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ANTICHRIST;

OR THE

SPIRIT OF SECT AND SCHISM.

BY

JOHN W. NEVIN,

PRESIDENT OF MARSHALL COLLEGE.

NEW-YORK:

JOHN S. TAYLOR, 151 NASSAU-STREET.

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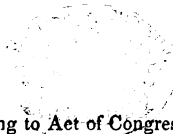
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P R E F A C E .

THE subject of the following tract has been partially presented, in three different places, during the course of the past year, from the pulpit ; and in each case a call was made for its publication. It is now issued accordingly, with new and more complete preparation, in its present form.

A review of my work on the "Mystical Presence," which has appeared in the last number of the "Princeton Biblical Repertory," attributed to the pen of Dr. Hodge, makes it proper for me to say a word here of my relation to Schleiermacher ; with whose whole system that article has found it convenient to invest me, in the way of borrowed drapery, for the purpose of bringing my theology into discredit.

I have read Schleiermacher some, and consider him certainly a genius of the very highest order in the modern theological world. But I am not aware at all of having taken him, in any sense slavishly, for my master and guide. I am not so foolish, indeed, as to set up for an *original* in Christian science ; the most I lay claim to is the exercise of some proper independence in thinking after others ; and I am ready to acknowledge always my obligations, in this way, to the great organs of theological knowledge, wherever they may come in my way. I am debtor thus, with lasting gratitude, both to the English and the Germans, both to Princeton and Berlin. So, no doubt, I owe much to Schleiermacher. But it is simply in the way, in which all the evangelical thinking

of Germany, at this time, is, more or less, impregnated with the deep suggestive power of his thoughts. Schleiermacher, it is well known, left no school behind him, in the strict sense of the word. But he left behind him a vast number of prolific ideas, which have taken root in other minds, and shot up in different spiritual creations, that own no farther common bond among themselves, and no fixed dependence whatever on his system as a whole. Such men as Neander, Nitzsch, Julius Müller, Dorner, Richard Rothe, Ullmann, Umbreit, &c., all feel and own his genial influence, though in very different ways; just as the influence of Coleridge is felt, in England and this country, by hundreds perhaps, who have no other connection whatever as members of a common school. It is not possible to come under the influence of German theology at all, without some participation at the same time, indirectly at least, in the workings of Schleiermacher's mind.

But Schleiermacher was not orthodox; his system, as it is called, ran out, in his own hand, into gross and dangerous errors. Granted. It is allowed, on all hands, by those who most honor his memory. Does it follow still, however, that all his thinking was for this reason false, or that no part of it can be turned to account in such a way as to leave his errors behind? Princeton, I would say respectfully, has been too apt to deal in this sort of logic. At one time, all sympathy with the mind of Coleridge is denounced, because Coleridge himself was an admirer of Schelling, and an eater of opium; at another, the pantheism of Hegel is made the burden of the sweeping question, Can any good thing come out of Germany? I mean no apology for Schelling, Coleridge or Hegel; but such indiscriminate judgments serve not, in the end, the cause, either of religion or science. They are moreover particularly inappropriate to the case immediately in hand. Schleiermacher's ideas have already entered, as we have just seen, into various theological tendencies and systems, quite

different at many points from his own. What could well be more unreasonable, in this case, than to charge all these with the errors of Schleiermacher himself, as necessarily involved in such correspondence? The "Repertory" might just as well denounce the whole system of Origen, on account of its acknowledged faults, and charge these as necessary consequences on all the great and good church fathers, who walked more or less in the light of his powerful mind, during the fourth and fifth centuries.

Let us be just to the memory of Schleiermacher. He stood in the bosom of a generation, which he found wholly destitute of faith in Christianity. Penetrated himself with the persuasion of its divine character, he sought to enforce its claims to rational respect, in the face of the learned and polite infidelity with which he was surrounded. In this mission his life was not passed without effect. It stands intimately associated with the process of theological regeneration, which is now going forward in the German church, Is it much to be wondered at, however, that he himself, in the circumstances mentioned, should not have been able to clear himself fully of the rationalistic connections in which he stood; or that his own ideas, in many cases, should be found leaving him behind, when brought to vegetate and expand, under more favorable relations, in other minds? Few of his disciples occupy now his own ground.*

* The great feature of Schleiermacher's thinking, is commonly considered to be his tendency to resolve religion into a system of subjectivity. In this view, he stands opposed to Hegel, whose philosophy makes all rather of the objective. Dr. Hodge then is rather wide of the mark, when he holds him up as the author of what he calls, in his review of "Bushnell on Christian Nurture," the German philosophical form of ritual or church Christianity. No doubt some of his ideas have had a wholesome influence, in this direction. But Schleiermacher is one of the last men to be charged with a disposition to trust in rites and forms. As to Neander, his style of thinking is unchurchly, almost to the extreme of Quakerism itself—a sore fault in that great master of church history.

This charge of holding Schleiermacher's system, brought against me by Dr. Hodge, has reference mainly, it seems, to two ideas, which run through the present tract as well as the "Mystical Presence." First, the *person* of Christ is made to be the ultimate fact of Christianity, rather than his doctrine merely, or work; secondly, the supernatural life which this included, is represented as coming through him into *organic* union with the life of nature, for the redemption of the world. But surely it is not necessary that either of these ideas should remain bound to the Rationalism and Sabellianism, which are charged by Dr. Hodge on the theory of Schleiermacher himself. To my mind at least, they fall in much more easily with the full doctrine of the Athanasian creed; and it is in this form generally, if not universally, that they come into view, in what may now be called the reigning evangelical theology of Germany. This may be seen in the admirable article from Ullmann, which I have prefixed as a preliminary essay to my work on the "Mystical Presence;" where the posture of Schleiermacher in regard to Christianity is properly appreciated, while at the same time it is *condemned* as inadequate and unsatisfactory, on the score of its not doing justice to the ideas of sin and atonement; in consequence of which the whole theory is carried forward to higher and more orthodox ground. Still Ullmann is full throughout of the two great thoughts already mentioned, not dreaming, as it would seem, of any difficulty in the way of holding them in such form. In the January number of the *Studien und Kritiken*, for the present year, he has a fine article on the theological position of this widely influential journal, with which he has been connected for so many years, bearing directly and strongly on this very point. The theology, in whose service he and his colleagues stand, and in which he sees more and more the central movement of the age, he defines as resting in a new way, on the "ground-fact of Christianity, that God was *in Christ* reconciling the world to himself." All is made to

hang on the mystery of the incarnation. "Christianity, more than before, is apprehended as *life* ; as the life in which God and humanity are first fully united in an organic way, and thus a new principle is furnished for the restoration and completion of man's nature ; and for this very reason, also, more than was the case ever before, the *person* of the Redeemer is recognized in its *central*, all conditioning, and all pervading *significance*, so that from this as its great spiritual heart, the Christian system is made to flow, in the living union of its parts."

Besides fortifying myself here with the preliminary essay, borrowed from Ullmann, I had taken all proper pains, as I thought, in the body of my work itself, to show that I stood in no fellowship, either with the errors of Schleiermacher on the one hand, or with those of Hegel on the other. I have been somewhat surprised, I confess, that in spite of all these precautions, I am set down by Dr. Hodge as a simple borrower of some "cast-off clothes" of the first, with a rag here and there perhaps from the second, just as though no such care whatever had been taken to prevent this very wrong. The only natural construction to be put on this is, that Dr. Hodge holds me incapable of seeing clearly to what issue my system necessarily runs, and feels himself authorized accordingly to load it with all these as he has them clearly in his own mind. Even in that case, however, he should have given me the full benefit of my ignorance, by noticing at least the honest endeavors it has made to keep clear of these errors. And how does it stand then with Ullmann? Is he too mistaken, in supposing that the theology of which he makes so much account, can by any possibility be sundered from the rationalistic Sabellianism of Schleiermacher, or the pantheistic Mysticism of the middle ages? And must we believe the same thing of all his colleagues and associates, as represented in the *Studien und Kritiken*? Such would seem to be the opinion of Dr. Hodge.

But let us now, for a moment, look a little more closely at the two theological ideas which have been named, that we may see for ourselves how far this judgment is entitled to our respect. The case is such, it seems to me, that all may very easily bring it, in their own minds, to a satisfactory solution.

Take first the view, by which Christ's *person* is made the central fact of Christianity. Can any one see, how this should remain necessarily wedded to Schleiermacher's defective doctrine of the Trinity; and not rather acquire its highest force, when associated, as it is in the hands of Dorner, Ullmann, and Rothe, with the ancient faith of the church? For my own part, I know no more overwhelming argument against all Socinianism and Unitarianism, than the "History of the Doctrine of Christ's Person" as handled by Dorner. So also I can easily understand Rothe, that great master of Christian speculation, and sympathize with him too as speaking in good faith, when he says: "The foundation of all my thinking, I can honestly say, is the simple Christian faith, as it has ruled the world for eighteen hundred years. This is for me the last certainty, for which I am ready to sacrifice, unhesitatingly and cheerfully, every other show of knowledge that may stand in its way. I know no firm ground besides, on which to cast the anchor, as of my whole human existence in general, so also of my thinking in particular, save the historical manifestation which bears the holy name of Jesus Christ. This is for me the inviolable all-holiest of humanity, the highest that has ever entered the consciousness of man, and a glorious sunrise in history from which alone all other objects derive light."* In proportion precisely as the person of Christ is felt, in this way, to be the all in all of the gospel, we must be urged, it seems to me, to make the highest account of the history of

* Theologische Ethik. Preface.

the incarnation, as the only proper support of such world-momentous weight. It is just what is needed, to give to every article of the old Apostles' Creed its full significance and proper majestic intonation. Nor is it easy to see certainly, how it should wrong in the least a single function or act of Christ, as concerned in our salvation. It disturbs not necessarily the orthodox ideas of atonement, imputation, justification, the agency of the Spirit, &c. ; but only provides for them a suitable basis in the deep christological reality which lies beyond. It rejects neither the doctrine of Christ nor his work, but simply resolves their *value* into the constitution of his life. Can it impair at all the dignity of his prophetic, priestly, or kingly offices, to say that all these serve merely to unfold the full import of the "grace and truth," previously comprehended in his mediatorial person? Is it any more difficult in the end to combine the two views into one system, than it is to unite the doctrinal scheme of St. Paul with the more contemplative theology of St. John?

And then, as to the other idea, immediately flowing from the first. Will it be pretended, that the conception of an *organic* union between the natural and the supernatural, through the person of Christ, is not capable of being joined with full faith in the doctrine of his separate divinity and the reality of the incarnation? It is only in connection with such faith, it appears to me, that it can be steadily and satisfactorily held at all. Or must we be told, that God can come into no real union of this sort with the world, and that every imagination of the kind runs out ultimately to Naturalism or Pantheism? So Dr. Hodge appears to think and affirm. He objects to all such expressions, as that the divine has become human or the supernatural natural; and says that the view of a historical incorporation of the power of Christ's life, by the Spirit, with the actual constitution of the world, tends to destroy the doctrine of the Trinity, and leaves no room especially for the objective personal existence

of the Holy Ghost. But now, is not this virtually to deny the fact of the incarnation itself? Either the supernatural entered into organic, that is, real and historical union, with the natural, in the person of Christ, or we must say of the whole mystery, that it was an optical illusion simply, or at most a passing theophany in the style of the Old Testament. The difference between such a theophany and a real incarnation, does not depend certainly on the measure of mere duration in the two cases. It rests altogether in this, that the last involves a true organic entrance into the stream of the world's life, which the other does not. And so it follows, that Christianity too is the perpetual presence of the same new creation, historically at work in the Church, and gradually assimilating the world into its own nature. This involves no such resolution of the Christian life into the force of a mere natural law, as Dr. Hodge presumes to charge upon the whole theory. The difference between Adam and Christ, the old creation and the new, is still very wide, as I have endeavored at least always to show, in the "Mystical Presence." Adam was a "living soul," says the apostle; Christ "a quickening spirit." It is the *personality* of Christ precisely, as an active, conscious, all-present fountain of life, and not his mere nature as in the case of Adam, that carries forward supernaturally, from age to age, the life of his people under the same free personal form.

The ancient church fathers abound with this view, of the organic union of the divine life with the human in Christ; and through him in the Church, as lying at the foundation of all Christianity. Particularly is this the case with those, who occupy that most brilliant period in the history of theology, which immediately followed the Sabellian and Arian heresies. Such men as Athanasius, the Gregories, and Basil, plant themselves continually on this high ground, as the only secure platform of the Christian faith and salvation. They insist clearly on the distinction between the show and

the reality of an incarnation. To make Christ a mere theophany or avater, involved, to their apprehension, the overthrow of the gospel. They felt too, and say over and over again, that the incarnation was of force, for the race, and not simply for the single person of Christ himself. They speak of him always, not as the cause merely, but as the *principle* of the new creation, which is represented accordingly as flowing organically from his person, onward to the last resurrection. Dr. Hodge indeed declares the theory to be a departure from the faith of the universal Church; but without going to the original sources themselves, any one may easily see the contrary, who will take the trouble of reading what is exhibited on the subject by Dorner, in his Christology. "Not only one or two, but *all* the most distinguished church fathers," he tells us, "show one mind in regard to the real, living person of the incarnate Word. With one voice they agree, that the personality of Christ has not simply a limited force, such as any other historical personality may claim, but that it holds rather an *essential* relation to the *whole race*; for which reason only, this person, though single in itself, is made the *object of an article of faith*, as of abiding and everlasting significance for all. Whether it be expressed, that he is the archetype, after whose image as existing in God, Adam was formed, and so our entire humanity; or that he is the principle, ἀρχή, for the whole new creation, in which first the old is made complete; or that he is the ἀπαρχή of the entire human mass, united to its substance, with all-pervading power; or that he is the everlasting head of humanity, himself a member of it indeed, but by the complete union of the divine and human in his person, at the same time, the plastic, organizing principle also, the universal soul, of its general organism; and on the other hand such a *head*, conveying life to all, only by being also in truth a *member*, essentially incorporated into this organism—of such universal significance, only in virtue of

his individual personality, as comprehending the presence of the divine itself in a real way: however the general view, we say, might be expressed, one thing is certain, that the Church *in all this continued simply in the track of the apostolic faith.*"*

If Christ and Christianity come not into organic union with the previous constitution of the world, in such a way as to complete its whole sense, by linking the supernatural with its life in an abiding and real new creation, is not the mystery of the incarnation shorn of all its significance and credibility at the same time?

Dr. Hodge charges me with Eutychianism, because I affirm the divine and human natures to have become so united in Christ, as to constitute one undivided life. The proof, as he gives it, is short; one life, he tells us, is only another word for one nature or *φύσις*, under which term Eutyches taught such a union of the two sides of our Savior's person as in fact reduced his humanity to a mere show; whence I am made to teach the same thing, or at least something no better. Words here, as we all know, are of most precarious force. I can only say that for me, *life* is not the same thing with nature, in the hypostatical mystery. I use the term rather to express, what I conceive to be involved in the idea of personality. But now, without

* *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi.* p. 78, 79. First edition.—In the second greatly enlarged edition, the authorities are given in full, p. 837–840. 940–962. 'Ο *λογος ενηθρωπησεν*, says Athanasius, *ινα ημεις θεοποιηθωμεν.* Through the body of Christ, a divine life is conveyed into our bodies, making them immortal. They describe him as *τον δλικον*, and not merely *τον τινα ανθρωπον*, homo *universalis*, and not simply *singularis*. For one who has come to take any inward interest in the subject, it is indeed refreshing to commune with the deep christological ideas of this old patristic divinity. Better *such* mysticism, a thousand times, than the barren abstractions, which have taken the place of it, in much at least of what is called popular theology at the present day.

pressing terms at all, is it not but too plain from the whole form and tenor of his thinking, that Dr. Hodge himself (I would speak it respectfully) stands fully in the system of Nestorius, by which the life of Christ was so divided as to fall asunder really into two persons? The constitution of his being was such as to involve, in his view, two lives; by which he must mean, of course, two forms of consciousness, that is, two subjects of thought and will, mechanically joined together in what he denominates the single person. But what is personality, if it be capable of this broad dualism? Is it not a unity, by its very conception, representing in the form of consciousness the inmost life of its subject? In what sense can the union of the two natures in Christ be *hypostatical*, if both are not brought to meet and rest in a strictly common centre? Would Dr. Hodge admit a strict *ενωσις* in the case at all, instead of the mere *συναφεια* of Nestorius?

His general theology, as presented in this article, if I understand it rightly, implies the contrary. It carries a decidedly Nestorianizing aspect throughout. This is shown particularly in what may be termed the bald abstraction, in which all doctrinal ideas are made to stand. The Trinity is taken as a logical formula, rather than a living revelation of God through Jesus Christ. The relation of God to the world, is that of an artificer over against the mechanism of his own work. The last principle of things, is an outward decree, which it is his business to execute in a like outward way. Man is no organic whole, evolving itself as a single process from first to last, but a vast multitude of living units placed on the same theatre, by successive generations, for moral trial. God imputes the sin of Adam to his posterity, not on the ground of any real unity of life between the parties, but purely of his own sovereign pleasure, just as he might have imputed the sin of the fallen angels to men, if he had thought proper. It is in virtue of his own arbitrary

covenant simply, that it is said, metaphorically, "All mankind descending from Adam by ordinary generation, *sinned IN HIM*, and *fell with him*, in his first transgression." They fell not so in the actual reality of life, but only in God's purpose and plan. Parallel with this mechanism of the curse, runs the mechanism also of redemption. The incarnation is an expedient, *contrived* to solve the problem of the atonement, and must be carefully held aloof from the whole process of the world's history under any other view, lest it should lose this "ex machina" character. Why it should have been delayed four thousand years, or why its action since should have been suspended on the common laws of our life in such a way as to move at so slow a rate over the face of the globe, is not clear; such however has been the divine will. After all, no absolutely new order of life has been introduced into the world, by the occasion. The Old Testament saints stood substantially on the same ground, as to consciousness of and inward relation to God, with the saints of the New Testament; though the least of these last *is* said to be more than the greatest of the first. The person of Christ itself, as such, forms not the specific revelation of the gospel, but simply his word and work as instrumentally disclosed through its agency. Divinity and humanity were indeed united in his life, but not in such a way as to be conjointly concerned at all in the same process of birth, growth, affection, work, suffering, and death. The humanity moreover, in this case, stood in no organic relation to our human life generally; it was simply the theophanic form, in which it was thought good that the Word should at this time appear. The second Adam, thus constituted, was made our representative again, like the first, by pure covenant and decree, and not on the ground at all of any real inward qualification he had, by the constitution of his person, to become a new organic root for the race. He was in truth no such root whatever, but the outward author simply of a redemption, which is to be made

over to his people in a foreign way. Inspiration here, as before, rests on no life-relation established between the parties; to suppose any thing of this sort, is to fall, we are gravely told, into the error of mediate justification, as taught by Placaeus! The virtue of the sacrifice on Calvary is made over to us by sheer divine thought, just as we might have had the benefit of some similar sacrifice, for aught we can see to the contrary, had God been pleased to order it in some other nature, and on some other planet altogether. Christ, now in heaven, is bound immovably, so far as his human nature is concerned, to the right hand of God, under the same general limitations that attach to our present existence in time and space; and communicates with the world, only as he did before his incarnation, in his divine nature or by the Spirit as his substitute and proxy. To conceive of him as present personally in the Church, *εν πνευματι*, under a peculiar mystical subsistence, of which the Holy Ghost is the medium, is said to involve virtually a denial of the objective personal existence of the Holy Ghost. Believers are indeed mystically united with Christ, as the Church has always believed; but only by the indwelling influence of the Spirit, as a wholly distinct agent; which moreover dwelt in good men, before Christ came, precisely in the same way, and is not to be regarded at all as coming into any new form of revelation for men in consequence of the Mediatorial mystery. Our mystical union with Christ in this view, is just like our mystical union at last with Moses, Abraham, and Isaiah, the animating life simply of one and the same Spirit which has dwelt in all. Dr. Hodge finds no particular mystery in the marriage relation, as noticed in Eph. v. 22-33, and just as little of course in Christ's relation to the Church, of which it is there made the type; the very judgment, which Calvin solemnly pronounced, in this case, preposterous and irreverently rash.

Such appears to me to be the general character of this

theological scheme, as presented in the Repertory. I have tried to make the picture, not a caricature, but a bold outline simply of the system, as it shows itself to my mind. In view of the whole, I can only say: If *this* be Calvinistic orthodoxy, my soul, come not thou into its secret, and unto its assembly, mine honor, be not thou united.*

This is not the place, of course, to notice the argument of the article on the sacramental question, as it stands connected in the original proper faith of the Reformed or Calvinistic Church. Let it suffice to say, that so far as it may seem to have force, against the statements of the "Mystical Presence," it is by confounding two different things, which are there kept carefully distinct; the *substance* of Calvin's doctrine namely, and the scientific *form* into which I have tried to cast it, for the very purpose of escaping difficulties and contradictions that are acknowledged to accompany it as usually stated. What does it prove against the first and most material part of the work, to show that the second is not in full keeping with Calvin's position as a whole? That is

* The Rev. Albert Barnes, in his "Defence," representing New School Presbyterianism, as it is called, and the general divinity I suppose of New England, mentions three general theories of our relation to Adam (p. 196-218). First, the doctrine of "the abler Calvinistic writers," such as Edwards, Boston, Stapfer, Calvin himself, &c., that the human race is involved in Adam's condemnation, on the ground of a *real union* between them as the root and branches of a common life. Secondly, the doctrine of Princeton and the Biblical Repertory, that this is by mere arbitrary sovereign imputation. Thirdly, the view that simply admits the fact of our general human sinfulness, without any attempt to explain it. Mr. Barnes rejects both the two first views, and holds to the last. But speaking of the second, he says: "Whatever may be the defects of the old system, it has manifestly many advantages over this. It has the merit of consistency. It retains the Scripture use of language. It uses words as they are employed in common life. So the profound mind of Edwards saw; and greatly as I dislike that system, it has so many *consistencies* over that now under notice, that I should greatly prefer it to that which in our time has supplanted it."

assumed and confessed, in the book itself. The scientific statement there given, is a mere essay towards a satisfactory vindication of the sense contained in the old doctrine. If it should be found unsuccessful, let it perish. This can never change however the nature of the old doctrine itself. There it stands still, a matter of pure history, in all its force. Dr. Hodge has not shown at all, that Calvin and the Calvinistic symbols do not teach a real participation of believers in the life of Christ, by the Lord's Supper. The evidence of the contrary, as presented in the "Mystical Presence," is not disturbed or unsettled in the least, as it seems to me, by all he has said. It is agreed, by the most competent judges, that Calvin held in substance the same mystery that was taught by Luther, differing from him only as to the mode of its occurrence. This clearly too was his own judgment. He signed the Augsburg Confession, as this was accepted also in the beginning by the entire *German Reformed Church*.*

J. W. N.

Mercersburg, May, 1848.

* Dr. Hodge regrets that I should have surrendered myself so far to German modes of thinking. But am I not a teacher in the German church, and as such bound, in common honesty, to cultivate a proper connection with the theological life of Germany, as well as with that of Scotland and New England? Or is it meant seriously, that the *whole* evangelical theology of that land is false, so far as it may vary from our common English tradition? And yet at this very time a scheme is in progress in Scotland itself, and under the auspices as it would seem of all sections of the Scotch church, for a wholesale transfer of this same evangelical German divinity, into English form, and for English use! Surely it is high time for the Princeton Repertory to adopt a less summary tone, in disposing of its merits.

ANTICHRIST.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God : Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God ; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come ; and even now already is it in the world.—1 JOHN IV. 1-3.

INTRODUCTION.

CHRISTIANITY has been called to struggle, from the beginning, with two forms of opposition. It has been assailed from without by broad and open infidelity ; and from within also, by the false spirit of error, under the disguise of its own name. It is only the outward aspect and posture of the war however that are changed in this case ; the foe remains always and substantially the same. The first shock was of course with open infidelity, in the shape partly of Judaism and partly of Paganism, which continue also to constitute the proper reigning forms of such unbelief, onward to the end of the world. Very soon, however, as the power of the gospel became too great to be effectually withstood in this way, these same hostile forces, representing indeed the whole life of the world in its natural character, began to reveal themselves also under the other mode of opposition. The spirit of infidelity became a spirit of HERESY and SCHISM, in the bosom of the Christian Church itself, answerable in this new form again to its original distinction, as a Jewish tendency in one direction and a Gentile or Pagan tendency in another.

Heresy and schism are not indeed precisely the same thing. They are however most intimately related, as different aspects or sides only of one and the same bad life. Heresy is theoretical schism; and schism is practical heresy. They flow into each other continually, and serve to make one another spiritually complete. Their connection is like that of the understanding and the will, which with all their difference embrace and fill each other, with mutual interpenetration, at every point. All heresy is in principle schismatic; all schism is in its inmost constitution heretical.

In one view, it may be said of heresies that their name is legion. The history of the Church has been a struggle with endless forms of error and falsehood in her own bosom, from the beginning. On nearer examination, however, all these are found to gather themselves up into a single fountain or head.* In this way, to the eagle gaze of St. John, all heresies and schisms, in long prophetic prospect, fall back perpetually to one and the same grand starting point. With bold, graphic hand, he brings into view, as by a single stroke

* Schleiermacher (*Der chr. Glaube*, § 22), with his peculiar talent for distinction and classification, reduces all Christian heresies to four cardinal ground-forms, determined by the nature of Christianity itself. Christianity springs from the apprehension of a new life, on the part of men, in Christ; a relation that implies the need and capability of redemption on the one side, as well as the full presence of it on the other. It may be heretically wronged then in two ways; either by such a view of Christ's person, or by such a view of our common human nature, as serves to subvert, directly or indirectly, the idea of such redemption. In either case, there is room again for such wrong, in two ways. The human nature may be regarded as having no need, in fact, of redemption from beyond itself; or its need, on the other side, may be held to lie so deep as to preclude all possibility of a real redemption from the ground of its own life. Thus we have the *Pelagian* and *Manichean* heresies, both resulting in an unreal salvation. So again, Christ may be placed on such a level with our common humanity, as to have no power whatever to become the centre of a higher consciousness for the world; or so much may be made of his higher nature, as to leave no room for any real communication between him and other men in the way of life. Thus we have the *Nazaraean* (or *Ebionitic*) and *Docetic* heresies. Altogether four; capable of endless modification; ever playing into each other; but through all ages substantially the same, including every possible defection from the simplicity of the doctrine of Christ. It is easy, again, to see that the Pelagian heresy agrees at bottom with the Nazaraean or Ebionitic, and the Manichean with the Docetic. Thus all turns, at last, on the view of the Savior's person; and so all heresies resolve themselves into a denial, virtual or explicit, of the fact that Jesus Christ has truly and really appeared in the flesh.

of the pencil, what may be called the universal generic character of this false power in the Church ; and thus lays down, at the same time, a simple universal criterion, of easy application, by which to distinguish it in every age from the Christian life in its true form. "HEREBY know ye the Spirit of God : every spirit that confesseth that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, is of God ; and every spirit that confesseth *not* that Jesus Christ is *come in the flesh*, is not of God." All true Christianity owns the mystery of "God manifest in the flesh," not in word only but in deed ; springs from the apprehension of it by faith ; lives, moves and has its being here, from first to last. Every spirit, then, pretending to be Christian, which excludes from itself the force of this confession, whether this he done in a direct or merely indirect way, stands self-convicted of falsehood. It is not of God, but bears upon itself the universal stamp or mark of heresy ; for this precisely is the fundamental and primary idea of all heresy in the church, that it "confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." This, in one word, is that *spirit of Antichrist*, whereof ye have heard, says the apostle, that it should come, and which is even now in the world.

Our subject then is ANTICHRIST, or the spirit of heresy and schism, under the aspect in which it is here presented to our view, by the glowing pen of St. John the Divine. We will consider first its *Nature* ; glance in the second place at its general *History* ; and then endeavor to set forth some of the distinguishing *Marks* or features, by which it may be identified and recognized under all the Protean shapes it is found to assume from age to age, with reference more particularly to its great Protestant manifestation, at the present day, in the form of Rationalistic Sectarianism. The way will thus be open to represent, in conclusion, the moral *Misery* of our reigning sect plague, and its proper *Remedy*.

I. THE NATURE OF ANTICHRIST.

This can be properly understood, only by means of a correct apprehension, in the first place, of Christianity and the Church. It is its relation to Christ as revealed in the Church, which gives it at once both its constitution and its name. It is Antichrist only in virtue of its relation to Christ.

Christianity is not simply a divine *doctrine*. It does not consist in this, that a certain system of truths, made known

by extraordinary revelation, has come to be embraced and professed openly by a body of people styling themselves the Church, who are at the same time more or less influenced by such faith in their character and life. The religion of Christ does indeed include doctrines, vast and momentous as eternity itself, such as the world has had no knowledge of under any other form of revelation; but these, after all, do not constitute its primary distinctive character. It is deeper than all doctrine.

Christianity again is not simply a divine *law*. It does not consist in this, that by means of the gospel, a body of people styling themselves the Church, have come to a clearer apprehension than the world ever had before, of the moral relation in which men stand to one another and to God, and of the duties that grow properly out of these relations. The religion of Christ is indeed a perfect system of ethics in this view; but this is not in the end its fundamental distinction. It is broader and deeper than any conception of this kind.

Christianity is not mere doctrine for the understanding, or mere law for the will, but a power which is formed to lay hold of the inmost consciousness of the world as the principle of a new creation. In this view, it comes to us in the character, not of a theory or rule, but primarily of a divine *FACT*. It is something which has taken place in the actual constitution of the world.

But we are not thus at once at the ground of the subject. We must carry our distinctions still farther.

Christianity, as a *Fact*, is not to be confounded with the idea of a mere *Event*. In this case, it must be considered the produce simply of such natural and spiritual forces as were at work in the world before its appearance. It would be a mere historical occurrence, of the same nature with the building of Rome or the destruction of Jerusalem; grand and stupendous, of course, and worthy to constitute the grandest epoch in the onward flow of time, but still one only, at last, among ten thousand other events that have taken place and continue to be followed still with important consequences, in the general movement of our human life. The rise of Mohammedanism may be fully resolved, in this way, into the action of resources and powers which were previously at hand in the process of history. But to conceive of the rise of Christianity, as a parallel product of the

world's earlier life, a mere reformation, say of Judaism, or a simple evolution of what was comprised in causes previously at work; is to overthrow its true nature altogether. It challenges our faith as a strictly *supernatural* fact.

On the other hand, however, Christianity must not be confounded, in this view, with the idea of a mere passing *Miracle*. It is not the supernatural, as brought to reveal itself in the way of outward, startling phenomenon simply, the presence of the invisible forced abruptly, for a short season, on the sense of the visible world, and then withdrawn again into its own awful retirement. The miraculous, in such form, cannot be said to add any thing to the real contents of history. It falls over, at last, to the character of a naked occurrence, and can be felt at best only as an outward occasion, in its influence on the course of life. But Christianity, as already said, is the principle of a new creation in the life of the world. It is the supernatural, then, brought into real, organic, abiding union with the natural, raising it into its own sphere, and filling it permanently thus with powers it never possessed before. It forms no contradiction, in this way, to the constitution of the world, as it stood previously, but accomplishes rather its inmost meaning, by revealing itself, in the "fullness of time," as the great mystery of humanity, which had been the desire of nations through all preceding ages; while it becomes, from the period of its revelation onward, the central force of history itself, which may be said to comprehend and rule as such all other forces embraced in the process. It challenges our faith as a strictly *historical* fact.

As distinguished thus from a mere event, on the one hand, and a transient miracle on the other, Christianity must be regarded as a **WORLD-FACT**, in the broadest sense of the term. Thus to transcend the constitution of nature, and at the same time to fall in with it harmoniously and complete its sense, is necessarily to be more deep and comprehensive than this from the beginning. Christianity is not part of the world as it stood before, but, for this very reason, more than the whole of it, as now exalted, through Christ, into a new and higher order of existence. The New Testament rests not upon the Old as its basis, but on the contrary, the Old Testament could never come to any true and solid reality till it was made to rest finally upon the New. We have a right to say, accordingly, that the second creation is more univer-

sal or catholic than the first. It must be so, in the very nature of the case, to unite with this organically, without being the continuation simply of the same life. To suppose it less comprehensive; less world-embracing in its own inward meaning and power, is either to rob it of its supernatural character altogether, or else to thrust it out from the course of actual history, as the magical action simply of forces that come to no real union with our general life whatever. Christianity is the broadest and deepest form of humanity. As a world-fact, it is parallel with the creation of man in the beginning, only going beyond it in the depth, and compass, and far-reaching significance of its contents.

Christianity, in the sense now described, is, of course, a *single* Fact. Innumerable particulars are indeed comprehended in its evolution, reaching as this does from the first to the second advent of the divine Savior; but all make up, in the end, the power of one and the same glorious life, the process and completion of the new creation in Christ Jesus.

All begins in the mystery of the incarnation. The whole Gospel is enunciated in that overwhelming declaration, *The Word became flesh*. The declaration is not, itself, however, the Gospel. This meets us primarily in the living person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in which is comprehended, for all time, the actual reality of the great mystery now named. He stood among men not as the proclaimer simply of truth and life, but as the very principle of both in his own person. He was not the prophetic organ only of the evangelical revelation, but the sum and substance of this revelation itself. As the constitution of the world, in its first form, served not merely to herald the name of God, but was itself an act of self-revelation, by which he came, to a certain extent, into actual view, so also the mystery of the incarnation is to be regarded, not as the medium simply of divine grace in its highest character, but as the very form under which this grace was brought to light. The person of Christ forms the last and most perfect act of self-revelation on the part of God, by which the process of all previous revelation became complete, and the deepest idea of the universe passed over from shadow to reality, in the actual inward and full union of the divine nature with the human, as one and the same life. The life of God, in the person of the incarnate Word, incorporated itself with the life of the human race, and became, in this way, the principle

and fountain of a new creation for the world at large. This act itself brought righteousness and salvation, life and immortality, into the sphere of our fallen humanity; for it was not possible that the divine element, thus "made flesh," should not in the end triumph over sin and hell, and thus accomplish all the grand and glorious results that are comprehended in the idea of the Gospel. Christianity, the whole vast mystery of the Church, the new heavens and the new earth replete with righteousness, all rest originally included as a single fact in the mystery of the incarnation. Christ is himself the light and life of the world. The last ground of its salvation is his person, not his work. All resolves itself into what he is, and not simply what he does. The great truths of the Gospel hold only* in the new order of life, which is constituted and unfolded by the fact of the incarnation itself, and beyond this they have no reality whatever. The resurrection and immortality which Christ proclaims spring forth directly from the power of his own life. The atonement finds all its value in the theanthropic mystery with which it is supported from behind. The ultimate, specific distinction of Christianity, as compared with all other systems of religion, is neither the doctrine nor the work of Christ, but the economy of his person, as the indispensable basis of both. It is constituted here, once forever, by the perfect, everlasting union of the human nature with the divine. This *fact*, apprehended and appropriated in the way of faith, (which in such case is the consciousness of a true life-union with the Savior himself,) carries along with it, to the end of time, the whole force and value of the Christian redemption.

The nature of Christianity, starting in such form, and passing over into the world's life in the way now stated, is happily illustrated by what may be considered the germ of the Apostles' Creed, as presented to us in the memorable confession of Peter, of which we have so full an account in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

"Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" To this question, addressed, we are told, by our Lord himself, on a certain occasion, to his twelve disciples, the reply was, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others, Jeremias or one of the prophets." Here were various judgments, formed in the way of mere outward reflection and opinion, on the appearance of Jesus Christ in the world, without any sense of the divine reality which was

actually at hand in his person. "But whom say ye that I am?" was the searching interrogation that followed. Simon Peter, in the name of all his brethren, promptly replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Here was faith, in communication, however, not with any given doctrine concerning Christ, received from without, or fruit of his own reflection, but with the living person of the Savior himself, as he stood there before him, in the plenitude of his own glorious life. Peter's knowledge, at this time, was very imperfect. The plan of the Christian salvation remained for him still a profound, unfathomable mystery. He had probably no distinct theory whatever in his mind, with regard to Christ's nature. *How* he came to the inward conviction expressed by his confession, or *what* precisely this conviction might be found to include in the end, for the understanding, he was not prepared at all to tell. But he had been apprehended, in the inmost depths of his spirit, by the overpowering force of the Savior's personality, and felt himself irresistibly drawn towards it, as the true ground and centre of his own spiritual being. His faith was the act of his inmost life itself, going forth towards the divine reality which was before him in Christ, and resting upon it as the comprehension of all truth and all good; an act, not of thought or volition, or feeling merely, as such, but of the entire soul, as the yet undistinguished totality of all these; like the communication that holds between the infant and its mother, as it hangs upon her bosom, and gazes upwards into her face, and long before it has come to the use of speech or thought, or knowledge of any kind, *lives* itself into her very life, and rests in the overflowing fullness of her love as though it were identical with its own being. "To whom shall we go but unto Thee?" is the language of such faith. Christ has become for it a necessary fact, the *most* necessary, indeed, of all facts, in the consciousness of life itself. Peter had no theory of redemption whatever, no orthodox scheme of salvation, by which to square his hope of heaven. But he could say, with the unwavering assurance which he had of his own existence, "Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." (John vi. 68, 69.) In this personal apprehension of Christ's person precisely, stood the high value of his faith, as contrasted with the mere opinions of the surrounding world.

Hence that marvelous congratulation, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven!" What was it, that mere nature in this case could not reveal? The substance simply of what Christ was, the deep, world-wide significance of the fact that stood revealed in his person. Transcending, as it did, the whole constitution of nature, this fact could be apprehended only in a supernatural way, and by such a process as must carry the soul of the subject over into the same sphere of life. Only as it might be brought to reach over, in the reality of its own living nature, to the personal consciousness of those who embraced it, was it possible for it to come to any true and full revelation. So the case stood with Peter. He was in Christ by faith, one with him for the time in the inmost consciousness of his soul. And so it follows with thrilling, almost startling emphasis, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Not on Peter's person, apart from his confession, of course, was the church to be built; but not on Peter's confession either, be it remembered, apart from his person. *Peter in Christ*, as the representative especially of the whole apostolic college; the personality of Peter, as centered and poised now on the supernatural fact, which had entered into his consciousness, and become part of himself, by Christ's person; Peter's confession, not as an abstract doctrine, lying beyond himself, but as constituting here the inmost fact of Peter's own life;—this was the *rock* on which, from this time onward to the end of the world, the church should continue to rise as a holy temple unto the Lord, in defiance of all the powers of earth and hell; built, as it is said in another place, upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. (Eph. ii. 20.)

Thus central and fundamental to the whole idea of Christianity and the church, do we find the mystery of the incarnation to be, not as a doctrine simply, but as a supernatural world-embracing fact, revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. The confession of Peter represents the universal Christian consciousness, as it was made to embrace this living revelation, from the beginning, in the form of life. That consciousness expressed itself in the Creed, which became thus the inward form as well as the outward bond of the Christian communion. The Creed was no product of

reflection, no result of consultation, no work of abstraction or calculation in any way, but the free, spontaneous out-birth of the general life of Christianity itself. Its contents were not doctrines, but facts, the very process of the new creation itself, as a present reality apprehended by faith in Christ Jesus, who was felt to be the alpha and omega of the whole. All hung upon the mystery of the incarnation, as a divine, everduring fact, unfolding at once the inmost nature of the adorable Trinity, and the boundless grace which is secured to man by the holy catholic Church.

But it is just this mystery in the church, which, above all, the natural sense of the world is unable to receive. "Flesh and blood," we are told, cannot reveal it. The spirit of the world, then, is necessarily here a spirit of infidelity, from first to last. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God," we are told by the holy apostle John; such inward apprehension of his true character, can come only from an actual transplantation, to some extent, into the new life sphere, which is constituted by his person. To be wholly out of this, involves of necessity an inward denial of its existence; and every judgment of its nature must be false, in proportion precisely as it springs from any such wrong position. Our human consciousness becomes complete only in Christ, who is literally the life of the world under its deepest and most comprehensive form; on which account it must ever be in vain to think of measuring or fathoming its true sense, as here revealed, by the force of any consciousness we can have of a different order. Every other consciousness, from the very nature of the case, is something not universal, but partial only, and as such inadequate altogether to serve as a rule for the right apprehension of the Christian mystery. On the contrary, by assuming to itself at all any such character as this, it can never fail to come into hostile relation to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Thus Judaism on the one side, in the beginning, as well as paganism on the other, showed themselves alike incapable of understanding Christianity, and set themselves in array against it with an open declaration of war. It was to the Greek foolishness, and a stumbling-block to the Jew; though in its own sphere, the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. Foiled in its attempt to overthrow the church from without, we soon find the same spirit, in substance, introducing itself under the garb of friendship

into the bosom of the church itself, ostensibly reconciled to Christ, and it might be to some extent led captive in fact by the overwhelming authority of his person. But in this simply outward transformation, it is still as much opposed to the actual sense of the christological mystery as before; and we have consequently only the spirit of infidelity converted into heresy and schism. The great distinctive character of all false Christianity is this accordingly, that it refuses to admit what we have seen already to be the grand distinction of that which is true. It will not confess that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." It may disguise itself beneath the Christian name, and pretend to honor Christ as a divine teacher and Savior; but it is radically opposed to him in fact. It will not allow his person to stand; but substitutes for it some spurious figment of its own brain, which it then dignifies with his glorious name, and seeks to pass off thus, to the view of the world, as the true and proper Christ of the Gospel. It is the great anti-christian lie, (the necessary life of the world out of Christ,) affecting to usurp the throne which belongs to the Divine Redeemer himself, and in this way warring against the Truth of truths in his person. "This is that spirit of Antichrist," says the apostle, "whereof ye have heard that it would come; and even now already is it in the world."

As the mystery of the incarnation is constituted, by the perfect union of humanity and divinity, in the single person of Jesus Christ, it is plain that it may be heretically assailed in two ways. The divinity may be sacrificed on the one side, in favor of the humanity; or the humanity, on the other side, may be sacrificed in favor of the divinity. Christ may be viewed as a mere man, invested with the show only of a divine life; or as a wholly supernatural being, invested with the show only of a common human life. In the first case, Christianity is shorn of its dignity as a strictly new creation, and simply carries on the process of history as it stood before; in the other case, it is such a creation as comes to no organic union whatever with the world's previous life, and runs out accordingly into the form of magic. Either view, of course, subverts fundamentally the great fact of the Gospel, which is at once, as we have seen, supernatural *and* historical—the power of a *new* creation, in which, at the same time, the *old* is comprehended and made complete. The two errors come in this way to the same thing at last;

and, as the true idea of Christ is divided between them, and thus made false and unreal on both sides, each has ever shown a tendency to fall over dialectically to the form of the other, as being more or less consciously incomplete and unsteady in its own position; just as unbelieving Judaism and Paganism (the twofold principle of this twofold Antichrist), with all their opposition, are found also unable to maintain their separate independence, and come never to any true and solid rest, till both are made one in Christ. (Eph. ii. 14.)*

The two phases of heresy now mentioned may be styled in a general way, the *Ebionitic* or Humanitarian, and the *Gnostic* or Docetic. The first is the product of Jewish infidelity, translated into the Christian sphere; the last represents, in the same circumstances, the infidelity of the Gentile.

Both are comprehended in the general idea of Antichrist, as exhibited by St. John; since both alike refuse to

* Paganism, as well as Judaism, looks towards Christianity as its proper, necessary end. Both systems may be said to struggle from the start, towards the mystery of the incarnation, as the last sense of the world's life, though of themselves they fall short of it throughout. On the Gentile side, the human mind was never able to come to any true sense of the distinction between the divine and human; they appear always more or less confounded, and are always incapable thus, of course, of any true reconciliation. Judaism, as a divine revelation, unfolds a higher sphere of thought. Here the distinction between God and the world comes into view, and is made to rest upon its proper moral basis, securing the idea of a true personality on the side of God, and also on the side of men. But the distinction comes again to no real union; God remains perpetually *beyond* the world, sundered from it in the way of abstract opposition. Judaism was not complete in itself, save as the shadow only of things to come, but *required* the revelation of Christianity to fulfill its own sense. Refusing to accept it for this end and affecting to stand by itself, it became necessarily as false as Paganism on the opposite side. In these circumstances, moreover, the opposition between the two systems, that of the Gentile and that of the Jew, could not fail to become itself uncertain and fluctuating. As neither system was complete in itself, it followed that each, in seeking to stand for itself, must fall over perpetually to the standpoint of the other; for that is the necessary law of all such dialectic contradictions; so long as their opposite poles come not to a true reconciliation in the higher position which both seek, neither can sustain its own independence, but each is doomed to play continually into the sphere of the other. This we find exemplified in Judaism and Gentilism, as openly opposed in the first place to Christianity; and then, very strikingly again, in the two great heretical tendencies under which they have taken shelter in the Church, through all their varying history, from the beginning down to the present time.

confess that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," and in this way turn the foundation fact of Christianity into a lie. It is however plainly the Gnostic error, which the apostle has here primarily in his mind. The Ebionitic theory was too poor, to be made the object of his special attention. It was only in the other form, that the antichristian spirit, transforming itself into an angel of light, could be said to come to its proper revelation in the Church. It was in this form besides, that it was already displaying its presence, particularly in the Church of Asia Minor, the region where John wrote. Gnosticism, as a system, had not yet, it is true, made its appearance. But the elements out of which it grew were all at hand, and the secret principle of its life was actively at work. The language of the apostle, accordingly, carries in itself a distinct reference to this particular system. The Ebionite, like the modern Unitarian, could hardly be said to allow that Christ had come at all; for he made him to be, when all was done, the simple continuation merely of what had been before. His christology was no new order of life whatever, but the old anthropology only of the world, as it had stood from the beginning. The Gnostic, on the other hand, *seemed* to admit the advent of a higher life into the world; but his Christ came in the end to no proper reality. The old dualism of heaven and earth, remained for him all that it had been before this pretended union took place. His Christ was no actual incarnation; came not at all *in the flesh*; carried in himself the show only, and not the substance, of our common human life. And such precisely is the heresy here delineated by St. John. This emphatically is that spirit of Antichrist, against whose continual coming the Church is warned so solemnly to stand through all ages on her continual guard.

Here then we reach the special idea of Antichrist, in the sense of St. John: a spirit, nominally Christian, and so not beyond the Church but in it, which seeks to overthrow the person of Christ, by resolving it into the mere show of an incarnation, that has never had place in fact.

The title designates thus, not a person, but a *spirit*. This is confined to no single age, but lives through all time. It is bound besides to no standing settled form; but is ever coming into view, from some new quarter, and under some new aspect; with such fair and plausible show, as might deceive, were it possible, nay, to a certain extent, at times, does

deceive, the very elect. It had begun to reveal itself, **when** this warning was first uttered, in manifold cases of **false** doctrine. "Even *now*," says the apostle, "are there *many* Antichrists." (1 John ii. 18.) It has been in the world **ever** since, sometimes under one form and sometimes under another; and it will continue to be in it still, with **varying phase**, till the whole thinking of the Church, as well as its **entire** life in other forms, shall have come to be fully transfused with the power of the new creation, the mystery of which is primarily comprehended in the divine-human person of Christ.

In this view, moreover, the bad power in question is **not** necessarily confined to cases, in which it may be said to reign with open opposition to the truth; but is capable of being associated also with forms of Christian character, that are **prevailingly** sound and good. In its own nature, or spirit or principle, first of infidelity, and then of heresy, it may notwithstanding insinuate itself at times, to a certain extent, into the thinking also of the truly pious and faithful; and thus appear as a false theory or scheme of religion, where yet the inward force of religion is perhaps deeply felt. The conflict between light and darkness in the church, is not simply that of system against system, outwardly opposed, but enters into the process of the Christian life itself; which is carried forward, only in the way of a constant struggle with the false tendencies of human nature, in those who are the subjects thus of its transforming power. The antichristian spirit accordingly, may reveal itself, in some cases, for a time at least, in close conjunction with the most active spirit of religion; though always of course, in such case, as a secret leaven, that tends directly to corrupt and destroy the good life with which it is thus unhappily combined.

It is the general character of Antichrist, to deny "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." It is not necessary, however, as must appear from what has been already said, that the denial should go always at once to this point, in a direct and open way. It may take place also indirectly, and by mere implication or consequence. In proportion indeed as the falsehood becomes incorporated with the life of the gospel itself, it must show always a more and more refined action, under this latter form. To deny the incarnation broadly and plainly, belongs to the heresy only in its primitive undisguised character. It lies in the very conception

of an historical process, that its subsequent developments should be of a more inward, deep, and spiritually insidious character, corresponding continually with the development of the Christian principle itself, whose action must enter always more and more deeply into the life of the world, creating all things new. But whether as expressed or merely implied, in the form of an open heresy or as a leaven of falsehood secretly infecting the Christian consciousness itself, it remains in its own nature ever the same fearfully bad power, "whose coming is after the working of Satan," and which aims throughout at nothing less than the subversion of the whole gospel. No connections into which it may happen to come, can change its own true and proper intrinsic nature. It is still always the horrible enemy of Christ; usurping his name, and playing itself off as an angel of light, only to make war more successfully upon the truth which is comprehended in his person.

From its very nature, the antichristian spirit, as now described, must always be a spirit of *schism* as well as heresy. The true catholicity of the gospel rests ultimately in Christ's person; not in any doctrine or precept simply which he spoke, but in the new order of life brought to light, in the way of historical enduring fact, by the mystery of the incarnation. It could answer no purpose to preach the idea of a universal brotherhood in God, to the sense of the world as it stood before Christ came. The consciousness of the Jew on the one hand, no less than the consciousness of the Gentile on the other, was by its very constitution partial only and not universal. The genius of Paganism might seem indeed, to a superficial observer, to have been more catholic than Christianity itself. Heathen Rome stood ready, we are told, not simply to tolerate, but even to honor and worship, to a certain extent, the gods of all her conquered provinces. This, however, was only itself an evidence of what we now affirm; it showed that her sense of religion fell entirely short of the proper universal character, which belongs to it as the deepest idea of man's life. Her catholicity at best sought nothing more than a friendly alliance of different religions, as something parallel with a confederacy of different political states. Judaism had no such toleration for foreign systems of worship; but it had also no power, on the other hand, to embrace the world as a whole on the basis even of its own life. To become truly universal, it was abso-

lutely necessary that it should descend far below its own depth, and so pass away in another form of consciousness altogether. Neither Judaism nor Paganism reached to the last ground of man's life; and how then was it possible, that they should represent its proper *wholeness* in the form of religion? This last ground of humanity, as something deeper than the whole previous constitution of the world, is revealed only in Christ; who is for this very reason the principle and fountain of all true catholicity and wholeness, as the only proper inward and enduring form of the Church, and the end thus at the same time of all contradiction and schism. (Eph. ii. 14-22.) "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." To be baptized into Christ is to put on Christ; and then "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female;" but a consciousness more profound and universal than the sense of all these distinctions, "ye are all *one*, as the children of God, in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26-28. vi. 15.) All this, let it be well considered, only *in Christ*, and in virtue of the concrete revelation of life which is comprehended in his person. It is the mystery of the incarnation itself, the christological fact in which it stands, brought home to the inmost sense of the soul through faith, that serves to break down all walls of partition in the sphere of religion, and to make its scope as broad and free as the idea of our universal life. To deny this fact, to be shut out from the sense of it in a living way, is to be thrown back necessarily upon a less comprehensive consciousness; which as such can never be truly catholic, but must include always at best a part only of the truth, with inward antagonism to the truth as a whole. In its own necessary constitution then, the antichristian spirit is ever more or less sectarian and schismatic. It involves a rent, or rupture, with the Christian life, in its last ground. To deny that Christ is come in the flesh, is to substitute the simply Jewish or simply Gentile consciousness, for the far deeper consciousness that should swallow up both in the form of Christianity; which is to overthrow of course, to the same extent, the entire idea of one holy catholic Church. Antichrist is thus the spirit at once both of heresy and schism.

II. GENERAL HISTORY OF ANTICHRIST.

No thought is had here, of course, of any thing like a regular methodical account of the manifold forms and phases, under which the evil power before us has been waging war with Christ and his Church, from the beginning down to the present time. This would require whole volumes for its execution, and resources of learning and science besides of the very highest order. Our historical survey at present is intended to be nothing more than the most cursory and rapid glance at some of the more striking manifestations of the spirit in question, at different periods; for the purpose of illustrating and identifying still farther its true distinctive character, as already described; and to open the way for a proper estimate of its presence, in the form under which it is found revealing itself, more particularly, in our own time.*

* It is assumed here, of course, and throughout, that Christianity is itself *historical*, in the inmost sense of this term. Heresy becomes a process, developing itself through various phases, simply because the life of the Church is never stationary, but always passing forward from one stadium of perfection to another, all to become complete at last in the splendors of Christ's second coming. Some will have it indeed, that Christianity is not thus historical. They allow, to be sure, what they call a history of the Church; but by this, they mean only that the Christian religion has been in the world for eighteen centuries, passing through various hands and subject to various fortunes, till at length it has come to be the property of the generation now living. The idea of an organic process by which the thinking and working of the Church, in our age, is to be regarded as the growth continually of its life as it has gone before, they obstinately reject. Especially do they refuse to hear of a history of Christian doctrines, in any such sense as implies a real genesis of truth for the understanding of the Church. The principle of development they count dangerous, and cling, whether as Romanists or Protestants, to the principle of stability. But shall we put out our own eyes, to please this unreasonable school? The Church has *not* been stationary in her form, but always in a process of change, from the beginning. It is the height of ecclesiastical pedantry, for any section of the Christian world, as it now stands, to pretend to pass itself off as an accurate image of what the Church was in the second century or the first. Such affectation can lead only to hypocrisy at last, and blind traditional bigotry. All theology is historical; not a single doctrine do we hold, that is worthy of trust, which has not been wrought into form and shape for us, through the medium of the actual life of the Church, as it has stood in other ages. Take, for instance, the doctrine of Christ's person. Has it been held under the same form from the beginning? One of the greatest works of this age is Dr. Dorner's *Entwicklungsgeschichte* of this very doctrine; in

As already intimated, the heresy appeared at first without reserve or disguise, in what may be called its proper native character. The spirit of the world, which was at the time a spirit in general of wild tumultuating fermentation, while it took the attitude for the most part of open infidel opposition to the revelation of Christ, came still to some extent under its divine power from the very start. We find it accordingly, even in the days of the apostles themselves, entering into pretended friendship with Christianity, and in this way seeking to corrupt it into its own image. Captivated and excited in fact, to a certain degree, by the grandeur of Christ, it affected now to make common cause with his infant Church, and to yield him its homage as the true Savior of the human race. But in all this, it came to no apprehension of the "mystery of godliness" as embodied in his person; and instead of surrendering itself to him by faith, as the deepest fact in life and the last principle of all truth, it required rather that Christ should surrender himself to *its* authority, and be content to take such form and meaning as its own order of life might allow. It could not go out of itself, in order that it might be in Christ. It was willing to be modified, stimulated, etherealized after a fashion, by Christ; but it could not brook the idea of a new creation in Christ. On the contrary, Christ must be forced to come into its own false sphere, with whatever of violence and cost, to make it appear as though *this* were the truth which he came to reveal. In other words, the fact of the incarnation must be turned into an empty dream. Only so was it possible to escape in full the authority of an

which, what *seems* at least to be a history of its development is very learnedly, and at the same time very clearly, traced from the beginning down to the present time. Those who so boldly reject the idea of historical development, would do well to make themselves acquainted with this great theological performance, not to speak of others, that might be mentioned, on the same general field. Is this work of Dörner a mere dream? Are his facts false; or does he put them together like a fool, mistaking altogether their true sense? If our stability theologians would only read such a work, and pretend, at least, to *answer it*, one might have some patience with their dogmatic confidence. But it is really asking too much in such a case, to require that those who *have* thus read, should be content to take such dogmatic confidence as of itself conclusive on the other side. Stubborn assumption here, confronted with the power of facts which it will not condescend to notice, or of which, perhaps, it has never heard, is not entitled to much respect.

objective Christ, and set up a purely subjective idol in his room. A divine life was acknowledged in the person of the Savior; but only in such a form as necessarily overthrew the conception of his true and proper human life. The idea of a real living union between the divine nature and the human, lay quite beyond the whole philosophy of religion as here brought into exercise. The human, accordingly, was made to lose itself entirely in the divine or superhuman. The man Jesus became only the shadowy form, or outward sign at best, under which the true invisible and supernatural Christ discovered himself to the senses of other men. It could not be said, that this divine Christ had himself literally *come in the flesh*. He seemed indeed to come in this way, teaching and working wonders in Judea and in Galilee; but all this was in the end a phantasm only, and not a part of the world's real history. For how was the thought to be endured, that spirit should link itself thus in lasting inward marriage with gross matter? How could the infinite enter into living union with the finite, and not suffer fatal circumscription in the process?

Such Docetic views of the person of Christ, as we learn from various references in the New Testament, began to show themselves in the Church before the death of the Apostles. They are clearly identified as the arch error of the age, in particular by St. John. "This is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world." So again, "Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist." (1 John ii. 18, 22. 2 John 7.)* In what forms precisely the heresy may have manifested itself during this period, remains for us to a great extent unknown. Most probably there was

* The somewhat enigmatical exhortation, which closes the first epistle: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," has reference probably to the same general subject; as if he had said: Be on your guard against spectral shadows (*εἰδωλα*, simulacra) that seek to pass themselves off for the true mystery of Christ. So Ignatius pronounces such as turned Christ into a phantasm, to be themselves no better than ghosts (*ἀσώματοι καὶ δαιμονικοί*).

but little regularity in its character. It was more a spirit or tendency, than a system. Its general form was chaotic and confused; of Gentile aspect at one time, and then again of Jewish; most frequently, however, we have reason to believe, a contradictory amalgamation of features borrowed from both sides. The Ebionitic view of Christ had a tendency from the start to pass over, at least in part, into the Docetic; as the Docetic also, on the other hand, had a constant tendency to lose itself again in the Ebionitic.*

In the second century, the false spirit which had been thus chaotically at work from the beginning, assumed order and system, to some extent, in the vast creations of *Gnosticism*. Wonderfully diversified as these were in their particular forms and aspects, the christological theory on which they rested was always substantially the same. It denied that Christ had come in the flesh, and resolved the fact of the incarnation into a mere theophany, by which the divine life only *seemed* to unite itself organically with the life of the world in man, without doing so in fact. Either the humanity of the Savior was altogether rejected, his whole bodily appearance treated as a vision simply, or optical illusion; or else it was stripped of all proper reality, by being made to sink into the character of an external organ, or instrument only, through which the true spiritual Christ was pleased to manifest his presence among men. The human,

* *Cerinthus* stands a prominent representative of such heresy, about the close of the first century, on the same field that was then honored by the presence of the apostle John. Jesus, in his view, was a mere man at first, born in a natural way; who, however, by his extraordinary virtues showed himself worthy to become the Son of God; and was accordingly raised to this distinction at his baptism, when Christ, a superangelic æon, descended upon him and entered into his person. He now knew the Father, and proclaimed him to the world, having power also to work miracles. At his death, the æon Christ withdrew from him again, and so took no part, of course, in his sufferings. Christ will return again, however, hereafter, and then the man Jesus will rise from the dead, and so enter upon his millennial reign. In all this, we have, it is clear, no *personal* union of the divine and human in the Messiah, but at best only a mechanical, magical connection. It serves to show, at the same time, how easily Ebionism and Gnosticism pass over into each other. The Savior is all man at the start; but his humanity is overpowered in the end by the higher life that descends upon it, as an outward foreign force; and thus all evaporates into sheer spirit. So the proper Gnosticism, on the other hand, starting with a Savior all superhuman, has a constant tendency to lose itself ultimately in the opposite extreme.

even when thus accepted as something real by itself, had still no actual reality in the constitution of the Savior's person; it came into no living union with this whatever, but stood out of it, and beyond it, as a mere transitory accident or appendage. The person was, in fact, divided into two Christs; a higher and a lower, a heavenly and an earthly Christ, bound together in an outward temporary way; the second being but an occasion or medium for the sensible revelation of the first. It was not thus a union that might be considered original and necessary at all in the Redeemer's life, but a mere economical device adopted to serve a particular purpose; which was referred accordingly, not to the origin of the human subject as born of the Virgin, but to his baptism in the river Jordan. Previous to this, Jesus had been, according to the theory, a mere man; born naturally, or it might be, as some were willing to allow, supernaturally; who, by a course of exalted virtue, became a suitable organ for the use of the heavenly Christ, now ready in the fullness of time to descend from the divine pleroma into the world. This descent had place at his baptism, the true *epiphany* of the Logos, which here took possession of his person, and continued to use it subsequently as an instrument of revelation, till the mission of mercy became complete. In some of the Gnostic systems more was made of the humanity of Christ than in others; but in all of them it remained at last an accidental appendage to his higher nature, rather than an essential element in his true and proper life. It was at best but the sign or symbol of the divine reality it represented; a sort of earthly copy or counterpart it might be of what belonged properly to heaven; but in no sense the actual presence of the divine heavenly fact itself. *This*, it was allowed on all hands, could not so *come in the flesh*.

There is nothing more grand and magnificent in the whole history of the Church, than its long, deep struggle with the gigantic strength of this Gnostic speculation. Had it not been founded upon the rock of Peter's life-confession, the *fact* of Christ's theanthropic person perpetually present to the inmost consciousness of the Church, through the power of faith, these gates of hell must assuredly have prevailed against it in the way of full and final overthrow. But it could not thus perish. The Gnostic heresies only served themselves to bring the Church, in the end, to a clearer un-

derstanding of what was contained in her own living creed. Christianity authenticated itself, as a divine reality and not a mere scheme of thought, by throwing off the huge weight of foreign element that sought on all sides to overwhelm it, and asserting successfully its own rightful supremacy, as the fountain of a new order of life for the world. The true nature of the fact comprehended in Christ's person, so far as the reality of both sides of his life was concerned, came gradually to a clear, steady enunciation. A long process was still needed, to settle the form in which the doctrine should be ultimately held ; but so much at least was triumphantly established, that Christianity rested on a true union of the divine life with the human in the person of Jesus Christ ; and in this way the contest with Gnosticism, in its open and undisguised character, was brought forever to an end. With all their magnificence, the Gnostic sects accordingly had no power to stand. They passed away, in due time, like the streams of the desert, or the coruscations of an aurora borealis.

But the *principle* of Gnosticism was not thus extirpated from the Church. It only betook itself to new forms of error, more plausible and refined, in which to continue its antichristian war against the person of Christ as before, under cover still of the Christian profession and name.

Its next most notable manifestation is in the character of the *Manichæan* heresy ; which may be said to bring up the rear of the Gnostic period, in a certain sense, in the third and fourth centuries. It seems, on first view indeed, to base itself on quite different ground ; having respect to the constitution of our common human nature, more than to the person of Christ. But the view we take of our common human nature and the view we take of Christ, in our theory of religion, always condition each other, and give us at last but different sides only of one and the same theological scheme. A false christology involves ever a false anthropology ; and a false anthropology, on the other hand, can never be sundered from a christology equally unsound. The same system of thought precisely, which refused to admit the idea of a true reconciliation between Nature and Spirit in the person of Jesus Christ, made it necessary to assert a like abrupt and hopelessly hostile relation between the life of nature and the higher life of grace, in those who are the subjects of his redemption. We see an exemplification of

this, to some extent, in all the Gnostic sects. But in the Manichæan heresy, it forms the grand characteristic distinction by which it is known. Humanity is here exhibited under the form of an absolutely helpless dualism; playing over continually into the sphere of an equally helpless pantheism; two principles, two kingdoms, that shut out all possibility of a real inward reconciliation, and thus allow no room whatever for the idea of a natural historical salvation, such as it is the object of Christianity to accomplish. The world as such, and the nature of man too so far as it partakes of its constitution, are regarded as intrinsically and incurably bad. Only the higher life which has become imprisoned in this dark sphere, but which forms at last no constituent part at all of its existence, is capable of being redeemed and saved; and the salvation which it requires resolves itself, when all is done, into a process that is full as much physical as moral, and which in the nature of the case overthrows the whole conception of a real mediation in the work of redemption. The entire process assumes the form of magic. Natural and supernatural come to no true union. All ends in dark fanatical gloom, on the one hand, and fantastic, unreal cloud creations, on the other.

The natural counterpart of this heresy, standing in the same relation to it that the Ebionitic view of Christ's person sustains to the Docetic, is presented to us in the form of *Pelagianism*. Here, the human nature is regarded as capable of salvation, without the help of any higher principle in the form of life. Manichæism carries its view of the corruption of the world so far as to subvert its capability of redemption; Pelagianism makes the corruption so light, that no redemption is needed. The case is admitted to call for help; but the help is thought of only in the character of outward occasion or salutary inward influence; it resolves itself into the notion of doctrine, example, providential facilities, and gracious aids. Christianity, of course, is not accepted as a new creation in Christ Jesus; it is only the old creation, roused into the full exercise of the resources it included before. Thus the full sense of what is comprehended in the fact of the incarnation, is necessarily contradicted and wronged. Pelagianism inclines naturally to look upon Christ as a mere man, and thus finds its proper end in Unitarianism. The Manichæan and Pelagian heresies, with all their apparent contradiction, exhibit only opposite poles

of the same antichristian falsehood ; which, as such, have a constant tendency, like Ebionism and Gnosticism, to fall over each into the sphere of the other. Fatalism and licentiousness are strangely mixed together, in the history of error. Nothing is more common than the union of Pelagian and Manichæan principles to some extent, or rather perhaps an alternation of one system with the other, in the same sect. Augustine especially was the great organ of the Church, in the hand of God, for conducting the Christian consciousness safely through both extremes, into that form of faith which has since been acknowledged as Catholic orthodoxy on the subject of sin and grace. The Manichæan and Pelagian heresies however were not annihilated, by the formal condemnation to which they were thus brought, in their original form. They have entered largely into the history of Christianity, through all subsequent ages ; sometimes in one form, and sometimes in another ; more or less blended together ; producing oftentimes the most contrary results, theoretical and practical, in strange combination ; but involving always, at bottom, a dualistic apprehension of Christ's person, by which the great fact of the incarnation may be said to have been shorn continually of its true and proper force.

Our attention is next challenged by the momentous christological controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries ; through which the true doctrine of Christ's person was still further defined and affirmed, in opposition to the error of *Nestorius*, on the one side, and the *Eutychian* or *Monophysite* heresy, on the other. The question here respected not the constituent parts of the Mediatorial person, in themselves considered ; he was allowed on all hands, in the Church, to be very God and very man ; the point was now to determine, if it might be done, the relation in which the two natures must be supposed to stand to each other, in this mysterious union. The question lay in this case, of course, entirely within the sphere of the Christian faith itself ; and yet the same false tendencies substantially, which had been encountered in a more open way before, were now to be met and conquered again ; the field of controversy was changed, but the conflicting forces, so far as inward principle was concerned, were what they had been from the first. As brought nearer, however, to the central fact of Christianity, the two contrary phases of the antichristian error, which as we have already seen have a tendency from the start to play into

each other, show themselves here less capable than ever of any clear and independent distinction. We have two extremes as before; but the falsehood which belongs to both, is found to be more clearly than before a common falsehood, from the fact that each is felt to include so largely in its own constitution, the very contradiction that seems to sunder it from the other; so that it is not always easy, by any means, to follow out in the action of either, the development of what might seem to be its own primary principle. Euty-chianism appears to be on the whole a continuation of the old Docetic or Gnostic tendency; whilst Nestorianism, as its opposite, must be regarded as a sort of highly refined Ebionism. The first recognizes indeed the proper humanity of Christ, as the last recognizes also his proper divinity; but in the one case, the humanity is made to lose itself again in the divine life with which it is united; while on the other, this union is reduced to the form of a mere mechanical conjunction, that brings the divine personality into no proper oneness of life with the manhood of Christ whatever. In both cases, the historical fact of the incarnation is subverted; in favor of Christ's true humanity, it might seem, on one side, and to save his title to full divinity on the other; but with palpable confusion of these purposes, at the same time, in each direction.

Thus Nestorianism in particular, which appears to lay so much emphasis, in one view, on the human side of Christ's life, asserting as it did at the same time his proper full divinity, comes necessarily to be almost as much Gnostic as Ebionitic in its constitution. For Gnosticism was willing also, as we have already seen, to allow the real manhood of the Savior, if only it were left to stand in a simply outward and mechanical relation to the higher principle which it served to reveal. The Nestorian Christ, like the Gnostic, was in fact a divided Christ, two distinct subsistences, joined together in the show, but not in the reality, of a common life. The divinity must be so sundered from the humanity, as to have it in fact always beyond itself, and never in its own sphere; it cannot be born of the Virgin, it cannot enter into the process of human growth, it cannot participate in the sufferings of the garden and the cross. It is a separate consciousness, that merely broods or floats over the proper life, first of the child, and then of the man Jesus, without coming ever to any actual incorporation with it, in the way of in-

ward personal unity. The hypostatical union is not organic and real, but the conjunction simply of two distinct forms of existence, which it is made to embrace in a visionary, magical way. Both sides of the antichristian principle are found here, dialectically wrought into the constitution of the same most plausible heresy; and under this form particularly, Jewish in one aspect and Gentile in another, Ebionism and Gnosticism smelted together, it has continued to show itself very extensively active in the Church ever since, with various modifications, down to the present time.

During the middle ages, we are met with the presence of St. John's cardinal heresy, under multitudinous and most complex manifestations. In the Roman Church, we have on the one hand a gross system of Pelagianism, sinking the Christian life into the sphere of mere nature; while on the other the natural is fantastically overwhelmed by the idea of the supernatural, and the whole system of grace converted into a system of magic. A conjunction of seeming opposites, which it need give us now, of course, no difficulty to comprehend or admit. Among the sects again, by which the reigning Church was opposed, it is easy to trace, from the Paulicians downward, a Gnostic and Manichæan taint, which must be allowed seriously to detract from their general merit as "witnesses of the truth." Their great defect is the want of a firm, full sense of the realness of Christianity, as an abiding objective revelation of the life of God in the flesh.

It was not to be expected, of course, that the Reformation should bring to an end the activity of the bad power, at whose history we are now glancing. On the contrary, if Protestantism be itself a higher stadium of the Christian life than all that went before, it might naturally be presumed that the antichristian heresy, whose very nature it is to keep pace always with the development of this life itself, would come here also to a corresponding revelation, and be something worse thus than all it had previously been. It is no compliment to Protestantism, to say that there is no Antichrist, save that which has been left behind in the Church of Rome; for this must imply, as the world now stands, that Protestant Christianity is comparatively impotent, as a true revelation of the presence and glory of Christ. Where the life of Christ is mainly active, in the way of historical force, we have reason to expect a corresponding activity of Anti-

christ, as the spirit of delusion and error. If then Protestantism be the truth of Christ in a higher form than Romanism, we ought not to be surprised certainly to find this false spirit here also, under its most subtle and dangerous character. In the nature of the case, moreover, the Protestant Antichrist must be sought, not beyond the pale of Protestantism, and in the posture of open opposition to its cause; but in the bosom of this cause itself, regarded as the most perfect style of the Church. He will be found, sitting in the temple of Protestantism, affecting to be no less than Christ, the Protestant Christ himself, whose right it is to exercise supreme control in the Church, and to be worshiped and served by the whole world.

Such a revelation we have presented to us, on a broad scale, in the *Rationalism* and *Sectarianism* which have become so widely characteristic of our Protestant Christianity, in its modern form. Antichrist is both rational and schismatic, as has been already shown, in his very nature; and his manifestations have exhibited always more or less of this twofold character, from the beginning. But never before was it made to stand forth so broadly to view, as the open and avowed form of the revelation itself. In the name of Protestantism, a large part of the Christian world has come to be rationalistic and schismatic now, on principle; holding this to be the true and proper form of Christianity; making no question of its power and right to shape theology and fashion the structure of the Church, as in its own eyes the case may seem to require. Nor is it difficult at all to identify the two forms of thinking here mentioned, as different sides only of one and the same false life. Their relation to each other is the same essentially which we have already found to hold between heresy and schism; the one is for the understanding what the other is for the will. Both, in their last ground, come together, as the power of a single error, and each accordingly including always the principle of the other in its own constitution, is secretly impelled towards it also, throughout, as the end in which alone it becomes naturally complete.

Rationalism, belonging as it does primarily to the sphere of theory and reflection, is naturally disposed to fall in with the Ebionitic tendency, and to reject thus at last the whole idea of any thing more than a common human life in Christ's person. It is not, however, necessarily restricted to this

view ; the very same theoretic principle may enter into a scheme of thinking, in which the supernatural side of Christianity is fully admitted. It deserves to be well understood and considered, that there is a supernaturalism which comes at last to the same thing precisely with rationalism in its lowest form ; a rationalistic supernaturalism, we may term it, which acknowledges the presence of a divine life in Christ, but will not allow it, at the same time, to come into any organic union with his human life ; so that the two forms of existence, thus held asunder, remain in truth, when all is done, two different spheres of consciousness altogether, and the proper divinity of the man Jesus is as much subverted as though it had been openly denied from the start. The supernatural, held in this way, becomes magic, and cannot be said to have truly "come in the flesh." This Nestorian theology, accordingly, if it be pushed out by thinking to its proper consequences, is found incapable in the end of maintaining its ground against the view that excludes the supernatural altogether. Rationalism indeed is in its very nature, a perpetual oscillation between these two extremes ; it is constitutionally dualistic, and in this view comes to its most profound character finally, in the form of Pantheism. Such is the course through which it has run particularly in Germany, the land it has so long claimed openly as its own.

The spirit of Sect, on the other hand, would seem to carry in itself an original natural affinity with the Docetic or Gnostic way of looking at Christ. More practical than theoretic at the start, it is disposed to lay peculiar stress on the spiritual side of Christianity, as the revelation of a higher life in the world. But this higher life is not apprehended, as the true universal sense of the world itself ; comes to no full human revelation, in the person of Christ, as the principle and ground of all religion. Sectarianism is ever inclined to place Christ wholly in the clouds, or to turn him into an ideal phantom, that it may be left the more free in the exercise of its own subjectivity. In this way, however, it is carried over, by a sort of inward necessity, to the sphere of theoretic Rationalism. The divine which it affects to grasp and hold in such fantastic style, becomes identical at last with the simply human. That which has begun in the spirit finds its tame, flat conclusion, ultimately in the flesh.

It is by no accidental connection, then, that sectarianism is found to be rationalistic. It belongs to its very constitu-

tion to have this character. The spirit of sect, wherever it may prevail, involves necessarily a false view of the person of Christ, and is utterly incompatible thus with sound Christian orthodoxy. As a spirit at once of heresy and schism, in this way, we pronounce it to be emphatically the Antichrist of the Church in our own time. So far as its power goes, it is at war with the whole fact of the incarnation.

III. MARKS OF ANTICHRIST:

With reference particularly to the Sect System.

To test the truth of the affirmation thus made, let us now pass in review some of the more striking marks or notes of the antichristian spirit, as they are found to accompany it through all its various phases and transmutations, applying them, at the same time, in the way of special trial, to the system here brought into view. For this we are prepared, in some measure, by the analysis and history which have gone before. It is the *spirit* of Antichrist, as something which is capable of diverse manifestations, that we are concerned especially to understand; and the only way of identifying the presence of the spiritual Proteus, in any particular manifestation, is to study well the features that belong to it in its universal character.

In this whole process, of course, we have to do, not with any particular sect or sects, as such, but only with the sect mind, as lying at the ground of all such divisions, and revealing itself through their general life. This is something which it is vastly important to understand, apart from all denominational distinctions and controversies with which it may be joined.

The ultimate, universal criterion of the Antichristian spirit is before us already, in the rule of St. John. It will not yield, in full, that Christ is *come in the flesh*. All other marks then, of course, by which it may be distinguished, must resolve themselves at last into this fundamental character. They will be the necessary consequences simply that flow from the want of faith in the incarnation as a real and abiding fact, and they will be found accordingly to fall back always to this point, as their principle and source.

First Mark.

Antichrist owns no *real mediation* between God and man to be necessary, in order to Christian salvation. It may affect, indeed, to feel the need of redemption, and to honor and trust in Christ at the same time as a Redeemer. But the only redemption it requires comes at last merely to this, that the parties which have been separated by sin should be brought together in form and fancy, without being reconciled in fact. The relation in which Christ stands to the whole object may be considered highly important and necessary, but it is altogether outward and mechanical, and no good reason appears why he should be a human Christ at all. He is the occasion by which men are brought near to God, not the real medium of this approach itself; the cause of the atonement in the divine mind, not the very fact in which it consists, as the actual self-revelation of God, *at one* with the world, and making the world to be *at one* with himself. (Rom. v. 11; 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.) To such an *at-one-ment*, accordingly, the salvation never comes in fact. The old dualism of nature remains without help, save in the way of pantheistic oscillations, that serve to mock in the end the weakness out of which they spring. All runs out into the form of an abstract, interminable disjunction and contradiction, between nature and spirit, earth and heaven, man and God. Salvation is something wholly subjective; made to rest in some measure, it may be, upon the *thought* of something which is supposed to have taken place also in the divine mind; but still, even in this form, a process which is such as to leave the subject always hopelessly in himself.

The Gnostic had no apprehension of Christ, as the objective medium of salvation; saw no need of any such medium in his own case; was strong rather in the imagination that he was called to rise above the world, in the way of direct personal transaction with God; for which only certain facilities had been provided by the gospel. His Christ became accordingly a mere phantasm.

So universally the antichristian spirit shows itself insensible to the necessity of a real mediation between God and man, and in this way thrusts the Savior aside, by clothing him with a false character. The Christ of the Quaker is the light of God in his own soul; which becomes again, in due time, the light of common reason. The Hegelian

Christ is an idea. The history of sectarianism shows it to have a constant constitutional tendency to thrust the fact of real mediation aside in the same way. It is characteristic of the sect spirit, that it makes Christ auxiliary only to its own religious life, and not properly the medium in which it moves. A Docetic tinge, a character of fantastic unreality, is thus made to surround his person, which only too often pays the natural penalty of its own wrong again, by settling at last into the form of a cold rationalistic abstraction.

Second Mark.

Antichrist undervalues the mystery of Christ's *person*. Not, of course, professedly, and in a direct way, but indirectly and in fact, by sinking it into comparative insignificance in the work of redemption. It might seem, indeed, in one view, as if the heresy were inclined to make too much of Christ's person; carrying it wholly into the clouds, and counting it too high to come into any real connection with the world whatever. The Gnostic Christ is altogether supernatural and transcendental, and owns no fellowship at all with our natural humanity, in its common mortal form. But for this very reason, he stands shorn of all personal importance for the actual human world. His person, as such, is not the medium of salvation, not the main thing, therefore, in Christianity. Not by what he is, according to this system, but by what he speaks and does, are we redeemed and brought near to God. The proper contents of the Savior's personality are not discerned; their unutterably momentous import is not felt; the fact is not apprehended as real, but in place of it the fantastic figment of a Christ is made to swim in the mind, having no more reality or power finally than a mere idea or thought; so that all hangs, not upon the constitution of the real historical Christ at all, but only upon the truth and power revealed through his ministry.

The Sect life in the church is always infected, more or less clearly, with this way of thinking; bears upon itself always, more or less plainly legible, this mark of Antichrist. All sectarian, schismatic Christianity has a tendency to make Christ's actual person of small account, as compared with his doctrine and work. It affects to magnify, it may be, the mediatorial functions of the Redeemer; but sees not the proper and necessary root of all these in the *mediatorial*

life ; as that which goes before all, and includes all, in the form of a divine, historical, and perpetual fact. Its christology is, after all, the outward apparatus of its theory of redemption, the divine machinery of salvation, rather than the very substance and process of this salvation itself. It fails always to bring the fact of the incarnation to its full right and weight. The fact itself is admitted ; but the necessity of it is by no means clear. One cannot see plainly, after all, as the case stands, why precisely the redemption of the gospel must be just in this form, and not in another ; why it was absolutely needful for the Word to become flesh at all ; why the ends of redemption might not have been about as well reached, if the whole gospel history had been a mere theophany, or a revelation of God's truth and love by some other medium altogether. For even where the evangelical salvation is made to go beyond the idea of doctrine merely or authority, so as to include the notion of a direct divine influence upon the soul, secured through the Savior Christ, it is still only the work of Christ externally considered, that opens the way for such grace ; so that, for aught that appears in the theory itself, the same end might have been fairly reached, if the same work had been accomplished in some other form entirely ; by an atonement, for instance, in the spiritual world, had it so pleased God, or under some other mode of existence than our common humanity, instead of that earthly sacrifice which actually took place for this purpose, when Christ died upon Calvary. The incarnation is viewed at best as the erection of the outward altar simply, on which this holocaust for the sins of the world might be made to ascend in sacred fire towards God ; the platform of the work of salvation ; the artificial theatre, wonderfully *contrived* by Heaven, on which should be enacted the vast scene of man's redemption. All is felt to be, at last, more or less shadowy, visionary, and fantastic ; all tends to swim into the form of distant, dim, ideal abstraction. Invariably it will be found, the sectarian Christ lacks the character of true realness for the mind, and wears, on the contrary, a more or less magical, æon-like aspect, in which the gospel seems to look down upon us always only from the clouds.

Third Mark.

With this dim sense of what is properly comprehended in the person of Christ, is always associated necessarily a corresponding want of faith in the Church, as a *real supernatural constitution* always present in the world. Antichrist acknowledges of course the existence of the Church; owns also its divine origin, and pretends to find in it the presence of a divine life. But the Church thus allowed, comes to no true, organically historical revelation in the world's life, as an independent, abiding form of human existence, continuously distinct from all that the world has been, or still continues to be, under any other form. If Christ be the principle of a new creation, the point in which the earth and heavens have been brought into permanent living conjunction as never before, it follows at once plainly that the Church in which is comprehended the power of this fact, and which for this very reason is declared to be his BODY, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, must carry in itself a constitution of its own, as really objective and enduring, to say the least, as the course of nature, on which as a basis it is made supernaturally to rest. The ancient Gnosticism, however, had no knowledge of any such organic, historical Church. Its associated Christianity was something of a quite different nature; made up of an election of living units, the pneumatic order of human spirits, each attracted for itself towards Christ, and all uniting by aggregation only to form the idea of his kingdom. As the Savior himself had no real being in the world, stood among men only in the form of an unsubstantial phantasm, or in the show of a human life which was after all but the sign or symbol of his invisible nature, not the very presence of this nature itself; it was not possible of course to attach any different idea of reality to the new life which he introduced into the world. The Church must become as Docetic and idealistic as her imaginary head.

And so in the case of all later manifestations of the antichristian spirit. With the course of time, we find it consenting in appearance to yield the first point; it affects to believe and confess that Christ did once come in the flesh; an *event*, far off in the dim distance of the past, and in this way much as though it belonged to another world; but its original character is only the more strongly asserted, with all this, in the view it continues to take of the Church. Nay,

it fights against the idea of a real Church, Antichrist as it is, as though the honor of the true historical Christ must necessarily be made to suffer by admitting its claims. Out of zeal for what Christ *once* was in the world, it madly seeks to turn his whole presence in it since into the character of a mere ghostlike abstraction. The Church, in its estimation, is the form only in which a certain system of thought, feeling, and action, produced by the gospel, is accustomed to make itself known, in conformity with our general social nature. In the end, accordingly, it resolves itself into thin air.

The whole Sect system shows here its true character; for it turns throughout on the assumption, that Christ has no real Church in this world; but only an invisible spiritual Christianity, which men are at liberty to arrange and shape, by the help of the Bible, according to their own pleasure. Schism, as such, has no faith in the holy catholic Church; holds the very word for popish, and the thing itself no better than empty wind; save as it may be taken to mean its own figment of a Church, which exists objectively in the clouds only, or at best in the Bible, and subjectively in such developments of piety as are supposed to square properly with this rule.

Fourth Mark.

This want of faith in the Church, as the presence of a real divine life in the world, reveals itself always in a low view of the *ministry* and *sacraments*, and of Christian *worship* generally. If the Church be not the depositary of supernatural powers, made objective and constant in the world under this form, it is not to be imagined of course that the organs and functions of the Church can carry in them any greater value or force.

It is characteristic of Antichrist accordingly, under all forms, to undervalue the true idea of the Christian ministry, and to sink the character of all church services and institutions to the level of our common human life; at the very moment, it may be, when it is pretended to exalt them, in another view, to the highest spiritual dignity. All Sectarian Christianity, in particular, is clearly distinguished by this mark; as any one may see from the history of past sects, or by considering the character in which sects appear in our

own time. They make little account of any outward ordination ; because it is the Spirit that qualifies all true ministers for the sacred office ; and *their* ministry must be God-sent, not manufactured by man. The office in this view, however, comes to no real union with the man on whom it seems to rest ; and the consequence is, that all ends at last, for himself and for others also, in the strength which may happen to belong to him in his simply natural capacity and state. The ministry is shorn thus of its true divine sanctity, and all ministerial functions undergo a corresponding degradation.

The same dualistic view prevails also in the case of the sacraments ; sundering the visible from the invisible ; overthrowing the idea of sacramental grace entirely. The spirit of Sect universally shrinks from the acknowledgment of any objective efficacy, either in Baptism or the Lord's Supper. It finds an immense difficulty in admitting the sacraments to be at all a special mode or form of grace, in which the divine force of Christianity is brought near to men, as something different from the exhibition which is made of it in the mere word ; not reflecting that it would be equally difficult, in all probability, to admit the presence of any such special divine force in the person of the Redeemer himself, were he now outwardly among us, as in the days of his flesh. Faith in the sacraments, and faith in a real Christ who is come in the flesh, go hand in hand together. Sects clearly betray their rationalistic, Gnostic spirit, by making the Lord's Supper to be a simple sign or monument, and denying all power to holy Baptism. Their sacraments are Docetic, fantastic ; all spirit, borrowed from the region of clouds ; only to prove at last all flesh, having no reality save in the worshiper's brain. Hence a tendency, on the part of all sects, as such, to set aside the sacraments altogether, or at least to change their character into an entirely new sense. The Baptist principle, in particular, may be said to lie involved in their whole theory of religion. Infant baptism has no meaning for those, who have lost all faith in the idea of sacramental grace.

The true idea of worship also will be found wanting, in the same circumstances, to the same extent. To be unsacramental, is necessarily to be at the same time unliturgical. The power of Christian worship consists in this, that the worshipers be filled with the sense of a common church life,

and present themselves in this consciousness as a living sacrifice to God. Its whole conception requires that it should move in the sphere of the objective, and not fall over to the sway of simply individual thought or feeling. But we all know, how completely the spirit of Sect serves to reverse this law. Sects have no sense for the objective and liturgical, in worship; hold all this rather to be at war with the idea of devotion; and aim accordingly, on principle, to clothe the entire service of God as much as possible with just the opposite character. Their hymns, and the tunes to which they are sung, their prayers, and of course also the whole tone of their preaching, bear the same impress of extreme subjectivity. This is supposed, indeed, to constitute their highest excellence and worth; as it seems to place the worshiper in direct personal juxtaposition with the spiritual world itself, and carries with it oftentimes a great show of earnestness and life, in its own form. But the transition here again is most easy, nay, most necessary, as all experience proves, from the region of clouds downward to the region of clods. All Sect worship, fanatical and extravagant at first, sinks finally into the dullest routine of empty ceremony. Sects as such, we may say rather, have no worship, in the only true sense of the term; and can hardly be said to know at all what worship, as a divine liturgical sacrifice, means.

Fifth Mark.

The antichristian spirit reveals itself still farther, in the way of contempt for all *history* and *authority*. It is not possible to believe in a real Church at all, if we do not recognize in it the continued presence of the same divine life, or new creation, that was originally introduced into the world by the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In the character of a supernatural fact or entity, actually at hand in the world's life, and as something different in this respect from a mere theory or conception, the Church *must* exist as the BODY of CHRIST objectively and permanently, in the world, under the form of history: not here to-day and gone to-morrow; but always here, according to Christ's own solemn promise: not in the way of dead, monotonous tradition; but in the way of a true organic life process, reaching forward continually, through all ages, to its full proper consummation at the end

of the world. In the very nature of the case, then, the individual must be bound by the general, the part by the whole : not blindly or slavishly, of course ; but still in such a way, that no rupture or chasm between the two may be endured, as though the individual could be true by itself, in any original and independent form, apart from the organic whole to which it belongs. Hence the idea of Church authority, and sound ecclesiastical tradition. Faith in a real Christ, felt to be always in the Church really to the end of the world, will make it impossible for Christians to undervalue and despise either the present Church or the Church of past ages.

In proportion, however, as the sense of such a new creation in Christ Jesus, as the fact of the incarnation implies, may be wanting, this catholic feeling cannot be expected of course to prevail. When the objective Church, present or past, is no divine *fact* for faith (as in the Creed), how should it be expected to control and rule in any way the particular Christian consciousness? The particular Christian consciousness in such case, if Christian it may still be called at all, is necessarily sectarian and schismatic—*ruptured* from the life of the Church as a whole. It belongs accordingly to the very constitution of *Sect*, on the other hand, that it should ever be thus a foe to all history and authority. Sects, in proportion as they *are* sectarian, are disposed to stand upon the right of private judgment and individual freedom ; and entertain, in particular, a sovereign contempt for the “Fathers,” and for Church antiquity in every shape.*

* It is hardly necessary to say, that this claim to absolute independence on the part of sects, is sheer pedantic affectation, when all is done. The thing itself is absurd and impossible. It lies in the constitution of our nature itself, that individual life and thought must be bound, in some way, by what is general. If then we refuse to acknowledge and honor authority under its legitimate form, we do not become free ; we only accept authority under some form that is false. All true freedom holds in the bosom of true authority, as all bondage begins where the orbit of law is forsaken. To be subjective supremely, is to be supremely weak. Your blustering braggadocio is always a coward. The man who is forever bent on having his own way, is sure to go forever wrong. Sects are always palpably unfree, in proportion as the sect spirit forms their prevailing character. They disown antiquity, to make room for their own upstart history of yesterday. They refuse all reverence to the catholic Church, that they may do servile homage to some miserable fragment of the Christian profession in its stead. They have their “fathers” too, and

Sixth Mark.

Such affectation of *individual freedom* is itself again worthy of being noticed, as a separate mark or feature of Antichrist.

Christianity proposes, indeed, also to make men free. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear," says the apostle, "but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Christ may be denominated emphatically the principle of all freedom; and religion, as derived from him, is any thing but a law of blind obedience, either for the understanding or the will. But for this very reason, it is not something to be produced or determined in any way, by the mind or will of men singly considered. Its form is *not* that of the single reason, or of the single will, as such; it carries in itself *always* a general character. *My* reason can be rational here, only as it admits the Christian reality under this form; *my* will can be free here, only as it freely consents to be bound by the objective life which it is thus required to enter. Christianity knows nothing of a purely subjective freedom, in any view. All individual reason, and individual will, *must* be bound, in order to be either rational or free. Authority, therefore, is just as necessary a constituent of religion as liberty itself; they are opposite poles only of one and the same life.

This, however, the antichristian spirit can never understand or allow. It is by its very nature, particularistic and subjective. It finds the measure of all truth and right in itself, and not in Christ or the Church. Christianity starts, of right, in faith; receives its contents primarily in the way of creed, as exhibited in the person of Christ; its maxim is, *credo ut intelligam*, I believe in order that I may understand; only as it is first merged thus in the sense of the new crea-

their "traditions," as all the world knows; and none bow down more blindly to the spiritual rule they have been pleased to set up for themselves, in their own way. This, in fact, is the very curse of sectarianism, that while it professes to make men free, it teaches them to become slaves; cuts them off from the main stream of Christianity; carries them into a corner; thrusts aside the *church* consciousness for the *sect* consciousness; contracts the horizon of their theological vision to the measure of its own small canopy, no bigger in some cases than a common umbrella; and then urges them, *thus bound*, to look forth contemptuously on all the rest of the Christian world, with true Chinese vanity, as barbarian and unfree.

tion as a divine present reality, may the reason of the individual subject be trusted at all, in its endeavors to apprehend what this creation means. But the spirit before us reverses this rule. Plainly expressed, its maxim is, *intelligo ut credam*, I must see and know in order that I may believe. It makes itself the last standard of truth, and is prepared to acknowledge Christ, only when He is found to suit its own preconceptions.

The pretension indeed is too monstrous, to be openly admitted in this barefaced form. It is cloaked accordingly, for the most part, with a show of subjection to the authority of the *Bible*. Antichrist (Matt. iv. 6) is ever ready to urge an "It is written," in favor of his own cause. He makes a merit of obeying God, in this way, while he tramples under foot all merely human authority. So it is characteristic of the Sect mind universally, as we all know, to make a pedantic parade of its love for the Bible. Your thorough sectarian is apt to rail out against old creeds and confessions; he is not to be bound thus, by the judgment of any man or body of men; others may lean on such human props; but the simple Bible is enough for *him*, and to no other testimony or law can he consent to appeal. He will not hear the Church; for that, he tells us, is the voice of man; but in the Bible God speaks, and he is willing to give it an obedient ear. He has faith in the Bible, but no faith in the Church; the fact of the written Record, he can embrace as truly supernatural and divine; but challenge his homage, in the same way, to the fact of Christianity itself, as a divine supernatural reality, subsisting in the life of the Church through all ages, and it is well if he do not scorn the thought as no better than gross superstition.

All this show of respect for God's Word however, is of no force whatever to invalidate what has just now been said of the false freedom of the spirit in question. It is only a plea, as already intimated, to excuse the arrogant assumption of superiority to all objective general authority whatever. With all his talk of following the Bible, the sectarian means by it simply, in the end, his own sense of what the Bible teaches. The Bible must be interpreted in some way; in order to enter any living mind, it must pass through a living medium of thought already at hand; for the undeveloped soul, it can have no meaning. An absolutely *immediate* use of it without all intervening preparation, is out of the ques-

tion. If the medium at hand be not the product of educational or traditional faith, the mind of the Church handed over to the individual subject, it will still be there as the particular mental frame at least of the subject himself, the product it may be in part of mere fancy or caprice, but always something different, of course, from the Bible itself, whose sense it is called to explain. The sectarian then never comes to the Bible, without a medium for converting it into thought and life; but instead of admitting the mind of the holy catholic Church, as it has stood from the beginning, to circumscribe his private thinking, in a free way, he affects to have no confidence in this whatever, and brings his own separate subjectivity to the case, under some other form, as though this were all that he needed to master the glorious world-revelation here laid at his feet.

Nor does it mend the matter at all, to plead here the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit. The question still returns, *How* are we led by the Spirit into all truth? Christianity is a whole, first in Christ and then in the Church, which it must ever be fanatical for me to think of grasping, as an isolated particle simply in its general life. This fanaticism however belongs to the Sect spirit, in its very constitution. It will have it, that both the Bible and the Holy Ghost are for the individual in such a way as to exclude all intermediate authority. All comes back finally to the form of mere individual judgment and will. The Bible and the Holy Spirit against the whole Church, is the plausible cry; but it comes always to this in the end: My sense of the Bible against the sense of the whole world besides. In riding the Bible with such pedantic parade, each sect rides in fact only its own theological hobby, in the Bible's name; while the individual ME is arrogantly exalted (*Antichrist*) above all that is divine either in the Church or Bible, as though it were the source of Christianity itself, and Christ could have no being objectively in this world, save by its sovereign permission.*

* Here is a fine opportunity for the Sect spirit to make a false issue, in its own favor, against this very tract; as it has already done, in fact, over and over again, in opposition to the writer, in other cases. The tract, it will be said, is not willing to acknowledge the Bible as the rule of faith, but seeks to bring in a law of blind tradition in its place. The charge, however, is hypocritical and false. Hypocritical, because all sects do themselves make use of tradition, in the interpretation of the Scriptures;

Seventh Mark.

Another mark of this schismatic spirit is found in its tendency to *hyperspiritualism*. Christianity is emphatically a spiritual religion ; but it is at the same time real, and in this respect conformable to the actual nature of man. It is the spiritual in true union with the natural, as the necessary basis of humanity, and a necessary element also in its constitution. Its Christ is one who has come in the flesh. Gnosticism will know only of a Christ who comes in the clouds, or which is the same thing, in the human brain. It claims to be in this way spiritual, in the highest degree ; pneumatic, and not psychic ; impatient of all contact possibly with our common earthly life. So through all phases ; the spirit in question is always the same ; swimming in empyrean heights, in such way as to lose all substantial hold upon the earth. Rationalism and sectarianism are both alike at this point ; zealous for spiritual religion in opposition to a religion of forms.

hAll sects in particular boast of having the spirit, as they call it, in extraordinary measure ; and affect to be more or less independent of outward ordinances in this way. They need, as we have seen, no outward historical Church, no real sacraments, no objective worship. Christianity is for

the poorest among them having some poor scheme of doctrine handed down from its own yesterday, *through* which, as a medium, its sense of God's word is always taken. Hypocritical again ; because no sect is willing to acknowledge the Bible as interpreted by other sects ; which it ought to do, if its own maxim were sound ; but each one insists that it shall be taken only in the particular sense that appears to suit itself ; while all join notwithstanding in the convenient cry : Great is *Private Judgment*, the Diana of the Sectarians ! The charge, moreover, is false ; we do not undervalue the Bible in favor of tradition, and we do not question the right of private judgment in its true form. All blind outward mechanical authority, in the interpretation of the Scriptures, as taught by Rome and practically allowed in a different form by the SECT ANTICHRIST, we disown with our whole heart. But for this very reason we own no private judgment, as worthy of trust, that is not organically comprehended in the life of Christianity as a whole. We will not endure licentiousness and self-will for the true liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. We accept the Bible as God's word ; but we see in the Church also the perpetual presence of a divine fact, from which that word may never be sundered without peril to the truth ; and we hold for little better than infidel cant, all veneration men may pretend for what is written, that is palpably coupled with no corresponding veneration for the mystical life of the Son of God, in its historical form.

them a matter of purely inward particular experience; a supernatural illapse of life upon the single subject, with or without means, as God may see fit. All is spiritualistic; rising in this form oftentimes to the region of seeming inspiration or ranting frenzy; but still fantastic, always unsubstantial and unreal; with the necessity of cooling down ultimately into the form of frigid rationalistic abstraction.

Eighth Mark.

This brings to view another most significant and far reaching feature of the antichristian spirit, namely the hopeless, helpless *dualism*, that characterizes its whole theory of the Christian life. God and nature, this last completed in man, come to a true union only in Christ. His theanthropic person is the form itself, in which the divine and human are brought to a real inward reconciliation. Apart from this fact, we can have only pantheism or dualism, or an unsteady oscillation rather between both. But this fact Antichrist rejects. So far as the spirit prevails then, it will not suffer the two worlds which Christ represents, to come to a true, inward, historical reconciliation, at any point. The union remains throughout, external, mechanical, abstract, and fantastic; having its pattern at best in the Nestorian Christ, where each nature is made to exclude the other, in such way as to exclude at the same time the idea of a common personal life. All is dualistic. A violent, abrupt chasm, is made to sunder the earth from the heavens, man from God, the world of nature from the world of spirit; and all attempts to bridge it over resolve themselves into Gnostic dreams, that bring the mind no sense of reality or truth.

It is wonderful how far this criterion is found to hold, in the religious thinking of Sects, and of all who are infected in any way with the old Nestorian view of Christ, after the manner, we may say, of Sects generally. In proportion as the person of the Savior is divided for their consciousness, the heavenly nature floating over the human merely without the conjunction of a real common life, the same character of unreality may easily be felt to reign also in the whole view which they take of Christianity. The visible and invisible come to no true union, in their sacraments and worship. Their idea of the Church is dualistic, making it, finally, a phantom. The relation of the new creation to the old, is

felt always to be abrupt, violent, chasmatic ; as though the first stood in no organic connection with the last, but were only joined to it in an outward way. Christianity is not viewed as the form in which the world itself becomes finally complete ; the resolution of the inmost secret of humanity ; the last scope of all God's ways in the vast process of creation. It is a factitious system, rather, the product of infinite skill combined with infinite love, mysteriously superadded to the constitution of the world's proper life, for the purposes of redemption. It is above this life, beyond it, over against it, as another order of existence ; but comes to no real reconciliation with it, by taking it up in its own sphere, and penetrating it with its own divine power.

The idea of any such inward marriage between Nature and Spirit, the millennium of creation, is wanting to the Gnostic altogether, and can never come to any full acknowledgment in the mind of the Nestorian. Your sectarian consciousness may bind them together, by a sort of outward tie ; but it has no power to make them one ; unless it be in the way of reducing the distinction itself to a nullity, by making one side to be all and the other nothing. It owns the supernatural ; but, in doing so, wrongs the natural ; wrongs both ; makes the supernatural to be magical only, and flings a dark Manichæan aspect over the world in its common view.

Sects disown history. To them the past is no womb of the present in the life of the Church. *Their* Christianity is always *το διοικετες*, direct from the clouds. (Acts xix. 35.) Sects have no faith in organic grace ; a power involved in the actual constitution of the Church, historically considered, for the accomplishment of its own ends ; no faith in baptism or educational religion. Conversion, for them, is ever something abrupt. And the spiritual life that follows, carries always the same character. It is bound to particular seasons and occasions, and comes to no steady union with life as a whole. The religion which affects to storm the heavens in the social conference to-night, has no power, and, as it might seem, no disposition, even, to sanctify the counting-room or shop to-morrow. It is made up of two lives—one pertaining to this world, and one pertaining to the next, between which it moves dualistically, with scarce an effort to bring them together. Sect piety is ever like the legs of the lame—unequal, unsteady, and full of contradiction.

Christianity, in its own nature, is world-embracing, and seeks to sanctify to its own use every sphere of the world's true and proper life. It is universally characteristic of Sects, on the contrary, that they admit no such catholic view of its nature, but are disposed rather to look with dark, malignant glance on the whole natural constitution of the world as something intrinsically bad. Science, art, politics and social life, are, for the genuine Sectarian, always more or less profane. His Gnostic Christ dooms him to perpetual imprisonment, gloomy and sad, in the labyrinth of a Manichæan World.

Ninth Mark.

The antichristian spirit, having the character, and occupying the posture, which have now been mentioned, cannot fail to show itself *fanatical*. The subjective can never be calm, quiet and strong, except as it is borne upon the bosom of the objective. The spiritual has no reality for man, except as revealed and apprehended in organic union with the natural. The dualistic consciousness of the Gnostic race must ever be in itself a consciousness, at bottom, of weakness and falsehood; associated, as we have just seen, by a sort of inward necessity, with a tinge of Manichæan malignity towards the world. But all this in religion, is the very conception of fanaticism itself. It belongs, then, to this spirit, as all history, at the same time, abundantly shows, to reveal itself in this way. It is, by its very constitution, restless and violent, extravagant and prone to extremes.

Sectarianism is always fanatical; either in the way of wild excitement, or quiet bigotry and prejudice; which are different stages only of the same moral disease. It affects to be strong, and yet has no strength in fact. Its earnestness runs into passion; in which form it becomes necessarily more or less unnatural and excessive; with the certainty of ending, sooner or later, in self-exhaustion and collapse. It is only the catholic Christianity, resting in the faith of divine powers objectively present, through Jesus Christ in the Church, that can be at once profoundly earnest and profoundly calm. The religion of Sect can never have the same character. It is unquiet, irregular, spasmodic; substitutes feeling for faith; moves always by impulse and

effort ; runs into excesses ; alternates between extremes. Its image, at best, is the whirlwind or mountain torrent, the very violence of whose action is a symptom of their own transient nature, and an argument that their strength itself is something hollow and unreal.

Tenth Mark.

Antichrist is known still farther as a spirit of endless *division*. Christianity, as the deepest life of the world, is necessarily universal and catholic. In Christ Jesus there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but a new creation, in which all other distinctions are abolished or reconciled. The Christian consciousness, as such, cannot allow itself to be subordinated to any other consciousness ; for this would imply that Christ is not the last fundamental fact in the world's life. Any consciousness, on the other hand, that stops short of this fact, that does not move truly and really in the sense of what is comprehended in the person of Christ, as the Word made flesh, must necessarily be particular and incomplete ; and if, with this character, it still affect, notwithstanding, to be the Christian consciousness itself, it must show itself, of course, to the same extent, uncatholic, also, and schismatic. Where the sense of a real Christ is wanting, there can be, as we have seen, no sense of a real Church ; the new creation resolves itself into a world of phantasms and dreams, or, at best, into a system of spiritual verities, which men are to appropriate only in the way of thought and feeling ; all is subjective, and for this very reason dependent finally on the mind of the subject for its particular form. A spiritualistic, subjective Christianity, may be said to carry the idea of schism in its very constitution.

Our modern Sect system, therefore, is but a fair revelation of the true character of this spirit, as it has prevailed from the beginning. It divides Christ on principle ; in full correspondence thus with its own theoretical counterpart, rationalism ; to which, in like manner, Christ is no original, universal fact, with which all Christian thinking is required to begin, but a mere theorem or problem, rather, for the exercise of thought in a different way.

Sectarianism goes throughout on the assumption, that there is no holy catholic Church in this world, one and uni-

versal, by its very conception, as the person of the Savior himself; but that the Church is simply what men may choose to make it, for their own accommodation, in conformity with the general law of their social nature. Men have a right, it is pretended, if they are not satisfied with the Church as they find it, to secede, and form a new organization more to their own taste, or the Church may rend itself into two bodies, with more or less violence, and each continue to be as much a Church as before. The principle in this way becomes one of unlimited division; if it be proper to have fifty Sects, we may as easily allow five hundred or five thousand; it follows, at last, that any congregation, or fragment of a congregation, is competent at any time to erect a separate standard in the name of the Church, and carry away with it all the powers that this divine constitution may be supposed to comprehend.* But is not this palpably to overthrow the idea of the Church entirely—transferring it to the clouds, or sinking it to the character of a mere abstraction?

The Sectarian consciousness can never be a true Church consciousness; as the particular can never truly stand in the place of the general; but necessarily becomes false by any such pretension. Ordinarily, indeed, Sects do not lay claim to the character of universalness. Their consciousness itself is such as excludes the idea of catholicity or church *wholeness*. They may be exclusive; are so at bottom always; but their exclusiveness is that of party, based on the sense of some subjective distinction, not the homage which faith renders to the objective fact of Christianity itself. Hence Sects commonly allow, that the Church is more comprehensive than *their* particular communions. They claim to be, each for itself, not the only way, but simply the best way, to heaven; not *the* Church, as though there were no other; but only *a* Church, or, as the thing more readily expresses itself, a society, connection, or religious *persuasion* rather, in which is collected the cream of

* Mr. Rupp, in his "Original History of the Religious Denominations, at present existing in the United States," 1844, gives us a list of between forty and fifty sects, which are here allowed to represent their own faith. But this, it seems, was much short of the truth, at least as it stands now. The same gentleman has issued proposals lately for a new work, to contain "authentic accounts of upwards of *seventy* religious denominations, associations and sects," belonging to the fruitful history of our country.

true religion, with due allowance for something at least of the same life, to show itself also under other forms. In all this, however, there is vast contradiction. The Sect consciousness owns itself for something less than the whole, and still requires the whole to do it homage, as though it were universal and supreme. Christianity is allowed to be deeper and broader than itself, and yet it is treated, in fact, as a subordinate sphere of life. The Sect consciousness is not borne and carried into the Church consciousness, but by its very nature affects to be itself the bearer rather of this last; a clear, practical solecism, which of necessity upsets the conception of a real, objective, holy catholic Church altogether. Sects profess to honor the universal Church, but it is perfectly plain that they honor themselves a great deal more. They acknowledge and exclude one another at the same moment. They are not co-ordinate departments of the same one Christian life; the distinction which divides them, is stronger than the bond that should hold them together. So far as they may seem to come together at all, it is not by entering into the sense of the Church as a real whole, of which they are only parts, but by setting aside altogether the idea of any such Church, Sects may enter into an alliance or league *as* Sects; but such union is no Church, and the catholicity thus pretended is itself but wholesale schism in disguise. It belongs to this antichristian, no-church spirit to rend asunder and divide, while it has no power whatever to heal and make whole. It is constitutionally schismatic, and may be known and distinguished by this mark, all the world over.

Eleventh Mark.

Another feature of the spirit in question may be found in the tendency it has always to *end in the flesh*. Theoretic Gnosticism falls over easily into the sphere of Ebionism. Manichæan strictness readily runs into Antinomian looseness. Ecclesiastical history abounds with exemplifications of this general truth. "Hyperspiritualism is ever fleshly pseudo-spiritualism; that is sure to fall back sooner or later, impotent and self-exhausted, into the low element from which it has vainly pretended to make its escape. Anabaptism finds its legitimate, natural end in the excesses of Munster; as Mormonism in the like excesses of Nauvoo. What a differ-

ence apparently between the inspiration of George Fox, and the cold infidelity of Elias Hicks. And yet the last is the true spiritual descendant of the first. The inward light of the one, and the light of reason as held by the other, come to the same thing at last. Both contradict the true conception of religion. Both are supremely subjective, and in this view supremely rationalistic, at the same time." In its highest flights, the religion which affects to be all spirit, remains intrinsically bound to the earth; it has no objective support, either for its speculation or its devotion; what it pretends to lean upon is no divine reality beyond itself, but a Gnostic fiction, merely sprung from its own womb: all ends at last in the farce of sheer, helpless subjectivity, a grinning parody on the lofty epic which has seemed to go before.

Fanaticism has a tendency always to become rationalistic in doctrine, and licentious in practice. Sectarian piety is characteristically inconsistent and unsteady. All spirit in one aspect, it is all flesh in another. It mounts towards heaven to-day, only to flounder in the mud to-morrow. Sects themselves continually change their character in this way. They start in the clouds, but invariably fall prone at last upon the earth. Their life in due time exhausts itself, by its own action; their fervid heat grows cool; their spiritualism subsides into fleshly form, a sort of conscious lie, that merely apes its former self; and each appears as the effete residuum only, or at best the monumental petrification of the high-wrought enthusiasm that formed its original being.*

* The moral *dishonesty* of the Sect spirit deserves here particular notice. The part assuming to be the whole, and turning in its life thus on some egotistic principle rather than the sense of an objective reality in religion, becomes necessarily false in the same measure to the truth itself. All *parties*, as such, are constitutionally dishonest, whether in politics or religion. Godly simplicity and true catholic feeling, go hand in hand together; while the whole tendency of Sectarianism is towards a sort of low calculating policy, that thinks to carry its own ends in religion, just as it follows its private interests in the world. It is truly humiliating, to look round on our Sect system as it stands and see how widely it has come to be infected with this bad spirit. *Jesuitism*, under a Protestant cloak, is every where more or less at work, in the way of misrepresentation, false pretence, and cunning intrigue. So long as any Sect has the feeling, that all other Christianity, past or present, is to be tried by its own small measure, as the absolute perfection of truth, how is it possible that it can have either the disposition or the power to be just towards any Sect besides?

Twelfth Mark.

The last characteristic of Antichrist we shall notice, is presented to us in the form of *false theology*. As we have already seen, the spirit involves a fundamental heresy from the start; and, however this may be brought to conform subsequently, in terms at least, to the established orthodoxy of the Church, it will be found to carry in itself always the same principle of falsehood, which cannot fail to make itself felt in the way of more or less refined error, throughout the whole structure of theological thought into which it is allowed to enter. Christianity as a science, involves a doctrine of God and a doctrine of man. These become one organically in the doctrine of the God-man, Christ. Anthropology and Theology both become complete, only on the basis of Christology. A false christological theory, then, though it be never so refined, must always vitiate the view that is taken at the same time both of the nature of God and the nature of man, imparting thus a secretly heterodox character to the whole theory of religion. The theanthropic fact, revealed in Christ's person and perpetuated in the Church, is the key, the only key, that unlocks the hidden mystery of the world. Turn this into a Gnostic phantasm, or Nestorian abstraction, and all theology becomes to the same extent uncertain and unreal.* The antichristian spirit is necessarily heretical as well as schismatic.

* No theology can be profound, that is not to the same extent catholic. The first condition towards a genuine interest in the science, is emancipation from the power of Sect; not indeed in such a way as to cease to be confessional, for that would be to break with history at the same time; but so as that this shall be turned into the medium simply, of communication with the objective whole of Christianity, as a divine reality in Christ and the Church. Sectarianism as having to do with a fragment of this reality only in its own life, (partial and unhistorical by its very constitution,) can never rightly master the whole of it in the way of knowledge. Its theology runs into a system of notions and abstractions, with polemic exclusion of all beyond its own sphere. True theology is not so much polemical, in this way, as comparative and ironical in the form of historical symbolism. Sects, as such, take little or no interest in the objective mystery of Christ and the Church. They are apt to consider the christological question, the subject of the sacraments, and all church ideas, comparatively barren and insipid; having more taste, naturally, for their own particular shibboleths; and not remembering that all Christianity starts in the realities of the creed, and is of no force any farther than these continue to be felt in the way of faith. There can be no surer mark of a poor theol-

Sects have no true theology. They are prone always to undervalue it in any form, as having a secret consciousness that for *them* it is in fact nothing. And in such shape as they have it, we find it to be always a system of mechanical abstractions, as barren for the understanding as it is cold and jejune for the heart. All runs out into a scheme of invincible dualism ; man here, God there ; two worlds, set over against each other, in the way of everlasting abstract opposition ; all communication between them magical only and fantastic, not historically real ; the incarnation a divine *avatar* simply, in human shape ; the Church, an idea ; its sacraments, signs ; the Bible, an aerolite, shot from the skies ; the whole process of salvation, a sort of divine legerdemain, wrought in the soul by the help of invisible powers ; all resolving itself at last, some outward supernatural apparatus only excepted, into marvelous coincidence, at almost every point, with the grossly subjective, neological theology of the mere Socinian or Deist, from which the idea of the supernatural is banished altogether.

IV. THE SECT PLAGUE AND ITS REMEDY.

Other marks or features of Antichrist might be traced, if it were necessary, in the general character of the Sect system. Enough has been exhibited, however, to identify its bad origin and nature. With all its pretensions to Christian sanctity, we find it to be at war throughout with Christ and his Church. Tried by the rule of St. John, it is not of God, but a spirit of falsehood and delusion only, which we are bound to hate and oppose, whenever it may come in our way.

This judgment must not be taken, of course, as an indiscriminate denunciation of all denominational or confessional distinctions, in the Church. What we have in view all along, as before remarked, is the Sect *mind*, without reference to particular organizations or societies, through which it may be revealed.

We have no right, in the first place, to put all ecclesiastical organizations on the same level, as regards church

ogy than this ; that it has no earnest sympathy with the idea of the Church, as a divine historical reality grounded in the constitution of Christ's person.

character. There is a difference between the idea of a denomination or confession, and that of a mere party or sect. It may be difficult to explain it clearly in theory, and still more so to apply it practically to existing religious bodies. But the nature of the case requires that it should be admitted; since we must otherwise allow the Church to be nothing, over against the principle of unlimited individual caprice; and all serious Christians, no doubt, have some sense of the distinction, as reaching into actual life. A denomination or confession forms a component part of the one universal Church; separated from the general body, by inward necessity; representing for the time a certain essential side of the common Christianity, which must otherwise have been undervalued and wronged; with the prospect and hope of a final re-integration of the interests thus divided, into their proper catholic unity. A Sect, on the other hand, stands in no such organic connection with the Church as a whole. It is the creature in full of private wilfulness and caprice, not the growth of the true Church life itself. It affects to be a perfectly original, and perfectly complete Christianity, by itself; and involves in fact, if not in open profession, a rupture with the entire consciousness of all the Christian world besides, as something defective and false.

According to this distinction, Sects as such are always evil, and every man is bound to shun them, as he values his own salvation. We may not say the same thing, however, of religious denominations. In the present state of the world, they may be justified, as being at least relatively necessary, in the great historical process, by which the Church is carried forward to its appointed end. Since the Reformation, in particular, the Church has fallen unavoidably into the form of more or less rupture with itself; so as to appear divided into different confessional organizations; without still losing, on this account, the internal oneness of its life as a whole.

In the next place, however, we must distinguish also between Sect feeling and Church feeling, in the bosom of denominations themselves. We cannot admit the presence of a true Church feeling, to any extent, in strictly Sectarian bodies; they are schismatic by their very constitution, and all who belong to them partake necessarily more or less of the same spirit. But it is quite possible, on the other hand, for Sect feeling, as well as Church feeling, to prevail in regu-

lar churchly denominations. It does not follow, then, that a denominational position may not be liable to exception here, simply because it can be vindicated as necessary and right in the actual state of the Church. It may be occupied, notwithstanding, with a spirit that is wholly Sectarian and schismatic. Denominational zeal, indeed, is ever ready to degenerate into the low bigotry of Sect; which of course, however, in such case, can be no more entitled to respect, than if it were found in open connection with the most unchurchly self-constituted organization in the land.

In admitting moreover the necessity of confessional distinctions, we do not allow them to be good and desirable in their own nature. They are relatively good only, as serving to open the way to a higher form of catholicity than that which they leave behind; whilst in themselves absolutely considered, they contradict and violate the true idea of the Church, and are to be bewailed on this account as an evil of the most serious magnitude. This divided condition of the Christian world is, at best, like the unsettled state of God's ancient Israel, during the wanderings that intervened between the Red Sea and the river Jordan. The wilderness was something better than the bondage of Egypt, for which it had been exchanged; and it had vast value, in the way of preparation for the land of Canaan, which was to be reached, finally, as the end of its weary trials. But still it was a sterile, howling desert, when all was done, and it must have argued an utter want of faith in God's word, for any to have taken up their rest in it as the land of promise. Just so in the case of our religious denominations. Allow them to be the necessary result of the Protestant movement, still they belong only to the *movement* as such, and not at all to the ulterior order in which this is required to become complete. In this view, it involves no contradiction whatever, to occupy a denominational position in the Church, as something which is made necessary for the time, by the general calamity of the age, while, notwithstanding, we pronounce the whole denominational system an abomination and abuse. Only as we do so, indeed, can any such position be justified as transiently right; for in no other view can it be reconciled, with a true catholic sense of the proper unity and universality of the Church. We have no right to acquiesce in the system, as ultimate and normal, in any sense, for Christianity. We have no right to be reconciled

to it, even for a single day, except as a painful, though it may be needful, transition stage, confused and chaotic, by which we are to be conducted over to a higher order of Christian life. Our very patience in the case should include an impatient *How long, Lord?* silently breathed into the ears of Zion's King. To say of the wilderness, This is our home, and we will seek no other, is to be at once in spirit unchurchly and schismatic. The system does violence to the true idea of the Church, tends to subvert it fundamentally; and we are bound to endure it, whilst it must be endured, only as an acknowledged misery, with steady protest against its power, and an honest desire to have it brought to an end.

As thus wrong in its own nature, and leading over at once to the life of Sect in full, the moment it comes to be acquiesced in as right and good, the denominational or confessional system is not to be distinguished practically, in the end, from the Sect system itself in its worst form. The two flow together as the power of a single evil. In our own country especially, as the Church now stands, this is palpably clear. Our denominational Christianity is fairly responsible for all the mischief of our Sectarian Christianity. We have full right to speak of the whole indiscriminately, as the *Sect plague* of our age and nation.

It is one of the favorable indications of the time, that few are willing now to stand forward as the open and formal apologists of the Sect system. Not many years since, this was quite common. New Sects were publicly proclaimed a blessing to the Church. They served, it was said, to separate discordant elements in its constitution; to provoke to good works; to act as a system of mutual checks and balances, in its general organization; to increase its efficiency, by a proper division of labor. In this view, it was fashionable to speak of them as the legitimate form of Christianity itself, which as such might be expected to reach forward, with full force, into the period of the millennium; when the Church is to appear "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."* Happily,

* A very favorite way of representing the subject, at one time, was to compare the different denominations to the several different kinds of soldiers that go to make up a regular army. More beautiful is the illustration (the last we have seen of the sort,) brought forward in connection with the late "Christian Alliance" movement by a distinguished orator from the Established Church of Scotland, making the several denominations to

we say, all this has in a great measure passed away. Our general sense of the evil of the Sect system is still, no doubt, most unequal to the truth, and we find it still practically and indirectly justified on all sides; but the feeling seems to have fastened itself on the inmost consciousness of the Christian world, that it cannot be vindicated as the normal order of the Church, and that Protestantism can never accomplish in full its high mission, till the divisions to which it has given birth shall have been brought to an end. The late "World Convention" at London, though it has issued in smoke, as might have been expected, deserves to be kept in view always, as a most significant fact, in this view. It stands as an open confession, we may say, on the part of the whole Protestant world, that its present division into Sects is a grand and crying evil, and that it has become one of the first necessities of the Church, if not indeed the very first, to bring the wholesale schism to an end. Such plainly is coming to be, more and more, the general feeling of the age. In different quarters, and from different points of view, the idea of the Church is waking into new force in men's minds, and producing a more or less uneasy apprehension of the great Antichristian falsehood with which we are surrounded. In all this, of course, we have much reason to rejoice; since the first condition of effectual help, in this case, is the oppressive sense of want. They that be whole need not a physician, we are told, but only such as are sick.

It is a wonder, indeed, that any could ever be carried so far out of the way, with the New Testament in their hands, as to plead for the Sect system on principle. It stands plainly in broad contradiction to the teaching of the Apostles, and the express will of Christ. The sense of the whole Gospel on the subject, may be said to be summarily comprehended in that memorable, and deeply-touching prayer: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word; that they all *may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

But it is not simply particular declarations of Christ and

be so many chords, whose combined music constitutes the harmony of the one, holy, universal Church! Alas, that so pretty a fancy should have so little truth in fact.

his Apostles, that are contradicted by the Sect system ; it is opposed to the whole *idea* of Christianity and the Church. This we have endeavored to show in the present tract. Christ is the last and deepest principle of humanity, which as such is required to take up the *whole*, in the way of organic unity, into the new order of life, thus introduced into the world. The idea of a nation or state is not thus universal, because it is based on nature primarily, which as such always implies distinction and multiplicity ; there may be many nations without any sort of violence to the conception of man. But the idea of the Church can bear no such rupture ; it is universal necessarily, as being in truth the only proper expression of man's universal life itself. To such universality, as we have already seen, neither Paganism nor Judaism, in themselves considered, had any power to come. Christ is the true sense of the world, the absolute religion of man, in which all previous forms of consciousness are required to pass forever away. Christianity, as springing from him in the Church, may indeed still admit distinctions ; but only in such a way, as the body may have parts, continuing itself to be, notwithstanding, the one true and only whole, in which all are carried and included as a single life. It can endure no such rupture as violates the organic oneness of its own nature. Christianity must be the deepest and most universal form of life, the trunk consciousness, if the word may be allowed, to which all spiritual distinctions besides, Greek, Jew, male, female, bond, free, &c., stand related simply as diverging branches that spring from the same tree. This indubitably is the true *idea* of Christianity ; and it is this idea rather than any formal statements on the subject in the New Testament, which conducts us finally to the article of the "One, Holy, Catholic Church," as it has stood in the Creed of the whole Christian world, from the beginning. No one can enter far into the consciousness of what Christ was and is still, without feeling the authority of this article. To deny it, is virtually to fall back to the standpoint of the world as it exists on the outside of the Christian mystery. It is to be entangled again in the old Gentile consciousness, or in that of the Jew.

Into this condemnation our Sect system, under its present reigning form, most evidently runs. We may imagine, indeed, an *organic* system of sects, by which the general Christian consciousness might fall asunder into so many

confessional branches, that should continue afterwards to integrate each other, without prejudice to the unity of the whole. But such is *not* the order that here actually prevails; and it needs but little reflection to see that the system, left to itself, can never be brought to assume practically any such form. Our Sects are in no sense whatever component parts of a common organic whole. No one can dream that the Christian consciousness, as concerned in their production, has required, by any sort of inward necessity, just so many, and no more, to express in full its own meaning. That notoriously is not the principle at all that lies for the most part at their foundation. To a great extent, they owe their existence to no truly objective interest whatever, but to self-will, passion, accident, and caprice. The causes of split, in most cases, are not a whit more important than other matters which have led to no such result, only because no personal references have come in to push them into similar consequence. The system, in this way, includes in itself no law or norm for its own regulation; no internal reason, to which an appeal can be legitimately carried against the rise of new sects. No one can say to it, "*Thus far shalt thou go, but no farther.*" If it be right to have five Sects, why not fifty? and if fifty, why not five hundred? If a thousand congregations, wilfully erecting a new ecclesiastical standard, can, as a matter of course, carry with them the full life of the Church, why may not a single congregation, or the half or fourth part of a single congregation, do precisely the same thing? Why, indeed, may I not constitute my own family into a separate "denomination," and have no more to do, ecclesiastically, with the rest of the world afterwards than the Methodists have now with the Presbyterians, or the Covenanters with the Seceders? The system flows forward irresistibly towards a perfectly atomistic independency, and has a tendency thus, from the start, to prostrate completely the whole being, as well as the whole idea, of the Church.

It is a striking, though most sad, illustration of the inward falsehood of the Sect system, as now described, that in most cases the original grounds of separation, with the bodies thus divided, have lost, to a great extent, frequently indeed altogether, the interest which they had in the beginning; while notwithstanding the door remains just as much closed as ever, in each case, against reconciliation and union.

Witness the fragments of the Scotch secession, mechanically transplanted to this side of the Atlantic. Witness the old antagonism of Lutheran and Reformed, as still kept up in the American German Church, while yet the Lutheran Confession, for the most part, has utterly surrendered its own original principle, and swung clear over the Calvinistic line itself on the opposite side. Is Methodism any longer faithful to its first idea and design? And then as regards the mass of our more upstart native Sects, how few of them, if they ever had any intelligible, distinctive theory to begin with, can be said to know or seriously care what it was, at the present time? It is the curse of sectarianism indeed that it cannot be truly historical; whilst, at the same time, history is the only enduring form of life; "das Fertige ist das Todte,"—what is *done* is necessarily also dead. The Sect life, sundering itself from the general consciousness of the Church, (uncatholic,) may start with vast show of spiritual freshness and vigor—like a divergent stream from the Euphrates or Tigris—but only, if it continue in such separate course, to lose itself ultimately in the sand, or settle into some stagnant pool, from which it can never afterwards accomplish its escape. The spirit expires gradually, in the arms of its own letter; the old terminology degenerates into sheer cant; and in place of the living witness that once gave utterance to some divine reality in the denominational creed, we have before us, finally a grim statue, or life-aping automaton at best, that simply parades in dumb show a sense which it has no longer any power to understand. It cannot be concealed, that into this judgment of Lot's wife our Sects, at least in a large part, are fast falling at the present time. And yet all this facilitates not, in the least, their return to any sort of catholic unity. There they stand over against each other, their original meaning for the most part gone, and yet they have no power in the world to come together. The system possesses no principle of cure or help, in its own nature. It has no tendency whatever, however remote, towards true catholicity. It is the very opposite of all organic Christianity. It is absolutely impotent to build up or unite, and mighty only to divide and destroy.

It is perfectly idle, in these circumstances, to remind us of the *invisible* hand, by which after all the true children of God, in the midst of all these divisions, are secretly drawn together. It is possible, no doubt, for this to prevail to some

extent over the difficulty here thrown in its way. We are bound indeed to rejoice in the conviction, that there are at this time among our different denominations, very many truly catholic souls, in which habitually the sense of denominational peculiarity is kept subordinate to the sense of church wholeness, and whose full tendency is towards the great millennium, the "Church of the Future," in which our existing captivity shall come finally to an end. But it is altogether plain, at the same time, that the exercise of such catholicity, as things now stand, is by no means easy; it runs against the natural bent of the Sect system itself, and can be maintained only with much self-discipline and prayer. And it is equally plain, that it has no place whatever in the mass of our Sect religion. It will not do to say: See how these Sects love one another, in the face of all their rivalry and outward separation! The "invisible" unity, we are told, is something deeper and stronger, than the denominational lines and landmarks that challenge the eye of sense. But if it be so, why should it not have force to make itself visible? Or is it only that which is comparatively weak and partial, in our interior life, that can be expected thus to clothe itself with corporeity and outward form? Alas, there is palpable contradiction, and gross hypocrisy, in the whole pretence. It is not possible for a true *Church* consciousness to exist, as the real ground-feeling of our religious life, the *whole*, of which all other forms of this life are only parts, without struggling at least towards a corresponding revelation of itself in an objective and visible form. To make the One, Holy, Catholic Church, a sheer invisibility, is just to convert it into an idealistic, Gnostic abstraction. Why not remand the Sect consciousness itself, into the same shadowy realm? Why not give us an *invisible* Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, as well as an invisible Church Catholic?

It will not hold. Our sects, as such, do not love each other, and are not inwardly bound together as the case requires, by a force that is deeper and stronger than that which keeps them apart. With all of them, the Sect consciousness is something deeper than the Church consciousness, the sense of the universal is overpowered by the sense of the particular. An occasional shaking of hands fraternally on the platform of a Bible Society, or a melting season of promiscuous communion now and then around the sacramental board,

fall short immeasurably of the true idea of catholic unity. There may be no open controversy. That belongs only to the first stage of the process; the heat of which after a short time, is found to cool down into a comparatively quiet form of hard, stiff tradition. But this want of controversy is itself, in such case, a sign commonly, that all real communion has come to an end, between the now mutually tolerant bodies. They have entered into different theological and ecclesiastical worlds, in which each has lost the power, to a great extent, of understanding the rest, or taking any interest in their affairs. Look at the "organs," as they are called, the religious papers and reviews, of the several denominations, which represent and rule at the same time, the various currents of their life. What a melancholy isolation of interest, in each case more or less, to the one narrow island which measures the horizon of the single sect. Some reference there may be occasionally to foreign ecclesiastical facts, in the way of passing news. But how little of broad, generous sympathy, with the affairs of God's kingdom as a whole. How little concern or power apparently, to forsake at any time the simply sectarian stand-point, and enter with hearty zeal into the cause of the universal Church, as a reality of infinitely more account than any fragment of it under a denominational form. Our Sects acknowledge one another indeed, for the most part, as true churches; a virtual confession, of course, that no one of them is complete by itself, and that they must flow together in some way, to be all that is comprehended in the idea of Christianity. But practically, all this is every day denied again and forgotten. Each affects, in fact, a measure of self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction, that leaves nothing to be sought or expected, in the way of complement, from abroad. All its thinking and working are conducted on the principle, that its mission is simply to carry out perpetually the sense and purpose of its own separate organization; precisely as though this were the true wholeness of Christianity, that must in the end swallow up the entire Church; without the least concern, as it would seem, to have the several confessional tendencies reconciled and united in a higher life, which may be found to be thus the universal truth of them all. The relation is one of mutual repulsion only, and exclusion.

This contradiction lies in the very nature of the system itself. Every Sect so far as it may have any part whatever

in Christian truth, is necessarily exclusive, whether it openly assume such character or not. And the reason is simply this, that the idea of the Church, as such, is necessarily universal. It implies the *whole* of the new heavenly creation it is employed to represent, with the rejection of all besides, as lying out of its sphere. All true catholicity is thus, at the same time, in the highest degree exclusive. It rests in the Church, as the one universal and *only* form of the new creation in Christ Jesus. It is not possible to sunder this character from the idea of the Church; and so it follows, that Sects in pretending to carry the full life of religion along with them, under this form, into their separate organizations, are always urged secretly to assert an exclusive Christianity in their own favor. A body which thus claims to be *a* Church, independently of all the rest of Christendom, is bound indeed, in inward consistency, to hold itself as *the* Church; since catholicity is felt to be just as necessary an attribute of such pretension, as holiness or divine authority. That is the most consistent sectarianism then, by all means, which openly unchurches all beyond its own pale, doing homage thus to the principle of true Church catholicity, while it turns it into open caricature. In a quiet way, all sectarianism *means* just the same thing in fact as long as it retains in itself any faith or life. It is the part, affecting to take the place of the whole; Antichrist usurping the attributes and prerogatives of Christ; in its best form, the old Jewish consciousness, with its narrow prejudices, substituted for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; or in the way of escape from this again, only the old Gentile consciousness, made tolerant and comprehensive, by true ethnic indifference to the whole idea of the Church. In this last case particularly, Sects find it much more easy to bear with one another, in their own division, than to brook the thought of their passing away in the power of a deeper life. Just as the different religions of ancient Rome, could seem to walk lovingly arm in arm together, as long as each made room politely for the territorial rights of the rest, but were roused to common wrath against Christianity, for claiming to be the absolute and universal truth of all religion; so there is nothing which is more sure ordinarily to provoke the displeasure of our liberal and loving Sects, than the claims of the one catholic Church brought near to them in any sensible way. It is very remarkable

too, that those precisely which are most full of universal brotherhood pretension, in this ethnic style, are the most quick to show their true shape, when touched by the Ithuriel spear of which we now speak. So long as it rests in anniversary speeches, it may do well enough; but let it come to true catholic *ideas*, begin where you please, and all this sweet patience is over. The Sect spirit *knows* itself to be the opposite of the genuine Church spirit; no better than a solemn lie, in truth, which has crept into its place; and the voice of the Church, even afar off, falls upon it always like the sound of its own death warrant. Sects, as such, cannot love the Church.

We cannot pretend here, of course, to notice in detail, the mischievous results of our Sect system, as they are made to surround us from day to day in its actual operation. They stare us in the face, from all sides. The marks of Antichrist, as already described in this tract, have not been derived from mere theory or speculation; they are a transcript simply of forms of life, that can easily be recognized in every direction, as the legitimate fruit of this evil. In the midst of our more respectable denominations, there are widely extended developments of the Sect life, which all these unite in condemning as hurtful and false; developments, which must be regarded as involving a total and fatal rupture with the proper Christian consciousness, as embodied in the idea of the Church. Vast multitudes, in this way, would seem to be left, by such false connections, without a ministry and without sacraments altogether, or at least in a state of most precarious uncertainty and question with regard to so great a point. For all this, however, the system as a whole is fairly responsible; since, as we have seen, it carries in itself no principle of limitation on the side towards schism, but tends rather, by obliterating all proper church feeling, to encourage the imagination that any Sect, however upstart and wild, is just as much of a Church as another. And then under its more respectable forms themselves, we need not be told how sadly the spirit in question is found to pollute and mar, on all sides, the fair face of our general Christian profession. Not only, as before said, are our Sects egotistically sundered from one another in their inward life; each trying and pretending to be a whole Christianity, which it is not, and never can be, in fact; but this disjunction takes necessarily also the character of rival-

ry and conflict. Not in the way of zeal now commonly for confessional doctrine and testimony ; *that* has become in a great measure quiet ; possibly renegade to its old faith ; but with the spirit of mere clique or party, selfishly wedded to the authority of its own name. Most of our Sects at least, are no longer "confessions" at all, but ecclesiastical corporations simply, bent on their own outward prosperity and aggrandizement. So they press and rub each other, with constant unpleasant collision, in all their movements. Their activity for God's glory and the salvation of souls, takes the form of competition and strife. Even the holy cause of "revivals" itself, is desecrated to party ends. Different interests in business and trade are not more thoroughly divided, than are these different interests in religion, in every town and village throughout the land. Ordinary political parties show themselves just as much capable of common sympathy and mutual toleration ; for *their* jealousies and animosities can sleep too, when the heat of some angry "campaign" has been passed, and fanaticism sinks exhausted into the arms of silent bigotry. The charity which "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but in the truth," reigns not in the relations of Sects. It is not as in the case of the natural body, where "the members have the same care one for another ; and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it : " but every one finds rather a secret satisfaction in the calamities of the rest, and is moved with secret envy at their prosperity. The loving harmony of different Sects in the same place, forms, we all see, not the rule but the exception, and is for the most part a band which the lightest breeze can snap asunder.

How indeed should it be otherwise ? The Sect life *must* affect to be a full Church life, and cannot possibly prosecute its own supposed mission, in this form, with any sort of earnest zeal, without becoming in some way exclusive and aggressive. Here, for instance, is a new village of a thousand or fifteen hundred souls, in the far West. A single church and one faithful pastor, would be amply sufficient for all its spiritual wants. It has already perhaps two distinct congregations, acknowledging each other as evangelical and true churches. But there is a portion of "material," that does not exactly belong to either ; and soon accordingly, we have an effort to establish two or three additional chapels,

each floating a new sectarian banner, brought thither by missionary activity on the part of so many different ecclesiastical bodies, which feel themselves bound in consistency, to push their own denominational "interest" into every nook and corner of the land. The five Sects thus struggling to keep foot on ground, broad enough only for the use of one, can never abide in true amity and love. Each is doomed, by inward necessity, to resist and undermine as much as possible all the rest. Alas, how fares it with all the sweet graces of the real Christian life, in such a case? Need we carry out the picture, in order to make it felt in the full measure of its unloveliness? But now that western village is only a naked revelation of the necessary working of the Sect spirit, latent if not overt, all the world over. Its natural and legitimate fruits, are those of the flesh only, and not those of the Spirit. Talk of its incidental advantages, its unhallowed rivalries and emulations *overruled* of God for good! The very thought, if employed to palliate the abomination, is profane. It belongs to the slang of the same ecclesiastical radicalism, which under a still lower form of thinking, would persuade us that temperance societies, mutual insurance fraternities, and other such schemes of moral utilitarianism, may safely be trusted to do the high work of Christ's one, Holy, Catholic Church. Worst of all, in this way, the sense of religion is itself blunted and its whole theory converted into falsehood. An unchurchly theology can never be rich and deep; and it lies in the very nature of the case also, that an unchurchly piety must be always more or less unsymmetrical and un-free, if not absolutely a harsh parody upon its own name. Sect religion can show itself pure and strong, only by rising with inward effort, above its proper native sphere. Remaining in this sphere, its tendency is always to run into pedantry, hypocrisy and cant.

After this review of the general misery comprehended in our reigning Sect system, we are prepared to notice in conclusion its proper REMEDY.

It will be seen at once, of course, that we have no sympathy whatever with those who imagine that all which is wanted here, is the violent overthrow in any way of outward denominational distinctions, as they now stand. We wage no crusade against Sects, in this form. Of what avail would it be to strike all of them dead at a single blow, if the Sect life be left still in force, ready to sprout forth into

new similar creations the next day? Such merely negative destructional opposition to Sects, is itself necessarily sectarian also in its very constitution, and can only issue at best accordingly in some new *no-sect* Sect, which is likely to be as narrow and rabid in its own way, as any of the rest.*

Just as little can we make common cause, with those who make the idea of catholicity to consist in a certain liberality, which shows itself indifferent at last to all religious distinctions, and overcomes the Sect consciousness by bringing it to dissolve simply in the sense of our life as a mere natural whole. Here, as before, the process of reconciliation is wholly negative and destructional; it surrenders, so far as it may prevail, the positive substance of Christianity, and lands us in a unity, which is the mere show of truth and faith, without their power. Against such spurious catholicity, often like an angel of light, we have need to stand constantly upon our guard. Caricature as the Sect life always is of the true life of the Church, it still involves at bottom some apprehension of a positive new creation in Christ Jesus, which as such must needs be exclusive in order to be really catholic; and this, in any case, is something better than the "liberal Christianity," that in giving up the caricature parts also with the idea of the Church itself, and becomes universal only by including nothing.

Equally plain is it, however, that no faith is to be proposed in the dream of any thing like a free construction of catholic unity, by counsel and compact, among the different Sects themselves. To think of their ever consenting to merge their existence in a new common church organization, would be, of course, perfectly extravagant. Every Sect has power to multiply its own bad life, like the polypus, by new sections and slips; but no single two of them, it seems, have power to come together again, in the way of full organic union. In this aspect, the system offers no hope for the future, but a prospect only of blank despair. The most to be expected from it, then, would be, an outward federal union of Sects, leaving each to its present independence, with

* Witness the sect of the "Christians," as they call themselves, in the West, the "Campbellites" or "Disciples of Christ," the "Church of God," as founded a few years since by John Winebreuner, &c. All these agree, in casting off creeds and tradition, and going back to the Bible. That is, they are absolutely unhistorical; and for this very reason their pretended catholicity has no contents or substance whatever.

some loose covenant and creed to represent the whole. But such a confederation, could it be made real, would be no Church; so far as this conception might continue to have force, it would remain bound only to the separate Sects as such. And who may not see, that in the very nature of any such transaction, the Sect consciousness is left to assert throughout its own supremacy over the sense of the Church, something more wide than itself? It is just like the French Convention of Jacobin memory, after the prostration of throne and altar, legislating into authority the existence of a "Supreme Being!" The Sects here, in solemn parliament assembled, each fully persuaded of its own indefeasible sovereignty and power, undertake to create a universal Church; not fully sure, indeed, whether there *be* any Holy Catholic Church, in the sense of the ancient creed; but honestly-minded, at all events, to bring something of the sort to pass, if God so please, and then see how it will work. But what is all this, less than an impudent affectation, of mastering the Church consciousness, into base subordination to the Sect consciousness, and making the *whole* thus to be the mere creature of its own parts? Every such pretension is systematic and uncatholic in its very nature; and so far as it may ever prevail, runs out necessarily into the same merely indifferentistic liberalism which we have already noticed. Nothing is more easy or common than the union of such false catholicity, in one aspect, with the full bigotry of Sect in another.* They belong to the same general sphere; different sides, only, of the antichristian life; the Gentile consciousness and that of the Jew, playing into each other for self-support, with equal wrong on both sides to the mystery of the one universal Church, as constituted and revealed in Jesus Christ.

We have no hesitation, then, in saying, that all redemption from the power of the Sect plague, must begin with a revival of true and hearty faith, in the ancient article of ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The idea of the Church, in the first place, is the only ef-

* It will be remembered easily, that the bodies which showed themselves most forward and active in the movement of the late World Convention, were those precisely which, in their general character and spirit, are known, on all hands, to be the most violently unhistorical and sectarian.

fective measure of schism. It is to this, precisely, what the moral law is to the conception of sin. Where there is no law, we are told, there is no sin; the sense of the last springs only from the sense of the first. So, where there is no Church, there can be no schism; no proper apprehension of it, at least, where it may prevail in fact. As long as men are disposed to deny the existence of one catholic Church, or to place it in the clouds merely as an invisible abstraction, or to substitute for it the negation and shadow of a simply ethnic brotherhood, it must be in vain to preach to them the evils of division and schism. They can have, at best, only a partial conception of their nature, and will not be engaged, of course, to put forth any strenuous desire or effort after deliverance.

This, plainly, is our prevailing state at the present time. We talk of the necessity of Christian love and union, and see to some extent the misery of our sectarianism; but still we seem satisfied in general, notwithstanding, to abide in the present system, as on the whole necessary and good. It is attended with no painful sense of schism, as necessarily involved in our divisions themselves. It is hard, oftentimes, to say precisely what this old ecclesiastical term signifies to our minds. No Sect, as such, can make any effective protest against the position of any other, as schismatic; for, in the very nature of the case, it can have no objective rule or measure to appeal to, that is any broader than its own Sect consciousness itself. But the consciousness of one Sect, in this view, is just of as much authority as that of another. And so it comes to pass, that men feel themselves, for the most part, free to act in Church matters as they please. To quit a Church connection, once viewed even in the Protestant world as a most solemn thing, is now regarded very much as a simple change of residence; it is simply to pass from one Sect over to another, which belongs as much to the Church general as that which has been left behind. In the same way, ecclesiastical privileges are shorn of their value, and ecclesiastical penalties of their proper weight. It is hard to make any body feel that there is the slightest danger of getting out of the Church, so as to have no true ministry and no true sacraments, in any sort of nominally Christian society. Such account of ordinances is treated as, at all events, no better than superstition. Few seem to have the least fear of schism, if only they can lay claim, in their own way,

to the Bible and God's Spirit. And the reigning Church sentiment, even with the more regular denominations, is such as to countenance in full this sad delusion. The Sect mind, stopping short of all true Church consciousness, can never, under its most respectable forms, administer any potent rebuke to the spirit in question. It is involved always in the same condemnation. It has no hearty faith itself in the Church ; and how then can it so speak as to infuse any such faith into others ?

The only help here, it should be clear, is in the general resuscitation of a sound Church feeling, as something deeper and more comprehensive than the feeling of Sect. Let this wake into life, to some proper extent, and it would be of more force to stem the course of sectarian fanaticism in a short time, than long years of argument and testimony exhibited in our present state. No one would think, then, of vindicating our Sect system, as the ultimate and normal order of Christianity ; but all must feel themselves bound to condemn it, and to mourn over it, as a captivity to the iron reign of schism, with longing anticipation of the day when God shall happily bring it to an end.

And so again, it is only by the force of such resuscitated faith in the Church, in the second place, that the way can be opened at all for any return out of this bondage, into the land of true catholicity and peace. It requires, surely, no very deep reflection, to perceive the force of this proposition. The Sect consciousness, as such, can never bring men beyond its own sphere ; can never lead them into the clear knowledge of the Church, and of course still less into its full life. All this must come from a different quarter, the living apprehension namely of the idea of the Church itself, as an objective reality in the world.

For it will be observed, that we speak throughout of the catholic Church as an object of *faith*, which in this view must be regarded as something at once supernatural and real. So it is exhibited to us in the Creed. It is not a mere notion, or abstraction, or subjective creation of the human mind, in any form ; but includes in itself an objective being, as we have seen, no less real and abiding than the person of Christ himself, from which it starts. This it is, precisely, that makes the great difference between spurious ethnic catholicity, as exhibited to us in world conventions, or mere stage displays, and catholicity under its genuine form. The first holds only in

the region of natural thought and feeling, and disturbs not necessarily, in the least, the inward habit of the Sect mind from which it springs; to admit the existence of a Holy Catholic Church, in such a case, is no more than to admit the existence of a British Parliament, or an American congress, or the authority of what is called the command of law in both countries. But the other stands in faith, whose very nature it is to mould the consciousness of its subject into the form of its object; and having this form, of course it must necessarily require the Sect mind to give way before the power of the deeper life which is thus made to take its place.

And here we may see, at once, the vanity of the plea which is sometimes urged against all faith in a real Church, that we are not able to point out clearly its external form, in the history of the world, in such a way as to cut off all cavil; as well as the falsehood of the position sometimes taken by Sects, that the first step needed towards catholic unity, is to make out satisfactorily some plan or scheme, to which the parties may then jointly agree as suited to secure this object. Every such thought, however, plausible as it may appear, virtually denies the Church to be any object of faith whatever, and converts it from the start into an object of mere sense or natural ratiocination. *Show us the Church, say the sects, and it sufficeth us; but to what can all homilies on the subject of catholicity and schism amount, so long as you are unable to mark out any door of escape from the present evil? Most plausible certainly, but at the same time sophistical and false.* For is not this, palpably, to place in question the reality of the Holy Catholic Church altogether, as an objective supernatural fact, in the sense of the ancient Creed? The catholic Church is a *mystery*, in the sense of the Creed, just like its other articles, which as such is to be apprehended primarily by faith, and *not* in the way of intelligence. It does not, of course, exclude intelligence, as this is not done either by the article of the incarnation; faith is not blind here or slavish: but it is the necessary form of access, in the first place, to the object of knowledge. As springing not from ourselves, but from abroad, and under a supernatural character, this must be brought nigh to us, by faith, as a divine reality, before it can be understood. To put intelligence before faith, here as elsewhere, is just what we mean by rationalism. The conception of a Church to be manufactured by the Sect mind, enthroned for the time as the higher

power, called to sit in judgment on its claims, is itself an infidel absurdity. As well pretend to construct, in the same *ab extra* way, the mystery of the incarnation, before surrendering the soul, by faith, to the power of the fact! Jesus Christ authenticates himself. And so it is, with the mystery of the Church. It must overwhelm our inward consciousness first, with its own objective force as a necessary result from the great Christological fact itself, in order that it may come to right revelation subsequently in the sphere of thought and outward life. It is not necessary at all, that the full contents of the article should be at once in our view, to allow the complete exercise of such faith. Peter's confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" carried in itself in truth, potentially, the whole sense of the Apostles' Creed, though with no insight of his, at the time, into the several articles of this, as afterwards evolved from its bosom. And just so, we may have a true faith in the article of the One, Holy, Catholic Church, while yet most incompetent, in our own minds, to estimate, in full, the terms and conditions under which it may be required to manifest itself in the world. Such faith does not turn primarily on the presence of the Church, as a given corporation accredited by outward seal, but on the idea of Christianity itself, as necessarily requiring this constitution to make itself complete. Not only the word of Christ, but his life, demands its presence. The article flows forth, with inward necessity, from the Christological mystery itself. To stand in the full sense of this, as the fact of a new order of life made originally permanent in the world, is to have the reality of the Holy Catholic Church; at the same time, actually at hand also as a part of our creed. The reality, in this case, is no mere notion or shadow, but a true divine object, apprehended by faith; and the consciousness which springs from it is something far more accordingly than the hollow, negative catholicity of Gentile unbelief; it is the sense of such wholeness as belongs to the positive life of Christianity itself.

With such objective, historical being in the world, as this faith implies, the Church of course is no abstraction. Its existence is concrete, and its attributes are determined by its constitution. Still its revelation is a process, in the course of which wide room is found for the actual and the ideal to fall asunder. In these circumstances, all may be said to turn on the presence of such a sound Church consciousness as is now described. It is from this alone, that all catholic

ideas must flow ; and in virtue of it only, can they ever be brought to take form in actual life.

Let no one say or think then, that it amounts to little to insist upon faith in the Church itself, as the most necessary remedy for the Sect plague, which now afflicts our Protestant Christianity. We come here at once to the ground-cause of the plague itself, which all may see to be the reigning want of such faith, in the form now described ; and it is plain, that until this be in some measure removed, no other palliative or help can be of much avail. What can well be more preposterous indeed, than to aim at catholic unity without being fully persuaded that it is any thing more than a dream, or to treat the Church as a mere *hypothesis* in the first place, in order to test the possibility of bringing it to pass ! Are the articles of the Creed, then, to be taken in the way of experiment ? Are the great verities of the new creation so many problems to be solved, or theorems to be demonstrated, before we can yield to their authority as true ? Can a genuine Church consciousness ever grow forth from the power of the Sect mind, however large and free in its own more narrow sphere ? Take the ground, that the Sect-mind is itself a true Church-mind, that the Church, in any whole view, is an abstraction only, which need never become visible, or that we can have nothing to do with it properly, in any different light, till it has resolved itself into some tangible case, whose merits we can then canvas and decide upon in an outward way ; approach the subject, we say, in any such style as this, and it is clear that all the interest we may take in it, must come to nothing in the end. What we need to start with is the sense of catholicity itself, "faith in the mystery of one universal historical Church," and the felt power of old catholic ideas as we find them reigning in the ancient Christian world. It cannot be disguised, that a wide-spread hostility prevails towards these ideas themselves, and not simply towards the abuses into which they may have been run by the Church of Rome. So long as this is the case, there can be no honest care or concern for Church unity. These catholic ideas are not arbitrary or accidental ; they form the necessary outbirth of a true Church life ; and to refuse them their proper honor, is of itself to do homage always to the spirit of Sect as a higher power ? Only as such feeling gives way before the sense of Christ's one universal Church, and room is made thus for true inward sympathy with catholic

ideas, may we hope at all to understand or settle satisfactorily, the questions involved in the restoration of our present captivity. Faith in the Church is not of itself all that the case requires ; but it is the first and greatest thing, that must open the way for all ulterior counsel and action ; and it is worse than idle to prate sentimentally of our good purposes, in its absence. Half of our Sects would be at once dissolved by it, like mists before the rising sun ; while the field of division and debate, among the rest, would be narrowed to less than half its present dimensions ; and, in the distance at least, would be seen rising, to the fond vision of hope, the glorious one catholic CHURCH OF THE FUTURE, as the praise, and joy, and glory of the whole earth.

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