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ART. I.—THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION.

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“I am come that they might have life.”—(John x. 10.) By this and similar utterances in the word of God, we are taught the ultimate design of Christ’s mission into the world. This comprehends vastly more than that conception which sees no deeper meaning in His incarnation, than a suitable adaptation to His work, as the Teacher of the children of men, and the Atoner for their sins. Such a view involves a low and inadequate conception of the nature of sin and its terrible consequences. It would seem to regard Adam, as he stood in Eden before the fall, as in the enjoyment of all the franchises of his being originally included in the mind of his Creator; as being already a participant in the grace of life, for which he was then but a candidate, to be enjoyed only, in the event of his free self-determination admitting him unto the wonderfully mysterious Sacrament of the Tree of Life; that his relations to the surroundings in the midst of which he was placed, were in no other way affected by his sin, than simply having incurred the divine displeasure, he thereby made himself obnoxious to punishment; and that to restore him in full to his normal relations to God, to himself, and to the whole order of nature around him, required only that this penalty should be endured, either in his own person or in the person of a Mediator. Sin, for it,

## ART. VIII.—ATHANASIUS.

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In some respects the most conspicuous name among the church fathers of the fourth century. Obscure in his origin, he became a beacon light for the Christian world, not only in his own age, but through all subsequent times. Small and insignificant in his outward person, he won for himself the highest renown by his intellectual and moral qualities; and deserved his honorary title of *The Great* quite as much as Constantine himself; being in the Church, indeed, no less than he was in the State, the centre and pivot around which the deepest interests of the age revolved. His name has been made immortal, especially through its association with the catholic doctrine of the Trinity, to whose defence he consecrated every moment and every faculty of his being. For this he lived, worked, prayed, suffered; counting no sacrifice or privation too great in the prosecution of his object; ready to stake upon it at all times the dearest interests of his existence. History offers us no more striking example of what may be accomplished by the force of a single will, when it is inflexibly applied to the pursuit of a single end or purpose. Archbishop of Alexandria for upwards of forty-six years, his long administration was spent in a perpetual combat against the powers of Arianism. Five times was he expelled from his throne; twenty years he passed as an exile or a fugitive; and almost every province of the Roman empire was successively witness to his sufferings, as well as to his unflinching constancy, in the service of the cause, which he considered as the sole pleasure and business, as the duty, and as the glory of his life. It was his great privilege, moreover, to see this cause, after long years of anxious care and toil, crowned at last with complete victory and success. Though it seemed to be for a time Athanasius against the world, he lived to see the world at last in

great measure on his side. His life in this respect, it has been well said, was like his character, beautifully round and complete. He finished the work he was appointed to fulfil, and was allowed finally to depart in peace.

Athanasius was born about the beginning of the fourth century. We hear of him first as a boy, on whom the attention of Alexander, the primate of Alexandria, was fixed, from observing him on a certain occasion playing the part of bishop among a company of other boys. Alexander was so struck with his appearance and manner, that he determined at once to have him educated for the service of the Church. He enjoyed in this way the advantage of the best ecclesiastical and classical training which the age could afford; and well did he profit by his opportunities. While still quite a young man, he distinguished himself by two very important and closely related theological works: *λόγος κατὰ Ελλήνων* (*oratio contra Gentes*), and *περὶ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Λόγου* (*de incarn. Verbi Dei*); in which he appears familiar with the Gentile philosophy, but shows himself at the same time thoroughly possessed by the power of Christianity as an independent principle, both of life and of thought. This, however, was only the beginning of his broad and profound speculation in regard to the Divine Logos, which served to prepare him for the task that lay before him in the Arian controversy. With this he became confronted first as deacon in the church of Alexandria, when Arius, a presbyter in the same Church, set himself to oppose the views of his bishop on the subject of Christ's divinity; pushing the idea of the Son's subordination to the Father to its extreme consequence, the denial of His eternal existence, and charging with Sabellian heresy all who refused to acknowledge His created origin. Against this the true Christian consciousness revolted; feeling it to be derogatory to the proper dignity of Christ, and subversive in the end of the whole Christian salvation. It became an object, therefore, of more and more urgent necessity, to determine theologically the true relation of the Son to the Father, in such a way as to maintain the proper divinity of Christ, without falling into the error of Sabellianism. The Arian controversy of Egypt

became thus, in a short time, a controversy for the Christian Church at large; and the first general council, held at Nice in 325, was convened especially for the purpose of bringing it to some public settlement and end. Here Athanasius attended, in company with his aged bishop, Alexander; and although still a young man, contributed largely, by his learning and zeal, to the memorable result, which was finally reached through the deliberations of this venerable body. The test term *ὁμοούσιος* (consubstantial), in the Nicene Creed, was carried through especially by his influence. That proved to be, in fact, the distinguishing theological word, which was required to meet the emergency into which the Church had now come; and once spoken as it now was in this famous creed, it could never again be recalled. But the speaking of the right word was not, of itself, in this case, the full bringing out at once of all that was properly comprehended in it for the Christian faith; and a long, violent struggle was still needed afterwards, to save and perpetuate the true sense of the Nicene doctrine, as it has since come down to later times. It was an easy thing for the Church to join in the condemnation of Arius; but it was not so easy for it to be at once of one mind with regard to the positive sense of the creed, which the council of Nice had adopted by a sort of compromise, as the only way of meeting effectually, at the time, the Arian error. It was not, then, with Arianism only, in its proper form, that the Nicene doctrine was required subsequently to contend; it had a powerful opposition to encounter besides in the Semi-arian (or better, perhaps, Semi-nicene) party, which repudiated Arianism, without being able to regard the Son as being yet strictly "of one substance with the Father." The right word spoken at Nice, through the influence of Athanasius and others, was to be maintained against both these forms of error; to be maintained, as it soon appeared, by a testimony which was to call into requisition, not only the greatest theological learning and skill, but the most heroic courage also, as well as the most indomitable patience, kept up through long years both of ecclesiastical and of political persecution; and to Athanasius himself it fell, beyond all others, to lead the way in this mighty strug-

gle, and to become thus, under God, the saviour of the cause which he seemed to have been raised up specially to defend.

On the death of his friend and patron Alexander, he was chosen to succeed him (in the year 328, it would seem) as bishop of Alexandria and primate of Egypt. In this high position he came at once into collision with the will of the Emperor Constantine, who, through various influences, had been led to relax his zeal against Arianism; and having recalled Arius himself from his banishment, sought to have him restored to the communion of the Church at Alexandria. Athanasius steadily resisted the application, showing thus his personal firmness, and the sense he had of the proper independence of the Church in her own jurisdiction. Constantine was constrained to respect his inflexible resolution; but it served more and more to inflame against him the hatred of his theological enemies; who now set themselves to accomplish his overthrow, by scattering rumors and suspicions affecting his character in the most injurious way. He was charged with being proud and tyrannical in his office; in particular, with having violated the peace made with the schismatic followers of Meletius; by sacrilegiously breaking a chalice in one of their churches; by subjecting several of their bishops to corporal maltreatment; by actually murdering one of them, Arsenius, it was said, with his own hand. These complaints became so loud, that Constantine finally ordered a council to be held at Cesarea (333) for their examination; where, however, Athanasius refused to make his appearance, knowing that the tribunal was one from which he could hope for no justice. Another council was convened in the year 335 at Tyre to try the same cause, which he was now forced by the peremptory command of the emperor to attend. He appeared there at the head of fifty Egyptian prelates, having with him also, privately concealed in his train, the Meletian bishop Arsenius, whom he was accused of having deprived of his life. Eusebius, of Cesarea, presided over the synod with unbecoming partizan passion; by his numerous faction, Athanasius was saluted with the names of homicide and tyrant; the clamor was encouraged for a time by his patient silence; but it was com-

pletely confounded, of course, when at the proper moment Arsenius himself was produced alive and unhurt in the midst of the assembly. The other charges against him were found also to be without proof; but the synod was resolved beforehand on his condemnation; and now to keep up the show of judicial forms, it was determined to send an episcopal commission of six delegates to collect evidence against him in Alexandria. This commission, composed of his declared enemies, brought back such a report as the case was supposed by the majority of the synod to require; and a decree was forthwith passed and published, pronouncing sentence of degradation and exile against Athanasius in the fiercest terms of malice and revenge. Athanasius himself before this, however, seeing how the case was going, had already taken the bold and dangerous step of quitting Tyre, and making his way to Constantinople, for the purpose of bringing his cause personally before the emperor himself. Waiting for a proper opportunity, he suddenly threw himself in the way of his offended sovereign as he was passing on horseback through the principal street of the city. Constantine was struck with surprise; then with anger; but, in the end, with respect and religious awe. He listened graciously to the complaints of Athanasius; and finally summoned the leading members of the council of Tyre to give an account of their proceedings in his presence. They now contrived, however, to add a serious political crimination to the other charges preferred against him; and so, for the sake of general peace and quiet, the emperor considered it best, after long hesitation, to let the sentence against him go into present effect. His see was allowed to remain vacant; while he himself was remanded to the city of Treves, in Gaul. Here he remained about twenty-eight months.

The death of Constantine changed the face of public affairs. By an honorable edict, Athanasius was allowed (338) to return to Alexandria. But he soon found himself exposed to new persecutions. The feeble emperor Constantius surrendered himself completely to the views of the Anti-nicene party; which now renewed its complaints against Athanasius, and sought to thrust him again from his see; as one who had violated the proper order

of the Church, it was said, in resuming his episcopal functions before he had been properly absolved from the sentence of degradation which had been passed upon him by the council of Tyre. A council of ninety bishops came together finally at Antioch (341), which, after formal consideration of his case, renewed or confirmed his deposition, and named as his successor a certain Gregory of Cappadocia; whose induction into office was accomplished afterwards only by military force and violence, against the wishes of the people. Athanasius now betook himself to Rome; where he sought interest in favor of his cause with Julius, the bishop of Rome, and with the clergy of the West generally; making himself master of the Latin language, and prosecuting his negotiations with great earnestness through a period of several years. A council of fifty bishops of Italy, in 342, pronounced a declaration unanimously in his favor; which so affronted the Anti-nicene Asiatics, that they threatened to break communion with Julius if he would not respect their decrees. The case was brought thus to an open antagonism between the West and the East. An attempt was made to have the difficulty settled, by a council which was called to meet at Sardica in 347, and which was to be composed of representatives from both sections of the Church. The measure only resulted, however, in making the breach worse than before. The Asiatics now drew off from the meeting, and formed themselves into a rival synod at Philippopolis, in Thrace; each body fulminated its decrees against the other; there was a formal end of church communion between the Nicene and Anti-nicene parties. Revered as a saint in the West, Athanasius was held up as a criminal to the abhorrence of the East. In the meantime, political influences were brought to work powerfully in his favor. Constans, the sovereign of the West, into whose presence Athanasius had been personally admitted on several occasions during his second exile, was finally engaged to espouse his cause, in a way that secured him justice in spite of all the machinations of his religious foes. By a brief and peremptory letter to his brother Constantius, the emperor of the East, he gave him to understand, that unless he consented to the immediate restoration of Athanasius, he him-

self, with a fleet and army, would bring him back to Alexandria. Constantius yielded to this demand; and in the year 349 the archbishop returned once more to his see. Gregory, of Cappadocia, was no longer in the way, having been murdered previously in a popular tumult. The entrance of Athanasius into his capital was a triumphal procession; absence and persecution had endeared him to the people; his authority was more firmly established than before, as it was exercised now also with new vigor; and his fame was diffused over the whole extent of the Christian world.

But his sufferings were not yet at an end. The death of Constans left him again without political protection; and it soon became manifest that the zeal of his enemies against him was as virulent and active as ever. The civil war, occasioned by the usurpation of Magnentius, secured him a respite of three years; then it appeared that Constantius himself, now sole monarch of the whole Roman empire, was bent with the animosity of a private quarrel on compassing his destruction. But this he could not do in the way of direct absolute power; the privileges of the Church had already revived a sense of order and freedom in the Roman government; he must proceed, therefore, with circuitous caution, negotiation, and delay. The sentence pronounced against Athanasius by the synod of Tyre had never been expressly repealed; but it was felt now all-important to have it supported by the concurrence of the Latin bishops. Two years were consumed in negotiations for this purpose; and the important cause was solemnly debated, first in the synod of Arles (353), and afterwards in the great council of Milan (355), which consisted of above three hundred bishops. Through the influence of the emperor, the Anti-nicene cause in these assemblies prevailed; Athanasius was condemned; and all who refused to subscribe the sentence afterwards were immediately banished by the emperor, in obedience, as he pretended, to the decrees of the Catholic Church. Especially conspicuous among this band of confessors and exiles were Liberius of Rome, and the venerable Hosius of Cordova, who was revered as the favorite of the great Constantine, and the father of the Nicene faith.



These showed at first great resolution in going into exile; but, in the end, even their courage gave way; and the Athanasian cause received its heaviest blow, when, for the purpose of recovering their sees (Hosius then one hundred years old), they allowed themselves to subscribe a formula put forth by the second council of Sirmium (357), in which the Nicene faith was virtually surrendered, and the condemnation of its great champion approved. In the meantime, the storm of persecution had burst in full force over the devoted head of Athanasius himself.

A verbal message was sent to him in the first place from the emperor, announcing the order of his banishment; which, it was hoped, might be carried into effect in this way, without any public commotion. Athanasius, however, disputed the truth of an order, which seemed so manifestly unreasonable and unjust; and the civil powers of Egypt agreed to suspend proceedings till the emperor's pleasure should be more distinctly ascertained. But the truce was hollow and false; by secret orders the legions of Upper Egypt and Lybia were brought by hasty marches to Alexandria, and introduced into the heart of the city before any effectual measures could be taken for its defence. At the hour of midnight, Syrianus, duke of Egypt, at the head of five thousand armed soldiers, unexpectedly invested the church of St. Thomas, where Athanasius, with a part of his clergy and people, were engaged with their nocturnal devotions. A terrible scene of violence followed. Seated on his throne, the archbishop expected, with calm and intrepid dignity, the approach of death. While the public service was interrupted by shouts of rage and cries of terror, he animated the congregation to join in chanting one of the psalms of David, which celebrates the triumph of the God of Israel over the proud and impious tyrant of Egypt. At length the doors were burst open; a cloud of arrows was discharged among the people; the soldiers rushed forward, with drawn swords, into the sanctuary; and the dreadful gleam of their arms was reflected by the holy luminaries which burned around the altar. Athanasius nobly refused to desert his episcopal station, till he had dismissed in safety the last of the congregation; then, amid the darkness and tumult of the night,

though hard pressed, and thrown to the ground for a time without sense or motion, he succeeded wonderfully in effecting at last his escape. From that moment the primate of Egypt disappeared from the eyes of his enemies, and remained above six years concealed in impenetrable obscurity.

The assault on the church of St. Thomas, on this memorable occasion, was only the beginning of continued scenes of violence and confusion that now took place in Alexandria. The three other churches of the place were profaned by similar outrages; and during at least four months, the city was exposed to the insults of a licentious army, stimulated by the rancorous enemies of the Catholic faith. The worst horrors of war prevailed in every direction. Under the mask of religious zeal, lust, avarice, and private resentment, were gratified with impunity, and even with applause. To crown all, room was made for a successor of Athanasius, in the person of the famous George, of Cappadocia; who, having received the consecration of an Arian Synod, was placed upon the episcopal throne by an armed force (356), and showed himself in the exercise of this power afterwards a perfect tyrant, regardless alike of justice, humanity, and religion. Under his administration, the same scenes of violence and scandal which had been enacted in the capital, were repeated in more than ninety episcopal cities of Egypt. Constantius in the end approved of all that was done, and in a public letter congratulated the people of Alexandria on their happy deliverance, extolling the virtues of the monster George, and denouncing Athanasius as a wicked troubler of the public peace, who had confessed his guilt by flying from justice, and whose seditious adherents he was determined to pursue thenceforth with fire and sword. The most determined measures were adopted to reach the fugitive bishop; all the powers of the empire, civil and military, were set in motion for his arrest; liberal rewards were promised to any one who should produce him either alive or dead; and the most severe penalties were denounced against those who should dare to give him protection.

And where, in the meantime, was Athanasius? He had found refuge in the deserts of Thebais, which were now peopled

by thousands of monks, the disciples of Antony and Pachomius; by whom he was welcomed as a father, and who stood ready to devote their lives, if need be, to his service. Conforming to their mode of life, and lost in their multitudinous society, he was here fairly beyond the reach of his adversaries. The monks served him faithfully as guards, as secretaries, and his messengers; and by their means he was enabled to maintain more or less constant communication still with his bereaved flock. Not content with this, however, he even ventured at times to emerge from the desert, and to trust himself personally to the discretion of his friends and adherents in Alexandria. His various adventures in these daring visits, might have formed the subject of a very interesting romance. He seems to have been actually present, secretly, at the councils of Rimini and Seleucia. Though out of sight for his enemies, he made his presence felt everywhere to their confusion. Constantius received from his invisible hand wound after wound, which he could neither heal nor revenge. His seasonable writings, widely circulated and eagerly read, served to unite and animate the orthodox party; and altogether, Athanasius working from the depths of the desert, was as much a living power for the world at large, as ever he had been while seated on his episcopal throne in Alexandria.

Constantius died toward the close of the year 361, and was followed by Julian the Apostate; under whom the exiled bishops generally received permission to return to their sees. The announcement of Julian's accession in Alexandria, was, at the same time, the signal for the downfall of the infamous George of Cappadocia, the Arian usurper of the episcopal throne in that city. He had exercised his power in a way that made him an object of general abhorrence; and no sooner was it known now that he had lost his imperial support by the death of Constantius, than the fury of the people began to cry out against him for vengeance, and rested not till he was miserably destroyed by a public mob, too impatient to wait for the tedious forms of law. In this way full room was made for Athanasius quietly to resume his office. He was received amidst the public acclamations of the city; and at once addressed himself, with

wise and prudent zeal, to the task of composing and healing the disorders with which he was surrounded. His pastoral labors, at the same time, were not confined to the narrow limits of Egypt, but made themselves felt now auspiciously throughout the Christian world. The time was favorable for his influence, and he knew how to exercise it with temperate moderation, worthy of the great cause to which he had devoted his life. The success of the Anti-nicene cause, under Constantius, had prepared the way for its dissolution, by bringing out in full force the principle of discord which it carried in its own bosom. Intoxicated with their seeming triumph, the Arians, properly so called, sought to carry all things with a high hand in their own favor. This had the effect of bringing the better portion of the middle party, the Semi-arians, to distrust more and more the alliance in which they had come to stand with those whose doctrine and spirit now revealed themselves in such unfavorable light; and altogether, during the last years of Constantius, a wide-spread reaction of sentiment had begun to make itself felt in favor of the persecuted Nicene faith. Athanasius understood how to take advantage of this in the way of general conciliation; and his wise and moderate counsels contributed far and wide to restore the shattered unity of the Church on the proper foundation of theological truth.

Such successful zeal for Christianity, however, soon drew upon him the notice and indignation of the Pagan emperor Julian; who now took occasion to charge him with having resumed his episcopal functions without proper authority, and again ordered him into banishment. Athanasius withdrew once more to the monasteries of the desert.

The death of Julian, in 363, opened the way for his return. On the first intelligence of the fact, the intrepid veteran of the faith, now seventy years old, came forth from his retreat, and was received back into Alexandria again amid the most lively demonstrations of public joy. He immediately made a journey to Antioch, where the new emperor, Jovian, had established his court; and in several conferences with him, succeeded in securing his favor completely, both for himself, and for the cause

that was dearer to him than his own life. He then returned in triumph to his diocese, and continued, with mature counsels and undiminished vigor, to direct, ten years longer, the ecclesiastical government of Alexandria, Egypt, and the Catholic Church. There was a slight interruption to his activity afterwards, indeed, under Valens, who, as Emperor of the East (364), had embraced the Arian religion, and then considered it his duty to persecute the Catholics, or *Athanasian heretics*, as he called them, in all possible ways. Taking advantage of this, the enemies of Athanasius attempted to disturb the last years of his venerable age; and he found it necessary, at one time, to take refuge, for a short season, in his father's sepulchre; a retreat, which has been made to count as his fifth exile. But it came to no full banishment in fact. The zeal of a great people, who instantly flew to arms, intimidated the imperial prefect; and the heroic primate was permitted to end his life not only in peace, but also in a sunset of glory, after a reign, which fell but little short of nearly a full half century of years.

Our knowledge of Athanasius is derived largely from his own works; which are partly apologetic, partly polemic, partly exegetical, partly homilies, letters, &c. The principal editions are: That of the Benedictine monks (*Athan. opera ed. Montfaucon*, Paris, 1698, 3 T. fol.); and that of *N. A. Guistiniani* (Patav. et Lips. 1777, 4 T. fol.) We have a panegyric upon him, rather than a proper biography, written by *Gregory of Nazianzum*. In later times, pains have been taken to place his history in proper light by *Papebroch*, in act Sanct. maj. I. 186; *Montfaucon*, in ed. opp.; and *Tillemont*, Memoires VIII. A graphic account of his character and fortunes may be found in *Gibbon's* History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Specially deserving of attention, however, are the late monographs: *I. A. Möhler*, Athanasius der Grosse und die Kirche seiner Zeit, comprising a careful representation of his doctrine, with an analysis of his principal writings; and *Böhringer*, in his Kirchengeschichte in Biographien I. 2; also *Neander*, in his Church History. Compare Bishop *Kaye*, in his Council of Nice, 1853. Thorough expositions of the doctrine of Athanasius may be found

in *Ritter's* Geschichte der Christl. Philosophie; in *Baur*, die Christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit, &c; and in *Dorner's* admirable Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi.

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ART. IX.—CORNELIUS' MEMORIAL.

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Cornelius, of Cesarea, was a Gentile; but, as was the case with many others of this class of persons, whom we meet with in the New Testament, he was a man of an earnest, humble, and religious mind. He was by birth a Roman, and no doubt was brought up in the faith of his countrymen. Through intercourse with the Jews, whilst stationed as an officer of a provincial garrison in Palestine, he became convinced of the error of Polytheism, and embraced the faith of the one only living and true God. That he was sincere in his belief in the religion of Israel, is evident from the fidelity with which he complied with the requirements it made of him.

There is no doubt but that he participated in the hope of the Messiah, which this nation so faithfully cherished. His religious wants were not yet fully met. Joy and peace in the Holy Ghost were not yet his. He longed for something still higher and better than he had hitherto attained. The intensity of his yearnings was manifested by his fasting,\* his almsgiving, and his prayers. His aspirations were not in vain, nor were his labors futile. An angel appears to him, bringing him a message from Heaven. "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." We learn from the ensuing history what this indicated. His desires were realized. For doing as the messenger of God directed him, he found the truth as it is in Jesus, he was made, with his family, to rejoice under the powerful working of the Holy Ghost, and his name

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\* See Acts x. 30