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SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE.¹

Lev. xxvii: 30-32—Ex. xxx: 13-16—1 Cor. xvi: 1-2—
Act. xx: 35.

Conclusion.

III. Systematic Benevolence in America.

IN the United States of North America, Church and State, as is known, are separated from each other, similarly as in the first three centuries, until Constantine the Great; with this important difference, however, that at that time the State, which was most intimately connected with heathen idolatry, did not at all legally acknowledge the Church, and even bloodily persecuted her, whilst with us both powers exist peaceably side by side of each other, and at least indirectly give to each other mutual protection. For on the one hand our religious corporations en-

¹ A Sermon preached by appointment before the Synod of the German Reformed Church of the U. S., at Lancaster, Pa., on the 20th of October, 1851, and published by request of the Synod.

GYPRIAN.

THASCIUS OECILIUS CYPRIAN, the great ornament of the Latin Church in the third century, was born at Carthage, about the beginning, probably, of this period, of a highly respectable and wealthy family. His father, we are told, was one of the principal senators of that place. Of his secular relations, however, including his education and many years afterwards of prosperous worldly life, almost nothing is now known; his biographer, the Deacon Pontius, having judged all this to be of no consideration, and so not worthy of any historical mention, "in view of that spiritual greatness" by which he became so illustrious in the end. We know only that he was possessed of good natural parts; that he enjoyed the best opportunities for intellectual culture; that these were diligently and successfully turned to account; that he applied himself particularly to the study of oratory and eloquence; that he became professor of rhetoric subsequently in his native city, a highly honorable as well as lucrative employment in that age; that he prosecuted his profession with great reputation and success, ("*gloriosa rhetoricam docuit*," according to Jerome); that he lived in elegant and genteel affluence, as a man of the world, devoted it would seem to mere pleasure and ambition, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, without God and without hope. He was a Pagan; and with all his secular cultivation the vices of Paganism held him firmly in their power.

In this condition however, according to his own confession, he was by no means happy. Amid the pleasures and honors of the world, he had a keen sense also of its unutterable vanity, and sighed frequently after higher and more enduring good. Christianity no doubt had some influence upon him in this way, long before he was brought to yield himself to its power. He could not but approve in his conscience its high purposes and aims; and there were aspirations in him at times, that would fain have burst the chains of sense and flesh, to make common cause with this divine philosophy in its heaven-ward flight. But he had no power to persuade himself, that what Christianity proposed in this case was in any way truly practicable. He saw that no merely natural ability or effort would be sufficient for any such end, the eradication of worldly affections and desires, the conquest of self, and a true surrendry of the heart to heavenly and eternal things; and it fell not in with his carnal wisdom, his natural experience and common sense,

to believe in any real provision for the purpose under a supernatural form. He knew, indeed, that the claims of the Church included the idea of such supernatural help; that powers more than human were supposed to be embraced in her constitution, for the accomplishment of its more than human ends; that her sacrament of regeneration in particular, was held to be not a powerless baptism with water merely, but an actual new birth by the Spirit into such a state of grace as brought with it the real possibility of righteousness and salvation, in a form wholly beyond and above the reach of nature. Of all this he had often heard; for it was part of the daily talk and universal faith of the Christian world at the time; but to his worldly judgment the thing appeared incredible. He was not able to acknowledge the mystery of any such supernatural grace; it appeared to him no better than a fanciful dream; and thus all his better thoughts and aspirations served only to fill him in the end with a more perfect feeling of despair, a sense of hopeless bondage to the power of this present world for which religion itself could offer no relief.

In his tract *De Gratia Dei*, addressed to his friend Donatus, soon after his conversion, he has himself given us a picture of the spiritual state in which he found himself, for some time at least, previously to that event. "I lay in darkness," he writes, "and floated on the world's boisterous sea, with no resting place for my feet, ignorant of my proper life, and estranged from truth and light. Circumstanced as I then was, I found it hard and impracticable to receive the promise held out by the divine goodness for my salvation; namely, that a man might be born again, and that being animated into a new life, through the laver of saving water, he might lay aside what he had been before, and though retaining the same bodily frame put on an entirely new mind and spirit. How is so great a conversion possible, I said to myself, that one should suddenly and at once put off what has either hardened upon him from his own nature or has become inveterate through long custom? These things are wrought, as it were with a firm and deep root, into his very constitution. When does one learn frugality, who has been accustomed to rich and sumptuous entertainments? And when does one who has been used to costly raiment, shining in gold and purple, descend contentedly to plain and simple apparel? He who has prided himself in honors and the insignia of power, cannot stoop to a private and inglorious state. He who has been surrounded with the officious attendance of numerous retainers and clients, considers it a calamity to be left alone.

So universally, it seems to be necessary, that through the seductive force of custom wine should continue to invite, pride to inflate, anger to inflame, covetousness to disquiet, cruelty to stimulate, ambition to please, and lust to hurry headlong in its own course. Such were often my private thoughts. For being deeply entangled in the manifold errors of my own previous life, which I considered it impossible for me to lay aside, I yielded thus to my besetting sins, and through despair of any thing better gave myself up to their power as an evil belonging to me by native and proper right."

This description refers particularly to the period immediately before his conversion, when he was led to think seriously of embracing the Christian salvation. He had formed an acquaintance with an aged and excellent priest in Carthage, named Cecilius, who gradually won his entire confidence, and whose influence on him was happily employed at the same time to engage his favorable attention to the claims of the Gospel. By him he was led to devote himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and finally to offer himself as a catechumen for admission into the Christian church. In this state of preparation, according to his biographer, he proposed to himself the highest ideal of Christian perfection; though he was far from being able at once to secure the victory over himself and over the world, to which his ardent spirit aspired. The full crisis of his conversion he himself refers to his baptism, which carried in it for his subsequent faith always the character of a real gift of life bestowed upon him by God. "When by means of the regenerating wave," he says, "the stain of my former life was washed away, and the serene and pure light of heaven descended into my sin-cleansed bosom; as soon as the second birth, by the Spirit derived from on high, had transformed me into a new man, presently in a wonderful way doubts began to be settled, perplexities to solve themselves, and obscurities to grow plain; there arose strength, for what before seemed difficult, and power to do what was before held to be impossible; making it clear, that the first natural life in the service of sin was of the earth, and that what the Holy Ghost had now breathed into me was of God"

Cyprian's baptism took place about the year 245 or 246, when perhaps he was not much less than fifty years old. He always regarded the priest Cecilius afterwards as under God the author of his spiritual life; and in token of his grateful affection towards him took his name into union with his own, calling himself from the time of his conversion *Thascius Cecilius Cyprian*.

He adopted at once what was then regarded as the highest rule of piety, devoting himself in a life of celibacy and voluntary poverty to the service of God. The Scriptures were made his favorite and constant study. He sold his estate, and gave the money as well as almost all he possessed besides, for the support of the poor; "by which," says Pontius, "he gained two ends of principal importance; renouncing and despising all *secular* views, (than which nothing is more fatal to the true interests of piety and religion,) and fulfilling at the same time, the law of charity, which God himself prefers to all sacrifices." With the study of the Scriptures he joined also that of the best ecclesiastical writers then known. Among these his great favorite was Tertullian, his own countryman, out of whose writings he made it a point to read something almost every day; calling for them as Jerome relates, with the simple word: "Hand me the Master." In a very short time, he was favorably known, we may say even distinguished, for his Christian knowledge and piety, on all sides.

This good reputation created a general desire, on the part of the people, to have him raised to the priesthood; and he was accordingly consecrated, while still a neophyte or recent convert, to this holy office; his extraordinary merit being considered a sufficient reason, for dispensing in his case with the rule, which forbade the ordination of persons of this class. Soon after Donatus, the bishop of Carthage died; and now there was a general cry, on the part of both clergy and laity, that Cyprian should become his successor. Of this dignity however he felt himself to be altogether unworthy; and protesting against his own nomination, with unaffected humility, went so far even as to hide himself by flight, that he might avoid the public pressure. But the place of his retreat was soon discovered; when the people laid siege literally to the house where he was, closing up every avenue of escape, and refusing to withdraw till he should yield himself to their will. He bowed himself accordingly in the end to the necessity which seemed to be imposed upon him so evidently by God himself, and thus became bishop of Carthage not more perhaps than two years after the time of his conversion. His consecration took place, with the unanimous approbation of the bishops of the province, in the year 248. With all this popular enthusiasm however, there was not a universal satisfaction with the appointment. A few of the presbyters, including Fortunatus and Donatus who had themselves aspired to the dignity, with some of their friends among the laity, opposed the election as being in favor of one

who was still only a novice in the church. Cyprian treated this party with great kindness, and bestowed upon them indeed special marks of his friendship and confidence; for the purpose partly of placing them on good terms with the body of the people, who were highly offended with their conduct. But they were not to be subdued in this way. All kindness was lost upon them; a deep grudge was still harbored in their bosoms against the new bishop, which only waited a favorable opportunity to break forth afterwards into open insubordination of the most active and violent kind.

Cyprian entered upon his episcopal duties with the greatest resolution and vigor. However backward he had been to undertake the office, there was no lack of zeal with him, when it had been undertaken, to carry out in full the proper sense of its functions. The energetic, uncompromising spirit, with which he insisted thus on what he conceived to be its rightful prerogatives and claims, has sometimes been regarded as the sign of a hierarchical nature, a disposition to lord it over God's heritage; in which view, to a carnal worldly mind, his previous deprecation of the episcopate must appear to have been no better than a politic feint or sham, a mere piece of mock modesty at best, in no true keeping with the ambition which actually reigned in his soul. Such also is the construction, which this carnal judgment is ever prone to put upon all similar instances of the *nolo episcopari*, as they come before us in the history of the ancient church. But let it be felt that Christianity is what it claims to be, and all this sort of thinking is at once reduced to its proper miserable worth. There is in truth no contradiction whatever, between the backwardness of Cyprian to become bishop, and the high church style in which he afterwards acted as a bishop. On the contrary, both exhibitions of character sprang from the same ground, the firm faith namely which he had in the divine origin of the church, and in the reality of the apostolical commission as something always of force in the succession of its priesthood. His humility led him to shrink in the first place from the honor and responsibility of a ministry, which he felt to be so directly from heaven; and the very same feeling substantially, the sense of what was due to such an office over against all simply private and personal ends, engaged him afterwards to use its resources, and assert its rights, with the most uncompromising zeal. He became in an important sense the organ of the high trust with which he was clothed. However humbly he thought of himself, he could not too much magnify his office. This was, not of man, but of God. However

much his election to it might have been due to the people, he never thought of resolving the office itself, its powers, resources, or rights, into any such popular vote. That would have been to his mind nothing short of absolute blasphemy. Every true bishop, in his view, was a successor of the apostles, and a real bearer of the commission which they received originally from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This was the consciousness in which he stood, and that actuated we may say his universal ministry. It is easy to see, how it might impart to this at times an air of something like pontifical assumption, as viewed from the standpoint of the common unbelieving world. But it needs only a slight knowledge of his life, a cursory acquaintance with the spirit that breathes through all his epistles and tracts, to be fully satisfied that his character was the very reverse in fact of every such unfavorable imagination. His hierarchichal ideas were all based, like those of St. Paul, on the renunciation and sacrifice of self. Never perhaps was there a bishop more truly humble, more self-denying, more gentle and affectionate, more ready to render himself up as a holocaust of love for the welfare of men or for the glory of God.

It is not too much to say of him, that he was the complete ideal of a true Christian bishop. His piety, his humility, his charity and benevolence, his gentleness combined with firmness and courage, his unsleeping vigilance and unbending resolution in the exercise of church discipline, were all deserving of the highest admiration. His very countenance, says Pontius, was at once venerable and full of grace, beyond what could well be expressed; so that no one could look upon him, without being inspired with a certain feeling of respectful awe. Cheerfulness and gravity were happily blended together in his looks; and his whole air and manner were such as to make it doubtful whether love or respect should preponderate in his presence; only this was certain, that he deserved the largest measure of both. His dress corresponded with the dignity and propriety of his appearance in other respects; it was simple, without being either ostentatious or mean. His liberality towards the poor, which had been so great before he became a bishop, formed afterwards also a leading ornament of his life. With his presbyters and people, he lived in relations of the tenderest sympathy and regard; dwelling among them as a father; taking counsel with them in all the concerns of the church; and seeking in every way especially to make them sharers of his own spirit, and full partners with himself in the heavenly calling of the gospel. He stood in the most intimate and active spiritual rapport with

his flock; rejoicing with those that rejoiced and weeping with those that wept; making common cause with them in their trials; even bearing their sins in a certain sense and carrying their sicknesses and griefs, as though they had been his own. He could say of them literally in the strong language of Paul: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not? We live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.—For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." He lived, not merely to rule and teach his people, but still more to make continual intercession for them before God. With prayers and tears they were borne upon his priestly heart, we may say, in the solemn ministrations of the altar, day and night.

It was not long till large and extraordinary occasion was afforded in the providence of God, for trying these virtues of the new bishop to the fullest extent. He had not enjoyed his dignity much more than a single year in peace, when the terrible Decian persecution, as it is called, burst like an avalanche upon the Church. The cruel edict reached Carthage about the beginning of the year 250. In such cases, the bishops, as being the acknowledged leaders of the Christian community, were always liable to become the first objects of attack. Cyprian however was especially obnoxious to the heathen party, as being so conspicuous a deserter from its ranks in the last part of his life, and now placed in the fore-front of the opposite cause.¹ The fanaticism of the mob, accordingly, at once fixed upon him for its prey. Circus amphitheatre and market, resounded with the cry: "*Cyprian to the lions!*" Not being found at once, he was proscribed, and all persons were forbidden to give him shelter or help. The rage of his enemies, however, was at this time disappointed. He saved himself by flight.

This was a momentous step in the circumstances, which was not taken without the most full and earnest deliberation. It was not a question of easy determination at once, to decide in view of all points between the two alternatives of flight or death. The crown of martyrdom was in many cases an object of ambition, in the early church; some were in danger of even rashly throwing themselves in its way; although the rule was not overlooked at the same time, by which our Saviour Himself

¹ In derision, and popular spite, they called him *Coprianus*, playing on the sense of a Greek word which signifies dung.

allowed his disciples, when persecuted in one city or country, to save themselves by fleeing to another. Cyprian had no difficulty in approving the course of others, who went into banishment, suffering the loss of their property, to avoid death. But his own case was not just of this general sort. He was the shepherd of the flock; and the question was mainly, what he owed in this fearful crisis to the welfare of his people. Would it not be the part of a hireling, to quit his post and forsake his charge, just when the wolf seemed ready to fall upon it and tear it in pieces? On the other hand, however, the presence of the bishop provoked persecution.² And then what was to be gained for the flock itself, by allowing the shepherd to be smitten, and the sheep to be scattered abroad, by the very first blast of the storm which was now at hand? Was the church properly prepared to meet the hurricane in that way. Alas, Cyprian knew but too well, that this was not the case; and facts enough of a deplorable kind were soon offered to confirm his apprehension. His clergy wished him to retire, for the sake of the church. Still he seems to have hesitated for a time; being "in a strait betwixt two;" till in answer finally to his earnest prayers, he received what he considered a direct monition from heaven, ordering him to withdraw. So at least his own language in one place would seem to imply³; and the fact is asserted also by his biographer Pontius. In this way the question was conclusively settled; and with a few confidential attendants, he went into retirement some distance from Carthage, hiding himself at once from both the knowledge and the power of his enemies. But his pastoral relations to his flock were not dissolved by this absence. During the whole time of his recess, though absent in body, he was still with them in spirit; maintaining constant communication with them by messengers and letters; watching over their affairs with intense sympathy and concern; administering counsels, admonitions, instructions and exhortations, suited to their circumstances and

² In his letter on the subject to the Roman presbyters and deacons (ep. 20, ed. Tauchn.) he says: "Cum me clamore violento frequenter populus flagitasset, non tam meam salutem, quam quietem fratrum publicam cogitans interim secessi, ne per inverecondam praesentiam nostram seditio, quae coeperat, plus provocaretur."

³ Ep. 16. ed. Tauchn. "Audiētis omnia, quando ad vos reducem me Dominus fecerit, qui ut secederem jussit." This might mean simply a scriptural or providential direction; but for one familiar with Cyprian's faith it refers more readily to a strictly supernatural order, by vision or in some other way.

wants; and above all assisting them continually by his intercessions and prayers.

The simple fact of this earnest pastoral supervision, thus firmly and steadily asserted on the one side and met with reciprocal confidence and trust on the other, through the entire period of his retreat, is enough of itself to shield him from the suspicion of having been actuated in the step, by the motive of mere fear or an unworthy regard in any way to the preservation of his own life. If there was any room for this reproach, says Neander, his subsequent behavior showed at least that he was able to overcome the dread of death, while the calm and candid tone with which he gives account of the course he took in his letter to the Roman clergy, must be considered enough for his justification. But no such doubtful apology does proper justice to the case. To admit the possibility of the weakness in question, is to overthrow the truth of the whole moral relation in which Cyprian is here exhibited to our view. A pious man might shrink from death, and choose flight as the more easy alternative for saving his faith; but he could not in these circumstances, without hypocrisy and guilt, assume a tone and air which would virtually imply the exact contrary of this, as we find Cyprian doing continually in his correspondence with the flock he had left behind him at Carthage. Nowhere does he betray the slightest sense of any such infirmity in what he had done, or the least anxiety to make his position right in the eyes of his own people. On the contrary, he uses towards them from first to last the tone of one, who felt that he had done nothing to forfeit their confidence, nothing to invalidate his pastoral right, nothing to embarrass the exercise of this right in the smallest degree. He places himself right in the midst of the bloody conflict which is going forward; makes common cause with the confessors and martyrs; acts throughout in the spirit of a general at the head of his troops; with trumpet tongue calls them to battle; triumphs in the "coronation" of such as were faithful unto death, as though it had been his own; weeps over the fall of the "lapsed," like a mother in bitterness for the loss of her children; insists afterwards on the discipline of the church, as the necessary remedy for such vast ruin; and at the risk of his own credit and popularity shows himself inexorable in asserting its most severe claims, in the face of a party violently bent on setting aside his authority, and supported to a certain extent by the voice even of confessors and martyrs themselves. Such deportment in such relations is not to be reconciled with the idea of a pusillanimous shrinking from martyrdom in the

mind of Cyprian himself, without the supposition either of vast self-ignorance or else great conscious duplicity. He must have been in one way or the other totally undeserving of moral respect, if he could act the part he did in this style, without an inward consciousness fully answerable to what it implied. And then again, how could any such acted part have engaged the confidence of his people? Those who knew him best, gave him full credit practically for being all that this high bearing continually assumed. The entire relation between him and his church, as it comes out in his letters, is such as should silence at once every imagination of anything like pusillanimity in his conduct. Every such thought, even in the hypothetical and guarded form it carries with Neander, destroys in fact the true verisimilitude of the picture in view; reduces all to the play of mere human and worldly factors; caricatures the supernatural side of Christianity, and in the end, we may say, turns the divine itself into the diabolical. We might as well charge St. Paul with selfishness and affectation in his ministry, and yet pretend to honor him notwithstanding as a glorious representative and true apostle of Christ.

The wisdom and propriety of Cyprian's secession were abundantly shown, in the salutary fruit which grew out of it for the church, both while it lasted and after it was over. Though outwardly absent, he was still the soul of the Christian cause at Carthage, throughout the entire ordeal of the Decian persecution. The faithful were encouraged and animated, by the assurance that he was still at their head and ready to die with them in the end for their common faith. Martyrs and confessors fought their good fight more joyfully, from knowing that his eye was upon them, and his heart with them, in the deadly struggle. When peace returned, there was no one so well fitted to restore the disorders, and repair the breaches, which had been caused by the overflowing scourge. Not only his own diocese, but the church at large, derived the greatest advantage while he lived from his truly apostolical vigilance and zeal; while his writings have proved a large source of instruction and benefit to the whole Christian world, through all ages since.

It has been intimated already, that the church was not properly prepared for the fearful trial which came upon her under the Emperor Decius. A comparatively long season of outward prosperity and rest previously had led as usual to much worldliness and carnal security in her communion. Multitudes professing the Christian name, and not a few even who served at

the altar, had come to be perfectly secular in their character, differing but little either in spirit or life from the Pagan world with which they were surrounded. It is a gloomy picture Cyprian himself draws of this dismal fact, in the first part of his tract *De Lapsis*; a picture, which for the honor of Christianity one might wish to keep out of view; but which, for the right understanding of Christianity at the same time, it is very important in truth that we should be brought to look steadily in the face. In the end, the actual here forms a better commentary on the mystery of godliness, the proper nature of the church in the world, than any ideal that may be substituted for it by the human imagination. The persecution, says Cyprian, was an exploration, mercifully ordained by God to revive discipline and restore faith. Both had fallen into sad decay. "Many, unmindful of what believers had been in the age of the apostles and should be always, had given themselves up to the pursuit of wealth, and were bent only on increasing their worldly estate. Devotion was wanting among the priests, and faith among the deacons; there was no charity in men's works, no strictness in their manners. Men dressed their beards; women painted their persons; both eyes and hair, God's work, were falsified by art into a new form. Cunning deceptions were practised on the simple, and advantage taken of brethren by dishonest tricks. Marriages were formed with unbelievers, by which Christ's members were prostituted to the Gentiles. Oaths were taken not only rashly, but falsely; those in authority were treated with proud insolence; curses flowed from poisoned lips; discords were kept up with lasting mutual hatred. Many bishops even, who should have been a lesson and example to others, renouncing the service of God for the care of worldly things, forsook their sees, and left their people, wandering into other parts of the country in quest of markets for profitable trade, anxious to have money largely while brethren in the church were in extreme want, grasping farms by trading and fraud, and multiplying their gains by interest."

This, be it remembered, in the third century, and before the Church had come to enjoy any toleration by law in the Roman empire. The picture of course sets before us a part only of the Christianity to which it refers; there was embraced in this a large amount besides of very different character. Still there is reason to believe, that this bad side of the case reached very far, and that there was an amount of worldliness and ungodliness in the church far beyond what is commonly imagined of these primitive times. And yet all this was strangely joined, as we

shall see, with the proper superhuman power of faith, and a corresponding presence of true supernatural grace, in the same church, to an extent which was found fully sufficient to carry it triumphantly through the fires of persecution, and to give it soon after the mastery of the Roman world.

The first effects of the Decian trial were terribly disastrous. A large portion of the Christian profession was at once swept away by it, like chaff before the wind. The imperial order required all to conform to the religion of the state, by taking part in some idolatrous ceremony, prescribed by the magistrate in the way of test. In the first place there was a proclamation merely, calling upon all persons to come forward within a certain time, and prove themselves good subjects of the government in this easy way. Only those who refused to do so, exposed themselves afterwards to more active persecution. They might quit the country before the term was up. In that case, their property was confiscated, and they were forbidden to return on pain of death; but they saved their faith. Such as chose not to fly, saw themselves at the mercy of the populace and the civil power, and in danger always of being called to the most severe account. They might be cited at any time to answer for their faith; when if they refused to deny Christ, by doing homage to idols, they were cast into prison, and subjected to sharp torture from time to time for the purpose of overcoming their resolution. Those who stood this trial were honored in the church as *confessors*. In the case of some, the process was carried sooner or later to the issue of a violent death. They were then known and revered as *martyrs*. To the disgrace however of a large number calling themselves Christians at this time in Carthage, they did not even wait till such confession and suffering were required at their hands, as the price of their fidelity to the Saviour; but showed themselves eager rather, on the first noise of the coming danger, to place themselves beyond its reach, and to save both life and property, by submitting of their own accord to the idolatrous test through which this bad security was to be gained. "At the first word of the threatening foe," Cyprian writes, "a very large portion of the brotherhood (*maximus fratrum numerus*) betrayed their faith, prostrated not by the violence of persecution, but by their own voluntary fall." All admonitions and engagements, the hopes of heaven and the terrors of hell, seemed to be at once forgotten. "They did not wait to go up to the Capitol at least by compulsion, to deny on interrogation. Many conquered before the battle, overthrown without conflict, retained not even this credit, that they seemed

to sacrifice to idols unwillingly. They ran to the forum of their own accord, hastened to death freely, as though they had before wished this, and but embraced now an opportunity which they had always desired. How many were put off by the magistrates through the close of day; how many even begged that their own ruin might not be thus postponed!" More than this. "For many their own destruction was not enough; they urged one another with mutual exhortations to perdition, pledged one another reciprocally in bumpers of death. And that nothing might be wanting to the fulness of crime, children also, carried or led by the hand of their parents, lost what they had acquired in the beginning of their life."

The great body of the "lapsed" probably were of this sort. Others however fell with less inexcusable disgrace; yielding only when they were brought to trial; or it may be not till nature was well nigh worn out by long privations and horrible torments. Some allowed themselves to take a sort of middle course, which amounted, in fact however to the sin they endeavored in this way to avoid. They did not themselves actually sacrifice; but by paying a fee they procured certificates, declaring that they had complied with the edict; or it might be, without this, and even without personally appearing before the magistrate, had their names enrolled simply on the official list of those who were thus approved. It was easy to frame a plausible apology for these evasions, especially under this latter form; but they were condemned by the church as tacit treason to the cause of Christ.

Altogether the fall of so large a portion of his flock was a calamity, that filled the soul of Cyprian with keen mortification and distress. It is to him as though the raging foe had torn away from the church a part of her own bowels. "What shall I do here, beloved brethren?" we hear him pathetically say. "In such tumultuating inward commotion, what or how shall I speak? It needs tears rather than words, to express the grief with which the wound of our body is to be bewailed, the manifold loss of our once numerous community to be deplored. For who can be so hard and iron-hearted, who so unmindful of fraternal charity, as to be able to stand in the midst of such vast wreck, such dismal and squalid ruins, with dry eyes, and not at once be forced rather to burst into tears, weeping forth his sorrow before it can be spoken? I mourn, brethren, I mourn together with you; nor is personal soundness and private health enough, in my case, to assuage my griefs; since the pastor is most wounded in the wound of his flock. I join my bosom

severally with all, I share their various loads of desolation and grief. I wail with those that wail, and weep with those that weep, and feel myself fallen with those that fall. Those darts of the raging enemy have pierced at the same time my members, those cruel swords have entered my bowels. My mind has no exemption or freedom from the pressure of the persecution; I too am prostrated, by affection, in the prostration of my brethren."

We might be ready to suppose, that where it cost so little to fall there would be little or no care afterwards to come to terms with the church, and that the fall would easily prove thus for many a total and final apostacy. This however was not the case. The lapsed generally, it would seem, did not mean this, or at least were not able to carry things out to this extremity. Their compliance with idolatry was an expedient merely for avoiding persecution. They still believed Christianity to be true, and saw in the church the only ark of salvation for a ruined world. No sooner were they free from secular danger, accordingly, by means of their defection, than they began to show an anxiety, many of them at least, to be restored again to the state from which they had fallen. The reconciliation of the lapsed, their return into the bosom of the church, became thus a difficult and embarrassing question, before the persecution itself which gave rise to it had come to an end.

Deplorable as the defection seemed however, it was by no means a defeat of the Christian cause. While some fell, others stood. The true life and vigor of the church came more conspicuously into view, by contrast with such partial desolation; and were found amply sufficient to sustain, and in the end to turn back, the full weight of the shock with which they were now tried. Many witnessed a good confession before the magistrate, and went joyfully into prison for the name of Christ; many went into voluntary exile, forsaking their property to save their lives with their faith; while a large number besides, who were not called upon to do so, showed themselves willing to face persecution for the same cause, if it were necessary, by simply refusing to do what was required by the government. The honor of the confessors was still farther advanced by the sharp tortures, that were employed without effect to subdue their constancy; and in the case of a number it came to its full consummation in martyrdom. To this whole army of the faithful Cyprian refers (*De Lapsis*, §. 2. 3.), in tones of almost rapturous exultation. Speaking of the joy with which he looked forward to his meeting with the confessors, on his return from ex-

ile, he exclaims: "Lo! the white robed cohort of Christ's soldiers, who have broken with firm front the impetuous shock of urgent persecution, prepared to suffer imprisonment, armed to endure death! Bravely ye have withstood the world, a glorious spectacle to God, an example for brethren to follow. The religious tongue owned Christ, in whom it had before professed to believe; the illustrious hands, which had been used only to divine works, refused now sacrilegious sacrifices; mouths sanctified by celestial food, after the body and blood of the Lord rejected the contamination of meat offered to idols; from the impious and wicked veil, with which the captive heads of the sacrificers were there bound, your heads remained free; the forehead made pure by God's sign could not brook the Devil's crown, but reserved itself for the crown of the Lord. With what delight does the church, as a mother, receive you to her bosom returning from battle! With what sense of blessedness and joy she throws open her gates, that you may enter, in serried ranks, bearing back trophies from the prostrate foe! Along with triumphing men come women also, who in this warfare with the world have conquered at the same time the weakness of their own sex. There too are virgins, in service now doubly glorious, and boys superior in virtue to their years. Nor is the multitude around you without part in this triumph, following close in the footsteps of your own conspicuous praise. In them is found also the same sincerity of heart, the same firm integrity of faith. Rooted immovably in the heavenly precepts, and established in the evangelical traditions, they were not dismayed by the prospect of banishment, torture, loss of property, or loss of life. A term was set for the trial of faith. But he who remembers that he has renounced this world, regards no day of the world; nor does he now calculate times on earth, who looks for eternity from God. Let no one, beloved brethren, detract from this glory, or disparage the credit of those who have thus kept the faith by invidious remark. When the term set for renouncing was up, every one who had not renounced, in fact proclaimed him self a Christian. The first title of victory, is to have confessed the Lord when apprehended by the hands of the Gentiles. A second degree of glory, is to be reserved to the Lord by a cautious retreat. The first is a public confession, the second private; that conquers the secular magistrate, this is content to keep a pure conscience before God who sees the heart."

In another place (Ep. 10.), he gives us a glimpse of the severe character of the ordeal, through which these heroes and heroines of the cross were required to pass. He is writing to

the martyrs and confessors themselves, yet in prison. " I exult and rejoice, O most brave and blessed brethren, to hear of your faith and courage, in which our mother the church glories. She gloried not long since indeed, when the constancy of those who confessed Christ led them to accept voluntary banishment for his name. This present confession however, as it excels in suffering, is in proportion more illustrious in honor. With the thickening of the fight, the glory of the soldiers has also increased. Nor were ye deterred from the battle through fear of torments, but these served rather to provoke your zeal, so that ye returned still courageously to the terrible contest with unflinching devotion. Some of your number, I learn, are already crowned; some the next thing to the same victorious coronation; while all, whose glorious company fills the prison, are animated with similar and equal ardent resolution for carrying on the contest; as becomes soldiers in the divine camp of Christ, whose firm faith no blandishments should deceive, no threats terrify, no pains and tortures overcome, since greater is he who is in us than he who is in this world, and no earthly punishment can be so mighty to cast down as the divine protection is to raise and uphold. Proof of this has been had in the glorious engagement of our brethren, who leading the way to others in overcoming torments have confronted the battle with an example of courage and faith, till the battle itself has been conquered and forced to yield. With what praises shall I proclaim your merit, most brave brethren? How sufficiently extol the strength of your resolution, the perseverance of your faith? Ye bore to the completion of glory the most excruciating torture, and yielded not to punishments which might be said rather to yield at last to you. Crowns brought pains to an end, which torments failed to reach. Torture was increased and protracted, not so as to break down the constancy of faith, but only to bear the men of God more speedily to the Lord. The admiring crowd of witnesses, saw the celestial conflict, the conflict of God, the spiritual contest, the battle of Christ, where his servants stood with free voice, with uncorrupted mind, with divine courage, naked indeed of secular armor, but equipped as believers in the arms of faith. The tortured stood stronger than their tormentors, and beaten and torn limbs vanquished those who beat and tore. Faith showed itself insuperable to the long sustained fury of the assault, even when at last, the body a broken wreck, it was not limbs now so much as wounds that were tortured in the servants of God. Blood flowed that might extinguish the conflagration of persecution, that might quench with glorious gore

the flames and fires of hell. O what a sight was that to the Lord, how sublime, how great, how acceptable in God's eyes through the consecrated faithfulness of his soldiery; as it is written in the Psalms, the Holy Ghost addressing and admonishing us also in like words: *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.* Precious truly is that death, which buys immortality with the price of its blood, which wins a crown by the completion of virtue."

The man who could write in this style was actuated certainly by no selfish worldly consideration, in holding himself personally aloof from the scene of conflict whose triumphs he describes in such glowing terms. We are bound to believe him, when he declares (Ep. 7.) his anxiety to be back among his suffering people, and represents himself as engaged by a sense of duty only to delay his return. His whole soul was with his flock. He makes the cause of the martyrs and confessors his own, and seems to share with them the glory of their testimony for Christ. It is a subject for congratulation only that one and another, from time to time, are brought to seal this testimony with death. Let those who are still left behind in prison, be ambitious only of the same illustrious coronation. "If the hour of conflict calls, face it boldly, fight bravely, knowing that ye fight under the eyes of your present Lord, and by the confession of his name are advancing to his own glory; who moreover is no mere spectator of his contending servants, but also wrestles and contends in us, and while he crowns is at the same time crowned himself in the issue of our combat." Such martyrdom, and such readiness for martyrdom, are regarded as the highest ornament of the cause to which they belong. "O blessed church ours, to be so irradiated with the rays of divine favor, to be made so illustrious by the glorious blood of martyrs in our own days. It was white before by the good works of the brethren; now it has become purple through martyr's blood. Its garlands lack neither lilies nor roses. Let all strive now for the ample dignity of either distinction; let them lay hold of crowns, either white by work or purple by suffering. In the heavenly camp both peace and war have their own flowers, to crown the glory of the Christian soldier."

While he magnifies in this way the honor of the martyrs, he is by no means unmindful of their wants while still in the body. The presbyters and deacons are urged to keep a continual eye on the necessities, both of those who were thrown into prison, and of others also who in their poverty continued faithful to Christ. The funds of the church must be steadily applied to

their relief. For this the clergy held such money in their hands. His own portion of course was not to be spared. "I beg of you," he writes in one place (Ep. 7.), "to have good care of the widows, of infirm persons, and of all the poor. Also let strangers, if any are in need, be helped out of my own amount placed in charge of our colleague Rogatianus; to whom, lest this may possibly be already all laid out, I now send also by the acolyth Naricus another sum, that cases of distress may be the more readily and largely helped." Due regard must be had still more to spiritual wants. The confessors are urged to give themselves to heavenly meditations and prayers. By the daily sacrifice of the altar especially, they must arm themselves for the great conflict. The priests must visit them in turns, one at a time with his assisting deacon, to "offer" in their behalf; going thus singly and alternately to avoid exciting attention; for which reason also the brethren generally must not go to see them in crowds; lest it should rouse jealousy, and lead to a denial of access to them altogether. "Would that my situation and office," he exclaims in one of his letters (Ep. 12), "allowed me to be now present. Most readily and cheerfully would I fulfil, with solemn ministry, all the duties of love towards our most brave brethren. But let your diligence be a substitute for my care, and do all that should be done for those, who are distinguished through the divine favor by such merits of faith and virtue. Let the bodies also of any, who though not put to the torture in prison yet depart this life there by a glorious end, receive attention and affectionate care. For neither courage nor honor are wanting in their case, to place them on the roll of the blessed, martyrs. For themselves, they have suffered all that they showed themselves ready and willing to suffer.— They have endured, faithful, and firm, and unconquerable, even unto death. Where to will and confession in prison and bonds is added the term of dying, the martyr's glory is complete. Finally take note also of the days on which they depart, that we may be able to celebrate their commemoration among the memories of the martyrs. Although Tertullus, our most faithful and devoted brother, who with his other care shown toward the brethren in every active service is not wanting in attention to this object also, will continue to inform me of the days on which our blessed brethren in prison pass into immortality by the end of a glorious death, that we may celebrate oblations and sacrifices here for their commemoration; which we hope soon to celebrate with you also, by the protection of the Lord."

The style in which, Cyprian addresses these sufferers for the

name of Christ, it has sometimes been remarked, is not just according to modern evangelical rule. There is often what we can hardly help feeling to be an undue glorification, not only of the martyrs already dead, but of those also who were steadfastly aspiring after the same crown. It seems to be taken too easily for granted, that this crown formed as a matter of course a direct passport to the abodes of bliss. The grand point is made to be simply enduring to the end. We hear no warnings on the danger of self-deception, no calls to anxious self-examination. The subjective side of the Christian salvation is most completely merged in the objective. Then there is a strange want of caution or reserve, in speaking of personal merit. Secular soldiers could hardly be stimulated more directly, by the idea of high desert, or by the prospect of glory and renown. And yet it would be a great mistake, to suppose that this implied no sense of the need of humility and vigilant diligence on the part of these confessors, no apprehension of the spiritual dangers to which they were still exposed. Cyprian in fact often refers to this. He felt that the merit of a good confession, and the praises bestowed upon it, might become a snare; and he abounds in exhortations accordingly, enforcing the necessity of a subsequently pious walk and conversation to make such credit full and complete. We learn from him too, that there was but too much in the actual course of events to justify such anxious solicitude. Some few of the confessors at least fell into gross irregularities and sins. "I hear that some disgrace your number," he writes *Ep.* 13, "and destroy the praise of your excellent name by their corrupt conduct; whom ye yourselves, as lovers and defenders of your own renown, are bound to rebuke, restrain, and correct. What reproach is it to your name, when one lives only to become intemperate or lascivious; another returns into the world, from which he had been expatriated, to be apprehended and punished afterwards, not now as a Christian, but as a malefactor! I hear too that some are inflated and proud." It is a strange glimpse we have in this way, into the interior life of the church in these ancient times. There is much in it, which it is not easy at once to understand, but from which, rightly considered, there may be for this very reason a great deal also to learn.

The object of this sketch is, not merely to give some account of Cyprian, but to illustrate at the same time, from the mirror of his life and writings, the Christianity of the third century. The subject will be resumed hereafter.

J. W. N.

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THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,
AND
THE BAPTISTIC QUESTION.

By DR. H. MARTENSEN, *Prof. of Theology in the University of Copenhagen.*

This is a small work of 51 pages, part of which is here presented to the English reader—the remainder shall follow. The occasion and design of it, will be best understood from the Author's own words in a short preface. "The by no means unimportant baptistic movement in the Danish Church—a movement which has not yet run its whole course—is the direct occasion of this church pamphlet. Inasmuch as the Baptist Theory has manifested itself also, in many points, in the Evangelical Church of Germany, and has become matter of attention, the author hopes that this small work may also be of interest to German readers. It asks to be permitted to take its place among those contributions, which have already appeared that are designed to lead to a more definite understanding of the dogmatic substance of this matter." It will be easily seen that

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CYPRIAN.

Second Article.

It has been already mentioned, that those who renounced their faith, under the sore pressure of the Decian persecution, were not willing for the most part to continue in this dreadful renunciation. Their sin of itself excluded them from the privileges and hopes of the Church. They professed repentance however, and sought to be restored to its communion. In many cases, this was without any proper evidence of such inward humiliation and true change of mind, as the solemnity of the offence required. The very number of the delinquents stood in the way of a just regard to discipline. It was easy to make light account of an offence, into which it had been found so easy to fall, and in which so many were concerned. The system of discipline too was not definitely settled at all points, in regard to the treatment of those who were brought into such condemnation. The cases of transgression also were by no means all of one and the same moral enormity. There was room for distinctions, and so for pleas of special indulgence and favor. Most of all however, reliance was placed on the intercession of the confessors and martyrs. It had long been a standing belief in the Church, that such faithful witnesses for Christ, besides winning an extraordinary crown for themselves, had power by their prayers and merits to recommend in a peculiar way the cause of others also who applied to them for such help. Many felt that a recommendation from this quarter, was equivalent to a full right and title to the privilege it enforced. The lapsed in particular, who had forfeited all merit of their own, considered it a powerful advantage to come in for a sort of partnership interest, in this way, in the merit of those who by their sufferings might be said to have made good in some sense to the Church, the failure and fall of her less constant children. Recourse was had to them accordingly in prison, for letters of peace, as they were called, or written testimonials, recommending such as received them to pardon and reconciliation with the Church. Such intercession was supposed to be specially of force, when obtained from one who was on the point of sealing his testimony with blood; the crown of actual martyrdom gave additional weight to the patronage, which was thus transferred from earth to heaven. Something of the same authority however was felt to belong to all the confessors. By showing themselves willing and ready to die for Christ, if necessary, they were all regarded

as standing high in the Divine favor, and as having special and extraordinary claims to respect among men. To the exercise of such patronage as we have now in consideration, so long as it was kept within proper bounds, there could be no reasonable objection. There was a true deep and solid ground for it in the mysterious constitution of Christianity itself. But in the nature of the case, it was very liable to run into the form of an abuse. The confessors were by no means all wise and discreet. Many of them in fact were very ignorant. Their very zeal for the salvation of souls might betray them into a false compassion. To some of them too, there could hardly fail to be a snare in the function of authority itself, which they were called to exercise in this high spiritual form. It carried in it a dangerous aliment for pride in one direction, as well as for something like religious fanaticism in another. Certificates and recommendations were liable to be given in this way with too much facility and freedom, and to be so used afterwards as to interfere seriously with the proper ends of church discipline. Such was the abuse that actually followed on no inconsiderable scale. Through the weakness or levity of some of the confessors, these indulgences, or letters of peace, were given to applicants of every character and class, in the greatest profusion and without any sort of discrimination or judgment. In some cases, they were put into so loose a form as to be tickets of admission into the church, not simply for the holder, but for his family also or friends, as many as he might choose to embrace under the convenient privilege, "*Communicet ille cum suis.*" Armed with such powerful recommendation, a great crowd of temporary apostates, now anxious professedly to repair their past fault, knocked loudly at the door of the church, demanding rather than begging to be restored to its privileges. To make the matter still worse, a portion of the clergy showed a disposition to yield to the pressure, and allowed themselves to communicate with the lapsed, on terms which overthrew in truth all order and discipline. This served of course to encourage their violent impatience, and made it more difficult than it would have been otherwise to deal with the case in the right way.

The occasion was serious and trying. The cause of the lapsed might be said to be a popular one, in view of the numbers who were concerned in it, and in view also of the great credit of the confessors and martyrs who seemed to be enlisted to a certain extent on its side. It required no little courage to face it with direct opposition. This however Cyprian did not hesitate to do, with all the authority which he felt to belong to him

in the character of a bishop. He saw the whole discipline of the church at stake, in the course things were threatening to take. But it was no hierarchical feeling merely, no zeal simply for the honor of his own order, that engaged him to take his stand. He saw in this relaxation of discipline, an extreme danger at the same time for the souls of those, in whose favor the deceitful privilege was sought. However desirable it was for those who had fallen to be restored to the peace of the church, this could be done effectually only through real humiliation and penance on their own part, making room for ecclesiastical absolution afterwards in a regular and valid form. Such was the necessary wholesome medicine, which God had provided for the healing of sin. There must be on the one side an *exomologesis* or confession, going to the bottom of the offence and carrying along with it the force of a real penitential expiation or satisfaction in some form; and then on the other side, to complete this, a solemn formal release under the hand of the ministering priest, bringing relief to the conscience from God himself. Unit- ing in it itself both these conditions, reconciliation with the church might be regarded as something more than an empty outward ceremony; it carried in it the force of a really Divine transaction, which served actually to reconcile the subject at the same time with Christ and with God, and gave him a title sacramentally to all the blessings of heaven. But the abuse before us tended towards the destruction of this salutary order on both sides. It turned the *exomologesis* into a superficial sham on one side; while on the other it obscured the proper sense of the grace of absolution, as a power proceeding through the priesthood only from the general church. It was under this view especially, that Cyprian set himself with all his might in opposition to the irregularity; sending letter upon letter from the place of his retreat, now to the clergy, now to the people, and now to the confessors themselves, full of instruction and warning with regard to the whole case. His tract, *De Lapsis*, is taken up mainly with the same subject. With great earnestness and firmness, he insists that the lapsed should not be at once restored to the peace of the church. They were not indeed to be rejected without mercy, as persons for whom there was no hope. On the contrary, they must be received as penitents, and encouraged in this character to desire and seek, as also to expect in the end, a release from church censure; but in the nature of the case, this course of penitential trial, where the offence had been so great, ought to be of long duration, and in a form to show true inward grief and humiliation. The terms of restora-

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tion must be governed in some measure by the character of the offence in different cases; but to fix and determine them was no business for private judgment merely or hasty particular decision. Let the persecution first come fairly to an end. Then the bishops might come together in council, and after suitable deliberation adopt such rules and decrees, as would secure uniform practice and meet all the exigencies of the case. In the mean time, the confessors must exercise their prerogative with becoming humility, and not in such a way as to do violence to the Divine order of the church; lest the merit of their good confession should be again neutralized and made of no account, by what must be regarded as an act of treason to the very cause in whose behalf it had taken place.

Addressing the general body of the people, Cyprian writes on the subject as follows:†

“That you mourn and grieve over the ruin of our brethren, I know from myself, most dearly beloved, who also grieve with you on their account, and am in great sorrow and pain, and feel what the beloved apostle has said, (2 Cor. xi: 29): ‘Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?’ Or as he has it in another place, (1 Cor. xii: 26): ‘Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.’ So I suffer and grieve for our brethren, who fallen and prostrated by the stress of persecution have carried away with them a part of our bowels, inflicting on us thus the sharp pain of their own wounds; which nevertheless the Divine mercy is able to cure. The case however, in my judgment, calls for deliberation and caution, lest by a too forward usurpation of peace more heavy occasion only be given for the Divine displeasure. The blessed martyrs have written to us with regard to certain persons, commending their desires to our consideration. When the Lord shall first have given us all peace restoring us to the church, the cases will be examined severally along with your presence and judgment. I hear however that some of the presbyters, unmindful of the gospel, and not heeding what the martyrs have written to us, nor reserving to the bishop the honor of his priesthood and see, have already begun to communicate with the lapsed, and to offer for them and give them the eucharist—things that should be reached only in due course and order. For whereas in smaller offences which are not committed directly against God, penance is per-

† Ep. 17, ed. Tauchn.

formed for a suitable time, and confession is made with proper probation of life in the case of the penitent, and no one can come to communication unless through the imposition of hands upon him first by the bishop and clergy; how much more is it needful, in the case of these most heavy and extreme offences, that all things should be conducted cautiously and wisely according to the discipline of the Lord! This indeed our presbyters and deacons ought to have urged, for the welfare of the sheep committed to their care, and to guide them by the divine rule into the way of suing for salvation. I know both the tractableness and the reverence of our people, who would have given themselves diligently to the work of satisfaction and deprecation towards God, had not some of the presbyters to please them led them astray. Be it your part then to exercise over the minds of the lapsed severally a wise and wholesome influence, in conformity with the divine precepts. Let no one unseasonably pluck fruit which is still unripe; let no one commit to the deep again his vessel battered and pierced by the waves, before it has been diligently repaired; let no one hasten to receive and put on a rent garment, if he see it not mended by a skilful workman and made fit to wear by the art of the fuller. Let them listen patiently, I pray, to our counsel; let them wait for our return; that when we shall have come to you through the mercy of God, we may be able in a council of our fellow bishops to examine the letters and requests of the blessed martyrs, according to the discipline of the Lord, in the presence of the confessors and with the assistance also of your judgment. In regard to this, I have written letters both to the clergy and to the martyrs and confessors, which I have directed to be read also in your hearing. My desire is, brethren dearly beloved and longed for, that ye may always prosper in the Lord and bear us in mind. Farewell."

In his letter to the clergy, (Ep. 16, ed. Tauchn.), he refers still more sharply to the conduct of those presbyters, who had encouraged the disorder of which he complains. They had been treating his authority with contempt before. He had held his peace for a time; but the case now had become too serious for silence; not only the honor of the episcopate was invaded; that might be overlooked; but the safety of souls also was in question. The case of the lapsed was in danger of being made worse, instead of better, by a hollow and groundless restoration of peace. Their offence had been of the heaviest kind, and called for corresponding remedy and help. "He who conceals this from our brethren, deceives them deplorably; so that those

who might do true penance and satisfy the paternal and merciful God by their prayers and works, are seduced into greater perdition, and those who might rise experience a still deeper fall. For while in the case of smaller sins the offenders do penance for proper time, and in the order of discipline come to confession, and by the imposition of the hands of the bishop and clergy receive the right of communicating; now in an unripe time, the persecution still continuing and the church itself not yet restored to peace, these are admitted to communion, and their name is offered; and no penance yet done, no confession yet made, no hand yet laid upon them by the bishop and clergy, they are allowed to receive the eucharist; of which it is written: 'Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord' (1 Cor. xi: 27)." The fault of all this lay with those, whose business it was to instruct the people, and to keep them to a proper observance of the divine precepts. The blessed martyrs too were wronged by what was done. *They* had, with becoming regard for the rights of the bishop, referred the case to him for favorable judgment, after peace should have been restored to the suffering church; these unruly priests, on the contrary, "refusing us the honor allowed by the martyrs along with the confessors, and disregarding the law and rule of the Lord the observance of which is enjoined by these same martyrs and confessors, before the fear of persecution is over, before our return, almost before the decease itself of the martyrs, communicate with the lapsed, and offer and give the eucharist; whereas if even the martyrs, overlooking scripture in the heat of their zeal, had desired anything going against the law of the Lord, they ought to have been set right by the admonition of the presbyters and deacons, according to usage in time past."

Writing to the martyrs and confessors, (Ep. 15), he takes occasion to say: "Official concern and the fear of the Lord compels us to admonish you by letter, most brave and blessed brethren, that ye who have so devotedly and courageously kept the faith of the Lord, may show like care for the observance also of the Lord's discipline and law. For whilst all the soldiers of Christ should be true to the orders of their leader, it is most of all fit that they should be obeyed by you, who have become an example to others of virtue and piety. And I had supposed indeed, that the presbyters and deacons, who are on the ground, would admonish and instruct you fully with regard to the law of the gospel; as it was always the custom, under our predecessors, for the deacons to assist and guide the wishes

of the martyrs in prison by counsel and scriptural rule. But now with the greatest grief I learn, not only that there has been no such suggestion to you of the divine precepts, but that even what ye yourselves proposed in the way of caution towards God and honor towards his priest, is made of no effect by some of the presbyters, who forget what is due both to God and the bishop. For whereas you had written to me, desiring your prayer to be examined, and peace to be restored to certain lapsed persons, when we should be able to meet with the clergy at the close of the persecution, these unfaithful ministers—against the rule of the gospel, against your respectful petition also, before the doing of penance, before confession made of the most serious and extreme offence, before the imposition of hands by the bishop and clergy for repentance—dare to offer for them, and to give them the eucharist, that is, to profane the sacred body of the Lord; since it is written: ‘Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.’ And in this there may be some excuse indeed for the lapsed. For who that is dead may not in haste to be made alive? Who may not be eager to run to his own salvation? But it is the business of the rulers to keep the law, and to instruct the hasty or ignorant, lest they become butchers, who should be shepherds, of the sheep. For when they concede what tends to destruction they do but deceive; and the fallen are not raised thus, but by offending God are urged into greater ruin. Let them then learn from you, what they ought rather themselves to have taught; let them reserve your petitions and wishes for the bishop, and wait a mature and quiet time for giving the peace for which you intercede. First let the mother have peace from the Lord; then may your petitions be considered for the peace of the children.” They must not suffer themselves, he goes on to say, to be overcome by the impurity of those who sought their aid. The case called for the greatest care and circumspection. As the friends of the Lord, hereafter along with him to judge the world, they should look diligently into the circumstances and merits of each single case; that no occasion for reproach might be given to the surrounding heathen world.

In the tract *De Lapsis*, we have the case put into the same form still more at large. “The priest of God must not deceive with false concessions, but provide for salutary remedies. He is a poor physician, who handles the tumid recesses of wounds with sparing hand, and by saving exaggerates the virus which is seated in the interior depths of the body. The wound must

be opened and cut, the amputation of diseased parts must make room for a more vigorous cure. However the patient may complain and cry out for pain, he will give thanks afterwards, when he comes to the sense of health." The neglect of such salutary discipline forms, in the eyes of Cyprian, a new calamity full as deplorable as the apostacy which had gone before. "A new form of desolation, dearly beloved brethren, has broken forth; and as if the storm of persecution had been a light thing, treacherous mischief and flattering ruin are carried to their height under the name of mercy. Against the vigor of the gospel, against the law of the Lord and of God, communication is thrown open by the temerity of certain persons to the unprepared—an empty and false peace, dangerous to those who give it, and of no worth to such as receive it. They require not patience in order to health, nor true medicine by satisfaction; penitence is driven from the breast, the recollection of the most grave and extreme offence is put out of the way. The wounds of the dying are covered, the deadly plague seated in the inmost vitals is hid under a feigned sorrow. Those who return from the altars of the Devil approach the holy place of the Lord with tainted and unclean hands; still reeking as it were from the deadly food of idols, their throats yet exhaling their own crime and breathing the smell of dire contagion, they invade the Lord's body, in the face of the scripture which exclaims: 'The soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people,' (Lev. vii: 20). So the Apostle testifies: 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils' (1 Cor. x: 21); as he threatens also the disobedient with this denunciation: 'Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord' (1 Cor. xi: 27). In contempt of all this, before expiation of offence, before confession made of crime, before the purgation of conscience by sacrifice and the hand of the priest, before any pacification of the displeasure of an angry threatening Saviour, violence is done to his body and blood, and they sin now more against the Lord with hands and mouth, than when they denied him before. They take that for peace, which some trade off to them with fallacious words. It is however not peace, but war; no one can be joined to the church, who is separated from the gospel. What? Do they call injury a benefit? Do they set forth impiety under the name of piety? Are those who should be

weeping and calling upon their Lord continuously, to be stopped in their penitential lamentations by the pretence of communication? To such lapsed persons this is what hail is to fruit, a whirlwind to trees, a destroying murrain to cattle, a cruel tempest to ships." All such agencies work, not to cure and save, but only to kill and destroy. It is another persecution in truth, by which the subtle adversary seeks to cut off the last hope for the lapsed, by silencing their grief, causing them to forget their sin, and so preventing them from the use of a long and thorough course of tears and prayers, the only penance that could bring them to a true peace with their offended Lord. "Let no one deceive himself or fall into mistake. The Lord alone can exercise mercy; he only can pardon sins committed against himself, who has carried our sins, who has suffered for us, whom God has given for our iniquities. Man cannot be greater than God; neither can the servant by his indulgence remit or pardon, what has been committed in the way of heavy offence against the Lord; such thought rather must add to the crime of the offender, by his forgetting the word: 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.' The Lord is to be entreated, the Lord is to be appeased by our satisfaction, who has said that he will deny those that deny him to whom alone all judgment has been committed by the Father. We believe indeed, that the merits of the martyrs and works of the righteous are of much avail with the Judge; but when the day of judgment shall have come, when after the close of the present life and world the people of Christ shall stand before his tribunal."

The firm position taken by the bishop served to control to a certain extent the disorder here brought into view, and might have corrected it entirely perhaps, if it had not been for the advantage taken of it by the small party which had been secretly opposed to him, as we have before seen, from the time of his election to the episcopate. At the head of the faction stood now the deacon Felicissimus. The time seemed favorable for an insurrectionary movement; and occasion was taken accordingly from a particular church visitation, which Cyprian had ordered by commission previously to his own return, to raise the standard of open revolt. Felicissimus, with Novatian and four other presbyters, refused to acknowledge the authority which it was attempted to exercise in this form, and undertook to establish in fact a separate and independent church; into which the lapsed were encouraged to enter without farther difficulty or delay. Many of them, impatient of the discipline to which they were required to submit in the regular church, fell but too easily into

the snare. Some of the confessors also, who had become involved as patrons in the cause of these bad clients, were led away unhappily by the same spirit of defection. Altogether the movement amounted in a short time to quite a serious schism. Cyprian brings the whole case before us, in a letter addressed to the people of his charge, (Ep. 43), as follows :

“ Although, beloved brethren, the most faithful and exemplary presbyter Virtius, the presbyters Rogatianus and Numidicus, confessors made illustrious by divine distinction, as also the deacons, good men and devoted in all obedience to ecclesiastical order, with the other ministers, give you the full attention of their presence, and cease not to confirm you severally by assiduous exhortations, as well as to direct and reform the minds of the lapsed with salutary counsels—so far as I can nevertheless I also admonish you, and in such way as I can visit you, by letter. By letter I say, dearly beloved brethren. For it is made inexpedient for me to return to you personally before Easter, through the malignity and treachery of certain presbyters; who mindful of their former conspiracy, and retaining their old grudge against my episcopate, that is against your vote and God’s judgment, renew of late their ancient opposition, profanely plotting against our authority in their usual insidious style. And herein truly the providence of God appears, that without will or wish on our part, nay in the midst of our indulgence and silence, they have paid the penalty they deserved, by expelling themselves without expulsion from us, giving sentence against themselves in their own conscience, excommunicating themselves from the church, as wicked conspirators against your will and that of God, by their own voluntary act. Now the faction of Felicissimus is disclosed, whence it came, and wherein it has had its root and strength. These before encouraged and urged some of the confessors, not to abide in concord with their bishop and observe the ecclesiastical discipline with faith and quietness according to the precepts of the Lord, not to maintain the glory of their confession by a corresponding blameless walk and conversation. And as though it had been a small thing, to have corrupted the minds of some confessors, and to have aimed at arming a portion of the ruptured brotherhood against the priesthood of God, they have now turned themselves with venomous deception to the destruction of the lapsed, seeking to turn them away, sick and wounded as they are and by the calamity of their fall disabled for vigorous counsels, from the cure of their wound, and by the interruption of their prayers and deprecations, by which God should be appeased with long continuous

satisfaction, seducing them into deadly presumption by the show of a false and deceitful peace.

“But I beseech you, brethren, be on your guard against the snares of the Devil, and diligently watch for your own salvation against the mortal delusion. This is another persecution, another trial. These five presbyters are nothing different from those five officers, whom the late edict joined with the magistracy, that they might subvert our faith, that they might entangle in deadly snares the weak hearts of brethren by leading them to deny the truth. The case is now the same, the same subversion is again at work to the ruin of souls through the five presbyters joined with Felicissimus; in this namely, that God is not entreated, that he who has denied Christ is not led to deprecate the anger of Christ thus denied, that after the guilt of crime penance also is done away, that there is no satisfaction to the Lord through the bishops and priests, but that with the desertion of the Lord’s priests, against the evangelical rule, a new tradition of sacrilegious institution is set up and made of force. And whereas it had been before agreed upon both by us and by the clergy, and confessors of the metropolis [Rome], as well as by the bishops generally whether in our province or beyond the sea, that no new regulation should be made in regard to the cause of the lapsed, until we should all come together, and with joint consultation settle upon a course in which both discipline and mercy should be properly regarded, this our judgment is rebelled against, and a factious conspiracy formed to overthrow all sacerdotal authority and power. What distress do I not suffer now, beloved brethren, that I cannot come to you in person, to address you severally myself, and to exhort you after the rule of our Lord and his gospel! It was not enough—the exile now of a second year and mournful separation from your face and sight, the incessant grief that gives me away from you no rest in my sore lamentations, the tears that flow day and night because the priest, whom ye created with so much love and zeal, is not yet allowed to salute you and meet your affectionate embrace. To our languishing mind is added now this farther distress, that in so great anxiety and need I cannot myself run to your aid, lest through the passion and craft of the traitors our presence should give rise to new tumult, and that the bishop, who ought to consult in all things for peace and tranquillity may not appear to have himself given occasion for sedition, and to have provoked fresh persecution. From where I am however, beloved brethren, I counsel and warn you, trust not rashly pernicious words, assent not lightly to declarations which are

false, take not darkness for light, night for day, famine for food, thirst for drink, poison for medicine, death for salvation. Let neither their age nor authority deceive you, who resembling in wickedness the two elders, that of old sought to corrupt and violate the chaste Susannah, endeavour by spurious doctrines to corrupt the purity of the church and violate evangelical truth.

“The Lord cries aloud and says: ‘Hearken not unto the words of the false prophets, who speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord; who say to them that reject the word of the Lord, Ye shall have peace’ (Jer. xxiii: 16, 17). Those now offer peace, who themselves have no peace; those pretend to bring back the lapsed into the church, who have themselves withdrawn from the church. God is one, and Christ is one, and there is one church, and one cathedra founded on the rock by the Lord’s voice. No other altar can be set up, there can be no new priesthood, by reason of the one altar and one priesthood. He who gathers elsewhere, scatters. Adulterous, impious, sacrilegious is whatever human passion may institute, in violation of a Divine arrangement. Keep far away from the contagion of such men, and avoid their word as you would flee from a cancer or plague, mindful of the Lord’s warning; ‘They be blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.’ They intercept your prayers, which with us you pour forth to God day and night, that you may appease him with just satisfaction; they intercept your tears, by which you wash away the guilt of the offence which has been committed; they intercept the peace, which ye seek truly and faithfully from the mercy of the Lord, not knowing that it is written: ‘That prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, which hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, shall be put to death’ (Deut. xiii: 5). Let no one, dear brethren, turn you aside from the ways of the Lord, let no one force you Christians from the gospel of Christ, let no one sunder the children of the church from the church. Let those perish alone, who have willed to perish; let those remain alone on the outside of the church, who have withdrawn from the church; let those alone be separate from the bishops, who have rebelled against the bishops; let those alone suffer the penalty of their conspiracy, who by your vote formerly and God’s judgment now have deserved such condemnation.”

Here we are introduced to Cyprian’s doctrine of the Church, which may be said to underlie and condition his whole theological system. Opportunity was soon given for bringing it into view, with yet clearer as well as more ample representation, and in terms of still more commanding decision and force.

His return to Carthage took place soon after Easter a. 251, after an absence of about fourteen months. The persecution had run its course; and the way was now open for the re-appearance of the bishop, in the full exercise of his episcopal functions, without danger of new commotion. The first great concern was to settle, in provincial council, the course to be pursued throughout the Church in regard to the lapsed. Such a system was adopted, as the necessities of the whole case, in the united judgment of the assembled bishops, appeared to require and demand. Those who had so grievously sinned, were not to be lightly set free from the bonds of their guilt. They must submit to a long and severe course of humiliation and sorrow, making satisfaction to God, and proving the sincerity of their repentance, by patient continuance in prayers and tears. With this however was held out, for their encouragement, the hope and prospect of reconciliation with the church at some future time; that they might not be thrown into despair, and so be led to fall back as hopeless outcasts from the church into the life of the heathen world. Regard was to be had, at the same time, to the nature and circumstances of each particular case of offence, some being entitled in this view of course to much greater indulgence than others. It was still farther provided, that where there was danger of death, in the case of a penitent who seemed to be sincere, an earlier reconciliation should take place, so that none thus earnestly seeking the peace of the church might be doomed to the great calamity of leaving the world without it. Some time after, as we shall see, a general relaxation or indulgence was allowed on this principle, in view of a new persecution under the Emperor Gallus; for which, it was held, the penitents could not be properly prepared, without the aids of grace that were to be found only in the bosom of the church.

In the same council, judgment was solemnly given against the schism of Felicissimus, with sentence of excommunication upon all who had joined themselves to his party and cause. Some attempts were still made afterwards to carry forward the rebellious movement. Among other measures, the party set up in the end a new bishop of Carthage, in opposition to Cyprian, and made a special effort to have the appointment acknowledged and approved at Rome. But all proved of small account. In the course of a few years, the new church seems to have ended in nothing.

In the mean time, however, a more serious schism had taken place in another part of the church, Novatian, a presbyter of

the church of Rome, had come to stand at the head of a party, which set itself in opposition to the regular bishop Cornelius. Ostensibly, the main question of controversy was the course of treatment to be pursued in regard to the lapsed. Novatian took the ground, that those who had thus fallen from the faith could in no case properly be received back again into the bosom of the church, but must be left to the uncovenanted mercy of God. In this respect, the schismatical movement at Rome was the direct opposite of that at Carthage; it taxed the discipline of the church with the want of that very severity, the exercise of which it was charged in the other case with carrying to excess. And yet that same Novatus, whose name figures in the Carthaginian faction, having made his way soon after to Rome, found no difficulty in making himself just as mischievously active here in the cause of Novatian as he had been before in that of Felicissimus. He seems to have been one of those restless spirits, with whom it is a sort of principle or maxim to go for any agitation that is against the existing order of things, and to whom the right of disorganization and revolution is especially *sacred*, whatever may be the occasion for its exercise. Cyprian, in one of his letters to Cornelius (Ep. 52), gives him a very bad character. In Rome now, however, he was all zeal for the cause of strict and severe discipline in the church; and it seems to have been through his turbulent activity in a good measure, that this cause was brought to take the form of an organized schism, by the pretended elevation of Novatian to the episcopate, in opposition to the regular bishop Cornelius. Efforts were made subsequently to carry out the organization in a wide form, and to have it acknowledged in other provinces. The body in communion with Cornelius was charged with corruption. This was to be on the contrary a pure church. Such plausible pretension in fact deceived many. The Novatian schism carried for a time quite a formidable aspect. Its day however was short. It had no power to stand against the authority of the Catholic Church. Excommunicated first by a council at Rome, the party labored in vain to have the sentence reversed or nullified abroad. Great pains were taken especially to gain the interest of the African bishops. But Cyprian took measures to have the case fully understood; and the result was, that the African church went fully in favor of Cornelius, and joined in the excommunication of the Novatians. The main significance of the schism was, in this way, that it formed a striking occasion for the development of the true idea of the Church, in its character of unity and wholeness, and furnished

at the same time a powerful and most instructive exemplification of the divine strength that belongs to this heavenly constitution, under such view, for the accomplishment of its own ends. The occasion did not create the doctrine of the Church, for which it became for all ages so conspicuous a theatre. It merely brought into view the fact, which it is the object of that doctrine to affirm and assert. The unity of the Church was the actual rock, on which the Novatian schism was dashed to pieces. The controversy lay between the authority of this supernatural constitution, regarded as a real historical fact in the world, and a simply human movement which affected to treat it as no fact by presumptuously thrusting itself into its place. No one saw this more clearly than Cyprian; and no one contributed more largely, or with greater effect, to place the controversy in its true light, and to bring out, in doing so, the high and solemn sense of that holy "sacrament of unity," as he terms it, in which is comprehended emphatically for all time the unconquerable strength of the true Catholic Church. Most of the letters we have from him during the pontificate of Cornelius, fifteen in number, are mainly occupied, directly or indirectly, with this great subject. It gave occasion also to his celebrated tract *De Unitate Ecclesiae*.

"Cornelius was made bishop," he says (Ep. 55), "by the judgment of God and his Christ, by the almost unanimous voice of the clergy, by the vote of the people as far as present, and by the collegiate action of a number of the best older bishops, when no one had been appointed before him, when the place of Fabian [his martyred predecessor], that is when the place of Peter and the dignity of the sacerdotal seat, was vacant; which having been thus occupied by the will of God and the firm consent of all of us, whoever may now pretend to be made bishop, he must be made necessarily on the outside, and can have no ecclesiastical ordination, as not holding the unity of the church. Be he who he may, and how much so ever he may arrogate to himself, he is profane, he is foreign, he is without. And since after the first there can be no second, whoever is made after one, who ought to be alone, he is not second now but none." Afterwards, coming to the person of Novatian he says: "It is not necessary to ask *what* he teaches, since he teaches without. Whoever and whatever he may be, he is no Christian who is not in Christ's church. Boast as he may of his philosophy, or make vain parade of his eloquence, the man who has not kept brotherly charity and ecclesiastical unity, has lost even all that he was before. Or shall he be counted a bishop, who,

where there was a regular bishop in the church consecrated by sixteen fellow bishops, intriguingly seeks to be raised to this dignity in a false and foreign form, by the help of deserters; and whereas there is from Christ one church divided throughout the world into many members, likewise one episcopate spread abroad by a concordant multitude of many bishops, *he*, after the order handed down by God, after this compact full unity of the catholic church everywhere settled, undertakes to create a human church, and sends out his new apostles to many cities to plant the authority of this recent institution, and while through all provinces and cities bishops have long since been ordained, venerable in age, sound in faith, tried in times of pressure and persecution, dares to create over these other spurious bishops of his own fabrication! As if he could overrun the whole world with the obstinacy of his new attempt, or dissolve the compact organization of the church by the dissemination of his discord; not knowing, that schismatics are always fervid at the start, but have no power to grow, or to carry on what they have unlawfully begun, wearing out with the failure of their own bad zeal.⁷⁷ Even if he had been regularly elected and consecrated at first, he goes on to say, and had afterwards withdrawn from the unity of the church, his episcopate would by this fact alone have been made of no force. Only in the unity of the office, universally taken, can any single bishop have true jurisdiction or lawful power.

The tract *De Unitate Ecclesiae* is a formal exhibition and defence of this general proposition, that the Church in its universal catholic character is the one only Divinely constituted medium and channel of salvation, and that schism therefore, or separation from it, involves necessarily at the same time separation from Christ also and exposure to everlasting death. Open outward persecution, the author tells us, is not the only nor the worst form in which Christians have reason to fear the assaults of Satan. Such direct war is less dangerous, and more easy to be met and overcome, than his insidious approaches under the garb of friendship and peace. It is in this latter view especially, that he is called the Serpent. So he deceived our first parents. So he tried to deceive Christ also; but was defeated and foiled. We are required to avoid the first of these examples, and to follow the second. Thus only shall we win immortality in the footsteps of the Prince of Life. But how can we do this, unless we keep his commandments, hold fast to his prescribed rules? This alone, is to be truly grounded on a rock, such as no storms or tempests can shake. To believe in Christ, we must do what

he orders and requires ; we must keep to the true way of salvation. Without such inward settlement, we shall be as chaff before the wind. What could be more subtle than the machinations of Satan, as now put forth in the name and under the show of Christianity itself? Seeing himself vanquished in the form of open heathenism, his altars forsaken, his temples deserted, through the growth of the new religion, he seeks now to reach by fraud what he has not been able to effect by force. "He invents heresies and schisms, to overturn faith, corrupt truth, rend unity. Those whom he cannot retain in the blindness of the old way, he circumvents and deceives by the error of a new course. He bears away men from the Church itself, and while they seem to themselves to have already come to the light and left the darkness of this world, he infuses into them again without their knowing it other shades of night ; so that although not standing with the gospel of Christ, and with his rule and law, they nevertheless call themselves Christians, and walking in darkness fancy that they have light, through the blandishing false art of the adversary ; who, according to the word of the Apostle, transforms himself into an angel of light, and passes off his emissaries as ministers of righteousness, asserting night for day, perdition for salvation, despair under pretence of hope, Antichrist in the name of Christ, so as by plausible lies cunningly to make void the truth. This comes, beloved brethren, by not going back to the origin of the truth, not seeking the head, not observing the teaching of the heavenly master."

For the determination of this rule, Cyprian goes on to say, there is no need of long discourse and argument. "A summary test of truth is at once at hand for faith. The Lord addresses Peter : I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven' (Math. xvi : 18, 19). Again he says to the same, after his resurrection : 'Feed my sheep' (John xxi : 15, 17). [On that one he builds his church, and commits his sheep to him to be fed.] And although, after his resurrection, he gives like power to all the Apostles, and says : 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained' (John xx : 21-23); still to make the unity clear, he provided by his authority that the origin of this same unity should start from one

(unitatis ejusdem originem ab uno incipientem sua auctoritate disposuit). The other Apostles were also indeed what Peter was, endowed with like partnership both of honor and power, but the beginning proceeds from unity, [and the primacy is given to Peter, that there might be shown to be one church of Christ and one cathedra. They are all pastors, and there is shown to be one flock, which is fed by all the Apostles with unanimous consent,] that the Church of Christ may be demonstrated one. Which one Church also the Holy Spirit describes in the Song of songs, personating the Lord, where it is said: 'My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her' (Cant. vi: 9). Can one who holds not this unity of the Church, believe that he holds the faith? Will he, who withstands and resists the Church, [who deserts the cathedra of Peter on which the Church is founded,] presume still that he is in the Church, when the blessed Apostle Paul also sets forth the sacrament of unity in like style, where he says: 'There is one body and one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God' (Eph. iv: 4-6)!"¹

This unity the bishops especially are bound firmly to assert and maintain, so as to show clearly that the Episcopate itself also is one and indivisible. "Let no one deceive the brotherhood, let no one corrupt the truth of faith by treacherous falsehood. The Episcopate is one, the parts of which hold severally from the whole (cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur). The Church also is one, which is extended into multitude by the force of its own fecundity; just as there are many rays of the sun, but only one light; and many boughs of a tree, but one trunk only firmly rooted in the ground; and as in the case of many streams flowing from a single fountain, however widely diffused the plentiful supply may appear, the unity is still preserved in the source. Tear a sunbeam from its place; the unity of the light suffers no division. Break off a bough from a tree; it has no further power of growth. Cut off a stream from its foun-

¹ The clauses which we have put into brackets in this passage have been regarded by some as spurious; although it is by no means settled, that the suspicion is correct. As to any theological interest that may seem to be at stake, however, the question is not of any account; since as Neander remarks, no less than Möhler, the clauses contain nothing that is not elsewhere affirmed by Cyprian, even more distinctly than here. They add but little indeed to the necessary sense, and plain purport, of their own context.

tain; it must soon become dry. So the Church of the Lord also, irradiated with light, sends out her rays over all the earth; still there is but one light, which is everywhere diffused, and the unity of the body is not divided. She spreads forth her boughs with exuberant growth through the whole world; she sends her abundant streams abroad, far and wide in every direction; yet is there but one head, one origin, one mother of continually prolific grace. Of her womb we are born; by her milk we are nourished; with her spirit we are animated."

The Church is the spouse of Christ. She only can bear children to God. Whoever is out of her, can have no part in the blessings of the Gospel. "He is a stranger, he is profane, he is an enemy. No one can have God for his father, who has not the Church for his mother. If one might escape who was out of Noah's ark, then may he also escape who is out of the Church." Not to gather with the Lord, is of itself to scatter.

This sacrament of unity, the writer tells us, was typically represented by the seamless garment of the Saviour, for which the soldiers cast lots. It is in truth, a mystery, closely related to the awful and glorious fact of the Trinity. The terrestrial constitution here has its root and force, we may say, in the celestial. Not to hold the unity of the Church, is not to hold the faith of the Father and the Son, not to hold life and salvation.

Thus we see the terrible nature of the sin of *schism*. It is full against the universal voice of the Scriptures. It is at war with the whole habit of faith, the whole mind of Christ. The temper which leads to it, is not of God but of the world; though it may be in the Church outwardly for a time, it forms no part of its true and proper life; it is there by accident; and when it comes to actual separation and secession, the process is only an act of self-judgment, a critical elimination from the body of Christ of an element which has been all along foreign and false. "Let no one imagine, that the good can depart from the Church. It is not the wheat which is carried away by the wind, nor a well rooted tree that is overthrown by the storm. Empty chaff is thus driven, and trees of small strength are thus violently laid low. To such the doom pronounced by the Apostle John refers: 'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us' (1 John ii: 19)." Heresies and schisms come from the working of human corruption, refusing to own the obedience of faith; and they serve, as St. Paul says I Cor. xi: 19, to make manifest those who are approved, to separate the chaff from the wheat.

Let all then, who value their salvation, give good heed to the voice of God, charging and commanding them not to listen to the words of such false prophets. They prophesy, and cry peace; but it is not from the Lord. They have not been sent. "These the Lord describes, when he says: 'They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water' (Jer. ii: 13). When there can be no baptism save one, they nevertheless pretend to baptize; while the fountain of life is deserted, they notwithstanding promise the grace of life giving and saving water. Men however are not washed there, but defiled rather; their sins are not purged, but only accumulated. That is no nativity to God, but a generation of children to the Devil." No such spurious filiation can bring with it true grace, or lead to heavenly life.

In vindication of their divisions, some quoted the passage which is so often abused for the same bad end in modern times: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matth. xviii: 20). Cyprian however charges them with wronging the true sense of these words, by overlooking and keeping out of sight their occasion and connection. They rend the text, as they try also to rend the Church. The object of the passage, as the previous context shows, is to enforce unity, not division. The Saviour is speaking of the authority and power the Church has to bind and loose on earth, as being the organ and medium of a corresponding power in heaven. This goes so far, he adds, 'that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three &c.' The stress of the thought lies on the idea of that Divine concord, which is itself but another name for the life of the Church in union with her glorious Head. "Not multitude, but unanimity, is made to be of such vast account. If two of you, he says, shall agree on earth; the unanimity is put first, the concord of peace is made to go before, that we may agree with faith and firm effect. But how can he agree thus with any one else, who agrees not with the body of the Church itself and with the universal brotherhood? How can two or three come together in Christ's name, who are in palpable separation from Christ and his Gospel? For we have not separated from them, but they have separated from us, and inasmuch as heresies and schisms are of later birth, by setting up separate conventicles for themselves, they have forsaken the head and fountain of truth. Our Lord, however, speaks of his Church,

and says to those who are in the Church, that if they should be in concord, if they should when met together, though only two or three, unitedly pray according to his command and direction, they would be able, though but two or three, to obtain from the Divine majesty what they should ask. Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, he says, I am in the midst of them; in the midst of such, namely, as are simple and peaceful, such as fear God and keep his commandments. With such though only two or three he promises to be, as he was with the three youths in the fiery furnace, and because they continued simple towards God and of one mind among themselves, refreshed them with the spirit of dew in the midst of surrounding flames; as he was with the two Apostles shut up in prison, who also were of like single and united mind, opening the doors of the prison, and placing them in public again to speak to the people the word they faithfully preached. When he lays down the rule then, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,' he does not sunder men from the Church, who has himself established and formed the Church; but reprovng discord to the unfaithful, and commending peace to the faithful, his language shows, that he is more with two or three only praying in unity than with the greatest number in dissent, that more may be obtained by the concordant supplication of a few than by the inharmonious prayer of many."

How can they meet together with Christ among them, who come together on the outside of his Church? That posture is of itself fatal to all faith and piety. "Though such should be slain for the confession of the Saviour's name, this stain is not washed out even by blood; the inexpressible and dreadful guilt of discord is not purged even by such passion. He cannot be a martyr, who is not in the Church; he cannot win the kingdom, who forsakes her that is destined to reign." Schism breaks the law of peace and charity, which is of no less force than the law of faith. The greatness of this grace is set before us in full by St. Paul, in the thirteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians. How can one have God, who has not charity? He may give his body to be burned, but the sacrifice will profit him nothing. "Such an one may be slain, but he cannot be crowned." Even to prophecy, cast out devils, and do miracles, is not enough to insure salvation. There must be righteousness, to gain the favor of the Judge; obedience to his precepts, that we may merit reward.

The spirit of schism, according to Cyprian, was no new thing :

but it had assumed latterly a more than usually bold and active form—a proof, as he sees it, that the “perilous times of the last days,” foretold by the Apostle, were now actually at hand, and the world drawing towards an end. The faithful, however, should not be disturbed by this. Let them see in these apostacies and insurrections the clear fulfilment of prophecy, and be only the more firmly resolved to keep clear of all fellowship with every such unbelieving movement, however outwardly bold and strong. Let them bear in mind the judgment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and the punishment of King Uzziah, as monuments of the crime and danger of such rebellious independence to the end of time. Those who now pretended to set up a new jurisdiction in the Church, usurping the powers of the priesthood which God had himself established, must be regarded as falling into the same fearful condemnation with these ancient examples. To such applies the Lord’s word: ‘Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.’ This crime is worse than that of the lapsed, so far as they are brought afterwards to do penance and make full satisfaction for their sin. It is a more full alienation from the Church; not through compulsion, but of deliberate choice; not transiently but perseveringly; carried out by principle and maxim, and seeking to involve others in its own perdition. It leads, not to penitence, but to pride only and every new disorder. It is a lapse, not once merely, but every day; and martyrdom itself, which may be a passport to heaven in the other case, is shown here of all worth and power.

Some confessors had been carried away by the false movement. But let not this create wonder or doubt. The merit of confession formed no security against the snares of the Devil afterwards, no immunity from temptation and sin. Of this, there were painful proofs in the disorderly and wicked conduct of some of the confessors under other forms. Solomon lost the grace he once had. A confessor may do so too. His confession is only the beginning of glory, not its end. It is an engagement to be true to Christ, which can continue to be meritorious only so far as it is sacredly kept, by a faithful observance of his institutions and precepts. Without this, what can it be but a source of greater guilt and heavier condemnation? The glory of the confessors as a body is not overthrown by such cases of defection; as the fall of Judas, the traitor, shook not the credit of the Apostolic college to which he had once belonged.

The conclusion is an earnest and powerful exhortation, to maintain unity, as the fundamental law of Christ’s house, the

necessary condition of charity and faith, in the observance of which only it is possible to be rightly prepared for the coming of the Lord. This is the posture of those, who wait for this glorious advent, with their loins girded and their lamps burning. "Let our light shine by good works, that it may lead us out of the darkness of this world into the light of eternal day. Let us anxiously and preparedly expect the sudden coming of our Lord, that when he shall knock, our waking faith may receive from him the reward of vigilance. If these commandments are kept, if these admonitions and precepts are observed, we cannot be overwhelmed asleep by the false power of the Devil, we shall reign as watchful servants in the kingdom of Christ."

Such is the general scope and sense of this remarkable tract of Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church*. The same doctrine runs through all his works. We are made to feel its presence, indirectly at least and by implication, if not in a more open way, in almost everything he wrote. It was not with him an accidental opinion merely. As already remarked, it lay at the foundation of his whole theology. It entered into the inmost core and heart of his faith. He holds it not as a theory, resting on argument or speculation. His genius and taste lay not that way. The whole is with him an object of faith, a fact flowing with overwhelming force out of the constitution of Christianity itself, and clearly established by the voice of inspiration in the Holy Scriptures. He deals with it always in this universal view. It is for him the necessary form of the mystery of salvation. It conditions all his sense of what is comprehended in the glorious gospel of the Blessed God.

Cyprian's theology, like that of all the Fathers, is cast in the type or mould of the Apostles' Creed. All turns on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, exhibited in the way of real revelation through the mystery of the Incarnation. This stupendous *fact* carries in it the redemption of the world, by bringing into it a new and higher order of life, in the bosom of which it is made possible for the fallen posterity of Adam to surmount the law of sin and death, to which they are subject without hope in their natural state. The Word made Flesh is the ground and foundation of the whole constitution; which is thus throughout of a strictly supernatural character, and in such form is not to be apprehended without faith. By descending into the Virgin, we are told in the tract *De Idolorum Vanitate* §. 11, God so united himself with man, as to form a real mediation through the Son, by which men are conducted to the Father. "Christ consented to become what man was, in order that man also might have

power to be what Christ is." The Gospel thus is not a doctrine or theory merely of salvation; it is a revelation of *grace* and *truth* in living form, an actual economy of redemption brought to pass through the mystery of the Incarnation, and to be found nowhere else. As such an objective reality exhibited in this concrete way, men can have part in it only by surrendering themselves truly to its power. This they do by *faith* and *love*, which simply express the proper counterpart in such case of the truth and grace presented on the other side. These accordingly are the ground factors of Christianity and the Church. It is easy to see how such surrendry to the power of such a supernatural fact, if this itself be no dream and faith and love no delusion or hypocritical pretence, must draw after it with necessary consequence the character of unity in the Christian life, and how too such unity becomes a necessary mark and test of the reality of this life in its proper form. How shall the truth and grace of Christ, of whose fulness we are all required to receive and in whom only we can be complete, be ever otherwise than in full harmony with themselves? Or how shall faith and love stand in real, and not simply notional and visionary, communication with this new order of life, and not be the source of a corresponding unity? To receive here, is actually to pass over into the form of that which is received; and the receptivity must be ruled and filled absolutely by its object, in both forms; so as to be a full bowing of faith to the authority of it as truth in one direction, and a full submission of love to its claims as grace in another. To be out of unity thus, in either view, is to be out of Christ. Schism is as regards love, precisely what heresy is as regards faith; an act, which implies an inward falling away from what may be termed the fundamental law of Christianity, the law of implicit surrendry to the living fact of the Gospel, as the true end and proper whole of man's life. The unity of the Church comes then from its constitution. It does not depend on the thought and will of men. It is not such a union as results from the voluntary agreement of a number of persons, who happen to be of the same mind. The foundation of it is in God, in the mystery of the Trinity, in the fact of the Incarnation, back of all piety among men in its individual forms. Such individual piety comes only through the acknowledgment and appropriation of the truth and grace, which go before it in the mystery of godliness under its general and universal form. This is the true idea of the Holy Catholic Church, as an article of faith. It is a real constitution, of supernatural origin and force, which as such carries in itself its own

laws, its own attributes, its own prerogatives and powers, and refuses to come into subjection in any way to human opinion or human plan.

Of such constitution in its very nature, the Church is at the same time, according to Cyprian, not an idea simply or principle committed to the mind of the world and left to actualize itself afterwards in its own way, but a most positive creation like the world of nature, starting directly from God, and asserting its supernatural presence and power, from the beginning onward to the end of time, under a most real outward and historical form. As the Word, in becoming Flesh, was no Gnostic vision merely, but a real manifestation of God in human form, such as might be looked upon with the eyes and felt by the hands, so the new order of life which followed could not be without a corresponding organization, it was supposed, in and through which it should make itself felt among men through all ages. Such organization, to meet the demands of the case, must be not of men but of God; for only in such view could it truly contain and put forth the heavenly powers of which it is to be the outward body and form. The Church, accordingly, is of Divine institution outwardly as well as inwardly; fully as much so, according to this view, as the economy of the Old Testament. It is a system of law and precept starting from Christ, to which the blessings of the gospel are bound by heavenly ordination, and which men are required to acknowledge and obey as the necessary condition and only real medium of grace. Christ laid the foundations of the Church first in his own person, by his life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glorification; and then in the mission of his Apostles, who after proper training were solemnly appointed to carry forward his work, and received power from on high at the same time for doing so with effect. The Apostolic commission was no doctrine merely, but a most real creation or constitution under a living outward form; which moreover, it was expressly declared, was to be of force to the end of time. As the living Father hath sent me, the Founder of Christianity says, even so send I you; the one mission is just the continuation of the other, and carries with it the same authority and force; he that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me. All power, he tells them after his resurrection, is given unto me in heaven and in earth: Go ye *therefore*—because it is so, and ye are to go in my name—and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;

teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. This was the guarantee, that their mission and work would not be in vain. He breathed on them, we are told in another place, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. This commission was followed soon after by a corresponding inauguration. Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, the Saviour said before his ascension; tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endowed with power from on high. The appointment, the solemn commission, the commandments and instructions which went along with it, were not enough; there must be a real communication of supernatural power answerable to all this, by which the Ministry thus divinely constituted should become the channel, not in word only but in very deed and fact, of the new order of life which was now made complete for the world. This took place, as we all know, on the day of Pentecost; when the Spirit which could not be given previously, "because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii: 39), descended in full measure on the waiting and expecting disciples, as with the sound of a mighty rushing wind and in flames of fire, proclaiming by these sensible symbols that the promise was fulfilled, and immediately confirming by the gift of tongues the all sufficient nature of the grace it brought along with it for its own ends. Such, according to the evangelical narrative, was the origin and first constitution of the Christian Church. It is hard indeed to conceive of a polity more outwardly real, more objectively historical, having less the show of a mere doctrine, or carrying more completely the form of a living concrete fact.

So it was always regarded by Cyprian. He saw in the Church a real constitution, carrying in itself by Divine appointment actual supernatural and heavenly powers, of one order with the grace and truth brought to light by the mystery of godliness in Christ, and not to be found in the world under any other form. He took in earnest the conception of Head and Body, so frequently applied by St. Paul to this mystical relation; looking upon the Church as in truth the fulness in this way of him that filleth all in all, and honoring it as the organ through which he is pleased to make his saving power known and felt among men. The whole economy, body and head, was for him a single grand fact, a new and extraordinary order of life with its own prerogatives, functions and powers, the origin of which was altogether above nature and only in God.

The notion of a simply human organization of the Church, a constitution founded on the will of men, and carrying with it no higher powers than such as might be taken to flow from the people for whose spiritual use it was established, was as far removed as possible from his thinking. The principle of Independency, the theory of Congregationalism, the idea of everything like ecclesiastical democracy or republicanism, lay heaven wide apart from the whole posture and habit of his mind. To found the kingdom of God in such style on the voice and will of men, like a confraternity of Free Masons, he would have considered the very perfection of rationalism and unbelief. To be the Divine reality it claims to be, it must come from above and not from below, its powers must proceed immediately from God and not from the people. Even the Presbyterian scheme was not enough for Cyprian, in this view. That scheme as it *once* stood, (not adulterated as we find it now for the most part by the Puritan idea of church democracy,) acknowledges a Ministry of divine origin, but not in the form of a hierarchy, with one order of office and power rising by divine right above another. It contends for the parity of the clergy, makes bishops to be of secondary growth and mere human arrangement, (*prini inter pares*, as the word goes,) with no rights or powers save such as have come to them by concession or usurpation from the body over which they are placed. We sometimes hear the *republicanism* of this system also paraded, on such account, as one of its special titles to confidence and praise. That precisely would have formed its condemnation in the eyes of Cyprian. He had no conception of an upward movement of powers here, whether by clerical or popular vote. The church pyramid, in his view, started from its own summit, not from its base. The only true order of its constitution, and so of the derivation of its functions and powers, was: Christ first, the head of the universal organism; then the Apostolate continued by regular succession in the Episcopate; then the Ministry in its lower orders; and finally the body of the people held in connection with the head through the medium of this hierarchy, which is thus Divinely ordained to be the one only channel of all descending communications of life and grace.

This excludes of course, not merely such rank rationalism as resolves the life of the Church into the will of mere natural humanity, in the style of such religious reformers as Kossuth, Kinkel, Mazzini, (who generously propose to settle by the world's vote what Christianity shall be, after they have cleared the world of what it pretends to be now); but it shuts out also;

what Cyprian would have regarded as only a more refined and plausible species of the same unhappy rationalism, the imagination, namely, that the supernatural economy of which Christ is the fountain and head comes to its actualization in some way or other first in the mass of believers, who then *as such* democratically organize the ecclesiastical polity in its higher forms—just as natural men are supposed to have the power of creating, in their own sphere, the corresponding polity of the State. This is the conception of the so called *universal priesthood* of Christians, which plays so important a part in certain schemes of theology. Cyprian knew nothing of it, in any such republican sense. All believers are indeed priests in his view, as they are prophets also and kings; but their prerogative in this respect forms in no sense the foundation or ground, from which the powers and rights of the Holy Ministry may be said to grow. The only order here is downwards, not upwards. The universal priesthood is not first under Christ, but last; it is not the basis of the proper hierarchy, but that in which this comes to its end. The bishops hold from Christ; the presbyters and deacons from the bishops; and *through* this constitution all priestly, prophetic, and kingly character, in any real form, descends to the people. The entire constitution in this view is held to be *jure divino* in the fullest sense, not a matter in any way of human policy or convention. The idea of a hierarchy of man's device, whether this be considered wise or foolish, upsets the whole sense of the institution; for then it must be regarded as having all its force from below, and not from above; and its pretensions to anything higher, if it make them, become then in truth both an usurpation and a sham. Cyprian had no thought of any such mournful pedantry as that. He was not a man to rest quietly in shadows and shams. He cared for no mock episcopacy, with mock powers, cocktail pretensions ending in mere sound and show. The entire force of the system lay, to his mind, in its *jure divino* character, in its supernatural authority, in its being a constitution which started from God, and carried in itself corresponding heavenly powers, under a real and not simply imaginary form, for the accomplishment of its own heavenly and supernatural ends.

In all this, there was no want of proper regard to the people. Their rights and privileges were fully recognized. They had a voice especially in the election of their chief pastors. Cyprian himself was in some sense forced to become a bishop, by the popular will. This however was at most only a nomination to office; the actual investiture came from another quarter. All

real ecclesiastical jurisdiction and power, it was well understood on all sides, came not from below but from above, not from the people nor through the people, but by the hands of the Ministry with strict apostolical succession from Christ.

With such real constitution, the Church is not to be regarded of course as springing from the Bible; as though God had given the revelation of Christianity only in such written form, and left it for men then to turn this text or copy into life as they best could. It is perfectly certain from the New Testament itself, that the great mystery of godliness was never committed in the beginning to any such helpless and wretchedly mechanical plan. It is as plain as the written text itself can make it, that the world was *not* thrown upon the Bible in the first place, to construct from it as to its own sapient mind might seem best the scheme of Christianity, to manufacture out of it the glorious fact of the Church in a form to suit its own judgment and taste. There is not a word in the Bible, which goes legitimately to support this monstrously rationalistic supposition; while the *Apostolical Commission* must ever be enough of itself for all truly believing and thoughtful minds, to cover it with confusion and shame. The Church is itself, according to the New Testament, a living constitution, not made of men after a supposed Divine prescription merely, but Divinely made, not an inspired doctrine simply but a supernatural reality and fact, built in a real outward way on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. So it is viewed always by Cyprian. No man could well make more account than he did of the Holy Scriptures. They were his continual study. He appeals to them as law and testimony on every occasion. His three books entitled *Testimonia*, addressed to Quirinus, are made up almost entirely of passages quoted from the Bible. But with all this, it never enters into his mind to make the Bible a fountain and rule of truth for the world as such, for the world *on the outside of the Church*, for the world in no union with the *living tradition of Christianity*, as a Divine fact handed down from the Apostles. On the contrary, he is of one mind here precisely with Tertullian and Irenaeus. The Bible is for him of authority only in the bosom of the Church. The New Testament grew out of this living revelation, supposes everywhere its supernatural presence, belongs to it exclusively in the way of rightful property, and can never be used safely except in believing submission to its authority and communion with its life. Heretics and schismatics, in this view, have no right to appeal to the Bible. It has to do with

an actual economy, in which they have no part, a world of positive realities which is for them as though it did not exist. What indeed can be more absurd, than to dream of separating the letter of Christianity from its own proper life? It is as though the blind should undertake to correct by the science of optics, the familiar experience of those who see; or as if some bold and pertinacious somnambulist might pretend to set aside by logic, the verities of the waking world. Natural philosophy and logic as related to the system of nature are of force only in the bosom of this system, as an actual felt and acknowledged fact; and just so we may say, that the proper use of the Bible, as a rule of faith and practice, in its relation to the sphere of grace, is necessarily conditioned also by the authority of this higher order of things, or in other words by the living tradition of the Church, felt and acknowledged to be a fact in the same way.

Starting in this way from the Apostolical commission, and bearing throughout the character of an independent supernatural constitution, the entire structure of the Church rests, for Cyprian, on the *Episcopate*. This he holds to be the strict succession of the Apostolate. The powers of the Church are carried forward by this channel alone. Here is the foundation of its unity and strength. Every bishop, in his proper sphere, is a representative and organ of the Divine Head, from which the whole body derives its life. He is the regular bond of union and communion thus, between Christ and the congregation over which he presides. To despise his authority, is the very spirit of heresy and schism. "Our Lord in the Gospel," Cyprian writes (*Ep. 66, ad Pupianum*), "when many of his disciples left him, turning to the twelve said: 'Will ye also go away?' Peter answered him: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art the Son of the Living God.' Peter speaks there, on whom the church was to be built, teaching and showing in the name of the church, that however the rebellious and proud multitude of those who are unwilling to obey may depart, still the church does not turn away from Christ, and the church for him is the people in union with the priest, the flock adhering to its own pastor. Whence you ought to know, that the bishop is in the church and the church in the bishop, and that if any one be not with the bishop he is not in the church; and that those flatter themselves in vain, who not having peace with the priests of God pretend to communicate with certain persons in a surreptitious way, since the church, which is catholic and one, is not rent nor divided, but is in truth firmly joined and soldered to-

gather by the close mutual conjunction of the priests." In another place (Ep. 33, addressed to the Lapsed,) he says: "Our Lord, whose precepts and directions we are bound to obey, settling the honor of the bishop and the plan of his church, in the Gospel, thus addresses Peter: 'I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock, &c.' Matth. xvi: 18, 19. From hence flows down through the change of times and successions the ordination of bishops and constitution of the church, that the church may rest upon the bishops, and every act of the church be governed by these rulers. Such then being the order established by Divine law, I marvel, that some of you have audaciously presumed to write to me *as in the name of the church*, when the church is constituted by the bishop and clergy with all who are in good standing" The same general thought we meet with in Cyprian's writings over and over again. The divine right of Episcopacy is perpetually asserted, or taken for granted, as a fact lying at the very foundation of the universal scheme and constitution of the Christian Church.

To be the foundation of unity for the Church however, in this broad view, the Episcopate must be in unity with itself. No bishop can be said to be the organ and representative of Christ, in virtue of what he is simply in his single and separate capacity. To be such an organ, he must be comprehended in the whole organism of which Christ is the head. His office can never be of force, except in union and harmony with the entire office of which it is only a part. "Episcopatus unus est," we are told, "cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur" (De Unit. §. 5). Again it is: "Episcopatus unus, episcoporum multorum concordia numerositate diffusus" (Ep. 55, *ad Antonianum*); so that Novatian's attempt to bring in new bishops, to get up a hierarchy in certain places in opposition to the one already established, was perfectly absurd as well as profane. Even if he had been himself regularly consecrated, (which was not the case,) he could have no power to start another ministry in any such irregular style. "No one can have either the power or the honor of the episcopate, who retains neither the unity of the episcopate nor its peace." So, writing to Stephen of Rome (Ep. 68,) in reference to a certain Marcian, one of the bishops of Gaul, who was reported to have given in his adhesion to Novatian "forsaking the unity of the catholic church and the harmonious consent of its priesthood," Cyprian urges him to address letters to the other bishops of that province requiring them to take measures for the proper care of his flock in some other way. "For the numerous body of the priests is joined togeth-

er by the cement of mutual concord and chain of unity on this account, that if any one of our colleges shall attempt to create heresy and so to lacerate and waste the flock of Christ, the rest may bring help and as good and compassionate pastors gather the Lord's sheep into the flock. — For although we are many pastors, we feed nevertheless one flock, and are bound to look after all the sheep which Christ has purchased by his blood and passion." The solidarity of the Episcopate then is no division properly speaking of its powers; it does not weaken the force of the office in single cases, but only makes it full and complete; every bishop in his sphere is armed with the jurisdiction of the universal college, and is to be regarded in fact as an overseer of the whole church; just as the Apostolate was not the sum simply of the several trusts belonging to its membership, but belonged to each Apostle in full as his own commission. In both cases, however, the trust in such form was strictly collegiate. It could have no force, save in the solidarity of the Divine constitution, out of which it sprang, and from which alone also it derived all its significance and truth.

Cyprian has a very high sense, in this view, of the prerogatives and rights of each bishop in his own see; and he is often appealed to by modern Episcopalians, accordingly, as a powerful witness for what is sometimes called the independency of the common episcopal office, over against the pretensions of the see of Rome. No one indeed could well go farther than he does, in magnifying this office, as one directly representing among men the supreme authority of Christ. In this respect, all bishops are for him of like dignity and co-ordinate power. He writes to Stephen, bishop of Rome, in the tone of a colleague possessing the same rank with himself; and he did not hesitate even, when the question arose concerning the baptism of heretics, to take ground openly against him, as Paul withstood Peter to the face, charging him with error and overbearing presumption.

All this, it must be allowed, is not answerable exactly to the order of the Papal system, as we find it established in later times. The relation between the see of Rome and the other sees would appear to have been more free and independent altogether, than it came to be afterwards. The supremacy of the Pope was not in Cyprian's mind, or at least is not in his writings, as it rules for instance in our day the thinking of Wiseman or Hughes. But we must not make more of this point than it will properly bear. The idea of a strict independency in the jurisdiction of bishops, we have already seen to be most perfectly at war with

Cyprian's scheme. The Episcopate is one first, and then manifold; the unity must go before the distribution; the independence can hold only in union with the solid corporation out of which it grows. Sundered from this, it becomes at once schism and death. It can never generate or uphold a true and valid church life, in the form of Novatianism say, or Anglicanism. The first condition of all real episcopal jurisdiction and power, is that it shall be truly of collegiate force, the exercise of the office under its universal or catholic view. But this now, in the nature of the case, implies and demands an actual outward order or system of some kind, by which the conception of such wholeness shall be properly secured and made good. The idea here, if it is not to end in an empty abstraction, must take the form of fact. As the church at large must be held together by a real bond in the episcopate, so this again must be bound like an orb or sphere to some single centre, that shall be the principle or beginning of its unity in a like actual view. So much is at once implied by the solidarity of the office. 'There can be no such consolidation even in the way of outward league merely, and still less in the way of inward living organism, without a real primacy at some point to support and represent the whole.' Such an actual primacy and real centre of unity for the universal Episcopal college, there can be no reasonable question or doubt, Cyprian habitually saw and acknowledged in the pontificate of the Bishop of Rome; which was regarded as flowing, with such right of priority, from the place originally assigned to Peter by our Blessed Lord himself in the joint commission of the Apostles.

This is plainly intimated, in what we have quoted from the tract *De Unitate Ecclesiae*. It lies in the universal argument of this tract; since the real unity it asserts necessarily requires the supposition of an actual centre somewhere, and all goes at once to fix it at Rome and nowhere else. We may say the same of Cyprian's doctrine of the Church, wherever it comes into view. It runs always with inevitable logic to this conclusion. Without it, the doctrine is a mere solecism. But what

'The Anglican Episcopate finds its centre to some extent in the See of Canterbury, but still more effectually in the Royal Supremacy. The King or Queen, as the case may be, is with most terrible reality, and not simply by fiction of law, Head of the Established Church. Our American Episcopacy has not yet got a fixed centre of any sort. It is Congregational. But this is a suicidal anomaly; which the hierarchy must overcome in some way hereafter, if it is to be of any lasting account.

is thus implied is also amply enough expressed, not only in this tract, but also in other places. So in his letter to the people of his charge on the faction of Felicissimus, which we have before quoted, we hear him say, that "there is one church, and one cathedra founded by the Lord's voice upon the rock,"¹ and no room on account of the one altar and one priesthood for the establishment of any other. So, Ep. 70, to Januarius and others: "There is one baptism, and one Holy Ghost, and one church founded by Christ the Lord on Peter with origin and plan of unity (*super Petrum origine unitatis et ratione fundata*)."² Again, Ep. 73, to Jubaian: "It is plain where and by whom the remission of sins can be given, which is granted in baptism. For to Peter first, on whom he built his church and from whom he instituted and shows the origin of unity, our Lord gave that power that what he loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven. And after his resurrection, he addresses also the Apostles, saying, As the Father hath sent me, &c." In the same epistle afterwards we are told, that the church "is one, and has been founded by the Lord's voice upon one, who also received his keys." Peter is the centre of the Apostolate, and so the real beginning of the actual organization of the Church; but this was no temporary order only; the Episcopate finds a corresponding centre in the *Cathedra Petri* at Rome, as the necessary starting point of unity in the same way. Thus, writing to Cornelius, bishop of Rome, of the attempt made by Felicissimus and his party to get up a new bishop at Carthage, (Ep. 59,) Cyprian says; "They dare to make voyage, with letters from profane schismatics to the see of Peter and the chief church, whence the sacerdotal unity is derived, &c." Again in another letter to the same Cornelius (Ep. 48), he says expressly that the Roman church was to be acknowledged as "the root and mother (*radix et matrix*) of the catholic church," and that communion with its bishop was the test of abiding in catholic unity and charity.³

The point is too plain to admit of any doubt. But this is not all. It is no less certain, that the view of Cyprian here was no peculiarity properly speaking of his own; it belonged to the

¹ Or as a different and better reading gives it, *super Petrum*, "on Peter."

² "Nos enim singulis navigantibus, ne cum scandalo ullo navigarent, rationem reddentes, scimus, nos hortatos eos esse, ut *ecclesie catholice radicem et matrem* agnoscerent ac tenerent."—"Placuit, ut per episcopos . . . per omnes omnino in provincia ista positos literae fierent, sicuti fiunt, ut te universe collegae nostri et communicationem tuam, *id est catholicę ecclesie unitatem pariter et caritatem* probarent firmiter ac tenerent."

age. He may have led the way in asserting the full sense of the church system at some points; but the elements of the system were all previously at hand in the actual constitution of the church as it then stood. The very title *cathedra Petri*, in such familiar use, is one proof of this. Neander thinks it may have been first used in a merely ideal sense for the episcopate as a whole; but the supposition rests on no historical evidence whatever, and is in its own nature highly improbable. It grew, no doubt, from the notion of an actual continuation of Peter's primacy in what was regarded from the beginning as Peter's see. The celebrated letter of the Oriental bishop Firmilian against Stephen, translated and preserved in Cyprian though sometimes quoted to show the contrary, goes in fact fully to establish this affirmation. His whole argument turns on the unity of the church; which Stephen is charged with forgetting and disregarding, because he acknowledged the baptism of heretics to be valid. The blindness of this must be felt, he thinks, when it is remembered that in founding his church the Saviour gave the power of remitting sins first to Peter alone, and afterwards to the Apostles only; which accordingly was confined to the church established by these legates, "and the bishops who have succeeded them by vicarious ordination." All who set up any other altar or priesthood on the outside of this "one catholic church of apostolical succession," are involved in the guilt of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and must look for like punishment. "And in this view," he goes on to say, "I feel indignant at the plain, palpable folly of Stephen, that he, who thus glories in the place of his episcopate and claims to hold the succession of Peter, on whom the foundations of the church are laid, should bring in many other rocks and establish many new church structures, by maintaining with his authority that baptism his place there." This is not certainly to dispute the primacy of Stephen, or to charge him with usurping for his see as the *cathedra Petri* a dignity which did not belong to it in fact. It is just the reverse. All goes to show, that Stephen was known to claim such central relation to the universal episcopal college, by right of succession from Peter, and that this claim was sustained by the general consent and tradition of the church. What offends Firmilian, and brings him to speak disrespectfully of the bishop of Rome, is that he should turn the weight of his high station in favor of the baptism of heretics; and pains are taken to make it appear, that by so doing he virtually stultified his own prerogative, by doing away with the very foundation on which it was taken to rest. For if there could be a valid bap-

tism on the outside of that one catholic church which was built upon Peter, it would follow that there might be other churches also on other foundations; and what must become then of the famous primacy of Rome? The argument involves an unbecoming sneer; but it is by no means simply *ad hominem*; the whole force of it turns on the assumption, that the theory of the catholic church which gave rise to Stephen's pretensions was in itself true, and known and acknowledged to be so on all sides.

The Church then, of which such vast account is made by Cyprian, was no idea merely of theory, but a well defined objective and historical reality, a most real corporation of which the whole world had knowledge and might take account. It was the so called *Catholic Church*, which held its rights by direct succession from the Apostles, (a succession about which there could be *then* certainly no possible mistake) held together throughout the world by a common Apostolical Episcopate, and having its acknowledged centre through this in the See of Peter at Rome. It is to this most real corporation, and not to any abstraction of vague and indeterminate bounds, that the law of unity, which he takes to be so essential to the idea of Christianity, is applied by him in all its uncompromising force. This precisely is the *Noah's Ark*, on the outside of which there is no salvation. Here, in this empirical catholic church, thus openly defined and circumscribed as a body in harmony with itself, and here only, were to be sought and found all the Divine properties and supernatural powers, which belong of necessity to the true idea of the church as an object of faith. This is the glorious constitution founded on Peter. This is that illustrious *Mother*, the Immaculate Spouse of the Incarnate Word, of whom it is said: "Illius foetu nascimur, illius lacte nutrimur, spiritu ejus animamur;" and to whom is at once referred the awfully solemn and most pregnantly significant old oracle: "*Habere jam non potest Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem.*" Here reside all grace and truth. The mystery of godliness is there in both forms, to be submitted to by men with corresponding self-surrendry of charity and faith. Not to own it, is to fall into heresy or schism; which involve each other, in the end, and either of which must be regarded as fatal to that whole posture of "obedience to the faith," in which St. Paul makes the idea of Christianity so comprehensively to stand. To be separated from the church, is to be separated from the promises, to have no part nor lot in the privileges or hopes of the gospel. No one in such state can be a true friend or sincere follower of Christ. "*Alienus est, profanus est, hostis est.*" Schism is always dam-

nable and damning. It strikes at the root of the CHRISTIAN FACT; for that Fact is not confined to the mystery of salvation in Him who is the Head of the Church, but must be of perennial force in the Body also over which he thus presides, as the proper continuation of this same mystery "always even unto the end of the world." Schism destroys the very substance of grace. "Quidquid a matrice discesserit seorsum vivere et spirare non poterit, substantiam salutis amittit." It is a sin, for which not even the merit of martyrdom itself can make any satisfaction. It is a perpetual apostasy, which makes all acts of religion, while it lasts, absolutely worthless and vain; for it is in truth the full verification, we are told, of what St. Paul says *1 Cor. xiii*: 1-3: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels—have all gifts—give my body to be burned, and have not CHARITY; I am as sounding brass; it profiteth me nothing."

The maxim, *No salvation out of the Church* (*extra ecclesiam salus nulla*), amounts of course at the same time to an assertion, that full salvation is to be found in the Church, that what is needed for this object is here really and truly at hand under a supernatural form. In Cyprian's scheme, accordingly, all that is embraced in this proposition holds good of the empirical catholic communion, in which only the church had for his faith the character of objective reality. Separation from this real constitution brought with it guilt and perdition, just because truth and grace were actually comprehended in it, under the most real view, for the purposes of salvation. In the bosom of the Church, answerably to the figure of Noah's ark, was wasted, as it were, on the face of the deep and high above the surrounding desolation of nature, the mysterious presence of a new and higher order of life. The whole constitution was above nature, a sacrament, a Divine mystery; which however was really in the world under an outward and historical form, and carried in itself really and truly the supernatural powers that were needed for the accomplishment of its own more than natural ends. These powers start in Christ, and can never be absolutely divorced from his person. But from him as the Head, they flow over into his Body, *τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν ᾧ πληροῦσθε*. The channel of this communication is the Apostolic Ministry; whose original commission remains always in force, and must be taken as a full guaranty, to the end of time, of the actual sufficiency of the office for such high purpose and design. No bishop, no church, is with Cyprian, as we have seen, a fixed and settled rule. Not to hear and obey the bishop, is to despise

the authority of Christ. Not to be in communion with the bishop, is to be out of communion with the fountain of all grace and life. The bishop is the source of power to the common priesthood; by the intervention of which then, the word is made to take effect, the sacraments have force, and all spiritual blessings are conveyed in a real and not simply imaginary way to the people.

This whole view comes out most amply and explicitly, in the controversy which was raised concerning the baptism of heretics. With our present Protestant habit of thought, that old controversy altogether is apt to seem of no great interest or account. With the doctrine of the church which prevailed in the third century, however, it was in fact of the very highest significance; and all that is needed to make it of interest still, is that we should be able to reproduce in our minds in some living way the idea of this doctrine as now explained. The controversy throws light on the doctrine, and shows at the same time how extensively and profoundly it had entered into the mind of the universal early church. Could there be any valid baptism among heretics? This was the question. A large and respectable party took the ground, that no such baptism had any force, and that heretics coming into the church must be baptized over again, as being in truth before without the sacrament altogether. Cyprian went zealously for this view. Stephen, Bishop of Rome, took the other side, governed as he said by previous tradition; and in the end, as is well known, this Roman decision prevailed, and became the acknowledged law of the Catholic Church. With the history of the controversy, and its proper merits, we are not now concerned. Its bearing on the subject before us is all we care about at present. This is at once full and plain. Cyprian argues at large against the validity of baptism among heretics, from the familiar view that all grace in the church is bound to its catholic organization, and must flow through the channel of the regular episcopate and priesthood. This is the basis of his whole opposition. The thought comes up from all sides, and in all forms. Baptism, he assumes, involves of necessity the present action of the Holy Ghost, which is to be found only in the Church of true Apostolical succession; and to this, it then follows, the sacrament must be necessarily confined.

“It is absurd,” he writes Ep. 74, *ad Pompeium*, “that whereas the second nativity is spiritual, by which we are born in Christ through the laver of regeneration, they should say one may be spiritually born among heretics, where they deny that the

Spirit is. For water alone cannot purge sins and sanctify a man, if it have not also the Holy Spirit. Whence, either they must concede that the Holy Spirit is there where they say baptism is, or else there is no baptism either where the Holy Spirit is not, because baptism cannot be without the Spirit. But what a thing is it to assert and contend, that they may be the sons of God who are not born in the church. For that it is baptism by which the old man dies and the new is born, the blessed Apostle shows and proves when he says: 'He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration' (Tit. iii: 5). But if regeneration be by washing, that is by baptism, how can heresy generate sons to God through Christ, not being the spouse of Christ? For it is the Church alone, which by conjunction and union with Christ generates children spiritually, according to the word of the same Apostle: 'Christ hath loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it with the washing of water' (Eph. v: 25, 26). If this therefore be his beloved spouse, which is alone sanctified by him and alone cleansed by his washing, it is manifest that heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ and cannot be either sanctified or cleansed by his washing, is not able to generate children to God.—Again: "It has been handed down to us, that there is one God, one Christ, one hop: and one faith, one church and one baptism established in this one church; from which unity if any one depart, he must be found necessarily with heretics, by defending whose cause against the church he makes war upon the sacrament of divine tradition. This sacrament of unity is represented to us in the Song of songs: 'A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, &c.' (iv: 12). But if the church be an inclosed garden and sealed fountain, how can he enter into the same garden or drink of its fountain, who is not in the church? So Peter himself also, in demonstration of unity, has taught us that we cannot be saved except by the one baptism only of one church. In the ark of Noah, he says, 'a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water; the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us' (1 Pet. iii: 20, 21). How brief and spiritual a commend, to exhibit the sacrament of unity! For as in that baptism of the world, by which its old iniquity was purged away, whosoever was not in the ark of Noah could not be saved through water, so now also no one can be saved by baptism who has not been baptized in the church, which our Lord has founded in unity after the sacrament of one ark."—Again in the epistle *ad Jubaianum*, after the passage before quoted, showing that the power of remitting sins in baptism flows from the commission of

our Lord, given first to Peter, "super quem aedificavit ecclesiam et unde unitatis originem instituit et ostendit." and then after his resurrection to the Apostles generally, it is added: "We see from this, that only those who are set over the church by evangelical law and the Lord's ordination can baptize and give remission of sins, while nothing can be bound or loosed on the outside, where there is no one who has power either to bind or loose." Then follow the familiar examples of Korah and his company, and of Aaron's sons offering strange fire on the altar. Afterwards the church is compared to the garden of Eden; its members to trees, of which any that fail to bring forth good fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire. "These trees she waters with four rivers, that is, the four Gospels, by which she bestows with heavenly inundation the grace of salutary baptism. Can he irrigate from the fountains of the church, who is not within the church? Shall he be able to impart to any one the salubrious and saving draughts of paradise, who disobedient, and of himself condemned and banished from the fountains of paradise, pines away and dies with the drought of eternal thirst?" This shows strikingly the relation, in which the use of the Scriptures, as well as of the means of grace generally, is regarded by Cyprian as standing to the Divine constitution of the Church. These streams of life are *not* for private judgment, and independent use, on the outside of this sacred inclosure; they belong to the garden, whose walls are obedience and faith, and only *there* can they serve truly their heavenly purpose. "The Lord cries," our author proceeds, "that if any one thirsts he should come and drink of the rivers of living water that flow from his person. Whither shall he come who thus thirsts? To heretics, where the fountain and river of living water is wholly wanting, or to the church, which is one, and has been by the Lord's voice founded upon one, who received also his keys. One she is, who holds and possesses all the power of her Spouse and Lord. In her we preside, for her honor and unity we contend, her grace as well as glory with faithful devotion we maintain. We by Divine permission water the thirsting people of God, we keep the bounds of the living fountains." —Elsewhere we are told, that no supposed soundness of doctrine, on the part of those who are out of the church, can be taken here as of any account; it is simple alienation from the church itself, that makes all ministrations on the outside of it to be of no force or worth whatever. "Should any one object, (Ep. 69, *ad Magnum*), that Novatian holds the same law which the catholic church holds, baptizes with the same symbol

that we also use, acknowledges the same God the Father, the same Christ the Son, the same Holy Ghost, and that so he may usurp the power of baptizing because he seems not to differ from us in the interrogation of baptism—let such an objector know first, that there is *not* one law of the symbol common to us with heretics, nor the same interrogation. For when they say: ‘Dost thou believe the remission of sins and the life everlasting by the holy church?’ they lie in the interrogation, since they have no church. Then again they confess themselves with their own voice, that remission of sins cannot be given except through the holy church, and not having this they show that with them no sins can be forgiven.”

These passages may serve as specimens. Many pages might be filled with quotations in the same general strain. No salvation out of the church; full possibility of salvation in the church, because *there*, and *there only*, the supernatural grace required for this end was, by Divine constitution, exhibited and made present for the obedient use of faith in an actual and real way. This is everywhere Cyprian’s doctrine, and it is referred to everywhere as the reigning doctrine of the age. That it was so in fact, there is no room for even the shadow of a doubt. Firmilian’s long letter, before mentioned, presents in full the same view as common to the Oriental church with the Latin; for it may be said to echo every sentiment on the subject, that is to be found in Cyprian. “All power and grace,” he says in particular, “are established in the church, where the elders preside, who also possess the power of baptizing and laying on hands and ordaining. For as it is not lawful for a heretic to ordain, so neither also to baptize, nor to perform any sacred and spiritual function, as being estranged from the source of sanctity (*quando alienus sit a spiritali et deifica sanctitate*). All which we some time since affirmed, in council at Iconium in Phrygia, assembled from Galatia and Cilicia and other neighboring regions, as something to be firmly held and asserted against heretics—a doubt having been raised in regard to it by some persons.” It was a public decision thus, made by a large portion of the Church in Asia Minor. “The power of remitting sins,” he says, after quoting the commission first to Peter and then to the Apostles as a body, “was given thus to the Apostles, and to the churches founded by them as Christ’s legates and the bishops who have succeeded them by vicarious ordination. When now enemies of the one catholic church in which we are, and adversaries of us who have succeeded the Apostles, arrogate to themselves illegal priesthoods in opposition to us, and set up profane altars, what

else are they than Korah and Dathan and Abiram, sacrilegious with like crime, and doomed to like punishment, along with all who favor their cause—as *their* friends and partizans also shared their miserable fate!” The same general theory is presented to us again, in the broadest and strongest terms, by the *Apostolical Constitutions*, a work which is generally supposed to have taken its present form about the middle of the third century.

The idea of a Church which is thus the organ and medium of grace in a real way, whose office it is, not simply to proclaim salvation, but with supernatural power also to bring it actually to pass, involves at once a corresponding view of the Holy Sacraments. They must be, not signs and pictures only, but seals and vehicles of the grace they represent. What *Baptism* in particular was to the faith of Cyprian in this view, our quotations have already plainly enough shown. These however are a mere fraction of the testimony to the same purport, which it would be easy to furnish from his writings. Baptism is for him everywhere the sacrament of regeneration, the mystery of the new birth, the real ground and foundation of spiritual life. It never seems so much as to enter his mind, that there can be any question made of this in the Church. To doubt it, would be, in his system, to doubt the supernatural realness of Christianity itself. This assumes throughout, that nature in man is fallen, without strength and under a curse; that what is born of the flesh is flesh; and that provision is made for his redemption by a new and higher order of life, which no less real than nature itself, but of another form altogether, starting from Christ and sustained by the Holy Ghost, is of force to set aside the old curse, and to “condemn sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” The true conception of the new birth thus, is not the stimulation of mere nature in any way as such, whether by human or supposed divine influence, but the actual introduction of the natural man into this higher order of life, the *supernatural* sphere of the Spirit, bringing along with it the real possibility of salvation. This supposes at once a Divine act; which was regarded always by the early Church, accordingly, as having place in the mystery of Baptism. He that believeth and is baptized, the Apostolical commission runs, shall be saved. Faith is submission to the new order of life supernaturally offered in the Church; and its proper complement is the heavenly reality of this grace itself, meeting it as God’s act and seal in the laver of regeneration. Baptism in such view is of course, as the old creeds have it, “for the remission of sins.”

It is a real translation from the sphere of nature, the fallen life of Adam, over into the sphere of truth and grace, the full possibility of righteousness and eternal life, which is revealed in Christ.

How real all this was to Cyprian is shown, most impressively and affectingly, by the account he gives of his own conversion, in the passage we have already quoted on this subject from his tract *De Gratia Dei*. He had felt the darkness and misery of nature; but despaired of help; till he was brought finally to bow to the hope set before him by the Church, and to offer himself, as a catechumen nearly fifty years old, for admission into its mystic inclosure. He had found it hard to believe, "that a man might be born again, and that being animated into a new life, through the laver of saving water, he might lay aside what he had been before, and though retaining the same bodily frame put on an entirely new mind and spirit." But this great mystery became real to him, through the actual experiment of submitting as a little child to the authority of Christianity in its own proper form. He believed, and was baptized; and his baptism was to his faith a real response of grace on the part of heaven, bringing with it the complete power of salvation. "When by means of the regenerating wave, (*undæ genitalis auxilio*), the stain of my former life was washed away, and the serene and pure light of heaven descended into my sin cleansed bosom; as soon as the second birth, by the Spirit derived from on high had transformed me into a new man, (*postquam coelitus spiritu hausto in novum me hominem natiuitas secunda reparavi*); presently in a wonderful way doubts began to be settled, perplexities to solve themselves, and obscurities to grow plain; there arose strength for what before seemed difficult, and power to do what was before held to be impossible; making it clear, that the first natural life in the service of sin was of the earth, and that what the Holy Ghost had now breathed into me was of God."

How it may be with others, we know not; but on our own mind, we confess, such a testimony, on such a subject, coming from such a man, falls with uncommonly powerful and solemn impression. In what startling contrast it stands, with the reigning so-called *evangelical* tone and style of the present day! Which is to be regarded as right, and which wrong, the voice of the ancient church in Cyprian, or this unsacramental modern voice? We pretend not here to answer the question. It is one however of most profound significance and interest, which the thoughtful may well be asked to lay seriously to heart. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

That Cyprian's voice here was in fact that of the universal ancient church, is beyond all doubt. The controversy concerning the baptism of heretics proceeds throughout, as we have already seen, on the supposition, that the sacrament is of real force for the remission of sin, and carries in it objectively the sense and power of the new birth. The question also in regard to the forgiveness of moral sin after baptism, which was a source likewise of no small difficulty to the early church, turned always, as we may at once see, on the same theory. For our modern Puritan habit of thought, there is no meaning in either of these old Catholic questions. Both of them are felt to be of antiquated interest, of no real difficulty, and of only small account. All that is needed however to make us feel their ancient significance, is some due apprehension of what baptism was held to be in the period to which they belong. In the age of Cyprian, no one questioned its power to take away sin and to produce regeneration, who did not mean at the same time to question the whole fact of Christianity. It was a settled maxim: "*Omnia delicta in baptismo deponi*" (*Test. III. §. 65*). It was a thing under tood and acknowledged on every side, that all "*qui ad divinum munus et patrimonium baptismi sanctificatione perveniunt,*" all who are made Christians by the sanctification of baptism, "*hominem illic veterem gratia lavacri salutaris exponunt, et innocenti Spiritu sancto a seruibz contagionis antiquæ iterata natiuitate purgantur:*" put off there the old man through the grace of the salutary laver, and being renewed by the Holy Ghost are cleansed from the defilement of the old contagion by a second birth.

Infant Baptism, in this view, comes to its proper significance. Infants need the grace which the sacrament brings as much as others, and no age is to be shut out from the benefit of a salvation which God has provided for all; "*Deus, ut personam non accipit, sic nec ætatem.*" If even the greatest sinners of full age are not to be refused the grace of baptism for the remission of sins, "how much less should it be refused to an infant, which being recently born has not sinned at all, except as by natural generation from Adam it has brought along with it in its first birth the contagion of the old death, and for which the way to obtaining the remission of sins is so much the more easy, as the sins to be remitted are not its own but those of another." So Cyprian writes, (*Ep. 64, ad Fidum*), in the name of a whole council of African bishops, in resolution of the doubt, not whether infants might be baptized at all, (nobody then, it seems, made any question of *that*,) but whether it was necessary to

defer their baptism till the eighth day, as in the case of circumcision among the Jews. The unanimous judgment is, that no such limitation was to be allowed. "Nulla anima perdenda est," they say; on which account, "universi iudicamus nulli homini nato misericordiam Dei et gratiam denegandam." The first birth makes room and creates occasion immediately for the second.

The same real force Cyprian sees always in the mystery of the *Holy Eucharist*. It is for his faith an actual sacrament, and not merely an outward monument or sign. As regards the mode of the communication it offers with the body and blood of Christ, his language is indeed more general than precise; but it is abundantly clear as to the fact. Writing on the petition in the Lord's Prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread*, (*De Oratione Dominica* §. 18), he says that Christ is the bread of life for his people, "qui corpus ejus contingunt," and so we are to pray that no serious sin may intervene to hinder our daily participation of the heavenly bread of the eucharist, and so of his body or flesh which he declares to be given for the life of the world. "Since then to eat of this bread is to live forever, as it is plain that those live who touch his body and receive the eucharist by right of communication, so on the other hand we must fear and pray lest any one, by being separated from Christ's body through prohibition, remain far from salvation, since he himself warns us, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye shall have no life in you*. And so we pray that our bread, that is Christ, may be given to us daily, that we who abide and live in him may not recede from his sanctification and body." This makes the eucharist at once the communion of the real flesh and blood of the Son of Man, according to the awful mystery of his own words in the sixth chapter of John. Hence the stress we find laid on it, as a real Divine viaticum, a source of strength and fortification against evil, for all great emergencies in the Christian life. A striking exemplification of this we have in the course pursued with regard to excommunicated penitents. Their probation was long and severe. But the danger of death in any case might bring it to an end. They must be strengthened for the last conflict by receiving the Lord's body. So when a new persecution was expected, we find this indulgence made general. "It was proper," Cyprian writes (*Ep. 57. ad Cornelium*), "that the term of penance should be protracted with relief to the infirm at death, whilst there was rest and tranquillity allowing such delay with the tears of mourners and such succor to the dying.

at the last hour. But now peace is needed, not for the infirm, but for the strong, and communication is to be given by us, not to the dying, but to the living; in order that we may not leave unarmed and naked but may fortify with the protection of Christ's body and blood, those whom we excite and exhort to battle; and that, inasmuch as the eucharist is for the purpose of a defence (tutela) to those who receive it, we may arm those whom we wish to be safe against the enemy with the fortification of the Lord's fulness. For how can we teach or urge them to shed *their blood* in the confession of Christ's name, if *his blood* be not allowed them for the struggle? Or how shall we prepare them for the cup of martyrdom, if we do not admit them first to drink the Lord's cup by right of communication in the church?"

Intimately connected with this idea of the mystical presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament of the Supper, as the bread of life, is the persuasion and belief that the service carried in it the force of a sacrifice or offering. In whatever sense the mystery involves communion with Christ's body and blood, it is with his body, we know, as broken, and with his blood as shed for the remission of sins. It is as comprehending in them always the force of the atonement wrought out by his bloody death, that his flesh is thus meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, for the use of a dying world. That atonement, in such view, is no past transaction merely, but a fact "once for all," the power of a perennial indissoluble life, always of force in the Savior's person. In such form, it must of necessity go along with the sacramental exhibition of his "flesh given for the life of the world." It will be there, so far as the exhibition itself is a reality and no dream, not as a remembered doctrine merely but in its own actual virtue and power as a sacrifice always well pleasing unto God. In this way no idea is more familiar to the mind of the ancient church, than that by which the eucharist is regarded as a service analogous with the offerings of the Old Testament. The passage: "In every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a *pure offering*" (Mal. i: 11), is taken to be thus literally fulfilled. We have seen how Cyprian speaks continually of the "altar" and "priesthood" in this relation, and of "offering" or "sacrificing" as terms of one import with the celebration of the Lord's supper, in the known and familiar church phraseology of the time. Memorable especially is the language he employs on the subject, Ep. 63, *ad Cæciliam*. With reference to the typical priesthood of Melchisedek, he says: "Who is more a priest of the Most

High God than our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered sacrifice to his Father, and this the same that Melchisedek offered, that is, bread and wine, namely his own body and blood ;” after which we are told, that Melchisedek offered an anticipatory image of Christ’s sacrifice in the form of bread and wine, “*quam rem perficiens et adimplens Dominus panem et calicem mixtum vino obtulit, et qui est plenitudo veritatis, veritatem prefiguratae imaginis adimplevit ;*” language that looks at once to the eucharist, as the abiding verification of what in the other case was only picture and shadow. Then further on it is said : “*If it is not lawful to alter the least of our Lord’s commandments, how much less may we thus make free with such great and weighty regulations relating to the very mystery itself of the Lord’s passion and our redemption, or change them by human authority into anything else than what God has appointed. For since Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is himself the High Priest of God the Father, and has offered himself first as a sacrifice to the Father, and commanded to do this in remembrance of him ; that priest, it is plain, truly officiates in Christ’s place, who imitates what Christ did ; and he then offers in the church a true and full sacrifice to God the Father, when he sets himself to offer according to what he sees to have been offered by Christ himself*”

The sacrament of the altar in this way becomes the centre of the universal Christian worship. All is a solemn *anastrophē* revolving round the shekinah of this mysterious presence. The unutterably glorious as well as awful REALITY which is here brought into view, is felt to underlie and bind together the whole new order of life to which it belongs ; sending its pulsations, like a mighty heart, over the mystical body, and making it to be in truth the “*communion of saints.*” Hence those “*commemorations*” of the martyrs, which Cyprian made so much account of celebrating in this way. Hence the idea of a certain benefit to the dead, through the power of this sacrifice performed on their account. Cyprian refers in one place to an established ecclesiastical rule, denying such posthumous privilege in a particular case of offence. The case itself is characteristic. It was that of nominating a priest, by last will and testament, to act as a secular trustee or guardian. This was

¹ *Ep. 39. Sacrificia pro eis semper, ut meministis, offerimus, quoties martyrum passionis et dies anniversaria commemoramus: cel. bramus.—* So also *Ep. 1.* before quoted.

regarded as something profane; for which reason, "there must be no offering made for the offender, no sacrifice rendered for his repose; he deserves not to have his name mentioned at the altar of God in the prayer of the priests, who has sought to call off from the altar the priests and ministers of God."^a The same idea of reconciling power was attached to the use of the eucharist, as we have already seen, in the restoration of penitents to the peace of the church. "The conscience must be purged "with sacrifice and under the hand of the priest." All prayers and supplications, as well as alms and good works of every sort, were regarded as acquiring new force when backed and supported by these altar solemnities, as truly as a like real benefit was believed to have been derived in such cases from the more ancient shadowy sacrifices of the Jewish law.

It is in full agreement with this whole doctrine of what the Church is as the real organ and medium of salvation, that Cyprian lays so much stress on the solemnity of penance and absolution in the case of the lapsed, as the necessary condition of their being restored to her communion and peace. There was a terrible reality in such a fall. The excommunication it brought with it was felt as a present actual calamity and curse. In these circumstances it became as much a necessity to be reconciled to the church, as it was to be brought into it at first by baptism. The case was not one for mere private repentance. It was not enough for the offender to think of settling it between his own conscience and God. There must be an application to the church for help; there must be full confession made to the ministers of religion; there must be a long course of contrition, with deprecatory prayers and other signs of grief; and then in the end, after all this, must come the priestly absolution, opening the way to the life giving communion of the Redeemer's body and blood. All this was held to be something vastly more than simple ceremony or show. It was the order which God had been pleased to establish, for the actual recovery

^a *Ep. 1. Quod episcopi, antecessores nostri religiose considerantes et salubriter providentes censuerunt, ne quis frater excedens ad tutelam vel curam clericum nominaret, ac si quis hoc fecisset, non offerretur pro eo, nec sacrificium pro dormitione ejus celebraretur. Neque enim apud altare Dei meretur nominari in sacerdotum prece, qui ab altari sacerdotes et ministros Dei voluit advocare.*" We may see at once, how this goes to show a general unquestioning consent on the part of the church, as it then stood, in the Catholic maxim, that prayer and the offering of the eucharist in behalf of the faithful dead are of true wholesome account for their repose.

of men from the guilt and power of sin. It carried in it the force of a real remedy, for what must prove otherwise a mortal and wholly incurable disease. Cyprian does not call it a sacrament exactly, as we now use the term; but it has for him undoubtedly all the elements of what is called the sacrament of penance in the Roman Church. Absolution in this way was held to be of force on earth for the actual forgiveness of sins in heaven. It must be secured accordingly by all means, before passing out of the world by death. Hence the indulgence granted to penitents *in extremis*; "because there is no exomologesis in hades (apud inferos), and to encourage penance, it must be made sure of its fruit" (*Ep.* 55, *ad Antonianum*). Just as infants are to be baptized (*Ep.* 61), because "quantum in nobis est, si fieri potest, nulla anima perdenda est."

And yet Cyprian taught no magical or merely mechanical salvation. The absolution of the church might be gained by false pretences; it might be granted rashly; but then it would have no force in the other world. Hence the danger of hasty restorations, in the case of the lapsed. Such indulgence tended to destruction, not to salvation. The wound must be thoroughly probed and cleansed, in order that there might be a radical cure. Dying penitents must indeed be absolved; in which case, however, "the Lord will ratify our judgment here only if he find the penitence of the sinner full and right; but should any one have deceived us by a feigned repentance, let God, who is not mocked and who sees the heart, perfect our defective inquisition, and the Lord make good the judgment of his servants." Over against all undue regard to the intercession of the confessors and martyrs, the people are reminded (*De Leprosis*), "that the Lord alone can have mercy upon men, and he only impart forgiveness of sins committed against himself, who has borne our sins and suffered on their account;" and also (*Ep.* 27), "that the martyrs make not the gospel but the gospel makes the martyrs." So the sacraments used unworthily, we are continually told, produce death only and not life.

Some may find here a contradiction in Cyprian's system. Neander seems to charge him in this way with some want of consistency. But the difficulty comes from a false apprehension of what is to be understood by objective grace, or the *opus operatum* rightly so called, in the ministrations of the church. To say that certain conditions are required on the part of the subject to make such grace of effect, and that the failure of these may turn it into a nullity or something worse, by no means implies that the same grace is without real power for the accom-

plishment of its own ends where conditional room is made for its action in this way. In the sphere of nature, causation and condition come before as under such necessary connection on all sides; and no good reason can be assigned, why a similar realistic order should not be allowed to have place also in the supernatural economy of the Holy Catholic Church.

Neander however sees a falling away from the original genius of the Gospel, in this whole Cyprianic doctrine of the outward church. The mind of the age, he thinks, had taken a wrong direction, and Cyprian became a leading organ in helping it forward in what he is pleased to denominate "a relapse to the Old Testament standpoint," which had been at first happily left behind. Bursting the shell of Judaism, we are told, Christianity had in the beginning, with the help of St. Paul especially, triumphed over the Jewish tendency and asserted successfully the proper freedom and spirituality of its own nature. "In the Gentile congregations the new creation was fairly revealed. But the surmoured Jewish view forced its way in again from another side. Humanity could not yet maintain itself on this height of a purely spiritual religion; for the mass who were to be educated first into the apprehension of pure Christianity, weaned first from Paganism, the Jewish standpoint was more near; out of Christianity accordingly, after it had reached its independence, a standpoint was again evolved analogous with that of the Old Testament, a new externalization of the kingdom of God, a new discipline of law, that should serve afterwards for the training of barbarous nations, a new guardianship for the mind of humanity till it should attain to full grown manhood in Christ." This rehabilitation, once commenced, proved to be of most fruitful progress, our historian tells us; and so we have a ready rule at once in hand, if we trust his guidance, for disposing of all the pontifical, churchly, and sacramental ideas, that come before us so thickly in the religious life of the third century. They are to be set to the account simply of this old most unfortunate, though it would seem highly necessary, *Rückfall*, on the part of Spiritual Pauline Christianity, *auf den alt-testamentlichen Standpunkt.*¹

This is characteristic. The great German master of church history has a theory of his own with regard to the true nature of Christianity, which he reads of course without difficulty into the New Testament, and particularly into the writings of St.

¹ K. G. B. I. S. 330, f. (2te Aufl.)

Paul. It is eminently spiritualistic, much of one sort in truth with the mysticism of the Quakers, and not far removed at times from the dry rationalism of the Baptists. But the church life of the third century is plainly enough constructed throughout, on an altogether different scheme. So far as this variation goes, Neander now must necessarily find it by his own rule out of right form and shape; and so the next thing is a hypothetical speculation, to account smoothly for the somewhat remarkable fact. This, it will be observed, rests on no historical basis whatever. It is taken from the cloud land simply of his own brain, like a vast deal more that we meet with in the landscape painting of the same distinguished writer. All comes to this only, that Neander's preconception here is contradicted by the actual state of things in the time of Cyprian, and *therefore* the time of Cyprian must be a departure, in the direction of this difference, from the original sense and spirit of the Gospel. It never seems to enter the mind of the great man, that the false reckoning might be on his own side possibly, and not with the age which is thus conveniently put in the wrong. Why should the judgment of Neander after all be taken as at once conclusive in such a case, against the judgment of Cyprian and the whole early church? The matter speaks for itself, we are told; this Cyprianic system carries in it evidently a strong analogy with the religious polity of the Old Testament. Suppose it does. Was not this polity then of Divine constitution? Was it not a real theocracy? Was it not ordered and framed with reference to the Gospel? And why then should that be taken at once for a false construction of Christianity, by which it is made to appear a true completion of Judaism, carrying out the sense of its shadows in the form of corresponding glorious realities? But the genius of the new religion, we are told again, is spiritual and free. That is most true. Must it follow from this, however, that it is Gnostic, a thing of mere subjective experience and dreamy speculation? What if the very idea of spirituality and freedom here be, not the unbound action simply of man's mind in the sphere of nature, but its introduction by faith into the sphere of truth and grace, as a higher order of life brought home to it in an objective way by the power of the Holy Ghost? Cyprian saw just this mystery in the Church. It was to him a real revelation of the grace it proclaimed. Its charter was taken to be, not fiction, but fact. It was a true supernatural polity, starting from the skies but permanently settled upon the earth. Under its forms went the active presence of what they were employed to exhibit and represent, the very substance of

the things which had been presented before only in the way of shadow and type. And who will say, that such a real revelation of the Spirit, if a simple actuality and no dream, would not be something sufficiently spiritual, or that the power of acknowledging it by faith might not be after all the best kind of freedom, and not a necessary falling back merely upon the Jewish standpoint for the education of unripe nations? We question much if Paul ever thought of asserting any other spirituality and freedom than this, in the name of the Gospel. The issue before us regards then just the truth of this ancient conception of the mystery of the Church. Neander's criticism assumes that the conception was visionary and false; that no such Divine polity, as Cyprian fondly dreamed, with heavenly functions and supernatural powers, was ever really at hand in its historical constitution. Grant that, and the rest follows easily enough. But other consequences also come painfully into view, for a thoughtful mind. Are we prepared for any such ominous concession? If not, what becomes of this whole judgment; Cyprian may be right after all, we repeat, and Neander wrong.

The church question as forced upon us by the writings of Cyprian, it is plain to see, is something a good deal deeper and more solemn than the controversy between Anglican Episcopacy and the rest of the Protestant world. We do not deny at all the importance of this controversy in its proper place; and for Episcopalianism as a system, it is hardly necessary for us to say, we entertain no small amount of veneration and regard. We do not deny too that Cyprian, who has been called the Ignatius of the West, bears ample testimony, like his predecessor of this name in the East, to the existence of Episcopacy, as an institution held to be of Apostolical origin, in the early church. But it is most plain at the same time, that we are not carried by it as a separate interest, in any way, to the last ground of the system to which it originally belonged. Mere episcopacy was not enough by any means, in the judgment of these ancient times, to uphold a true church succession; it must be the office in unity with itself under a catholic form; the office as representing the undivided and indivisible Apostolical commission, on which as a rock centering in Peter the Church was to be built to the end of time. Along with this go corresponding apprehensions of the attributes and powers of the Church, which our modern Protestant Episcopacy either rejects altogether, or turns into affectation and sham. The two systems are of altogether different constitution; and it is perfectly idle to think of establishing an identity between them, on the ground simply of their having

in common the office of bishops. What charm can there be in an episcopate, that this rather than any other fragment of Peter's ship as it originally sailed towards heaven, should be taken to carry away with it now, *as a fragment*, the power of a true church life? No. Anglicanism is not Cyprianic Christianity. The question of Episcopacy is in truth of only secondary and very subordinate account. The grand issue always, is that which lies between Protestantism and Romanism. This we are bound to look solemnly in the face.

J. W. N.

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CYPRIAN.

Third Article:

CYPRIAN'S doctrine of the CHURCH we have found to be fundamental to his whole theology and religious life. In proportion as this is the case, it becomes important to understand well in what relation it stood to the faith and life of the Christian world generally in the first ages. To do justice to the man, as well as to judge properly of the doctrine, we must inquire how far this was peculiar to himself and to the time when he lived, or is to be regarded as having come down by legitimate inheritance and tradition from a still older period, as part of the faith which was supposed to have been originally delivered to the saints. To feel the full significance of such an inquiry, we need only to bring to mind distinctly the leading features of the Cyprianic doctrine of the church, and to observe at the same time the broad contrast and contradiction in which they may be seen at once to stand, with the thinking of a large portion of the modern so called evangelical world on the same subject.

What is most necessary to be kept in view in the Cyprianic

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doctrine, is not this or that feature of it taken in a separate abstract light, the point of episcopacy for instance or the point of baptismal regeneration, but the universal idea rather, the conception of the church as a whole, out of which all such particular features flow, and in the presence and power of which alone they can be said to have any real force. The Campbellite Baptists, in their style, run away with the notion of an objective power of some sort belonging to the sacrament of baptism; and then claim to be what the church was in the beginning, by laying all stress on the ordinance in such view, as was done in primitive times. Their theory is, that the sacrament, as a Divine appointment, may be torn away from the living constitution to which it originally appertained, without losing its force, and so that the use of it by any class of men professing to obey the Gospel may be taken as sufficiently valid at all times for its original purposes and ends. The pedantry is much the same, it seems to us, when Episcopalians run away in similar style with mere episcopacy, or with the notion of a liturgy; and on the ground of such distinction simply pretend to be in union here with what the Church was in the first ages, with a certain affectation of exclusive completeness over against all other Protestant bodies which happen not to be possessed of the same advantage. What charm is there, we ask again as we have asked before, in a ministry of bishops, that it should be considered sufficient to bear away with it, wherever found, the original powers and prerogatives of the church, without regard to the whole constitution of the church as it stood in the beginning? Or what talismanic virtue for any such end shall be supposed to reside in the use of a liturgy, kept up in the same isolated way? We grant at once the argument for episcopacy drawn from the practice of the church in the third century; as we allow also the full force of the argument in the same form for the use of liturgies. Nothing short of the most bull-necked obstinacy, can refuse to see and admit what is so perfectly clear. In these points, separately viewed, Episcopalians undoubtedly come nearer to the Christianity of Cyprian's time, than the bodies they affect to exclude and condemn. We may say as much however of the Gospel according to Alexander Campbell. It approaches the primitive scheme of Christianity here and there, more closely than most of the sects which agree in denouncing it as rationalistic and false. And yet rightly no such advantage in this case, is allowed to be of any account; just because the resemblances rested upon show themselves to be not living but dead, are not rooted in the presence of the same life, but owe their

appearance altogether to outward artificial imitation. Mechanical similitude in this way is something widely different from organical communion. It is quite possible to conceive of an identity of life under great variations of outward form, while it may be wanting entirely where the outward show of variation is the least. No figure in wax can stand truly for the life it represents. No parts brought outwardly together can constitute a living whole. So in the case before us, we say, Episcopalians are quite too fast, when from the single fact of their agreement with the primitive church in the matter of episcopacy, and one or two other like separate points, they at once jump to the conclusion that they alone have preserved under a Protestant form the true succession of what Christianity was in the beginning, and that all other Protestant bodies are without authority and right. This, we are fully persuaded, is to bring the whole cause of Protestantism into peril. The question between those who receive and those who reject episcopacy on Protestant ground is a mere circumstance, over against the broad deep issue by which in the nature of the case both are sundered from the Church of Rome; and as related to this, it is a mere circumstance in the problem of making out for Protestantism a real historical derivation from the Christianity of the first ages. For one who is brought to understand the actual state of the case, it is easy enough to see that if Episcopal Protestantism can be successfully justified in its measure of variation from the old order of the church, Protestantism without episcopacy also may be justified in the like general predicament; the difference in the degree of variation in the two cases being after all nearly as nothing, in comparison with what is of common amount. The grand question regards the right of Protestantism in its whole view. Has it been possible at all to maintain a true succession of the ancient church life, under this form? Let us feel only that an intelligent affirmative answer can be returned to this question, and we shall feel at the same time that the possibility cannot be held reasonably to the narrow limits of the Anglican scheme. To be of any real force that far, it must be of force still farther. By seeking to fix it within any such purely arbitrary and mechanical bounds, we in fact destroy it altogether.

The Cyprianic doctrine of the church made vast account indeed of episcopacy; but not of episcopacy in any and every view. The significance of the whole institution was conditioned by the universal scheme to which it belonged. It was felt to be of fundamental account in its organic relation to this scheme; while out of such connection it was held to be of no importance

whatever. What we need then to understand and keep in view, as we have said, is the conception or idea as a whole, which the doctrine before us exhibits as the true theory of the church. With regard to this, there is no room for any serious mistake. We may call in question, if we please, the truth of the theory. We may say that Cyprian and his age were in error. But the fact of the theory itself is too plain to be made the subject of any dispute, so far at least as its general form is concerned.

The theory is, that the Church was literally a Divine constitution, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; that it grew out of the mystery of the Incarnation, and had its perpetual charter in the living power of the Apostolical Commission; that it bore thus the character of a true historical organization in the bosom of the world's present life; that under such outwardly visible and historical form, it carried in itself at the same time real heavenly and supernatural powers, actual virtue and force above nature for its own more than earthly and natural ends; that the exercise of these powers was through functions and organs ordained of God, and centering in the ministry of the episcopate, which was derived by clear succession from the office of the Apostles, and in the character of a solid corporation formed at once the basis and the bond of unity for the universal organism; and that there was no room consequently to think of salvation, except in the bosom of this most real system and through its instrumental mediation and help. It is easy to see, in such view, that all faith must start as an act of submission on the part of men to the authority with which they were supposed to be thus objectively confronted. Where a real constitution of this sort was allowed to be at hand, it is plain that no acknowledgment of Christianity could be regarded as true and valid, that fell short of an actual bowing of the soul to its claims in this form. Only to question these claims, to make them a matter for debate, was to refuse for the time the objective reality to which by Divine right they were taken to appertain. To talk of faith on the outside of the church was at once a contradiction in terms. No faith could be honest and sound, which was not ready to submit to the mystery which here challenged its submission. To believe, was of necessity thus to be also *baptized*, or in other words to come under the power in this real way of that real supernatural system, into the bosom of which baptism was considered always to be the solemn act of introduction, the sacrament of a new birth. And then we need be at no loss to understand the vast stress which was laid on, the sin of schism.

With this theory of the church, it becomes at once an offence in full parallel with heresy, simply the obverse side in truth of that sin. It rests necessarily on the assumption, that there is no Holy Catholic Church, in the sense now under consideration—no real objective constitution, embodying in itself by Divine ordination the mystery of the Christian salvation under a supernatural form, and carrying in itself in such view the full guaranty of its proper infallible sufficiency for its own ends—and that Christianity therefore is by no means bound to any such order and method of revelation in the world, but may be carried into effect and made of force for the purposes of salvation, by the mere judgment and will of men, in some other form altogether. But who may not see, that for the doctrine before us every assumption of this sort, however tacitly and silently made, must be at once the negation of the whole fact of Christianity, the opposite exactly of all true faith? It strikes at the root of the whole mystery, which faith is required here to embrace; and in the bosom of which only as a Divine reality it can have any power to save. Schism then, in the very nature of the case, must be wholesale heresy also and death. It is the most fundamental of all forms of insurrection against the authority of the Gospel. It aims at its universal subversion.

Such, we say, is the Cyprianic doctrine of the church. Our modern Protestant scheme, it is painfully evident, is altogether different. The difference does not turn by any means on the question of episcopacy, or on any such point as purgatory, transubstantiation, or the worship of the saints. It lies deeper than all this. The true last ground of it opens upon us in the doctrine of the church. Protestantism, it is plain, involves an entire departure from the theory or scheme of Cyprian here, not simply as it may reject this or that form of ecclesiastical polity, this or that ecclesiastical usage, but as it refuses to see in the church the actual presence of the Christian salvation under the same outwardly real and objective view. Let no one take offence at this, as though it were a reproach cast upon Protestantism. We have to do with it at present only as a simple fact of history. As such, we are bound to see it, to acknowledge it, to make it the subject of earnest and solemn consideration. It is a fact which needs to be understood and satisfactorily explained, to make good our common boast that Protestantism seeks only the light.

So far as Puritanism is concerned, the difference now mentioned is immediately palpable. It openly repudiates the whole idea of the church, which is exhibited to us by Cyprian, con-

siders it a figment, part indeed of the mystery of iniquity, and something diametrically opposed to the notion of evangelical piety after its own approved style. It never grows tired of harping on the string, that to trust in the church is to have no proper sense of the spirituality of the Gospel, and that a religion of sacraments is puerile and unsafe. It sets Christianity on the outside of the church. This is not of the essence and constitution of the awful mystery in any way, but only an outward accident attached to it, which men may order and shape as they best can, with help of the Bible, to suit their own taste. The church is not the medium of the Christian salvation in any real sense. Faith stands not primarily in any act of submission to it in any such view; but has regard to truth under an altogether different form, and may be complete under a character of most perfect abstraction from its claims, and indeed must be so to make the acknowledgment of these claims afterwards, such as they are, of any actual account. Schism, on this scheme, becomes a very venial offence, is no longer at all intelligible indeed in its ancient sense. The universal sect system is based, of course, on the absolute want of everything like faith in the article of the Holy Catholic Church as it once stood; and the tendency of this system always is towards its own natural end of full Baptistie Independence, which boldly resolves the whole mystery into the notion of an indefinite multitude of churches formed by "social contract," in Jean Jacques Rousseau style, without the remotest imagination of any supernatural right or force whatever.

But the Puritan system in this case is not alone. The difference before us extends also, as already intimated, to Anglican Episcopalianism. Its theory of the church is not that of Cyprian. Whether right or wrong, this last makes no room for the legitimate entrance of any such fact as the Reformation, owns no possibility whatever of a valid hierarchy aside from the unity of the apostolical succession as a solid whole, and asserts with unfaltering precision the presence of supernatural powers objectively at hand in the church and to be found nowhere else.

The difference is with Protestantism as a whole. It is not to be disguised, that this rests upon a doctrine of the church, which is broadly at variance with the doctrine of Cyprian. It becomes then a most interesting and momentous inquiry: *In what relation does this Cyprianic doctrine stand to the life and faith of the Christian world generally in the first ages?* The man who can be indifferent to the practical solemnity of this inquiry, may be very sure that he has himself no real faith in the Divine

realness of Christianity, but is mistaking for it always a hollow phantom only of his own brain.

May it be successfully pretended, in the first place, that Cyprian's doctrine was in any material view peculiar to himself, or that it gained ground and credit in the Christian world mainly through his authority and influence. This is a favorite fancy with some; and it receives a certain measure of countenance even from such a man as Neander. He talks of a gradual rise of hierarchical views by defection from the first simplicity of the Gospel, and sees in the schisms of Felicissimus and Novatian the last unsuccessful efforts of an older more free and spiritual tendency to maintain itself in opposition to this new movement, which was now bearing all in its own wrong direction. Cyprian, it is admitted, was not strictly the author of the movement; he found himself rather borne upon its bosom. But his personality fitted him to become beyond all other men of the time its representative and organ; and the supposition is accordingly, that it owed its triumph in the third century very largely to his active and uncompromising zeal. We have already seen how- ever, to some extent, how little foundation there is for any hypothesis of this sort, in the actual facts of the age. The evidence is most ample and full, that Cyprian's doctrine of the church was, in all its essential features, the doctrine held in his time by the whole Christian world. East and West here were substantially of one and the same mind. Everywhere we find episcopacy, not only established, but acknowledged also to be of Divine right, by direct continuation down from the time of the Apostles. Along with this we find, moreover, on all sides, the idea of the necessary unity of the church, the conception of its supernatural real constitution as an object of faith, in the sense of the Apostles' Creed, the acknowledgment of its essential relation to all true godliness, as being the body of Christ and so the medium through which he carries forward his glorious salvation in the world. Faith was held to stand primarily in this very habit of mind. It was obedience to the claims of the Christian fact, exhibited precisely in this outwardly objective and historical form. Hence baptism was owned to be regeneration; the eucharist was felt to involve the mystery of a real communication with the Saviour's flesh and blood; priestly absolution, following penance and confession, was relied upon as of true force for the remission of sin. Schism was regarded a deadly offence, just because it turned the fact of the Church into a lie, and was in this way a standing act of disobedience to the truth Divinely lodged in her constitution. We may set all

this down, if we see proper, for rank superstition ; but we can have no right to deny, that so at all events the faith of the Christian world stood in the third century, and that it was of one complexion thus with what we have found to be the general church system of Cyprian. Christianity, as it then prevailed, was conditioned absolutely and essentially by this system. The church was made to be the pillar and ground of the universal fact. We see this, not merely in the direct statements which are made on the subject, but in some respects more impressively still in forms of thought and life by which in an indirect way it is continually taken for granted. The doctrine is not met in the form of an outward accident only ; we find it wrought into the whole religious mind of the age ; it is of one growth with this, concrete with its very existence, we might almost say, at every point. It is implied in the controversy concerning the restoration of the lapsed. It lies in all the premises, which entered into the reigning system of church discipline, in the eagerness of penitents to secure the peace of the church, in the forms and rules which governed its mysterious communication. It formed the soul of the question concerning the baptism of heretics. It lay at the foundation of the views which were entertained of the vast merit of martyrdom, of the communion of saints, of the power of the holy sacraments, and we may say indeed of the universal theology of the age. All is constructed on the assumption of the Divine constitution of the Church, under such form of objective reality as we have now in consideration. Cyprian's writings are everywhere an appeal to this fact. He deals in no speculation ; brings in no theory of his own ; but throws himself perpetually on what he holds to be the living sense of Christianity, in the consciousness of that world of faith generally to which the mystery belonged. And this precisely it was, that clothed his writings with power. They came home to the heart and mind of the church, as an echo for the most part of its universally acknowledged faith.

But such a faith thus universally established in the middle of the third century, could not have sprung up like a mushroom in the night, could not have been the growth of a single day or year. It creates of itself at once a mighty presumption, that it had come down by general tradition from the time going before ; and if there be no clear evidence to the contrary, this tradition or handing down must be taken to reach away back to the earliest date of ecclesiastical history. It is asking a great deal too much, in such a case, when we are required to set out with just the opposite presumption ; and are gravely told that, not the fact

of variation here, but the fact of identity, is that which needs to be made out at every upward step of such inquiry by direct overwhelming proof. The only truly logical and philosophical view is that which takes the sameness for granted, till the fact of some actual change is demonstrated. Such a state of things as we meet with, throughout the length and breadth of the Christian world, in the time of Cyprian, whose own life reached back to the beginning of the century, and who stood in such close theological relation with Tertullian, the great connecting link between the third century and the second, most conclusively implies that substantially the same order of thought and life had prevailed also in this earlier period. It is not possible to account satisfactorily for the later known fact on any other hypothesis. And more especially must this be felt to be the case, when it is borne in mind that the authority of such a tradition, in favor of the later system, was always boldly asserted, and that so far as we know the assertion never met with contradiction in any quarter. For even Neander has not pretended to say, that either Novatian or Felicissimus ever appealed to any older doctrine or practice, as being in opposition to the high church pretensions by which they were resisted in their schismatical designs; as they would have done certainly in their own defence, if the thing had been at all possible; and it seems to us therefore to be no better than the most puerile romance, when the great historian chooses to make their factions notwithstanding, especially that of the last, the representation of a hypothetical anti-hierarchical interest in the church, which with the advantage of antiquity and right religious feeling on its side, was no longer able now to maintain its ground. So far as episcopacy was concerned, the tradition of which we now speak carried it back distinctly, as we have before said, to the age of the Apostles. The bishops were held to be their successors in office, the bearers of the same commission which these had received in the beginning to teach all nations; and the line of this succession, in the case of the different sees, was in fact traced up to the very time when they were first established; a task, which was then just as easy as it would be now to carry back the succession of any well established civil magistracy for a like comparatively short period of years.

But we are not left to this form of proof alone, strong as it must be allowed to be in the full posture of the case. We can appeal directly to the voice of the second century itself.

All the writers of this period speak familiarly of the government of the church by bishops, who were regarded as holding

their office by legitimate succession from the Apostles. Tertullian and Irenaeus, in controversy with the heretics of their time, appeal to the course of this succession in the case of certain prominent sees as an open clearly established fact, which could be verified for any inquirer without the least difficulty or trouble. And what right can any one have now, to call in question the credibility of their statement, or to suppose that it was founded on some sort of mistake? It would be just as reasonable to question an appeal, at the present time, to the Gubernatorial succession of Pennsylvania, or Massachusetts, or New-York, since the date of the American Revolution, in proof of the historical identity of the government of either of these notable Commonwealths between the years 1776 and 1852. There was just as little room for uncertainty in the one case as in the other. "Come then," says Tertullian in his celebrated tract on *Prescription*, "you who wish to exercise your curiosity to more advantage in the affair of salvation, go through the apostolic churches, in which the very chairs of the apostles continue aloft in their places, in which their very original letters are recited, sounding forth the voice and representing the countenance of each one. Is Achaia near you? You have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedon, you have Philippi, you have Thessalonica. If you can go to Asia, you have Ephesus. If you are near Italy, you have Rome, whence we also derive our origin. How happy is this church, to which the apostles poured forth their whole doctrine with their blood! where Peter is assimilated to the Lord in his martyrdom: where Paul is crowned with a death like that of John: where John the apostle, after he had been dipped in boiling oil without suffering injury, is banished to the island: let us see what she learned, what she taught, what she professed in her symbol in common with the African churches" (c. 36). The heretics are boldly challenged to produce any similar warrant for their pretensions. "Let them then give us the origin of their churches; let them unfold the series of their bishops, [they too, it seems, knew of no other form of church polity,] coming down from the beginning in succession, so that the first bishop shall appear to have been appointed and preceded by some one of the apostles or apostolic men, without having fallen off subsequently from their communion. For in this way the apostolic churches trace their descent; as the church of Smyrna, for instance, refers to Polycarp constituted by John, and the church of the Romans to Clement ordained by Peter. In like manner also the other churches show those who were appointed to the episcopate by the apostles, and so

made channels of the apostolic seed. Let the heretics feign anything like this" (c. 32). Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, had argued against the false teachers of his time in precisely the same strain. "All who wish to see the truth," he says, "may see in the entire Church the tradition of the apostles, manifested throughout the whole world; and we can enumerate the bishops who have been ordained by the apostles, and their successors down to our time, who taught or knew no such doctrine as they madly dream of. But since it would be very tedious to enumerate in this work the succession of all the churches, by pointing to the tradition of the greatest and most ancient church, known to all, founded and established at Rome by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul, and to her faith announced to men which comes down to us also by the succession of bishops, we confound all those who in any improper manner gather together, either through self-complacency, or vain-glory, or blindness and perverse disposition. For with this church, on account of her more powerful principality, it is necessary that every church, that is the faithful on all sides round, should agree, in which the apostolic tradition has been always preserved by those on all sides" (l. iii. c. 3). No one needs to be informed of the doctrine of Ignatius on the same subject, which itself sets us almost in felt contact with the last of the Apostles. His glorification of episcopacy, as the ground of all stability and the channel of all grace in the church, is an old topic, familiar to all who have bestowed on the Episcopalian controversy of modern times even the least attention. The very fulness and force of his testimony are made, by those who cannot bear it, a reason for disputing its truth. Their own foregone conclusion would be at once upset by its clear distinct voice; and so, to save their conclusion, they set themselves to smother the voice as they best can, by taking it for granted that it is surreptitious and false, something palmed upon the real Ignatius by the pious fraud of a later age. Professor Rothe, in his great work *Die Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche*, has well exposed the arbitrary and absurd character of this wholesale scepticism. The truth is the Episcopal passages of Ignatius, as they may be called, have not as such the slightest air of forgery or interpolation; they fall in naturally and easily with his general train of thought, and stand in close connection with the whole form and habit of his theology. This will be shown presently, when we come to consider more particularly the view he takes of the Church. And just as little room is there to say, that the style of thinking here brought into view does not agree with the age of Ignatius, but

is made to anticipate unnaturally what belongs of right only to the next century. It is easy to see, that it is not identical in any such way with the thinking of this later time, that it bears upon it the marks of an earlier stage of the Christian life, and that it fits well with the ecclesiastical and theological connections of the period to which it is thus referred, so far as we have any knowledge of them from other sources. The Epistles of Ignatius, in their generally accepted form, are just such a light in truth as we need to find our way in ecclesiastical history, with any sort of intelligence, from the first century over into the bosom of the second, from the age of the Apostles onward to the order of things which stares us in the face in the days of Irenaeus and Tertullian. Extinguish this light, refuse to acknowledge what it reveals, violently *theorize* into the place of this another scheme of church facts altogether; and it is not too much to say, that the whole history of the second century must be brought at the same time into inextricable confusion.

We are not concerned particularly at present, however, with the question of Episcopacy. It is plain enough, that the government of the church, in the second century, was in this form; and we think it sufficiently clear also, that the See of Rome was regarded as possessing a central dignity in the system, a sort of actual *principality*, derived from the original primacy of St. Peter. But for our main purpose just now, this is of only secondary account. What we seek, is to determine the view taken of the constitution of the Church itself inwardly considered. This is something back of all questions concerning its outward polity, even though such polity be regarded as Divine, and as essentially blended thus with the very existence of the organization to which it may belong. Waiving then the abstract controversy between Presbytery as such and Prelacy, as well as that between both of these together and the Papacy, we go on to show that the second century throughout held the same view of the general nature and constitution of the Church, which we have already found to underlie the scheme of Cyprian in the third. According to this view, the Church is a supernatural fact in the world under an outward historical form, a real constitution established by extraordinary Divine commission and destined to endure to the end of time, with powers and functions answerable to such high character. It grows at the same time with inward necessity, from the mystery of the Saviour's incarnation, including his resurrection and glorification, according to the order exhibited in the Apostles' Creed. In such view, it is the actual home of the grace and truth here brought to light for

the salvation of dying men, not an external accident simply of Christianity, but a fundamental part of its very constitution, the medium by which it is made actual, the body through which as an organ it works, in the world. Submission to this outwardly real constitution is the true obedience of faith, in which all salvation begins, and baptism as a true objective response to such act of submission is a sacrament of regeneration introducing the subject into the heavenly order of life to which it belongs, and giving him a title to all its privileges, with the full real possibility of eternal salvation. So constituted, the Church is necessarily one, and catholic, and holy, and apostolical, carrying in it the positive whole of Christianity, and absolutely excluding as false and profane all that is external to its own communion. Schism becomes thus at once a mortal sin, of one nature with heresy; to be out of the church is to be cut off from the fountains of salvation in every other form; the bible, the sacraments, the ministry, are streams of life only within this mystical paradise, not on the outside of it; no one can have God for his father, who has not this visible and actual Church for his mother. Such, we say, is the general theory. We are not presenting it now as necessarily right and true. We propose only to show, that it was universally held in the second century.

The truth is, however, it is not easy to know where to begin with the evidence, or how to arrange it, just because it is so abundant and full. So soon as we lay aside all stubborn preconceptions, and endeavor simply to take the age on its own standpoint, we shall find that its whole theological life is constructed on the basis precisely of the scheme now stated, and that its utterances become clear and intelligible only in proportion as we make it a key for their interpretation. To understand Tertullian, Irenaeus, or Ignatius, to be able to read their writings, with any true religious interest or satisfaction, the most indispensable of all conditions is just that we should have power to perceive this fact, and power at the same time to make ourselves at home—hypothetically at least if not by conviction of its truth—in the animus of their faith as exercised in such intensely realistic style.

On the apostolicity of the church, its Divine commission, the realness of its constitution as a fact handed down by unbroken continuous succession from the beginning, Tertullian's tract in particular on the Prescription of Heretics might be given at large. He puts down all heresies, by asserting in favor of the church the right of possession and regular inheritance, over against which every later claim must be held at once for a false

and unlawful usurpation. Christ, he tells us, who knew his own doctrine, chose twelve of his leading disciples to be the teachers of it to the nations. "These apostles, whose name signifies *sent* . . . having obtained the promised power of the Holy Ghost for miracles and speech, and having preached the faith and established churches first in Judea, afterwards went forth into the world at large and proclaimed the same teaching of the same faith to the nations; and then they founded churches in every city from which other churches afterwards borrowed the graft of faith and seed of doctrine, and are continually doing so still in order to become churches. And in this way these also are reckoned apostolical, as being the progeny of apostolical churches. Every kind must of course be referred to its origin. Hence however many churches there may be, that which was first from the apostles is one, of which come all. Thus all are the first and apostolical, whilst all as one show their unity, by communication of peace, and title of brotherhood and mutual pledge of hospitality; rights, which no other reason regulates save one tradition of the same sacrament. From this then we draw the prescription: that if our Lord Jesus Christ sent apostles to preach, no other preachers are to be received than those whom he commissioned, because no other has known the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son has revealed him, and to no others does the Son appear to have made such revelation but to the apostles, whom he sent to preach of course what he revealed. But what they preached, that is, what Christ revealed to them, I will here also lay down the rule, ought not to be proved otherwise than by the same churches, which the apostles themselves founded, by preaching to them with the living voice as they call it, as well as afterwards by their letters. If these things be so, it is clear thence that all doctrine which agrees with those apostolical churches, the matrices and originals of the faith, is to be reckoned as true, exhibiting without doubt what the churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God; but that all other doctrine is to be fore-judged as false, the taste of which is against the truth of the churches, and of the apostles, and of Christ, and of God. It remains then that we show, whether our doctrine, whose rule we have already given, is to be reckoned of apostolical tradition, and from this itself whether all besides must be referred to falsehood. We communicate with the apostolical churches, which is done by no different doctrine: this is the test of truth" (c. 20, 21). This passage brings into view also Tertullian's idea of the necessary unity of the church. However many particular

churches there may be, they are all in truth one by virtue of their common apostolical origin and life. Each one is what it professes to be, in the bosom only of the general organization of which it is thus a part. So in other places, he speaks of such churches as bound together, in distinction from all heretical assemblies, by a common "right of peace and title of brotherhood;" they have "one faith, one God, the same Christ, the same hope, the same sacramental laver." What belongs to one belongs to all; "nostrum est quodcunque nostrorum est." They are all "confederated by sacramental association" (*de societate sacramenti confoederantur*). Unity implies exclusiveness, in other words the restriction of the Christian salvation to the church, as being its real medium and organ. This thought also is familiar to Tertullian. He lays stress on the maternity of church; and makes use of the subsequently classic symbol of Noah's ark, to express its relation to the surrounding world.

On all these points, the still older testimony of Irenaeus is yet more explicit and direct, as well as far more large and full. He too puts down the cause of all heretics by the plea of prescription, original occupancy and prior right on the part of the church, which he views always as a single corporation, in full unity with itself and of unbroken succession from the time of the apostles. The church is universal, "diffused through the whole world to the ends of the earth." As such again it is exclusive, allowing no rivalry with its proper functions under any different form. He sees in it always the definite and only channel of the historical progress of the work of redemption, the only organ of Christ's redeeming activity in the world, the only possessor of the powers of the Christian salvation, that is, in one word, of the Holy Ghost. Here alone are deposited all the treasures of grace; and here accordingly they are, at the same time, in absolutely full measure. In the church only is to be found the complete truth. She is the only possessor and guardian of the true holy scriptures. She is, in the most manifold relations, the mother, and the only mother, of all who belong to Christ. To be out of her bosom, by heresy or schism, is death. In the remarkable passage, *Adv. Haer.* l. iii. c. 24, §. 1, he speaks of the whole economy of the Gospel, as an objective system set forth everywhere under the same form, which we comprehend in our faith, as we receive this to keep from the church, where the Spirit of God always resides, like some rich unguent in a good vessel, "juvenescens et juvenescere faciens ipsum vas in quo est," the source of a perennially new and fresh life. "For this gift of God is bestowed upon the church, like the breath of

life to the natural man, that all the members by partaking of it may be made alive; and in her is arranged the communication of Christ, that is the Holy Ghost, the pledge of incorruption, and the confirmation of our faith, and the scale of ascension to God. For in the church, it is said, God has placed apostles, prophets, teachers, and every other operation of the Spirit; of which all fail to partake, who have not recourse to the church, but cheat themselves of life by wrong judgment and pernicious work. For where the church is, there is also the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the church and all grace; but the Spirit is truth. Wherefore such as fail to partake of him are neither nourished by the breasts of the mother into life, nor participate in the most pure fountain that proceeds from the body of Christ, but dig out for themselves broken cisterns of the earth, and drink water filled with mud, avoiding the faith of the church so as not to be converted, and rejecting the Spirit so as not to be amended." Again, l. v. c. 20. §. 2: "We must then flee the opinions of heretics, and carefully watch against their infestations; but must take refuge in the church, and be educated in her bosom and nourished by the Lord's scriptures. For the church is planted as a paradise or garden in this world. So of every tree of the garden ye shall eat, saith the Spirit of God; that is, eat ye of every scripture of the Lord; but ye shall not eat of knowledge pretending to be above this, nor touch the whole dissent of heretics. For they themselves avow, that they have the knowledge of good and evil, and set up their impious sense above God who made them. They think thus above the measure of thought. Wherefore also the Apostle says, we must not think more highly than we ought to think, but should think soberly; that we may not, by eating of their knowledge, that namely which is thus too high, be thrust out from the paradise of life, into which the Lord brings those who obey his command, 'gathering together in one all things in himself both which are in heaven and which are on earth.' But what is in heaven are spiritual things, what is on earth is the economy of man. Gathering these into one therefore in himself, uniting man to the Spirit and placing the Spirit in man, he has become the head of the Spirit, and gives the Spirit to be the head of man: for through him we see, and have heard and do speak." So again, l. iii. c. 4, §. 1: "It is not necessary to seek from others the truth which it is so easy to receive from the church, since the apostles have most fully committed to her as a rich depository, all that is of the truth, that every one who will may take thence the water of life. For

she is the entrance into life, while all others are thieves and robbers. On which account, we are to shun them, and to regard with diligent affection what is of the church, holding fast the tradition of truth." On the unity of the church, the same writer, as is well known to all who have any knowledge of him, is particularly clear and emphatic. He makes it to consist in identity of doctrine and confession, in community of faith, in the participation of the same Holy Ghost, and expressly also in the power of a common ecclesiastical organization, held together by the general bond of the episcopate in its collective or consolidated view. "Though spread over the whole world to the ends of the earth, the church still holds one faith received from the apostles and their disciples. . . . This proclamation and this creed so received, she sedulously guards, notwithstanding her diffusion throughout the world, as if she occupied but one house; she believes them alike as if she had one soul and the same heart, and harmoniously proclaims and teaches them, and hands them down, as though she were possessed of but a single voice. The dialects, as regards the world, are indeed different; but the force of the tradition is one and the same. . . . For as the sun, God's creature, is through the whole world one and the same, so also the proclamation of the truth shines in every direction, and enlightens all men who are willing to come to the knowledge of the truth" *Adv. Haer. I. 10, § 1, 2.*—"Wherefore it is necessary to hearken to the presbyters in the church, to those who have the succession from the apostles, as we have shown, who along with the succession of the episcopate have received the sure gift of truth according to the good pleasure of the Father; while all others, who stand aside from the reigning succession, and convene together in any place, are to be held in suspicion, either as heretics of bad doctrine, or as proud and self-pleasing schismatics, or finally as hypocrites actuated by the desire of gain and vain glory. All such are fallen from the truth. . . . From all such therefore it is a duty to abstain, but to adhere to those, who both keep the doctrine of the apostles, as we have said before, and along with the order of the eldership exhibit sound speech and a life without offence for the confirmation and reproof of others" *Ib. iv. c. 20, §. 2, 4.* The true Christian gnosis is represented as resting, *iv. c. 33, §. 8,* in two elements, the doctrine of the apostles and the church system derived from them, by episcopal succession, throughout the world. "*Agnitio vera est apostolorum doctrina et antiquus ecclesiae status in universo mundo et character corporis Christi*"

secundum successiones episcoporum, quibus illi eam, quae in uno quoque loco est, ecclesiam tradiderunt."

How deeply seated this whole view of the unity and exclusiveness of the church was in the faith of this early time, is strikingly shown in the usual mode of denouncing heretics and heresies. The two conceptions of heresy and schism are always regarded as flowing more or less together. The error of judgment is always taken to be something, that grows out of an evil heart of disobedience towards an actual teaching authority, which all are required at once to acknowledge and obey. The truth as it is in Christ is never viewed as the sense simply of a written revelation, which men are expected to understand as they best can and so set up as an object of faith. It is primarily a *tradition*, a system handed down from the apostles under a tangible objective form, in the bosom of a constitution which is itself part of the revelation, and which challenges to itself the homage and submission of all in such view, as the indispensable condition of their having any lot or part in the grace which is thus placed within their reach. It is continually taken for granted, that this outward authority is clearly defined and constantly at hand, so as to leave no apology or excuse for falling into heresy in any form. Heretics are necessarily and at once rebels against a regularly constituted authority, which they are bound to obey; and this rebellion, in the circumstances, amounts to a virtual renunciation of the Divine supremacy of Christianity itself. It involves the guilt of schism, rupture with the evangelical tradition, a violent breaking away from the actual living order of the Gospel; and this, of course, can be nothing less in the end than down right infidelity. Such, we say, is the light in which it is regarded and spoken of always by the early fathers. We have seen already how Tertullian and Irenaeus make use of the argument from prescription. They put down all heresies as innovations and invasions upon long established right. The church is in actual possession of the truth; it belongs to her by inheritance; her title deeds reach back plainly to the original charter of Christianity. What right then can any other party have, to come in and dispute her authority? Heresy is, by its very conception, the setting up of mere private will against law and right. It expresses precisely the opposite of the attribute *catholic*, as this enters necessarily into the constitution of the real and true church. It carries in it at once the notion of sect, something cut off from the proper whole of Christianity, the substitution of what is private and subjective, matter of wil-

ful choice, *ἄρσεις*, for what is objective and general.¹ All such particularism, in the sphere of Christianity, must be irreligious, a work of the flesh (Gal. v : 20), a virtual denial and abandonment of the faith. The heretic is to be considered *αὐτοκατάκριτος*, self condemned (Tit. iii : 10, 11); as one who voluntarily disowns and gives up the Christian principle, the fundamental maxim of the obedience of faith. He is condemned, says Tertullian, "in quo sibi elegit," by the matter of his own election. "We have no right," he adds, "to bring in anything of our own will, nor yet to choose what any one else may have brought in of his mere will" (De Praesc. c. 6). That is his notion of religious liberty and private judgment; which he backs by the authority of our Lord's apostles; for even they, he tells us, did not choose what they should teach, but "faithfully delivered to the nations the discipline they had received from Christ." Heresies are in this way always the fruit of the fleshly mind as such, acting in opposition to the mind of the Spirit. "Wo to those," cries Origen, "who despise the church, and trust in the arrogance and swelling words of heretics." There are three habits of the soul, according to Clemens Alexandrinus, ignorance, opinion, knowledge; the first is that of the heathen, the last belongs to the true church, while the character of heresy is found in the second. It puts the merely subjective into the room of the objective, mistakes its own fancies for heavenly realities. Christianity in this form ceased to be a church, and became a school. The attributes belonging to it as the body of Christ, were lost in the narrow conception of mere human party or sect. This is often held up by the early fathers in the way of reproach. Heretics, according to Tertullian, seemed to have no sense at all for unity or catholicity; and just for this reason, they were uncommonly liberal and tolerant, planting themselves on the ground that there should be free inquiry in religion, and liberty also to change opinion as often as it might be found necessary. "They join peace on all sides," says Tertullian, "and make no account of their own differences, whilst they band themselves together to make war upon the one truth." "They can hardly be said to have any schisms; because when they exist, they come not into view. Schism is their unity. They do not even adhere among themselves to their own systems, but

¹ So Athanasius: Πῶθεν λέγεται ἄρσεις; Ἀπο τῶν αἰρημάτων τῶν ἴδιων, καὶ τοῦτο ἐξ ἀκολούθειαν.—So Tertullian: Haereses dictae graeca voce ex interpretatione electionis, qua quis, sive ad instituendas sive ad suscipiendas eas, utitur.

every one modifies by private judgment what he has received, just as this was concocted by private judgment on the part of his teacher. The course the thing takes tells its nature and the manner of its commencement. The Valentinians have as much right as Valentinus, the Marcionites as much as Marcion, to alter the faith at their own pleasure. And so all heresies, when carefully examined, are found to disagree in many things with their authors" (De Praesc. c. 41, 42). They showed a common tendency, according to the Apostolical Constitutions, vi: 10, to treat religious differences as of no material account. They affected to care only for practical piety. They laid great stress on following the Scriptures; and were fond of appealing to such texts as, "Seek, and ye shall find," "Prove all things, &c.," in justification of their restless unsettled habit. "They are forever pretending to *seek*," says Irenaeus, "as persons without sight, but are never able to find." All with them is matter of opinion; whereas the idea of faith requires something fixed and sure, in the way of outward objective tradition, that may be submitted to in such view as the firm ground of the Christian life.

Holding such relation to the Catholic Church, heresies are condemned always in the most unsparing terms. By no possibility can they be either safe or right. It is common to refer them directly to the instigation of the Devil. "Heretics are all apostates from the truth," according to Irenaeus, Adv. haer. iv: 26, §. 2; "and as they offer strange fire on the altar of God, that is strange doctrines, they shall be consumed by fire from heaven, like Nadab and Abihu. As rising up against the truth, and exhorting others against the church, they abide in hell, swallowed up of the opening earth, like the company of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. As dividing and separating the church, they fall into the punishment of Jeroboam." Origen on Rom. xiv: 22, 23, *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God, &c.*, proceeds in the following strain: "Some one may ask, if heretics also, because they act according to what they believe, may be supposed to act from faith. In my view, we should call it their credulity rather than faith. For as false prophets are sometimes improperly called prophets, and false science is said to be science, and false wisdom is termed wisdom; so the credulity of heretics is by a false name designated faith. Whence it is to be considered, whether even if any good work may seem to have place among them, it is not perhaps converted into sin, as it is said of one, *Let his prayer be turned into sin*. There is a chastity at times, which is not of faith, &c., &c. There is thus a false faith of such as concerning faith have made ship-

wreck, there is a false wisdom also of *this world and of the princes of this world*, which shall be destroyed. For as pirates are accustomed to kindle a fire under cover of night, near shallow and rocky parts of the sea, by which they may draw mariners, through hope of reaching a safe haven, into ruinous shipwreck; so also is that light of false wisdom or false faith kindled by the princes of the world and the powers of the air, not that men may escape, but that they may perish, in their voyage on the sea of life and through the waves of this present world." What we need to observe, is the opposition in which heresy is made to stand to the idea of the church, as something individual and private, in the form of opinion or speculation, over against an authority which is assumed to be at hand under the character of a known positive constitution, demanding submission not as a matter of opinion but as an act of faith. The sense of this opposition, and this particular conception of the nature of faith, may be said to enter into the universal thinking of the ancient church, and come into view more or less clearly wherever the subject of heresy is brought in any way under consideration.

What Irenæus relates of Polycarp, and his well known story concerning St. John, falls in exactly with this habit of thought, and must be taken as a true picture here at all events of the mind of the first half of the second century, whatever may be made of the story in question; which itself, however, would seem to be open to no reasonable doubt. Polycarp, we are told, during his visit to Rome in the time of Anicetus, converted many heretics to the church, by simply announcing the truth he had been accustomed to teach in Asia as having been received and delivered to him by the Apostles. "And there are those," Irenæus adds, "who have heard him say, that John, the disciple of the Lord, having entered a bathing house in Ephesus, when he learned that Cerinthus was also within, hastened out of the place before he had washed, saying he feared the building might fall having Cerinthus in it, the enemy of the truth. Polycarp himself also, when Marcion once met him and asked, *Dost thou know us?* replied, *I do know thee as the first born of Satan.* Such fear had the Apostles and their disciples of communicating, even to a word, with any of those who corrupted the truth."

The whole thinking of this early period, we say, is based upon the idea of the church which we have now under consideration. No quotation in regard to particular points can do the subject any sort of justice. There is danger rather of their

serving to enfeeble the argument they should support, by their necessarily partial character and isolated form. Their full proper force can be felt only in the bosom of the living connections, from the midst of which they are taken. To understand the theology or worship of the primitive church, as it comes before us in the most ancient fathers, at almost any point, we must be able to throw our minds into the posture of this idea, and to conceive of the church, hypothetically at least, as a Divine constitution, embodying in itself in a real way the powers of the Christian salvation, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Take, for example, the single point of baptismal regeneration. No thought is more familiar to this early Christianity, than that baptism is of force really and truly for the remission of sins, and to bring men into saving relation with God. It is spoken of continually as an illuminating, cleansing, renovating sacrament. It is made everywhere to be the basis and foundation of the Christian life. All this too, without the least sign of hesitation or embarrassment, in the most ready and matter of course style, as though the point were open to no difficulty and understood all round to be a first principle of the doctrine of Christ. To say, that such phraseology was mere rhetoric, or flourish of high sounding words known to be hollow figure and falsehood at last, is an insult on the ancient church worthy only the pen of Gibbon or the tongue of Voltaire. It simply shows, what earnest was then made with the objective realness of the church. Suppose Christianity a doctrine only, a simply spiritualistic system in the modern Puritan or Methodistic sense, and then indeed all such phraseology becomes more or less unmeaning bombast, the credit of which can be saved only by such violent qualification as must turn the whole of it at last into frigid nonsense. But suppose only the actual presence of righteousness and salvation in the church, as a known outward and historical corporation, the full possibility of redemption brought home *there* to all who can be led to believe and embrace the joyful intelligence, and who may not see that the difficulty of all these startling forms of speech is at once brought comparatively to an end? In proportion precisely as this view can be reproduced in any modern mind in a lively way, it will be found to carry in it all the key that is needed, to solve the otherwise inexplicable enigma of the old ecclesiastical *usus loquendi*, on the subject of holy baptism. And so with regard to other points. All are conditioned by faith in the article of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as being the spouse of God, the mother of saints, the real medium of salvation and fountain of life to a dying world. That is the

universal standpoint of Christian antiquity ; and to understand it, or do it any sort of justice, we must be able, both in mind and heart, to *think* ourselves into the same position. With regard to this whole subject, there is too much reason to apprehend, antiquity might say to most of us, as St. Paul says to the Corinthians : “ Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels ! ”

When we look into the Apostolical Fathers, as they are called, we find plainly enough this same general view of the church, which is carried back thus to the very feet, as it were, of the Blessed Apostles themselves. The question, let it be still kept well in mind, is not immediately concerning episcopacy or any other such single interest separately considered. Much has been done to darken the subject, by taking it in this way. The grand point is the conception of the church, and the view taken of its relations to the Christian salvation. Here, we say, all is plain. There is not the least evidence of any real contradiction, so far as this great subject is concerned, between the commencement and the close of the second century. No violent chasm appears, sundering the period of Polycarp, Ignatius and the Roman Clement, from that of Irenaeus and Tertullian. Few as our notices are of the ecclesiastical life of this older time, they are abundantly sufficient to show that the idea of the church, as we find it afterwards everywhere received, was then in full force, ruling both the theory and the practice of religion on all sides. It was held to be a Divine constitution ; it was regarded as the real home of the Spirit, and the organ and channel thus of all grace. It was in this view one, universal, and alone, the *Catholic Church* in the full sense of this most significant name, the grand and glorious mystery of the Creed. Men must bow to its authority in this form, in order to be saved. To do so, is faith ; not to do so, involves at once the full condemnation of disobedience and unbelief. This clearly is the theory, whether true or false, which underlies all the religious thinking of the Apostolical Fathers.

The church of Smyrna, in its Epistle on the martyrdom of Polycarp, speaks of all the *παροικιαί* of the “ holy catholic church ” in every place ; and tells how Polycarp remembered, in his last prayer, “ the whole catholic church throughout the world. ” Hermas represents the same conception by his symbolical tower, “ which appeared throughout of one color, shining like the brightness of the sun, ” though made up of believers from all nations under heaven, made to be of one mind by their common faith. The whole is as though made of one stone.

Not to be in the structure of the tower, is to be reprobate. The rejected stones lying around it signify "such as have known the truth, but have not continued in it, and are not joined with the saints." The ideas of heresy and schism run into each other, as a common falling away from the historical fact of the church, carrying along with it in some way its own determinate outward form. "It is better," says Clement of Rome, "that you should be found small and have place in the flock of Christ, than that you should be thrust out from his hope in aspiring to be high." This is addressed to those who opposed the presbyters in Corinth, and is a call upon them to submit to the church in its proper ministry; in which view, it is plain, exclusion from the hope of Christ, is made to be just one and the same thing with excommunication from his flock in this outward form.

Ignatius is much more explicit and full. His system is clearly the same with that of Cyprian, though bearing evidently enough also the characteristic marks of an earlier age. All depends, with him, on being in union with the bishop, and so with the church over which he presides, in the name and with the authority of Christ. "Let no one deceive himself," he writes to the Ephesians, c. 5, "if any one be not within the altar, he is destitute of the bread of God." Again *ad Trall.* c. 7: "He that is within the altar is clean, he that is without is not clean; that is, whoever does anything apart from the bishop and the presbytery and the deacon, he is not clean in his conscience." Heretics are stigmatised, *ad Philad.* c. 3, as "evil plants on which Christ bestows no care, because they are not of the Father's planting," and then it follows: "If any one follow a schismatic, he has no inheritance in the kingdom of God." Again, *ad Smyrn.* c. 4, heretics are denounced as "wild beasts in human shape, whom we are not only not to receive, but if possible not even to meet; praying for them only, if perchance they may come to repentance; which indeed is difficult; but still not beyond the power of Jesus Christ, our true life." Afterwards they are described as bringing in other opinions (heterodoxies) against the grace of Jesus Christ, contradicting the mind of God, and making no account of charity; and then it is added, c. 7: "They abstain from the eucharist and prayer, as not acknowledging the eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, given for our sins and raised again through the goodness of the Father. Opposing the gift of God disputatiously they die, whereas to continue in charity would be better for them that they might rise again. It is proper therefore to have nothing to do with such." Here plainly heresy is the setting up of private

opinion against what is at hand for faith in the form of known outward authority, which necessarily involves therefore a breach of charity, the rupture of unity, and so a falling away from the real life and immortality which Christ has lodged in the church exclusively under its whole form, as his own mystical body. *Heterodoxy* thus comes to its full sense. It is not one opinion merely pitted against another *opinion*; but opinion as such, in any and every shape, over against faith, and the fixed outward tradition which this is required to receive and obey.

Three topics mainly make up the argument or theme of the Ignatian Epistles; first, the danger to be apprehended from heretics, particularly such as turned the fact of the incarnation into a Gnostic dream; secondly, the vast importance of maintaining the unity of the church; and finally, the great duty of cleaving firmly to the bishop, at the head of his presbyters and deacons, with absolute subjection to his authority. These heads are not brought forward in separate and distinct form; they are made continually to flow into one another, and are so woven together as to show that they are, in the mind of the writer, inwardly related always in the way of cause and effect. The danger of heresy leads him to press the object of church unity, as the only effectual security against its seductive power; and zeal for this interest of unity again becomes a motive to enforce unconditional obedience to the bishops, as the means specially ordained and required for its preservation. No mistake can be greater than to suppose that the glorification of the episcopate with Ignatius is lodged in without other reason for the mere sake of the office itself, or to promote a simply hierarchical interest. It flows as naturally as possible from the burden of his zeal for the spiritual welfare of the churches to which he wrote; and to understand it fully, we need only to make ourselves familiar with the general conception of Christianity in which his spirit moved and had its home. All faith with him, it is plain, stands primarily in an act of submission to the Christian salvation as an outward fact, starting in the mystery of the incarnation and reaching forward from this under a form of existence altogether peculiar to itself in the church. So apprehended it must be necessarily one and whole, in unity and harmony always with itself. The objective, in the nature of the case, must rule and condition the subjective, the new creation can owe nothing to private judgment or private will. The setting up of any such pretension is at once heresy, *ἀπεισις*, something insurrectionary and rebellious over against the concrete fact of Christianity in its own form. It is to be deprecated and resisted, accordingly,

just on this account. The force of the evil is not merely nor primarily in its error of doctrine theoretically considered; it lies rather in the attempt to substitute opinion in some form for the authority of tradition. This, whether the opinion be in one form or in another, strikes at the very foundation of the Christian mystery, and includes in itself necessarily the idea of division and schism. To hold fast the unity of the church, becomes then the indispensable and only sufficient means of preserving and maintaining the truth. The ground and bond of this unity, Ignatius sees in the episcopate. The bishops represent the authority of Christ, and each of them may be said to gather up in himself as a centre the religious life of the particular church over which he presides. Their general charge is at the same time collegiate, like that of the original Apostles from whom they hold their powers in the way of legitimate succession. To be in unity then with itself, and so with the universal or catholic church, and to be secure thus against the invasions of heresy, each particular congregation must remain in close communion with its own bishop and in absolute submission to his authority. This becomes with Ignatius, in such view, a cardinal and fundamental interest. Both the other interests depend upon it; and for this reason, he lays upon it everywhere the main stress of his exhortation, in a way that is apt to strike much of our modern thinking as extravagant and ridiculously absurd.

It would carry us too far to exemplify what we have now said by quotations. Nor is it necessary. No one who knows anything of Ignatius can need to be informed, what constant stress he lays on submission to the bishop, with his presbyters and deacons, as the very ideal of perfection and prosperity in the condition of every church. His general strain is: "Do nothing without the bishop; keep your flesh as the temple of God; love unity and flee divisions; be ye imitators of Christ, as he is also of the Father. I have done my part, as a man set for unity. Where there is division and wrath, God abides not. To all who repent the Lord will grant forgiveness, if they repent to the unity of God and communication with the bishop" (*ad Philad. c. 7, 8*). "Hold to the bishops, that God may be with you. I go bail for those who are in subjection to the bishop, the presbyters, the deacons; and with them let me have my part in God" (*ad Polyc. c. 6*). Our concern here is not just with Episcopacy. It is with the idea of the church, which must be taken necessarily to lie at the bottom of this view. It is not the episcopate, under any and every view, that carries in it such title to respect. The case supposes a real Divine constitution,

in the bosom of which only the office can be of any heavenly force, and where at the same time it must be in some way the power of a single fact, an office through all its parts in unity with itself, representing thus, not in figure only but in fact, the authority of Jesus Christ in its own proper undivided form. If the Church were a human organization simply, or subject to the limitations and conditions of our human life naturally considered, it would be indeed absurd to talk of its Ministry in this style, and such exaltation of the duty of obedience to it, as the great law of unity and so of security against heresy, might well be considered anything but reasonable and safe. But Ignatius looked upon the case in no such light. All his language implies, that he took the Church to be in truth a supernatural constitution, which as such was to be regarded as of absolute and supreme sufficiency within itself for its own ends. The first duty of all men accordingly is to submit to it in such outwardly objective form. All the ends of righteousness and salvation depend upon acknowledging it, and bowing to it, precisely in this view. Nothing can well be more remote from the independent sectarian notion of religion, that prevails so extensively at the present day. But it falls in with the universal thinking of the church in the first ages.

The Cyprianic doctrine of the church falls back thus, in its fundamental conception, to the earliest Christian time. It was no innovation of the third century upon the faith of the second. However it may have been with the age of the New Testament, it is certain that as soon as we pass beyond that we find ourselves surrounded on all sides with modes of thought, and forms of religious life, which involve at bottom this very scheme as carrying in it the true sense and force of the Christian salvation. So after the third century, its authority continued to be universal. The piety of the fourth and fifth centuries, the religion of such men as Athanasius, Chrysostom, Basil, the Gregories, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, is conditioned from beginning to end by the conception of the church, as the necessary organ and medium of grace. Augustine in particular, over against the heresies of his time, became the great expositor and spokesman of the doctrine for his own and all following ages. With him, it remained no longer an article simply of faith and strong theological feeling. No one indeed had ever a deeper sense of its glorious significance, in this form. It lay at the foundation of his spiritual life. It formed the very hinge of his conversion. His whole Christian experience was pervaded by the power of it at every point. But what came to him in this way as a fact

of faith, he endeavored also to master in the way of knowledge ; and the result was, that the doctrine was brought to assume, through his wonderfully vigorous mind, a form of scientific consistency and completeness which it had not possessed before. This however was all. He added nothing, properly speaking, to the contents of the doctrine itself.

“ Most inwardly was he filled,” according to Professor Rothe, “ with the thought of the *exclusiveness* of the Catholic Church. In the painful struggles of his own religious history, the ideas of Christianity and the Catholic Church had become for his consciousness completely commensurate and identical. The hold, by which he saved himself from the shipwreck of his interior life, and on which he fastened spasmodically with the whole energy of his powerful spirit, was the absolute conviction that the Catholic Church, and this alone, was a historical revelation, in which the Christian spirit could express and actualize itself in a real way, by which it had a living powerful organism for its operation ; the consciousness in short of the specific and exclusive suitability of the Catholic Church to the Christian life as its proper form.¹ He knew, that it was only by the Catholic Church, and in her, he had himself been able to lay hold of Christianity, that only in communion with her he had found Christian life, healing for his deeply unsettled nature and the satisfaction of all its wants. Before his mind the Catholic Church stood, as the compassionate and loving guide of man, otherwise helplessly abandoned to himself and his errors, with miserable desolation ; as the never failing fountain, out of which alone flowed for him the streams of Divine grace and life ; as the real communion of God on earth, in which alone was to be reached a true life of holy love ; and as the sheltering paternal home, where every one might find, according to his individual need, true care for his infirmities and failings, and a right field at the same time for his religious activity. All these impressions flowed together for him in the general thought—so familiar also already to Cyprian—of the *motherhood* of the Catholic Church, into which he poured the whole inwardness and tenderness of

¹ This consciousness is very beautifully and forcibly expressed, particularly in his tract *De moribus Ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum*, L. I. §. 62-64, and in the passage *Contra Epistolam Manichaei*, §. 5, where he gives the grounds of his confidence in the truth and divinity of the Catholic Church. He says here expressly, that the feeling described in the text outweighs with him all single difficulties that might still remain for the understanding.—*Note by Rothe.*

his deep sensibility. This of itself expresses exclusiveness. Christ is to him altogether identical with the Catholic Church, his life with hers; and without communion with her he holds communion with him to be impossible.”¹

The universal authority of the doctrine, finally, meets us under the most impressive form in the ancient symbols or creeds. These differ in some particulars; but never so as to contradict one another; never so as to fall away in the least from the same fundamental scheme or type. This we have in what is known generally as the Apostles' Creed. Here the article of the church forms a special object of faith, which as such must be received of course in the character of a supernatural mystery. All the old church creeds acknowledge it in the same view. There can be no question moreover, but that the sense of the article was in full harmony always with what we have now found to be the doctrine held by the Fathers from the end of the first century on to the beginning of the fifth. We speak not of episcopacy, whether in the Anglican or in the Roman form; what we mean, is the idea of the church as a necessary constituent in the great fact of Christianity, as the Divinely established and exclusively valid form of its actualization in the world, as the real organ and medium of all its power for the salvation of men—an outward historical constitution in this view, which in the nature of the case must be in unity with itself, and to which men must submit by faith, in the spirit of little children, in order to be saved. Nothing less than this, we say, is the sense of the article, as it comes before us in the old creeds. Our modern thinking may give it another sense; may understand it to refer to an abstraction only, the notion of the so called invisible church; but in doing so it ceases to be historical altogether, and will be found in fact to occupy a different standpoint entirely from that of the ancient Christian world, over against the universal sense and spirit of these early creeds. The doctrine, or fact rather, of the holy catholic church, grows here out of the mystery of the incarnation, completing itself in the glorification of the Saviour and the mission of the Holy Ghost; it is a living concrete revelation, founded on the Apostolical commission, and carrying along with it corresponding heavenly powers; it defines itself, with inward necessity, as one, holy, universal, and exclusive, the all sufficient and the only ark of righteousness and salvation. It is a mystery thus for faith.

¹ Die Anf d. christl. Kirche, p. 680, 681.

Nothing can be more perfectly foreign from the genius of the old creeds, as well as from the religious life universally of the ancient church, than the notion of an experimental religion in the modern sectarian sense, which completes itself on the outside of the church, and without its help, and values this as a sort of outward machinery merely that may become auxiliary afterwards to the working of piety in the other view. From no such standpoint, we may depend upon it, is it possible to fathom the deep meaning of the Apostles' Creed. Every such standpoint is, in truth, the direct negation of the faith to which it gives utterance, contradicts in every position the mystery it was framed to assert and affirm. It holds this mystery for a lie, and sets up another notion altogether, the figment of natural reason simply, in its room and place; and so repeating the old symbol, pretends perhaps to be of one mind still, with this form of sound words originally delivered to the saints. Alas, for the delusion. There is however no excuse for any such mistake. The case is plain, for all who care to understand the truth. The doctrine of the Apostles' Creed in regard to the church, is the same that is presented to us by Irenaeus, by Cyprian, by Athanasius, by Augustine. We owe it both to antiquity and to ourselves, to see and acknowledge here the full truth. The voice of ecclesiastical history is clear. The structure of the creed itself, for one who has gained any true insight whatever into its constitution, is abundantly conclusive. What it affirms, as a foundation principle of faith, is the existence of the church under its outward historical form, as a Divine fact, as the supernatural carrying forward of the work of redemption, as the actual revelation and home of the Spirit, as the real medium of grace, in the bosom of which only, but there surely, may be wrought out the full process of man's salvation, from the remission of sins onward to the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. The church is made to be, without a figure, the organ of the new creation. There it is held to take place. There the heavenly forces on which it depends are considered to be all actually at hand. There the ministry, the bible, the sacraments carry with them a saving power, which can belong to them no where else. This is the very mystery, which gives the article its place in the creed. In what other view could it be an object of faith? How else could men be required to bow to its authority, as a necessary part of the mystery of godliness brought to pass by the Gospel?

In what wide contrast with all this old habit of thought much at least of our modern Protestantism stands, is too plain to re-

quire any sort of proof. The evidence of it is thrown in our way continually from all sides. Take in exemplification the following significant and characteristic passage, which happens to meet our eye while we write, as a passing editorial in a late number of the New York Observer, (July 28,) under the somewhat equivocal caption, *Tampering with the Truth*.

“In the history of the rise and progress of the great apostacy, we have an illustration of the danger of the slightest deviations from fundamental truth. This giant system of iniquity may be traced to the early introduction of what, at first view, appears to be a slight error in doctrine. The apostle Paul informs us that, even in his day, the ‘mystery of iniquity’ was already at work. And almost up to the apostolic age, we may trace the specious error of sacramental grace, which lies at the foundation of that vast superstructure of spiritual tyranny, which, for ages, spread desolation over both the Eastern and Western churches. The difference between this, as at first taught, and the true doctrine, was apparently so slight that the minds of the multitude, not accustomed to discriminate, might not perceive it. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, sealing the covenant relation of believers to God. But, according to this doctrine, grace is communicated to the soul in some mysterious manner, under the form of an outward rite. This is very agreeable to the carnal heart. It saves the necessity of the personal exercise of repentance and faith, relieves of the necessity of self-scrutiny, in order to discern the ‘inward spiritual grace,’ of which the sacrament is a sign, and turns the whole matter over to the priest.

“This error, in its inception, was so specious, so much in harmony with the prevalent mystical philosophy, and so conformed to the taste of a superstitious age, that it was received by a declining church without suspicion. But there soon grew out of it the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration*. Then followed an increase of sacraments, in order to cover all the supposed wants of the human soul. *Confirmation* was made a sacrament to impart grace for *sanctification*; *Penance*, to secure the pardon of sins committed after baptism; the *Eucharist* was transformed into the real body and blood of Christ, to provide a ground of confidence for the superstitious multitude, without personal piety; and to this is added *extreme unction*, that dying grace may be imparted by anointing the five senses with holy oil. To crown the whole, there is the sacrament of *Orders*, which lays the foundation of the hierarchy, by imparting to the priest the power of conferring grace, in the administration of the sacraments.

“Thus we have a complete perversion of the gospel, by the introduction of a *sacramental religion*, which removes the necessity

of an intelligent reception of the truth, and dispenses with faith, repentance, and holy obedience, and puts the whole affair into the hands of the priest, making his office indispensable to the right exercise of religion. Thus, the whole of Oriental and Papal Christendom lie at the feet of the Priesthood.

“The *germ* from which has grown up this deadly Bohon Upas tree, whose wide spreading branches overshadow the world, diffusing everywhere the malaria of spiritual death, was this same doctrine of *sacramental grace*, which some learned men in the Protestant churches are seeking to exhume from the catacombs of a past age, and impose upon the wonder-loving credulity of the nineteenth century. Though it must be obvious to the impartial student of history, that from the time of the introduction of this doctrine into the primitive churches, may be traced the gradual departure of the Holy Spirit; till at length the temple of Christ, deserted of his presence became the temple of idols, ‘Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.’”

The quotation speaks for itself. It must be confessed too, that it represents well and fairly a large portion of the religious thinking of the present time. Our universal sect system is ready to take up the same key. This precisely is what multitudes mean by the conception of *evangelical religion*, as distinguished from what they hold to be a religion of rites and forms. Our object here is not to have any controversy with the scheme. Let it pass for what it is worth. What we wish is simply to bring into clear view, the relation in which it stands to what was supposed to be Christianity in the first ages. This all should be willing to see and understand, as a matter at least of simple history. It is the character of truth to love the light. What then, in the case before us, is the clear form of fact? Here is a theory of religion, claiming to be the true sense of Protestantism, which boldly repudiates as an apostacy and mystery of iniquity the whole sense of what Christianity was taken to be in the beginning, back at least to the very age next following that of the Apostles. To be on good terms with it, as the self-constituted exponent now of the true meaning of the bible over against the blundering ignorance of all past centuries, we are required to give up to Satan not only the church of the middle ages, but the church also of earlier times from the fifth century up to the very beginning of the second. For it is not with this or that questionable point only, that the issue of the N. Y. Observer is concerned. It goes at once to the very foundations of the ancient faith. The idea of a *sacramental religion*, we are told, overturns the Gospel. A ministry exercising in any true sense

Divine powers, is taken to be such a conception as opens the way at once for the full reign of Antichrist. Why? Only of course because the *Church*, the proper home of such a ministry and sacraments of such supernatural force, is not believed to be the grand and awfully solemn mystery which it was held to be in the beginning. All comes to this at last. The idea of a Divine church takes away all difficulty from the idea of sacramental grace, as well as from the idea of a ministry possessed of more than human powers; whereas the want of faith in the church under any such supernatural view, as being the form and medium of the Christian salvation in the world, necessarily involves the want of power to honor the ministry and the holy sacraments under any corresponding view. If the sense of a higher order of life in this form as something actual and real be not at hand, if the church itself be after all a natural constitution only, part of the system of this world in its natural form and nothing more, then indeed it is easy to see how all that belongs to it must sink down to the same region of mere naturalism, and how it must appear no better than miserable pedantry and affectation to think of talking it into any higher sense. Alexander Campbell's "baptismal regeneration," sundered from the idea of a real historical polity bearing along with it from age to age, by strict Apostolical succession, the more than human powers with which the church started in the beginning, is in truth a most pitiful and melancholy sham. And so to the judgment now before us all sacramental religion seems, just because it has no faith in the existence of any such church either now or in time past. But, as we have seen, this faith, right or wrong, enters into the universal Christianity of the first ages. It is not there by accident either or unscemly excrecence. We find it prominently inserted in the Creed. The piety of the second century, as well as that of the third and fourth, is based upon it, and constructed upon it, from beginning to end. The religion of the whole period was beyond all controversy just what is here denounced by the N. Y. Observer, as the complete perversion of the Gospel. The Fathers all believed in the Holy Catholic Church, and showed themselves to be in earnest with this faith, by ascribing to the church Divine functions and powers. If *this* be the grand apostacy, the "mystery of iniquity," they were all hopelessly involved in it from the very start, and the Creed itself becomes the "masterpiece of the Devil."

To this end it must indeed necessarily come, with Protestantism in the unchurchly and unsacramental form. The Puritan Recorder was only a fair exponent of the true inward sense of

the system, when it ventured to say openly some time ago, "that the Creed and Puritanism have not a kindred spirit," and that the life and spirit of the venerable formulary, notwithstanding the place allowed to it "by a sort of courtesy" in the New England Primer, "never entered into the life of the Puritan churches," so that it exists among them now only "as some fossil relic of by-gone ages." Every attempt to restore its buried authority, the Recorder views with pity and contempt. "We are free to confess," it tells us again, "that this Creed has forsaken the Puritans, and gone over to become the idol and strength of all branches of Anti-puritanism. And there are good reasons; for Puritanism builds on the Scriptures, and this Creed teaches, in several respects, anti-scriptural doctrines. It is true, that most of it is *capable of a sense* which harmonizes with the Scriptures, and so the Puritans received it, in *a sense consonant with their theology*—either leaving out, or putting a strained sense upon the passage, which asserts that Christ descended into hell. But it is neither safe nor expedient to receive such a document *in such a perverted sense*. For the document once being admitted, and its authority being made to bind the conscience, then the way is open for those who hold the *errors held by its authors*, to plead that we are bound to receive it *in the sense which its authors gave to it*, and this makes it an instrument of *corrupting the faith of the gospel*." Here we have the cloven foot disclosed without any sort of reserve. Some of the "heretical points" of the creed, as they are called, the Puritan Recorder went on afterwards to expose in form, namely, the descent to hades, the communion of saints, and the holy catholic church. This last it dared to brand as "*a figment*." But as we have just said, Puritanism is fairly expounded here by the unbelieving voice of the Recorder. It has never yet raised any protest against the disclosure thus made at its heavy expense; and we presume it will not do so in time to come. Its whole standpoint is theologically different from that of the primitive church. The faith of this last, as we have it in the creed, is not its faith. It has brought in, beyond all contradiction, *another gospel*; so that the question is now, which is to be regarded as apostolically right and true, the gospel of Puritanism as it rules New England, and much of the world besides in the nineteenth century, or the gospel in which the second century gloried and trusted as a Divine gift handed down from the first. The two systems are not the same. The platform of faith on which the one rests, is by the other openly disowned as unscriptural and contrary to truth.

Here is something surely, which well deserves our most solemn attention and consideration. We do not present it now for any purpose of controversy or debate. We do not pretend to condemn dogmatically in one direction, or to approve in another. What we wish, is merely to bring into view the historical fact, which must remain the same whatever construction we may put upon it, and which needs first of all to be distinctly perceived and acknowledged that it may be construed with intelligence in any way. Evangelical Puritanism, the modern sect system generally, is at war with what was considered to be Christianity in the first ages. The controversy between present and past here regards not simply the order of things in the Nicene period, and afterwards, but reaches up to the age next following that of the Apostles; and it has to do, not with a few accidents only of the old faith, but with its universal form and constitution. The question, in the last instance, is not of the Papacy as such, nor of Episcopacy, nor of Presbytery, nor of Sacramental Grace, nor of the authority of the Holy Scriptures. All falls back just to this: Has there ever been in the world such a Divine constitution as the Holy Catholic Church, in the sense of the ancient creeds? It is another question, which we need carefully to distinguish from this, whether there be any such Divine organization, with supernatural functions and powers, actually at hand in the world *now*. We may dispose of this second question afterwards as shall seem best; before it comes plainly the other: Was there *ever* any order of this sort in Christian history? Were the first ages right, or were they wrong, in making the existence of it an article of faith, and in grounding upon it the entire weight of the world's salvation? Here it is, that the chasm which yawns so fearfully between the past and the present comes fairly and fully into view. Puritanism does not believe, what was believed most firmly in the days of Ignatius and Polycarp, that the Church stood among men as an actual polity, created by Divine commission, and endowed with corresponding heavenly powers for its own ends. What was a foundation mystery of faith in the one case, is scouted as a dangerous unscriptural "figment" in the other. In this way, Puritanism breaks with the universal Christianity of the first ages; turns its *Creed* into a grand *Lie*; for all must go together, if any regard is to be had to the original sense of the symbol; and so literally converts the course of church history into a wholesale radical apostacy and delusion from the very start.

Such is the simple historical fact. Who will deny, that it is

full of unutterable solemnity and interest? Here is the question of questions surely at this time, for all who can rise above the paltry prejudices of party and sect, so as to take any interest in the truth for its own sake. Alas, that the number of such should be so few! Is the old church doctrine of the Apostles' Creed—or *was* it rather—fact or figment, a reality or a dream? Was it a true "heavenly vision" to which fathers, martyrs and saints, did well "not to be disobedient;" or must it be regarded, on the contrary, as the most melancholy hallucination that ever took possession of the human mind, the art of Satan playing himself off as an angel of light, the mystery of iniquity "leading captivity captive," in a new downward sense now, most horrible to think of, for at least fourteen hundred years? What are all other questions, with the everlasting din that is made about them in our Babel of sects, as compared with this?

Was there ever among men a *Church*, in the sense of the Creed, a Divine constitution, carrying in itself real grace as an order of existence *above nature*, and rightly challenging in such view the "obedience of faith?"

That is the first question. Only where it is answered in the affirmative, of course, can there be any room for the second; which *then*, however, cannot fail to come home with like awful solemnity—as a waking and not merely sleep-walking interest—to every mind that is seriously bent on being saved:

Is the mystery of a *Divine Church* in this old sense still at work in the world? Are the glorious things once spoken of Zion yet true and real, as they were held to be in the first ages? Or has that heavenly vision dissolved long since into thin air and mere Gnostic idealism, like the baseless fabric of a dream which leaves no wreck behind?

J. W. N.

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Fourth and Last Article.

THE year 252 brought with it new trials for the Christian Church. There would seem to be a mysterious sympathy between the moral and physical worlds, by which every great catastrophe or crisis in the first is found to be marked more or less distinctly by corresponding tokens and signs in the second. When the foundations of society are about to give way, men's hearts are made often to faint and fear by strange signs of wrath in the course of nature. So it was before the destruction of Jerusalem; and something of the same sort we meet with in the last period of the old Pagan empire of Rome. The decline of the state, the breaking up of the ancient order of life, seemed to draw along with it calamity and disaster in all conceivable forms. The universal course of the world was so ordered, as to proclaim continually its own vanity and misery. On this subject we may learn much from Augustine. Long before his time however, these signs of wrath had begun to show themselves in the economy of God's providence, filling whole lands with ap-

prehension and fear. Wars, rumors of wars, famine, pestilence, and flood, united with the sense of perpetual political insecurity, to make men weary of the present, and to beget within them a feeling of desperation at the same time with regard to the future. At the time of which we now speak, under the reign of Gallus and Volusianus, a most fearful plague was moving, like a Divine curse, over the length and breadth of the civilized world. With this were joined in some parts of the empire other public calamities, such as drought and famine. As usual, these visitations served to inflame the popular heathen mind against the followers of Christ. They were regarded always as the enemies of the reigning order of things; they refused to take part in the religious sacrifices that were ordered to propitiate the gods; and it became a merit accordingly, in the eyes of fanaticism, to stir up the magistrates against them as a class of persons who had no right to live. The way was opened thus for a new persecution.

It was in reference to this, that the term of penitential discipline was cut short, as already remarked, in the case of those who had before fallen and were now seeking to be restored again to the peace of the church. "Inasmuch as we see," Cyprian writes to Cornelius of Rome in the name of a whole African council (Ep. 57), "that the day of another persecution is close at hand, and are admonished by many urgent signs to arm and prepare ourselves for the conflict set before us by the enemy, as also by our exhortations to get in readiness the people whom God has deigned to commit to our charge, and to gather within the Lord's camp all his soldiers who call for arms and ask to be led to battle—we have judged, in obedience to necessity, that reconciliation should be given to such as have not forsaken the church, but have persevered since the first day of their fall in doing penance, bewailing their sin and imploring mercy of the Lord, and that they ought to be equipped and furnished for the struggle which is drawing near. For heed must be given to the fair signs and warnings of the time, that the sheep may not be left exposed by the shepherds, but the whole flock be collected together, and the Lord's army made ready for the contest of the heavenly war." In such circumstances it might be trusted, that no improper advantage would be taken of this indulgence. It was to be hoped that penitents thus restored would be found ready now, with others, to die for their faith; in which case the reconciliation would turn out to have been on the part of the bishops, "whose office it was as priests to celebrate daily sacrifices to God," a true priestly function preparing victims for the

glorious altar of martyrdom. If however any should seek restoration without this mind, they must be left to the judgment of the Lord. It was not meet that their fault should stand in the way of so great a benefit, in favor of others who might be ready in truth to embrace the martyr's crown. "Nor let any one object," the epistle goes on to say, "that he who receives martyrdom is baptized in his own blood, and needs no peace from the bishop, having in prospect the crown of a higher acceptance and more glorious reward from the Lord. For in the first place, no one can be equal to martyrdom, who is not armed for battle by the church, and the mind must fail which is not raised and inflamed by the participation of the eucharist. Our Lord says in his Gospel: 'When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you' (Matth. x: 19, 20). But when it is said that the Spirit of the Father speaks in those who are delivered up and called to confess the Saviour's name, how can any one be found ready and prepared for such confession, who shall not first have received by the peace of the church the Spirit of the Father, who himself speaks and confesses in us by the strength he imparts to his servants?" Then in the second place, if flight were chosen instead of the martyr's crown, and the penitent should be cut off by untimely death in the period of his exile, "must it not be laid to our account that so good a soldier, who gave up all and forsook house and parents and children to follow his Lord, has departed this life without peace and communion?" May not the shepherds be charged in the day of judgment with unfaithfulness to their trust, who thus neglect the sheep so solemnly committed to their hands?

No military chief, on the eve of battle, could be more solicitous for the good conduct of his soldiers, than Cyprian was that the professed servants of Christ should quit themselves valiantly for the faith in this new trial. His care and zeal extended to places at a distance, as well as to his own immediate charge. We have a long admirable letter from him addressed to the people of Thibaris, which sounds still like the voice of a heavenly trumpet, calling upon men to forsake all joyfully for Christ. He sees the fashion of the world passing away, the last time evidently at hand, the power of Antichrist ready to appear in full revelation; and finds in all this only the stronger reason for renouncing its expectations in every form, and making full earnest with the promise of life and immortality contained in the Gospel. Let persecutions come. They were to be expected.

They had been foretold. They grow necessarily out of the relation the church bears to the world. They serve to promote our fellowship with Christ; who bids us rejoice and exult accordingly, when we are called thus to suffer for his name. Why? "Because when persecutions have place, then crowns of faith are given, then the soldiers of God are proved, then heaven is opened to the martyrs." Let God be glorified by death or by flight—the leaving of all for the Saviour's name. Exile in such form involved no real separation from the church. He is not alone who, wherever he wanders or hides in mountains or dismal deserts, has Christ always for his companion. And should he fall, by robber or wild beast, by hunger or thirst or cold, or by storm at sea, it will be still under his leader's eye, a merit sure to find from him its promised reward in the resurrection. "The glory of martyrdom is not less for its being out of public view, if only it be death really for the Saviour's sake. Enough that it be attested by that one witness, who awards to martyrs their final plaudit and crown." Then follow the animating examples of righteous Abel, the first martyr, of Abraham called to sacrifice his son Isaac, of the three youth whom Nebuchadnezzar cast into the fiery furnace, and of others mentioned in sacred history, whose faith it should be counted a privilege to follow in the same path to everlasting glory. In the end, victory must declare itself on the side of Christ, and shame and defeat be the portion of all who should join hands with Antichrist and the world. He that loveth his life must lose it, while to hate it in this world was to save it forever. "Men are trained and exercised for secular contests, and count it greatly to their honor if it may fall to them to be crowned before a multitude of spectators and in the presence of the emperor. See what a grand and sublime contest, glorious by the reward of a celestial crown, is here, that God should behold us striving, and take a lively interest in the spectacle of our struggle, following with his eyes those whom he has deigned to make his own sons. While we fight and do battle for the faith, God beholds, his angels behold, Christ also beholds. What weight of glory is it, and what vast happiness, to contend in the presence of God, and to be crowned by Christ as Judge! Let us arm ourselves, dearly beloved brethren, with all our strength, and prepare for the contest with pure mind, sound faith, and devoted resolution. Let the camp of God move forward to the battle, to which we are summoned. Let the sound arm themselves, that none such may lose their past integrity. Let the lapsed also arm themselves, that such may recover what has been lost. Let the sound be provoked to bat-

tle by honor, the lapsed by grief. The blessed apostle Paul exhorts us to arm and prepare in this way, when he says: 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, &c.' (Eph. vi: 12-17). These arms let us take, with these spiritual and heavenly defences let us fortify ourselves, that we may be able to withstand and repel in the evil day the assaults of the Devil." Then follows a glowing picture of the final triumph of the saints, in contrast with the fearful doom of all rebels and traitors, after which the epistle concludes: "Let these things, dearly beloved brethren, sink into our hearts. Let this be the preparation of our arms, this our meditation day and night, to keep before our eyes, and to revolve in thought and feeling continually, the punishments of the wicked and the rewards and merits of the just, what the Lord threatens in the way of penalty to those who deny him, and what on the other hand he promises to those who confess him in the way of glory. Should the day of persecution overtake us in the midst of such thoughts and meditations, the soldier of Christ, instructed by his precepts and admonitions, will not quail from battle, but be ready for the crown."

The tract *De Exhortatione Martyrii*, addressed to Fortunatus, is a general encouragement to martyrdom, in like earnest and vigorous strain, made up mainly of texts and examples drawn from the Holy Scriptures. It is not enough in this war to be summoned to battle by man's voice; the precepts and promises of God, as they are to be found in his own word, need to be well laid up and continually revolved in the mind. These are the sounds of the trumpet, that inspire the soldier with his best courage, and most surely conduct him to victory. Of such force however the Scriptures are to Cyprian's mind, as a matter of course, only in the bosom of the Church. As we have seen before, martyrdom itself had no value in his eyes, no proper reality we may say, under any other view. The subject is presented under a succession of leading heads, such as: That the idols of the heathen are no gods; That God only is to be worshipped; God's threatenings against such as sacrifice to idols, &c. Sufferings and persecutions are shown to be the natural lot of the righteous and pious. But Christ is greater and stronger than the world; he can sustain his people here, and he will bring them to everlasting glory hereafter—an exceeding weight of glory that may well cause all suffering and affliction in this world to appear by comparison insignificant and light. Then comes the stirring peroration: "If it be glorious for secular soldiers, after the enemy has been conquered, to come back with triumph into their country, how much more great and illustrious

is it to return triumphing, from the defeat of Satan, into Paradise; and there, from whence Adam the sinner was once cast out, to bring back victorious trophies by the prostration of him who before caused such ruinous fall; to offer unto God his most acceptable sacrifice of incorruptible faith and inward virtue without blemish; to attend him, with illustrious devotion, when he shall come to take vengeance on his enemies; to stand by his side, when he shall sit in judgment; to be joint heir with Christ; to be made equal with the angels; to rejoice, with patriarchs, with apostles, with prophets, in the profession of the heavenly kingdom! Such thoughts what persecution can conquer, what torments overcome? The mind which is settled by religious meditations remains fixed and firm, and no terrors of the Devil, no threats of the world, can shake the soul that is made strong by the sure and steady faith of things to come. The world is shut in persecutions, but heaven is thrown open. Antichrist threatens, but Christ defends. Death comes, but immortality follows. Earth disappears to the slain, but paradise meets the restored. Temporal life is extinguished, but life eternal takes its place. What dignity is it, and what security, to depart hence joyfully, to depart gloriously in the midst of affliction and pain, to close at one moment the eyes that look upon men and the world, and to open them the next on God and on Christ! How rapid so bright a transition! You are hurried suddenly from below, to rest in glory above. Lay hold of these things; think of them day and night. Found in such frame by the day of persecution, the soldier of God will be fully prepared for battle. Or if called away before, the faith which was thus prepared for martyrdom will not lose its reward. Where God is judge, merit hangs not on the accident of time. In persecution martyrdom is crowned, in peace the martyr's mind."

The bishops of Rome, under the immediate eye of the emperors, were naturally the first object always of imperial persecution. The see was filled almost wholly, for three centuries, by a succession of martyrs. Cornelius, who had entered on the office at the risk of his life under Decius, was now banished, and afterwards condemned to death. Lucius, his courageous successor, soon shared the same fate. We have a letter from Cyprian to Cornelius on the occasion of his good confession, which breathes the martyr's spirit, burns with the martyr's fire, we might almost say in every line. "We have learned the glorious proofs of your faith and virtue, dearest brother," he writes, "we have heard of the honor of your confession, with the exultation of those who feel themselves to be partners also

and sharers of your meritorious praise. For since the church for us is one, and our mind also in undivided harmony, what priest must not triumph in the praises of his fellow priest as though they were his own, or what brotherhood not rejoice in the joy of brethren everywhere? It is not possible fully to express, what exultation and joy there was here, when we were informed of the prosperous and brave course of things among you—that you had led the way there in confession for the brethren, and that the confession of the leader had been swelled by their concurrence, so that in going before to glory you have made many to be companions of your glory, and have engaged the people to become confessors by being first ready to confess for all; leaving us at a loss which most to extol among you, your own ready and firm faith or the unyielding love of the brethren. There was publicly proved the virtue of the bishop going before, with the devotion of the brotherhood cleaving to his steps. As there is among you one mind and one voice, the whole Roman church has confessed.” It was a splendid illustration of the faith which had been commended in the same church long before by the blessed St. Paul; an example full of instruction and encouragement to all churches throughout the world, showing the invincible nature of true Christian unity, where priest and people hold firmly together in the fear of God, and the power it has to prevail in the end over the worst designs of the enemy. The readiness shown by the whole church in this case to make common cause with the confession of the bishop, served to baffle and confound the persecuting power from the very start. Many even who had before fallen now stood firm, deriving strength from their penance, and recovering what had been lost by a glorious confession. The epistle closes with an exhortation of love, in view of what was still to come. “Let us not cease to give ourselves, with all the people, to fastings, watchings, and prayers. Let us be instant in groanings and deprecations. These are the celestial arms for us, which cause us bravely to stand and persevere. These are the spiritual defences and divine weapons, by which we are protected. Let us be mutually mindful of each other, in concord and harmony; let us pray always one for the other; let us relieve our trials and distresses by mutual charity; and which ever of us may first depart hence by the speedy favor of the Lord, let our love continue in his presence, let not prayer cease for our brethren and sisters before the mercy of the Father.”

Here we have a plain recognition of the thought, as one familiar on all sides, that the prayers of the saints in heaven are

not without effect on earth, and that they are to be desired and made account of accordingly, by those who are still in the body, in this view. We meet the same thought at the close of the tract *De Habitu Virginum*: "Mementote tunc nostri, cum incipiet in vobis virginitas coronari."

Persecution served to distinguish, we are told, between the true church and schism pretending to usurp its name. Novatian and his party in Rome were now safe. So in Carthage the faction which was trying to set up a new church under Fortunatus. Antichrist knows his proper enemy, and cares not to waste his strength on those who are already in fact on his own side. "The adversary and foe of the church despises and passes by as conquered captives those whom he has already alienated and led off from the church, and turns his rage against those in whom Christ is seen to dwell." The world would seem indeed in every such case, to have a most quick apprehension in some way of what is and what is not of one spirit with itself. Sects and schisms it can understand. They bring religion into its own sphere, make it a matter of private judgment, place it under the control of human will. That is something to be borne with and endured. It is only the presence of the true *Catholic Church*, with its real heavenly assumptions and powers, and its jurisdiction higher than any which belongs to the kings of the earth, that provokes its hostility and wrath. This the world has no power to comprehend. But it can feel the opposition in which it stands to its own darkness and vanity, and on this ground is ready always to fight against its claims wherever they may be exhibited in their true form.

The plague also made room for a striking argument in favor of the Catholic Church, by bringing the spirit with which it was actuated into lively contrast with the reigning spirit of the world. The fear of death destroyed in the breasts of the heathen all sentiments of kindness and love. Those who could

¹ "Inimicus et hostis ecclesiae, quos alienavit ab ecclesia et foras duxit, at captivos et victos contemnit et praeterit, eos pergit lacescere in quibus Christum cernit habitare. Quaquam etsi aliquis ex talibus fuerit apprehensus, non est quod sibi quasi in confessione nominis blandiatur, &c." *Ep. 60, ad Cornelium*. So again, *Ep. 61, ad Lucium*, the persecution in Rome is said to have been Divinely intended to distinguish the true church from the false and to confound heretics by showing which cause the Devil was disposed to destroy and which to spare. "Neque enim persecutor et impugnator Christi adversarius nisi castra et milites Christi; haereticos prostratos semel et omnes factos contemnit et praeterit. Eos quaerit dejicere, quos videt stare."

fled, to save their own lives. The sick were abandoned, in the most merciless style, to their hard fate. The dying, and the dead, were cast out upon the highways and streets. On all sides corpses were left unburied, poisoning the air still more with their pestilential putrefaction. A sort of desperation ruled the public mind; which however, instead of bringing men to acknowledge their sins and humble themselves in the way of religion, led many rather to blaspheme the only true religion itself as being the cause of this sore calamity, as well as of the other public miseries of the time. In these circumstances, Cyprian published two tracts; one, *De Mortalitate*, designed to instruct and animate Christians in their duty; the other, *Ad Demetrianum*, in the way of apology and defence over against this mad charge of the Pagan world. The effect of the first, along with the other exhortations of the chief pastor, backed by his own brave and noble example, seems to have been all that could have been wished or desired. The faltering were made firm, while the strong were inspired with new resolution and zeal. Not only did the Christians take care of their own sick, and show becoming regard to their own dead; but in the spirit of that heroic, self-sacrificing and self-forgetting charity, which no other religion save that of the cross has ever been able to inspire, they took upon them the care also of others. "If we are the children of God," said Cyprian to his people, "who causes his sun to shine and sends rain upon the just and unjust, not confining his gifts and benefits to his own merely, but extending to those also who are alienated from him in the spirit of their mind, we must show it in act and deed, endeavoring to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, by blessing those that curse us and doing good to those by whom we are persecuted." The church resolved itself, accordingly, into an organization of mercy and charity for the whole city. The rich made generous contributions in money; the poor lent their personal service. The sick, who had been abandoned by their heathen relatives and friends, were taken in and nursed at the risk of life. The streets were cleared of exposed corpses, and the air relieved from contagion, by their proper burial. Thus did the church heap coals of fire on the head of her enemy. The Pagan world looked on with astonishment, and for the moment at least was forced to admire what it had no power rightly to comprehend.

* Compare with this the following picture, which has been preserved to us from Dionysius of Alexandria, in a notice of the plague that prevailed

The tract *De Mortalitate* has regard specially to the miseries of its own age; which Cyprian felt to be in a certain sense the consummation of the world's vanity, making room for the full advent of Antichrist, and so for the final collapse and fall of its whole present state, in the way of preparation for the second coming of Christ. The relation of the world, however, this present *saeculum*, the order of nature as such, to the economy of grace and the true kingdom of God, is always substantially the same. It remains always equally true, that the scheme or fashion of this world passeth away; that it is in itself a shadow and a dream; that the proper destiny of man lies beyond it, in a form which he is now required to embrace by faith; that this involves and requires necessarily the solemn renunciation of the life that now is for that which is to come; that those who thus set faith above sense must be hated, and charged with folly, by the mass of men who have no faith, but are bent on living only for the present time; that such moral disorder on the part of the world, added to its natural vanity, and attended with special judgments on the part of God, must make it always a scene of discipline and trial for the righteous; and that the only proper posture and habit of the believer, therefore, is that by which he is led to look upon it as a state that is ever rushing towards its own dissolution, and to wait for the revelation of the Son of God from heaven, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe. In such view, the tract before us is of eloquent application and force for all times. These are the topics in substance, on which it dwells. Let the soldiers of the cross consider well the terms of their warfare.

in that city some years later, in the reign of the Emperor Gallien: "The visitation filled the heathen with the utmost dismay, as an evil that left no hope; but it had no such terror for us, to whom it came only as a special discipline and probation. The most of our brethren spared not themselves in the fulness of their brotherly love, but cared only for one another, and by attending upon the sick without regard to their own safety, serving them willingly for Christ's sake, showed themselves ready to give their lives for them if need be with joy. Many died, after they had restored others by their care. The best among us, a number of presbyters, deacons, and distinguished laymen, ended their lives in this way—a form of death, which seems, as the fruit of great piety and vigorous faith, not to fall short of the glory of martyrdom itself. Many handled the bodies of dying Christian brethren, closed their mouths and eyes, buried them with all decency and respect, and then followed them in death. Among the heathen, all was different. Those who took sick were thrust out; the dearest friends were forsaken; the dying were exposed in the street; the dead were left unburied."

They are called to meet trials. These show that the world is passing away, and that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. We live by faith. Why should we not be ready joyfully to quit this life, if God calls, full as it is of temptation and sorrow—unless it be because the glorious promises of God concerning the life to come, are not firmly believed? While in the body, Christians are necessarily under the same law of suffering with others. Nay, they must endure more than the common world. This is part of their discipline; which is to be met with corresponding humility and patience; and which is to make room finally for their victory and crown. The plague should be terrible only to such as were not “born again of water and the Spirit,” who stood exposed thus to the second death. To the servants of God, death in any form was to be counted salvation. When such were called away, it was not proper that their friends should mourn as those who had no hope—“clothing themselves in black garments here, for those who are now arrayed there in white.” Let the heathen see, that we really believe what we say, and do not mourn as lost those whom we profess to regard as living with God. Death is the necessary passage to immortality. Who should not desire to be thus transformed into the image of the Saviour and translated into his glory? Let those seek to stay in the world, on whom the world smiles, and who make it their confidence and life. *Our rest and hope are not here.* We have here no abiding city, but seek one to come. Now especially all may be said to urge us forwards and upwards in our thoughts. The world is evidently tottering towards its own fall. The sorrows of the last time are near at hand. To die now, is for the righteous emphatically to be taken away from the evil to come. Let us welcome such deliverance then, as strangers and pilgrims anxious to reach their proper home. “Paradise we consider our country, the patriarchs are our parents; and why should we not hasten forward to behold the first and salute the last? A vast collection of friends await us there; a large crowd of parents, brothers, sons, secure now of their own salvation but anxious still for ours, expect our presence. To meet and embrace these, what joy will it be on both sides! What will be the pleasure of those celestial regions, without the fear of dying, felicity supreme in a life without end! There will be the glorious choir of the apostles, there the exulting company of the prophets, there the innumerable throng of martyrs crowned for the victory of their conflict and passion, there the triumphant virgins which subdued the concupiscence of the flesh and body by the power of continence, there the merciful in the

possession of their reward, who performed works of righteousness by their alms and gifts to the poor, and following the Lord's directions converted their earthly patrimony into treasures in heaven. To these, beloved brethren, let us hasten with ardent desire; let it be our wish, that we may reach there soon, that we may soon be with Christ. Let God behold in us this mind, let Christ the Lord see such to be the purpose of our faith, who may be expected to bestow the rewards of his glory most largely on those who have had towards him the strongest desires."

The tract addressed to *Demetrianus* is written with like animation, and in a similar tone of firm and vigorous faith. It is a bold apology for Christianity over against the charges of this insulting representative of heathenism, in which the vanity and misery of the reigning Pagan life are brought out with unmerciful exposure, and the solemn truths of the Gospel proclaimed in opposition to it with Elijah-like severity and zeal. Again we have the idea of the world in its decrepitude and old age, a system now ready to pass away. War, dearth, famine, pestilence, were all in order for such a state of palpable decay. They had been foretold, as signs of the approaching end of the world. They were however, at the same time, signs of Divine wrath. God was angry with the heathen world for its sins. What right had those to complain of his judgments, who wearied him with their provocations. "Ye are angry at God's anger; as though ye had merited something good by your bad lives; as though all your calamities were not still less in number and more light than your sins." Then follows a scathing censure of the reigning manners of the time, revealing to us a gloomy insight into the social state of the old Roman world in these last days of its life and power. And now as if all other crimes were not enough, the guilt must be added to them of persecuting the servants of the Most High. All other forms of religion they could tolerate; only not the service of the true God. "Crocodiles, and baboons, and stones, and serpents, are worshipped by you; God alone is either not worshipped anywhere, or else worshipped at risk of punishment. The innocent, the righteous, the friends of God, ye deprive of their hope, rob of their patrimony, load with chains, cast into prison, deliver to the sword, to wild beasts, to flames. Neither are ye content to inflict upon us such pains in any simple and compendious form. Protracted torments are applied to our racked bodies, manifold excruciations to our lacerated bowels; your savage inhumanity is not satisfied with ordinary forms of torture; it becomes a matter of ingenuity to excogitate such as new." What lust of cruelty? What gratui-

tous rage? In other cases, torture was applied to draw out confession. But here the confession was offered freely, and yet the torture was made to follow; showing plainly what diabolical spirit ruled and governed the whole process. "But why turn to the infirmity of the body? Why contend with the imbecillity of mortal flesh? Engage with the power of the soul, assail the force of the mind, overthrow faith, conquer by disputation if you can, conquer with reason. Or if there be anything of divinity and power in your gods, let *them* rise in their own cause, and defend themselves by their own majesty." But the impotency of these gods was shown, in the power which Christians had over them, through the name of Christ, in the cure of demoniacal possessions. On the other hand, God is the avenger of his people, and all who are his enemies must perish. There may seem to be indeed in this world one lot to the righteous with the wicked; but it is only in appearance. The calamities which come upon the last as a curse only, are to the first a source of discipline and so of salvation. The issue in the one case is eternal death, while in the other it is everlasting life. Let the enemies of the Church then be warned in time, and seek salvation before it be forever too late. Let them come forth from the deep night of superstition into the clear light of day. "We grudge not your good, and hoard not up for ourselves the Divine gift. We return kindness for your hatred; and for the pains and torments you inflict upon us, we show unto you the way of salvation. Believe and live, that having persecuted us in time ye may rejoice with us in eternity. When this world is left, there is no room for penitence, no force in satisfaction. Here life is either lost or gained." Here repentance is never too late; and no one need despair of salvation, who even at the last hour applies to God with a true heart for mercy.

Another interesting exemplification of Christian charity on the part of Cyprian and his church, is presented to us about the same time in their cheerful and liberal response to a call that was made upon them from Numidia, for the relief a heavy calamity which had befallen the churches in that country. In an irruption of some neighboring barbarous tribe, a number of Christians, of both sexes, were carried away into captivity; and a sum of money was now required for their ransom, which the poverty of the Numidian churches found itself unable to raise. Letters were sent to Carthage, reporting the case and imploring help. We have Cyprian's epistle in reply, (*Ep.* 62, *ad Junuarium et al.*), full of the most tender sympathy and concern. "With the greatest inward commotion," he writes, "and not

without tears, we have read what you have written to us, dear brethren, in the solicitude of your love, concerning the captivity of our brethren and sisters. For who must not grieve in such a case, who must not reckon the calamity of his brother to be his own, when the Apostle Paul says: 'If one member suffer, &c.' (1 Cor. xii: 26); and in another place: 'Who is weak and I am not weak' (2 Cor. xi: 29). So now the captivity of our brethren is to be considered *our* captivity also, and the affliction of those in danger is to be regarded as our affliction; since we are united in truth in one body, and not love merely, but religion also should excite and engage us to ransom brethren who are our members. For since the Apostle Paul again says: 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' (1 Cor. iii: 16), if even love were not enough, to urge us to the help of our brethren, we should yet reflect in this case that they are temples of God which are carried away captive, and that we ought not patiently to endure the long continuance of such disgrace, but should lay out actively and promptly such strength as we have, to deserve well by our service of Christ our Divine Lord and Judge. For whereas the Apostle Paul says: 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ' (Gal. iii: 27), we are to see in our captive brethren Christ himself, and to redeem from the peril of captivity Him who has redeemed us from the peril of death; that he who has rescued us from the jaws of the Devil, and who abides and dwells in us, may now himself be rescued from the hands of barbarians, and he be redeemed by a sum of money who has redeemed us by the cross and by blood; who moreover allows this to happen, that our faith may be tried, whether each one is ready to do for another what he would wish to be done for himself, if he were himself a captive in the hands of barbarians." With many thanks for the opportunity given to participate in so good a work, the epistle then goes on to state, that the case had been laid before the church in Carthage, and that a collection had been readily and freely made amounting to a "hundred thousand sesterces," (several thousand dollars,) which was now forwarded to the Numidian bishops, to be applied as they might see proper to the object in view. The wish is expressed that no similar calamity might again occur; but it is nobly added at the same time: "If however anything of the sort *should* take place, to prove our love and try our faith, fail not to inform us of it at once by letter, as you rest assured that, whilst our whole church and brotherhood here pray that no such event may happen, they are ready in case it should to contribute

large and liberal aid." In conclusion another feature of this early Christianity comes into view, which is not undeserving of our thoughtful notice: "That our brethren and sisters who have contributed heartily and freely to this necessary work, as they are ready to do always, may be had in mind in your prayers, and a recompense be made them for their good deed in your *sacrifices and supplications*, I have subjoined their several names; as I have added also the names of certain of our colleagues in the priesthood, who being present have also contributed something in their own name and in that of their people according to their ability—noting and forwarding also their amounts besides our own proper remittance; all of whom, as faith and charity demand, ye are bound to remember in your offices of prayer."

The persecution under Gallus proved after all less serious than was apprehended. Wars and insurrections, throughout his reign, gave him no time to carry it vigorously forward in the provinces; and his death, which took place by violence in the summer of a. 253, brought it altogether to an end. For a few years subsequently, the Church was permitted to enjoy again general rest and peace.

It was towards the close of this period, that the unhappy controversy arose concerning the baptism of heretics, of which we have already taken some notice. As we have seen before, it grew entirely out of the high view which then universally prevailed of the Divine nature of the Church, as being the body of Christ, and thus the one only medium of salvation for a guilty and fallen world. All saving grace for men was held to be by the action of the Spirit, not as influencing their minds in what may be called a general natural way, but only as comprehended in this supernatural constitution, made to be historically present in the world under such outward and real form. Here was the mystery precisely, which faith, as distinguished from sense and natural reason, was required to own and embrace in the Holy Catholic Church—a new world of light and power namely, by the resurrection of Christ, actually at hand through the Holy Ghost for all the purposes of man's redemption and sanctification. In the bosom of this heavenly constitution, it was held, and nowhere else in the wide world, there was "power on earth to forgive sins." Here the Apostolic commission was still in full force, carrying along with it corresponding endowments and prerogatives of grace. Here were real sacraments, not shadows merely but types. Here accordingly baptism by water, was at the same time baptism by the Holy Ghost, answerable in full to

our Saviour's word to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It was for the remission of sins, and carried in it the mystery of a new birth to righteousness and salvation. Such force the sacrament was considered to have, of course, not as a mechanical or magical charm, not in virtue of its own outward form merely nakedly and separately taken, but in union only with the supernatural life of the Church, in which is comprehended the presence of the Spirit and the fulness of the new creation. From this it would seem naturally to follow, that it could never be validly administered on the outside of the church, and that the baptism of heretics and schismatics, therefore, must be rejected as of no force.

This view in fact gained wide ground in different parts of the church. It prevailed particularly in Asia Minor and Northern Africa. In Rome however it was all along held, that such baptism might be valid, and that it was not necessary therefore to baptize over again in all cases those who came from heretical associations into the true church. For some time the question was not brought to any decision. Each region was allowed to follow quietly its own tradition and custom. But now, in the middle of the third century, the difference broke out into an open and violent controversy, the result of which was a complete rupture for a season between the see of Rome and those portions of the church which stood opposed to it in this dispute.

Towards the end of the year 253, the Roman bishop Stephen went so far as to place the churches of Asia Minor under sentence of excommunication, on the charge of their being Anabaptists, in insisting as they did on the re-baptism of heretics. From Asia the difficulty soon after extended itself to Northern Africa. Cyprian entered with zeal into the Asiatic view, and in doing so was brought at once into full collision with the Roman pontiff. Two councils, the first composed of eighteen and the second of seventy-one bishops, were held at Carthage in the year 255, which united in the declaration that the baptism of heretics was not to be regarded as valid. We have several letters from Cyprian on the subject, some of them quite long, all taking the same ground and breathing the same earnest and decided tone. Among the rest, one to Stephen himself, reporting to him respectfully but firmly the judgment of the larger Carthaginian council.

The argument is always of one form. All grace resides in the church; heretics and schismatics are on the outside of this sacred communion; consequently they have not the Spirit; and

how then can they confer any spiritual benefit on others? Their sacraments must be, like themselves, false and void. It is not enough to say, that the Spirit is given afterwards, by confirmation or the imposition of hands, when any of them are received into the true church. It belongs to the idea of baptism, that this sacrament itself should include the grace of the Spirit; "for remission of sins is granted to every one in baptism, and the declaration of our Lord in the Gospel shows that sins can be remitted by those only who have the Holy Spirit; since when he sent forth his disciples after his resurrection, saying, 'As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you,' we are told that he breathed on them, and said: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whose soever ye retain they are retained.' This proves, that he only can baptize and give remission of sins, who may have the Holy Ghost." How then can the baptism of heretics carry with it any force, (Ep. 69)? "How shall he be able to give remission of sins to another, who himself has no power to put off his own sins, as being out of the church?" The interrogation made in baptism involves clearly this sense; "for when we say, 'Dost thou believe in life eternal and the remission of sins by the holy church?' it is understood that the remission of sins is not given except in the church, and that with heretics, where the church is not, sins cannot be discharged. Let those then who assert that heretics can baptize either change the interrogation, or else vindicate its truth—unless they allow them the church also, for whom they thus claim baptism." Along with baptism must go also the holy chrism or anointing with consecrated oil. "But there can be no sanctification of creature oil, where there is neither altar nor church" (Ep. 70).

It is easy enough to see, that Cyprian has in his eye always the position taken by Stephen and the Roman church, and that he feels it to be more than anything else in his way. He has to allow too, that this had the weight of previous custom and tradition in its favor. The contrary view, in Africa at least, had begun to acquire authority only about the close of the previous century, and was still not universally received. So far as previous practice is appealed to in this case accordingly, it is for the purpose only of establishing a provincial liberty, the right of following a special usage and custom; while pains are taken, in a way which seems to be almost Protestant at times, to break the authority of the older and more general tradition, by an appeal to what is taken to be the voice of reason and the clear sense of the Gospel. The old usage, it is supposed, may have grown out

of the fact, that those who went off in the first heresies and schisms had been previously baptized in the church, and so did not need to be baptized over again if they afterwards returned to its bosom. It became an abuse, only when the same rule was extended to such as had their first baptism with heretics, which was to be considered in truth no baptism at all. "We are not to go by custom however, but by force of reason. For even Peter, whom the Lord chose to be first and on whom he built his church, when Paul afterwards contended with him about circumcision, did not arrogate anything to himself with insolent assumption, so as to say that he held the primacy and ought rather to have deference from such as came after him, neither did he despise Paul because he had once been a persecutor of the church, but admitted the counsel of truth, and readily yielded to right reason as vindicated by Paul; leaving us thus a lesson of concord and patience, that we may not pertinaciously cleave to our own mind, but may embrace and make to be our own rather what is usefully and wholesomely suggested at times by our brethren and colleagues, if it be found true and right" (Ep. 71). This looks to Stephen, and may be considered pretty free in its manner of dealing with his pontifical claims; but it is not hard to see that it carries in it notwithstanding a silent acknowledgment of the truth of these claims. It is not a protest against authority absolutely in the name of reason, but a plea rather which seeks to bend authority to reason as its proper rule. "In vain do they who are vanquished by reason oppose custom to us," it is said in another place (Ep. 72) "as though custom were greater than truth, or that were not to be followed in spiritual things which is revealed for the better by the Holy Spirit." Error in ignorance may be pardoned, as it was in the case of St Paul; but to continue in it, after the truth has been made clear, is obstinacy without excuse. Such passages have it must be confessed a sufficiently independent sound, and may seem at first not to be in full harmony with Cyprian's general theory of the church. But we are bound in common justice to take them in connection with this theory; and when we do so, they will be found to assert after all nothing more than this, that the authority of the church in its own sphere ought to be governed by a proper regard to the nature of things, and not simply by blind custom. To suppose that the author of the tract *De Unitate Ecclesiae* could seriously intend, for one moment, to set up private judgment as such in any case of this sort against the whole idea of church authority, or to make any particular and separate construction of the original sense of

Christianity of more force than the tradition of the church itself in its absolute and fully settled form, is perfectly absurd. The more so too, we may add, as the object of Cyprian's zeal here was itself only a sort of corollary always in his mind from that very doctrine of the church, which he would be made by this supposition to hold in so poor account.

With like qualification must we take those passages, in which he seems to assert the right of every bishop to follow in his own diocese any practice which to himself may seem best, under responsibility to God alone at the last day. So Ep. 69, *ad Magnum*; he gives his judgment, imposing it however on no one, "as each overseer must give account of his conduct to the Lord, as the blessed Paul writes: 'Every one of us shall give account of himself to God; let us not therefore judge one another any more,' (Rom. xiv: 12, 13)." Again Ep. 72, to Stephen himself: "These things, very dear brother, we have reported to you, both out of official regard and from private affection, believing that you too, in the sincerity of your piety and faith, will be pleased with what is agreeable at once to both piety and truth. We know however, that some are not willing to lay aside what they have once imbibed, and cannot easily change their own mind, but without prejudice to the bond of peace and concord with their colleagues choose to retain certain peculiarities which have become established for themselves by use. In which matter also neither do we pretend to coerce any one or to create law, since every bishop in the government of the church has the free use of his own will, under responsibility for what he does to the Lord." Again, Ep. 72, *ad Jubaianum*: "These things, dear brother, we have written to you, after our mediocrity, not prescribing or prejudging for any one, so as that every bishop may not do what he thinks best, having free power of his own will. We, so far as in us lies, do not quarrel for the sake of heretics with our colleagues and fellow bishops, with whom we hold concord and peace in the Lord; more especially as the apostle says, 'If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the church of God' (1 Cor. xi: 16). Patiently and mildly we maintain the spirit of charity, the honor of our college, the bond of faith and concord of the priesthood." To infer from all this, that Cyprian considered every bishop absolutely independent in his own charge, would be ridiculously foolish. The office for him had no force in any case, except in union with the organization of the church as a single whole. All he can mean here then is, that within this acknowledged general jurisdiction, and under the condition of being true to its

proper authority, however this might be exercised, each member of the episcopal college was to be regarded as an independent functionary, at liberty to manage his particular trust as to himself should appear best. This question concerning the baptism of heretics accordingly he affects to look upon as one not yet absolutely settled, as one that should for the present be left open; in the case of which, at the same time he trusts, that what he takes to be the necessary sense of the true doctrine of the church, would yet be able to triumph in the end over all contrary present usage, if only it were not pretended now to force it to a general public decision. What he is provoked with in Stephen's conduct, is that he should insist on taking the point out of the sphere of freedom, and be bent on turning it into fixed law, in a form which was supposed not to express fairly at last the true mind of the church and the proper sense of the Christian tradition.

Be this as it might however, Stephen refused to recede from the ground he had already been led to take, in opposition to the churches of Asia Minor. With the delegates which were sent to him by the African council he refused to have any conference whatever, and even directed his people not to receive them into their houses, by way of testifying his displeasure with the cause they represented. Cyprian's letter was answered; but only to let him know that the position he had taken was wrong. "Let there be no innovation," it was said, "on the rule handed down, that such as come from heretical bodies should be received by imposition of hands only to repentance." Cyprian speaks of the communication as proud and self-contradictory (Ep. 74, *ad Pompeium*); but he was not in the right posture and mood exactly, to judge fairly in the case; it may have been simply strong and firm in its tone, while it refused to reason on the subject, but cut the whole question short by the stern plea of usage and tradition.

Another council, consisting of seventy-eight bishops, was convened in Carthage towards the close of the year 256, which in the face of this Roman decision solemnly re-affirmed the previous judgment of the African church.¹ The difficulty was carried thus to an actual and open breach of ecclesiastical peace.

¹ In the introduction to the proceedings of this synod, from Cyprian's pen, it is said with plain reference to Stephen: "Neque enim quisquam nostrum episcopum se esse episcoporum constituit, aut tyrannico terrore ad obsequendi necessitatem collegas suos adijit, quando habeat omnis episcopus pro licentia libertatis et potestatis suae arbitrium proprium tamque

In these circumstances, it became an object with Cyprian to have a common understanding with the churches of Asia Minor. A special communication on the subject was made accordingly to Firmilian of Cesarea in Cappadocia, one of the leading bishops of that region; which drew forth in return the celebrated letter of this prelate preserved among Cyprian's writings. It makes common cause of course with the African bishops; echoes the sentiments and arguments of Cyprian; and speaks at the same time in the most disrespectful terms of the course pursued by Stephen. Over against the Roman plea of tradition, it is maintained that the strong terms of reprobation employed by the apostles towards heretics show plainly that they could not have admitted the validity of their baptism, and that the alleged contrary custom therefore must have crept in without right, and so should not now be allowed to contravene what was manifestly the true sense of the Gospel. The Roman tradition in some other points also was not strictly apostolical, as might be seen in its variation from what was observed at Jerusalem; so in other provinces local peculiarities of worship were to be found; which however disturbed not the proper unity of the church; an evil now forced upon it by the intolerance of Stephen, which of itself showed this tradition human only and not Divine. In Asia, they had always followed the other practice. One church and so only one baptism, had been their maxim. To admit baptism on the outside of the true church, was in the end to suppose other real churches also besides that founded on Peter, and so to turn into a farce the very primacy of which Stephen was now disposed to make such high-handed use. This was to be worse than the heretics themselves, by keeping them back from the laver of regeneration, and withholding from them the remission of sins, even when they were led to renounce their errors and to seek salvation as something which is to be found only in the church. And yet the Roman pontiff must be offended. The patron of heretics, God's enemies, is indignant with those who oppose them and maintain the truth of the church! Hence what strifes and dissensions has he not brought to pass? "But what sin hast

judicari ab alio non possit, quam nec ipse potest alium judicare. Sed expectemus universi judicium Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui unus et solus habet potestatem et praeponendi nos in ecclesiae suae gubernatione et de actu nostro judicandi." This is carrying the tone of episcopal independence very far indeed; but the nature of the case requires, that it should still be taken with the general qualification to which we have already referred.

thou not accumulated on thyself, in cutting thyself off from so many flocks! For it is thyself thou has excinded, be well assured; since he is the true schismatic, who makes himself an apostate from the communion of ecclesiastical unity. For in pretending to cut off all from thy communion thou hast only put thyself out of communion with all." What a specimen of evangelical charity and humility! A fine way truly to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—thus to make common cause with heretics, and break with the household of faith in all parts of the world! To refuse all negotiation on the subject with the delegates of a sister province! "To call Cyprian besides a pseudo-christian, a pseudo-apostle, and a deceitful workman!"

The letter is deeply tinged with passion throughout. All is discolored, distorted and exaggerated, by the medium of excited feeling and partizan interest through which it is viewed. We see in it not so much Stephen's real spirit, or his real behavior, as the construction put upon both by the offended humor of Firmilian. Stephen never certainly applied any such abusive epithets to Cyprian. Firmilian merely construes in this way, after the fashion of heated brains, the pontiff's general procedure. It amounted to this, he means, in its virtual import; as one may flare up, when he is contradicted in some opinion by another, and say: "Do you then call me a *liar*?" This one specimen is enough to show, with how much caution and reserve the statements generally of such a witness are to be received, in this unfortunate case. It is to be regretted, that the whole controversy is set before us only under an *ex parte* and completely onesided representation. We have no version of the affair from the side of Stephen. If we had, it would no doubt be made to appear in a very different light.

As it is, the whole case tells strongly in favor of the supremacy of the Roman see, and not against it as is sometimes pretended. How came Stephen to assert such authority, in opposition to whole provinces of the church east and west, if it were not on the ground of previously acknowledged prerogative and right? Or how could the pretension do more than call forth derision, if no such ground existed for it in fact in the general mind of the church? It is easy to talk of his presumption and pride, and of a regular system of usurpation kept up with success on the part of the Roman pontiffs generally. But that is simply to beg the whole question in dispute. The hypothesis is too violent. It destroys itself. Stephen was neither fool nor knave; and yet he must have been both on a grand scale, to play the part he did here out of mere wanton ambition, usurping powers to which

he himself well knew, as all the world knew besides, he had no lawful claim whatever. Both Cyprian and Firmilian are themselves witnesses in fact, that a true central authority did belong to the bishop of Rome. What they complain of is its supposed abuse. They feel the force of it very plainly in spite of themselves. This is just what makes them so restive under its exercise. Had it been mere false pretension, they could have afforded to let it pass by them as the idle wind. They knew it however to be more than that. Then again, it turned out in the end that Stephen was in truth right. His judgment proved to be, with proper distinctions afterwards, the real voice of the Catholic Church, and has remained in full force down to the present time. There is reason to believe too, that it includes deep wisdom, that it is of vast practical importance, and that it was highly necessary at the same time to have the case settled in this way. Even those who are most ready to resolve the whole proceeding into the worst motives, are constrained generally to admit all this in its favor. But now what makes the case most of all remarkable perhaps, is the way in which so wise and correct a decision was reached. It was not by any theological speculation. It must be granted, that there seemed to be much more reason in the view taken of the subject by Cyprian. To this day it is by no means easy to answer his general argument. It would appear to lie really in the conception of the church, as it was then universally held, that no baptism on the outside of its visible communion could be valid; and that to pretend the contrary must necessarily bring into peril the entire doctrine, as an article of faith. And yet just this seeming contradiction the judgment of Stephen, setting at full defiance the cogency of the reasoning employed on the other side, is made to embrace. Not however through any more profound analysis of the Christian theory. Nothing of that sort was pretended. All was made to turn on tradition. The wisdom of the decision, whatever it might be, lay altogether in the tact, with which what was taken to be the true sense of the Church in this form was discerned and affirmed, in distinction from all merely accidental variations with which it might have been observed in particular places. On this ground only the whole judgment was made to rest. Stephen acted in the case, not as a legislator, but simply as a judge expounding the common law of the church. This is truly characteristic, and forms one of the most interesting features of the whole transaction.

How far Cyprian may have been deserving of blame in this affair, we shall not pretend to give any opinion. Augustine,

who was his great admirer, and who in a certain sense carried out his doctrine of the Church to its proper scientific perfection, considers that he fell here into serious fault; which he trusts however was surmounted by his better mind afterwards, as it may be said to have been fully washed out at last by his glorious martyrdom. Of his honesty and pure zeal for the glory of God, no one can have any doubt. It is easy enough to see also, that the controversy gave him no small amount of uneasiness and grief.

In the midst of it, as he himself informs us in his epistle to Jubaianus, he wrote his tract *De Bono Patientiæ*.¹ It is an exhortation to endure manfully the sorrows and trials of life, enforced by the general long-suffering of God, and by the particular pattern of Christ, as well as by the example of the patriarchs, prophets, and saints of every age, who have borne his image and walked in his spirit. 'The world in any view is full of vanity and grief; our present mortal state is by reason of sin a discipline of affliction throughout. All need to arm themselves with patience for the battle of life. But how much more the followers of Christ, who in addition to those natural evils were required to meet special tribulations on account of their faith; who were exposed to special and extraordinary assaults of the Devil; "who, besides other manifold and various temptations, were called upon, by the dreadful stress of persecution, to forsake their property, to undergo imprisonment, to bear chains, to put life at stake, to endure the sword, wild beasts, flames, crucifixion, in a word all sorts of torments and pains, by faith and the virtue of patience—according to the word of the Lord: 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world' (John xvi: 33)."' All true patience springs from a firm apprehension of the reality and glory of the life to come. We are saved by hope. God reigns. In the end, all will be right. He who is now silent will in due time be revealed in power and glory, to give rest to his people and to punish his enemies with everlasting destruction. Such is the general strain of this tract, like the music of Ossian, mournful and yet pleasant to the soul. It came in good

¹ Also, as it would seem, the tract entitled *De Zelo et Livore*; which some have supposed to be a sort of practical improvement in some way of the trying experience through which the author was called to pass in this controversy; though without any good reason that we can find, either in the title of the piece or in its contents.

time. The hour for the patience of confessors and martyrs was once more close at hand.

A new persecution broke forth under Valerian in the year 257. The controversy between the bishops of Rome and Carthage was hushed, in their common sufferings for the faith. Stephen had the honor of laying down his life first, with the usual fortune and courage of his exalted see. Cyprian stood prepared in his own mind for the same fate. The persecution however was not at once carried generally to blood. It was hoped that by depriving the congregations of their pastors, and then forbidding them to meet, the object in view might be gained without resorting to this extremity. Cyprian was called before the proconsul Paternus, and required to answer for his faith. "I am a Christian and a bishop," he replied; "I acknowledge only the one true God, who has made heaven and earth and sea, and all that they contain. This God we Christians serve; and to Him we pray day and night for ourselves, for all men, and for the welfare of the emperors themselves." *Proconsul*: "Do you persist in this purpose?" *Cyprian*: "A good purpose, proceeding from the knowledge of God, may not be changed." The proconsul then pronounced sentence of banishment upon him, according to the imperial edict; and as this had regard to presbyters as well as bishops, he demanded the names of any such then living in Carthage. Cyprian refused to give them; the Roman law, he said, did not allow him to become an informer; neither was it right that they should come forward and report themselves; but let them be sought in the places of their ministry; there they might easily be found. Thus ended this good confession. Cyprian was sent to Curubis; and an order was issued at the same time prohibiting all Christian assemblies, and the common practice of visiting Christian burial places, under penalty of death.

The work of proscription spread throughout Africa. In a short time we find, among other forms of punishment, many thrown into chains, and condemned to labor in the mines—bishops and other ecclesiastics mainly, but along with them also some of the laity, including even females and small boys. From the place of his exile, Cyprian forwarded to these fellow sufferers for the testimony of Jesus a large sum of money, from such means as he had still at command, accompanying the gift with a glowing letter of congratulation and encouragement, which well serves at the same time to show the ardor and courageous zeal of his own mind in the near prospect of martyrdom. For to this issue he now confidently expected to come. He had re-

ceived notice of it in a vision.' The oracle however inspired him with no dread. On the contrary, it was to him a source only of joy and strength. The letter to which we have just referred breathes this spirit, in almost every line. "Your glory would require, most blessed and beloved brethren," it begins, "that I should myself come to see and embrace you, were it not that I also am bound as an exile to fixed limits for the confession of the Name. But in such way as I can, I present myself before you; though not with outward bodily approach, yet in affection and spirit I come, expressing by letter the mind with which I triumphantly exult in those virtues and praises which are yours, reckoning myself a partner with you, in the fellowship of love, though not in bodily passion. How indeed can I hold my voice in silence, when I hear of those who are so very dear to me so many glorious things, proceeding from the Divine favor; that a part of you, by the consummation of their martyrdom, should have already gone before to receive from the Lord the crown of their merits; while a part still tarry in the confinement of prisons, or in the mines and chains, furnishing by these very delays a larger amount of example to confirm and animate others, advancing by protracted torments to more ample titles of merit, about to have hereafter for reward celestial compensations answering to the days which are now numbered in pain?" Then, after remarking that such distinction at the end well befitted the exemplary character of their previous Christian life, the epistle goes on: "That you should have been grievously beaten first of all with cudgels, as the beginning of your glorious confession, is not for us a matter of horror. Sticks could not terrify the Christian body, whose whole hope is in the wood. The servant of Christ owns the symbol of his salvation; he who has been by the wood redeemed to eternal life, is here advanced by the wood towards his crown. And what marvel is it that vessels of gold and silver should be yielded to the mines, the place where gold and silver dwell, except that the order is now reversed, so that the mines have begun to receive the precious metals, which they were before wont only to give? They have imposed fetters also on your feet, and have bound your sacred persons, the temples of God, with ignominious chains—

¹ Supernatural communications of this sort, in one form or another, would seem to have been not unfrequent in his experience; and he refers to them, from time to time, in a way which shows them to have been looked upon as by no means out of course in the life of the Church as it then stood.

as if with the body the spirit too might be bound, or your gold could be sullied by the contact of iron. For men dedicated to God, and religiously maintaining the testimony of their faith, these are ornaments, not bonds, the feet of Christians are not put to shame by them, but made illustrious rather for coronation. O feet happily bound, that are to be set free, not by the smith, but by the Lord! O feet happily bound, which move in the way of salvation towards paradise! O feet bound for the present in the world, that they may be free with the Lord forever! O feet held back for a time by fetters and gyves, about to run swiftly with glorious course to Christ! Let cruelty and malice hold you in chains here at their pleasure, soon shall ye pass from the earth and these pains to the realms of heaven. The body is not indulged in the mines with bed and pillows, but it is refreshed with the consolations of Christ. The limbs weary with labor lie on the ground, but it is no punishment to lie there with Christ. The person, externally unwashed and squalid, is the more purified by the Spirit within. There is but little bread there; but man lives not by bread alone, but also by the word of God. There is lack of clothing against the cold; but he who has put on Christ has both raiment and ornament enough. The half-shaven head looks frightful; but since the head of the man is Christ, the head which is thus distinguished for the Lord's name must be honorable in any form." It might seem hard, that "no opportunity was had there for the priests of God to offer and celebrate Divine sacrifices." They must however consider their sufferings themselves a sacrifice to God of the most precious and acceptable kind, that was sure also to be followed with the largest return of heavenly profit. The priests had gloriously led the way in this service, presenting themselves as victims holy and without spot on the altar of God; and the fruit of their consecration was now seen in the similar devotion also of their flocks. "Following your example, a large portion of the people have made with you a like confession and won a like crown, joined with you in the strongest bond of love, and not to be separated from their pastors either by prisons or mines. Among these are not wanting virgins, to whose sixty-fold fruit is now added the hundred-fold, and who are borne thus with double glory towards the celestial crown. Boys also have earned the praise of confession by a virtue beyond their years." In conclusion, they are exhorted to wait joyfully for the hour of their triumphant departure; while an interest is begged in their prayers in the mean time, as now likely to be of special force and effect, in behalf of Cyprian himself and others, whose testimo-

ny had not yet come so nearly to the like glorious end; "that God may deign to consummate the confession of us all, that he may set us safely and gloriously free, along with you, from the darkness and snares of the world, so that we who have stood joined together in the bonds of charity and peace, both against the assaults of heretics and the pressure of the heathen, may rejoice together likewise in the regions of bliss."

In answer to this we have three different letters, written from different locations in the mines, in which these sufferers acknowledge in the warmest terms the kindness of Cyprian, reciprocate his expressions of love, and modestly return his praises as properly less theirs than his own. "Es enim omnibus in tractatu major," they say, "in sermone facundior, in consilio sapientior, in patientia simplicior, in operibus largior, in abstinentia sanctorum, in obsequio humilior, et in actu bono innocentior." They were only his disciples. His confession before the proconsul, followed by his banishment, had been like the sound of a trumpet, summoning the soldiers of God to battle. This first shock, so well sustained, must carry with it the merit in some sense of all that had followed. They hoped only to share with him the crown of his confession by following its steps. They were now helped by his animating words; let him go on still to help them with his continual prayers.

Under a new provincial governor, Cyprian was recalled after nearly a year's absence, and directed to keep himself in the mean time to a retired country residence in the neighborhood of Carthage, till his fate should be farther settled by a new rescript which was now expected from Rome. Valerian had determined to proceed to more rigorous measures for the suppression of Christianity. For bishops, priests and deacons, the penalty was now to be at once death; senators and knights were to have their property confiscated first, and then if they still persisted in their Christian confession must likewise lose their lives; in certain other classes of persons again confiscation was to be joined with banishment and chains. The policy was to remove the clergy, and arrest the spread of Christianity among the higher classes. Pope Sixtus, who had lately dared to take the post of honor made vacant by the death of Stephen, and with him four deacons of the Roman church, were the first victims of this new bloody proclamation. They suffered martyrdom on the sixth of August 258. In Carthage, as Cyprian writes in a letter to Successus (Ep. 80), all the clergy stood to their place, "ready for the brunt of battle, and fully made up in mind for immortality and glory." By private messengers, he had learned the true

nature of the late edict. Despatches were on the way now from the Emperor to the proconsul; "the coming of which we hope for every day," he adds, "with firm faith looking towards the hour of our passion, and expecting through the help and mercy of the Lord the crown of everlasting life." Then follows a request that this information might be conveyed to the bishops of the province generally; "in order that by their exhortation the brotherhood may be everywhere strengthened and prepared for the spiritual conflict, so that all may think less of death than of immortality, and being consecrated to the Lord with full faith and entire heart may rejoice rather than fear in this confession, in which as they know the soldiers of God and of Christ are not killed but crowned."

The rescript came. Soon after it was understood that lictors were sent to bring Cyprian to Utica, where the proconsul had gone at the time to hold his court. With the advice of his friends, however, he withdrew, and kept himself concealed, till the procurator came back to Carthage; in order that he might have the privilege of laying down his life among his own people. So he himself explains the matter in the last letter we have from him, (Ep. 81), addressed at this time to the presbyters, deacons, and universal people of his charge. "It is meet and proper," he writes, "that a bishop should confess the Lord in the place where he has presided over the Lord's church, and the whole flock be made illustrious by the testimony of the pastor in their midst. For whatever the confessing bishop speaks in the moment of confession, he speaks by God's inspiration with the mouth of all. But the honor of our glorious church must suffer damage, if I the regular bishop of another charge should, after sentence, received on confession at Utica, go as a martyr from thence to the Lord; whereas it is my continual prayer and most earnest wish, both for my own sake and for yours, to confess among you, to suffer there, and thence to depart to the Lord. We wait accordingly in this retreat the return of the proconsul to Carthage, ready to hear from him the imperial instructions in regard to those who bear the Christian name, and to speak what it may be the Lord's will to have spoken at the time."

With the return of the proconsul, the illustrious bishop of Carthage again made his appearance, and was immediately afterwards taken into custody. The whole church in that city was thrown into commotion. A large multitude of people accompanied him to the place of judgment and kept watch through the night in dense crowd before the house in which he was kept

confined. When brought before the magistrate, he witnessed a firm, good confession; which drew after it at once his doom to a violent death. The sentence was pronounced: *Let Thascius Cyprian be executed with the sword.* "God be praised!" responded the bishop, and said no more. He was then led, in the midst of a vast body of people, to the spot where his execution was to take place. Here he disrobed himself, kneeled down, and prayed. When the executioner approached, he directed twenty five pieces of gold to be paid to him for what he chose to regard in this way as a service of love. He then bandaged his own eyes; two of his clergy bound his arms; with trembling hand the executioner raised the fatal sword; the venerable head fell. So ended the tragic, but triumphant scene. The object of the saint's ambition was reached. The glorious crown of martyrdom was at last fully and forever won.

The Christians, we are told, spread napkins and handkerchiefs on the ground, that they might be consecrated as relics, it would seem, by coming into contact with the baptism of blood.

The execution took place on the 14th of September a. 258, in the midst of a plain, thickly set with trees, a short distance out from the city. The body was buried privately, during the following night, on the Mappalian way. Two churches were afterwards raised to his memory; one under the name *Mappalia* on the spot where he was buried; the other on the place of his execution, which received the name of *Mensa Cypriana*—that is, the *table* or altar where he was offered as a sacrifice to God. His bones were transferred long after, in the time of Charlemagne, to France.

We shall not pretend to follow this general account of Cyprian's life, with any separate portrait of his character. Our sketch has been so framed, as to allow this to speak for itself. No one can doubt especially the reality and strength of his piety. Religion with him was no form merely, no empty theory or notion, but a living power which possessed and ruled the entire man. He has been charged with a disposition to make too much of the simply outward. But no mistake could be greater than to suppose, that the outward was of any worth or force for him in any merely external view. There was nothing mechanical in his religion, nothing magical or superstitious. He did make account of the outward; but it was only as he held it to be joined, by Divine supernatural association, with the real presence and invisible action of the Spirit. He had no sense for what is sometimes taken to be the highest order of spirituality in modern times—that religious experience, which affects to be

independent of all outward supports and helps, and claims the power of entering into communion directly with the Most High, by virtue simply of its own upward endeavors and flights. Where such habit of thought prevails, the relation between the outward and inward in religion is always felt to be more accidental than necessary, and it becomes accordingly a sort of principle and inaxim that the one can be exalted only at the expense of the other. To be spiritual then is regarded as one and the same thing with being lifted by the activity of the mind, (assisted it is presumed by the Holy Ghost,) out of the world of sense into that of pure thought and feeling; whilst to make account of the objective, in the character of any outward institutions or forms, considered either as human or divine, is taken to be just the opposite of spirituality in its true and best sense. Those who are in this way of thinking can never understand the necessity of laying much stress on the idea of the church and the holy sacraments. They are terribly afraid of what they call reproachfully the sacramental system. The sacraments may be good enough in their place, they think, and the church too is to be honored, particularly under its *invisible* character; but there is a constant tendency in the human mind to make such outward things a substitute for evangelical piety, that is, for the action of the soul as such conversing with God directly in an inward way; and so it is necessary to be very jealous of any view which seems to ascribe to them more than a simply rational and natural force. With this whole mode of thought, it is most certain that Cyprian had no sympathy whatever. His religion was not *evangelical*, in any such technical Baptist or Puritanic sense. The idea of any opposition between the Gospel and the Church, lay as far as possible from his mind. Christianity with him was essentially churchly and sacramental. He could have had no patience with any spirituality, which might have plumed itself on being indifferent to this side of the mystery of godliness, under the dream of moving in a higher and more ethereal region. All *such* spirituality he would have denounced at once, beyond every sort of doubt, as false spiritualism only, Gnostic hallucination, the action of the simply natural mind in the way of religion substituted for the operations of grace under its proper supernatural form. To be in the Spirit was not in his view any exaltation merely of the natural mind as such; that would be after all something born only of the *flesh*, which can never by any stimulation, we are told, produce any thing higher than itself (John iii: 6); it implied

the presence and action of the Holy Ghost in the world under a real form, which was taken to be above nature, and which was felt to involve thus necessarily the idea of an actual constitution, in the bosom of which only, as distinguished from the world in its common form, it could be possible to have part in the grace it was supposed to comprehend. This constitution presented itself to his mind, as an object of faith, according to the Creed, in the mystery of the Holy Catholic Church. There accordingly, and not in the sphere of our natural life on the outside of this Divine constitution, the Spirit was regarded as dwelling and working in a most real objective way, for the sanctification and salvation of sinful men. All true spirituality then, in the view of Cyprian, was conditioned by the believing acknowledgment of this mystery, and an actual submission to the power of it in its own place and under its own proper form. He made vast account certainly of the outward church, of the regular priesthood, of the holy sacraments, of ecclesiastical institutions and forms generally; but it was just because he made all in all of the action of the Spirit, and believed at the same time that such supernatural grace was not to be found in the order of nature, but offered itself for the use of men only in the church, and so through the ministrations and forms of the church—that it was a mystery in such view, which men are bound to take as they find it by faith, and the whole sense of which is lost the moment they pretend to deal with it as an object of mere natural sense and reason.

All falls back then to the question, Was this conception of Christianity true or false? To say that Cyprian laid undue stress on outward institutions and forms, is at bottom simply to call in question the soundness of his whole theory of religion, which was at the same time, as we have seen, the universal theory of the early church—the same too that the church of all ages has professed to accept, in the repetition of the creed. Let this theory be supposed wrong—let the mystery of the Spirit, as a power working in the church under such real supernatural form, (*foolishness* to the natural mind always of course.) fall to the ground, or, which is the same thing, resolve itself into the spiritualism of Quakers, Baptists or Deists, and then it will be easy enough certainly to make out here a most serious defect in the constitution of our martyr's piety. The only difficulty will be to see, how he could have had any true and genuine piety at all. But on the other hand, simply reverse the supposition just made. Instead of taking it for granted that no supernatural grace belonged to the outward church, through the

real presence of the Holy Ghost in its organization, imagine hypothetically the precise opposite of this—that the Holy Ghost namely *was* present and active in the church as a mystery for faith, and that what Cyprian believed here was objectively real and true; and who cannot see, that the whole force of the objection now under consideration is at once overthrown. *That* is all that is wanted, to set a religion of sacraments and priestly forms in perfect harmony with the demands of inward piety. Who will pretend, that such a mode of being in the Spirit—if only the mystery itself be no fiction or dream, and faith be brought to yield itself heartily to its power—is not after all something quite as evangelical and spiritual, if we look at it properly, as the highest flights of devotion under any altogether inward and exclusively subjective form? We may, if we choose, question the reality of this objective grace, the presence of any such actual shekinah in the outward Christian temple. But we are bound at least to allow to Cyprian and his age, the benefit of the imagination. We must judge the early church from the standpoint of its own faith, and not from a position which assumes that this faith was a lie. We must be willing to plant ourselves, for this purpose, on the premises of the ancient creed, taken in its proper original sense. In no other form, can our judgment possibly be entitled to the least respect. Either these premises were true, or they were false. Admit them to have been true, and you can have no right to charge the sacramental system of the ancients with superstition, or to say that they lost sight of the Spirit, the only real source of the truly spiritual as distinguished from the merely *spiritualistic*, in magnifying and exalting ecclesiastical forms; just as little as you may impute superstition or formality to Moses for acknowledging reverentially the presence of God in the burning bush, instead of turning away from it to converse with Him only in his own spirit. Will it be said then that the premises of the creed are false? Very well. That is at all events clear and fair. Then the charge in question has indeed full force. The sacramentalism of the ancients was in sober truth superstition, formalism, miserable mummery, the dead mechanical service of the flesh substituted for the living service of the spirit. But what then becomes of their whole Christianity? How preposterous to speak of it or think of it still, as a Divine fact, as a mystery which carried, in it really and truly the power of the world's salvation. To such issue must the whole question come at last.

We have seen already to some extent, how Cyprian's doctrine

of the church gave character and form to his theological system at other points. Along with the idea of a real Divine polity, as truly present in the world as the Jewish theocracy by which it was foreshadowed, went in his mind the conception also of a ministry exercising really Divine functions, of a proper priesthood, of sacraments powerful to take away sin and forward the soul in the way of everlasting life. Baptism, confirmation, the mystical presence of the holy eucharist, the awful sacrifice of the altar, penance, including confession and absolution, the sacrament of orders, consecrations and holy rites generally, derived for him their significance and force from this article of the Holy Catholic Church. Here only the Bible could have its right authority and proper use. Here only any virtue could have true Christian merit. The idea of the church determined the view taken of heresy and schism. We have seen how it carried the sense of the communion of saints beyond the grave also, leading naturally to sacrifices and prayers for the dead, and encouraging the belief that the saints in heaven make intercession for their brethren who are still in the world. The veneration for relics, which we find in the church from the earliest times, must be referred to the same general sentiment. All these conceptions belong predominantly, we may say, to one general side of the system before us. It remains now to notice briefly the same scheme of Christianity under a second general aspect, in the view it takes of what may be considered more particularly and directly the experimental practical side of the Christian salvation. This will be found to be also conditioned and determined throughout, by the realistic apprehension of the church that enters so universally into the ancient faith. All rests on the basis, and falls into the order, of the Apostles' Creed.

We have in the first place a corresponding view of the natural state of man since the fall. Cyprian has indeed but little to say directly of original sin and its consequences. The controversy with Pelagianism belongs to a later time. But it would be a great mistake to suppose, for this reason, that he had no apprehension or sense of the truth which this controversy afterwards brought into full view. The fact of the fall, and of the consequent moral helplessness of the race, may be said to enter as a sort of quiet substratum into his whole system of religion. This in truth is the case necessarily with any theory of Christianity, in which earnest is made with the mystery of a supernatural church, as was done always in the beginning. The Creed itself, as we all know, is silent on the subject of original sin. But is it this for reason of any uncertain sound as regards Pe-

lagianism? By no means. Puritanism, in its modern form, may affect to find in it here a serious ellipsis, and a reason for tinkering it into new and more orthodox shape. But in the end the very silence of the old Creed on this point is of deeper and more solemn force, than any amount of strained articulation, brought out in the abstract angular style of this unchurchly school. Is it asked why? The answer is easily and immediately at hand. The fact of the fall must of necessity be interpreted always by the fact of redemption. Let this last resolve itself into an abstraction, a mere Gnostic philosophem, as it must always do where Christianity ceases to be churchly and sacramental, and the felt realness of the other will be lost for faith precisely to the same extent. In place of the fact, we shall have a notion, a philosophical myth, in the end a Calvinistic or Hegelian *necessity* simply in the constitution of our natural human life. The only effectual protection from such error, is to be found in the right apprehension of the mystery of the Holy Catholic Church; for this at once brings into view the order of grace as something really in the world, through Christ, under a form above nature—a supernatural mystery—in the bosom of which only the redemption of the race is to be reached; a fact which it is impossible to see and acknowledge heartily, without being made to see and feel at the same time the reality of the fall, as a moral and not simply physical calamity, and the terrible nature of the consequences in which the race has come to be involved by reason of it. No testimony against Pelagianism can be stronger than that of the Creed, regarded in this view. It goes full against all modern theories of the perfectibility of man, considered in the order of nature only. It lays the axe at the root of all humanitarian dreams, by proclaiming the necessity and actual presence of another higher order of life for the accomplishment of man's true destiny. To have any living sense of the mystery that is comprehended for faith in the Church, with its remission of sins, communion of saints, resurrection from the dead and life everlasting, is necessarily to be penetrated to the same extent with the feeling that the life of nature as it lies on the outside of this most real constitution of the Spirit, is absolutely under the power of sin and death; and it is not too much to say, that without such faith in the mystery of the Church, (the world in which the saints *live* on both sides of the grave, and whose powers miraculously transcend the whole reach of the natural understanding,) no sense of what humanity is naturally, and apart from the range of this new creation, can ever be properly sufficient and complete. Faith

in the objective realness of supernatural grace in the church, is the indispensable condition of faith in the objective realness of the fall in the sphere of nature.

Those who make the church a human corporation only, and baptism a mere sign, will be found always to wrong in some way the true significance of the state into which the world has been brought by the fall.

With Cyprian, as we have had full opportunity to see, the world on the outside of the church was altogether without light and hope. The relation between the two states, the order of grace here and the order of nature there, was that of the ark in the time of Noah to the universal desolation with which it was surrounded. The same character of most intense realism extended itself in his mind, to both sides of the awfully solemn contrast. Hence came the saving force of baptism in one direction, the damning power of schism in another. He saw in the first a real translation from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son; in the last a no less real abandonment of this kingdom for the empire of Satan, the god of the present world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience and wrath. He took in strict sense all those passages of the New Testament, in which the world in its natural state is represented as being under the dominion of Satan, as alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in it by reason of sin, and as doomed to perish and pass away in its own vanity; while the true end of man's life is to be sought and found only in a higher order of existence, brought to pass for him through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and offered to him now as a Divine word or promise, which he is required to embrace wholly by faith. The whole poverty and misery of nature, as thus opposed to grace and the hope of everlasting life in Christ, come together for Cyprian in the conception of what he calls the "seculum," the course of our general human existence as related simply to the present world. This in its best estate is altogether vanity. It is blind, dark, prone to all evil, and powerless to all good. It lies under the curse of the fall. It is a state of dismal exclusion and exile from paradise. Those who belong to it walk continually in a vain show. Their life is a false and empty dream; from which they are to wake hereafter only to shame and everlasting contempt.

All salvation, in these circumstances, is held to be only and wholly of God's free grace. It can be in no part the fruit of human activity or counsel, going before this grace or working aside from it in any way of separate merit and power. The

Creed rests throughout on the idea, that redemption in the case of men is possible only in an order of things above nature, in the bosom of a supernatural system. The ancient theory of the church and sacraments, rightly apprehended, here again cuts up all Pelagianism by the roots. It takes in the most real sense the declaration, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Mere nature or flesh is held to be absolutely impotent for all purposes of righteousness and life. We must be saved by grace, descending upon us from heaven under another mode of existence altogether. For this great mystery room is made only through the death and resurrection of Christ. No other foundation can be laid. He is the propitiation for our sins. He is the second Adam. Through him only is it possible to have access to the Father. Cyprian is every where full and explicit in the acknowledgement of all this. He is of one mind in regard to it with St. Paul.

On the question moreover of the personal appropriation of this objective salvation, he would have been ready to answer promptly: "By grace are we saved *through faith*; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." The subjective side of this new creation, no less than the objective, was for him undoubtedly something that sprang, not from nature as such, but only from the new order of life itself which it was required to embrace. But it is hardly necessary to say, that the doctrine of justification by faith, as we have it brought out by Luther at a later day, is not to be found anywhere in Cyprian's writings; for it is now generally understood and admitted, that it was unknown in this form to the ancient church universally. This does not at once show the doctrine to be at war with the ancient faith. Theology may require in a later stage of its history distinctions and determinations, which were not called for in the period going before. The two conceptions of justification and sanctification, which it has been found so important to hold apart in our Protestant confessions and catechisms, flow always more or less together in the Bible; and in the thinking of the early church they come before us continually in the same concrete form. The objective side of the process is never so sundered from the actual life of the personal subject, as to be considered his property, without being at the same time a real quality of his life itself in some way. Cyprian, as we have seen, makes vast account of faith. But it is not just in the Lutheran view of this grace. Faith with him is simply the acknowledgment of the mystery of the Christian salvation as something actually present in the church, and a firm reliance on it in such view for

the accomplishment of its own ends. It is the power of owning practically, as certain and true, the supernatural realities of the Gospel, the solemn assurances of God's word, which the natural mind is able at best to embrace only as unsubstantial notions. The declaration that the just shall live by faith is taken to mean in this way, that the lively apprehension of heavenly and eternal things enables the righteous man, the true follower of Christ, to overcome the world and lay hold on everlasting life. This would seem to be the same view that is taken of the subject in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; where the examples brought forward from the Old Testament go singly to show the power which this supernatural principle has in the just, to enable them to do what would be impossible to mere nature, by making sure to them, on the authority of some Divine word, things that have no certainty in any other form. Faith in this case is not the instrument simply, by which righteousness is received in a purely outward way; it is regarded rather as the very form of righteousness itself in the believer's soul; as where St. Paul says: "We walk by faith; or St. John: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." In Cyprian's scheme of theology the efficient cause of justification is the mercy of God, the meritorious cause the righteousness of Christ, the instrumental cause the sacrament of baptism, while what has been called the formal cause is the actual appropriation of this objective grace on the part of the sinner himself. The power of such appropriation is something above nature, a gift from God which goes along with the grace that is offered to it in the church; the exercise of it however is necessarily an active state of the personal subject in whom it is found, and must set what it appropriates in real union with his life. It makes him just, implants in him a real principle of righteousness, by the new living relation into which he is thus brought with the redemption that is found in Christ. This justice or righteousness supposes faith throughout; involves it; holds in the power of it continually as its necessary subjective form. Faith so joined with its proper object is of itself a state of justification. In such view again however, it is at once more than mere faith. It includes also charity or love, by which it becomes at the same time the germ of sanctification, the principle of all good works.

In this way we may easily comprehend how Cyprian comes, in the full spirit of the whole patristic theology, to lay so much emphasis and stress on the necessity and merit of good works. On this subject he abounds in a style of speaking, which is apt

to strike modern evangelical ears as being, to say the least, very unguarded and by no means safe. His language sounds often like a downright contradiction of what many take to be the sense of St. Paul, on the doctrine of salvation by faith. It seems to make all hang rather on works; and taken in connection especially with the virtue he attributes to the sacraments, may readily enough be construed as lending countenance to a merely legal religion of the most outward and mechanical sort. No one however can enter into Cyprian's spirit, or make himself at home in his actual world of thought, without feeling that no such judgment can be relied upon as intelligent and just. Cyprian is no dealer in mere forms and dead works. If his piety seem to us of this cast, there is fair room to suspect something wrong in ourselves. We are bound at all events to believe, that we have not penetrated fully the sense of his system; and should consider it worth our serious pains, to cultivate some better acquaintance with it in its own proper form.

He himself, it is certain, never dreamed of being in the least opposition here to the doctrine of St. Paul. The idea of good works, of works acceptable to God and deserving heaven, on the part of the simply natural man, never entered into his mind. They are considered possible only in the case of one who is already made just to some extent, by being united to Christ through the glorious power of the gospel. They are the fruit of supernatural grace. They own their whole possibility and worth to the "obedience of faith," and the actual mystery of righteousness which is made to meet and fill this habit of the soul in a real way through the church. Hence they can have no place on the outside of this Divine constitution. Even martyrdom, in a state of schism, has no merit. In the church however, such works are but the necessary product of the Christian life itself. Without them, faith must be dead. If it live and act at all, it must *work by love*. It completes itself in the form of good works; which then are not another different kind of righteousness, but serve simply to bring into view the full meaning and force of the inward habit from which they spring; just as the branches of the vine bring forth fruit, in virtue of the life which unites them to the parent stock. As such fruit, the real produce of the branches, detracts nothing from the proper dignity of the vine, but sets this rather in the most conspicuous light; for what would the vine be without foliage and fruit; so says our blessed Lord himself: "Herein is my Father glorified, that *ye bear much fruit*; so shall ye be my disciples." And as good works are necessary in this way, so may they easily be

seen to carry with them actual merit also ; not of course in the way of any original or independent desert on the part of the believer ; all thought of that is excluded by the relation in which they stand necessarily to the only source and fountain of all righteousness in Christ ; but yet as really and truly laying a foundation for reward, through God's mercy, in the new world of grace to which they belong. They are in this view a qualification for glory and honor and immortality, and may be said to deserve accordingly the crown they are hereafter to receive.

Very special virtue is attributed, in particular, to the giving of alms and to works of mercy in every form. Prayer, we are told (*De Oratione Dominica*, §. 32,) in order that it may be efficacious, must not be naked and alone. "Sterile supplications to God have no power. As every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire, so prayer without fruit can have no merit with God, being divorced from work. This Divine Scripture teaches, when it says (Tob. xii : 8) : 'Prayer is good with fasting and alms.' For he who will render a reward in the day of judgment for works and alms, inclines now also graciously to him who joins work to prayer. Thus at last Cornelius, the Centurion, when he prayed, was found worthy to be heard. He gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway ; and so an angel stood by him as he was praying about the ninth hour, with this testimony to his work : Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God. Swiftly those prayers ascend to God, which are borne to him by the merit of our good works."

The tract *De Opere et Eleemosynis*, as its title shows, is entirely devoted to this subject. We learn at once from its introduction, in what light works of mercy are regarded, and in what relation they are supposed to stand to the great interest of salvation.

"Many and great are the divine benefits," it runs, "which the abounding kindness of God the Father and of Christ has wrought and is still working for our salvation ; that the Father sent his Son to restore us and give us life, and that the Son was willing to be sent and to become the Son of Man, in order to make us the sons of God—humbled himself, that he might raise those who were before prostrate—was wounded, that he might cure our wounds—became a servant, that he might bring liberty to those who were in bondage—endured death, that he might bestow on mortals immortality. These are manifold and great gifts of Divine mercy. But what providence is it besides this, and how great clemency, that salutary counsel has been

taken prospectively for the full preservation of man when thus redeemed. For when the Lord, coming into the world, had healed those wounds which Adam carried, and cured the old poison of the serpent, he laid down the law, that he who was made whole should sin no more, lest something worse should happen to him. We were shut up and confined to close bounds by the injunction of innocence. Nor would there have been any help for the lapses of human frailty, if the Divine goodness had not again interposed, by pointing to works of justice and mercy, to open for us a way of maintaining salvation—that whatever stains should afterwards be contracted, we might wash them away *by alms*. The Holy Spirit declares in the Divine Scriptures: ‘By alms and faith sins are purged’ (Prov. xvi: 6). Not of course those sins which were first contracted; for these are purged by the blood and sanctification of Christ. So again he says: ‘Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins’ (S'r. iii: 30). Here also it is shown and proved, that as by the laver of saving water the fire of hell is quenched, so the flame of sins is set at rest by alms and good works. And whereas remission of sins is given once in baptism, continuance in such well doing afterwards as a certain semblance of baptism again procures the Divine indulgence. This our Lord also teaches in the Gospel. For when his disciples were noticed for eating without having first washed their hands, he answered and said: ‘Did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you’ (Luke xi: 40, 41); showing and teaching thus, that not the hands are to be washed, but the breast, and that stains within are to be removed rather than such as are without—that he who has purged that which is within may be said to have purged also that which is without, and with the cleansing of the mind to have begun to be clean also in his outward person. And then to show how we may be pure and clean, he added that we must give alms. The Merciful One teaches and exhorts to do mercy, and because he seeks to preserve those whom he has with great price redeemed, shows how such as have become polluted after the grace of baptism may again be purged and made clean.”

This is sufficiently plain. Baptism takes away all previous sins; but it makes no provision for sins afterwards committed. For the removal of these, mere repentance and prayer are not enough. Fasting is not enough. There must be works of charity and mercy. These, by God’s gracious appointment,

have a real force to do away the stains thus contracted by the soul, and to recommennd it anew to the Divine favor.

The tract then goes on to exhort those to whom it is addressed, to make free and continual use of this heavenly indulgence. Quotations and examples are brought forward largely from the Bible. One is almost surprised to find them so full and apt. The use made of the case of Tabitha, in the Acts of the Apostles, (ix: 36-42), is striking. Alms had power here, it is said, to restore even from the first death. When Peter came into the room where her corpse lay, he found himself surrounded by widows weeping and showing the coats and garments which she had made while she was yet with them, "interceding for the deceased not so much with their voices as with her own works." Peter felt that what was so asked could be obtained, and that Christ who had himself been clothed in his own poor would not be wanting now to their earnest supplications. "After he had kneeled accordingly, and as a fit advocate of widows and the poor presented to the Lord the prayers committed to his charge, turning to the body, which was now washed and laid out upon the table, he said, 'Tabitha, arise in the name of Jesus Christ.' Nor did he fail to bring help at once, who had said in the Gospel that whatever was asked in his name should be granted. So death is suspended, the spirit returns, and to the admiration and astonishment of all the body is restored alive once more to the light of this world. So much could the merits of mercy accomplish; of such avail were righteous works! She who had ministered to distressed widows the means of living, was found worthy to be recalled to life by the prayer of widows."

So throughout the tract, the giving of alms is enforced as something actually meritorious in the sight of God, by which men have it in their power to make satisfaction for their sins, and to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. Such is the view of Cyprian everywhere, and such would seem to have been the doctrine of the universal church in the age to which he belonged.

Another exemplification of the same general way of thinking is presented to us, in the vast account which was made of confession and martyrdom. How far this went, we have had ample opportunity to see already. Martyrdom is regarded as a sort of sacrament. The baptism by water has its full parallel here, and in some respects more than this, in the baptism by blood. The second baptism in such form excels the first. "It is more ample in grace," according to Cyprian, "more sublime in pow-

er, more costly in honor; a baptism, with which angels baptize; a baptism, in which God and his Christ exult; a baptism, after which there is no more sin; a baptism, which consummates the growth of our faith; a baptism, which as we leave the world unites us at once with God. In the baptism of water we obtain remission of sins; in the baptism of blood, the crown of virtue. It is a thing to be embraced, and desired, and sought with our most importunate prayers, that we who are the servants of God may be also his friends" (*De Exh. Martyrii*, §. 4). It is emphatically a good work, the sublimest act of faith, the most intense concentration of the whole meaning and power of the Christian life; and in the same proportion it carries in it the real merit of this life, power to please God, power to atone for sin, and a title to everlasting glory and renown in the world to come. For this way of looking at the subject, there was supposed to be full justification in those frequent passages of the Bible, in which the trials and sufferings of the pious for righteousness' sake are represented as being sure of a corresponding reward hereafter; such as: "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*".—"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."—"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—"Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, &c. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven."—"Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."—"There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."—"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." These, and many other texts besides of like strain, were taken, by the simplicity of the ancient church, in the most literal and strict sense. They were felt to mean precisely what they seem to say; and in view of them, there seemed to be no extravagance, in glorifying as was done on all sides the merit of confession, or in making it an object of ambition even, to win the laurels of martyrdom, and to wear its everlasting crown. To a generation, whose highest ideal of the perfection of man is a vision of rail-roads, electric telegraphs, natural science, material prosperity, and self-governing democracy, all this may appear sufficiently fanatical, and not exactly according to evangelical rule. But the church in the beginning, it is hardly necessary to say, was no such generation. It had faith. Its ideal was in the world of things not seen and eternal.

Another special and extraordinary form of merit was found in the state of virginity. In the third book of his *Testimonia*, Cyprian devotes a special head (c. 32) to this subject, made up altogether of such Scriptural passages as appear to him in point for establishing its claims. They are taken partly from the Old Testament, and partly from the New: Gen. iii: 16.—Math. xix: 11, 12.—Luke xx: 34—38.—I Cor, vii: 1—7, 32—34.—Ex. xix: 15.—I Sam. xxi: 5.—Rev. xiv: 4. It is not to be questioned, but that these passages, rightly considered, are of real force in favor of the principle which is here involved. They go to show, in harmony with the natural religious sense of the whole world, that virginity and continence are not a matter of indifference in the service of God, but form in certain circumstances a special qualification or meetness for coming before him in an acceptable manner. Such was the view universally of the early church, back it would seem to the very time of the Apostles. Hence the great importance attached from the beginning to the celibacy of the clergy. Hence the account made of widows and virgins, devoted to God and consecrated to the service of the church. They form a standing class in the Christian congregation, as well known as any order of the clergy. Cyprian refers to them often, and speaks of their state always in terms of the highest respect. We have one tract from him, *De Habitu Virginum*, occupied wholly with this subject; which while it brings into view some faults and disorders belonging to the system as it then prevailed in Carthage, and aims severely at their correction, may be said notwithstanding to overflow with veneration throughout for the institute itself, as one that was felt to be of special ornament and worth for the Church.

The tract opens with a representation of the necessity of Christian discipline in general, for the purposes of salvation. All depends on knowing and firmly following the heavenly rules and precepts of the Gospel. Grace sets us free from our previous sins in baptism, makes us whole, and then says: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." The command of innocence follows the gift of soundness, (*dat innocentie legem postquam contulit sanitatem*"); salutary discipline must complete what by Divine privilege is thus happily commenced and made possible. So in the case of every age and state. But here he has to do with a state that is special, and as such bound to a special rule of sanctification. "Our discourse is now to virgins, who in proportion as they stand higher in glory are also an object of greater concern. They are the flower of

the ecclesiastical stock, the beauty and ornament of spiritual grace, a joyous progeny, a work of praise and honor whole and incorrupt, the image of God reflecting the sanctity of our Lord, the more illustrious portion of Christ's flock. Through these is made to rejoice, and in these largely flourishes, the glorious fecundity of the church as a mother; and the more the number of virgins is made to abound, so much the more does the joy of the mother increase. To these we now speak, these we exhort, with affection rather than authority; not as claiming, in our extreme littleness and insignificance, (of which we are fully conscious,) any right of censure, but because the more concern quickens caution, the greater is our apprehension of the assaults of the Devil." And so the tract then goes on to enforce, on the part of those to whom it is addressed, a whole and entire consecration to Christ, outwardly as well as inwardly, in the spirit of their special vocation and engagement, that such high distinction in the church might not fail finally of its proper heavenly reward. Virgins must look upon themselves as more than others dead to the present world. They were to consider themselves married to the Lord. In their case especially all ornaments, all attention to dress, all vain company, were to be considered wholly out of place. They must not put themselves in any way of temptation; they are bound to avoid even the appearance of evil. Were any of them possessed of wealth? This could be no reason for laying it out in mere worldly show. Let it be devoted to charitable uses. Let it be put out to interest with God. Let it go to feed Christ in the persons of the poor. Those who had renounced the world, and embraced a state so high above it, should walk and live accordingly. The way to heaven is narrow and hard in any case; but the way of virginity, like that of martyrdom, as it looks towards a higher reward than that which awaits the common Christian life, lies also through greater difficulties and calls for greater diligence and care. Those who aspire to its celestial crown, cannot go too far in divorcing themselves from every worldly interest and expectation, and may well count every sacrifice cheap that serves in any way to help them forward in so noble a pursuit. There are different degrees of honor in heaven, for different degrees of merit; as the seed which is sown in good ground is said to bring forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty fold, some thirty-fold. The first hundred-fold reward belongs to the martyrs. The second sixty-fold measure is reserved for virgins. Let them not shrink, with such prospect, from any self-denial required by their state. Let them remain steadily true to their vows.

In the world to come, we are told, the children of the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are equal to the angels. "What others are to become thus hereafter," the address continues, "ye have begun to be already. Ye possess the glory of the resurrection even now in this world; ye pass through the world without the world's contamination; by persevering in charity and virginity ye are equal to the angels of God. Only let the virginity remain complete and inviolate, and hold on steadily as it has bravely begun, seeking not outward ornaments of jewelry and apparel, but only those of the spirit. Let it regard God and heaven, and not bring down the eyes which have been raised on high to the desires of the flesh or world, nor fix them on things of the earth."

The command to increase and multiply, it is said in conclusion, had regard to the wants of the world when it was yet void of population; it was for the use and service of nature. After it now comes, for such as can bear it, the rule of celibacy, in the service of the world of grace. Not as a command however; but as a counsel only, submitted to free will and choice. Heaven is made up of many mansions; among which a superior place is reserved for such as accept this higher law. All who come to the laver of baptism are there purged from their old pollution by a new birth; but this bears a character of special sanctity in those, who break in full with the desires of nature and the flesh. They bear emphatically, even here in the body, the image of the heavenly Adam. Such is the high merit of virginity, when found true to the terms of its own institution. "Let this be your affectionate industry and care, O excellent virgins, who set apart to God and to Christ are already gone before, in better and chief part, to the Lord to whom ye are consecrated. Let those advanced in years exercise authority over the younger; let the younger encourage their associates. Rouse one another with mutual exhortations, provoke one another by virtuous competition to glory. Hold out bravely, go forward with spirit, reach happily the end. Only see that ye then bear us in mind, when virginity shall have begun in you to wear its crown."

Here we have very clearly the Catholic conception of *evangelical counsels*, as they are called, offering to such as have power to embrace them a higher form of righteousness than that which is necessary for all men as the condition simply of their salvation; and along with this, as a matter of course the conception also of a more than usual merit in the case of such eminent saints, as well as of a title to a larger measure of

heavenly glory than is to be expected by others. In this way the door is thrown open at once for the whole ascetic system which fills so much space, and plays so important a part, in the theology and religious life of the ancient church.

It is the fashion with many in modern times, to dispose of all this side of Early Christianity in a very easy and summary way. They set it down at once for a wholesale corruption, brought into the church from the heathen world. The Oriental Philosophy abounded in ascetic maxims and practices. Gnosticism made a vast parade of similar delusions and dreams. Christianity resisted these errors; prevailed over them in fact in their foreign form; and then, strangely enough, made room for the vanquished foe in her own bosom. We have had occasion before to notice, how far this monstrous theory is carried by Isaae Taylor. The old ascetic system of the church he finds to be a wretched compound simply of Buddhism and Brahminism throughout, borrowed immediately from the conquered Gnostic sects. This is outrageously gross; and it is not easy to see certainly how it can be set in harmony with any sort of real faith whatever in the divine origin and true historical continuance of Christianity, as a revelation starting from Christ, and upheld by his Spirit. It represents however, as we all know, a widely extended theological school, both in the Episcopal body and on the outside of it, which at times affects to glory notwithstanding, (precious inconsistency and contradiction!) in the purity and strength of the Primitive Church, as a legacy of praise which it fancies itself entitled in some kind of way to consider peculiarly its own. Neander of course is far more careful and just. And yet he too falls to some extent into the same view. The relation of Christianity to the world, he tells us, is a twofold one, it must first oppose its previous life as ruled by the principle of sin, and then take possession of it positively by filling the forms of nature with its own higher power. The negative side of this process, coming before the other in the beginning, had a tendency naturally to become extreme; and the false asceticism of the Pagan and Gnostic worlds falling in at the same time with this posture of things, forced its way gradually into the mind of the church, and made the error complete (K. G. 2nd ed. I. p. 473-478.)

This is the exact counterpart of the supposed corruption of early Christianity, on another side, by the Jewish element. There the church having in the first place surmounted Judaism, is represented as afterwards allowing it to come to a resurrection again in her own bosom, and here the very same process is re-

garded as having place in the case of Paganism. In both cases, the conclusion is reached by adopting in the first place a hypothesis concerning the true nature of Christianity, which requires the facts exhibited in its actual history to be accounted for in this way. Give up the hypothesis, and the solution of itself at once falls to the ground. The great question is always, whether the hypothesis is to be regarded as true or false.

So far as the principle of the ascetic system is concerned, it would carry us quite too far to pretend to go into its examination here. We can only say, that the general spirit of the New Testament, in our opinion, together with the universal voice of natural religion in all ages of the world, and the religious instinct as it is felt by every unsophisticated mind, is full against the general position of Neander; and that the form in which the subject is placed by Isaac Taylor, and the school he represents, is nothing short of a low theory of naturalism, that will be found to be radically at war in the end with the universal conception of religion in any truly supernatural form.

We are now done with Cyprian and his theology. Our object has been to describe simply, rather than to explain or defend. We have wished however to make the picture properly coherent with itself, and to set one part of it in right relation always to another. So much was due, in a case of this sort, to simple historical verity. If the representation may have proved offensive to some, we are sorry for it; but we are not able to see well how it could be helped. What is the ground of dissatisfaction? That the subject should have been brought into inquiry or review at all? Or, that it should not have been *fore-
ed* to present itself in quite another light? Are we to be silent where history is concerned, or must we bend it into a false and deceitful shape, to escape the glare of unpleasant truth—and this too to please those, who are forever wearying our ears with the stalest cant about intelligence, knowledge, free inquiry, coming to the light, and other such common places, and yet can bear no truth or fact, no inquiry or discussion whatever, that goes to disturb and unsettle in the least the profound sense they have of their own infallibility? Cyprian's system of religion, which was at the same time that of his age, we have found to be mainly Catholic, and not Protestant. All is conditioned by the old Catholic theory of the Church; all flows, from first to last, in the channel of the ancient Creed. The whole is in such view in perfect harmony with itself. There is nothing broken or fragmentary in the scheme; and no unprejudiced mind can fail to see, that it is in all material points, in its sum-

damental principles and leading elements, the same system that is presented to us in the Nicene period, and that is brought out still more fully afterwards in the Catholicism of the middle ages. It is not the Protestantism of the sixteenth century, and much less the Puritanism of the nineteenth. This then is the same result precisely that was reached in our articles on Early Christianity; only we have it here under a somewhat different view. The result may not be agreeable or pleasant. But what of that? The only question is, whether it is true. If it be so, we are bound to take it as it is, and to make of it afterwards what we can. Why should we not be willing to know the truth? Have we any interest in ignoring it, in shutting our eyes to it, in obstinately embracing instead of it a shadow or a lie. No sophistry can ever make early Christianity to be the same thing with Protestantism. Episcopalianism here too, with all its pretension and self-conceit, has just as little real historical bottom to stand upon as the cause of the Reformation under a different form. No part of the interest can ever be successfully vindicated, as being a repristination simply of what Christianity was in the beginning; and it is only a waste of strength, and a betrayal indeed of the whole cause, to pretend to make good its assumptions and claims in any such violently false way. Sooner or later history must revenge itself for the wrong it is thus made to bear. Any true defence of Protestantism, as all the waking part of the world is coming to see more and more, must be conducted in altogether different style. The fact now stated must be admitted, and boldly looked in the face. Early Christianity was in its constitutional elements, not Protestantism, but Catholicism. Then there are but two general ways of vindicating the Reformation. We must either make all previous Christianity, back to the time of the Apostles, a Satanic apostacy and delusion, and say that the Church took a new start in the sixteenth century, as original as that of the day of Pentecost, and a good deal more safe and sure; which is to give up historical Christianity altogether, and so if we understand it the whole conception also of a supernatural holy and apostolic church. Or else we must resort to the theory of historical development, by which the Catholic form of the church shall be regarded as the natural and legitimate course of its history onward to the time of the Reformation, and the state of things since be taken as a more advanced stage of that same previous life, struggling forward to a still higher and far more glorious consummation in time to come. To reject both of these solutions, and to quarrel only with the facts that imperi-

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ously require either one or the other as the only escape from the argument in favor of the Church of Rome, may well be pronounced *obscurantism* of the first order.

We of course reject in full the unhistorical theory; and one object we have had in view always, has been to expose its most insane and most perfectly untenable character. It is at last but a decent name for infidelity. Religion built on any such foundation as this, rests only on the sand or wind. We are shut up then of course, so far as we have any faith in Protestantism, to the theory of historical development, as the only possible way of setting it in living union with the Divine fact of early Christianity. But this theory may be carried out in various ways, as we have shown on a former occasion. The methods of Newman, Rothe, Schaff, Thiersch, are not just the same. Neander too has in some respects his own scheme. The whole later German theology, in its better form, moves in the bosom of this theory, is constructed upon it, or at least takes it for granted, though often in a vague and indefinite way. If it be asked now, what precise construction *we* propose to apply to the subject, we have only to say that we have none to offer whatever. That has been no part of our plan. If we even had a theory in our thoughts that might be perfectly satisfactory to our own mind, we would not choose to bring it forward in the present connection; lest it might seem that the subject was identified in some way, with any such scheme of explanation.¹ What we have wished, is to present the subject in its own separate and naked form, not entangled with any theory; that it may speak for itself; that it may provoke thought; that it may lead to some earnest and honest contemplation of the truth for its own

¹The "Obscurantism," with which we have to deal in this whole case, is ever ready to lay hold of the vague charge of *theory* and *speculation*, for the purpose of setting aside the force of facts, which it has no power to answer and no will to admit. It would fain have it that all turns here on some philosophical hobby of *historical development*, in the interest of which facts are forced to do service in a strained and violent way. We have however no such hobby to offer or defend. For development as such, in any shape, we care not a fig. We would prefer greatly indeed to have the riddle of church history satisfactorily solved, without recourse to any such help. Our trouble is altogether with *facts*. The theorization is all on the other side. All starts in a particular theory of Christianity, to which both the Bible and Church History are there required to bend throughout. Then follows a scheme of exegesis violent enough. Then again a method or plan of history, the most unnatural that can well be conceived, and as purely ideal as any construction of Hegel or Strauss. And this is to avoid speculation and "philosophy falsely so called!"

sake. The importance of the subject, the nature of the facts in question, is not changed by any theory that may be brought forward for their right adjustment with the cause of Protestantism. This or that solution may be found unsatisfactory; but still the facts remain just what they were before. There they are, challenging our most solemn regard; and it is much if we can only be brought to see that they *are* there, and to look them steadily in the face. We have had no theory to assert or uphold. We offer no speculation. Our concern has been simply to give a true picture of facts. The difficulty of the whole subject is of course clearly before our mind. We feel it deeply, and not without anxiety and alarm. But we are not bound to solve it, and have no more interest in doing so than others. We have not made the difficulty in any way. We are not responsible for it, and we have no mind or care at present to charge ourselves with the burden of its explanation. There it stands before the whole world. It is of age too, we may say, full formed and full grown; let it speak then for itself.

J. W. N.