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BAILEY'S FESTUS.

FESTUS: *A Poem*, by PHILIP JAMES BAILEY. Barrister at Law. Ninth American Edition. Boston: Benjamin B. Mussey & Co. 1850. 12 mo. pp. 412.

THE last great poem of the age! We have little fear that the time will ever come when Smelfungus Redivivus need throw down his pen in despair, declaring that critics must cease to criticise because authors had ceased to write. The present century properly claims the maternity of Reviews, and statistics of the present time would show that it has been increasingly prolific; and yet, if Reviews have any mission to discharge at all, they are scarcely sufficient for the labor ready prepared to their hands. Notwithstanding the practical business character of the present age, it is emphatically an age of authorship; and, while the great facilities and inducements which it affords may elicit much that is worthless and trashy, we cannot help thinking that it gives birth to more golden thought than any preceding one, and that in its womb there are mighty travailings of spirit, the offspring of which a future age will recognise and cherish. There are, doubtless, great eras in the world's history and in national history, when, in correspondence with the outward phase of the age,

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EARLY CHRISTIANITY.

IN an interesting letter of the Rev. Dr. Bacon, written recently from Lyons in France and published in the N. Y. "Independent" and the "American and Foreign Christian Union," we meet with the following passages referring to the present and past religious character of that ancient and venerable city.

"Before I left home I resolved that, if it were possible, I would visit Lyons in my travels, and see for myself what God has wrought there for the revival and advancement of true religion. That city, as you know, is the centre of a great and powerful organization for the propagation of the Roman Catholic faith—an organization second only to the Propaganda at Rome in the extent of its missions and the amount of its resources. In that city, too, the Roman Catholic religion is more flourishing, with the indications of living zeal, and more deeply seated in the affections of the people, than in any other city on the continent of Europe. The fact, then, so often reported to us, that there a Protestant Evangelical Church has been gathered, and that in the midst of such a population evangelical labors have been crowned with signal success, is a fact which the Christian traveler may well turn aside to see."

"Ever since my childhood the name of Lyons has been associated in my thoughts, with the faith and patience of the saints who suffered there as witnesses for CHRIST in the second century. The story of the sufferings and constancy of Pothinus, Blandina, Perpetua, and others, is upon record in the epistle from the Christians of Lyons and Vienne, to their brethren in Asia Minor, with whom they appear to have been closely connected—a document which is familiar to the readers of Milner's Church History, and which is among the earliest and most authentic remains of Christian antiquity. It was an interesting thought that I was now for the first time upon ground that had been consecrated by the struggle of primitive Christianity, and watered with the blood of martyrs, some of whom had looked upon the faces of CHRIST'S immediate followers. And now, among the 200,000 inhabitants of Lyons, are there any living remains of the Gospel for which the primitive martyrs suffered, and which gave them the victory? The archbishop of Lyons and Vienne is honored by the Roman Catholic Church as the successor of Pothinus and St. Irenæus; but how slight the resemblance between the pompous and showy worship now performed under the roof of that old cathedral, and the simple prayers and songs of the few disciples who were wont to meet here in some obscure chamber "with their bishops and deacons," sev-

enteen hundred years ago. Where are the successors of those primitive Christians?

"It was with such thoughts that I went forth on the morning of the LORD'S day to find the Evangelical Chapel in the *Rue de l'Arbre Sec*. I looked in at the cathedral and at other churches, splendid with pictures and images, as I past by, and beheld their devotions; and it seemed to me that the city could hardly have been more given to idolatry in the palmy days of Pagan Rome, than it is at this day. In these magnificent structures the Christian traveler looks in vain for anything like what he has learned from the New Testament. The worship, instead of being offered exclusively and directly in CHRIST'S name to the one living and true God, is offered to deified mortals, and chiefly to Mary, "the mother of God." Instead of being addressed only to an invisible God, who is a spirit, and who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, it is offered to images and pictures, (and those, for the most part, of no superior description,) and to dead men's bones. Not in such places, nor where such worship is offered, are we to look for the true succession from the apostles and primitive martyrs, the true Catholic Church, which is the body of CHRIST."

Dr. Bacon's letter is addressed to an Association of Benevolent Ladies in New Haven, whose contributions have gone for a number of years past, through the Foreign Evangelical Society, (now the Am. and For. Chr. Union,) towards the support of an evangelical missionary in Lyons. In that city, containing with its immediate environs at least 300,000 inhabitants—next to Paris, the most populous and influential city of France—the great centre of Papal influence—the truth, according to Dr. Baird, has made greater progress within the last twenty years than in any other city of the same country. "The work began in 1825, or even earlier, in the efforts of a pious Swiss Protestant shoemaker. In the humble apartment of this poor man little meetings were held for reading the Scriptures and prayer. It was at these meetings, we believe, that Mr. Moureton, the brave grenadier of Napoleon, (who was in the battle of Leipsic, and several others in the later years of the reign of that wonderful man,) was converted." There was of course a considerable body of Protestantism there before; but this unfortunately had ceased to be evangelical; like the Protestantism of France generally had glided into dead rationalistic formality. The church here noticed is a wholly new and independent movement. The pious grenadier, Mr. Moureton, in the capacity of a deacon and colporteur, has done much to promote it for a series of years by his labors among the laboring population of Lyons and its sub-

urbs. The Rev. Adolphe Monod, settled as one of the pastors of the regular Protestant church in 1829, was soon after "brought to the saving knowledge of Christ, and began to preach the true Gospel with great zeal and power;" the result of which was, that the worldly-minded consistory of the church took offence, and soon after deposed him from his office. In this way he became the head of the small evangelical interest just noticed, which now assumed the character of a separate church, and has since grown into its present importance. It is remarkable however, that this improved Protestantism has derived but little of its material from the ranks of the old Protestantism. "Mr. Monod soon found that the new church was to be increased not so much by bringing back the degenerate Protestants from their rationalism to the simplicity of the gospel, as by conversions from among the Roman Catholics. Thus his enterprise became from the outset a work of evangelism among the manufacturing population of the city and its crowded suburbs. Into that field of labor he entered with great zeal and great success. And when, on the removal of Mr. Monod to Paris a few years ago, he was succeeded by Mr. Fisch, the work went on with undiminished prosperity"—that is, the work of turning Catholics into a much better sort of Protestants than could be made generally from the Protestant body itself. Dr. Bacon describes the congregation as very plain, made up for the most part of common laboring people of the lower class, but still as much resembling in its intelligent appearance and simple worship what he had been accustomed to in Puritan America; so that he felt himself, stranger though he was, among brethren of the same household of faith. In the afternoon, he attended a meeting of the brotherhood for mutual conference and inquiry.

"It was held in a school-room, and very much resembled a Congregational church meeting in New England. There was however one obvious difference. Those brethren were not merely concerned with the working of a system defined and understood in all its details, and familiar to them from their childhood. With the New Testament in their hands, they were inquiring after principles and rules of church order; and the question which then chiefly occupied their attention, and seemed somewhat to divide their opinions, was whether the government of their church should be in part committed to a body of elders, or retained entire in the hands of the assembled brethren. As I listened to the discussion, I could not but admire the free and manly yet fraternal spirit in which it was conducted. And as I saw what a school for the development of various intellectual gifts as well as for the culture of Christian affec-

tion, that church had been under its simple democratic organization, I felt quite sure that those brethren, with all their confidence in their teachers, would not be easily persuaded to subvert a system to which they were already so greatly indebted, or to divest themselves of the right of freely debating and voting on all their interests and duties as a church."

The letter states, that there are now in the city and suburbs four chapels, in addition to the mother church, one with a distinct pastor the other three missionary preaching places—that four ministers, several evangelists and a number of colporteurs, are constantly employed—that the total number of communicants in 1850 was 440, while about 2500 persons were more or less directly connected with the evangelical community; whereupon the excellent and much respected writer concludes:

"I think that in these facts the ladies who formerly contributed to aid the good work at Lyons, will find evidence that their coöperation was not in vain. Rarely have I enjoyed anything more than I enjoyed my visit to that missionary and apostolical church. Nor do I know where to look for a more satisfactory representation of the ideal of primitive Christianity than may be found in the city which was made illustrious so long ago by the labors of Irenæus, and by the martyrdom of Pothinus and Blandina."

In reading this, we were reminded of certain notices of the same place, in somewhat similar style, from the pen of the Rev. Daniel Wilson, (then of Islington, but better known since as Bishop of Calcutta,) in his work entitled "Travels on the Continent of Europe in the Summer of 1823;" as also of certain parallel passages in the same work, relating to the early and later Christianity of the celebrated city of Milan. Take in the case of Lyons the following extracts:

"This morning I have visited St. Irenée, the site of the ancient city, though now only a suburb. I here visited the Roman baths at the Ursuline Monastery (formerly so, for all the monasteries and convents were abolished at the Revolution.) These baths consist of a series of numerous dark vaults, communicating with each other, about twenty feet under ground; but no longer interesting, except from their antiquity. I then went to what was the garden of the Minimes, and saw the remains of the Roman Amphitheatre, where the early Christians were exposed to the wild beasts. This scene affected me extremely. The form of the Amphitheatre remains, after a lapse of sixteen or seventeen centuries. Some traces may be discovered of the rising seats of turf, and several dilapidated brick vaults seem to indicate the places where the wild beasts,

and perhaps the holy martyrs, were guarded. It is capable of holding an immense assemblage—perhaps 30 or 40,000 persons. A still more elevated range of seats, to which you ascend by decayed stone steps, seem to have been the place allotted for the magistrates and regulators of the barbarous shows. A peaceful vineyard now flourishes where these scenes of horror once reigned. The tender garden shrub springs in the seats and vaults. The undisturbed wild flowers perfume the air. A stranger now and then visits the spot, and calmly inquires if that was the Amphitheatre which once filled all Christendom with lamentation. What a monster is persecution, whether Pagan, Popish, or Protestant! And yet, till the beginning of the last century, it was hardly banished from the general habits of Europe. Would to God that even now it could be said to be utterly rooted out!

“I visited, after this, the church of St. Irenée, built in the time of the Romans, when the liberty of public worship was refused the Christians. It is subterraneous, and contains the bones of the many thousand Christians who were martyred in the year 202, under the emperor Severus. It is of this noble army of martyrs that Milner gives such an affecting account: An inscription on the church states, that St. Pothinus was sent by Polycarp, and founded it; and was martyred under the emperor Antoninus; that St. Irenæus succeeded him, and converted an infinite multitude of Pagans, and suffered martyrdom, together with nineteen thousand Christians, besides women and children, in the year 202; and that in the year 470, the church was beautified. I have not an exact recollection of what Milner says, and therefore may be wrong in giving credit to some of these particulars; but I have a strong impression that the main facts agree with the tradition on the spot; and I confess, I beheld the scene with veneration. I could almost forgive the processions which are twice in the year made to this sacred place, if it were not for the excessive ignorance and superstition attending them.

“Near to this church are some fine remains of a Roman aqueduct, for conveying water to the city, built at the time of Julius Cæsar. A convent of three hundred nuns has arisen since the peace, in the same place, of the order of St. Michel, where many younger daughters are sent from the best families, to be got out of the way, just the same as under the ancient regime. In saying this, I do not forget that the education in many of the convents is, in some respects, excellent, and that the larger number of young persons are placed there merely for a few years for that purpose. Still the whole system is decidedly bad, and unfriendly to the highest purposes of a generous education.”

“Upon looking carefully into Milner's Ecclesiastical History, since I came home, I find there were two early persecutions of the

Christians at Vienne and Lyons (neighboring French towns,) one about the year of our Lord 169, under the emperor Marcus Antoninus; the second under Septimus Severus, about the year 202. The first of these is best known, and the accounts in Milner refer to it. The scene of its cruel executions was the Amphitheatre which I visited as I have above mentioned. The second is not so credibly attested, but at the same time may on the whole be believed to have taken place. The church of St. Irenée relates exclusively to it. Pothinus was bishop of Lyons during the first cruelties; he had been a disciple of the blessed Polycarp, the contemporary of the apostle John. He perished about the year 169, being upwards of ninety years of age; he had been sent, in all probability, by Polycarp from Smyrna to found these French churches; for the merchants of Smyrna and Lyons were the chief navigators of the Mediterranean sea. This could not be very long before the persecution burst out. He was accompanied in his apostolical labors by Irenæus, an Asiatic Greek also, who wrote the interesting and authentic account of the first acts of the martyrs, preserved by Eusebius, and given so well by Milner. Irenæus succeeded Pothinus as bishop, and suffered martyrdom in the persecution of 202."

The animus of the writer in all this, the inward posture with which he looks upon the past and its relation to the present, comes out more clearly in the notice he takes of Milan and its distinguished prelates St. Ambrose and St. Charles Borromeo.

"*Sunday morning, Sept. 14.*—This is one of my melancholy Sundays. An immense Catholic town of one hundred and fifty thousand souls—the ecclesiastical apparatus enormous; about two hundred churches, eighty convents, and one hundred religious houses—compare this with the Protestant establishment of Birmingham or Manchester, which fall as far short of what such a crowded population fairly demands, as the Milan establishment exceeds it. We might surely learn something in England of the duty of greater zeal and attention to our pure form of Christianity, from the excessive diligence of the Catholics in their corrupt superstitions.

"I feel a peculiar veneration for Milan on two accounts: St. Ambrose, whom Milner dwells on with such commendations, was the light of this city in the fourth century; Carlo Borromeo, whose benevolence exceeds all description, was archbishop here in the sixteenth. This last I know at present little of; but Ambrose was one of the most humble and spiritual of the fathers of the church, two or three centuries before Popery, properly speaking, began. In this city Ambrose preached: it was here Austin heard him, attracted by the fame of his eloquence. It was here also, that Angilbertus, bishop of Milan in the ninth century, refused to own the

supremacy of the Pope ; indeed, the church of Milan did not submit to the Roman see till two hundred years afterwards. May God raise up another Ambrose to purify and recall the city and churches, which he instructed thirteen or fourteen centuries ago ! Nothing is impossible with God ; but Popery seems to infatuate this people. On the church of Milan notices are affixed, that whoever causes a mass to be said there, may deliver any one he chooses from purgatory. In the mean time, this debasing superstition goes hand in hand with secret infidelity and unblushing vice."

"St. Ambrose died in the year 397, in the 57th year of his age, and the 23d of his episcopate. He has been charged with leaning too much towards the incipient superstitions of his day, and thus unconsciously of helping forward the growth of monastic bondage and prelatical pride. Something of this charge may be true ; but he lived and died firm and unbending in all the fundamentals of divine truth. He loved the Saviour. He depended on his merits only for justification. He relied on the illumination and grace of the Holy Spirit. He delighted in communion with God. A rich unction of godliness rests on his writings ; and he was one of the most fervent, humble, laborious, and charitable of all Christian bishops."

"I have witnessed to-day, with grief and indignation, all the superstitions of Popery in their full triumph. In other towns, the neighborhood of Protestantism has been some check on the display of idolatry ; but here in Italy, where a Protestant is scarcely tolerated, except in the chapels of ambassadors, you see what things tend to ; Popery has its unimpeded course ; every thing follows the guidance and authority of the prevailing taste in religion.

"At half-past ten this morning we went to the cathedral, where seats were obtained for us in the gallery near the altar. We saw the whole of the proceedings at High Mass—priests almost without end—incense—singing—music—processions—perpetual changes of dress—four persons with mitres, whom the people called the little bishops—a crowd of people coming in and going out, and staring around them ; but not one prayer, nor one verse of the Holy Scriptures intelligible to the people, not even if they knew Latin ; nor one word of a sermon ; in short, it was nothing more nor less than a PAGAN SHOW.

"We returned to our inn, and, after our English service, we went to see the catechising. This was founded by Borromeo, in the sixteenth century, and is one of the peculiarities of the diocese of Milan. The children meet in classes of ten or twenty, drawn up between the pillars of the vast cathedral, and separated from each other by curtains ; the boys on one side, the girls on the other. In all the churches of the city there are classes also. Many

grown people were mingled with the children. A priest, and sometimes a layman, sat in the midst of each class, and seemed to be explaining familiarly the Christian religion. The sight was quite interesting. Tables for learning to write were placed in different recesses. The children were exceedingly attentive. At the door of each school, the words, *pax vobis*, peace be unto you, were inscribed on a board; the names of the scholars were also on boards. Each school had a small pulpit, with a green cloth in front, bearing the Borromean motto, *Humilitas*.

“Now what can, in itself, be more excellent than all this? But mark the corruption of Popery: these poor children are all made members of a fraternity, and purchase indulgences for their sins by coming to school. A brief of the Pope, dated 1609, affords a perpetual indulgence to the children in a sort of running lease of six thousand years, eight thousand years, &c., and these indulgences are applicable to the recovering of souls out of purgatory; the prayers also before school are full of error and idolatry. All this I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears: for I was curious to understand the bearings of these celebrated schools. Thus is the infant mind fettered and imprisoned.

“Still I do not doubt that much good may be done on the whole—the Catholic catechisms contain the foundation of the Christian religion, a general view of Scripture history, explanations of the creation and redemption of mankind, some good instructions on the moral law, sound statements on the divinity of Christ, and the Holy Trinity: some acknowledgments of the fall of man, and the necessity of the grace of God’s Holy Spirit: with inculcations of repentance, contrition, humility, self-denial, watchfulness, and preparation for death and judgment. These catechisms are not brief summaries, but rather full explanations of religion: making up small volumes of fifty or more pages. In the frontispiece of the catechism for the diocese of Geneva is the following affecting sentence, under the figure of our Lord, “*Sois amour et mon crime ont mis Jésus à mort*”—a sentiment which cannot but produce good. Still all is wofully mixed up with superstition, and error, and human traditions; and the consequence of this mixture is, that vital truths are so associated in the mind, from early youth, with the follies of Popery, that even the most pious men of that communion do not enough distinguish between them. If you deny transubstantiation, they suppose you disbelieve the divinity of Christ; if you avow that you are not a Papist, they suppose that you are a heretic, and have renounced the faith, &c. It was thus that such eminent Christians as Pascal, Nicole, Quesnel, Fénelon, and the great men of the Jansenist school, lived and died in the church of Rome. “A voluntary humility,” as well as the “worshipping of angels,”—Coloss. ii. 18—may well be noted by St. Paul as an er-

ror, which ought zealously to be excluded from the Christian church."

"I was vexed on returning to Eng'and, and consulting my books, that I had been so long ignorant of the history and character of Berromeo. He is considered by the Roman Catholic writers as the model of all virtues, and the great restorer of ecclesiastical discipline in the sixteenth century. I have not been able to satisfy myself in what degree he was a true Christian, in the Scriptural sense of the word. That he was devoted to the superstitions of Popery, and was a firm upholder of the Roman see, cannot be doubted; but I have no access to his sermons or letters, so as to judge whether any living embers of the faith and love of Christ were smothered at the bottom of these superstitions. His habits of devotion, his self-denial, his zeal, his fortitude, his humility, and especially his unbounded and almost unparalleled benevolence, which are ascribed to him by universal consent, would lead one to hope that, notwithstanding "the wood, and hay, and stubble," accumulated on it, he was building on the true "foundation, Christ Jesus."—1 Cor. iii. 11, 12.

"He was born at Arona in 1538, in a small apartment which I saw behind the church; and was of one of the noblest and most opulent families of Italy. At the age of eleven he had several livings given him by his uncle the Cardinal de Medicis, who was elected Pope in 1549. In his twenty-third year he was created cardinal by the same pontiff, and managed the proceedings of the council of Trent, as well as the chief temporal affairs of the Pope, for some years. This I consider as by far the most unfavorable part of Berromeo's life, as to the cultivation of personal piety. Such employments at Rome must have initiated him into all the system of that artful and secular court—and he who was intrusted to draw up the Trent catechism, must at that time have had little real Christian knowledge or feeling. However, in 1565 he left Rome, and went to reside at Milan, of which he had been made archbishop.

"Here begins the bright part of Berromeo's history. He had now to preside over the largest diocese of Italy, consisting of not less than eight hundred and fifty parishes, many of them in the wildest regions of the Alps. He began by resigning all his other preferments, by giving up to his family his chief estates, and by dividing the revenues of his archbishopric into three parts—one for the poor—another for the building and reparation of churches—the third for his domestic expenditure as bishop; all the accounts of which he submitted annually to the examination of his clergy. He next totally renounced the splendor in which he had lived at Rome, reduced the number of his servants, forbade the use of silk garments in his palace, rendered his household a pattern of edifica-

tion, slept himself on boards, prolonged his watchings and prayers to a late hour of the night, wore an under dress coarse and common, and devoted himself to perpetual fasts and abstinences.

“ He then entered on the task of restoring decayed discipline and order throughout his vast diocese. To this end he was indefatigable in visiting himself every parish under his care, held frequent ecclesiastical synods, and established a permanent council, which met monthly to inspect and regulate the conduct of the priests. In this manner his cotemporaries agree in asserting, that he removed various scandals which prevailed amongst all classes of the faithful, abolished many superstitious usages, and checked the ignorance and abuses of the secular and regular clergy.

“ His fortitude in carrying through his reforms, notwithstanding the violent opposition which he met with from all quarters, deserves remark. On one occasion an assassin was hired, who shot at him, whilst kneeling in prayer, in the archiepiscopal palace. Borromeo, unmoved, continued his devotions; and, when he rose from his knees, the bullet, which had been aimed at his back, but had been caught in the lawn sleeves of his dress, fell at his feet.

“ His charities were unbounded. He built ten colleges, five hospitals, and schools and public fountains without number. Besides this, he bestowed annually the sum of thirty thousand crowns on the poor; and in various cases of public distress in the course of his life, as much as two hundred thousand crowns more.

“ In the meantime, his personal virtues, his lowliness, his self-command, his forgiveness of injuries, his temperance, his prudence, his sanctity, the consistency of his whole character, (I speak after his biographers, whose veracity, I believe, is not questioned,) gave him such weight, that he not only rendered his immense diocese a model of good order and discipline, after an anarchy of eighty years, during which its archbishops had not resided, but extended his influence over the neighboring dioceses, and pushed his regulations throughout a great part of France and Germany.

“ Perhaps his conduct during a pestilence which raged for six months at Milan is amongst the actions of his life which may lead one the most to hope that this benevolent and tender-hearted prelate was indeed animated with the fear and love of his Saviour. Nothing could restrain him from visiting his sick and dying flock, during the raging of this fatal malady: when his clergy entreated him to consult his own safety, he replied, that nothing more became a bishop than to face danger at the call of his duty. He was continually found in the most infected spots, administering consolation both to the bodies and souls of his perishing people; and he sold all the small remains of his ancient splendor, and even his bed, to give the produce to the distressed.

“ The institution, or rather invention of Sunday schools, is again

a further evidence of something more than a superstitious state of heart. Nothing could be so novel as such institutions in the sixteenth century, and nothing so beneficial. When we recollect the public admiration which has rested on such schools in our own Protestant and enlightened country, though planned scarcely fifty years back, we may estimate the piety of mind, the vigor and penetration of judgment, which could lead a Catholic archbishop and cardinal to institute them two hundred years ago, and to place them on a footing which has continued to the present day. May I not add, that possibly some of the superstitious usages now attached to these schools may have grown up since the time of Borromeo. Certainly the indulgences which I saw were of the date of 1609, five-and-twenty years after his death; for the reader must be informed that, in the year 1584, this benevolent bishop fell a victim to fever caught in the mountainous parishes of his diocese, which he was visiting in his usual course.

“As a preacher he was most laborious. Though he had an impediment in his speech, and a difficulty in finding words to express readily his meaning, he overcame these hindrances, and preached most assiduously on Sundays and festivals at Milan. His biographers say, that the higher classes in the city were offended with him, and did not frequent his sermons; but that the common people flocked with eagerness to hear him. Perhaps something of what the Apostle calls “the offence of the cross,” may be traced in this. It does not at all lessen my hope of Borromeo’s piety, that the rich and great did not follow him.

“Such is a faint sketch of some of the chief events in the life of Charles Borromeo. My materials are scanty, especially as to the spiritual state of his heart and affections. It is for God only to judge on this subject: but charity rejoices to hope all things in such a case. I acknowledge that his simple and sublime motto, HUMILITAS, is very affecting to my mind. I trust it was the expression of his real character; and that his submission to the usurpations of the Romish church may have arisen from that faulty prostration of the understanding to human authority, which is so apt to engraft itself, under circumstances like those of Borromeo, on scriptural lowliness of spirit. Oh, if he had more fully studied and obeyed his Bible, and had read with honest candor the treatises of his great contemporaries, the reformers of Germany and Switzerland, he might, perhaps, have become the LUTHER or ZUINGLE, instead of, what he actually was, only the FENELON of Italy.”

The reference made in the foregoing extract to *indulgences* shows the writer, with all his education, to be one of those who stick in the vulgar notion still of this doctrine, and in spite of all evidence to the contrary insist on forcing upon the Roman church an abomination here which she continually disowns.

The idea of an indulgence to commit sin, a license in form to do wrong, is a pure fiction got up by the seething brain of fanaticism to make Popery odious; and is just as little entitled to regard at best, as the charge brought against Presbyterians for instance of holding and teaching, that there are infants in hell not a span long. An indulgence has not even the force of a pardon for past sin, however repented of truly by the sinner. It is a wholly different conception, which we have no right to drag hither and thither to suit our own prejudice, but are bound in common honesty, if we must oppose it, to understand and handle at all events in the sense of its own system, and not in another sense.

One can hardly help feeling somewhat amused with the evident embarrassment, in which the good vicar of Islington finds himself with his facts. He has in his mind a certain scheme of religion, what he conceives to be the clear sense of the Gospel in regard to this great interest, which is at war with the whole idea he has formed of Romanism; to such an extent, that he feels bound to think of this last only as a system of unmitigated abominations, a wholesale apostacy from the truth, and such a tissue of foolery and impiety in the name of religion as can scarcely be reconciled with the opinion, that there are any pious persons at all within its communion. He finds it a great deal easier to admit the true godliness of ten "witnesses" opposing the church in the middle ages, even though it should be among such a sect as the Albigenes, than to be entirely satisfied with that of one only, quietly submitting to the authority of this church, believing in transubstantiation, and praying to saints and images, in its bosom. And still he is a good man, anxious to find his own ideal of evangelical piety as broadly as possible diffused in the history of the world, and cordially disposed to acknowledge and honor it wherever it comes in his way. With the instance of Ambrose, in the case before us, he can get along without any *very* serious difficulty, taking Milner's Church History for his guide, and holding fast always to the common Anglican theory of a marked distinction, between the Christianity of the first four or five centuries and that of the thousand years following. There are things hard to understand in the piety of Ambrose and Augustine, even as we have it portrayed to us in Milner; for which however an apology is found in the supposition, that standing as they did on the borders of the great apostacy which was to follow, they came accidentally here and there within the folds of its impending shadow, without still belonging to it properly in the substance of their faith. But the idea

of any similar exhibition of apostolical religion from the same see of Milan, under the full-blown Papacy and in open communion with its corruptions—and all this too in the middle of the sixteenth century, and in the person of one who had been employed to draw up the Roman Catechism for the Council of Trent—was altogether another matter, and something not provided for plainly in any way by our tourist's previous theory. The good account he hears of St. Borromeo perplexes him. He finds it impossible to unite in his mind the image of a truly holy archbishop, such as he is described to have been, with the mummerly and superstition of the modern Milan, (a city wholly given to idolatry,) which yet hardly could have been much better in the age of the Reformation, when presided over by this canonized man. Did he not hear the trumpet of the Reformation, giving no uncertain sound just over the Alps? And how then could he refuse to make common cause with it against Rome and the Pope? The bishop that was to be of Calcutta cannot understand it; but being, as we have said a good man, he makes it a point on his return home to look into the character of this same Borromeo, with such literary helps as he can find for this purpose; when, lo, to his own great surprise, not to say amiable confusion, it appears that there is no reason whatever to question the extraordinary sanctity of the man, so far as least as the outward show of consecration to works of piety is concerned. So the Rev. Daniel Wilson, in the exercise of that charity which hopeth all things and believeth all things, feels himself constrained to bear open testimony to its reality; the only question being still, whether the seeming sanctity after all had any proper root in the doctrine of justification by faith, the one great principle of religion in its true Protestant form. On this point a lingering doubt remains, which could be properly dissipated only by studying the character in question in the mirror of his own written thoughts; a privilege, which our author had not still enjoyed, when he first published his travels. Subsequently however it came in his way to look into the soul of the Catholic saint in this way; and now every doubt as to the genuineness of his piety was forced to retire; so that in the second edition of the same book, we have finally a free, full and altogether joyful acknowledgment of the fact, that in the person of Borromeo the Roman communion actually produced, so late as the 16th century, out of its own bosom and as it were in the very face of the Reformation itself, a veritable saint of like station and piety with the great St. Ambrose of the fourth century, and worthy even to be set in some sort of comparison with

the Protestant saints, Zuingli, Luther, and Calvin. Under huge incrustations of Popish superstition, may be clearly traced still, in this extraordinary case, the lineaments of a truly evangelical faith, an actual diamond of grace, formed no one can tell how in the very heart of what might seem to be most fully at war with its whole nature. The case is set down accordingly as a sort of grand exception to common history, the next thing to a *lusus nature* in the world of grace. Anselm, Bernard, Thomas a Kempis, Fenelon, and a few other like celebrities perhaps, names "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*," are referred habitually to the same convenient category or rubric. They are spiritual curiosities, which no one should be expected fully to understand or explain.

In all this, however, we have two utterly false conceptions at work in the mind of the vicar of Islington himself. In the first place, his estimate of the extent to which real piety has existed in the Catholic church, both before the Reformation and since, is in no sort of agreement with the truth. In the second place, his imagination that this piety is in no sense the proper product of the Catholic religion as such, but something violently exceptional rather to its natural course, is not a whit less visionary and unsound.

Both these notions, we know, enter largely into our common Protestant thinking. But this does not make them right. They form in conjunction a mere blind prejudice, which like every other prejudice of this sort is sure to prove hurtful, in the end, to the cause it seems to favor and serve. Of all styles of upholding Protestantism, we may say, that is absolutely the worst, which can see no sense or truth whatever in Catholicism, but holds itself bound to make it at every point as bad as possible, and to fight off with tooth and nail every word that may be spoken in its praise. Such wholesale and extreme pugnacity, may be very convenient; as it calls for no discrimination, it requires of course neither learning nor thought, but can be played off under all circumstances, by almost any polemic, with about the same good effect. Its strength consists mainly in calling nick-names, in repeating outrageous charges without regard to any contradiction from the other side, in thrumming over thread-bare common-places received by tradition from the easy credulity of times past, in huge exaggerations, and vast distortions, and bold insulting insinuations thrown out at random in any and every direction.¹ But however convenient all this may be, re-

¹ As a single exemplification, take the *Ladies'* petition got up a few months

quiring little reading, and less thought, and no politeness nor charity whatever, it is high time to see that it is a system of tactics, which needs in truth only a slight change of circumstances at any time to work just the opposite way from that in which it is meant to work. The vanity and impotency of it must become apparent, in proportion precisely as men are brought to look at things with their own eyes; and then the result is, that sensible and well-bred people, not those who go by the text book of a sect, but such as move in a wider range of thought and have some better knowledge of the world, political and literary men, seeing how they have been imposed upon by the current slang, are very apt to be taken with a sort of quiet disgust towards the whole interest which they find to be thus badly defend-

since for the Legislature of Pennsylvania, in the city of Philadelphia, under the auspices of the notorious Giustiniani, calling for the suppression of nunneries, under the gross insinuation of their being only seats of licentiousness and sin. Strange "ladies" they must have been, that could lend their names to such an infamous libel on the purity of their own sex. The like insult directed towards the Episcopalians, Methodists or Presbyterians, would have at once drawn upon itself the angry frown of society, as a breach of all decency as well as charity. But as directed against the Catholics only, the blackguardism of the thing was generally not felt. Certain evangelical papers caught up even with great gusto, as a capital hit, the flying report that the Legislature had referred the petition to the Committee on Vice and Immorality. Now if *any* ground had ever been given for scandal in the history of American nunneries, one might have some patience with such ribald ruffianism, hiding its malignity under the cloak of religion. But what well informed person needs to be told, that every apology of this sort is wanting! All attempts yet made to blast the good name of these institutions among us, have recoiled with signal discomfiture on the heads of those who have acted as leaders in the vile crusade. It is enough to refer to Charlestown, Pittsburg, and Montreal—to the *memory* of Miss Reed, Dr. Brownlee and Maria Monk. On the other hand, the good works of these religious houses have been too manifold and plain in every direction, to be at all rationally called in question. Now in all seriousness we ask, what right in these circumstances have people pretending to be themselves respectable and pious, to vilify and calumniate the inmates of such institutions in the way of which we now speak, as though they had forfeited all claim to the most ordinary courtesies of well bred life? Just as little right, we say confidently, as any gentleman has to outrage in the same way any Ladies' Seminary whatever that is to be found in the land.—This same Giustiniani is the apostle of German Catholicism, as it has been called, or Rongianism, in this country; whose *wonderful* success in founding churches in New York, Rochester, Buffalo and Philadelphia, has been duly trumpeted and glorified in times past by a part of our religious press; though the same papers have never considered it necessary to let us know, how completely the infidel sham has in each case run out since into clear smoke. He has now gone to Italy, we are told, to help set things right in that unfortunate part of the world.

ed, and so to look favorably in the same measure on the other side, as being at so many points plainly an injured and persecuted cause. To make our opposition to Romanism of any weight, the first condition would seem to be clearly that we should have made ourselves acquainted with it on its own ground, that we should have taken some pains to learn from the system itself what it means and wills. But of all that army of zealots, who hold themselves perfectly prepared to demolish it at a blow through the stage or press, how few are there probably who have ever felt it necessary to get their facts from other than the most common Protestant sources? Take indeed our ministers generally. Has one in fifty of them ever examined seriously a Catholic work of divinity, whether didactic, practical or historical? An ordinary anti-popery assault implies no preparation of this sort whatever; but rather a dogged purpose only, not to hear or believe a single word the Catholics say for themselves, while everything contrary to this is forced upon them from other quarters, as the voice and sense of their system. The sooner all such fanatical indecencies can be brought to an end, the better. They help not Protestantism, but serve only to involve it in reproach.

To return to the two imaginations already named. It is a sheer prejudice to suppose, in the first place, that cases of sanctity and true godliness have been, or are now, of only rare and extraordinary occurrence in the Roman communion. Any one who is willing at all to look into the actual history of the church, to listen to its own voice, to study its institutions, to make himself acquainted with its works, will soon find reason enough to rejoice in a widely different and far more favorable view. The single institution of the "Sisters of Charity," with its manifold services of mercy and love, is of itself fact enough to upset, for any thoughtful mind, the vulgar idea that Romanism is without religion, and a source of evil only without any good. This is however but one among many illustrations looking the same way, which the charity, "that rejoiceth not in iniquity but in the truth," need never be at a loss to find in the same church. That must be a stout bigotry indeed, which is able to turn aside the force of all such examples, by resolving them into self-righteousness or mercenary motives of any still lower kind. It has its fit parallel only in the calumnies, that were used in the first ages to blacken the virtues of Christianity into crimes among the heathen.

But in the second place it is just as blind a prejudice again, to suppose that the piety of the Roman church, such as it is,

springs not from the proper life of the system itself, but is there rather by accident, and as something out of place, and so to speak in spite of the unfriendly connections with which it is surrounded; so that if it could only be torn up from the soil in which it thus happens to stand, and transplanted into a truly evangelical liberty, it might be expected to thrive and flourish at a much better rate. The native and as it were normal tendency of Catholicism, in the view of this prejudice, is not to piety at all, but only to superstition and sin; for it is taken to be a systematic conspiracy against the doctrines of grace from the beginning; and hence when we meet with the phenomenon of a truly evangelical spirit here and there in its communion, as in the case of Pascal or Fenelon, we are bound to see in it a wonderful exception to established law, and to admire so much the more the power of the evangelical principle, which is sufficient even in such untoward circumstances to bring to pass so great a miracle. No one however can study the subject to any extent for himself, without being led to see that the very reverse of all this is the truth. Catholicism is inwardly fitted for the production of its own forms of piety, and owes them to no foreign source or influence whatever. Its saints are not exotics, that pine after other climes and skies, but products of home growth; answerable in all respects to the conditions that surround them. To place them in other relations would be, not to advance, but to cripple their life. Borromeo was constitutionally a Catholic in his piety, and not a Protestant. The same may be said of Fenelon, of Philip de Neri, of Anselm and Bernard, of Ambrose, and of the old church fathers generally. The piety of all of them has a complexion, which is materially different from any that we meet with in the modern Protestant world. We mean not by this to call in question the reality of this last, or its high worth; all we wish to say is, that it is of another character and order, and that what we find of saintliness in the Roman church is strictly and legitimately from itself and not from abroad. To Protestantize it even in imagination, is to turn it into caricature, and to eviscerate it at last of its very life. What could the early fathers do with themselves in New England? Such an institution as that of the Sisters of Charity can never be transferred to purely Protestant ground; as no such ground either could ever have given it birth. Attempts are made in our own time to furnish a Protestant version of the same idea, under what claims to be a higher and more evangelical form; for the purpose of supplying an evident want. But nothing of this sort will ever equal the original design, or be more indeed than a

weak and stunted copy of this on the most narrow and ephemeral scale. It is only in the bosom of ideas, principles and associations, which are Catholic distinctively and *not* Protestant, that charity of this sort finds itself perfectly at home. And just so it is with the piety of this church in general. It is fairly and truly native to the soil from which it springs. That church, with all its supposed errors and sins, has ever had power in its own way to produce a large amount of very lovely religion. If it has been the mother of abominations, it has been unquestionably the mother also of martyrs and saints. It is a sorry business to pretend to deny this, or to try to falsify the fact into the smallest possible dimensions, for the sake of some miserable pre-conception with which it will not agree. We do but belittle ourselves, when we resort to strategy so poor as that. To deal with Romanism to any purpose, we must get rid of the notion that it carries in it no truth, no grace, no principle of religious activity and life; that it is as bad as infidelity, if not a good deal worse; that it lacks all the attributes of a church, and is

¹ We clip the following from an editorial of the *New York Observer*, called forth not long ago by a sermon which Archbishop Hughes preached on his return from Europe, as the paper sneeringly adds, "without the Cardinal's hat." It is curiously characteristic.

"The Tribune finds fault with Bishop Hughes, for resisting the progress of Socialism in Europe. Between Romanism and Socialism there is little to choose, so far as the moral improvement of the people is concerned. They are essentially Anti-Christian, and many wise and good men regard infidelity as the least evil of the two, when the choice must be between it and Popery. We have therefore regarded it as one of the phenomena of the times, worth observing and recording, that the leaders of the Romanizing and the Fourierite parties in this country, are now discussing the comparative worth of their two schemes, for the improvement of mankind. We regard them both with equal detestation, and in the controversy now in progress, are quite indifferent as to the issue."

The same editorial reproaches the sermon, in the beginning, with betraying a want of sympathy with the liberty spirit that is now at work in Europe. So in general our American anti-popery is ever ready to fall in with the revolutionary tendency abroad, as though it must necessarily be both patriotic and pious—needing only plenty of *Bibles* to tame the whirlwind and keep it right. And yet notoriously this movement is prevalently irreligious, radical, socialistic and infidel, threatening the foundations of all government and society. So it is regarded by the Catholic church; which is powerfully resisting it, and forms at this time, we verily believe, a most necessary bulwark in the old world against its terrible progress. But this the *N. Y. Observer* denounces, as hostility to the cause of liberty and the rights of man; while it goes on the next moment to make Catholicism just as bad as Socialism itself. We have heard before of the same sentiment being uttered in high places. But it is for all this none the less a truly abominable sentiment, that must sooner or later quail before the frown of

purely a synagogue of Satan or a mere human confederacy, for worldly and unhallowed ends. One wing of the Presbyterian church has it is true openly committed itself to this bold position, in pronouncing what they stigmatize as *Romish* baptism to be without force—unchurching virtually thus the whole church as it stood at the birth of the Reformation and for at least twelve hundred years before, and making such men as Augustine and Chrysostom, as well as Luther and Calvin of a later day, to be no better than unbaptized heathens, so far as any idea of covenant or sacramental grace is concerned; for it is notorious, that the baptism in question goes back, with all its objectionable features, not only to the fourth century, but beyond that to the days of Cyprian even and Tertullian. But no such *brutum fulmen* as this can stand. All history laughs it to scorn. The vitality of Romanism at this very time, and the evidently growing confusion of Protestantism, all the world over, show it to be idle as the passing wind. It is no time, in the crisis to which things are now coming, to think of settling the question between Protestantism and Rome, in this extravagant and fanatical way. There must be honesty enough to see and own good on the side of this *hated* church, as well as a keen scent for its sores. Take it simply as it appears in our own country, struggling finally into full organization, after years of crushing difficulty and persecution; and need we say, that it has merit and respectability enough in a religious view to give it some right to the same sort of genteel respect at least, that is felt to be proper towards almost every sect besides? Is its hierarchy at this time

intelligent and good men. A few years since Dr. Hengstenberg of Berlin, whose zeal for Protestantism none can question who have any knowledge of the man, was heavily pressed on this very point by a party which made a merit of treating Romanism in the same way—Protestants of the rationalistic no-religion school, who were disposed to place religion in mere opposition and contradiction to the Catholic church. But he had courage to say to such spirit, "Get thee behind me, Satan;" and to proclaim to the world that there is no comparison to be thought of between Infidelity and Catholicism, and that when it comes to a war with the first, all our affections and sympathies are bound to go joyfully with the last, as one grand division simply of the great army of faith to which all true Protestants as well as all true Catholics belong. The heartless fanaticism of the N. Y. Observer not only *infidelizes* such men as Bishops Chevereux, England, Eccleston, Hughes, Kenrick, &c., (any of them good enough to compare with the Rev. Sydney E. Morse & Co., any day,) and Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of Charity, &c., in large number, in our own time; but goes away back to other times also, and swamps all the fathers and martyrs, after the first two centuries at least, in the same Acherontian lake.

a whit behind that of the Episcopal church, in point of learning, piety, or official diligence and zeal? Has any church among us produced better specimens of apostolical sanctity, than the first bishop of Boston for instance or the first bishop of Charleston, and others also that might easily be named; men, whose virtues adorn the history of the country, and whose parallels are not so readily offered in other communions, that we can afford for this reason to pass their memory into ungrateful oblivion. It is not easy to read the writings of Bishop England, glowing with the eloquence of noble gentlemanly feeling as they do on almost every page, and not be filled with indignation, as well as moved even to tears at times, with the gross and cruel wrong which has been heaped upon the Catholics among us from the beginning, in the holy name of religion. What *right*, we ask again, have the zealots of other churches to lay aside here the laws of common courtesy, and to be just as rude and scurrilous as they please? What right have rabid pens, or still more rabid tongues, to make religion in this form the synonyme of impiety and unbelief, and when confronted with clear proofs and living examples of the contrary, to resolve all into hypocrisy, or happy inconsistency, as though it were not possible for piety to grow forth in any way from such a system? Some go so far as to tell us even, that no intelligent priest or layman in the Catholic church can seriously believe what he professes to believe. This however is such unmannerly rudeness as deserves no answer, come from what quarter it may.

But what we have in view now more particularly, is to expose the fallacy that lies in the extracts we have given from Dr. Bacon and Bishop Wilson, with regard to the nature of early Christianity, as compared with that particular modern scheme of religion, which they dignify with the title Evangelical, and which is for each of them the only true and perfect sense of the Gospel. Both writers assume, that there existed in the beginning, back of the corruptions and abuses of Romanism, and subsequently to the time of the Apostles, a certain golden age, longer or shorter, of comparatively pure religious faith, which truly represented still the simplicity and spirituality of the proper divine model of the church, as we have it plainly exhibited to us in the New Testament; and that this was in all material respects of one character precisely with what they now approve as the best style of Protestantism. But never was there a more perfect mistake.

It may be easy enough to show, that there are many points of difference between early Christianity and Romanism, as we find

this established in later times. But this fact is by no means sufficient to show, that the first was to the same extent in agreement with modern Protestantism, whether in the Episcopalian or in the Congregational form. It is clear on the contrary, that no such agreement has ever had place, but that modern Protestantism is still farther away from this older faith than the system by which it is supposed to have been supplanted in the middle ages. No defence of Protestantism can well be more insufficient and unsound, than that by which it is set forth as a pure *restitution* simply of what Christianity was at the beginning, either in the fourth century, or the third, or the second. It will always be found on examination to have no such character in fact; and every attempt to force upon the world any imagination of the sort, in favor of either Episcopacy, or Presbyterianism, or Independency, in favor of all or of any one of the three score and ten sects which at this time follow the Bible as their sole rule of faith, must only serve in the end by its palpable falsehood to bring suspicion and doubt on the whole cause which is thus badly upheld. Whatever differences there may be between the first ages and those that followed, it is still plain enough that the course of things was from the very start *towards* that order at least, which afterwards prevailed; that this later order therefore stands bound by true historical connection with what went before; and that Protestantism accordingly, as a still more advanced period in the general movement of history, holds a living relation to the first period only through the medium of the second, and is just as little a copy of the one in form as it is of the other. This we sincerely believe is the only ground, on which may be set up any rational defence of the great revolution of the 16th century, (unsupported as it stands by miracles or inspiration,) in conjunction with a true faith in the Divine character of the church. It is the theory of historical development, which assumes the possibility and necessity of a transition on the part of the church through various stages of form, (as in all growth,) for the very purpose of bringing out more and more fully always the true inward sense of its life, which has been one and the same from the beginning. When Romanists refuse every such view, and insist that their whole system has been handed down from the time of the Apostles, it *seems* not easy certainly to admit the pretence. But when Protestants also refuse the view, and pretend to give us things, in their several by no means harmonious systems, just as they were in the first ages of the church, the pretension is still more glaringly rash and false. However it may be with Romanism, it is certain that

Protestantism can never make good its claims on any such ground. And yet it will not do, to give up all historical connection with the church as it first started, and as it stood afterwards for fifteen hundred years—at least not without an overwhelming *Thus saith the Lord* in the form of miracles. The only escape then is in the formula of the same and yet not the same, legitimate growth, historical development. If this cannot stand, if it be found at war with the true idea of a Divine revelation, we for our part must give up all faith in Protestantism, and bow as we best can to the authority of the Roman church; for an interest which resolves itself virtually into infidelity, as Protestantism under every other view in which it can be put seems to us to do clearly, has no right, as in the end also it can have no power, to stand

It needs but little knowledge of history certainly, to see that Christianity as it stood in the fourth century, and in the first part of the fifth, in the time of Jerome and Ambrose and Augustine, in the time of Chrysostom and Basil and the Gregories, was something very different from modern Protestantism, and that it bore in truth a very near resemblance in all material points to the later religion of the Roman church. This is most clear of course as regards full Puritanism, in the form it carries in New England; but it is equally true in fact of the Anglican system also, and this whether we take it in the low church or high church view. Episcopalians are indeed fond of making a great distinction, between the first four or five centuries and the ages that follow; telling us with much self-complacency, that the early church thus far was comparatively pure, that the Roman apostacy came in afterwards marring and blotting the fair face which things had before, and that the English church distinguished itself at the Reformation by its moderation and sound critical judgment, in discriminating here properly between the purity of the primitive faith and its subsequent adulterations. According to the most churchly view, the Reformation was for Anglicanism no revolution properly speaking at all, but the simple clearing away of some previous abuses, and a self-righting of the English church as a whole once more into its old habit and course. But this is altogether a most lame and desperate hypothesis. All history gives it the lie. The boasted discrimination of the English Protestantism vanishes into thin air, the moment we come to inquire into its actual origin and rise. Never was there a great movement, in which accident, caprice, and mere human passion, more clearly prevailed as factors, over the forces of calm judgment and sound reason. If under the pol-

itical auspices that ruled it, the system was indeed so fortunate as to hit the true mean in the way pretended, while all the Protestant world besides missed it, the advantage must be ascribed to its good luck far more than to its good judgment. The case however becomes still worse, when we look into the real nature of the advantage which is to be referred to this good luck. The main feature of it is episcopacy, with a king at the head of it instead of a pope. In virtue of this constitution, and some few peculiarities besides, Anglicanism piques itself on being a *jure divino* succession of the old English branch of the Church Catholic, while for want of such accidents other Protestant bodies, it is held, have no right to put in any similar claim. The charm lies in the notion of the episcopate, handed down by outward succession, as a sort of primary Divinely appointed mark and seal of the true church.

But what would such men as Cyprian, Ambrose, or Augustine, have thought of the glorification of the episcopate, with all that may go along with it in the English system besides, in any such outward style as this? They did indeed put a high value on episcopacy and some other things that Anglicanism contends for; but only as these interests were themselves comprehended in what they held to be a still wider and deeper system of truth. Episcopacy torn from the idea of that glorious unity, with which alone was felt to go the actual presence of Divine powers in the church, would have been for either of these fathers as perfectly powerless an institution for church ends, as any other scheme of government whatever. The plea then of falling back here to the ground of the first four or five centuries, is for the vindication even of this *accident* itself a false plea; for the episcopacy of that time, and its other points of agreement with modern Anglicanism, were mere circumstances in a wider scheme of thought, which this same Anglicanism disowns now as anti-christian and false. If it had a right to reform thus far, and might do so without losing its identity as a part of the church, no good reason can be shown why it had not as much right, if it saw proper, to reform still farther. The rupture with Catholicism is the grand point; over against which, the accident of retaining episcopacy, and some other fragments of the old system, dwindles into insignificance.

For in truth there is no return here to anything more than fragments of the early system, even in the dead view now mentioned. It is as pure a fiction as ever entered a good man's head, to dream as Bishop Wilson does that his favorite scheme of evangelical Episcopalianism prevailed in the fourth century;

and the case is not materially improved, by simply changing the dream into an Oxford or Tractarian shape. The whole idea of a marked chasm anywhere about the fifth century, dividing an older purer style of Christianity from the system that meets us in the middle ages, much as English episcopacy stands related to the papacy, is no better than a chimera; history is all against it; we might just as rationally pretend to fix any such dividing line in the eighth century or in the tenth.

According to Bishop Wilson, Ambrose was somewhat infected with the *incipient* superstitions of his day; but still "lived and died firm and unbending in all the fundamentals of divine truth;" by which is meant, that he looked to the merits of Christ for salvation, and built his religion on the doctrine of justification by faith, taking the Bible for his text book and guide, after the most approved evangelical fashion of the present time. "Ambrose was one of the most humble and spiritual of the fathers of the church," we are told, "two or three centuries before Popery properly speaking began." Even as late as the ninth century, the church of Milan is represented as still holding out against the claims of the Papacy; and not till two hundred years after that indeed, does the writer allow it to have submitted to the Roman see, and in this way to have been drawn fully and finally into the vortex of its corruptions. But if anything in the world can be said to be historically clear, it is the fact that with the close of the fourth century and the coming in of the fifth, the Primacy of the Roman See was admitted and acknowledged in all parts of the Christian world. This is granted by Barrow himself, in his great work on the Supremacy; though he tries to set aside the force of the fact, by resolving it into motives and reasons to suit his own cause. The promise of our Saviour to Peter, is always taken by the fathers in the sense that he was to be the centre of unity for the church, and in the language of Chrysostom to have the presidency of it throughout the whole earth. Ambrose and Augustine both recognise this distinction of Peter, over and over again, in the clearest and strongest terms. To be joined in communion with the see of Rome was in the view of this period to be in the bosom of the true church; to be out of that communion was to be in schism. It was not enough to be in union with any other bishop or body of bishops; the sacrament of unity was held to be of force only, as having regard to the church in its universal character; and this involved necessarily the idea of one universal centre, which by general consent was to be found in Rome only, and no where else.'

'St. Ambrose relates in praise to his brother Satirus, that on reaching

Examples of the actual exercise of supreme power on the part of the Popes, in the fourth and fifth centuries, are so frequent and numerous, that nothing short of the most wilful obstinacy can pretend to treat them as of no account. In every great question of the time, whether rising in the East or in the West, all eyes show themselves every ready to turn towards the *cathedra Petri*, as the last resort for counsel and adjudication; all controversies, either in the way of appeal or complaint, or for the ratification of decisions given in other quarters, are made to come directly or indirectly in the end before this tribunal, and reach their final and conclusive settlement only through its intervention. The Popes, in these cases, take it for granted themselves, that the power which they exercise belongs to them of right, in virtue of the prerogative of their see; there is no appearance whatever of effort or of usurpation, in the part they allow themselves to act; it seems to fall to them as naturally, as the functions of a magistrate or judge in any case are felt to go along with the office to which they belong. And the whole world apparently regards the primacy, in the same way, as a thing of course, a matter fully settled and established in the constitution of the Christian church. We hear of no objection to it, no protest against it, as a new and daring presumption, or as a departure from the earlier order of Christianity.¹ The whole

shore after shipwreck, he was careful to inquire, whether the bishop of the place "agreed in faith with the Catholic bishops, that is with the Roman Church"—assuming communion with Rome thus to be a test of orthodoxy and catholicity.

¹ It is common to refer to the strong terms, in which St. Gregory the Great opposed the use of the title, "Universal Bishop," on the part of John the Faster, Bishop of Constantinople, as a proof that no similar character was then thought of in favor of the Roman see. But this is altogether too late, to be of the least historical force in any such view. The evidences of the acknowledgment of the primacy of Rome long before this on all sides, are too overwhelming a great deal to be for a moment disturbed, by the mere sound of what is here paraded as a contrary testimony. Gregory disliked the pretension of the title; it had for him a haughty sound, which fell not in with his sense of the respect that was due to other bishops. Even Peter, "the first member of the holy universal church, to whom the care of the whole church was committed," was to be regarded still as one among his brethren, and not as a single and exclusive head. In rejecting this title, Gregory certainly did not disclaim any superior authority in himself, as successor of Peter; for he himself affirmed the contrary in the most positive terms, and exercised in the most marked manner the powers of an actual ruler of the whole church. "Assuredly," says Mr. Allies in his attempt to uphold the Church of England, "if there was any Pontiff who, like St. Leo, held the most strong and deeply rooted convictions as to the

nature of the case implies, as strongly as any historical conditions and relations well could, that this precisely and no other order had been handed down from a time, beyond which no memory of man to the contrary then reached. So perfectly idle is the dream, that Popery, taken in the sense of an acknowledgment of the primacy of the Roman see, and of its right to be regarded as the centre of church unity, came in only some two or three centuries after the age of Ambrose, and was not fully admitted into Milan even before the eleventh century. ✓

The idea of the primacy itself however, in the view now presented, was from the first but one necessary part of that general doctrine of the church, which the modern evangelical school is ever ready to denounce, as the introduction of Romanism and a complete falling away from the primitive scheme of faith. It implies of course episcopacy; but it implies also a great deal more. At the ground of it lies the conception of a truly Divine character belonging to the Church as a whole, and not to be separated from the attributes of unity and universality; the idea of the church thus as one, holy, and catholic; the idea of an actual continuation of Christ's presence and power in the church, according to the terms of the original apostolic commission; the idea of sacramental grace, the power of absolution, the working of miracles to the end of time, and a real communion of saints extending to the departed dead as well as to those still living on the earth. It is perfectly certain accordingly, that in the fourth and fifth centuries, all these and other naturally related conceptions, running very directly into the Roman corruptions as they are called of a later period, were in full operation and force; and this in no sporadic exceptional or accidental way merely, but with universal authority and as belonging to the inmost life and substance of the great mystery of Christianity. The fathers of this glorious period did indeed hold "all the fundamentals of divine truth," as Bishop Wilson is charitable enough to suppose; but they held them in no such order and view, as they are made to carry in the theory which Bishop Wilson would fain make to be the reigning sense of their faith, in spite of the "incipient superstitions" with which it was outwardly disfigured. We owe it to ourselves here to see and own the full truth. The ✓

prerogatives of the Roman see, it was St. Gregory." His letters abound with admonitions, injunctions, threats, and decrees, directed to bishops in every part of the church, all of whom he treated as brethren whilst they were blameless; if they erred, admonishing them as a father; and punishing them as a judge when they proved delinquent.

religion of these fathers was not of the shape and type now usually known as evangelical, and paraded commonly as the best style of Protestantism. They knew nothing of the view which makes the Bible and Private Judgment the principle of Christianity or the only rule of faith. They took Christianity to be a supernatural system, propounded by the Saviour to his Apostles, and handed down from them as a living tradition (including the Bible) by the Church. The order of doctrine for them was the Apostles' Creed. They looked upon the sacraments as mysteries; taking baptism to be for the remission of sins, and seeing in the "tremendous sacrament of the altar" the real presence of the Redeemer's glorified body, and a new exhibition continually of the one sacrifice that takes away sin. All was reality, not merely shadow and type. They acknowledged the divine character of the Christian priesthood, the necessity of confession, the grace of ministerial absolution. They believed in purgatory, and considered it "a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins." They held that the intercession of saints is salutary for the living in the other world, as well as in the present; and they made it a part of their piety accordingly to seek the aid of departed saints, as well as of angels, by addressing to them direct invocations for this purpose. They counted it a part of their religion also to venerate and cherish the monuments and relics of departed saints and martyrs, and were firmly persuaded that miracles were often performed through the instrumentality of such relics, as well as on fit occasions also in other ways; for of the continuance of miracles in the church, they never dreamed of making any question. They set a high value on the merit of celibacy and voluntary poverty, chosen in the service of the kingdom of God; and both by doctrine and example did what they could to recommend the monastic life, as at once honorable to religion and eminently suited to promote the spiritual welfare of men. All these things too went together, in their view, as so many parts and constituents of a single religious system; and the only voices that ventured here and there to make them the subject of doubt or contradiction, as in the case of Aerius, Jovinian and Vigilantius, were quickly cried down from every side as absolutely heretical and profane.

In the bosom of this system stood, not outwardly and by accident only, but as true representatives of its very soul and life, such men as Athanasius, Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa, Ephraim the Syrian, Hilary of Poitiers, Jerome, Ambrose, and

Augustine. They held the fundamentals certainly of the Gospel; but they held them in connexion with a vast deal that modern evangelical Protestantism is in the habit of denouncing as the worst Roman corruption, and what is most stumbling of all they made it a fundamental point to hold the supposed better parts of their faith just in this bad connection and no other. The piety even of Ambrose and Augustine is steeped in what this modern school sets down as rank heathenish superstition. The slightest inspection of historical documents is sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind of this fact. No one can read attentively even the Confessions of Augustine, the work in which Milner and others affect to find a full parallel to the *experience* of true religion in the modern unchurchly style, without being made to feel that there is no room in truth for any such imagination. The two orders of thought are materially different. The very *crisis* of conversion in the case of the African father, turns on the principle of absolute and unconditional submission to the supernatural authority of the *Church*, in a form that would be considered anything but evangelical with the Pietistic or Methodist tendency of the present time.

The ground taken here then by Bishop Wilson, and by the whole low church or no church so called evangelical interest, still bent on claiming some sort of genealogical affinity with the orthodoxy and piety of the fourth and fifth centuries, is clearly and palpably false. But how is it with Puseyism or Anglicanism in the high view, pretending to find in this early period its own pattern of Episcopacy, as distinguished from what it conceives to be those later innovations of the Papacy which it pompously condemns and rejects? Alas, the whole theory is brittle as glass, and falls to pieces with the first tap of the critic's hammer. Nothing can well be more arbitrary, than the way in which this system proceeds with church antiquity, choosing this feature and refusing that, just as it may happen to square or not square with the previously settled accident of its own constitution. It is stiff for the episcopate, without being able to see that the idea of its divine right rests from the start in a view of the church, which involves with equal force and often asserts the same necessity for the primacy. It builds a doctrine here and a practice there on the universal tradition of this classic time, this golden era of sound church feeling and faith; but without any reason, other than its own pleasure and whim, thrusts out of the way other doctrines and practices embraced in the same universal tradition with even greater clearness and force. The whole hypothesis is untrue. There is no such chasm between this classic period

and the time following as it pretends, and least of all in the form of any such discrimination of doctrines and practices as it needs to prop up its own cause. The fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries were not Protestants of either the Anglican or the Puritan school. They would have felt themselves lost, and away from home altogether, in the arms of English Episcopalianism, as well as in the more bony and stern embrace of Scotch Presbyterianism.¹

New England Puritanism of course, as represented by Dr. Bacon, is quite willing to admit the general truth of what has now been said in relation to the age of Ambrose and Augustine; though at times ready enough still to talk of these fathers and their fellows, as though it took them to be in the main of its own communion and faith. Much even that Episcopalian Protestantism finds to be good here, this more unchurchly system has no hesitation in treating as part and parcel of the "great apostacy," which so soon turned the whole truth of Christianity into a strange lie. The fourth century was miserably corrupt. Even the third carries in many respects a very questionable face. But still we are not to give up entirely the idea of a truly golden age, representing for a time at least, however short, the true original simplicity of the Gospel, as the same has been happily resuscitated once again in these last days, particularly among the churches of New England. In the second century somewhere, or even reaching over this a little here and there into the third, back of popery and prelacy, the theory ventures to assume what

¹ "Did St. Athanasius or St. Ambrose come suddenly to life, it cannot be doubted what communion they would mistake for their own. All surely will agree that these fathers, with whatever difference of opinion, whatever protests if we will, would find themselves more at home with such men as St. Bernard or St. Ignatius Loyola, or with the lonely priest in his lodgings, or the holy sisterhood of mercy, or the unlettered crowd before the altar, than with the rulers or the members of any other religious community. And may we not add, that were the two saints, who once sojourned, in exile or on embassy, at Treves, to come more northward still, and to travel until they reached another fair city, seated among groves, green meadows, and calm streams, the holy brothers would turn from many a high aisle and solemn cloister which they found there, and ask the way to some small chapel where mass was said in the populous alley or forlorn suburb? And, on the other hand, can any one who has but heard his name, and cursorily read his history, doubt for one instant how the people of England in turn, 'we, our princes, our priests, and our prophets,' Lords and Commons, Universities, Ecclesiastical Courts, marts of commerce, great towns, country parishes, would deal with Athanasius—Athanasius who spent his long years in fighting against kings for a theological term?"—*Newman, Essay on Development.*

all historical documents fail to make clear, the existence namely of a strictly evangelical church, founded on Protestant principles, (the Bible the only rule of doctrine, justification by faith, the clergy of one order, the people the fountain of all church power,) breathing a Protestant spirit, and carrying men to heaven without sacramental mummery or mysticism in the common sense Puritan way of the present time. So we have seen Dr. Bacon pleasing himself with the imagination, that the Christianity of Lyons in the second century, in the days of Pothinus and Irenæus, and of course also the faith and piety of the church generally in a still earlier part of the same century, in the days of Ignatius and Polycarp, corresponded in all material respects with the modern ecclesiastical life of Connecticut and Massachusetts. Is there any more ground for this fancy, than can be urged in favor of the one we have just now dismissed? We believe not. It rests throughout on a mere hypothesis, which involves in the end a purely arbitrary construction of history, just as wild and bold, to our view, as any that has been offered to us, from a different standpoint, by Strauss or Baur. Into this part of the subject however, the limits necessarily imposed on us at present will not permit us to enter. We hope to be able to return to it, in a second article, some time hereafter.

J. W. N.

ZACHARIAS URSINUS.¹

AMONG the reformers of the second generation, the race of distinguished men, who, though themselves the children of the reformation, were yet in a certain sense joined with the proper original apostles of that great work, in carrying it out to its final settlement and conclusion, no one can be named who is more worthy of honorable recollection, than the learned and amiable author of the far-famed Heidelberg Catechism. In some re-

¹ In the preparation of this article, use has been made of the following works: ALTINO'S *Historia de Ecclesiis Palatinis*; VAN ALPEN'S *Geschichte und Literatur des Heidelberg'schen Katechismus*; PLANCK'S *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie*; BAYLE'S *Dict. hist. et crit. art. Ursin*; SEISER'S *Geschichte der Reformation zu Heidelberg*; K. F. VIERORDT'S *Geschichte der Reformation im Grossherzogthum Baden*; EDWARD'S *Das Dogma vom heil. Abendmahl und seine Geschichte*. Reference may be made also to the writer's own work on the *History and Genius of the Heidelberg Catechism*.

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EARLY CHRISTIANITY.

Second Article.

THE general Puritan theory of Early Christianity may be reduced to the following propositions:

1st. That it started in the beginning under the same form substantially, both in doctrine and practice, which is now known and honored as Evangelical Protestantism without prelacy. The doctrine was orthodox, as distinguished from all heresies that are at war with the doctrines of the Trinity, human depravity, and the atonement. The principle of the Bible and private judgment lay at the bottom of the whole system. The worship was much in the modern style of Scotland or New England. So was it also with the government or polity of the churches. All was vastly rational and spiritual. Even Presbyterianism, according to the Congregationalists, was not yet born. The Baptists carry the nudity farther still. But all agree, that the church notions of later times were unknown. There was no papacy, no episcopacy, no priesthood, no liturgy, no thought of a supernatural virtue in baptism, no dream of anything like the mystery of the real presence in the awful sacrament of the altar. The primitive piety was quite of another order from all this. It was

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neither hierarchical nor mystical, but ran in the channel rather of popular freedom, democratic right, and common sense.

2d. That this happy state of things, established under the authority of the Apostles and in their time universally prevalent in the churches, was unfortunately of only very short duration. How long it lasted is by no means clear. After the destruction of Jerusalem, we have for a time almost no historical notices whatever that serve to reveal to us the actual condition of the church; and such testimony as we have, with the going out of the first century and the coming in of the second, have so questionable a look at certain points, that it is hard to know how far they are to be trusted anywhere. It became the policy of later times to corrupt and suppress documents. The theory thus is of necessity thrown here on presumption and hypothesis. Two broad facts for it however are settled and given; first, that the church started right in the beginning, and secondly, that on coming fully into view again in the third century it is found to be strangely wrong, fairly on the tide in truth of the prelatical system with its whole sea of corruptions and abominations. Between these dates then must be assumed an apostasy or fall, somewhat like that which turned our first parents out of paradise into the common world. When or how the doleful change took place, in the absence of all reliable historical evidence, can only be made out by conjecture; and here naturally the theory is subject in different hands to some variations. The Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist schemes or constructions, are not just the same. All however make the paradisiacal period of the church very short. It is hard to find even one whole century for it after the destruction of Jerusalem; though in a vague loose way it is common to speak of it, as reaching through the second century and some little distance perhaps into the third.

3d. That the change thus early commenced was in truth in full opposition to the original sense and design of Christianity, and involved in principle from the start the grand apostacy that afterwards became complete in the church of Rome, and which is graphically foretold in those passages of the New Testament that speak of antichrist, the mystical Babylon, and the man of sin. The Baptists include in this corruption more than the Congregationalists; and these again include in it more than the Presbyterians, taking Presbytery itself in fact, and that idea of the church which *once* went along with it, for the first stage of the downward progress; but as to what lies beyond this, the vast world of notions and practices namely that go to make up the prelatical system as we find it in full force in the days of Cyp-

rian, the whole Puritan body of course is but of one mind. It is throughout an usurpation only and an abuse, against the Bible, against apostolical and primitive example, against the entire genius and spirit of evangelical religion. It belongs to an order of thought and habit of life, which however countenanced by many good men in the beginning, must be regarded as constitutionally at variance with the first principles of the Gospel, as antichristian and worldly; the natural and only proper end of which, in the course of two or three centuries, was the complete failure of the church in its original form. It became the synagogue of Satan. Christianity went out in dismal eclipse for a thousand years, with only a few tapers, dimly burning here and there in vallies and corners, to keep up some faint remembrance of that glorious day-spring from on high with which it had visited the nations in the beginning.

4th. That the long night of this fearful captivity came to an end finally, through the great mercy of God, by the event of the Reformation; which was brought to pass by the diligent study of the Bible, the original codex of Christianity, under the awakening and guiding influence of the Holy Ghost, and consisted simply in a resuscitation of the life and doctrine of the primitive church, which had been so long buried beneath the corruptions of the great Roman apostacy. The Reformation, in this view, was not properly the historical product and continuation of the life of the church itself, or what was called the church, as it stood before. It was a revolutionary rebellion rather against this as something totally false and wrong, by which it was violently set aside to make room for a new order of things altogether. If it be asked, by what authority Luther and the other reformers undertook to bring in so vast a change, the answer is that they had the authority of the Bible. This and this only, is the religion of Protestants. Popery was antichrist; the Bible teaches plainly a different religion, which must have prevailed in the beginning, and which Popery had contrived to suppress; and what better right than this fact then could the reformers have or need, to fight against it, to overturn it as far as they were able, and to set up the religion of the Bible, the primitive evangelical religion, in its room and place? Such was their warrant, and such as far as it went their good and excellent work. It is not strange however, coming out of such thick darkness as they had in their rear, that they were not themselves able at once to see clearly all that needed to be done in this great restoration; to say nothing of such outward political limitations as they had to contend with for instance in England. Luther

stuck miserably in the mud of Romanism to the last. Even Calvin had his sacramental crotchets, and talks strangely at times of the church. Anglicanism remained out and out semi-papery. Hence the need of new reformation. This we have in Puritanism; which itself also has required some time to come to that perfection of Bible simplicity and truth, which it now happily presents in this country, especially in New England—and most of all, if we take their own word for it, in the wide communion of the Baptists. Here finally, after so long a sleep, the fair image of original Christianity, as it once gladdened the assemblies of the faithful in the days of Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus, and the blessed martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, has come forth as it were from the catacombs, to put to shame that frightful mask which has for so many centuries cheated the world in its name and stead. And what is better still, there is some ground now also to hope, since we have got into the middle of the nineteenth century and Anglo-Saxon mind is in a fair way to rule the world, that this second edition and experiment of a pure faith and true church will be more successful than the first; and that Christ will find it proper *now*, in these last days, to be with his church always, and to make good thus his own promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, as they might seem to have done before, till *Shiloh* come or to the end of the world.

Such in a general view, we say, is the Puritan theory of the past history of the church, and such is the relation in which it imagines Protestantism to stand to Primitive Christianity. The theory and the fancy we believe to be both together absolutely visionary and false. More than that, they are eminently suited to overthrow at last the credit of Protestantism itself, and along with this to upset all faith in Christianity as being really and truly such a revelation as it claims to be for the salvation of the world. Grant the premises of this wild hypothesis, and infidelity may proceed at once to draw its own conclusions with unanswerable force.

It is truly amazing, before looking at the facts of history at all, that the holders of the hypothesis are not troubled some by the very *prodigiousness* of the conceptions that enter into its composition. They appear to be quite easy and at home, for the most part, in the fabric of their peculiar historical system, as though it were the most natural and reasonable structure in the world; and yet never was fabric of this sort probably so put together, as to furnish by its very texture more just cause for anxiety and distrust. The theory, instead of being natural and

reasonable, is as much against nature and reason as can well be conceived. Let any thinking man put out of his mind the mere habit of looking at the past through the medium of the theory itself, so as to bring home to himself clearly in an abstract way the elements and combinations of which it is constructed, and he must feel surely that no scheme could well be, in an *a priori* view, less probable or worthy of trust. Every presumption is against it. If believed at all by the earnestly thoughtful, it can be only through stress of overwhelming evidence, making it a sin to doubt. The unthoughtful of course feel no such difficulty. Their faith is easy, just because it is hollow and blind.

Only look at the scheme in its own light. All previous history looked to the coming of Christ, and prepared the way for it, as the grand central fact of religion and so of the world's life. The Old Testament revelation, through thousands of years, made room for the magnificent and awful mystery. At length it came, the Fact of all facts, full of grace and truth, heralded by angels, surrounded with miracles, binding earth to heaven, and laying the foundations of a new creation of whose splendors and glories there should be no end. Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. His apostles were solemnly commissioned to preach the gospel throughout the world. On the day of Pentecost, they were armed with supernatural power from on high for this purpose; and the history of the Christian Church was opened under a form, that carried in it the largest promise of universal victory and success in following time. With this promise corresponded in full the progress of the new cause, in the age of the apostles and for a short time afterwards. The Gospel was rapidly published throughout the Roman world. The ascended Redeemer at the right hand of God, made head over all things to the church, gave proof of his exaltation and power by causing his kingdom to spread and prevail, in the face of all opposition whether Jewish or Pagan. The whole course of things seemed to show clearly, that the powers of a higher world were at work in the glorious movement, and that it embodied in itself the will and counsel of heaven itself for the full accomplishment of the end towards which it reached. It is usual indeed to make this early success of Christianity one of the external proofs of its divine origin, a real supernatural seal of its truth, like that of miracles. One would naturally suppose, that such a beginning must have led to some sound and true result, in harmony with its own heavenly conditions. But, according to the hypothesis now before us, the very opposite of this took place. Hardly

had the last of the apostles gone to heaven, before signs of apostacy began to show themselves in the bosom of the infant church, threatening to overthrow and defeat entirely its original design. In the midst of its early triumphs, whilst it had still strength to perform miracles and exhibit martyrdoms on all sides in favor of the truth, the leaven of this malignant corruption went forward, strangely enough, in the most active and virulent way; infecting and poisoning, more and more, the very vitals of the church; till in the course of a single century from the death of St. John, perhaps indeed much sooner, the entire course of its life was changed from what it had been at first, and turned into a false direction. Traces of the original faith and piety are still to be found indeed in the third and fourth and fifth centuries, the echoes and reminiscences as it were, more and more faint, of the better age which had gone before; but these were exceptional now to the central tendency, rather than its true and genuine fruit; the power that prevailed, and that was fast carrying all things its own way, almost without question or protest, was the "mystery of iniquity," that same great anti-christian apostacy in principle and drift, which in due time afterwards culminated in the Pope, and brought upon the world the darkness of the middle ages. The eclipse came not at once in its full strength; but still, from the very start, it was the beginning of the total obscurity that followed, and looked to this steadily as its end. So in truth Satan in the end fairly prevailed over Christ. The church fell, not partially and transiently only, but universally, in its collective and corporate character, with an apostacy that was to reach through twelve hundred years. Had it not been for some copies of the Bible here and there, in the hands of a few obscure and persecuted witnesses for the truth, the light of Christianity would have become absolutely extinct; for the so called catholic church, in league plainly with the powers of hell, and with the sovereignty of the world in its hands, showed itself bent for ages on the accomplishment precisely of this terrible result. Never was there so glorious a morning, so suddenly lost and forgotten in thick impenetrable clouds! The grandeur of the enterprise is equalled only by the greatness of its failure. And what is that fearful whisper that seems to steal upon us, in view of it, from the very depths of the bottomless pit: "This man began to build, and was not able to finish?" But here again the hypothesis is ready with its own answer. The failure was not final. So long as the Bible lived, there was still room for hope; and at last accordingly, "in the fulness of time," after centuries upon centuries of ecclesiastical chaos, God was pleased

to say once more, "Let there be light," and there *was* light. The reformers of the 16th century drew forth from the sacred volume, by the help of God's Spirit, the true scheme and pattern of the christian faith, as it was in the beginning. The spell of ages was broken. Christ gave tokens that he was again at the head of his church. The unfinished work of the first and second centuries was once more actively and vigorously resumed. In the form of Protestantism, it may *now* be expected, after so long a time, to go forward conquering and to conquer, until all enemies are subdued under the Saviour's feet. True, Popery is not still dead, and Protestantism itself is getting into huge difficulties; but we must now have faith in Christ's headship over his church, and in his promise that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it; so as to be firmly persuaded, in spite of all fears and discouragements, that the right course which things have at last taken must certainly prove successful in the end, and that he who sits king in Zion will not rest till he shall have brought forth judgment unto victory.

Will any sober minded man pretend to say, that this, in itself considered, is not a strange and unnatural hypothesis, which it is exceedingly hard to reconcile, either with the divine origin of the church, or with its divine mission, or with the divine presence in it of Him, who is represented as having the government of the world on his shoulders for its defence and salvation?

But the case becomes yet more difficult, when we look into the sacred oracles which lie back of the actual history of the church, and find that instead of lending any countenance to this scheme prospectively, they set before us in the most plain and unquestionable terms an altogether different prospect. Some few passages, we know, have been impressed by a strained and violent exegesis into the service of the theory, by being made in sound at least to foretell a general apostacy of the church, the features of which it has been pretended to identify in the Papal communion; and it is not uncommon to hear the enemies of Popery appealing to these perversions of scripture as the very voice of inspiration itself, and charging those who question the infallibility of their gloss with setting themselves against the authority of God's word. But the day for such arbitrary and unhistorical interpretation, it may be trusted, is now fast coming to an end. On the field of science at least, it is fairly and fully exploded. No real biblical scholar, in any part of the world, is found willing to endorse the vulgar anti-popery sense of these pet texts. On the other hand, however, there are many single passages and texts, which clearly foretell the unfailling stability

of the church, through all ages, on to the end of time. And what perhaps is of still more account, the whole drift and scope of the Bible look always in the same direction, and in this direction only.

Even under the Old Testament, it was a standing article of faith that the theocracy could not fail. But this perpetuity was itself the type only of that higher and better state, in which the Jewish theocracy was to become complete finally as the New Testament church. If it lay in the conception of the old that it should not prove a failure, much more must this be taken to lie in the conception of the new. It is to the times of the Messiah in this view emphatically, that the predictions and promises of the Old Testament in relation to the coming fortunes of the church especially refer. All join in the assurance, that the kingdom then to be set up should be an everlasting kingdom, and that of its dominion and glory there should be no end. Nothing could well be more foreign from the old Messianic scheme, than the imagination that the enlargement of Jacob, by the coming of Shiloh, was to give place almost immediately again to a long night of captivity and bondage, ten times worse than that of Babylon, from which there was to be no escape for more than a thousand years. And just as little can any such view be reconciled with the plan of Christianity, as it meets us in the New Testament. This proceeds everywhere on the assumption, that the kingdom of God, or the church, as now established among men, was destined, not to fall but to stand, not to pass away like the streams of the desert, but to be as the waters of the sanctuary rather, in Ezekiel's vision, an ever deepening and perpetual river. There are, it is true, predictions enough of trials, heresies, apostacies and corruptions; but the idea is never for a moment allowed, that these should prevail in any such universal way as the theory before us pretends. On the contrary, the strongest assurances are given, that this should not be the case.

These stand forth most conspicuously and solemnly, in those wonderful passages from the mouth of the blessed Saviour himself, which form as it were the charter of the church and its heavenly commission to the end of time. "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" Math. xvi. 18. The use which the Romanists make of this text, must not, blind us to its true magnificence and grandeur. It is still scripture; and we are bound, as good Protestants, to pause with some reverence before it, and to inquire with seriousness what it actually does

mean. Take it as we may, it looks certainly like a most explicit pledge, in terms of unusual solemnity and deliberation, that the church should endure on its first foundation, that is with true historical succession from its own beginning, through all ages. Of the same tenor again precisely is the apostolic commission, after our Saviour's resurrection and just before his ascension: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth: Go ye *therefore*, 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" Matth. xxviii: 18-20. Here again we have scripture, under a most majestic and commanding form. Has it any meaning answerable to its magnificent terms, or is it a mere flourish of Oriental figures which mean the next thing to nothing? Words could hardly be put together in a way more significantly suited to express the idea, that the object of this commission was one which could not possibly suffer failure or defeat. The enterprise in view is conditioned by the fact, that all power is in the Saviour's hands, that he is head over all things, as Paul expresses it, to the church; and all conceivable difficulties attending it, as in the case of Moses when sent to bring Israel out of Egypt, are reduced to nothing by the one overwhelming consideration, "*Lo, I am with you always,*" engaging the entire plenitude of this power for its never ending success. It is useless to dwell on other testimonies that look immediately in the same direction. If these capital and classical passages have no power to fix attention or constrain belief, it is not to be imagined that any amount of scriptural evidence besides will be felt to carry with it any real weight.

It is very certain, that only the most wilful and stubborn prejudice can fail to see, how utterly at war the Bible is with the notion of a quickly apostatizing and totally failing church, in any view answerable to the strange Puritan hypothesis which we have now under consideration. No such notion accordingly ever entered the mind of the primitive church itself. It was for a time supposed indeed that the end of the world was near at hand, and that the resurrection state or millenium would soon appear; and it was only gradually, that this view gave place to the idea of a long course of history preparing the way for Christ's second coming. But neither in the one form nor in the other, was the thought ever admitted that the church itself might collapse or go into universal dismal eclipse. That would have been counted downright infidelity. The promise to Peter and

the apostolic commission were never taken but in one sense; and that appeared to be so plain, that no one but an unbeliever, it was supposed, could ever think of seriously calling it in question. It became accordingly, as we all know, an element of the primitive faith, an article of the early creed, to believe in the being of the holy catholic church as an indestructible fact, a divine mystery that could never fail or pass away.

The biblical doctrine on this subject is so clear indeed, that even the most unhistorical advocates of the Puritan theory are themselves constrained to allow it; though they take care to put it into a shape to suit their own preconceived scheme. Nothing is more common than to hear them talk of the unfailling and enduring character of the church, of its being founded on a rock, and of Christ's presence with it always for its protection and defence; they are willing to say with the ancient creed, when necessary, "We believe in the church as one, holy, catholic and apostolical." But by all this they mean in the end, not the church in any outward and visible view, not the historical organization known under this name and claiming these titles from the third century down to the sixteenth, but a supposed succession of hidden and scattered witnesses, in the so called catholic church partly, but more generally after a time on the outside of it, handing down what the theory is pleased to call a pure faith, in conflict with the reigning system, and in the way of more or less direct protest against it as an anti-christian usurpation. It is of the invisible church only, they tell us, the secret "election in Israel," that the glorious things spoken of Zion are to be understood. The church was in the wilderness for a thousand years before the Reformation, among the Waldenses, Albigenses, Henricians, Paulicians, and such like; God was never altogether without a handful of people somewhere, that refused to bow the knee to Baal. No such evasion however is of any force in truth, for getting clear of the difficulty which we have here in view. It turns in the first place on a mere arbitrary assumption, borrowed from the clouds, and got up palpably to serve a purpose, without the least regard to historical facts and dates; an assumption that is doomed therefore, by necessary consequence, to dissolve before the light of history more and more into mere fog and mist. These sects of the middle ages are bad stuff at best, for making out the romance of a pure Christianity, from the fifth century to the fifteenth, on the outside of the Roman church. But allowing them to have been as good as the theory before us affects to believe, and granting it besides a fair proportion of sporadic exceptional cases of piety,

in the reigning church itself, to fill up the thin and airy succession, what sound mind can be satisfied still to take *this* for any fitting verification of the glowing predictions of the Old Testament, any true fulfilment of the high sounding promises and pledges that are contained in the New? No *such* construction of these predictions and promises certainly ever entered into the mind of the primitive church itself; the construction is perfectly foreign from the sense of the ancient creed; and we may safely say, that nothing short of the most powerful prejudice in favor of a previously established theory can account in any case, for its being accepted as in the least degree satisfactory or probable. The whole is a subterfuge plainly, got up to escape the clear and proper sense of the Bible, and not an honest commentary by any means designed to meet this sense in a fair and open way.

The difficulty then stands before us still in its full strength. The helplessness of the plea thus put in to turn aside its force, only serves to give it greater weight. The more we bring the case home in an actual way to our thoughts, the more are we likely to be confounded with its palpable monstrosity. Puritanism puts an enormous tax upon our faith from the very outset, when it requires us to believe things so contradictory and mutually destructive as are here brought together in one and the same theory or scheme. That the church should have such a history behind it as that of the Old Testament, such a glorious array of miracles, types, prophecies, heralding and foreshadowing its advent, for thousands of years, as the desire of all nations, the last sense and grand fulfilment of all previous revelations; that its actual inauguration in the world should be so every way worthy of this stupendous world-embracing poem, in the mystery of the incarnation itself, ("God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, &c." 1 Tim. v: 16.), in "promises exceedingly great and precious," and high guaranties from the throne of heaven, in signs and wonders and miracles, and in wide pentecostal triumphs throughout the Roman empire; that Christianity should start thus, under such divine auspices, the glorified Saviour head over all things for its single cause and sake, and ever present by his Spirit in the midst of it according to his own word, and by infallible tokens also making his presence known and felt on all sides; that the church in these circumstances should look upon itself as an institution founded upon a rock, and make it an article of faith that its charter could not fail: and yet, that in fact all began to fail, to go into confusion, to run towards apostacy, before the end of the second century; that

this fearful tendency, in spite of Christ's headship in heaven and his, *Lo, I am with you always*, on earth, through fires of martyrdom and unheard of sacrifices for the faith once delivered to the saints, so far prevailed actually as in the course of two or three centuries more to turn this whole faith into a lie; that the church in short, under its original corporate character, ran out historically into a complete and universal failure, so as to be for a whole millenium of the most horrible spiritual darkness and desolation, a mere synagogue of Satan, the enemy of all truth and righteousness, seeking only to pull down and destroy what Christ (King in Zion Ps. ii: 1-6) was still trying to build here and there, by such people as the Paulicians and Albigenes: All this taken together, we say, requires such a cormorant credulity for its full reception, that the most careless minds, when brought to think only a little for themselves, are very likely to start back aghast from the scheme, and may well be excused for gently asking, By what authority and right does it pretend so to lord it over our faith?

It would seem reasonable to expect in so improbable a case, that the main positions of the theory at least would be so supported by clear historical proof, as to carry with them some sort of coercive force for such as are willing and anxious to know the truth. An apostacy so profound and total should be properly attested in some way, by historical testimonies and monuments. Allowing it to have come in gradually, this only gives us the more right to expect and demand the evidence of which we now speak. So vast a revolution, in such view, implies of necessity a moral struggle, a conflict of principles and aims, a tumult of inharmonious and opposing forces. To say that the primitive church yielded passively to the great apostacy from the beginning, without contradiction or protest, is to make it from the very first, not "the pillar and ground of the truth," but the mother of error itself; to conceive of it as built, not on a rock beating back the strong floods of hell, but on the mere sand at the mercy of all winds and waves. The least we can ask then, is to have set before us in history some traces of this grand ecclesiastical catastrophe, by which all our *a priori* conceptions of Christianity are so confounded, and our faith in its divine origin and heavenly commission is so terribly tried. And as we should have clear proof in this way of the failure of the church in the beginning, it would seem but reasonable also that we should not be left to take the Reformation on trust subsequently as a merely human work. Allow the continuous stability of the church, as a divine institution carrying in itself down to that time the

promises and gifts with which it was freighted in the beginning, and we may at least try to justify Protestantism as a true product of this historical life itself; in which view it might need no higher warrant perhaps for its vindication. But give up the historical succession, by taking the ground that the church had failed. for a thousand years, except among sects from which it is notorious Protestantism did *not* spring, and that the Reformation was in truth a new setting up of Christianity parallel with its first setting up by the Apostles; and then really we see not, why the proper credentials of a truly apostolical commission should be wanting in the second case more than in the first. Luther himself did not hesitate to pose the radicalism of the Anabaptists with this test: "If they have a commission from God, let them prove it by *miracles*." But if the Reformation itself is to be taken for what this Puritan theory makes it, we must say it was quite as much a new church as the enterprise of Storck and Munzer, and needed quite as much the argument of miracles for its support. ✓

But now when we look into the actual course of history, we find it in no agreement whatever with these reasonable presumptions and anticipations, as directed either towards the end of this supposed failure of the church or towards its beginning. The Reformation, we all know, lacked entirely the seal of miracles, the only truly apostolical warrant for a really apostolical work. In this respect it bore no resemblance to the mission of Elijah, the restorer of Moses in the apostate kingdom of Israel. That such an apostacy, reaching through a thousand years, should finally be set right in this way, is not a little strange. On the other hand however, the coming in of the apostacy is more strangely conditioned still. Never was a revolution so vast and important, so broad and deep in its course, so sweepingly disastrous in its effects. We may apply to it without exaggeration the strong figure: "In those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken." The church, having in charge the most vital interests of a fallen world, proved recreant to her solemn trust, fell from her high estate, and became literally the seat of Antichrist and a synagogue of Satan. Thus fearfully radical, the revolution was at the same time no less dreadfully universal. And yet, strange to say, no one can tell when or how it came to pass. We have indeed certain schemes that pretend to be such an explanation. But these, when examined, are found to be purely fanciful attempts to solve the demands of a theory already adopted, rather

than the exhibition of actual historical grounds for the theory itself. It is assumed in the first place that a certain form of religion, Puritanism for instance, is taught in the New Testament, and therefore that it must have prevailed in the apostolical and primitive church; it is very evident in the next place, that a wholly different form of religion prevailed in the church of the third and fourth centuries, a system intrinsically at war with Puritanism and leading directly towards full Catholicism; here then the fact of an apostacy is supposed to be historically established, and any combination now is taken to be rational and legitimate that serves at all to bind the two sides of it plausibly together. So we have various pretty plans or methods, that of the Quakers, that of the Baptists, that of the Independents, that of the Presbyterians, and coming down somewhat farther that also of the Episcopalians, setting forth with more or less particularity how the corruption of pure Christianity in the first ages took place, first one step and then another, till at last the face of it was totally altered and changed; but if we call for the direct proof of these fine spun constructions, we find it to be either wanting altogether, or at best to consist in a few stray words, picked up here and there without regard to the general formation from which they are taken, and of such slippery and extremely brittle sense, that one may well feel astounded to see what weight they are made to bear. It seems to be counted sufficient for the most part, if no direct proof can be quoted the other way, or if the force of any such quotation can be ingeniously set aside. If Irenæus speak not of infant baptism in terms that cut off all captious debate, the Baptists hold it a good argument that the baptism of infants in his time was unknown. If Justin Martyr teach not diocesan episcopacy in the same terms with Cyprian, the Presbyterians lay hold of him as a good witness that the ambition of prelacy was not yet born. If the primacy of the Roman see be not positively declared by the earliest fathers in round set phrase, the Episcopalians take it as so much testimony that this usurpation, as they call it, came in at a later day. If it appear that the Apostles' Creed is not quoted in its full present form before the fourth century, Puritanism chuckles over the nice discovery, and on the strength of it proceeds at once to deny its apostolical and primitive authority, treating its article of the church as a figment, and seeing in it the germs at least of all sorts of Popish error and delusion. And so it goes throughout the chapter. It never seems to enter the head of these self-complacent theorizers, that the burden of proof lies of right first and foremost upon themselves; that the difficulty of making out

clear and plain testimony in every case for the negative of their arbitrary positions, is not in and of itself any testimony whatever in favor of these positions; that the *indifference* of the argument in this form, the mere want of positive and direct testimony either way, is itself in truth a most powerful presumption, not in favor of their theories, but against them, and in favor only of the cause to which they are variously opposed. The grand difficulty is just to see, how so great an apostacy as is here supposed to have had place, turning the fair bride of the Lamb in so short a time into the similitude of a harlot, should have gone forward through its several stages or steps, as laid down in either of these schemes, and yet have left no trace of its dire revolutionary march on the historic page!

That false tendencies might begin to work in a pure state of the church, is not hard to believe. But the case before us involves immeasurably more than this. These tendencies are taken to be from the start in full opposition to the genius and spirit of the Gospel; they work rapidly in fact towards its overthrow; they bring in by degrees new ideas and practices altogether, the fruit of cunning secular pride and borrowed from Judaism or Paganism, that go directly to undermine and break up the simple evangelical system of earlier times; and yet they provoke no opposition, excite no alarm, but make an easy prey of the whole church, as it would seem, without a protesting cry or a contradictory stroke. The ministers took the lead in the bad movement, and the people fell in passively with their wrong guidance. All sorts of pious lies and forgeries were resorted to for its support; and the daughter of Zion was either too silly to perceive the fraud, or too sleepy to lay it seriously to heart. The old faith died thus, and gave no sign. The apostacy came in without an effort or a struggle. True, as we are told, it had stages and degrees. But each new stage found a generation ready to accept it, as the undoubted sense of the faith they had received from their fathers. The work went silently but surely forward always in the same false direction. It carried along with it the universal church. When this comes fully into view in the fourth century, we find, not a part of it merely, but the entire body fully committed to the sacramental, liturgical, churchly and priestly system, with the full persuasion that the whole of it had come down from the earliest times. All history may be defied, to furnish any parallel to such a revolution, any change political or religious at once so vast and yet so entirely without noise. It passes before us like a scene of magic. As some one has observed, it is as though the world on some one night had

gone to bed Protestant or Puritan, and on waking the next morning found itself thoroughly and universally Catholic.

Only think of a single province, such as modern New England for instance, in the course of one or two hundred years throwing off the whole type of its religion in this way, and with general consent accepting another of diametrically opposite character and cast, without a single monument to inform posterity how the thing was done. Think of her associations and conso-ciations, with their system of parity and rank democracy, passing over in so short a time to a well ordered hierarchy, revolving round a single centre. Think of her free prayers losing themselves in liturgical forms, her naked spiritualism stooping to clothe itself with the mummery of outward ceremonies and rites, crossings, bowings, sprinklings, with all the paraphernalia of a truly pontifical worship. Think of her sacraments turning from barren signs into supernatural mysteries, of the simple memorial of the Lord's supper in particular assuming the character of a real sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead, and running into the bold and utterly confounding tenet of transubstantiation. Think of her mission of worldly prudence, utility, materialism and common sense, running out into the glorification of monasticism, voluntary poverty, the angelical life of celibates and virgins. Imagine these and other kindred transformations, we say, accomplished between the days of Dr. Increase Mather and those of President Dwight, and all so smoothly and quietly as to leave no trace, not a solitary record or sign of resistance, protestation, division or dissent, to inform posterity in any case when or how the change took place. Would it not be a moral miracle, transcending entirely the common order of history? But in the hypothesis before us, the miracle goes far beyond this. It embraces not one province only, but many, widely separated in space, and differing in every social and national respect. It is universal Christendom, from Britain to Africa, from Spain to India, that is found to have yielded simultaneously to the spirit of defection and revolt, as though it had been animated through all its borders with one and the same principle of evil, bewildering its senses and hurrying it among the tombs. Nothing could better show the universality of the supposed apostacy; and the deep root it had taken previously in the mind and life of the church, than the grand divisions that took place in the fourth and fifth centuries; giving rise to rival communions on a vast scale, some of which have upheld themselves down to the present time. These could not of course consent in any such innovation after they fell asund-

er; on the contrary, the laws of party and sect would have been sure to bring out a loud complaint of the change, if anything of the sort lay within the reach of knowledge before. But the Arians and Donatists brought no charge here against the Catholics. The Nestorians and Monophysites went out and founded new churches, which remain to this day; but they carried along with them the characteristic peculiarities of the Roman system, which they have never ceased since to regard as of truly apostolical force and date. These have indeed become for the most part mere petrifications or dead fossil remains; but in this character they still bear powerful and unanswerable testimony to the fact of which we now speak, the universal and unquestioned authority of this system throughout Christendom in the fourth century. No language written on rocks for this purpose, could be more sure or plain.

The contrast in which this noiseless revolution stands with the known vigilance of the church in other things, serves to make it still more striking and strange. Christianity in the beginning was anything but a passive and inert system, which offered itself like wax to every impression from abroad. It had a most intense life of its own, power to assimilate and reject in the sea of elements with which it was surrounded, the force of self-conservation over against all dissolving agencies, as never any system of thought or life before. It is just this organic and all subduing character that forms the grand argument from history, for its divine origin and heavenly truth. Neander has it continually in view. What subtle speculations were not tried, in the first centuries on the part of the Gnostics, Manicheans, Sabellians, Arians, and others, to corrupt the truth; and yet how promptly and vigorously all these innovations were met and repelled. It was not reflection either that led the way in these contests with heresy, but a fine tact rather and living instinct for the orthodoxy to which they were always opposed. Danger was felt with keen inward sensibility even afar off, and no time was lost in sounding an alarm. There is no lack accordingly of historical witnesses and monuments, to show here what actually took place. They abound in the form of controversies, councils, heretical parties, and wide-spread long enduring schisms. And yet in the midst of all this vigilant activity, if we are to believe our Puritan hypothesis, the great apostacy of Popery came in upon the universal church so quietly that no one now can lay his hand on the origin of a single one of all its manifold forms of corruption and abuse. It gave rise to no controversy, created no party, led to no schism. The Argus-

eyed jealousy of the heretical sects themselves was blinded and deceived. They saw not the wholesale treason which was going forward in such bold and impudent style; and it was allowed by all of them accordingly to pass, without one syllable of remonstrance or rebuke.

But this is not all. The prodigiousness of the theory goes still farther. It is by the Bible it pretends to be sure that the church started on the Puritan model, and that this later state of it therefore must be counted a grand falling away from its first and only true form. But now the Bible itself comes down to us through the hands of this same apostate church, which made no conscience, we are sometimes told, of forging and falsifying documents, to almost any extent, for the purpose of carrying out its own wrong; and we have absolutely to take it on trust from the credit solely of this suspicious source. This is particularly clear, in the case of the New Testament, the main authority of course for the question here in debate. What authority was it that fixed the sacred canon, determining in the beginning what books were to be taken as inspired, and what other books not a few were to be rejected as apocryphal or false? The authority precisely of that very organization, which these same canonical writings are now brought forward to convict of palpable wholesale unfaithfulness to its own trust; and which was in the full career of such sad apostacy indeed, while diligently and as it would seem most faithfully fulfilling this great commission, for the use of the world in later ages. The work of settling the canon began in the second century, but was not fully completed before the fourth; and then it was by the tradition and authority of the church simply that the work, regarded through all this time as one and the same, was brought thus to its final consummation. We have already seen however, where the church stood in the fourth century, and in what direction all its forces were tending in the third. Is it not strange, that we should be under obligation to such a growing mystery of iniquity for so excellent and holy a gift, and that coming to us in this way we can still be so sure that every line of it is inspired, so as to make it the only rule of our faith? Is it not strange that the very Church, which had still divine tact enough for the delicate function of settling the canon, had at the same time no power to see or feel her own glaring departures from the light of this infallible rule, but actually gloried in it as the oracle and voucher of her claims;—not dreaming how, after the lapse of twelve hundred years, it should blaze forth into quite another signification, and be a swift witness against herself, as the whore of Babylon, the mother of abominations and lies.

Nor does the wonder stop here. The faithful execution of this most responsible task of settling the canon, and handing down an uncorrupted Bible, for the use of all following time, is not the only merit of the ancient church. These ages of apostacy, as they are here considered, were at the same time, by general acknowledgment, ages of extraordinary faith and power. Miracles abounded. Charity had no limits. Zeal stopped at no sacrifices, however hard or great. The blood of martyrs flowed in torrents. The heroism of confessors braved every danger. Bishops ruled at the peril of their lives. In the catalogue of Roman popes, no less than thirty before the time of Constantine, that is, the whole list that far with only two or three exceptions, wear the crown of martyrdom. Nor was this zeal outward only, the fanaticism of a name or a sect. Along with it burned, as we have seen before, a glowing interest in the truth, an inextinguishable ardor in maintaining the faith once delivered to the saints. Heresies quailed from its presence. Schisms withered under its blasting rebuke. Thus, in the midst of all opposition, it went forward from strength to strength, till in the beginning of the fourth century finally we behold it fairly seated on the throne of the Cesars. And this outward victory, as Neander will tell us, was but a faint symbol of the far more important revolution it had already accomplished in the empire of human thought, the interior world of the spirit. Here was brought to pass, in the same time, a true creation from the bosom of chaos, such as the world had never seen before, over which the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. In foundation and principle at least, old things, whether of philosophy, or of art, or of morality and social life, were passed away, and, lo, all things had become new. This is the grand argument for Christianity from its *miraculous success*; of which Puritanism, when it suits, is ready to make as loud use as any part of the church besides, as though it really believed this ancient glory to be in some way after all truly and properly its own. And yet by the same Puritanism we are told again, when another object is in view, that the cause which thus conquered the world by manifest supernatural power, was itself so deserted and abandoned by its glorified King, as to be all the while rushing at the same time towards universal apostacy and ruin, by the mystery of sin which it carried in its own womb!

And then again, when this mystery came fully out, and the apostacy stood completely revealed in the form of full grown and undisguised Popery, followed as we all know by the long deep night of the middle ages, there was still no end to the mor-

al wonders of which we now speak. The Papacy itself is a wonder of wonders. There is nothing like it in all history besides. So all will feel, who stop to *think* about it in more than a fool's way. History too, even in Protestant hands, is coming more and more to do justice to the vast and mighty merits of the system in past times, bringing in light upon it, and scaring away the owls and bats that have so long been accustomed to hoot and flit here at their own will. These ages of darkness as they are called, were still, to an extent now hard to understand, ages also of faith. The church still had, as in earlier days, her miracles, her martyrdoms, her missionary zeal, her holy bishops and saints, her works of charity and love, her care for sound doctrine, her sense of a heavenly commission, and her more than human power to convert and subdue nations. True, the world was dark, very dark and very wild; and its corruptions were powerfully felt at times in her own bosom; but no one but a simpleton or a knave will pretend to make this barbarism *her* work, or to lay it as a crime to *her* charge. She was the rock that beat back its proud waves. She was the power of order and law, the fountain of a new civilization, in the midst of its tumultuating chaos. Take the conversion of Saxon England in the time of Gregory the Great and the long work of moral organization with which it was followed in succeeding centuries. Look at the missionaries that proceeded from this island, apostolical bishops and holy monks, in the seventh and eighth centuries, planting churches successfully in the countries of the Rhine. Consider the entire evangelization of the new barbarous Europe. Is it not a work fairly parallel, to say the least, with the conquest of the old Roman empire in the first ages? Is not the argument of "miraculous success" quite as strong here as there? Think again of the theology of this old Catholic church, of its body of ethics, of its canon law. The cathedral of Cologne is no such work as this last; the dome of St. Peter is less sublimely grand than the first. How wonderful, that the theological determinations of the fifth and sixth centuries, in the midst of endless agitation and strife, should fall so steadily the right way; and also that these true conclusions should seem to hang so constantly, in the last instance, on the mind and voice of Rome. And then in the ages that followed, how wonderful again, that when there was but small power to build, nothing should be done at least to unsettle and pull down the edifice of sound doctrine as it stood before. However much of rubbish the Reformation found occasion to remove, it was still compelled to do homage to the main body of the Roman theolo-

gy as orthodox and right ; and to this day Protestantism has no valid mission in the world, any farther than it is willing to build on this old foundation. Its distinctive doctrines are of no force, except in organic union with the grand scheme of truth, which is exhibited in the ancient creeds and in the decisions of the first general councils. Cut off from this root, taken out from the stream of this only sure and safe tradition, even the authority of the Bible becomes uncertain, and the article of justification by faith itself is turned into a perilous lie. In every view, we may say, the work and mission of the church after the fourth century continue to be, as they were before, the most wonderful and solemn fact in the world. And yet, according to the theory now in hand, it was no longer an apostatizing church merely, but a body fully apostate, fallen from the truth, opposed to righteousness, in league with Satan, and systematically bent on destroying all that Christ came into the world to build. Antichrist, the man of sin, reigned terribly supreme, "sitting in the temple of God, and opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped." How truly confounding the incongruous combination ! How perfectly self-satirical the incoherent face of the contradiction !

The theory is false. It rests on no historical bottom. The scriptures are against it. All sound religious feeling is at war with it. Facts of every sort conspire to prove it untrue. It is a sheer hypothesis, a sort of Protestant myth we may call it, got up to serve a purpose, and hardened by time and tradition now into the form of a sacred prejudice ; or rather it is an arbitrary construction, that seeks to turn into mere myth and fable the true history of the church. In this view we have said, that it may fairly challenge comparison with the famous critical systems of such men as Strauss and Baur. Indeed these are in some respects more plausible. They take the ground, that Christianity as we have it now in the New Testament is a product properly of the second century, rather than the true birth historically of the first ; that the original facts and doctrines were far more simple ; that the religious imagination of the infant church, or the spirit of controversy among its Jewish and Gentile parties, idealized all into new shape and form ; and that most of our canonical books were then forged according to this new and higher scheme, and piously fathered upon the apostles to give them more credit and weight. Monstrous as this representation is, it is truly wonderful what a show of learning, critical and historical, can be urged in its favor, enough almost to deceive at times the very elect themselves. And yet it is a wild theory,

which needs no other force to upset it in the end than the simple persuasion, that the church itself is of divine origin, and not the most abominable imposture that ever has appeared in the world. The article: "I believe in the holy catholic church," which must ever precede in the order of faith, as Augustine tells us, that other article: "I believe in the holy inspired bible," wherever it really prevails in the heart, scatters to the wind all imaginable sophistries and subtleties in this form. The logic of Hegel before it, becomes no better than a spider's web. The true answer to Strauss, as well as to the whole Tübingen school, is an act of faith in the mystery of Christianity itself, as we have this concretely set forth in the ancient creed. But now what better after all, as tried by the touchstone of such faith, is the Puritan theory at which we are now looking? Is it not equally borrowed from the clouds, and at the same time equally fatal to all firm and full confidence in the supernatural origin and mission of the church, whose history it pretends to follow in so strange a way? To allow the suppositions of Strauss or of Baur, is from the very outset to drag down Christianity from the skies, and to make its whole signification not only human merely and earthly, but grossly carnal also and devilish. It is morally impossible to conceive of its rise and growth in any such style, and yet look upon it as a direct revelation in any way from heaven. The two conceptions are incompatible, and go at once to destroy each other. And just so also, we say, to allow the historical suppositions of Puritanism, is to convert the divine origin of the church into a fiction or a dream. Even such a scheme of history as we have in Mosheim for instance, or in the text book of Gieseler with all its show of authorities, is intrinsically at war with any real faith in this mystery, and can never fail to undermine it where no antidote is in the way. The sense of authorities, the force even of facts, turns always on the standpoint from which they are viewed. An infidel hypothesis necessarily sees all persons and things in the light of its own evil and false eye. Both Mosheim and Gieseler in this way are very little better than Gibbon. To accept their disposition and combination of facts, is of necessity to give up secretly the whole idea, that the glorious things spoken of Zion in the beginning ever had any truth. But the common Puritan scheme goes farther still in this infidel direction. It outrages all moral verisimilitude, and joins together such contraries as by no possibility *can* cohere in the same real and firm belief. What sane mind can bring its theory of the wholesale errors and corruptions of the early church, into any sort of harmony with the

assured feeling, that the heavenly and supernatural conditions of its presence in the world were ever in any real sense what they are described as being, either in the New Testament or in the ancient creeds? There is not the least doubt, but that the theory in fact tends directly to destroy all such assurance, by the monstrous and violent incompatibility of its own terms. This does not imply indeed a formal giving up of the point in question, as an article of so called faith. That is the true logical end of the contradiction. But all men have not logic; and it is quite possible to carry out the rationalism in another form. The article may be shorn of all historical connections, and thrust out from the real world altogether, so that the supernatural in the case shall have no actual being whatever in the bosom of the natural, but be only as a cloud or dream floating over it and beyond it in Gnostic or Nestorian style. In such shape it may be possible still, to believe in a holy catholic church, which was from the very start the mere foot-ball of Satan. But in the same way it is possible also to believe, that the moon is made of green cheese.

And so we come finally to the conclusion, towards which this discussion has been looking and reaching all along, that there never was in truth any such identity as Puritanism dreams between the early church and its own modern self. Its hypothesis of the vast and terrible revolution by which all is taken to have fallen so soon into another type, is unnatural, unhistorical, irreligious, and fairly incredible; and we have a right to infer accordingly that its primary premise is false. No such primeval state ever existed, as makes it necessary to consider the whole subsequent history of the church an apostacy only and a grand universal lie. Dr. Bacon and others are entirely mistaken, when they imagine any counterpart to New England Congregationalism in the days of Ignatius and Polycarp, or please themselves with the thought that the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, in the second century, suffered for just such views of truth as are now preached in the pulpits of Connecticut and Massachusetts. An overwhelming presumption of the contrary lies before us in the later history of the church; and it needs only some proper freedom from prejudice, we will now add, to find this presumption abundantly confirmed by the historical data of this older period itself. True, these are comparatively sparse, and often a good deal indefinite and vague; and it is not impossible for an adroit criticism, on this account, to twist them to its own mind—especially if it have *carte blanche* to treat as interpolation or corruption every passage that may prove refractory in the

process. But the violence of all such criticism appears plainly enough on its own front, and when it has made the most of its cause in this way, the proofs that stand in clear force against it are still amply sufficient for the purpose now affirmed. The force of the argument is sometimes enfeebled and obscured, by fixing attention too exclusively on single points and particular phrases and texts. But what the case requires, is a steady regard to the broad issue in question as a whole, and a fair estimate of the testimony or evidence concerned under the like universal view. It is not necessary to stickle for this or that point separately considered; nor is it worth while to waste either ink or breath, in settling the credit or fixing the sense of one clause here and another there, in the remains of Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, or Irenæus. The main question in controversy is of far wider scope and range than any such particular eddies raised in its bosom, and is capable of being brought to some general conclusion in a much more comprehensive and summary way. It regards not so much mere prelacy, or the use of a liturgy in this or that particular form, or the positive practice of infant baptism at a given time, or the mode in which the water was applied in this sacrament whether in the case of infants or adults, or the acknowledgment of transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass—it regards not so much any one or all of these and such like points separately taken, we say, as it does rather the whole idea and scheme of the church, in which all such points are comprehended, and from which they derive necessarily in the end their proper significance and import. The determination of these single points, we know, is of no small consequence, where it can be fairly reached, for the settlement also of this general and main question. But what we wish to say is, that in the case before us the main question is not thrown absolutely or conclusively on any particular issues of this sort, which it may be possible for a small criticism to envelope here and there in dust or smoke. The general spirit and form of early Christianity are capable of being understood from its few historical remains, especially when taken in connection with the tradition of following times, in such manner as fairly to overwhelm the nibbling of such mouse-like criticism at particular points, instead of being dependent upon it at all in any way for their own authority. The sense of the whole here is so clear and plain, that we have the best right to use it as a key or guide for the interpretation of the parts. Take for instance the Baptist points of immersion and the exclusion of infants from the church; all turns finally on the light in which the sacrament of baptism

itself was regarded, and so on the view taken of the supernatural constitution of Christianity; and it requires nothing more than the most general acquaintance with the first age of the church, and the writings that have come down to us from that time, to see and feel surely that the whole standpoint of Christianity then was completely different from that of the Baptists in the present day; so that no proof they may ever seem to have for their favorite hobbies can have any force at all to identify the one position with the other. Allowing the points of correspondence they claim to be real, to what can it amount still so long as it is plain, that the whole inward posture of the early church was in contradiction to the un-mystical, un-sacramental and un-churchly system, in which the Baptists now glory as pre-eminently their own? The best and most sufficient defence against this system after all, is simply to be somewhat imbued with the general soul of the primitive church, as it looks forth upon us from the writings of Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenæus and Tertullian. With any such preparation, no one can be in danger of mistaking the modern fiction for the ancient truth. They belong to different worlds; and only to be at home in the one, is necessarily to feel the other in the same measure foreign and strange.

It is in this general way that we propose now, to try briefly the whole question here offered for our consideration. May the Puritan system as a whole, whether carried out in the Baptistical or in the Congregational or in the Presbyterian form, or allowed even to get as far as low-church Episcopalianism, be regarded as constitutionally one and the same with what Christianity was in the second century, and so by implication in the latter part also of the first? To settle this question, we need not go minutely into the Ignatian controversy, or any other of like accidental and mechanical character. Strike out as an interpolation every passage in Ignatius that goes directly for episcopacy, and for the argument now in hand but little is lost from the weight that truly and properly belongs to him as a witness. For a really thoughtful mind, this weight lies in no such texts nakedly taken, but in the reigning drift and complexion of the epistles as a whole. A very short writing in this way, such for instance as Pliny's celebrated letter to Trajan, where there is any power whatever to reproduce in the mind its historical surroundings, may convey by its total representation far more than any criticism can reach by mere verbal dissection. In this way it is very easy, we think, to bring the question here propounded to a full and conclusive settlement. Whatever Christianity may have

been in the second century, and in the age immediately following that of the Apostles, it was not the system that is now known and honored as Puritanism, and least of all was it this system under its most approved and complete form as it reigns at the present time in New England. L

✓ I. In the first place, it rested throughout on a wholly different conception of the *Church*. With Puritanism, the church is acknowledged to be divine, as having been founded originally by Christ, and as standing still in some way under the superintendence of his Spirit. But this supernatural character, in the end, resolves itself very much into an unhistorical abstraction. The church is not conceived of as a real outward as well as inward constitution, having in such view of its own organism as a single whole, and keeping up a true identity with itself in space and time. It is of the nature rather of a school; the divinity of it falls back entirely upon its doctrine; or rather on the Bible which is taken to contain this doctrine, while men are left to draw it from this source, as they best can, in a perfectly human way. The only realization of the church after all in the world, thus, is in the form of an invisible communion, representing all those who are happy enough, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to find the truth. In the way of such inward spiritual experience, on the part of individuals, there is room to speak still of supernatural operations reaching over into the sphere of our present life; but to dream of any other supernaturalism in the church than this, is counted dangerous superstition. The idea of the church in this way is stripped of all mystery; it falls to the level of any other social or political institution; to believe in it is just as easy, as to believe in the Copernican system or the Parliament of Great Britain. It is neither catholic nor apostolical, except as Aristotle's philosophy may be called Aristotelian for all who are satisfied that he was the author of it. No divine obligation, no supernatural necessity, accordingly, is felt to go along with any actual organization bearing this name; a thousand organizations, wholly independent of one another, may have equal right to such distinction; and though all should fail even for centuries, it would be perfectly possible to restore the machinery again in full force, at any time, and with all its original powers, by the help simply of the Bible, the true *magna charta* of man's rights and privileges in this form. The divine character of the church is in no sense parallel, for Puritanism, with the divine character of the bible. It holds it for a sort of profanity to make any such account of its heavenly authority. Theoretically and practically, Puritanism treats the actual

church as a simply human institution, the work of man's hands, and of divine force at the last only as civil government is of such force, or in the sense rather of the republican maxim, "The voice of the people is the voice of God." The powers of the organization, and so of course the offices by which they are to be executed, are held to come, not from above, but from below. It is made the glory of Christianity to be purely and intensely democratic. No *jure divino* constitution is to be allowed to the ministry, no superhuman force to its functions. The people are the fountain of right, and the basis of all order and law. Congregationalism completes itself in full Independence. All comes thus to the platform of common sense; all goes by popular judgment and popular vote.

Now it is not the truth or worth of this theory, in itself considered, that we are here required to discuss; we merely affirm, that it is in no sort of harmony with the idea of the church which prevailed in the second century. This might be confidently inferred indeed from the simple fact, acknowledged on all sides, that the ruling features of the later church system come fully into view in the next century, as the only scheme known or thought of throughout the Christian world. To imagine the Puritan ideal, as we have it now exemplified in New England, turning itself over, by complete somerset, in the course of one century, into the pattern of things presented for instance in Cyprian or the Apostolical Constitutions, without so much as a historical whisper to show when or how the prodigious revolution was brought to pass, is much like pretending to take Gulliver's travels or the stories of Sinbad the Sailor for sober truth. But besides this, the authorities of the second century itself are full against the whole fancy which is here in question. The drift and spirit of every writing that has come down to us from this time, look quite a different way. To read Ignatius, or Polycarp, or Justin Martyr, or Irenæus, or Tertullian, is to feel ourselves surrounded in the very act with a churchly element, a sense of the mystical and supernatural, which falls in easily enough with the later faith of the primitive church, but not at all with the keen clear air of modern Puritanism, as this sweeps either the heaths of Scotland or the bleak hills of New England. We need not stop here to settle the precise polity of the church at every point, in the age after the Apostles. It is enough to know, that all proceeded on a view of its supernatural rights and powers, which was exactly the reverse of what we have found to be the Puritan scheme. The church was considered a mystery, an object of faith, a supernatural fact in the world, not

based at all on the will of men, but on the commission of Christ, the force of which it was held extended from the Apostles forward through all time. It was taken to rest on the ministry, which was regarded accordingly as having its origin and authority, not from the people, but from God. The idea of a democratic or simply popular constitution in the case finds no countenance in the New Testament; this proceeds throughout on the assumption rather that the powers both of doctrine and government, for the church, start from above and not from below; the apostolate is the root of all following ministerial offices and functions. And fully conformable with this, is the theory and the actual order of the church in the period of which we now speak. We may appeal here even to Clement of Rome in the latter part of the first century, who in a memorable passage, (*Ep. I. ad Corinth. c. 42-44.*) urges the duty of submission to church rulers, on the ground of a divine order in their office, parallel with that of the Levitical priesthood under the Old Testament, of which God had shown himself so jealous through the ministry of his servant Moses.¹ To quote Ignatius on the same general point, may be taken as perfectly superfluous. It is not merely where he bears direct witness for episcopacy, that his testimony is of weight; the force of it lies rather in the universal tone of his several epistles. It is sometimes said, that the episcopal passages have the air of being interpolations, thrust into the text from a later age. But any one may readily see the contrary, who will take the trouble of reading the text with his own eyes, for the purpose of getting out of it its own sense instead of putting into it a sense to suit himself. There is nothing whatever in these passages at variance with the reigning tone of the epistles, but on the contrary they are in full keeping with this throughout.² There is hardly a sentence or a line indeed

¹ "The apostles had their office from Christ," he tells us, "Christ from God; they were sent by him as he was sent by God. Both in right order according to God's will." Clothed with full power after his resurrection, they went forth and founded churches on all sides, appointing tried men to preside over them as bishops and deacons, which was only fulfilling the sense of ancient prophecy, *Is. lx: 17.* This they did, in virtue of their own commission, to prevent contentions such as they knew were likely to arise; and not only did they appoint these first officers, but "they made arrangement also for the future, that when these should die other approved men should succeed to their place."

² This is well shown by that most profound and acute critic, Dr. *Richard Rothe*, in his work entitled "*Die Anfänge der christlichen Kirche*," where the authority of these epistles, and the whole subject of the constitution of the early church, are handled in a truly masterly style.

in Ignatius, that is not in spirit fully opposite to Puritanism, on the great question of the church. He has in his mind always the mystical order of the creed, according to which the fact of the incarnation underlies in a real way the fact of the church, as the carrying out of the same wonder for faith. In correspondence with the real union of divinity and humanity in Christ, his mystical body must have a real historical and visible being in the world as well as an invisible spiritual character, and this must of necessity carry along with it in such view the attributes of unity and catholicity, as the signature of its superhuman authority. Hence the stress laid on the hierarchy, as the bond, not from below but from above, of that glorious *sacramentum unitatis* on which was felt to hang the virtue and value of all grace in the church besides. Hence the holy martyr's horror of all schism. Obedience to the church is, in his view, obedience to Christ; to be out of communion with the bishop, in rupture with the one altar he guards and represents, is to have no part at the same time in the kingdom of God.¹ 'The unity must be somatic, as well as spiritual.'² To fall away from this bond, is taken to be a falling away to the same extent from the lively sense of the mystery of the incarnation, a species of Gnosticism which turned the flesh of the Son of God into a mere phantom, and so robbed the Gospel of its heavenly power. For those who resolve Christ in this way into a phantom or abstraction, according to Ignatius, make themselves in the end to be without either substance or strength; all true christian strength comes from an apprehension of the whole mystery here in view as something historically and enduringly real. With this agrees again, as all know, the teaching of Irenæus in the latter part of the second century, as it has come down to us particularly in his celebrated work against heretics; and the same views substantially are presented to us also by Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria.

II. The contrary schemes of the church just noticed, involve with a sort of inward logical necessity different and contrary views also of the *ministry*, and of its relations to the body of the people. Puritanism makes the ministers of religion to be much like county or town officers, or sees in them at best only good religious counsellors and teachers, whom the people create

¹ Μη πλασασθε ἀδελφοί μου ἐν τῆς σχιζοῦντι ἀκούσασθαι βασιλείαν Θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήτι, Ad Philad. c. 3.

² ἵνα ἰσῶσης ἡ σωματικὴ τε καὶ πνευματικὴ, Ad Magnes. c. 1, 13.

for their own use and follow as far as to themselves may seem good. It spurns the whole idea of a divinely established hierarchy, drawing its rights and powers from heaven, and forming in its corporate character the bond of unity for the church, the ground of its perpetual stability, and the channel of all communications of grace to it from Him who is its glorified head. Every view of this sort runs counter to the democracy of the system, and does violence to its rationalism and common sense. It has no power constitutionally to believe in any really supernatural order reaching here below the time of the Apostles; and it must have accordingly the same guaranties for freedom precisely, which it is accustomed to ask and lean upon in the case of purely human and civil relations. Hence the vast account it makes of the popular element in all ecclesiastical interests and concerns, its zeal for the parity of the clergy, its deep seated hostility to the idea of the priesthood, as well as to all pontifical allusions or associations, in any connection with the work of the christian ministry.

But now how different from all such thinking, is the light in which the ministry is found to stand in the second century. We need not go into any minute examination of the ecclesiastical polity which then prevailed. The question is not primarily whether there were three orders of clergy, or two, or only one; whether the bishops of Ignatius were diocesan in the modern sense, or simply parochial; but this rather, What relation did the overseership of the church bear to the mass of its members? And this, we say confidently, was neither Congregational *nor* Presbyterian, in the established sense of these distinctions at the present time. Let any one look into the writers already named, especially Ignatius and Irenæus, so as to catch at all their general tone and spirit, and he will feel it to be no better than burlesque, when Dr. Bacon allows himself to transfer to the scene of Smyrna or Lyons, in the second century, the picture he himself gives us of what he takes to be the repristation of the primitive church in this latter city in our own day.¹ The imag-

¹“The meeting which I attended was a meeting of the brotherhood for mutual conference and inquiry. It was held in a school-room, and very much resembled a Congregational church meeting in New England. There was, however, one obvious difference. Those brethren were not merely concerned with the working of a system defined and understood in all its details, and familiar to them from their childhood. With the New Testament in their hands, they were inquiring after principles and rules of church order; and the question which then chiefly occupied their attention, and seemed somewhat to divide their opinions, was whether the govern-

ination of any such ecclesiastical republicanism, is completely foreign we may say from the whole spirit of this ancient period. Only look at the way in which Irenæus speaks of the episcopate and the apostolical succession, as the grand bulwark of truth against all heresy and schism; not once or twice merely, but whenever the subject comes in his way; showing the view to be inseparably joined with the entire scheme of Christianity in his mind. It is not to be disguised moreover, that the episcopate is viewed by him as a general corporation, having its centre of unity in the church of Rome. Against the novelty of heretics, he appeals to the clear succession of the catholic sees generally from the time of the Apostles; but then sums all up, by singling out the Roman church, founded by the most glorious apostles Peter and Paul, and having a certain principality for the church at large, as furnishing in its line of bishops a sure tradition of the faith held by the universal body from the beginning.² Take this system of church government as we may, it is the very reverse of all such independency and popularity as are made to be the basis of ecclesiastical order in New England. Congregationalism lays no such stress on the episcopate or overseership of the church, regarded as an organic corporation, bound together always by a common centre, and having authority by unbroken tradition from the Apostles. And just as little have we here the

ment of their church should be in part committed to a body of elders, or remain entire in the hands of the assembled brethren. As I listened to the discussions, I could not but admire the free and manly, yet fraternal spirit in which it was conducted. And as I saw what a school for the development of various intellectual gifts, as well as for the culture of Christian affection, that church had been under its simple democratic organization. I felt quite sure that those brethren, with all their confidence in their teachers, would not be easily persuaded to subvert a system to which they were already so greatly indebted, or to divest themselves of the right of freely debating and voting on all their interests and duties as a church."—"Rarely, have I enjoyed anything more than I enjoyed my visit to that missionary and apostolical church. Nor do I know where to look for a more satisfactory representation of the ideal and primitive Christianity, than in the city which was made illustrious so long ago by the labors of Irenæus, and by the martyrdom of Pothinus and Blandina."—*Letter from Lyons.*

²"Sed quoniam valde longum est, in hoc tali volumine omnium ecclesiarum enumerare successiones: maximæ et antiquissimæ et omnibus cognitæ, a gloriosissimis duobus Apostolis Petro et Paulo Romæ fundatæ et constitutæ ecclesiæ, eam quam habet ab Apostolis traditionem et annuntiatam hominibus fidem per successiones episcoporum pervenientem usque ad nos indicantes, confundimus omnes eos, &c.—Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potiorem principitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, &c."—*Adv. hæres. III. 3. §. 2.*

type of modern Presbyterianism. The bishops of Ignatius, Polycarp, and Irenæus, however small may have been their charges, were not simply Presbyterian pastors. They have altogether a different look, and hold an entirely different relation to the people over whom they preside. Their rule is not indeed lordly, but neither is it simply representative and democratic; it is patriarchal rather, but at the same time an actual episcopate or oversight, derived from the chief Shepherd, at once supreme and self-sacrificing, in the full spirit of 1 Pet. v: 1-4. The order altogether is that of a hierarchy. The pastors are at the same time priests; and pontifical ideas fall in with their ministry easily and naturally from every side. The altar at which they serve is not merely a cold metaphor; and the sacrifice they offer upon it is mystical indeed, but nevertheless awfully and sublimely real. In one word, the system contains in element and germ at least the whole theory of the church that is more fully presented to us afterwards, in the writings of Cyprian and Augustine. There is no contradiction between the two schemes. The first flows over without any sort of violence or effort into the last; and becomes hard to understand, only when inquisitorial theorists put it to the rack, for the purpose of forcing from it a sense and voice which are not its own.'

III. This leads us naturally to the consideration of a third general and broadly palpable difference between Puritanism and the early church, that namely which appears in the view they take of the *holy sacraments*. The modern system owns no real mystery either in baptism or the Lord's supper. It takes them indeed for divine institutions; but the sense of them is altogether natural only and human. They carry in them no objective force, have no power whatever to present what they represent; they are taken to be signs only or pictures of a grace, which exists not in the sacraments themselves, but out of them and beyond them under a wholly different form. Any virtue they have is from the activity of the worshipper's mind, moved it may be by the Spirit of God to make good use of the outward and natural help to devotional thoughts and affections, which is thus placed within its reach. All beyond this is held to be superstition; and the sacramental system in particular of the Catholic church, as well as the whole doctrine of the real pres-

'This is shown, with what appears to us to be the most triumphant evidence, by Richard Rothe, in the great work to which we have before referred, *Die Anfänge d. chr. Kirche*, particularly in the third book.

ence in its Protestant form also, is denounced and discarded as a purely diabolical figment, brought in under the Papacy in complete contradiction to the original sense of the Gospel, and without the least ground or reason in the practice of the church as it stood in the beginning.

It might seem plain to any child, that if any such low view had prevailed in the second century, it must have required a miracle to place the entire church, in its doctrine of the sacraments, where we find it to be in the fourth century, or to lead it over even in half a dozen centuries to so astounding a tenet as that of transubstantiation, with like universal and at the same time profoundly noiseless and peaceful revolution. But the second century can easily enough speak here for itself. And so clear and full in truth is its voice on the whole subject, that we venture to say no one can listen to it attentively, having any sort of confidence at the same time in the true apostolicity of its faith, and not be inspired with a feeling of downright horror, in view of the deep yawning gulph by which this is found to be sundered from what we have just now seen to be the modern system. Right or wrong, Puritanism is in its sacramental doctrine a grand apostacy, not only from what Protestantism was designed to be in the beginning, but also from the faith of the early church as it stood in the days of Pothinus and Irenæus. The martyrs of Lyons must have drawn back aghast from the view of baptism and the holy eucharist now commonly prevalent in New England; while their venerable bishops, no doubt, would have placed it in one category with the numerous heresies of the time, that went directly to overthrow the real appearance of Christ in the flesh.

Passing over baptism, let us fix our attention on the sacrament of the blessed eucharist. Nothing can be clearer at first glance, than that the fathers of this period make vastly more of the institution than is at all answerable to the natural and simple light in which it is regarded by Puritanism. They lay great stress on its doctrinal significance, as being in some vital way related to the mystery of the incarnation, and conditioning the whole faith and life of the church; and they seldom refer to it, without bringing into view the idea of its mystical supernatural import. Ignatius takes the real presence of the eucharist to be organically related to the truth and realness of the Saviour's humanity, and upbraids the docetic Gnostics, (who acknowledged thus also the force of the connection,) with abstaining from the institution, because they would not believe that Christ had ever assumed anything more than the show of a human body.

"They refrain from the service," he writes, "on account of their not confessing that the eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father in his goodness raised from the dead. Contradicting the gift of God they die in their contention; but it would be their interest to love, so that they too might rise again."¹ In another place, (ad Ephes. c. 20.) Ignatius calls the eucharist the "medicine of immortality" (φαρμακον ἀθανασίας) and the "antidote of death" (ἀντιδοτον του μη ἀποθανειν); phrases that are sufficiently explained by the last clause of the foregoing quotation, where the risen flesh of the Saviour is made to be the power that is to reanimate also our mortal bodies. But if there were any doubt as to the doctrine of Ignatius here, or as to its agreement with the reigning faith of the church at the time, it must vanish certainly before the ample and plain testimony of Irenæus.

With this father again, the doctrine of the eucharist is made to be of extraordinary practical and theoretical account. It is not a circumstance merely in the general system of faith, but appears as a truly living and divinely efficacious link, between the mystery of the incarnation on one side and the coming resurrection of our bodies on another; showing plainly that these connections as suggested by Ignatius, were not fanciful or casual, but rooted in the reigning belief of the church. The Gnostics generally held the material world to be intrinsically evil, and so not capable of coming into any real union with the new creation by Christ. They would not allow accordingly that the Saviour took a real human body; and they could not admit of course then the resurrection of the body, in the case of his people. It was a principle with them, that the body as such constitutionally excluded the idea of immortality. Against these errors Irenæus affirms the goodness of the natural creation, the truth of Christ's incarnation, and the commensurateness of his redemption with the whole nature of man, as being able to save the body in the way of future resurrection no less than the soul. One grand source of argument is found in the mystery of the holy supper, which it is taken for granted that these heretics, in common with the church, acknowledged to be a bond of communication with Christ's substantial flesh and blood. However disposed they might be by their spiritualistic system to take these

¹ Εὐχαριστίας· καὶ προσηύχης ἀπέχονται δια το μη ὁμολογεῖν, τὴν εὐχαριστιαν σαρκα εἶναι τοῦ σωτηρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὴν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν παθεῖσαν, ἵν τῇ χρῆσῃ-σῃ τὸ πάτηρ ἡγείρην. Οἱ ἀντιλεγόντες τῇ ὄψει τοῦ Θεοῦ συζητοῦντες ἀποθανοσκομοὶ σωζόμενοι ἐξ αὐτοῦ διασῶν, ἵνα καὶ ἀναστῶσι.—Ad Smyrn. c. 7.

terms in an improper and merely figurative sense, it seems that they were still compelled to yield here to the pressure of the catholic faith, and to admit thus an actual presence of the Saviour's glorified body, whatever that might be, in this sublime mystery; and no evidence could well be stronger than this, for the universal and vital authority of this faith in the church itself at the time. To deny the possibility of the resurrection, according to Irenaeus, involves this consequence: "That neither the cup of the eucharist is the communication of his blood, nor the bread which we break the communication of his body; for it is not blood, unless it be from his veins and his flesh, and the rest of that human substance, by which he became truly the Word of God." Again: "Since we are members of him, and live from the natural creation, which he furnishes to us for this end, causing his sun to rise and sending rain according to his own pleasure; he has proclaimed the cup which is of the natural creation to be his own blood, from which he moistens our blood, and has established the bread which is of this creation to be his own body from which he nourishes our bodies." And still farther: "When therefore the natural cup and bread, by receiving the word of God at consecration, are made the eucharist of the blood and body of Christ, by which the substance of our flesh is advanced and upheld, how can they deny that the flesh is capable of the gift of God, which is eternal life, since it is nourished by the blood and body of Christ and is his member? Even as the blessed Apostle says in his Epistle to the Ephesians, *We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones*; not speaking of the spiritual and invisible man, (for spirit has neither bones nor flesh.) but of that constitution which is truly human, consisting of flesh and nerves and bones, which is nourished from the cup that is his blood and from the bread that is his body. And as the slip of the vine laid in the ground brings forth fruit in its time, and the grain of wheat falling into the earth and undergoing decomposition rises manifoldly by God's Spirit, through which all things are upheld; which then by the wisdom of God come to be for the use of man, and receiving the word of consecration become the eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ: so also our bodies nourished by this, and laid away in the earth and dissolved into it shall rise again in their time, the Word of God bestowing the resurrection upon them to the glory of God the Father."¹ In another place, Iren-

¹ Adv. haeres. v. 2, §. 2, 3.

aeus calls upon the heretics either to give up the errors now noticed, or else to abstain from the eucharist, as some of the earlier Docetae actually did in the time of Ignatius, according to what we have seen before. "How can they say," he exclaims, "that the flesh perishes and attains not to life, which is nourished by the body and blood of the Lord? Let them change their view, or refrain from offering these things. Our view, on the contrary, agrees with the eucharist, and the eucharist again confirms our view. For we offer to him things that are his own, setting forth congruously the communion and unity, and confessing the resurrection of the flesh and spirit. For as the bread from the earth, when it has received the invocation of God, is now no longer bread, but the eucharist consisting of two things, an earthly and a celestial; so also our bodies receiving the eucharist are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to everlasting life."¹

So much for the real presence of the Saviour's glorified humanity in the holy supper. Can there be any doubt in the face of these passages, whether such a mystery was held by the early church, or whether it was considered to be of necessary force as a part of the faith originally delivered to the saints? We see too, how the service was regarded as carrying in it the force of a sacrifice or oblation, analogous with the offerings of the altar under the Old Testament; an idea which Irenæus elsewhere utters in full and distinct terms, applying to the case, in the spirit of later centuries, the memorable passage, Mal. i: 10, 11, where it is said: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts." But what student of antiquity needs to be told, that the eucharist in this early period carried in it a significance and solemnity, of which no rational account can be given, except on the ground that such powers as those now mentioned were supposed to go along with its celebration?²

We inquire not now into the truth of this old sacramental doctrine; neither is it necessary to define in what mode precisely it understood the mystery of the real presence to take place. It is enough to know, that the mystery itself was universally

¹ Adv. haeres. iv. 18. §. 5.

² See an interesting and clear representation of the testimony of Irenæus on the whole subject in *Möhler's Patrologie*, pp. 377-391.

received, as of fundamental consequence in the christian system; and that the doctrine therefore stood in no sort of harmony with the common Puritan view of the present time. The martyrs of Lyons and Vienne died in full hope of the resurrection; but this hope was based on a species of realistic sacramentalism here, which we feel very sure would bring upon them now through all New England the charge of gross superstition, and leave no room for them whatever within the magic ring of its "evangelical sects."

IV. A like wide contrast between the early system and the modern comes into view, in the next place, when we look at their different theories in regard to the *rule of faith*.

It is a primary maxim with Puritanism, that the Bible alone is the rule and ground of all religion, of all that men are required to believe or do in the service of God. In this sacred volume, we are told, God has been pleased to place his word in full, by special inspiration, as a supernatural directory for the use of the world to the end of time; for the very purpose of providing a sufficient authority for faith, that might be independent of all human judgment and will. If it be asked, how the Bible is to be interpreted and made available as a rule of faith, the answer is that every man must interpret it as he best can for his own use, under the guidance of God's Spirit, and with such helps as he may happen to have at his command. In other words, the ultimate tribunal for the exposition of God's word is private judgment. No other tribunal can be regarded as of any legitimate authority or right. All tradition especially, pretending in any way to over-rule private judgment, is to be firmly rejected as something inimical to the rights of reason and conscience. What men can see to be taught in the scriptures is to be of force for them as revelation, and what they cannot see to be so taught there is to be of no such force. The great matter accordingly is to place the bible in every man's hands, and to have him able to read it, that he may then follow it in his own way. The idea seems to be, that the bible was published in the first place as a sort of divine formulary or text book for the world to follow in matters of religion, and that the church rested on no other ground in the beginning for its practices or doctrines, appealing to it and building upon it in a perfectly free and original way after the fashion of our modern sects; in which view it is to be counted still the foundation and pillar of the truth, so that the dissemination of its printed text throughout the world, without note or comment, is the one thing specially needful and specially to be relied upon for the full victory of Christianity, from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

This theory has many difficulties. To place a divine text at the mercy of private judgment, looks very much like making it a mere nose of wax. Men deal not thus with the authority of other laws and constitutions. All the world over the sense of written statutes is ruled more or less by the power of an unwritten living tradition, (such as the "common law" of England and this country,) which at the same time is applied to the case by some public tribunal, and *not* by every man at his own pleasure. So deeply seated indeed is this order in our very nature, that it is never surmounted even by those who in the case before us pretend to set it aside. Puritanism never in truth allows the bible *alone* to be the religion of Protestants. Every sect has its tradition, its system of opinions and habits, handed forward by education, just as much as the Catholic church itself, through which as a medium the written word is studied and understood at every point. In no other way could it exist as a historical body at all. The private judgment of a good Presbyterian is always carried, from infancy on to old age, in the bosom of a general Presbyterian stream of thought, that has been flowing in its own separate channel from the origin of this communion in the days of John Knox; and the same thing precisely is true of the Methodists, as well as of all the other scores of sects that in as many variant ways follow the same infallible rule of faith and practice. It cannot well escape observation again, that the bible itself lends no sort of countenance to the hypothesis, which turns it thus in such abstract style into the sum total of all God's mind and will, mechanically laid down for man's use, like the directions for the building of the tabernacle in the book of Exodus. It never speaks of itself as being either a system of divinity or a confession of faith. It has no such form, but shows as clearly as possible an altogether different construction and design. Nay more, it is perfectly certain from the New Testament itself, that Christianity was *not* made to rest on any such foundation in the beginning, but on a living authority, which started in Christ and passed over from him to the ministry of the church. This is as plain as words could well make it, from *Matth. xvi: 18, 19*; *Matth. xxviii: 18, 20*; *Eph. ii: 19, 22*, and *1 Tim. iii: 15, 16*. On the basis of the apostolical commission, backed by heavenly miraculous authority, and entering into no negotiation whatever with the world's private judgment, the early church was in fact planted and built throughout the Roman empire. The books of the New Testament came afterwards as part and parcel of the glorious revelation committed to her hands; and it was not till the fourth century, as we have before seen,

that the arduous and responsible task of settling the canon was brought to a complete close, although the main parts of it were acknowledged and in general use probably before the middle of the second.

These are difficulties, we say, which, from the Puritan standpoint it is by no means easy to meet. But we do not press them at present. What we wish to hold up to view is the clearly evident fact, that the church of the second century was not Puritan but Catholic, in its conception of the rule of faith, concurring here in its whole habit of thought with the order that actually prevailed, as just now stated, in the first planting of Christianity in the world. The sacred books are indeed referred to with high veneration in this age, as they are in all subsequent times of the Catholic church, but never under any such abstract and independent view, as they are made to carry in the private-judgment sect system of the present day. Of a bible, out of which every man was to fetch the doctrines and practices of religion as he best could with the bucket of his own common sense, these early Christians had not so much as the most remote imagination. They own the inspiration of the scriptures and appeal to them as the norm and measure of their faith; but it is only and always as they are taken to be comprehended in that general tradition of infallible truth, which had come down from the Apostles in a living way by the church. The bible was for them the word of God, not on the outside of the church, and as a book dropped from the skies for all sorts of men to use in their own way, but in the bosom of the church alone, and in organic union with that great system of revelation of which this was acknowledged to be the pillar and ground. Sundered from that organism, cut off from the living stream of catholic tradition, the holy oracles in the hands of heretics were considered as shorn of all their force. Such men as Irenæus and Tertullian had no idea of sitting down, and debating points of doctrine with the Gnostics out of the bible, in any way owning at all their right to appeal to it as an independent rule; just as little as it ever entered into their heads probably to put the people, "with the New Testament in their hands," on inquiring "into the principles and rules of church government," after the democratic fashion of the nineteenth century. They will not allow the heretics to put their cause on any ground of this sort; they cut them off by prescription, that is, by the clear title of the regular church to the succession or tradition of Christianity, as it had been handed down, under the broad seal of its original charter, from the time of the Apostles. Some notice has been taken be-

fore of the way, in which Irenæus appeals to the known apostolical succession of the bishops in his time, and their collective voice in favor of the truth, bringing all to centre and culminate in Rome as the principal see. This constitution, and no other, is with him the organ of unity both in doctrine and government; all else is heresy and schism. "It is necessary to hearken to the presbyters in the church," he tells us (*Adv. haer. iv. c. 20*), who have the succession from the Apostles, and along with the succession of the episcopate have received the certain gift of truth according to the good pleasure of the Father." Again (*iv. c. 33, §. 8.*): "The true knowledge (*γνώσις*) is the doctrine of the Apostles, and the ancient constitution (*συστημα*) of the church in the whole world, and the character of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, to whom they (the Apostles) have committed the church in every place." "The paths of heresy are many and variable, but the doctrine of the church is one and unchanging all over the world; "she preserves the traditional faith, though spread throughout the earth, with the greatest care, as if she occupied but one house; and believes it, as if she had but one soul and one heart; and proclaims, teaches, hands it forward, with marvellous agreement, as if she had but one mouth. The languages used are indeed different, but the matter of the tradition is still one and the same" (*i. 10. 2. comp. v. 20. §. 1.*). Again (*iii. 4. §. 1.*): "If the Apostles had left us no writings, ought we not still to follow the rule of that tradition, which they handed over to those to whom they committed the churches? To this rule many nations of barbarians do hold in fact, which believe in Christ, and have his salvation inscribed by the Holy Ghost without ink or paper on their hearts, carefully following the tradition &c." Specially striking is the passage, *L. iii. c. 24. §. 1.*, where this tradition is made to carry in it a divine element, rendering it infallible; gathering itself up into the mystery of that faith "which we have received and hold from our church, and which the Spirit of God continually renovates, like a precious jewel in a good casket, imparting to it the quality of his own perennial youth." Such is the testimony of Irenæus. Tertullian is, if possible, still stronger in the same churchly strain. He will know nothing of any private argumentation, from the scriptures or any other source; all must yield to the smashing weight of ecclesiastical tradition. Christianity is built, not on a book, but on a living system handed down from the day of Pentecost. Truth is fellowship with the churches derived by regular succession from the Apostles; they have collectively but one doctrine; and whatever disowns this

order, is without farther examination to be rejected as false. His whole tract on the *Prescription of Heretics* rests on this view, and might be quoted here with effect. The heretics have no right to appeal to the scriptures. These belong only to the church. She may say to them: 'Who are you? Whence do you come? What business have you strangers with my property? By what right are you, Marcion, felling my trees? By what authority are you, Valentine, turning the course of my streams? Under what pretence are you, Apelles, removing my land-marks? The estate is mine; why do you other persons presume to work it and use it at your pleasure? The estate is mine; I have the ancient, prior possession of it; have the title deeds from the original owners. I am the heir of the Apostles; they made their will, with all proper solemnities, in my favor, while they disinherited and cast you off as strangers and enemies.'" Tertullian had no idea of making exegesis the mother of faith.¹

Is it necessary to say, that the faith of the second century, as here portrayed, is something very different from the reigning evangelical scheme of the present day? No honest student of history, we think, can fail to see and confess, that the doctrine of Irenæus and Tertullian on the relation of the bible to the church is essentially one and the same with that which is clearly presented afterwards by Chrysostom and Augustine, and that in sound at least it is very much like the Catholic doctrine as opposed to Protestantism in modern times.

V. Take next the *order of doctrine*. Single truths have their proper value and force, not merely in themselves separately taken, but in the place they occupy as parts of the whole system to which they belong. Much depends then on the order in which they are held. The doctrinal scheme of the early church has come down to us in the Apostles' Creed. Into the question of the origin of this symbol, it is not necessary now to enter. Its universal prevalence in the fourth century is itself argument enough for a thinking mind, that it must have come down from time immemorial before in substantially the same form; but independently of this, it is abundantly plain from the writers of the second century, that the whole theology of that period was shaped in the mind of the church on this model at least, and on no other. But this at once conditions and determines its uni-

¹ See Rothe's work before quoted; also Mùhler's *Patrologie*, pp. 344-357, 737-748.

versal character, setting it in close affinity with the later theology of the Catholic church, and placing it in broad contrariety to the Puritan scheme of doctrine as we now meet with it in New England. Puritanism, by its abstract spiritualistic character, has lost the power to a great extent of understanding both the old creed, and the catholic theology of which it was the foundation; and with a certain feeling of superior maturity is disposed generally to put the whole away as somewhat childish and out of date. The objection is not so much to single points in themselves considered; for most of these may be translated into some good modern sense; but it holds rather against the order in which they are put together, the architecture of the creed, its reigning animus, its too much of one thing and its too little or nothing at all of another. The sound of it is uncomfortably mystical, sacramental and churchly. Puritanism knows very well in its inmost soul, that no *such* creed is the symbol exactly of that form of belief which it now parades as its own, and as being at the same time the only true and perfect sense of the bible. It would never have produced any creed of this sort. It sees all truth in a different order, and holds it in quite other proportions and relations. When it undertakes to give us a creed in fact, (as it is ready to do commonly at a moment's warning and to any order,) the product is something very different from the ancient symbol of the Apostles.¹

¹ See an article entitled "Puritanism and the Creed," in the *Mercersburg Review* for November 1819, published at the same time also as a separate tract. It will be remembered, that the *Puritan Recorder*, of Boston, plainly acknowledged "that the Creed and Puritanism have not a kindred spirit;" and that only by courtesy it found a place originally in Puritan formularies and catechisms. "Its life and spirit," it was said, "never entered into the life of the Puritan churches; and consequently it now exists among us as some fossil relic of by-gone ages. And we look with a sort of pity upon those who are laboring to infuse life into it, and to set it up as a living ruler in the church. We are free to confess, 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 should have been said rather, that Puritanism has forsaken the Creed; breaking away at the same time from the faith of the universal church as it stood in the second century, and while it accepts the bible from the hands of this same church, coolly turning round and saying to it: You never understood your own scriptures; we know what they mean, and you and your creed may go to the tomb of the Capulets. We have never heard of any repudiation of this monstrous sentiment, on the part of the interest thus represented by the *Puritan Recorder*, and take it for granted therefore that it is nothing more than a true picture after all of what must be considered here a general falling away from the *regula fidei* of the primitive church.

There is a real difference, as regards the *tout ensemble* of Christian doctrine between the Patristic system and Protestantism in its original proper form. More than one has felt something of the experience given in the following striking passage from Thiersch. "It is a strange impression," he remarks in his work on the *Canon*, p. 280, "that the church fathers make on one who first enters on the study of them, under the full force of a merely Protestant consciousness. So fared it with the writer himself. Nurtured on the best that the old Protestant books of devotion contain, and trained theologically in the doctrines and interpretations of the orthodox period of Protestantism, he turned finally to the fathers. Well does he remember how strange it appeared to him in the beginning, to find here nothing of those truths, which formed the spring of his whole religious life, nothing of the way the sinner must tread to arrive at peace and an assurance of the Divine favor, nothing of Christ's merit as the only ground of forgiveness, nothing of continual repentance and ever new recourse to the fountain of free grace, nothing of the high confidence of the justified believer. Instead of this, he found that all weight was laid on the incarnation of the Divine Logos, on the right knowledge of the great object of worship, on the objective mystery of the Trinity and of Christ's Person, on the connection between creation, redemption, and the future restoration of the creature along with the glorification also of man's body, on the freedom of man and on the reality of the operations of Divine grace in the sacraments. But he was enabled gradually to live himself into this old mode of thought, and without giving up what is true and inalienable in the Lutheran Protestant consciousness, to correct its on-sidedness by a living appropriation of the theology of the fathers. He soon saw, that over against the errors of the present time, its pantheism and fatalism, its spiritualism and misapprehension of the significance of the corporeal, the church needs a decided taking up again of what is true in the Patristic scheme of thought, and an assimilation of her whole life to the ancient model—in spirit and idea first, as outward relations are not at once under human control. This old primitive church stood out to his view more and more in its full splendor, in its sublime beauty, of which only fragmentary lineaments are to be recognised in the churches, confessions and sects, of the present day."

Thiersch here finds Protestantism itself materially different from early Christianity; while he holds it however, in its legitimate character, capable of a living conjunction with the ancient faith, though carrying in itself a fearful tendency to fall away

from it altogether; a tendency, which is now getting the mastery of it in truth in many places, and that needs to be counteracted by a return to former ideas. What he has his eye upon immediately is the rationalism surrounding him in Germany. But the tendency is not limited to that form of open unbelief. It lies in all unchurchly religion. It animates the whole sect system. It forms the proper soul of Puritanism. This is not original Protestantism, carrying in it the *possibility* merely of a full dissociation from the mind of the ancient church; but it is this possibility actually realized. It is a growth completely to the one side, which refuses now all organic agreement with the trunk of Christian doctrine as this stood in the beginning. The two schemes of thought are quite apart, and can never be made to fit together with any sort of symmetry or ease. Puritanism, by its very constitution, ignores and abjures the *old* sense of the Apostles' Creed. V

VI. Look finally at the subject of *faith in miracles*. It is well known, that the early church not only believed firmly in the miracles of Christ and his Apostles, as well as in those of the Old Testament, but had a most firm persuasion also that the same power was still actively displayed in her own bosom, and that it lay in her commission in truth to look for its revelation, as occasion might require, "always to the end of the world." It is generally admitted even among Protestants not openly rationalistic, (though some feel it necessary with the celebrated Dr. Conyers Middleton to take different ground through fear of Popery,) that many supernatural signs and wonders were wrought in the service of Christianity during the first three ages. But what we have to do with just now is not so much the actual truth of these miracles, as the state of mind on the part of the church itself, by which they were considered possible, and which led to their being readily received on all sides as nothing more than the natural and proper fruit of the new religion. The apologists appeal to them boldly as notorious facts. Both Irenæus and Tertullian challenge the heretics to prove their authority by miracles, as the church did hers in every direction; and the proofs mentioned are such as giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, casting out devils, healing sicknesses, and even raising the dead to life. To question the fact of miracles in the church, would have been in this period equivalent to downright infidelity. It lay in the whole sense the church then had of the realness and nearness of the supernatural world, in her felt apprehension of the living communion in which she stood with it through Christ, that such demonstrations of its

presence should be regarded as most perfectly possible, and in some sort as a matter of course. Her idea of *faith* was such, as of itself involved this from the very start.

But who needs to be told, how different from all this the tone of thought is that now pervades the universal empire of Puritanism? The difference is not in the mere want of miracles; though that is something too for a thoughtful mind; it appears rather, under a more alarming and affecting view, in the want of power to exercise faith in anything of the sort. Puritanism pretends indeed to great faith in the invisible and supernatural; just as the Gnostics did also in ancient times. But its faith, like theirs, is in the language of Ignatius wonderfully asomatic and unreal. The action of the supernatural is remanded by it to the world of mere thought. God works miracles now in the souls of his people; and away back in the shadow land of the past, he wrought them by special dispensation also under a more outward form. But the age of such proper wonders is long since past. It is unsafe to speak of them after the third century, and not very wise to lay much stress on them even in the second. All pretensions to anything of the sort may be set down at once, and without any examination, as purely "lying wonders." Such we all know to be the reigning habit of thought here, with this popular system. Dr. Middleton's theory suits it to a tittle, and is drawn as it were from its very soul. Puritanism has no faith in miracles answerable at all to what prevailed in the early church, no power we may say to believe them in the same way. Its inward relation to the world from which miracles come, is by no means the same. The difference is not in the judgment exercised in regard to this particular miracle or that, but in the total frame of the mind with regard to the universal subject. This is not faith, but absolute scepticism, just as complete as anything we meet with in Gibbon, Voltaire, or Hume.¹

The martyrs of Lyons knew nothing of such scepticism. "It required another sense of the "powers of the world to come,"

¹ Both the *N. Y. Observer* and the *N. Y. Churchman*, representing but too faithfully we fear the spirit of their respective communions, noticed not long since with pure derision a sermon by Dr. Forbes, the late convert to Romanism, in defence of the idea that Christ has continued to fulfil his promise of miracles in the later ages of the church. The misery of all this is, not that this or that wonder of popular belief in the Catholic church may be shown to be false and ridiculous, but that the basis on which alone any such popular beliefs are made possible, the sense namely of the supernatural order of Christianity as a real and ever present fountain of the miraculous in the church, is rationalistically undermined and destroyed.

to carry so many simple and plain persons, with such triumphant courage, through the scenes that are described in the account of their martyrdom. They had no difficulty in admitting the reality of signs and wonders in the church. Nay, these had place in connexion with their own sufferings, and are reported by Irenæus, (the supposed writer of the account,) as carrying in them nothing incredible whatever. Blandina, a weak slave, was regarded as being upheld, quite beyond the common course of nature, in the terrible torments through which she was made to pass, from the break of day till night. The deacon Sanctus was tortured with hot plates of brass and in other ways, till his body became so covered with wounds and bruises that the very figure of it was lost; a few days after which he was brought out again, when it was supposed that the inflammation of his sores would cause him, under the repetition of the same cruelties, either to yield at once or expire. But "to the amazement of all, his body under the latter torments recovered its former strength and shape, and the exact use of all his limbs was restored; so that by this miracle of the grace of Jesus Christ, what was designed as an additional pain, proved an absolute and effectual cure." The martyrs appeared to move in a perfect nimbus of supernatural grace; even "their bodies sent forth such an agreeable and pleasant savor, as gave occasion to think that they used perfumes."¹ The wild beasts of the amphitheatre, to which she was exposed, could not be provoked to touch Blandina. One of the martyrs "had a revelation" in regard to another, which this last made it his business dutifully to follow. What remained of the bodies, after the terrible tragedy, was burned to ashes, and thrown into the waters of the Rhone; but it was believed, that a part of these ashes was afterwards miraculously recovered, and the relics were deposited under the altar of the church which anciently bore the name of the Apostles of Lyons.

We say nothing of the credibility of these statements, nothing of the opinion we should have of what they pretend to describe. We hold them up simply as a picture of the mind that was in the church in the days of Pothinus and Irenæus; and in view

¹ It is related in the acts of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, written by the church of Smyrna, that when fire was set to the pile prepared to burn him the "flames forming themselves into an arch, like the sails of a ship swelled with the wind, gently encircled the body of the martyr, which stood in the middle, resembling not roasted flesh, but purified gold or silver, appearing bright through the flames; and his body sending forth such a fragrance, that we seemed to smell precious spices."

of it we have no hesitation in saying, that Dr. Bacon is altogether mistaken, when he finds its *facsimile*, either in Mr. Fisch's evangelical congregation of the present Lyons, or under the keen sharp features of Puritanism in any part of New England.

It would be easy to extend this contrast to other points. Veneration for the *relics* of deceased saints comes into view, as far back as our eye can reach. The bones of Ignatius, who was martyred at Rome under Trajan in the beginning of the second century, were carefully gathered up after his death, we are told, and carried back to Antioch his episcopal see. According to Chrysostom, they were borne in triumph on the shoulders of all the cities through Asia Minor. In Antioch they were placed finally in a church distinguished by his name, which St. Chrysostom encourages people in his day to visit, as having been to many the means of undoubted help both spiritually and corporally. In the case of Polycarp, the church of Smyrna writes that the malice of the devil was exerted to prevent his relics being carried off by the Christians; "for many desired to do it, to show their respect to his body." At the suggestion of the Jews, the proconsul was advised not to give the body into their hands, lest they should pass from the worship of the crucified one to the worship of Polycarp; "not knowing," say the acts, "that we can never forsake Christ, nor adore any other, though we love the martyrs, as his disciples and imitators, for the great love they bore their king and master." The corpse accordingly was reduced to ashes. "We afterwards took up the bones," the church adds, "more precious than the richest jewels or gold, and deposited them decently in a place, at which may God grant us to assemble with joy, to celebrate the birthday of the martyr." How different all this is from the spirit of modern Puritanism, even a child may see and feel. But the veneration for relics is itself only the proof and sign of a great deal more, embraced in the article of the "communion of saints" as it was held in the early church, every vestige of which has disappeared from the thinking of this later system. It is equally evident again, that the church of the second century attributed a peculiar merit to the state of celibacy and virginity, embraced for the glory of God and in the service of religion, which falls in fully with the tone of thought we find afterwards established in the Roman Catholic communion, but is as much at war as can well be imagined with the entire genius of Puritanism in every form and shape. It is not necessary, however, to push the comparison any farther, in the consideration of these or of other kindred points. Our general purpose is abundantly answered, our cause more than

made out, by the topics of proof and illustration already presented.

The Puritan hypothesis, we now repeat, is false. There never was any such period of unchurchly evangelicalism as it assumes, in the history of early Christianity. Its whole dream of a golden age, answerable to its own taste and fashion, after the time of the New Testament and back of what it takes to be the grand apostacy that comes into view in the third century, is as perfectly baseless as any vision could well be. It rests upon mere air. It has not a syllable of true historical evidence in its favor; while the universal drift of proof is directly against it. Those then who will have it that New England Puritanism is the true image of what Christianity was at the start, and that the church tendency as it appears in universal force afterwards was from the start a corruption only, must take still higher ground than even this dizzy imagination; they must make up their mind, with the heroic Baptists, to look upon the history of the church as a grand falling away from its original design and type, as soon as it passed out of the hands of the Apostles, and long before the last of these in fact had gone to his rest. To this the theory comes in the end; and with the great body of those who hold it, this probably is the sense that always lurks in it at the bottom. But we need have no hesitation surely in saying, that every view of *this* sort is fatal to the credibility of the Gospel. It is only Gnosticism in disguise.

Our faith in the realness of Christianity will not allow us to bear the thought, that it fell from the very outset into the gulph-stream of a total apostacy, which carried the universal church, without resistance or knowledge, right onward always to the shipwreck of a thousand years—while Christ was showing himself by infallible signs both present and awake in the vessel, and miracles of faith and zeal prevailed on every side. It will not do; the whole supposition is monstrous. Puritanism is mistaken. It is a thousand times safer to interpret the meaning of Christianity from its own actual history in the beginning, than it is to sit at the feet now of any such modern authority, spinning the sense of it from the clouds. As to the likelihood of apostacy and wholesale error, in the main difference between the two forms of teaching, we believe the chances to be immeasurably in favor of antiquity and against the modern authority. It is far easier to believe Puritanism an apostacy, in its rejection of the *mystery* of the church and its sacraments, than it is to brand the universal faith of the second and third centuries with any such character, for the acknowledgment of this mystery as

something quite above the range of reason and common sense. We choose to go here with the early church. We do not believe that it fell into apostacy, as a whole, from the very outset of its course; that it mistook fundamentally the sense and meaning of the faith delivered to it by the Apostles; that it was almost immediately overpowered by a new and foreign idea, a "mystery of iniquity" that turned it finally into the synagogue of Satan. We detest and abhor any imagination of this sort; and pray God that our children may be kept from every such miserable tradition, as a true snare of the Devil that looks directly to rationalism and infidelity. There were faults and corruptions no doubt in the history of the church; but there was no such falling away from its own proper and primitive idea, as Puritanism finds it necessary constantly to assert. The reigning course of Christianity was right, and in full conformity with the will of Him who so visibly presided over it "on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The habit of doctrine and worship in which such men as Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyprian stood, which animated the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, and glowed in the seraphic ardor of Polycarp and Ignatius, must have been in the main, not diabolical, not superstitious, but true to the genius of the Gospel as it was "first spoken by the Lord and confirmed by them that heard him—God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." This implies of course that even the Papacy itself, ~~to-~~wards which at least the whole system was carried with intrinsic necessity from the beginning, came in with reason and right, and had a mission to fulfil in the service of Christianity that could not have been fulfilled as well in any other way. No one indeed can study the history of the church soberly, it seems to us, without seeing this in the actual course of events. The grand bulwark of the true religion, through the whole period of the middle ages, was beyond all question the ecclesiastical organization that centered in the popes or bishops of Rome. Without this, the church would have fallen to pieces, hundreds of years before the Reformation. Only suppose the Papacy to have been overwhelmed by Mohammedanism, or by the German emperors, or by the wild fury of the Albigenses and other such Manichean sects, and what would there have been left of the glorious mystery of Christianity as it first stood, either to reform or mend in the sixteenth century?

If the cause of Protestantism then is to be successfully maintained, it must be on some other ground than the common Puri-

tan assumption, that it is just what Christianity was in the beginning, and that all variations from it in antiquity are to be set to the account of a devilish apostacy, of which Popery was at last the consummation and end. Come what may of the Reformation, there are certain general maxims of faith here which we can never safely renounce. We must hold fast to the divine origin of the church, and to its divine continuity from the beginning down to the present time. We must see and admit, that Protestantism is no return simply to Primitive Christianity. Its connection with this is *through* the Roman Catholic church only, as the real continuation of the older system. In no other view can it be acknowledged, as the historical and legitimate succession of this ancient faith. This implies, however, that the life of Protestantism must be one with the life of the church as it stood previously. It is to be taken as different from this indeed in the rejection of many accidental corruptions, but not in distinctive substance and spirit. Its doctrines and habits must be felt to grow forth, with true inward vitality, from the faith that has been accredited as divine from the beginning, by the promise and miraculous providence of Christ. Puritanism then, by abjuring this historical and organic relationship to the ancient church, does what it can in truth to ruin the cause of genuine Protestantism. It brings in another Gospel. It throws us on the terrible dilemma: "Either Ancient Christianity was intrinsically false, or Protestantism is a bold imposture"; for it makes this last to be the pure negation and contradiction of the first. But when it comes to this, what sound mind can pause in its choice? To create such a dilemma, we say then, is to fight against the Reformation. Puritanism, carrying upon its hard front these formidable horns, is no better than treason and death to Protestantism.

J. W. N.

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EARLY CHRISTIANITY.

*Third Article.*¹

To make our discussion properly complete, it is still necessary to bring into view, more particularly than has yet been done, the practical bearings and issues of the whole subject.

¹ 1. *Ancient Christianity, and the Doctrines of the Oxford Tracts for the Times.* By the Author of "Spiritual Despotism." Fourth Edition. London, 1844. 2 vols. 8vo.

2. *Die Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche und ihre Verfassung.* Ein geschichtlicher Versuch von RICHARD ROTHE, Professor der Theol. &c. Erster Band. Wittenberg, 1837.

3. *The Principle of Protestantism as related to the Present State of the Church.* By PHILIP SCHAFF, Ph. D. Chambersburg, 1846.

4. *What is Church History? A Vindication of the idea of Historical Development.* By PHILIP SCHAFF. Philadelphia, 1846.

5. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine.* By JOHN HENRY NEWMAN. American Edition, 1846.

6. *Vorlesungen über Katholicismus und Protestantismus.* Von HEINRICH W. J. THIERSCH, Doctor der Philosophie und Theologie, ordentl. Prof. d. Theol. an der Universität Marburg. Erlangen, 1848.

It is rather a sorry commentary on the reigning knowledge of ecclesiastical history among us, that the statements made in our first article with regard to the Christianity of the fourth and fifth centuries, should have given rise in certain quarters to so much scandal and offence. We have been represented as betraying the cause of Protestantism, and making huge strides towards Romanism, by the mere fact of venturing such statements themselves; as though they were of either novel or questionable character, or must necessarily and at once imply a full approval of the points which as a matter of simple history they are found to grant and allow. Our positions here are not theological, but purely historical. They relate to a question of outward fact, to be settled in such form by proper testimony. How the fact may suit this or that theory of divinity, is another question altogether; and nothing can well be more childish and absurd, than to think of making this second inquiry the rule and measure of the other. Is our theology then to regulate and decide the meaning of history? Must this last have no voice whatever, save as it can be forced to speak in agreement with the first? Shall facts be concealed or denied, because they fall not in with a given scheme of belief? Ridiculous pretension. It breathes the very spirit, that is ordinarily attributed to the inquisition. We have heard of the case of Galileo; forced to do penance, as the story goes, for teaching that the earth moves round the sun, while the honor of the reigning theology was supposed to require rather, that the sun should be taken to move round the earth. The case before us is precisely of the same tyrannical complexion. Nay it is in some respects worse; for the facts of the Copernican system are by no means so near to us, and so capable of full verification in their own order, as the facts of history with which we are here concerned. The first may always be questioned with some show at least of reason; whereas to question these last is like pretending to call white black or black white.

We refer to what we have said of the religious system of the days of Ambrose and Augustine. "You tell us," exclaims some evangelical inquisitor, doing his best to look calm and mild as well as more than commonly pious, "that Christianity as it stood in the fourth century, and in the first part of the fifth, was something very different from modern Protestantism, and that it bore in truth a very near resemblance in all material points to the later religion of the Roman church."—That, Sir, is what we have said; and such precisely is our opinion.—"You go so far as to add, that were the fathers who then lived to return to

the world in our time, they would find themselves more at home in the Papal than in the Protestant communion.”—We have not the least doubt of it, Sir, supposing them to return as they were when they died; their first movement would be towards Romanism, and the most we could hope would be that, after some time taken to understand the present state of things, they might be prepared perhaps to pass forward to Protestantism, as after all better and higher ground.—“You hold that these fathers, whom the whole Protestant world is accustomed to venerate and laud as the glory of the ancient church, knew nothing of the view which makes the bible and private judgment the principle of Christianity and the only source and rule of faith, acknowledged the central dignity of the bishop of Rome, believed in baptismal regeneration, the mystery of the real presence, purgatory and prayers for the dead, venerated relics, had full faith in the continuation of miracles, and glorified celibacy, voluntary poverty, and the monastic life, as at once honorable to religion and eminently suited to promote the spiritual welfare of men.”—Certainly, Sir, we do hold all this, and are prepared to furnish any amount of proof for it that may be reasonably required.—“Then you endorse the worst abominations of the Roman system.”—Softly, Sir Inquisitor, not quite so fast; that is not the question in any way under consideration. The matter here to be settled is not what we or you may think of these points. The simple inquiry is, Are the positions true? Whatever may be thought of them theologically, are they *historically* true? They are merely historical positions. They affirm certain facts of history as facts, and in no other way. If the positions in this view are wrong, if it can be shown that the facts were not as they affirm, let us have proof of it, proper historical proof, and we shall consider it a privilege to acknowledge and retract our mistake. But are *you* prepared, Inquisitorial Sir, for this reasonable task? Alas, no. You have never read a page of one of these early fathers; and you have never given any serious attention to the history of the church in this period as it may be studied from other sources; for if you had done so, it would not be possible for you to assume the ridiculous attitude in which you now stand. You have never studied the subject; know nothing about it; and yet here you are, in spite of all such ignorance, pretending to dispose of it in the most dogmatical and wholesale style, without the least regard whatever to actual facts. The Romanizing spirit of the fourth and fifth centuries is too clear, to admit of any sort of question or doubt. You simply expose your own want of everything like true scholarship, on

the field of church history, by imagining that there is any room for controversy in the case of so plain a fact.

Any respectable church historian may be appealed to as a witness in regard to this point. Gieseler, Neander, Mosheim, though not with the same spirit exactly, agree here in the same general representation, so far as the main fact is concerned. Quotations are unnecessary. It is agreed all round, that the prelatical and pontifical system was in full force in this period, that the sacraments were regarded as supernatural mysteries, that purgatory, prayers for the dead, and the worship of saints, were part and parcel of the reigning faith, that celibacy and monasticism were held in the highest honor, that an unbounded veneration for relics everywhere prevailed, and that miracles were received on all sides as events by no means uncommon or incredible in the church. Who indeed can be ignorant of this, who has only read Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*? We may put what construction we please on the facts. We may explain them as we please. But it is perfectly idle to dispute them, or to pretend to set them aside. We might just as well quarrel with the constitution of nature. The fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries were not Puritan nor Protestant. They stood in the bosom of the Catholic system, the very same order of thought that completed itself afterwards in the Roman or Papal church. And their position there was not by accident merely or in a simply external way. It belonged to the very substance of their faith. Their christianity was constructed throughout from this standpoint alone. The strong supposition then of Dr. Newman is not a whit too strong for the actual character of the case. If Ambrose or Athanasius should now revisit the earth, with their old habit of mind, neither of them would be able to feel himself at home in any of our Protestant churches. They would fall in much more readily, for a time at least, with the doctrine and worship of the Catholics. And so on the other hand, neither of them would find the least toleration in any Protestant sect. Anglicans, Low Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, United Brethren, Quakers, and so on to the end of the chapter, would exclude them alike from their communion, or take them in at best as novices and babes requiring to be taught again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Let any one appear in New England, at the present time, in the spirit precisely and power of Athanasius, or Chrysostom, or Ambrose, or Augustine, and it is perfectly certain that he would find no countenance or favor in any quarter. Orthodoxy and Unitarianism would join

hands in trying to put him down, as a pestilent fellow bent only on corrupting the faith of the churches. No evangelical sect would think of extending to him the right hand of fellowship. His name would be cast out as evil, he would be regarded as a Papist and an enemy of all true religion, in every direction. Such men as Jovinian and Vigilantius would find far more favor. These were the true Protestants, as Neander styles them, of the fourth century. But for this very reason they appeared wholly out of place in its bosom. The whole tone and temper of the time was against them. They were fairly overwhelmed as rationalistic heretics.¹

We may charge all this, if we choose, to the ignorance and superstition of the age. We may be sorry or angry, as best suits our humor, that the facts of history should come before us in such disagreeable form. It is easy enough also to renounce the authority of the whole Christianity of this period, and to throw ourselves at once back upon the authority of the Bible. The fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries were not infallible; why should we then trouble ourselves with their fancies and ways, when we have the sure word of revelation itself to make us acquainted with all necessary truth? Such ground certainly we have a right to take, if we see proper. Only, in doing so, let us see and know clearly what we are about. Let us not pretend in this way to set aside the fact itself, from the force of which we thus try to make our escape. This is all we are concerned with at present; and this is something entirely independent of any construction that may be put upon it, or of any theological use to which it may be turned, in one direction or in another.

¹ "The most eminent of these worthy opposers of the reigning superstitions was *Jovinian*, an Italian monk, who, towards the conclusion of this century, taught first at Rome, and afterwards at Milan, that all those who kept the vows they made to Christ at their baptism, and lived according to those rules of piety and virtue laid down in the gospel, had an equal title to the rewards of futurity; and that, consequently, those who passed their days in unsociable celibacy, and severe mortifications and fastings, were in no respect more acceptable in the eye of God, than those who lived virtuously in the bonds of marriage, and nourished their bodies with moderation and temperance. These judicious opinions, which many began to adopt, were first condemned by the church of Rome, and afterwards by *Ambrose*, in a council held at Milan in the year 390. The emperor *Honorius* seconded the authoritative proceedings of the bishops by the violence of the secular arm, answered the judicious reasonings of *Jovinian* by the terror of coercive and penal laws, and banished this pretended heretic to the island *Boa*. *Jovinian* published his opinions in a book, against which *Jerome*, in the following century, wrote a most bitter and abusive treatise, which is still extant."—*Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. Cent. IV. Part II. Chapt. III.*

Make what we may of it, we owe it to truth here to acknowledge and confess the full existence of the fact itself. The Christianity of the fourth and fifth centuries was more Roman Catholic a great deal than Protestant. The best piety of this period, as it meets us in such saints as Athanasius, Chrysostom and Ambrose, is fairly steeped in what would be counted by the common Puritanism of the present time rank heathenish superstition. Let us at all events have honesty enough to own here what is the simple truth. Let us look the fact fairly and steadily in the face, and then *as a fact* we may deal with it as seems best.

We had no idea indeed, that what we have said with regard to this point was likely to be disputed at all, or even to be found particularly startling, in any section at least of Puritan Christianity. We thought it was a matter conceded and granted on all hands, that not only the prelatical system, but all sorts of Romanizing tendencies besides, were in full play as early as the fourth century; and that no account was to be made of this period accordingly, as a source of testimony or evidence for any other form of faith that might be supposed to have prevailed at an earlier day. Puritanism, we thought, had settled it as a fixed maxim, that the seeds of Popery were not only sown, but actively sprouting also and bearing most ugly fruit on all sides, in the fourth and fifth centuries, the time of Ambrose and Augustine; and that *therefore* exactly no stress was to be laid on the voice of any such fathers, wherever it seems to be pitched on the Catholic key and to carry in it a plainly Catholic sound. Nothing is more familiar to us certainly than this line of argument. What Independent is disturbed by the hierarchical ideas, that are everywhere current in the age of Athanasius? What Baptist cares a fig for the usages of "time immemorial," that are brought into view in the controversy between Pelagius and Augustine? What Presbyterian is put out of countenance in the least, by any amount of proof urged against his favorite system, from creeds or liturgies that date from the days of Arius or Nestorius? The ever ready answer to all such authority is, that it is quite too late to be of any significance or force. The period is given up as an age of wholesale departure from the truth.¹

¹ "We can then admit, with Dr. N., that the Christianity of the fourth century was something 'very different from modern Protestantism'—and very different too from the truth and piety taught in the New Testament. We can readily admit that those fathers, were they now to rise from the dead with the same views they had when they fell asleep, would hardly 'find their home' in any of our Protestant churches. They would still have

The fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, we are told, were all wofully infected with superstition and under the dominion of error. Patristic testimony in any case is not of much account, except as it falls in with what we may take to be the sense of the Bible; but borrowed from the time now mentioned it is worth, on all points here in consideration, the next thing to nothing.

Take in exemplification a single passage from Dr. Miller's Letters on Episcopacy. "In examining the writings of the Fathers," he tells us, "I shall admit only the testimony of those

a hankering after the imaginary virtues of celibacy, and asceticism, and mystical interpretations, and baptism for the remission of original sin, and an insatiate passion for relics, and for the pretended miracles of monkery. We grant that the elements of Romanism were fermenting and growing rank in the ancient Church—the church of the fourth century;—and we also admit in these elements, the development of the great Apostacy predicted by the Apostle.—If men cannot see evidences of the Apostacy, 'the falling away,' in the teaching and monkery and fanaticism of that age, it must be for the want of eyes to see, or power to discriminate between the graceful form of truth and its hideous caricatures; or they must be the victims of a blinding credulity, which regards with reverential awe, every relic of antiquity."—*Christian Observer*, (Philadelphia,) Nov. 1851.

This is curious enough in its connexions. The occasion is Mr. Helfenstein's circular, calling on sister sects to take part with Dr. Berg and himself in their protest against the G. R. Synod, for not choosing to make our first article on *Early Christianity* cause for a process of Lynch law at our capital expense. Our amiable friend, Dr. Converse, so well known for his zeal against the assumptions of the Old School section of Presbyterianism, though too delicate to "intermeddle" with the ecclesiastical difficulties of another body, holds this a fair opportunity and call notwithstanding for stepping forward, in the character at once of both judge and jury, to regulate the affairs of the G. R. church. The body is not competent, it would seem, to act for itself. It has no right to its own historical character. It must be tried by a foreign standard, by Puritanism, by New School Presbyterianism, by "American Lutheranism," by all that is unsacramental and unchurchly in the land. And if it abide not this test, then all must be wrong. But what is it now that Mr. Helfenstein's circular finds to be so dreadful in the article on *Early Christianity*? Simply this, that it makes the leading elements of Romanism to have been at work in the Nicene church, and denies the existence of any golden period answerable to modern Puritanism after the age of the N. Testament. And yet, what so horrifies Mr. H. here is fully granted, in the foregoing extract by the Philadelphia observer itself. With what then does the editor quarrel? Had he read our article with his own eyes? We presume not. And yet he undertakes to deal with it, and with the whole G. R. church besides, in this magisterial way, on the strength of the first wrong impression caught up from the *ex parte* statement of a foiled and passionate appelliant, flying to his Editorial Bench for redress! If this be either honorable or honest, there is need in truth that we should go to school again to learn "which be the first principles" of Christian Ethics.

who wrote within the *first two centuries*. Immediately after this period so many corruptions began to creep into the church ; so many of the most respectable Christian writers are known to have been heterodox in their opinions ; so much evidence appears, that even before the commencement of the third century, the Papacy began to exhibit its pretensions ; and such multiplied proofs of wide spreading degeneracy crowd into view, that the testimony of every subsequent writer is to be received with suspicion." This is the only proper Presbyterian view. Presbyterianism *must* take this ground, in order to have any solid bottom whatever. And still more must Congregationalism do so, under every form and shape. The universal voice of the fourth and fifth centuries looks wholly another way. The least that can be said of it is, that it goes in full for the prelatical and high church system at all points ; and Presbyterians and Independents are generally willing to allow that it goes for a great deal more than this system under its common Episcopalian form ; that it goes in fact for many of the leading features of Romanism, and that for Episcopalianism therefore as an argument which proves too much it may be said properly to prove nothing.

In this light we find the subject handled indeed, even in the Episcopal church itself, by one of its parties in controversy with the other. The Puseyites, as they are called, and the High-church party in general, have been disposed to build the authority of their system very much on the Nicene period of ecclesiastical antiquity ; taking it for granted, that while it exhibits, with unmistakeable clearness, all the traces of their theory as distinguished from every less churchly scheme, it may be regarded as standing equally clear from the abuses of Romanism, as these come into view along with the growth of the Papacy in later centuries. On the other side however it has been well and ably shown, that there is no room whatever for this last distinction in any such pretended form. In particular, the work entitled "*Ancient Christianity*," by Isaac Taylor, Esq., the author of "*Spiritual Despotism*" and other well known volumes, is wholly devoted to the object of proving that it is a most perfect mistake, to imagine anything like the counterpart of Anglican Protestantism as having existed in the fourth century, and that in truth what are usually considered the worst abuses of Romanism were already fully at work in this period ; nay, that in many respects the form under which they then appeared was decidedly worse altogether, than that which they carried subsequently in the middle ages. So far as the mere question of history goes, no one will pretend to question the competency of Mr. Taylor, as

a truly learned and faithful witness. His testimony is given as the result of a very full and laborious personal examination of the writings of the early fathers themselves, and is supported throughout with a weight of authorities and examples that a man must be rash indeed to think of setting aside. The evidence is absolutely overwhelming, that the Nicene church was in all essential points of one mind and character with the Papal church of later times, and that where any difference is to be found, it was for the most part not in favor of the first, but against it rather, and in favor of this last. Let a few extracts serve here to show the ground taken and triumphantly maintained by this author, on the relation of these older and later schemes of Christianity, viewed thus as a question of simple historical fact and nothing more.

“Our ears have been so much and so long used to the sound (repeated by Protestant writers, one after another, and without any distinct reference to facts, and probably without any direct knowledge of them,) of the *progressive corruption* of Christianity, and the slow and steady advances of superstition and spiritual tyranny, that we are little prepared to admit a contrary statement, better sustained by evidence, as well as more significant in itself—namely, that, although councils, or the papal authority, from age to age, followed up, embodied and legalized certain opinions, usages, and practices, which had already been long prevalent in an undefined form, it very rarely pushed on far in advance of the feeling and custom of the times; but that, on the contrary, it rather followed in the wake of ancient superstitions, expressing in bulls, decretals, and canons (which were not seldom of a corrective kind) the inherited principles of the ecclesiastical body. Or to state the same general fact, as it is seen from another point of view, it will be found true that, if the sentiment and opinion of the church at different eras be regarded apart from the authorized expressions of the same, there will appear to have been far less of *progression* than we have been taught to suppose; and that, on the contrary, the notions and usages of a later, differ extremely little from those of an earlier age; or that, so far as they do differ, the advantage, in respect of morality and piety, is quite as often on the side of the later as of the earlier ages. If particular points be had in view, it may be affirmed that Popery is a practicable form, and a corrected expression, of the Christianity of the Nicene age.”—*Ancient Christianity, Vol. I. p. 63.*

“A well-defined and authoritative system (involving elements of evil) is, I think, much to be preferred to an undefined system, involving the very same elements; and I firmly believe that it were, on the whole, better for a community to submit itself, without con-

ditions, to the well-known Tridentine Popery, than to take up the Christianity of Ambrose, Basil, Gregory Nyssen, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine. Personally, I would rather be a Christian after the fashion of Pascal and Arnold, than after that of Cyprian or Cyril; but how much rather after that of our own protestant worthies, who, although entangled by fond notions about the ancient church, were, in heart, and in the main bent of their lives, followers, not of the fathers, but of the apostles!"—*Vol. I. p. 124, 125.*

"In this sense then, and how much soever it may jar with notions that have been generally entertained, and whatever high offence the assertion may give to certain persons, I here distinctly repeat my affirmation that Romanism was a reform, (or if there be any other word of nearly the same meaning, but more agreeable to our ears,) a reform, or a correction of the Nicene church system. In thus reiterating this unacceptable assertion, I am prepared, if required to do so, to defend my ground by copious citations of historical and ecclesiastical evidence; and particularly by an appeal to the writings of the early popes and to the acts of councils. As an inference from this advisedly-made assertion, I am prepared to say, that considered as a question affecting the morals of the people, it were better for us to return without reserve to the church of Rome, (horrid supposition as it is,) than to surrender ourselves to the system which Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, the Gregories, and Augustine bequeathed to the nations. Nicene church principles, as now attempted to be put in the room of the principles of the Reformation, if in some points *theologically* better, or less encumbered, than the Popery of the council of Trent, would as I verily believe more quickly and certainly deluge England with fanatical debauchery, than would *such* Romanism as the church of Rome would at this moment, gladly establish among us."—*Vol. II. p. 69, 70.*

"Popery then was a reform of the antecedent church system: inasmuch as it created and employed a force, counteractive of the evils which that system, and which itself too, could not but generate. The great men of the fourth century believed, that the system contained within itself a counteractive power. A few years furnished lamentable evidence of the fallacy of such a belief. The popes snatched at the only alternative—the creating a power *exterior* to the system, and assuming to be independent of it, by virtue of the special authority vested in the successors of Peter. *This* scheme was practicable; and Time has pronounced its eulogium. Terrible as is Popery, it is infinitely less terrible than its own naked substance, apart from its form. If at the present moment there are Popish nations in a moral condition almost as degraded as that into which Christendom at large had sunk in the fifth century, it is because the corrective energies of the papal hierarchy have long been dormant."—*Vol. II. p. 71, 72.*

“I have undertaken to show, by numerous and varied citations, not merely that the doctrine and practice of religious celibacy occupied a prominent place in the theological and ecclesiastical system of the Nicene church, a fact hardly needing to be proved, but that the institute was intimately and inseparably connected with, and that it powerfully affected, every other element of ancient Christianity, whether dogmatic, ethical, ritual, or hierarchical. If, then, such a connexion can be proved to have existed, we must either adopt its notions and usages in this essential particular, or must surrender very much of our veneration for ancient Christianity.

“The fact of the intimate connexion here affirmed is really not less obvious or easily established than that of the mere existence of the institute itself. Modern church writers may, indeed, have thrown the unpleasing subject into the back-ground, and so it may have attracted much less attention than its importance deserves; but we no sooner open the patristic folios than we find it confronting us, on almost every page; and if either the general averment were questioned, or the bearing of the celibate upon every part of ancient Christianity were denied, volumes might be filled with the proofs that attest the one as well as the other. Both these facts must be admitted by all unprejudiced inquirers who shall take the pains to look into the extant remains of Christian antiquity.”—*Vol. I. p. 131.*

“Do not the fathers then worship God? do they not adore the Son of God? Assuredly: but when they muster all the forces of their eloquence, when they catch fire, and swell, as if inspired, whenever (I must be permitted to make the allusion, for it is really appropriate,) whenever they take their seat upon the tripod and begin to foam, the subject of the rhapsody is sure to be—‘a blessed martyr,’ it may be an apostle; or a recently departed ‘doctor,’ or, ‘a virgin confessor;’ or it is the relics of such a one, and the miraculous virtues of his sacred dust. If, in turning over these folios, the eye is any where caught by the frequency of interjections, such a page is quite as likely to be found to sparkle and flash with the commendations of the mother of God, or of her companion saints, as with the praises of the Son; and more often does the flood-tide of eloquence swell with the mysterious virtues of the sacraments than with the power and grace of the Saviour. The Saviour does indeed sit enthroned within the veil of the Christian temple; but what the Christian populace hear most about, is—the temple itself, and its embroideries, and its gildings, and its ministers, and its rites, and the saints that fill its niches. In a word, what was visible, and what was human, stood in front of what is invisible and divine: and when we find a system of blasphemous idolatry fully expanded in the middle ages, this system cannot, in any equity, be spoken of as any thing else than a following out of the adulatory rhapsodies of the great writers and preachers of the Nicene church.”—*Vol. I. p. 188.*

“Let not the Protestant reader, who may lately have heard Ambrose named as one of the great three, to whom we are to look for our idea of finished Christianity, let him not be startled at this praying to a saint. Ambrose in the west, as well as Nazianzen, Nyssen, Chrysostom, in the east, and others, too many to name, had convinced himself that no prayers were so well expedited on high, as those which were presented by a saint and martyr already in the skies! In fact, a good choice as to the ‘patrocinium,’ was the main point in the business of prayer. These matters were, however, regulated by a certain propriety and conventional usage,—may we say, etiquette: it was not on every sort of occasion that the Virgin was to be troubled with the wants and wishes of mortals: each saint had, indeed, come to have his department; and each was applied to in his particular line. In connexion with subjects such as this how can one be serious? unless indeed considerations are admitted that agitate the mind with emotions of indignation and disgust.”—*Vol. I. p. 212.*

“It was, however, a consolation to Ambrose, in the loss of his brother, that he had lived to return to Milan, where the sacred dust would be at all times accessible, affording to him means of devotion of no ordinary value—‘habeo sepulcrum,’ says he, ‘super quod jaceam, et *commendabiliorem* Deo futurum esse me credam, quod supra sancti corporis ossa requiescam.’ Ambrose was truly a gainer by the death of his brother: for in place of his mere bodily presence, as a living coadjutor, he had the justifying merits of his bones, and the benefit of his intercession in heaven! Ungracious task indeed is it to adduce these instances of blasphemous superstition, as attaching to a name like that of Ambrose; but what choice is left us when, as now, the Christian community, little suspecting what is implied in the advice, are enjoined to take their faith and practice from the divines of the Nicene age, and from Ambrose, Athanasius, and Basil, especially?”—*Ib.*

“The florid orators, bishops and great divines of the fourth century, we find, one and all, throughout the east, throughout the west, throughout the African church, lauding and lifting to the skies whatever is formal in religion, whatever is external, accessory, ritual, ecclesiastical: it was upon *these* things that they spent their strength; it was these that strung their energies, these that fired their souls. Virginity they put first and foremost; then came maceration of the body, tears, psalm-singing, prostrations on the bare earth, humiliations, alms-giving, expiatory labours and sufferings, the kind offices of the saints in heaven, the wonder-working efficacy of the sacraments, the unutterable powers of the clergy: these were the ripe and favoured themes of animated sermons, and of prolix treatises; and such was the style, temper, spirit, and practice of the church, from the banks of the Tigris, to the shores of the Atlantic, and from the Scandinavian morasses, to the burning

sands of the great desert ; such, so far as our extant materials give us any information. And all this was what it should have been ! and this is what now we should be tending toward !"—*Vol. I. p. 265.*

These are strong statements. But so far as historical facts are concerned, they are placed by our author beyond all contradiction. The Nicene Christianity bore no resemblance whatever to Protestantism. It carried in it all the principles of Romanism ; so that this is to be considered in many respects an improvement on the older system, a regulation and correction of its abuses, and not by any means the bringing in of something always progressively worse. The model saint of the period is presented to us in the person of St. Antony, the "Patriarch of Monks." Asceticism is made to be the highest style of piety. The merit of celibacy, the glorification of virginity, veneration for relics, all sorts of miracles, the idea of purgatory, the worship of saints, prayers for the dead, submission to the authority of the church, and faith in the sacraments as truly supernatural mysteries, come everywhere into view as the universal staple of religious thought. All this is so clearly established by the historical monuments which have come down to us from this age, that he who runs may read—unless indeed he choose rather to shut his own eyes. And what are we to think then of those, who are ready to take offence with the declaration of so plain a truth, as though it involved a deadly stab at the whole cause of Protestantism, and were the next thing in fact to a full acknowledgment of the claims of Rome ! Alas for our Protestantism, if it is to stand by the feeble arm of *such* defenders. The noise they make is found to be at last, the proclamation simply of their own shame.

It is simply ridiculous then to make any question about the reigning state of the church in the fourth and fifth centuries, as related to Romanism and Popery. Our representation has not been a whit too strong for the actual truth of the case, but may be considered as falling short of this altogether. It is the merest romance, when such a man as Bishop Wilson, or any other Evangelical Protestant of the present day, allows himself to dream that such men as Ambrose and Augustine were orthodox and pious after his own fashion, that the main elements of their religion were of a truly Protestant cast, and that they were in a great measure free from the ideas which afterwards took full possession of the church under what is called the Roman apostacy. Every imagination of this sort is a perfect illusion. These

fathers, and along with them the entire church of their time, were in all material respects fully committed to the later Roman system; and at some points indeed stood farther off from Evangelical Protestantism than the full grown Popery of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Let this truth then be known and kept in mind. Here at least is a fixed fact in church history, which only the most disgraceful ignorance can pretend to dispute. Let it be made familiar to our thoughts. Nicene Christianity, the system which the fourth century inherited from the third and handed forward to the fifth, was not Protestantism; much less Puritanism; bore no resemblance to this whatever; but in all essential principles and characteristics was nothing more nor less than Romanism itself. The great Athanasius, now in London or New York, would be found worshipping only at Catholic altars. Augustine would not be acknowledged by any evangelical sect. Chrysostom would feel the Puritanism of New England more inhospitable and dry than the Egyptian desert.

For his own immediate and main object then, the argument of Mr. Isaac Taylor, it seems to us, is unanswerably conclusive and overwhelming. Anglicanism builds its pretensions throughout on the position, that antiquity as far down as to the fifth century is in its favor, and at the same time against those features of Romanism which go beyond its measure; that these Roman features came in gradually at a later period, along with the rise of the Papacy, as innovations and corruptions; and that it is possible now to cast them all off as purely outward excrescences or incrustations, and so to find in the Nicene system a true picture of what the church was in the beginning, and the fair pattern at the same time of modern Episcopacy after the Oxford scheme. This whole position, it is perfectly certain, cannot stand. It is historically false. To trust it is only to lean upon a broken reed. There is no such distinction here as it asserts, between the older and later church systems. The Nicene Christianity was in its whole constitution of one order with Romanism. The worst corruptions, as they are usually called, of this later system, were all at work in the older system. They are not by any means the inventions and devices of the Papacy, as distinguished from the supposed Patriarchal or Episcopal order of more ancient times. The idea of a steadily growing apostasy and defection from such primitive state of the church, under the usurped dominion of Rome, is a purely arbitrary fiction, which the least true study of antiquity must soon scatter to the winds. In many things, the later order was a decided improvement on the order that went before. The Papacy

was a wholesome reformatory and regulative power for the most part, in its relation to what are called Popish abuses and corruptions, rather than the proper fountain itself of these evils. They belonged to the inheritance it received from the Nicene age, the period in which modern Anglicanism now affects to glory as the model and pattern of an uncorrupted Christianity just like its own. All this, we say, Mr. Taylor makes perfectly clear. Puseyism, in his hands, is convicted of miserable pedantry. Its rule is too wide a great deal for its own pretensions. The line it pretends to draw between Nicene Episcopacy and *Popery* for the purpose of marking off a *jure divino* system of church principles to suit itself, is one that exists only in hypothesis and dream, and not at all in true history. Both historically and logically the premises of the fourth century complete themselves in the full Papal system, and under any form short of this are something, not better than such proper conclusion, but in all respects worse.

As far too as an argument may seem to hold in the relation of the church at different times to the reigning moral and social life in the midst of which it appears, the Nicene Christianity has nothing to plead in its own recommendation. It is a most gloomy picture in this view that Mr. Taylor gives us particularly of the fifth century, from Salvian and other writers. All sorts of immorality prevailed throughout the nominally Christian church. Society showed itself rotten to the core. The Goths and Vandals surpassed, in many cases, the morality of those who professed the true religion and participated in its sacraments. It is evident enough too from Chrysostom and others, that the state of things in the fourth century was much the same, the visible church being literally flooded with immorality and vice. Mr. Taylor brings this forward, as an exemplification of the natural and necessary operation of the Nicene theology. This is plainly a false use of the case. It had other causes sufficiently intelligible in the social state of the world at the time. But the fact is one, which on many accounts it is important to understand and hold in mind. Romanism in later times was not embosomed generally in moral associations so bad as those of this older period; and its worst social phases at the present time, as we are accustomed to think of them in connection with such countries as Spain or Italy or Austria, are far less revolting than the life of nominal Christendom in Europe generally, and throughout North Africa, in the days of Augustine. If modern Catholicism may be convicted of being a false religion on this ground, it is certain that the whole Christianity of the Nicene

age is open to like condemnation, and with still greater effect, in precisely the same view.

So much for the Nicene age, according to the judgment of this learned author. But he does not confine his view to this period. His knowledge of the laws of history could not permit him to doubt its organic union with the life of the period that went before; and his actual study of that earlier age has been of a kind to place this reasonable conclusion beyond all question. He confirms in full, accordingly, the general statement we have already made in relation to the Christianity also of the second and third centuries, as tried by the standard of modern Protestantism. The fourth century was a true continuation of the ecclesiastical forms and views of the third; and this again grew, by natural and legitimate birth, out of the bosom of the second. As far back as our historical notices reach, we find no trace this side of the New Testament of any church system at all answering to any Puritan scheme of the present time; no room or space however small in which to locate the hypothesis even of any such scheme; but very sufficient proof rather that the prevailing habit of thought looked all quite another way, and that in principle and tendency at least the infant church was carried from the very start towards the order of the third and fourth centuries, and through this, we may say, towards the mediæval Catholicism in which that older system finally became complete. Listen for a moment again to the strong testimony of our English writer.

“At a time not more remote from the Apostolic age than we, of this generation, are from the times of Barrow, Tillotson, Taylor, Baxter, we find every element of the abuses of the twelfth century, and not the elements only, but some of those abuses in a ripened, nay, in a putrescent condition.”—*Vol. I. p. 70.*

“I cannot however proceed to call in my next pair of witnesses, without adverting to a fact which forces itself upon every well informed and reflecting reader of the early Christian writers, I mean the much higher moral condition, and the more effective discipline of the Romish church in later times, than can with any truth be claimed for the ancient church, even during its era of suffering and depression. Our ears are stunned with the outcry against the ‘corruptions of Popery.’ I boldly say that Popery, foul as it is, and has ever been, in the mass, might yet fairly represent itself as a *reform upon early Christianity*. Do not accuse me of the wish to startle you with paradoxes. I will not swell my pages (which will have enough to bear) with quotations from modern books that are in the hands of most religious readers. In truth, volumes of unimpeachable evidence might be produced, establishing the fact, that

the *later* Romish church has had to boast eminent virtues, in connexion with her monastic institutions; and I think virtues, better compacted, and more consistent than belonged to the earlier church."——"Nothing can be more inequitable than to charge these horrors upon Romanism. The church of Rome has done, in these instances, *the best it could*, to bring the cumbrous abomination bequeathed to it by the saints and doctors and martyrs of the pristine age, into a manageable condition. And if we are to hear much more of the 'corruptions of popery,' as opposed to 'primitive purity,' there will be no alternative but freely to lay open the sewers of the early church, and to allow them to disgorge their contents upon the wholesome air."——"Before we reprobate popes, councils, and Romanist saints, let us fairly see what sort of system it was which the doctors and martyrs of the highest antiquity had delivered into their care and custody. We Protestants are prompt enough to condemn the pontiffs, or St. Bernard; but let inquiry be made concerning the Christianity imbodyed in the writings of those to whom popes and doctors looked up, as their undoubted masters."—*Vol. I. p. 77-79.*

"I have undertaken to adduce proof of the assertion, not only that the doctrine of the merit of celibacy, and the consequent practices, are found in a mature state at an early age; but also—That, at the earliest period at which we find this doctrine, and these practices, distinctly mentioned, they are referred to in such a manner as to make it certain that they were, at that time, no novelties or recent innovations. Now I am aware that a statement such as this, if it shall appear to be borne out by evidence, will excite alarm in some minds; the dissipation of erroneous impressions, is always a critical and somewhat perilous operation; nevertheless dangers much more to be feared, are incurred by a refusal to admit the full and simple truth. Yet the alarm that may be felt in this instance, at the first, may soon be removed; for although it were to appear that certain capital errors of feeling, and practice, had seized the church universal, at the very moment when the personal influence of the apostles was withdrawn, yet such an admission will shake no principle really important to our faith or comfort. In fact, too many have been attaching their faith and comfort to a supposition, concerning pristine Christianity, which is totally illusory, and such as can bear no examination—a supposition which must long ago have been dispelled from all well informed minds, by the influence of rational modes of dealing with historical materials, if it had not been for the *conservative accident*, that the materials, which belong to this particular department of history, have lain imbedded in repulsive folios of Latin and Greek, to which very few, and those not the most independent, or energetic in their habits of mind, have had access. Certain utterly unfounded generalities, very delight-

ful had they possessed the recommendation of truth, have been a thousand times repeated, and seldom scrutinized.

“But the times of this ignorance are now passing away: and I think the zeal of the Oxford writers will have the effect, as an indirect means, of disabusing effectively, and for ever, the religious mind, in this country, and perhaps throughout Europe, of the inveterate illusions that have so long hung over the fields of Christian antiquity. It will be utterly impossible, much longer to make those things believed which we have been taught to consider as unquestionable; and the result must be, (how desirable a result) the compelling the Christian church, henceforward, to rest its faith and practice on the only solid foundation.

“The actual impression, moral and spiritual, made upon the Jewish and Pagan world by the preaching of the Apostles themselves, and of their personal colleagues, has, I fear, been overrated by the generality of Christians.”—“And then, as to the period immediately following the death of the apostles, and of the men whom they personally appointed to govern the churches, we have too easily, and without any sufficient evidence, assumed the belief that a brightness and purity belonged to it, only a shade or two less than what we have attributed to the apostolic times. This belief, is, in fact, merely the correlative of the common Protestant notion concerning the progressive corruptions of Popery, it being a natural supposition that the higher we ascend toward the apostolic age, so much the more truth, simplicity, purity, must there have been in the church. Thus it is that we have allowed ourselves to theorize, when what we should have done, was simply to examine our documents.

“The opinion that has forced itself upon my own mind, is to this effect, that the period dating its commencement from the death of the last of the apostles, or apostolic men, was, altogether, as little deserving to be selected and proposed as a *patrona*, as any one of the first five of church history;—it had indeed its single points of excellence, and of a high order, but by no means shone in those consistent and exemplary qualities which should entitle it to the honour of being considered as a model to after ages. We need therefore neither feel surprise nor alarm, when we find, in particular instances, that the grossest errors of theory and practice, are to be traced to their origin in the first century. In such instances, for my own part, I can wonder at nothing but the infatuation of those who, fully informed as they must be of the actual facts, and benefited moreover by modern modes of thinking, can nevertheless so prostrate their understandings before the phantom—venerable antiquity, as to be inflamed with the desire of inducing the Christian world to imitate what really asks for apology and extenuation.”—*Vol. I. p. 102–104.*

"In fact, I think, there are very few points of difference, distinguishing the Nicene church from either the earlier or the later church, within the compass of two hundred years on either side, which modern controvertists of any class would much care to insist upon, as of material consequence to their particular opinions."—*Vol. I. p. 144.*

These are serious admissions ; and coming from such a source, they are entitled certainly to serious consideration. Let it be borne in mind, that we quote them simply in confirmation of a historical fact, without any regard now to the light in which this fact may be viewed, either by Mr. Taylor himself or by others, in its theological connections. It is of the highest importance, that we should make here a clear distinction, between what actually had place and what construction should be put upon it in a theory of church history. All we are concerned with at present, is the simple fact, (explain it or judge of it as we may,) that the Christianity of the second century was in no sense of one and the same order with modern Puritanism. How far precisely it may have anticipated the several features of the later Nicene system, is not entirely clear ; but that it carried in it the elements and germs of this system, and looked towards it from the first with inward natural tendency, would seem to be beyond all doubt. The third century could not be what we find it to be in Cyprian and the Apostolical Constitutions, without some corresponding preparation at least in the age immediately preceding ; and both the fact of such preparation, and its general nature, can be easily enough traced, as we have already shown, not merely to the time of Tertullian and Irenæus, but away back even to the days also of Polycarp and Ignatius. Let the *fact* then be fairly and honestly acknowledged ; or else let it be disputed and set aside, if possible, on proper historical grounds. We present it as a simple point of history. We might wish it to be otherwise ; but we feel that we have no power to make it otherwise, any more than we have to stop the earth from rolling round the sun, or to hush the alphabet of geology into dead silence. Facts themselves must not be treated as heresies, however we may feel disposed to treat the conclusions which are drawn from them.

But—we hear some one say—our appeal as to what constituted Early Christianity, in its oldest form, is to the New Testament itself. Let the writings of the Apostles themselves speak. The fathers sadly corrupted the truth, and mingled with it the dreams of pagan philosophy. Let those who choose rest in such false

or doubtful authority; *we* go at once to the original founders of the church, and are content to learn what it was in the beginning from their lips.

All very good, we say in reply; all very good. But the point before us just now, is not the Christianity that may be taught in the New Testament, or that may have prevailed in the Apostolical age.¹ Our inquiry, as historical, has been directed throughout to the determination of what Christianity was *after* the age of the Apostles, first in the Nicene age, and then back of that again in the middle and first part of the second century. The facts regarded in these two cases, are by no means just the same; and our idea of the first must not be allowed to blind or distort our vision, as directed towards this last. *You* may not care indeed for any later state of the church; but that is no reason why such later state should not be allowed, as a fact of history at least, to appear in its own place and under its own form. If we do not need it for our faith, let us at all events not quarrel with it as a matter of simple knowledge.

The fact itself however, in whatever light we regard it theologically, is one of the greatest practical account, as necessarily conditioning our whole theory of church history, and more particularly the view we may take of the relation that holds between Catholicism and Protestantism.

We have from it first of all this general result, that Protestantism is not at all identical with early Christianity, in the form at least which it carries after the time of the Apostles. We do not of course urge this as an objection to Protestantism. There are, as we shall see presently, different ways of reconciling the fact with the supposition that it is after all the purest and best style of Christianity. If we except Newman, all the distinguished writers whose works are quoted at the beginning of the present article, have in view the vindication of the Protestant Reformation, over against the pretensions of the Roman church; and yet all of them agree with Newman himself, in believing the

¹ Those who take us to task for not ascending at once to the original records of Christianity, for the determination of what it was in its earliest and purest form, ought to remember that this whole discussion has had for its object from the beginning an altogether different inquiry—prompted in the first place by a particular position taken in the Rev. Dr. Bacon's Letter from Lyons; this namely, that the system of religion now prevalent in New England, is to be regarded as in all material points the same with that which existed at Lyons, and throughout the church generally, in the days of Pothinus and Irenæus.

modern form of religion to be in many respects very different from that which prevailed either in the fourth century or in the second. Newman's own theory indeed makes the mere fact of the disagreement to be of no conclusive force; since he himself allows the idea of a real historical movement in the life of the church, and must consider Protestantism therefore to be sufficiently justified on his own principles, if only it can be shown to be a legitimate development out of the bosom of Christianity as this stood before.

The general truth is clear. Protestantism and Early Christianity are not the same. Let it be observed, we speak not now of early Christianity as it may be supposed to have been in the age of the Apostles, but of its manifestation in the period following that age, as far back as our historical notices reach this side of the New Testament. We speak not of what it may have been before the destruction of Jerusalem, or for a short time afterwards, in the first century; but of what it is found to have been, as a fact of history, in the second century as well as in the third and fourth. Let it be observed again also, that we speak now not of inward essence but of outward form. There may be wide differences in the latter view, where a real sameness has place after all under the former view. All we say is, that Protestantism outwardly considered does not agree, in its general constitution and form, with what we find Christianity to have been after the time of the New Testament, as far back as the middle of the second century as well as in the fourth and third. No one of our modern sects can show itself to be identical with this ancient church. They may fall upon the still older period of the New Testament, and claim to be in full agreement with this; to all that we have nothing just now to say; but they are not any of them what the church was in the days either of Athanasius or of Cyprian or of Irenæus. The church from the fourth century back to the first part of the second was not Congregationalism, nor Presbyterianism, nor Methodism, nor Anglican Episcopalism, nor any other phase of Protestantism as it now stands. It had its own changes great and serious during this period; but through them all it bears a certain sameness of character peculiar to itself, with which none of these modern systems is found to agree. It carries in it from the beginning elements and tendencies, from whatever source derived, that look steadily towards Romanism, the later system in which all at last actually reached their natural end. Protestantism is not the pristinest simply of any such ecclesiastical antiquity, (this side of the New Testament,) whether under its later or its earlier

form. Its right to exist can never be put safely on any test of this sort.

So much we ought to see and openly confess. Nothing is gained, but much lost rather, by pretending to consider our modern position the same that was occupied by the primitive post-apostolical church. We cannot force facts; and it is always rash and impolitic to take ground directly or indirectly, that makes any such violence necessary for the support of our cause.

Granting then, as all who know anything of church history must, that Protestantism is not the restoration strictly of early (post-apostolical) Christianity, but that this ran naturally rather first into the Nicene system, and then through that again into the later Roman Catholic system, how is the cause of the Reformation to be vindicated as just and right? What view shall we take of this disagreement, (solemn historical fact as it is and not to be disguised nor ignored,) which shall not compromise the credit of Protestantism, but allow us to regard it still as worthy of our confidence and trust? Such is the great question, with the solution of which not a few of the best minds of our age are now seriously wrestling, as a problem of the deepest interest for the world. Only the superficial can fail to look upon it in this light.

Shall we cut the whole matter short, by casting off entirely the authority of the post-apostolical church from the second century down to the sixteenth and by throwing ourselves exclusively on the New Testament, as a sufficient warrant for the modern system, not only without antiquity, but against it also, to any extent that the case may require? This is the ground taken by Puritanism.¹ Its theory is, that Protestantism stands in no or-

¹ It is hardly necessary to say, that Puritanism, as we always take it, is by no means the same thing with Protestantism. It is of later appearance, a sort of *second growth* upon the original work of the Reformation; and its distinctive features in this view are by no means hard to understand. It is one side simply of the original whole of Protestantism, the Reformed tendency; not in polar union as this was at first with the Lutheran tendency, and so in organic connection with the proper historical life of the old Catholic church; but cut off from both these relations, and under such miserable unhistorical and unchurchly abstraction, now claiming pedantically to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, of all that Christianity has ever been in the world. It resolves all religion into private reason, by making this to be the only oracle of what is to be considered the divine sense of the Bible. It is always in this way rationalistic, even when it may seem to be most orthodox. It has no sense of a supernatural church, no faith in the holy sacraments, no sympathy with the reigning drift and tone of the ancient creed. It makes no account of Catholic Christianity.

ganic historical connection with the life of the Catholic church as we find it before the Reformation; that the relation between the two was one of simple contradiction; that the old church was an entire apostasy from the Christianity of the New Testament; and that this was reproduced in the sixteenth century, as an absolutely new creation, directly from its own original fountain and source. The assumption is, that the church at an early period fell away from its primitive purity, and came under the power of a strange and dreadful apostasy, which completed itself finally in the Papacy and all the abominations usually charged upon the church of Rome. The theory involves the idea of a steadily growing corruption, a continual progress from bad to worse. The fourth century thus is taken to have been far more pure than the twelfth. Still its general corruption also is not to be denied. The third century too must have been strongly set in the same false direction. But is there no part of the second, that may be claimed as the pattern of evangelical piety in its modern Protestant style? This is frequently taken for granted in a quiet way, for the purpose of effect. But we have found the assumption to be groundless. History knows nothing of any such period, after the age of the Apostles, but on the contrary shows the church, from the time it first comes into notice, to have been plainly committed to the course of things that led onward directly to the Nicene system. So this Puritan theory, to be fully true to itself, is willing in the end to give up *all* post-apostolical antiquity. It is enough for it, to be certain that the pattern of Protestantism is found in the New Testament. Grant that a different order of religion is found to be at work immediately afterwards, in the ancient church, to what does the fact amount in the face of this original rule, which the world can now interpret for itself? So far as any such difference goes, we have only to set it down from the first for an apostasy, the coming in of that grand catastrophe which afterwards turned the church into a synagogue of hell. Protestantism sets the whole process aside, overleaps the entire interval between the sixteenth

Anglicanism, in its eyes, is sheer foolery and falsehood. The sense of Lutheranism—*true* Lutheranism, and not the bastard spawn of Puritanism itself usurping this venerable name—it has no power even to comprehend; the whole system is a *terra incognita* to its brain. Even the old Calvinistic or Reformed faith has passed quite beyond its horizon. And yet it now claims to be the whole fact of Protestantism, and as such the whole truth of Christianity! Preposterous assumption. Puritanism is indeed a great fact too in its way; but it is not proper Protestantism. This is something older, wider, greater, and as we believe also a great deal better.

century and the first, abjures antiquity clear back to the beginning, and claims to be a new and fresh copy simply of what Christianity was in the days of the Apostles.

This theory we have examined and found wanting. Its disposition of facts, in the first place, is loose and blind in the extreme. There is no such difference as it pretends, in the order of corruption, between the Popery of the middle ages and the period going before. We agree fully with Mr. Taylor, that this was in many respects an improvement on the older system. Then again, the main hypothesis in the case is in the highest degree unnatural and violent. It assumes a full *principal* failure of the church from the very start, an actual triumph of Satan over Christ in the very heart and bosom of his own kingdom, in the face of all God's promises to the contrary, in the face of the original charter and commission of this same church from Christ's own lips, and in spite of his continual headship over it at the right hand of the Father, with all power given unto him in heaven and in earth, to make good his word that the gates of hell should not prevail against it through all time. For the idea is, that the ancient church *did* fail, so as to lose finally the life with which it started; and that Protestantism therefore is no continuation of this life in any really historical way, but an actual return to the beginning, for the purpose of a new experiment of Christianity under a better and safer form. In this way Protestantism is made to be the contradiction and negation of all previous Christianity, back to the age of the Apostles. Its justification requires us to denounce and condemn all church antiquity. To be on good terms with it, we must renounce everything like hearty fellowship—if not with the names—at least with the real persons of the fathers, martyrs, and saints, of the first centuries, everything like true sympathy with their actual spirit and life. Then farther, the use which the theory makes of the Bible is by no means satisfactory; and is of such a wilful and arbitrary character indeed, as may well inspire a terrible doubt of its being more free from mistake after all than the use made of it by the ancient church. If all antiquity could so blunder here, for fifteen centuries, as to miss the entire sense of God's word, who will go bail for us that Puritanism may be trusted and followed now as a truly infallible guide? Finally, the scheme refuses to come into any sort of intelligible harmony with the course of church history. It supposes such a state of things as leaves no room for the idea of a divine life in the church, and makes it in fact to have been the enemy of all truth and righteousness. And yet the church has never been

without the signs and proofs of Christ's supernatural presence in her midst, (according to his promise,) from the beginning.

Altogether thus, this Puritan theory runs directly towards infidelity. It puts together terms which are in their own nature incompatible; and in asking us to believe them, necessarily remands our faith into the world of mere abstractions and notions. On this account it is, that we have denounced it as secretly the foe of Protestantism. We say most deliberately, that a christianity which is not historical, not the continuation organically of the proper life of the church as it has existed from the beginning—but which abjures all connection with this life as something false, and sets itself in contradiction to it as a totally new and different existence—can have no right whatever to challenge our faith, as being the same supernatural fact that is set before us by the article of the church in the ancient creed. It seeks to turn that fact into a wholesale lie, by making such supposition the only alternative to its own truth. No defence of Protestantism in this form can stand. To make the Reformation a mere rebellion, a radical revolution, a violent breaking away from the whole authority of the past, is to give it a purely human or rather an actually diabolical character. It comes then just to this, that either the rebellion was diabolical or else the ancient church back to the second century was the work of the Devil and not Christ's work. We are shut up to the necessity of rejecting one, in order that we may choose the other; for they are opposite interests, and the case will not allow us to acknowledge both at once. But who that has any faith in the supernatural mystery of the church, as it came from Christ in the beginning, can submit to the claims of Protestantism put into any such shape as this? Who of any sound christian feeling will bear to give up all antiquity in such radical style, for the sake of a wholly new system starting only in the sixteenth century? This is Puritanism; but we are not willing to allow that it is Protestantism, that it expresses the meaning of the Reformation in its true original sense. Puritanism is absolutely unhistorical by principle and profession; but Protestantism, if it have any right to exist at all, is the true historical continuation of the ancient church. To force the other character upon it, is to kill it root and branch.

We are sorry to find that Mr. Isaac Taylor, with all his learning and good sense, is not able to clear himself of this false and untenable ground, in his controversy with the Oxford theology. He sets out indeed with what might seem to a very strong acknowledgment, of the dependence of the modern church upon that of antiquity. The following passages are of great point

and force certainly, against the whole spirit of our reigning sect system at the present time, (wiser in its own conceit than seven men that can render a reason,) which only laughs at every sort of authority in such form, and counts *itself* to be nothing less than the direct embodiment of the bible over against all that the church has ever been before.

“ Looking at the Christian world at large, it is my full conviction, that there is just now a far more urgent need of persuasives to the study of Christian history and literature, than of cautions against the abuse of such studies. Too many feel and speak as if they thought there were no continuity in their religion; or as if there were no universal church; or as if the individual Christian, with his pocket bible in his hand, need fix his eyes upon nothing but the little eddy of his personal emotions; or as if Christianity were not what it is its glory and its characteristic to be—*a religion of history.*”

“ Christianity, the pledge to man of eternity, is the occupant of all time; and not merely was it, itself, the ripening of the dispensations that had gone before it, but it was to be the home companion of the successive generations of man, until the consummation of all things. Not to know Christianity as the religion of all ages—as that which grasps and interprets the cycles of time, is to be in a condition like that of the man whose gloomy chamber admits only a single pencil of the universal radiance of noon.”—*Vol. I. p. 21, 22.*

“ If it be true that the general complexion of church history, through the course of long centuries, is such as to offend our preconceived notions, and to shock our spiritual tastes, and if, while we bend over the records of those dim eras, the promise of the Lord to be with his servants, still rings in our ears, as a doleful knell of hopes broken; if it be so, or as far as such may be the fact, the motive becomes more impressive and serious which impels us to acquire an authentic knowledge of this course of events, in all its details,—and if there are any who must acknowledge that they feel a peculiar repugnance in regard to church history, they are the very persons, more than any other, whom it behooves to school themselves in this kind of learning; for it seems more than barely probable, that this distaste springs from some ill affection of their own mind,—demanding to be exposed and remedied. Such persons may well admit the supposition that they have hastily assumed certain notions of their Lord's principles of government, which are in fact unlike what, at length, they will find themselves to be subject to; and if so, the sooner they dispel any such false impressions, the better. On the face of the instance supposed, one should say, that any perplexities we may feel in regard to that course of events which constitutes the history of Christianity, proba-

bly spring from some deep-seated error of feeling, or of opinion, which, for our own sakes, we should carefully analyze."—P. 25.

"These indispensable studies, have, in fact, been revived of late, to a great extent, in our own, as well as other countries; while the use and necessity of them are forced anew upon the minds of all by the rapid and unexpected advances of Romanism, whose ministers are taking advantage of that ignorance of antiquity which has too long been the reproach of Protestantism."—P. 28.

"These 'fathers,' thus grouped as a little band, by the objectors, were some of them men of as brilliant genius as any age has produced: some, commanding a flowing and vigorous eloquence, some, an extensive erudition, some, conversant with the great world, some, whose meditations had been ripened by years of seclusion, some of them the only historians of the times in which they lived, some, the chiefs of the philosophy of their age; and, if we are to speak of the whole, as a series or body of writers, they are the men who, during a long era of deepening barbarism, still held the lamp of knowledge and learning, and, in fact, afford us almost all that we can now know, intimately, of the condition of the nations surrounding the Mediterranean, from the extinction of the classic fire, to the time of its rekindling in the fourteenth century. The church was the ark of all things that had life, during a deluge of a thousand years."—P. 31, 35.

"Nearly of the same quality, and usually advanced by the same parties, is the portentous insinuation, or the bold and appalling avowal, that there was little or no genuine Christianity in the world from the times of Justin Martyr to those of Wicliffe, or of Luther! and the inference from this assumption is, that we are far more likely to be led astray than edified by looking into the literature of this vast territory of religious darkness.

"I must leave it to those who entertain any such sombre belief as this, to repel, in the best manner they are able, those fiery darts of infidelity which will not fail to be hurled at Christianity itself, as often as the opinion is professed. Such persons, too, must expound as they can, our Lord's parting promise to his servants."—P. 35.

"Christianity is absolute truth, bearing with various effect, from age to age, upon our distorted and discoloured human nature, but never so powerfully pervading the foreign substance it enters as to undergo no deflections itself, or to take no stains; and as its influence varies, from age to age, in intensity, as well as in the particular direction it may take, so does it exhibit, from age to age, great variations of form and hue. But the men of any one age indulge too much the overweening temper that attaches always to human nature, when they say to themselves—*our* Christianity is absolute Christianity; but that of such or such an age, was a mere shadow of it."—P. 36.

"The modern spirit of self-sufficiency seems to reach its climax in the contempt thrown by some upon those who, endowed with as much learning and acumen as ourselves, read the scriptures while the ink of the apostolic autographs had hardly faded."—P. 40.

"It is in fact a circumstance worthy to be noticed, that even the most ultra-protestant of ultra-protestants, if it happens to him to meet with a real or apparent confirmation of his peculiar views, within the circle of ecclesiastical antiquity, shows no reluctance whatever in snatching at it, and in turning it to the best account he can, piously quoting Irenæus, or Tertullian, or Ignatius, like any good Romanist! It is—'the bible, and the bible alone,' just when the evidence afforded, on some disputed point, by the writings of Ignatius, or Irenæus, or Tertullian, happens to tell in the wrong direction; otherwise, these 'papistical authorities' are good enough."—P. 52.

"It has been nothing so much as this inconsiderate 'bible alone' outcry, that has given modern Popery so long a reprieve in the heart of Protestant countries; and it is now the very same zeal, without discretion, that opens a fair field for the spread of the doctrines of the Oxford Tracts."—P. 54.

These, we say, are sound and true sentiments. But they are not well sustained by Mr. Taylor's own work. The only use he sees proper to make of ecclesiastical history after all, is such as is made of the testimony of a common witness in a court of law. The voice of the church is to him only as the voice of the profane world, the authority of the fathers of one and the same order with the authority of Tacitus or Pliny. Antiquity may help us to the knowledge of some facts, but nothing more; to sit in judgment on the facts, to make out their true value, to accept them as grains of gold or reject them as heaps of trash, is the high prerogative of modern reason, acting in its triple office of lawyer, jurymen, and judge. The rule or standard of judgment is indeed professedly the bible, God's infallible word; but the *tribunal* for interpreting and applying it, the highest and last resort therefore in all cases of controversy and appeal, is always the mind of the present age as distinguished from every age that has gone before. Mr. Taylor's standpoint is completely subjective. It is not the right position, for doing justice to any history; but least of all, for doing justice to the history of God's church. For if the church be what it professed to be at the start, and what it is acknowledged by the whole christian world to be in the creed, it is a supernatural constitution, and in such view must have a supernatural history. A divine church with a purely human history, is for faith a contradiction in terms. In

any such view however, it is something fairly monstrous to think of turning the whole process into the play of simply human factors, and then requiring it to bend everywhere to the measure of our modern judgment. But this precisely is what Mr. Isaac Taylor allows himself to do. With the bible in hand, he finds it a most easy and reasonable thing to rule out of court the universal voice of the church, from the second century if need be to the sixteenth, wherever it refuses to chime in with his own mind. In this way he falls in fact into the theory and method of Puritanism, under the most perfectly arbitrary form. Protestantism in his hands ceases to be historical altogether, and stands forward in direct antagonism to the life of the early church. The relation between the two systems is made to be one of violent contradiction and opposition. It admits of no organic reconciliation. To make good the modern cause, antiquity is presented to us under attributes that destroy its whole title to our confidence and respect. It becomes indeed an unintelligible riddle. It is the church of Christ in the habiliments of hell; or shall we call it rather a hideous vision of Satan himself, transformed for the time into an angel of light?

“Our brethren of the early church,” Mr. Taylor himself tells us (*Vol. I. p. 37*), “challenge our respect, as well as affection; for theirs was the fervour of a steady faith in things unseen and eternal; theirs often a meek patience and humility, under the most grievous wrongs; theirs the courage to maintain a good profession before the frowning face of philosophy, of secular tyranny, and of splendid superstition; theirs was abstractedness from the world, and a painful self-denial; theirs the most arduous and costly labours of love; theirs a munificence in charity, altogether without example; theirs was a reverent and scrupulous care of the sacred writings, and this merit, if they had had no other, is of a superlative degree, and should entitle them to the veneration and grateful regards of the modern church. How little do many readers of the Bible, now-a-days, think of what it cost the Christians of the second and third centuries, merely to rescue and hide the sacred treasure from the rage of the heathen!”

This is a beautiful and bright picture. But, alas, the historical analysis that follows turns it all into shame. Nothing can well be more gloomy and oppressive to a truly christian mind, than the light in which the fathers of these first centuries, together with the theology and piety of the ancient church generally, are made to show themselves beneath the pencil of this brilliant and fluent writer. False principles came in from the start, not

affecting ~~only~~ the surface of the new religion, but carrying the poison of death into its very heart. Gnosticism, though resisted and conquered on the outside of the church, had a full triumph within. Out of it grew the ascetic system, false views of marriage, the glorification of virginity, monasticism, and all kindred views. The celibate corrupted the whole scheme of theology. Christianity itself is opposed to the Oriental theosophy, proceeding throughout on a different view of the world; and it vanquished this enemy in fact. But only, we are told, to take it again into its own bosom. "The catholic church opposed its substantial truths to these baseless and malignant speculations; and triumphed: but alas, it fell in triumphing." Gnosticism thus infused its own antichristian soul into the entire body of the Nicene theology.¹ Parallel with this doctrinal corruption, ran a corresponding corruption of the whole life of religion practically considered. The true scheme of salvation was to a great extent lost. Repentance and justification by faith sunk out of sight, overwhelmed completely by a factitious religion of outward forms and rites. The sacraments were exaggerated into saving mysteries. Polytheism, expelled and subdued under its heathen character, rose into power again as Christian demonolatry, the worship of saints, relics and images: all in pure contradiction to the original genius of the gospel. Along with this system went the universal noise of prodigies and miracles. These were "lying wonders," piously contrived to keep up the credit of the reigning superstitions. They are not insulated instances merely of alleged supernatural agency, but form a *miraculous dispensation*, running on from year to year, and carrying along with it the ostensible faith and homage of the whole church. At the same time it is plain enough to modern common sense, that the dispensation was throughout an enormous cheat, kept up by the priesthood for their own ends: Even the best men of the church, such as the Nicene fathers generally, must have been more or less privy to these awfully wicked frauds.² St. Ambrose, for instance, must have first buried the

¹ "The massive walls of the church, like a hastily constructed coffer-dam, had repelled, from age to age, the angry billows of the Gnostic heresy, which could never open a free passage for themselves within the sacred enclosure. Nevertheless these waters, bitter and turbid, no sooner rose high around the shattered structure, than, through a thousand fissures, they penetrated, and in fact stood at one and the same mean level, within, where they were silently stagnant, as without, where they were in angry commotion."—*Vol. I. p.* 175.

² "It will be my painful task, to lay open the shameless frauds and im-

skeletons, during the night, which he pretended to discover the next day, by divine revelation, as the remains of the martyrs Gervasius and Protasius; must have hired men to act the part of demoniacs, who should bear testimony to the truth of the discovery, drilling them well into their diabolical parts; must have engaged Severus, the butcher, to feign himself restored to sight by touching the covering of the relics, as they were borne in solemn procession to their new resting place beneath the altar of the Ambrosian church. And yet Ambrose was one of the best and greatest men, belonging to the history of the ancient church.

With such a view of the theology and life of the fourth century, Mr. Taylor finds it natural and easy to charge the system directly with the universal decay of morals, that marked the last stage of the old Roman civilization. All came, by necessary derivation, from the "church principles" of the third and fourth centuries. The cause which Christ had founded for the salvation of the world, proved in the end like the breath of the Sirocco, sweeping it with an unmeasurable curse.¹

This may suffice for our present purpose; which is not to discuss directly the merit of our author's positions; but simply to set them in contrast with the other side of his own picture of this same ancient Christianity, in argument and proof of the perfectly unhistorical character of his general scheme. A man may talk as he pleases about the glories of the early church, Christ's presence in it, and its victories over error and sin; if he couple with it the idea of such wholesale falsehood and corruption as is here laid to its charge, all this praise is made absolutely void.²

pious miracle-mongering, by means of which the trade of the priests at these magnificent shrines was kept agoing; faults incomparably more discreditable than were any that had been practised in the heathen oracular temples. This is indeed a heavy theme; and how sorrowful—how sickening, when a man like Chrysostom is found acting as the Hierophant of these mysteries of iniquity!"—*Vol. II. p. 207.*

¹"Christianity, as restored by the Reformers, has gradually regenerated the countries which have freely entertained it; while, on the contrary, Christianity, as debased by the Nicene divines, after quickly spending its healthful forces, only served to hurry the nations downward into—to use Salvian's language—a sink of debauchery."—*Vol. II. p. 37.*

²"The ancient church having compromised the greatest truths, and thereby forfeited the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, rushed forward, without a check, on every path of artificial excitement; and being at the same time urged by the circumstances of its precarious conflict with the expiring paganism, as well as with innumerable new-born heresies, to strengthen itself by the nefarious arts of popular influence—by factitious terrors, hopes, wonders, it regarded no scruples of honor, and threw the reins on the neck of fanatical extravagance."—*Vol. II. 157.* If this be true, what nonsense to speak of such a heaven-forsaken church, as being in any sense the ark of religion or the pillar and ground of the truth!

The two thoughts refuse to stand together. One necessarily excludes the other. Common history will not endure any such gross contradiction. But still less can it be reconciled with any faith in the history of the church, as a supernatural order. If Ambrose could so lend himself to the Devil, he was no saint. If the church generally was so terribly corrupt both in doctrine and practice, embodying in itself the worst principles of heathenism, God surely was not in the midst of it as a Saviour and King. It was, clear back to the third and even to the second century, the synagogue in truth of Satan, the unclean temple and home of Antichrist.

For the errors and corruptions here set to its account, are not represented as partial only or relative, the exaggerations or distortions merely of acknowledged truth and sound christian feeling. In that view, they might still be reconciled with the idea of a truly historical church, bearing in its bosom the supernatural presence of its glorified Head. Faith in the continuity of the church as a divine fact, (the proper mystery of the creed.) by no means requires us to overlook or deny the frailties and follies that necessarily belong to the human side of its history. But in the case before us, the human, which left to itself is always the diabolical also, is made absolutely to overwhelm the divine. All resolves itself pragmatically into the play of worldly factors, often of the most ignoble kind, in no real union whatever with heavenly factors in any way answerable to the promise, "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world." At best the heavenly is sublimated into the notion only of God's providence, as it floats over *all* human history—a Gnostic conception, that falls immeasurably short of the mystery set before us in the creed. The errors and corruptions charged upon the church here, are such as strike at the very root of its inmost sanctuary, we may say, of its universal constitution and life. They are false, not by excess or distortion merely, but by principle; being nothing less, in truth, than the introduction of another gospel altogether, whose swift triumphs soon supplanted the original and proper sense of Christianity, from one end of its broad domain to the other.

If Protestantism then is to be defended successfully it can be neither on the ground that it is a reprobation simply of early post-apostolical christianity, nor on the ground that it is an absolute nullification of this ancient faith, leaping over it with a single bound to the age of the Apostles.

We are shut up thus to the idea of *historical development*, as the only possible way of escape from the difficulty with which

we are met in bringing the present here into comparison with the past. If the modern church must be the same in substance with the ancient church, a true continuation of its life as this has been in the world by divine promise from the beginning, while it is perfectly plain at the same time that a wide difference holds between the two systems as to form, the relation binding them together can only be one of living progress or growth. No other will satisfy these opposite conditions. Growth implies unity in the midst of change. That precisely is what we are to understand by historical development. We do not say now, that it is actually the true key to the problem of Protestantism. We say merely, that if this interest be at all capable of rational apology, in the face of its notorious disagreement with ancient christianity, it can be in this way only and in no other. If we are not at liberty to apply the law of organic progress to the case, there is no help for the cause of the Reformation, the facts being what we find them to be in actual history. Let those look to it, who pretend to be the most staunch friends of Protestantism by scouting the entire idea of any such law; who will have it either that their own small version of Christianity in this form, as given in some one of our sects, is a true picture of what the church was in the beginning of the second century, or that it is against this altogether, and above it, as being the re-assertion at last of the original and proper sense of the New Testament, from which the whole course of history immediately afterwards fell away. Neither of these alternatives can stand. The present here is plainly not one with the past; but just as little may it pretend to be the nullification of the past, or its plump contradiction.

Some pretend to identify this doctrine of development with the system of Romanism itself; as though the only occasion for it were found in the variations through which it is supposed to have passed in reaching its present form. Nor have Romanists themselves been unwilling always, to allow it a certain amount of truth. It is not easy to deny certainly, that very considerable changes had place in the history of Christianity before the time of the Reformation; and this might seem to be a natural and ready view, for surmounting the objection drawn from them against the stability and unity of the Catholic church. Mr. Newman, it is well known, has tried to turn the idea to account in this way, in his memorable *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. Few theological tracts, in the English language are more worthy of being read, or more likely to reward a diligent perusal with lasting benefit and fruit. The author

holds christianity to be an objective fact in the world, that must be throughout identical with itself.' Still that it has undergone serious modifications in its outward form and aspect, he considers to be no less certain and clear. To reconcile this semblance of discrepancy then, he has recourse to what he calls the *theory of developments*. It is of the nature of a living idea to expand itself, to take new form, as it comes by the course of history into new relations requiring its application in new ways. At the same time however it carries in itself, from the start, the type and norm of all that it is subsequently to become. We must distinguish accordingly between a true development in such view and a corruption which transforms the very substance of the idea itself into something else. Mr. Newman lays down no less than seven tests, by which we may be guided and assisted in making this important distinction; and then goes on to apply the subject, by illustrations drawn with great force and effect from the actual history of the church in past ages. The whole theory, however, has been condemned by other Romanists, as being at war with the true genius of the Catholic religion. Mr. Brownson of our own country in particular, it will be remembered, set himself in vigorous opposition to it from the start. Catholicism, as he will have it, has known no change. It is only Protestantism that has moved away from what the church was in the begin-

“Christianity is no dream of the study or the cloister. It has long since passed beyond the letter of documents and the reasonings of individual minds, and has become public property.—It has from the first had an objective existence.—Its home is in the world.—The hypothesis, indeed, has met with wide reception in these latter ages, that Christianity does not fall within the province of history, that it is to each man what each man thinks it to be, and nothing else.—Or again, it has been maintained, or implied, that all existing denominations of christianity are wrong, none representing it as taught by Christ and his Apostles; that it died out of the world at its birth, and was forthwith succeeded by a counterfeit or counterfeits which assumed its name, though they inherited but a portion of its teaching; that it has existed indeed among men ever since, and exists at this day, but as a secret and hidden doctrine, which does but revive here and there under a supernatural influence in the hearts of individuals, and is manifested to the world only by glimpses or in gleams, according to the number or the station of the illuminated, and their connexion with the history of their times.” All this however, the writer tells us truly, is at best in itself a *hypothesis* only. The only natural assumption is the contrary, namely, “to take it for granted that the christianity of the second, fourth, seventh, twelfth, sixteenth, and intermediate centuries, is in its *substance* the very religion which Christ and his Apostles taught in the first, whatever may be the modifications for good or for evil, which lapse of years, or the vicissitudes of human affairs have impressed upon it.—The *onus probandi* is with those who assert what it is unnatural to expect; to be just able to doubt is no warrant for disbelieving.”—*Introduction.*

ning, and that is still always in motion and never at rest. It is only Protestantism, that needs any such law of development to account for its changes; and to Protestantism alone, accordingly, the whole theory legitimately and of right belongs.*

Be this as it may, Protestantism at all events is still less able to get along without the help of some such theory than Romanism. In no other way possibly, can it make good its claim to be the historical continuance at all of the supernatural fact which the church is allowed to have been in the beginning.* This is now felt by all, who deserve to be considered of any authority in the sphere of church history. The whole progress of this science at the present time, under the new impulse which has been given to it by Neander and others, is making it more and more ridiculous to think of upholding the cause of the Reformation under any other view. It *must* be one with the ancient church, to have any valid claim to its prerogatives and powers; but this it *can* be only in the way of historical growth. Give that up, and all is gone. Without the idea of development, the whole fact of Protestantism resolves itself into a fearful lie.

Those who wish to see this subject ably and happily handled, are referred to Professor Schaff's *Principle of Protestantism*, the special object of which is to exhibit and defend the idea of

* Mr. Brownson's judgment in this case is not to be taken, of course, as at once final and conclusive for the Catholic church. Mr. Newman's book was written before he became a Romanist in form; but it has been defended by some in that communion; and we do not find, that Mr. Newman himself, since his conversion, has renounced the general doctrine of it as wrong. On the contrary, if we understand him rightly, it is distinctly affirmed still in some of his recent lectures. Möhler has the same thought.

* Mr. Newman will tell us, that even in *this* way it is perfectly indefensible, as being not a true development at all of what Christianity was in the beginning, but its radical corruption. "Whatever be historical Christianity, it is not Protestantism; if ever there were a safe truth it is this.—Protestants can as little bear its Ante-nicene as its Post-tridentine period.—So much must the Protestant grant, that if such a system of doctrine as he would now introduce ever existed in early times, it has been clean swept away as if by a deluge, suddenly, silently, and without memorial; by a deluge coming in a night, and utterly soaking, rotting, heaving up, and hurrying off every vestige of what it found in the church, before cock-crowing; so that 'when they rose in the morning,' her true seed 'were all dead corpses'—nay dead and buried—and without a grave-stone." This we may consider to be exaggeration and mistake; since it amounts to a full condemnation of Protestantism in every view, as being without all real root in the past life of the church. But it only shows the more strongly, what necessity there is of making out the line of a true historical succession in its favor, by a deeper and better apprehension if possible of *this* idea of development.

historical development in its application to the Protestant movement. This work we have noticed at some length on a former occasion. It was decried, on its first appearance, by a certain class of Protestants, as being inimical to the very cause it professed to defend. But it was only because the author had a far deeper insight into the necessities of his subject, than those who thus judged him were able to understand. They belonged to the unchurchly, unhistorical school, for which Christianity is a mere matter of opinion or notion, and which has no difficulty accordingly in setting all the laws of real history, as well as all the conditions of a truly supernatural church, at the most perfect defiance, in order to carry out its own dogmatical abstractions. Dr. Schaff had entered too far into the modern sense of history and the proper idea of the church, to be satisfied with any such poor and superficial habit of thought. He saw the absolute necessity of showing Protestantism to be historical, in the full modern force of this most significant term, for the purpose of vindicating its right to exist; and his work accordingly is a most honest and vigorous attempt to defend it on this ground. We have said before, what we now deliberately repeat, that it is the best apology for the cause of the Reformation which has yet appeared in this country. If this cause is to be successfully upheld at all, it can only be, we believe, on the general ground taken in this book. However it may be as regards details, the argument in its main course and scheme may be considered identical now with the very life of Protestantism. It is approved and endorsed in such view, we may say, by the whole weight of German theological science, as it appears in its best representatives at the present time. The Reformation, according to this scheme, was not a revolution, radically upsetting the church as it stood before. In that view it must have been a new religion, and would have needed miracles to support its claims. It was merely a disengagement of the old life of the church from the abuses, with which it became burdened in the course of time, and its advancement to a form more congenial, than that which it carried before, with the wants of the modern world. It was no nullification thus of previous history, no return simply to what christianity was supposed to have been in the beginning; its connection with that was still through the intervening history of the old Catholic church; and from the bosom of this church it sprang by true living derivation and birth. Protestantism is no repudiation then of ancient christianity, nor of the proper religious life of the middle ages. It owes its being to this old life, which was engaged for centuries before with its painful parturition. Here is

the idea of historical development. But the theory goes farther still. Protestantism, the favorite child of Catholicism, is not itself a full realization of the true idea of Christianity. It has terrible defects upon it, malignant diseases, belonging as would seem to its very blood, which are growing always worse and worse, and threaten to bring upon it in the end full dissolution. It will not do then to rest in it as the absolute consummation of the church. To take it for that, is again to turn it palpably into a lie. As it was not the first form of Christianity, so neither may it be considered the last. It is itself a process of transition only towards a higher and better state of the church, which is still future though probably now near at hand, and the coming in of which may be expected to form an epoch in history quite as great at least as that of the Reformation itself. The result of this new development will be the recovery of Protestantism itself from the evils under which it now suffers, and in this way its full and final vindication by the judgment of history. It will be however, at the same time, a vindication of Catholicism also, as having been of true historical necessity in its day for the full working out of the problem which shall thus be conducted at last to its glorious solution. Such, we say, is the theory of *historical development*, as we have it applied in this interesting and able tract to the great question here brought into view; the question, namely, how Protestantism is to be set in harmony with the past history of the church, and with its true ideal as the kingdom of God, a supernatural polity of truth and righteousness among men. ✓

This German idea of development, as we may call it, is not the same with that presented to us by Dr. Newman. The last is a continuous expansion and enlargement under the same form and in the same general direction; the process involves no disorder or contradiction in its own movement; it is the full sense always, as far as it goes, of what the church was in fact and intention from the beginning; it is the simple coming out of this sense, in a view answerable to the new relations of its history from age to age; each stage of development is by itself normal and full, and so of force for all time; all moves thus in the line of Catholicism only, without the possibility of growing into anything like Protestantism; on which account, accordingly, this must be regarded as a corruption of the original idea of Christianity, by which it is changed into another type and fashion altogether. It is not easy in truth to conceive of the old Catholic system blossoming into Protestantism, in the way of any such regular and direct growth; and there seems to be no room there-

fore, for the supposition, that Dr. Newman's conception of development goes against the pretensions of the Roman church.* The German theory however does do so, in the most emphatic manner. Its idea of growth is that of a process carried forward, by the action of different forces, working separately to some extent, and so it may be even onesidedly and contradictorily for a time, towards a concrete result representing in full unity at last the true meaning and power of the whole. Each part of the process then is regarded as necessary and right in its own order and time; but still only as *relatively* right, and as having need thus to complete itself, by passing ultimately into a higher form. Catholicism in this view is justified as a true and legitimate movement of the church; but it is taken to have been the explication of one side of Christianity mainly, rather than a full and proper representation of the fact as a whole; a process thus that naturally became excessive, and so wrong, in its own direction, preparing the way for a powerful reaction finally in the opposite direction. This reaction we have in Protestantism; which in such view springs from the old church, not just by uniform progress, but with a certain measure of violence, while yet it is found to be the product really and truly of its deeper life. Here again however, as before, the first result is only relatively good. The new tendency has become itself onesided, exorbitant, and full of wrong. Hence the need of still another crisis, (the signs of whose advent many seem already to see,)

* We meet with the same thought in Tertullian. "There is nothing," he tells us, "which does not advance by age. All things wait upon time; as the preacher saith, there is a time for every thing. Look at the natural world, and see the plant gradually ripening to its fruit, first a mere grain; from the grain arises the green stalk, and from the stalk shoots up the shrub; then the boughs and branches get strength, and the tree is complete; thence the swelling bud, and from the bud the blossom, and from the flower the fruit; which at the first crude and shapeless, by little and little proceeds, and attains its ripe softness and flavor. And so in religion, for it is the same God of nature and of religion; at first in its rudiments only, nature surmising something concerning God; then by the law and the prophets advanced to its infant state; then by the Gospel it reached the heats of youth; and now by the Comforter is moulded to its maturity." Tertullian speaks here as a Montanist, but the thought itself may be applied to the gradual expansion of the Catholic system. Isaac Taylor sets it down, in this view, as the foundation principle of Romanism (Vol. I. p. 93-96). He wrongs the church however, by charging it with the introduction of new revelations. The supposed innovations of the system came in always as the growth merely of what was at hand before. The expansion thus claimed to be organic, the actualization simply of the previously potential. It was a development in every case, professedly, and not a proper apocalypse.

which may arrest and correct this abuse, and open the way for a higher and better state of the church, in which both these great tendencies shall be brought at length happily to unite, revealing to the world the full sense of Christianity in a form now absolute and complete.

For a truly learned representation of this whole view, in its relations to other older schemes of ecclesiastical history, (for there has been a remarkable exemplification of the law of development in the progress of this science itself.) we beg leave to refer our readers to Professor Schaff's tract entitled, *What is Church History?* They will find it well worthy of their most careful and diligent perusal.

We have spoken before of Thiersch's "Lectures on Catholicism and Protestantism." They abound in original and fresh thought, pervaded throughout with a tone of the most earnest piety, though not altogether free at times from the excesses of an erratic fancy. The history of the church is with him also a grand and complicated process, exposed to powerful corruptions, and yet moving onward always towards the full consummation of its own original idea; which is not to be reached however without the intervention of a new supernatural apostolate, in all respects parallel with that which was employed for the first establishment of Christianity in the beginning. The church, he thinks, has passed through four great metamorphoses already, in coming to its present condition. First we have it under its *Old Catholic* form, as it existed between the age of the Apostles and the time of Constantine. Then it appears as the *Imperial (Græco-Roman)* church, in close connection with the state, and undergoing many corruptions and changes. Next it becomes the *Roman Catholic* church of the middle ages. Last of all it stands before us as the *Protestant* church. This was called forth, with a sort of inward necessity, by the corruptions and abuses of the Roman system; and it has its full historical justification, in the actual religious benefits it has conferred upon the world; benefits that may be said to show themselves even in the improved character of Romanism itself. Still it is but too plain, that Protestantism is not the full-successful solution of the problem of Christianity. It has not fulfilled the promise of its own beginning; and it carries in it no pledge now of any true religious millenium in time to come. Evils of tremendous character are lodged within its bosom. A reign of rationalism and unbelief has sprung out of it, for which the present course of things, in the view of Thiersch, offers no prospect of recovery or help. It is no relief, in such case, to know

that the Catholic church, in countries where it has no Protestantism as a rival at its side, such for instance as South America or Spain, is in a moral condition equally if not still more deplorable. It is only the more sad, that neither *here* nor *there* the proper face of the true church is to be discerned. "Whether the Reformers, could they have seen the present posture of the church that goes by their name, would have regretted and cursed their own work, as has been often said, we know not; but it is certain that a keen eye and a strong faith are needed, in view of the general declension that prevails, not to overlook the good which is still left, and to see in it the germ of a better future. Of such future however one of the most necessary conditions is just this, that we should learn to maintain a proper bearing towards the Catholic church and its peculiarities." The self-sufficiency of both systems must come to an end, before room can be made for that higher state of the church, which God may be expected then to bring in by miraculous dispensation, restoring all things to their proper form.

Professor Rothe takes a different view, conditioned by his speculative construction of Christianity in its relations to Nature and Humanity, as we have this fully brought out, with unparalleled architectonic power, in his *Theological Ethics*. The idea of the church he takes to be accidental, rather than essential, to the religious life of the world. The ultimate and only fully normal order of man's existence is the state, the organism of his moral relations, which can never be complete save as they are brought in the end to embrace all that is included also in the sense of religion. Such will be at last the actual consummation of the process, by which our world is now fulfilling its original destiny and design. The process itself however is conditioned now by the fact of redemption, made necessary through sin. This implies a new power brought into the world for its sanctification; a power in such view different from the natural life of the world, but fitted at the same time to take possession of this life always more and more, and finally to transform it fully into its own image. So far as Christianity continues in such distinction from the world naturally considered, it must have its own organization as something distinct from the state, and as something necessarily also in conflict to a certain extent with its very conception. This organization gives us the proper fact of the church. Its relation to the state is at first one of broad opposition; but in the nature of the case it is in this respect a changing and flowing relation; for as the state receives into it more and more the power of the christian life, through the agency of

the church, the mission and work of this last over against it shrink always into narrower bounds, so that the assertion of its authority becomes at last a source of oppression and restraint. In the end thus it comes naturally to a rebellion against the idea of the church, as an exclusive institute for the purposes of religion. This was the true sense of the Reformation. It involved the breaking up of the old Catholic doctrine of the church, as something good in its time but no longer answerable to the advanced age of the world, for the necessary purpose of securing free room and scope for the forces of religion under a different form, that namely which is presented to us in the constitution of the state. There is still indeed a demand for the action of the church, and but little prospect as yet that this demand will soon come to an end; but the first step has been taken towards what is to be at last the true order of religion; the vanishing nature of the church has begun to be apparent; its former attributes are passing away; we find it in a chaos of dissolution, the result of which will be in due time its universal absorption into the political organism which has been its rival from the beginning.¹

This is truly a startling way of bringing the problem of Protestantism to a solution; and it is no wonder perhaps that the religious world, even in Germany itself, where the church might seem indeed to be fast tumbling into ruins, has not been able yet to look upon the view with much favor. Still it is the view of a most earnestly religious man, who is at the same time one

¹ "There is bitter complaint made in our day, especially in Evangelical Christendom, of the decline of the church. With right and without right, as we choose to take it. With right; for the church, *as a church*, is in reality falling always more and more into ruins, and how it may or can be helped up again, even with the best will on the side of government, is in no wise to be seen. Without right; for this collapse of the church is just the consequence of the maturity and independence of the christian life, which thus breaks the old form that has become too strait for it, and escaping from its restraints runs joyfully towards its true element, the state. We will acknowledge unreservedly the decline of the church, but in the complaint which is made on this account we will take no part. As it seems to us, the general position in which we have tried to set the reader is the only one, from which one can survey the whole course of church history, without danger of falling out with its movement.—From this standpoint alone also, do we first reach a real justification of the Reformation against Catholicism. So long as the *church* is considered to be the highest and only proper realization of the christian life, the act must in truth be set down for a crime, by which the unity of the church, and so the church itself, has been and only could be dashed to pieces."—*Die Anfänge d. chr. Kirchr.*, p. 88.

of the profoundest thinkers and most learned scholars of the age, grappling here in all his strength with what he feels to be the very life question of Protestantism itself; and it well deserves attention in such light, if for no other reason yet at least for this, that it goes to show how real and serious the general problem is, which is here offered for our consideration. Puritanism, with its ordinary want of historical sensibility and its most superficial conception of the mystery of the church, may affect to find no difficulty in the whole subject, and can easily afford to dismiss every theory of this sort as a vain and superfluous speculation. It needs no solution for a knot, which it has no power to see. But for all this, the knot itself is there, and it is one of no common intricacy and force. Puritanism is ready at once to reject Rothe's resolution of the church into the state; but only because it does not admit at all the idea of the church in his sense, and in the old christian sense, as distinguished from the idea of the state. That whole idea is for it from the start a falsehood, the very *proton-pseudos* we may say of Romanism. Its highest order is only the state throughout, or man in the form of natural political society. The church has no absolute necessity; it is not of the essence of religion in any way; this holds in humanity as such under the political order; and it is the glory of Protestantism, as well as its only true sense, to assert such independence to the fullest extent. Hence many churches instead of one; any number of them indeed, to suit the world's taste; till the whole conception runs out finally into the open sea of no church whatever. And what less is this, we ask, than Rothe's version of the Reformation—the breaking up, namely, of the old doctrine of the holy catholic church, as we find it in the creed, and the first grand step towards its full formal dissolution at last in the all devouring idea of the state?

The whole theory, with all our respect for Rothe, *we* of course at once repudiate as unsound and false. How could the idea of the church be an object of faith, that is a supernatural mystery of like order with the other articles of the creed, if it were after all any such merely provisional and transient fact, (a downright "*figment*" the Puritan Recorder would say rather,) designed to pass away finally in another conception altogether? We might just as well resolve the resurrection of the body, with Hymeneus and Philetus, into the idea of a new moral life begun in the present world. It will not do to defend Protestantism, by surrendering Christianity. We are not willing to give up for it either history or the creed.

Rothe's error, we think, lies in the assumption, that the econo-

my of the world naturally considered must be regarded as carrying in itself, from the beginning, all the necessary elements and conditions of a perfect humanity; in which view a real redemption must complete its work under the form of our present telluric life, (though not of course without the resurrection,) keeping itself to the organism of earth where the law of sin and death now reigns, and achieving a true and proper victory here on the theatre of the actual curse, instead of translating its subjects for this purpose, in a violent way, over into some altogether new and different order of being. A scientific apprehension of what the world is as a historical process or *cosmos*, would seem indeed to require that it should not be defeated in its highest end, the glorification of humanity, by the disorder of sin—that with reference to this it should not turn out a hopeless failure, an irrecoverable wreck, from which man must be extricated by an act of sheer power for the accomplishment of his salvation somewhere else. But we have no right to assume in this way, that the proper sense of the world in its natural order lies wholly in itself as an independent and separate system. The overshadowing embrace of a higher economy—the absolutely supernatural—we must believe rather to have been needed from the first to complete its process in the life of man. In such view, redemption is more than the carrying out of the natural order of the world to any merely natural end; and the church, as the medium of its work, is more than a provisional institute simply for perfecting the scheme of the state, the highest form of man's life on the basis of nature as it now stands. The true destination of this lies beyond the present economy of nature in the sphere of the supernatural, in an order of things that fairly outleaps and transcends the whole system out of which grows now the constitution of political kingdoms and states. In the kingdom of heaven, the last and most perfect order of humanity, as "they neither marry nor are given in marriage," so also there will be neither Greek nor Jew, but the whole idea of nationality is to be taken up, as it would appear, into a far higher and wider conception, rooted not in nature but in grace. The church will not lose itself in the state; but it will be the state rather that shall be found then to have vanished away in the church.

We have then this result. Since Protestantism is not the same thing with primitive post-apostolical Christianity, but this last looks rather directly towards Romanism; and since, at the same time, Protestantism cannot be historically divorced from the first life of the church, and set in full rebellion against it, (if the church was originally what it claimed to be, a divine

supernatural fact and not a hellish imposture,) without forfeiting all title to our faith and trust; there is but one view only in which it is possible to uphold rationally the modern system, and that is the view of historical development; which however must be so taken, that it shall not on the one side remain hopelessly bound to the limits of the Roman system, as in the hands of Dr. Newman, nor yet on the other side run itself out into a fair dissolution of the very idea with which it started, whether this be by the Hegelian dialectics of a man like Baur or by such more respectable theories as we have from the hands of Rothe and Thielsch. A development into sheer vacuity, is only another word for annihilation. If *that* be the true sense of Protestantism as related to the old mystery of the church, all defence of it for faith is gone. It must be a real historical continuation of the church, in the verity of its old supernatural existence, carrying along with it a true participation in its prerogatives and powers, or it is nothing.

It is not necessary now that we should be prepared to determine positively the true construction and proper significance of Protestantism beyond the result now stated, in order to make this result itself of practical account. It is of high account at all events to see what are the necessary conditions of the question which is to be solved, what are the terms and limits within which the solution must move, whatever view we may choose to take of it afterwards as restrained to such bounds. It is much only to have it settled in our minds, that the defence of Protestantism, if it is to be made good at all, must be conducted in a certain general way, whether any particular plan of such defence may be counted satisfactory or not. We propose at present no positive doctrine on the subject one way or another. That has not been the object at all of these articles. We have wished merely to show that the nature of Christianity, and the facts of history, require the argument for Protestantism to run in a certain line, if it is to be of any force; and that no different form of apology, in which this general necessity is overlooked or trampled under foot, can deserve to be regarded with respect. No view of Protestantism can be either sound or safe, which by setting it in absolute universal opposition to Catholicism makes it to be unhistorical, and so cuts it off from all lot or part in the inheritance of the past life of the church.

Nothing more than the sense of this plain truth is needed, to expose the vanity of all that system of polemics against the church of Rome, which proceeds on the assumption that it is purely and entirely false and corrupt, and that it deserves no

hearing in truth, and much less anything like calm respect, whatever it may pretend to urge in its own defence.

We are all familiar with the anti-popery spirit under this radical and fanatical form. Our common religious press may be said to teem with it every week. It meets us on the street and in all public places. Our very piety is infected with it to a large extent, both in the sanctuary and in the domestic circle. The fountains of our charity are turned by it too often into wormwood and gall. Many appear to look upon it as one main part of their religion, a necessary evidence of their evangelical temper and habit, to hate and curse the Catholics. However it may be in any other direction, here at least they feel that they do well, as it would seem, to be angry, to show contempt, and to indulge misrepresentation and abuse, to their heart's full content. Nicknames are so put to the tongue, that they flow from it like the poison of asps without effort or thought. All too in Christ's sweet and holy name. The most abominable charges and criminations are trumpeted without proof, as though the bold repetition of them simply were enough in the end to make them good. No pains are taken to understand any doctrine or practice of the church, in the light of its own historical or theological relations; it is counted quite sufficient to drag every article in the most rude and vulgar way before the tribunal of the world's common sense, (alas, how *common* in many cases.) and to take the measure of its merits accordingly; as though the deepest mysteries of religion might be settled by such superficial and profane judgment, as it were at a moment's glance. All runs out easily thus into the most wholesale censure and reproach. Romanism is found to be, from beginning to end, a tissue of impiety and folly, at war with the most sacred interests of humanity, and in full contradiction to the will of God. It is a diabolical conspiracy against truth and righteousness. There is no reason in any of its institutions; they are founded on falsehood throughout; they subvert the whole sense of the gospel, and in their source and operation are purely antichristian, of one order we may say with infidelity itself. Such in general is the tenor of this popular theory.

But no such style of thinking can be maintained, where anything like a sound historical feeling has been brought into exercise in regard to the church. Those who look at Romanism only in this rabid and fanatical way, show themselves by the very fact to have no sense of the divine organization of Christianity as a perpetual living constitution in the world, and no apprehension of the necessity there is that Protestantism should

be strictly and truly the product of this life, if it can have any right to exist at all. They make no account of history. Their view of Protestantism is such as cuts it off entirely from the concrete mystery of the church in past ages, and turns it thus into a mere abstraction. In this way it is essentially rationalistic and infidel; and it is ever ready accordingly to make common cause with open unbelief, in treating the whole real past of the church as a sort of universal cheat and lie. Faith in historical christianity at once upsets every such habit of thought; and in doing so necessarily begets a more just and tolerant spirit towards the present Catholic church. It does so in a two-fold view, first as it regards the past, and secondly as it throws its eye forward into the future.

As regards the past, the faith now mentioned feels itself bound to derive the life of Protestantism, genealogically, from the historical church of previous ages; which at the same time is clearly seen to carry in it the leading features of Romanism away back to the Nicene age, and in element or germ at least beyond that also up to the very middle of the second century. Now it need not follow from this, that all such features are to be approved as right and good for all time; nor even that they were in all cases right and good at any time. The very idea of the Reformation implies the contrary; for the meaning of it is, that many things belonging to the old church were either abuses in their own nature, or had grown to be such by the progress of history, which it was necessary at last to thrust wholly out of the way. But no one who has any sense of the divine constitution of the church can bring himself to look upon its whole past order and spirit, for this reason, as false and wrong; nor can he think of denouncing even what he may not be able to approve, in any such style of vituperation as our modern anti-papery sees fit to indulge in towards what it calls the abominations of Romanism. Here then it becomes at once impossible for any person of this sort, to sympathize with the vulgar method of fighting the Roman Catholics which we have now under consideration. Take it, for instance, as it comes before us in "Kirwan," or in the pages of the "Protestant Quarterly Review." It not only fights Romanism, but fights at the same time with fully equal effect the whole ancient church. The points on which it expends mainly its indignation, or ridicule, or scorn, are to a great extent distinctive, not of modern Romanism as such, but of the church as it has existed back to the fourth century, if not indeed to the first part of the second. The argument goes too far, and proves a great deal too much. It becomes immediately profane, by

striking at all that has been esteemed most holy for the faith of christians, not simply in the middle ages, but in the ages also that went before. It turns the fathers into knaves and fools. It covers all ecclesiastical antiquity with disgrace. This is more than any sound mind, imbued with the slightest tinge of right historical feeling, can be expected patiently to endure. It is infidelity pretending to preach to us in the name of evangelical religion. If anti-popery is to be at the same time anti-christianity, in this blind irreverent style, the less we have to do with it the better. No such zeal for Protestantism can be entitled to any sort of respect. It carries the evidence of its own impotency on its very front. To have any knowledge of the past, and to perceive at all the organic continuity that must necessarily hold in the life of the church from age to age, through all transformations and changes, involves at once the clear perception also that this vulgar feeling towards Romanism is from beneath and not from above. We need not be slavishly bound by the authority of the past; but as believers in the divine reality of the church, we must consider it one of our first duties to treat its ancient history with reverence and respect. We may not join hands here with Ham, the father of Canaan. Those who do so, and who thus make Christianity vile, while they pretend to be spitting only upon the errors and superstitions of Rome, prove by this very fact that they are blind witnesses and teachers even in regard to Romanism itself. Whatever may be wrong here, *they* are not the men whom it is safe to follow as guides and leaders into a better way. They do not understand what they condemn. There is neither light nor love in their zeal. If our war against Romanism is to be so managed that it must be at the same time a war against all church antiquity, we may as well give up the contest. But to have any intelligent regard for the ancient church on the other hand, any feeling of religious fellowship with it, is to see that Romanism itself is no fair object for persecution in this radical and ribald style. We may oppose it still; but we will have some sense also of its just claims and merits. We will not spit upon it, nor cover it with spiteful and malignant slang. We will not feel, that love to Christ and hatred of the Pope are precisely one and the same thing.

But the future also comes in, through the medium of a right historical feeling, along with the past, to promote this same equitable and moderate tone of thought towards the Catholic church. To have faith in Protestantism at all as a development out of Catholicism, (the only view that allows any real faith in it what-

ever,) is to feel at the same time that it is not in and of itself the last full result of the process to which it owes its birth; that it has not carried away with it the *whole* life of the church as it stood before; that what it lacks accordingly in this respect, can only be made up to it hereafter in some way from the other side of Christianity, as the same is still extant in the church of Rome. The actual course of history is proving this, for all thinking men, more and more. Protestantism, as it now stands, is not the end of the Reformation. Who will dare to say of it, that any one of its sects separately, or that all of its sects collectively, may be taken for the full and whole sense of the holy catholic church, the original mystery of the creed? It is but too plain, that it falls far short of the proper idea of this mystery. The sect system, say what we may of it, is constitutionally at war with the true being of the church, and tends always towards its dissolution. It can never stand therefore as a fixed and ultimate fact, in the history of Christianity. If it be required in the progress of this history at all, it can only be for the sake of some ulterior order in which it is destined finally to pass away; and so, no system in which it is comprehended can ever be enduring, under any such form. In the case of Protestantism, this constitutional instability is now a simple matter of fact which has become too plain to be denied. The system is not fixed, but in motion; and the motion is for the time in the direction of complete self-dissolution. Fools and bigots may shut their eyes, to the truth; but it is none the less clear for all this to such as are earnestly thoughtful and truly wise. The fashion of this system passeth away. We can have no rational faith in it then as an abiding order, but only as we take it for a transitory scheme, whose breaking up is to make room in due time for another and far more perfect state of the church, in which its disorders and miseries shall finally be brought to an end. But to feel this, with any sense of the historical rights of the ancient church, and with any apprehension of what the Roman communion still is as distinguished from the Protestant, is to see and feel at the same time that the new order in which Protestantism is to become thus complete cannot be reached without the co-operation and help of Romanism. However faulty this may be in its separate character, it still embodies in itself nevertheless certain principles and forms of life, derived from the past history of the church, which are wanting to Protestantism as it now stands, and which need to be incorporated with it in some way as the proper and necessary complement of its own nature. The interest of Romanism is not so left behind, as to be no longer of

any account; it must come in hereafter to counterbalance and correct again the disorder and excess of the other system. To this issue it comes necessarily, we say, with the historical scheme now under consideration.

The issue itself however may be conceived of as coming to pass in different ways, accordingly as greater or less stress is laid on one or the other of the factors concerned in its production.

First, Protestantism may be taken for the grand reigning stream of Christianity, (though not the whole of it by any means.) into which finally the life of Catholicism is to pour itself as a wholesome qualifying power, yielding to it the palm of superior right and strength.

Or secondly, the two forces may be viewed as contrary sides merely of a dialectic process, in the Hegelian sense, which must be both alike taken up and so brought to an end (*aufgehoben*) in a new form of existence, that shall be at once the truth of both and yet something far higher and better than either.

Or lastly, it may be supposed that the principal succession of the proper church life lies after all in the channel of the Roman Catholic communion; while Protestantism is to be regarded still as a true outflow of the same life, legitimate and necessary in its time, which however must in the end fall back into the old Catholic stream in order to fulfil its own mission, bringing into the universal church thus a new spiritual tone which only such a crisis could enable it to reach.

Of these three hypotheses, the first of course falls in best with the natural presumption of all Protestants in favor of their own system. But so far as the vindication of Protestantism itself is concerned, on the scheme of historical development, it would hold good under any of the views now mentioned; for even the last implies the necessity of its presence, and the reality of its vocation, as a vast and mighty factor in the work by which the church is to be made finally complete. It is no part of our business now, however, to discuss the merits either of all or of any of these hypothetical constructions; what we have in view is simply to show, how the general historical view here in question, by which Protestantism is seen to be in its very nature a movement towards something more complete than its present state, and something which is to be reached only in the direction of Catholicism, must necessarily beget towards the Roman church a much more tolerant and favorable feeling than that which usually actuates the enemies of this communion.

We know well, what sort of offence some are likely to take with any statement of this kind. They count it for no small

part of their righteousness, to hate the Roman Catholic church with a perfect hatred; and they are ready to make it a grievous heresy in others, if they fall not in at once with this want of charity, or presume to take any view of the case that is less intolerant than their own. We have only to say however, that *we* have not so learned Christ; and we know of no reason why we should passively succumb to the authority of any such arbitrary and intemperate spirit. It is no article of faith with us, no term of orthodoxy, to believe that the Pope as such is Antichrist, that the Roman church is Babylon, that a certain scheme of exegesis or a certain construction of church history, brought in to prop up this view, is to be received as of one and the same force with the authority of God's word itself. We have yet to learn, by what right any pretend to set up their exegetical or historical hobbies in such shape, the shibboleths at best of a mere party, for the universal law of Protestantism and the only measure of its faith. We claim for ourselves, and for all Protestants, the exercise here of some independent thought, and full liberty to judge of this whole subject as the case itself may seem to require. It is high time indeed, that the school to which we now refer should itself begin to see, that its Procrustean rule here is one that cannot stand. Anti popery, in this absolutely radical and unhistorical style, is not the whole and only true sense of Protestantism. Its fanatical war-whoop belongs to the outskirts of this camp at best, and not to its proper centre. The best Protestant piety, and we may say the entire Protestant learning, of the present time, fall not in at all with any such senseless yell, but stand in doubt of it more and more as being too often of the very same sound with open infidelity itself. Philology and history are working now mightily against this narrow school, all over the world, and not at all in its favor. Its only strength lies in its determination to ignore and resist, as it best can, the progress of true theological science. But this must soon prove also a crumbling trust. Historical studies in particular are already fast undermining its foundations, by the new trains of thought they are forcing on the mind of the world. The actual course of events too in our own age, is full of ominous meaning in the same direction.

Certain it is, that the present especially is no time for yielding tamely to the madness of any spirit, that seeks to build up Protestantism as the work of God, by denouncing Catholicism as purely and wholly the work of the Devil. Never before perhaps was the principle of unbelief so actively at work in the nominally christian world, for the overthrow of religion under

every supernatural view. To make the matter worse, this principle is affecting to be itself the deepest and last sense of Christianity, the true end of its high and glorious mission for the redemption of the human race. Here undoubtedly we meet the real Antichrist of the present age, in a form that may well fill the world with apprehension and dread. It is at once rationalism (with the sect spirit) in the church, and radicalism in the state. Against this formidable enemy, the cause of Protestantism and the cause of Romanism are one and the same; and we be to us as Protestants, if we refuse to see and acknowledge the fact. To make Romanism itself infidelity, to deride its supernatural pretensions, to treat its mysteries as diabolical and profane, and to own no fellowship with its faith whatever, (in the common anti-popery style,) is almost unavoidably to come to a sort of truce at least, if not indeed open friendship, with the real infidelity to which it stands opposed, and that is now notoriously making war upon it in precisely the same form and fashion. It is a sad spectacle in truth, when any part of the Protestant church is seen smiling on the enemies of all religion, and even cheering them forward in their work of destruction, simply because it is directed immediately against the church of Rome, as though *any* opposition to this were at once a service rendered to the other side. According to this style of thinking, it would be a gain for the cause of religion if Romanism were at once swept, by some sudden revolution, from the face of the earth, even if open infidelity for the time should be left in its place.¹ Shall we join hands with those who thus think and

¹The want of spiritual discernment here with many Protestants is truly amazing. They are ready to bid God speed to any agency, however low and vile, that is turned against the Catholic church. Every vagabond that sets up the trade of abusing the Pope, finds some favor. Ronge, a few years since, was at once hailed as a second Luther, though his whole cause now lies in the gutter of infidelity. And how was Giustiniani lauded for his work, in getting up German churches of the same stamp in our own country. There is a fearful tendency among us even to make common cause with the revolutionary spirit in Europe, under its worst forms, just because it seeks to destroy priests as well as to put down kings. True, we all condemn Rationalism and Socialism in the abstract; but we are wonderfully prone notwithstanding to look upon the cause in which they are enlisted as in itself a very good cause, which it becomes us as Republicans and Protestants to cheer and help. The cry of liberty and social rights deceives us. It becomes part of our religion to pray for the success of every revolution got up in the name of freedom, whatever else may be its merits. We fall in with the cant and slang of humanitarian patriotism on this subject, as though it were the true sense of Christ's blessed evangel; and are

talk? God forbid. They are traitors to the cause of Protestantism, if this be indeed the cause of true Christianity. We abhor every such unholy alliance as is here offered to our view. We go with Rome against Infidelity, a thousand times more readily than with Infidelity against Rome. We are very sure too, that any Protestant feeling which is differently constituted at this point, must be throughout miserably defective and false. It proceeds on a wrong apprehension altogether of the true relation between Protestantism and Romanism; it stands in no sympathy or fellowship whatever with the Catholic life of other ages; it shows itself to be wanting thus in a material element of Christianity itself. Plume itself as it may on its own worth, it is of counterfeit quality in its very nature. Its elective affinities prove it to be false.

We now bring these articles to a close. In the way of general recapitulation, our whole subject may be exhibited in the following propositions.

1. It is an error to suppose, that Nicene Christianity as it existed in the fourth and fifth centuries was in any sense identical with modern Protestantism. It was in all material respects the same system that is presented to us in the later Roman church.

2. It is an error to suppose, that the Christianity of the second century, as we find it in the time of Irenæus or even in the days of Ignatius and Polycarp, was of one and the same order with modern Protestantism. Especially was it unlike this in the Puritan form. However it may have differed from the Nicene system, it was made up of elements and tendencies plainly which looked towards this all along as their logical end. It was the later system at least in principle and germ.

3. The difference which exists in the whole case turns not merely on any single outward institution, such as episcopacy, but extends to the ecclesiastical life as a whole. It is a vain pretence therefore, by which Anglicanism affects to be on this score a true and full copy of what the church was in the first

prepared then to denounce every voice that refuses to take up the same song, as false to the genius of America. Such religious papers as the N. Y. Observer make common chime here with the Tribune and Herald of the same city; and the very pulpit rings in many cases, with no uncertain sound, in the same direction. But what can be more shallow than all this? Europe may need reform; no doubt does need it greatly. But how idle is it to look for anything of this sort, from the revolutionary spirit that is now bent on overturning its governments and institutions? To expect the regeneration of society from any such spirit, is itself a species of infidelity not to be excused.

ages. The universal posture and genius of the ancient church, its scheme of thought and modes of action, were different. Its life was constitutionally Catholic and not Protestant.

4. No scheme of Protestantism then can be vindicated, on the ground of its being a repristination simply of what Christianity was immediately after the age of the Apostles.

5. On the other hand however, to pretend that this post-apostolical Christianity was in no view the legitimate continuation of the New Testament church, but a full apostacy from this in principle from the very start; so that Protestantism is to be considered a new fact altogether, rooting itself in the bible, without any regard to history; is such an assumption, as goes to upset completely the supernatural mystery of the holy catholic church, in the form under which it is made to challenge our faith in the Apostles' Creed. To take away from the church its divine historical existence, is to turn it into a wretched Gnostic abstraction. To conceive of it as the mere foot-ball of Satan from the beginning, is to suppose Christ either totally unmindful of his own word that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, or else unable to make his word good. No theory can stand, which thus overthrows the truth of the church from the beginning.

6. Protestantism then, if it is to be rationally vindicated at all on the platform of faith, must be set in union with the original fact of Christianity through the medium of the actual history of this fact, as we have it in the progress of the old Catholic church from the second century down to the sixteenth. It must be historical, the product of the previous life of the church, in order to be true and worthy of trust. Whatever line of sects it may be possible to trump up on the outside of the church proper, down to the time of the Waldenses, it is well known that Protestantism was not derived from any such poor source in fact; and one of the greatest wrongs that can well be done to it, is to seek its apology in any such jejune and hollow succession. If it be not the genuine fruit of the best life that belonged to the old church itself, as Luther and his compeers believed, it can admit of no valid defence.

7. This however involves of necessity the idea of historical development; by which both Romanism and Protestantism are to be regarded as falling short of the full idea of Christianity, and as needing something beyond themselves for their own completion.

8. No opposition to Romanism can deserve respect, or carry with it any true weight, which is not based on some proper sense of its historical relations to early Christianity and to modern

Protestantism, in the view now stated. Without this qualification, anti-popery becomes altogether negative and destructional towards the Roman church, and is simply blind unhistorical radicalism of the very worst kind. Its war with Romanism, is a rude profane assault in truth upon all ecclesiastical antiquity. No such controversy can stand. History and theology must in due time sweep it from the field.

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