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THE

METHODIST QUARTERLY REVIEW

JANUARY, 1864.

ART. I.—THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF "THE INSTITUTES OF THEOLOGY," BY REV. RICHARD WATSON.

STANDING on some lofty peak of the Andes, the traveler may see the head-waters of the great South American rivers mingling in one. But soon they separate, and, becoming more and more divergent in their course as they rush onward toward the sea, their mouths are at last separated by the length of a whole continent. So the student in philosophy, standing on the elevated plain of analytic thought, discovers that the two great philosophic systems which have divided the suffrages of learned men, and placed them on totally opposite poles of thought, have their common starting-point in the one question, "Are there any ideas in the human mind which have not come in through the senses from the external world?" Here are the head-waters of the sensational and transcendental schools of philosophy mingling in one, and just as the Amazon and La Plata flow on in opposite directions until they have reached the extremities of the continent, so from the *yea* or *nay* of this great question, the rivers of philosophic thought flow on in diverse courses until they have reached the antipodes.

If you take the negative side of the question you are a sensationalist, and belong to the school of Locke. Hence *sense* is, for you, the only avenue of knowledge. All the simple ideas existing in the mind are the result of material impressions made upon the sensorium. They are photographs of the external world, the copies that remain after the sensations

FOURTH SERIES, VOL. XVI.—1

ART. II.—THE SAINTS OF THE DESERT: ST. ANTHONY OF EGYPT, AND SYMEON THE STYLITE.

CHRISTIAN monasticism arose in the fourth century on the basis of the earlier asceticism, which can be traced to the apostolic age, and even beyond to the Essenes in Palestine and Therapeutæ in Egypt. It was an attempt to save the virgin purity of the Church, now united with the State since Constantine, by carrying it into the wilderness, and to strike out a safer way to holiness and salvation by withdrawing from the world and its temptations, and by cultivating exclusively the virtues of humility, chastity, and self-denial in unbroken communion with God. It spread with astonishing rapidity all over the Christian world, became one of the leading institutions in the Greek and Roman Church, and exerted for many centuries down to the Reformation, and even to the present time, a powerful influence for good and evil upon the Church and the world.

The first known Christian hermit, as distinct from the earlier ascetics, who lived in the midst of the Church, is the fabulous PAUL OF THEBES, in Upper Egypt. In the twenty-second year of his age, during the Decian persecution, A. D. 250, he retired to a distant cave, grew fond of solitude, and lived there, according to the legend, ninety years in a grotto near a spring and a palm-tree, which furnished him food, shade, and clothing until his death, in 340. In his later years a raven is said to have brought him daily half a loaf, as the ravens ministered to Elijah. But no one knew of this wonderful saint till Anthony, who under a higher impulse visited and buried him, made him known to the world. At this singular visit the raven brought a double portion of bread, and at the burial two lions of the desert assisted Anthony of their own accord, digging a grave in the sand. So says, in good earnest, the learned Jerome some thirty years afterward, as it appears, on the authority of Amathus and Macarius, two disciples of Anthony. But this and similar traditions he opens to suspicion by the remark in the prologue to his life of Paul of Thebes, that many incredible things are said of him which are not worthy of repetition.

In this Paul we have an example of a canonized saint who lived ninety years unseen and unknown in the wilderness, beyond all fellowship with the visible Church, without Bible, public worship, or sacraments, and so died, yet is supposed to have attained the highest grade of piety. How does this consist with the common doctrine of the Catholic Church respecting the necessity and the operation of the means of grace? Augustine, blinded by the ascetic spirit of his age, says even that anchorets on their level of perfection may dispense with the Bible. Certain it is that this kind of perfection stands not in the Bible, but outside of it.

The proper founder of the hermit life, the one chiefly instrumental in giving it its prevalence, was ST. ANTHONY of Egypt. He is the most celebrated, the most original, and the most venerable representative of this abnormal and eccentric sanctity, the patriarch of monks, and the childless father of an innumerable seed. Anthony sprang from a Christian and honorable Coptic family, and was born about 251 at Conia, on the borders of the Thebiad. Naturally quiet, contemplative, and reflective, he avoided the society of playmates, and despised all higher learning. He understood only his Coptic vernacular, and remained all his life ignorant of Grecian literature and secular science. But he diligently attended divine worship with his parents, and so carefully heard the Scripture lessons that he retained them in memory. Memory was his library. He afterward made faithful, but only too literal use of single passages of Scripture, and began his discourse to the hermits with the very uncatholic-sounding declaration, "The holy Scriptures give us instruction enough." In his eighteenth year, about 270, the death of his parents devolved on him the care of a younger sister and a considerable estate. Six months afterward he heard in the church, just as he was meditating on the apostles' implicit following of Jesus, the word of the Lord to the rich young ruler: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." This word was the voice of God, which determined his life. He divided his real estate, consisting of three hundred acres of fertile land, among the inhabitants of the village, and sold his personal property for the benefit of the poor, excepting a moderate

reserve for the support of his sister. But when soon afterward he heard in the church the exhortation, "Take no thought for the morrow," he distributed the remnant to the poor, and intrusted his sister to a society of pious virgins. He visited her only once after, a characteristic fact for the ascetic depreciation of natural ties.

He then forsook the hamlet and led an ascetic life in the neighborhood, praying constantly according to the exhortation, "Pray without ceasing;" and also laboring according to the maxim, "If any will not work, neither should he eat." What he did not need for his slender support he gave to the poor. He visited the neighboring ascetics, who were then already very plentiful in Egypt, to learn humbly and thankfully their several eminent virtues: from one, earnestness in prayer; from another, watchfulness; from a third, excellence in fasting; from a fourth, meekness; from all, love to Christ and to fellow-men. Thus he made himself universally beloved, and came to be revered as a friend of God. But to reach a still higher level of ascetic holiness, he retreated, after the year 285, further and further from the bosom and vicinity of the Church into solitude, and thus became the founder of anchoritism or hermit life, strictly so called. At first he lived in a sepulcher; then for twenty years in the ruins of a castle; and last on Mount Colzim, some seven hours from the Red Sea, a three days' journey east of the Nile, where an old cloister still preserves his name and memory.

In this solitude he prosecuted his ascetic practices with ever-increasing vigor. The monotony was broken only by basket-making, occasional visits, and battles with the devil. In fasting he attained a rare abstemiousness. His food consisted of bread and salt, sometimes dates; his drink of water. Flesh and wine he never touched. He ate only once a day, generally after sunset, and like the presbyter Isidore, was ashamed that an immortal spirit should need earthly nourishment. Often he fasted from two to five days. Friends and wandering Saracens, who always had a certain reverence for the saints of the desert, brought him bread from time to time. But in the last years of his life, to render himself entirely independent of others, and to afford hospitality to travelers, he cultivated a small garden on the mountain, near a spring shaded by palms.

Sometimes the wild beasts of the forest destroyed his modest harvest, till he drove them away forever with the expostulation, "Why do you injure me, who never have done you the slightest harm? Away with you all, in the name of the Lord, and never come into my neighborhood again." He slept on bare ground, or at best on a pallet of straw; but often he watched the whole night through in prayer. The anointing of the body with oil he despised, and in later years never washed his feet, as if filthiness was an essential element of ascetic perfection. His whole wardrobe consisted of a hair shirt, a sheepskin, and a girdle. But notwithstanding all, he had a winning friendliness and cheerfulness in his face.

Conflicts with the devil and his hosts of demons were, as with other solitary saints, a prominent part of Anthony's experience, and continued through all his life. The devil appeared to him in visions and dreams, or even in daylight, in all possible forms; now as a friend, now as a fascinating woman, now as a dragon, tempting him by reminding him of his former wealth, of his noble family, of the care due to his sister; by promises of wealth, honor, and renown; by exhibitions of the difficulty of virtue and the facility of vice; by unchaste thoughts and images; by terrible threatenings of the dangers and punishments of the ascetic life. Once he struck the hermit so violently, Athanasius says, that a friend, who brought him bread, found him on the ground apparently dead. At another time he broke through the walls of his cave and filled the room with roaring lions, howling wolves, growling bears, fierce hyenas, crawling serpents, and scorpions; but Anthony turned manfully toward the monsters, till a supernatural light broke in from the roof and dispersed them. His sermon, which he delivered to the hermits at their request, treats principally of these wars with demons, and gives also the key to the interpretation of them. "Fear not Satan and his angels," he said; "Christ has broken their power. The best weapon against them is faith and piety. The presence of evil spirits reveals itself in perplexity, despondency, hatred of the ascetics, evil desires, fear of death. They take the form answering to the spiritual state they find in us at the time. They are the reflex of our thoughts and fantasies. If thou art carnally minded, thou art their prey; but if thou rejoicest in the Lord and occu-

piest thyself with divine things they are powerless. The devil is afraid of fasting, of prayer, of humility and good works. His illusions soon vanish where one arms himself with the sign of the cross."

Only in exceptional cases did Anthony leave his solitude, and then he made a powerful impression on both Christians and heathens with his hairy dress and his emaciated, ghost-like form. In the year 311, during the persecution under Maximinus, he appeared in Alexandria, in the hope of himself gaining the martyr's crown. He visited the confessors in the mines and prisons, encouraged them before the tribunal, accompanied them to the scaffold; but no one ventured to lay hands on the saint of the wilderness. In the year 351, when a hundred years old, he showed himself for the second and last time in the metropolis of Egypt to bear witness for the orthodox faith of his friend Athanasius against Arianism, and in a few days converted more heathen and heretics than had otherwise been gained in a whole year. He declared the Arian denial of the divinity of Christ worse than the venom of the serpent, and no better than heathenism, which worshiped the creature instead of the Creator. He would have nothing to do with heretics, and warned his disciples against intercourse with them. Athanasius attended him to the gate of the city, where he cast out an evil spirit from a girl. An invitation to stay longer in Alexandria he declined, saying, "As a fish out of water, so a monk out of his solitude dies." Imitating his example, the monks afterward forsook the wilderness in swarms whenever orthodoxy was in danger, and went in long processions, with wax tapers and responsive singing, through the streets, or appeared at the councils to contend for the orthodox faith with all the energy of fanaticism, often even with physical force.

Though Anthony shunned the society of men, yet he was frequently visited in his solitude and resorted to for consolation and aid by Christians and heathens, by ascetics, sick and needy, as a heaven-descended physician of Egypt for body and soul. He enjoined prayer, labor, and care of the poor; exhorted those at strife to the love of God, and healed the sick and demoniac with his prayer. Athanasius relates several miracles performed by him, the truth of which we leave undecided, though they are far less incredible and absurd than many other monkish

stories of that age. Anthony, his biographer assures us, never boasted when his prayer was heard, nor murmured when it was not, but in either case thanked God. He cautioned monks against overrating the gift of miracles, since it is not our work, but the grace of the Lord; and he reminded them of the word, "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." To Martianus, an officer, who urgently besought him to heal his possessed daughter, he said, "Man, why dost thou call on me? I am a man, as thou art. If thou believest, pray to God, and he will hear thee." Martianus prayed, and on his return found his daughter whole.

Anthony distinguished himself above most of his countless disciples and successors by his fresh originality of mind. Though uneducated and contracted, he had sound sense and ready mother-wit. Many of his striking answers and felicitous sentences have come down to us. When some heathen philosophers once visited him, he asked them, "Why do you give yourselves so much trouble to see a fool?" They explained, perhaps ironically, that they took him rather for a wise man. He replied, "If you take me for a fool, your labor is lost; but if I am a wise man you should imitate me, and be Christians as I am." At another time, when taunted with his ignorance, he asked, "Which is older and better, mind or learning?" The mind, was the answer. "Then," said the hermit, "the mind can do without learning." "My book," he remarked on a similar occasion, "is the whole creation, which lies open before me, and in which I can read the word of God as often as I will." The blind Church teacher, Didymus, whom he met in Alexandria, he comforted with the words, "Trouble not thyself for the loss of the outward eye, with which even flies see; but rejoice in the possession of the spiritual eye, with which also angels behold the face of God and receive his light." Even the Emperor Constantine, with his sons, wrote to him as a spiritual father, and begged an answer from him. The hermit at first would not so much as receive the letter, since in any case, being unable to write, he could not answer it, and cared as little for the great of this world as Diogenes for Alexander. When told that the emperor was a Christian, he dictated the answer: "Happy thou, that thou worshippest Christ.

Be not proud of thy earthly power. Think of the future judgment, and know that Christ is the only true and eternal king. Practice justice and love for men, and care for the poor." To his disciples he said on this occasion, "Wonder not that the emperor writes to me, for he is a man. Wonder much more that God has written the law for man, and has spoken to us by his own Son."

During the last years of his life the patriarch of monasticism withdrew as much as possible from the sight of visitors, but allowed two disciples to live with him, and to take care of him in his infirm old age. When he felt his end approaching he commanded them not to embalm his body, according to the Egyptian custom, but to bury it in the earth, and keep the spot of his interment secret. One of his two sleep-skins he bequeathed to the Bishop Serapion ; the other, with his underclothing, to Athanasius, who had once given it to him new, and now received it back, worn out and loaded with honor. What became of the robe woven from palm leaves, which, according to Jerome, he had inherited from Paul of Thebes, and wore at Easter and Pentecost, Athanasius does not tell us. After this disposition of his property Anthony said to his disciples, "Children, farewell ; for Anthony goes away, and will be no more with you." With these words he stretched out his feet and expired with a smiling face, in the year 356, a hundred and five years old. His grave remained for centuries unknown. His last will was thus a protest against the worship of saints and relics, which, however, it nevertheless greatly helped to promote. Under Justinian, in 561, his bones, as the Bollandists and Butler minutely relate, were miraculously discovered, brought to Alexandria, then to Constantinople, and at last to Vienna, in South France ; and in the eleventh century, during the raging of an epidemic disease—the so-called holy fire, or St. Anthony's fire—they are said to have performed great wonders.

Athanasius, the greatest man of the Nicene age, concludes his biography of his friend with this sketch of his character : "From this short narrative you may judge how great a man Anthony was, who persevered in the ascetic life from youth to the highest age. In his advanced age he never allowed himself better food nor change of raiment, nor did he even wash his feet. Yet he continued healthy in all his parts. His eyesight

was clear to the end, and his teeth sound, though by long use worn to mere stumps. He retained also the perfect use of his hands and feet, and was more robust and vigorous than those who are accustomed to a change of food and clothing and to washing. His fame spread from his remote dwelling on the lone mountain over the whole Roman empire. What gave him his renown was not learning, nor worldly wisdom, nor human art, but alone his piety toward God. And let all the brethren know that the Lord will not only take holy monks to heaven, but give them celebrity in all the earth, however deep they may bury themselves in the wilderness."

The whole Nicene age venerated in Anthony a model saint. This fact brings out most characteristically the vast difference between the ancient and the modern, the old Catholic and the evangelical Protestant conception of the nature of Christian religion. The specifically Christian element in the life of Anthony, especially as measured by the Pauline standard, is very small. Nevertheless we can but admire the miserable magnificence, the simple, rude grandeur of this hermit sanctity, even in its aberration. Anthony concealed under his sheep-skin a child-like humility, an amiable simplicity, a rare energy of will, and a glowing love to God, which maintained itself for almost ninety years in the absence of all the comforts and pleasures of natural life, and triumphed over all the temptations of the flesh. By piety alone, without the help of education or learning, he became one of the most remarkable and influential men in the history of the ancient Church.

Even heathen cotemporaries could not withhold from him their reverence, and the celebrated philosopher Synesius, afterward a bishop, before his conversion reckoned Anthony among those rare men in whom flashes of thought take the place of reasonings, and natural power of mind makes schooling needless.

The example of Anthony acted like magic upon his generation, and his biography by Athanasius, which was soon translated also into Latin, was a tract for the times. Chrysostom, the prince of ancient preachers, recommended it to all as instructive and edifying reading. Even Augustine, the most evangelical of the fathers, was powerfully affected by the read-

ing of it in his decisive religious struggles, and was decided by it in his entire renunciation of the world.

In a short time, still in the lifetime of Anthony, the deserts of Egypt, from Nitria, south of Alexandria and the wilderness of Scetis, to Lybia and the Thebiad, were peopled with anchorets and studded with cells. A mania for monasticism possessed Christendom, and seized the people of all classes like an epidemic. As martyrdom had formerly been, so now monasticism was, the quickest and surest way to renown upon earth and to eternal reward in heaven. This prospect, with which Athanasius concludes his life of Anthony, abundantly recompensed all self-denial, and mightily stimulated pious ambition. The consistent recluse must continually increase his seclusion. No desert was too scorching, no rock too forbidding, no cliff too steep, no cave too dismal for the feet of these world-hating and man-shunning enthusiasts. It has been supposed that in Egypt the number of anchorets and monks equaled the population of the cities! The natural contrast between the desert and the fertile valley of the Nile was reflected in the moral contrast between the monastic life and the world.

It is unnecessary to recount the lives of all the leading anchorets, since the same features, even to unimportant details, repeat themselves in all. But in the fifth century a new and quite original path was broken by SYMEON, the father of the STYLITES, or pillar-saints, who spent long years, day and night, summer and winter, rain and sunshine, frost and heat, standing on high unsheltered pillars in prayer and penances, and made the way to heaven for themselves so passing hard, that one knows not whether to wonder at their unexampled self-denial, or to pity their ignorance of the Gospel salvation. On this giddy height the anchoretic asceticism reached its completion.

ST. SYMEON THE STYLITE, originally a shepherd on the borders of Syria and Cilicia, when a boy of thirteen years was powerfully affected by the beatitudes which he heard read in the church, and betook himself to a cloister. He lay several days without eating or drinking before the threshold, and begged to be admitted as the meanest servant of the house. He accustomed himself to eat only once a week, on Sunday. During Lent he even went through the whole forty days without

any food ; a fact almost incredible, even for a tropical climate. The first attempt of this kind brought him to the verge of death ; but his constitution conformed itself, and when Theodoret visited him he had solemnized six-and-twenty Lent seasons by total abstinence, and thus surpassed Moses, Elias, and even Christ, who never fasted so but once ! Another of his extraordinary inflictions was to lace his body so tightly that the cord pressed through to his bones, and could be cut off only with the most terrible pains. This occasioned his dismissal from the cloister.

He afterward spent some time as a hermit upon a mountain with an iron chain upon his feet, and was visited there by admiring and curious throngs.

When this failed to satisfy him, he invented, in 423, a new sort of holiness, and lived some two days' journey (forty miles) east of Antioch, for six-and-thirty years, until his death upon a pillar, which at last was nearly forty cubits high ; for the pillar was raised in proportion as he approached heaven and perfection. Here he could never lie or sit, but only stand or lean upon a post, probably a banister, or devoutly bow, in which last position he almost touched his feet with his head, so flexible had his back been made by fasting. A spectator once counted in one day no less than twelve hundred and forty-four such genuflexions of the saint before the Almighty, and then gave up counting. He wore a covering of the skins of beasts, and a chain about his neck. Even the holy sacrament he took upon his pillar. People streamed from afar to witness this standing wonder of the age. He spoke to all classes with the same friendliness, mildness, and love ; only women he never suffered to come within the walls which surrounded his pillar.

From this original pulpit, as a mediator between heaven and earth, he preached repentance twice a day to the astonished spectators, settled controversies, vindicated the orthodox faith, extorted laws even from an emperor, healed the sick, wrought miracles, and converted thousands of heathen Ishmaelites, Iberians, Armenians, and Persians to Christianity, or at least to the Christian name.

All this the celebrated Theodoret relates as an eye-witness during the lifetime of the saint. He terms him the great wonder of the world, and compares him to a candle on a candle-

stick, and to the sun itself, which sheds its rays on every side. He asks the objector to this mode of life to consider that God often uses very striking means to arouse the negligent, as the history of the prophets show; and concludes his narrative with the remark, "Should the saint live longer he may do yet greater wonders, for he is a universal ornament and honor to religion."

He died in 459, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, of a long-concealed and loathsome ulcer on his leg, and his body was brought in solemn procession to the metropolitan Church of Antioch.

Even before his death Symeon enjoyed the unbounded admiration of Christians and heathens, of the common people, of the kings of Persia, and the emperors Theodosius II., Leo, and Marcian, who begged his blessing and his counsel. No wonder that, with his renowned humility, he had to struggle with the temptations of spiritual pride. Once an angel appeared to him in a vision, with a chariot of fire to convey him, like Elijah, to heaven, because the blessed spirits longed for him. He was already stepping into the chariot with his right foot, which on this occasion he sprained, (as Jacob his thigh,) when the phantom of Satan was chased away by the sign of the cross. Perhaps this incident, which the *Acta Sanctorum* gives, was afterward invented to account for his sore, and to illustrate the danger of self-conceit. Hence also the pious monk Nilus, with good reason, reminded the ostentatious pillar-saints of the proverb, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased."

Of the later Stylites the most distinguished were Daniel, (died 490,) in the vicinity of Constantinople, and Symeon the Younger, (died 592,) in Syria. The latter is said to have spent sixty-eight years on a pillar. In the East this form of sanctity perpetuated itself, though only in exceptional cases, down to the twelfth century. The West, so far as we know, affords but one example of a Stylite who, according to Gregory of Tours, lived a long time on a pillar near Treves, but came down at the command of the bishop and entered a neighboring cloister.

With all due admiration for the extraordinary moral heroism displayed by these ancient hermits, it is no recommendation to it that it is without any authority in the Scriptures of truth.

Christ and the apostles never enjoined such excesses either by precept or example. On the other hand, the history of ancient and modern Hindoo asceticism furnish similar phenomena in connection with a false religion. Some of these heathen devotees, we are told by travelers, bury themselves in pits with only small breathing holes at the top; while others, disdain to touch the vile earth beneath, live in iron cages suspended from trees. Some wear heavy iron collars or fetters, or drag a heavy chain, fastened by one end round their privy parts, to give ostentatious proof of their chastity. Others keep their fists hard shut, until their finger nails grow through the palms of their hands. Some stand perpetually on one leg; others keep their faces turned over one shoulder, until they cannot turn them back again. Some lie on wooden beds, bristling all over with iron spikes; others are fastened for life to the trunk of a tree by a chain, like Symeon to his pillar. Some suspend themselves for half an hour at a time, feet uppermost, or with a hook thrust through their naked backs, over a hot fire. A Jesuit missionary describes a Hindoo saint who had his body inclosed in an iron cage, with his head and feet outside, so that he could walk, but neither sit nor lie down; at night his pious attendants attached a hundred lighted lamps to the outside of the cage, so that their master could exhibit himself walking as the mock-light of the world!

It is impossible to read of these self-imposed penances and sufferings without profound gratitude to Christ, who, in the Gospel, opened to all penitent and believing sinners such a plain and sure road to salvation; and to the Reformers of the sixteenth century, who cleared this road of the many obstructions erected by the pious folly of men in the vain attempt to save themselves.