposition of the sinful will, and therefore cannot be resisted in the sense of being defeated or overcome, and therefore cannot be lost.

## **6. Socinian Confessions**

The Socinians laid still less stress upon symbols than the Arminians. The principal writings having a confessional character among them are the following: 1. The Cracovian Catechism,—composed mostly of passages of Scripture. It was drawn up by Schomann, and published in 1574, for the use of the Polish churches. 2. The Catechism of Faustus Socinus,—published at Racovia, 1618, in an unfinished form, owing to the death of Socinus. 3. The Racovian Catechisms,—the larger composed by Schmalz and Moscorovius, and published in 1605; the smaller by Schmalz, in 1605. These are the principal

symbolical product of Socinianism, and are drawn very much from the writings of the Socini.

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## MONERGISM BOOKS

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