

philosophers;¹ Domitian crucifying the very scribes who copied the work of Hermogenes of Tarsus, in which he was obliquely criticized.² When men in the mass crouched before such tyranny, helplessly beholding emperor after emperor overtaken by the madness that accrues to absolute power, they were disabled for any disinterested warfare on behalf of truth. All serious impeachment of religion proceeds upon an ethical motive; and in imperial Rome there was no room for any nobility of ethic save such as upbore the Stoics in their austere pursuit of self-control, in a world too full of evil to be delighted in.

Thus it came about that the Cæsars, who would doubtless have protected their co-operating priesthoods from any serious attack on the official religion,³ had practically no occasion to do so. Lucian's jests were cast at the Gods of Greece, not at those of the Roman official cults; hence his immunity. What the Cæsars were concerned to do was rather to menace any alien religion that seemed to undermine the solidarity of the State; and of such religions, first the Jewish, and later the Christian, were obvious examples. Thus we have it that Tiberius "put down foreign religions" (*externas ceremonias*), in particular the Egyptian and Judaic rites; pulling down the temple of Isis, crucifying her priests, expelling from Rome all Jews and proselytes, and forcing the Jewish youth to undergo military service in unhealthy climates.⁴ Even the astrologers, in whose lore he believed, he expelled until they promised to renounce their art—a precedent partly set up by Augustus,⁵ and followed with varying severity by all the emperors, pagan and Christian alike.

And still the old Italian religion waned, as it must. On the one hand, the Italic population was almost wholly replaced or diluted by alien stocks, slave or free, with alien cults and customs; on the other, the utter insincerity of the official cults, punctiliously conserved by well-paid, unbelieving priests, invited indifference. In the nature of things, an unchanging creed is moribund; life means adaptation to change; and it was only the alien cults that in Rome adapted themselves to the psychic mutation. Among the educated, who had read their Lucretius, the spectacle of the innumerable cults of the empire conduced either to entire but tacit unbelief, or to a species of vaguely rationalistic⁶ yet sentimental monotheism, in

¹ Cp. Schmidt, pp. 346-47.

² Suetonius, *Domitian*, c. 10.

³ Cp. Schmidt, p. 157.

⁴ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 36; Josephus, *Antiquities*, xviii, 3, §§ 4, 5. Josephus specifies isolated pretexts, which Suetonius does not mention. They are not very probable.

⁵ Who destroyed 2,000 copies of prophetic books. Suetonius, *Aug.* c. 31.

⁶ See, in the next chapter, as to the rationalistic mythology of Macrobius.

which Reason sometimes figured as universal Deity.¹ Among the uneducated the progression was constant towards one or other of the emotional and ritualistic oriental faiths, so much better adapted to their down-trodden life.

§ 4

One element of betterment there was in the life of declining Rome, until the Roman ideals were superseded by oriental. Even the Augustan poets, Horace and Ovid, had protested like the Hebrew prophets, and like Plato and like Cicero, against the idea that rich sacrifices availed with the Gods above a pure heart; and such doctrine, while paganism lasted, prevailed more and more.² At the same time, Horace rejects the Judæo-Stoic doctrine, adopted in the gospels, that all sins are equal, and lays down the rational moral test of utility—*Utilitas justi propè mater et æqui*.³ The better and more thoughtful men who grew up under the autocracy, though inevitably feebler and more credulous in their thinking than those of the later commonwealth, developed at length a concern for conduct, public and private, which lends dignity to the later philosophic literature, and lustre to the imperial rule of the Antonines. This concern it was that, linking Greek theory to Roman practice, produced a code of rational law which could serve Europe for a thousand years. This concern too it was, joined with the relatively high moral quality of their theism, that ennobled the writing of Seneca⁴ and Epictetus and Maximus of Tyre; and irradiates the words as well as the rule of Marcus Aurelius. In them was anticipated all that was good⁵ in the later Christian ethic, even as the popular faiths anticipated the Christian dogmas; and they cherished a temper of serenity that the Fathers fell far short of. To compare their pages with those of the subsequent Christian Fathers—Seneca with Lactantius, “the Christian Cicero”; Maximus with Arnobius; Epictetus with Tertullian; the admirable Marcus, and his ideal of the “dear city of Zeus,” with the shrill polemic of Augustine’s *City of God* and the hysteria of the *Confessions*—is to

¹ Cp. Propertius, ii, 14, 27 *sqq.*; iii, 23, 19-20; iv, 3, 38; Tibullus, iv, 1, 18-23; Juvenal, as before cited, and xv, 133, 142-46.

² Plato, *2 Alcib.*; Cicero, *Pro Cluentio*, c. 68; Horace, *Carm.* iii, 23, 17; Ovid, *Heroides*, *Acont. Cydipp.* 191-92; Persius, *Sat.* ii, 69; Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, i, 6. Cp. Diod. Sic. xii, 20; Varro, in Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, vii, 1.

³ *1 Sat.* iii, 96-98. Cp. Cicero, *De Finibus*, iv, 19, 27, 28; Matt. v, 19-28; James, ii, 10. Lactantius, again (*Div. Inst.* iii, 23), denounces the doctrine of the equality of offences as laid down by Zeno, giving no sign of knowing that it is also set forth in his own sacred books.

⁴ On Seneca’s moral teaching, cp. Martha, *Les Moralistes sous l’empire romain*, pp. 57-66; Boissier, *La religion romaine*, ii, 80-82. M. Boissier further examines fully the exploded theory that Seneca received Christian teaching. On this compare Bishop Lightfoot, *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 237-92.

⁵ Seneca was so advanced in his theoretic ethic as to consider all war on a level with homicide. *Epist.* xcv, 30.

prove a rapid descent in magnanimity, sanity, self-command, sweetness of spirit, and tolerance. What figures as religious intolerance in the Cæsars was, as we have seen, always a political, never a religious, animosity. Any prosecution of Christians under the Antonines was certainly on the score of breach of law, turbulence, or real or supposed malpractices, not on that of heresy—a crime created only by the Christians themselves, in their own conflicts.

The scientific account of the repellent characteristics of the Fathers, of course, is not that their faith made them what they were, but that the ever-worsening social and intellectual conditions assorted such types into their ecclesiastical places, and secured for them their influence over the types now prevailing among the people. They too stand for the intellectual dissolution wrought by imperialism. When all the higher forms of intellectual efficiency were at an end, it was impossible that on any religious impulse whatever there should be generated either a higher code of life or a saner body of thought than those of the higher paganism of the past. Their very arguments against paganism are largely drawn from old "pagan" sources. Those who still speak of the rise of Christianity in the ancient world as a process of "regeneration" are merely turning historical science out of doors. The Christian Fathers had all the opportunity that a life of quasi-intellectual specialism could supply; and their liberty of criticism as regarded the moribund pagan creeds was a further gymnastic; but nothing could countervail the insanity of their intellectual presuppositions, which they could not transcend.

Inheriting the Judaic hypnotism of the Sacred Book, they could reason only as do railers; and the moral readjustment which put them in revolt against the erotic element in pagan mythology was a mere substitution of an ascetic neurosis for the old disease of imagination. Strictly speaking, their asceticism, being never rationalized, never rose to the level of ethic as distinguished from mere taboo or sacrosanct custom. As we shall see, they could not wholly escape the insurgence of the spirit of reason; but they collectively scouted it with a success attained by no other ostensibly educated priesthood of antiquity. They intellectually represent, in fact, the consummation of the general Mediterranean decadence.

For the rest, the "triumph" of the new faith was simply the survival of the forms of thought, and, above all, of the form of religious community, best fitted to the political and intellectual environment. The new Church organization was above all things a great economic endowment for a class of preachers, polemicists, and

propagandists ; and between the closing of the old spheres of public life and the opening of the new,¹ the new faith was established as much by political and economic conditions as by its intellectual adaptation to an age of mental twilight.

Of the religion of the educated pagans in its last forms, then, it is finally to be said that it was markedly rationalistic as compared with the Christianity which followed, and has been on that ground stigmatized by Christian orthodoxy down till our own day. The religion of Marcus Aurelius is self-reverence, self-study, self-rule, *plus* faith in Deity ; and it is not to be gainsaid that, next to his adoptive father Antoninus Pius, he remains the noblest monarch in ancient history ; the nearest parallel being the more superstitious but still noble Julian, the last of the great pagan rulers. In such rulers the antique philosophy was in a measure justified of its children ; and if it never taught them to grapple with the vast sociological problem set up by the Empire, and so failed to preserve the antique civilization, it at least did as much for them in that regard as the new faith did for its followers.

¹ It is to be noted that preaching had begun among the moralists of Rome in the first century, and was carried on by the priests of Isis in the second ; and that in Egypt monasticism had long been established. Martha, as cited, p. 67 ; Boissier, i, 356-59. Cp. Mosheim, 2 Cent. pt. ii, c. iii, §§ 13, 14, as to monasticism.

CHAPTER VII

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY AND ITS OPPONENTS

§ 1

THE Christian gospels, broadly considered, stand for a certain measure of freethinking reaction against the Jewish religion, and are accordingly to be reckoned with in the present inquiry; albeit their practical outcome was only an addition to the world's supernaturalism and traditional dogma. To estimate aright their share of freethought, we have but to consider the kind and degree of demand they made on the reason of the ancient listener, as apart, that is, from the demand made on their basis for the recognition of a new Deity. When this is done it will be found that they express in parts a process of reflection which outwent even critical common sense in a kind of ecstatic Stoicism, an oriental repudiation of the tyranny of passions and appetites; in other parts a mysticism that proceeds as far beyond the credulity of ordinary faith. Socially considered, they embody a similar opposition between an anarchistic and a partly orthodox or regulative ideal. The plain inference is that they stand for many independent movements of thought in the Græco-Roman world. It is actually on record that the reduction of the whole law to love of one's neighbour¹ was taught before the Christian era by the famous Rabbi Hillel;² and the gospel itself³ shows that this view was current. In another passage⁴ the reduction of the ten commandments to five again indicates a not uncommon disregard for the ecclesiastical side of the law. But the difference between the two passages points of itself to various forces of relative freethought.

Any attentive study of the gospels discloses not merely much glossing and piecing and interpolating of documents, but a plain medley of doctrines, of ideals, of principles; and to accept the mass of disconnected utterances ascribed to "the Lord," many of them associated with miracles, as the oral teaching of any one man, is a proceeding so uncritical that in no other study could it now be

¹ Mt. xxii, 39; Mk. xii, 31.
³ Mk. xii, 32.

² Talmud, tract. *Sabbath*, 306.
⁴ Lk. xviii, 20.

followed. The simple fact that the Pauline Epistles (by whomsoever written) show no knowledge of any Jesuine miracles or teachings whatever, except as regards the Last Supper (1 Cor. xi, 24-25—a passage obviously interpolated), admits of only three possible interpretations: (1) the Jesus then believed in had not figured as a teacher at all; or (2) the writer or writers gave no credit or attached no importance to reports of his teachings. Either of these views (of which the first is plainly the more plausible) admits of (3) the further conclusion that the Pauline Jesus was not the Gospel Jesus, but an earlier one—a fair enough hypothesis; but on that view the mass of Dominical utterances in the gospels is only so much the less certificated. When, then, it is admitted by all open-minded students that the *events* in the narrative are in many cases fictitious, even when they are not miraculous, it is wholly inadmissible that the *sayings* should be trustworthy, as one man's teachings.

Analysing them in collation, we find even in the Synoptics, and without taking into account the Fourth Gospel, such wide discrepancies as the following:—

1. The doctrine: "the Kingdom of God is among you" (Lk. xvii, 21), side by side with promises of the speedy arrival of the Son of Man, whose coming = the Kingdom of God (cp. Mt. iii, 2, 3; iv, 17; Mk. i, 15).

2. The frequent profession to supersede the Law (Mt. v, 21, 33, 38, 43, etc.); and the express declaration that not one jot or tittle thereof is to be superseded (Mt. v, 17-20).

3. Proclamation of a gospel for the poor and the enslaved (Lk. iv, 18); with the tacit acceptance of slavery (Lk. xvii, 7, 9, 10; where the word translated "servant" in the A.V., and let pass by McClellan, Blackader, and other reforming English critics, certainly means "slave").

4. Stipulation for the simple fulfilment of the Law as a passport to eternal life, with or without further self-denial (Mt. xix, 16-21; Lk. x, 28; xviii, 22); on the other hand a stipulation for simple benevolence, as in the Egyptian ritual (Mt. xxv; cp. Lk. ix, 48); and yet again stipulations for blind faith (Mt. x, 15) and for blood redemption (Mt. xxvi, 28).

5. Alternate promise (Mt. vi, 33; xix, 29) and denial (Mt. x, 34-39) of temporal blessings.

6. Alternate commands to secrecy (Mt. xii, 16; viii, 4; ix, 30; Mk. iii, 12; v, 43; vii, 36) and to publicity (Mt. vii, 7-8; Mk. v, 19) concerning miracles, with a frequent record of their public performance.

7. Specific restriction of salvation to Israelites (Mt. x, 5, 6; xv, 24; xix, 28); equally specific declaration that the Kingdom of God shall be to another nation (Mt. xxii, 43); no less specific

assurance that the Son of Man (not the Twelve as in Mt. xix, 28) shall judge all nations, not merely Israel (Mt. xxv, 32; cp. viii, 11).

8. Profession to teach all, especially the simple and the childlike (Mt. xviii, 3; xi, 25, 28-30; Mk. x, 15); on the contrary, a flat declaration (Mt. xiii, 10-16; Mk. iv, 11; Lk. viii, 10; cp. Mk. iv, 34) that the saving teaching is only for the special disciples; yet again (Mt. xv, 16; Mk. vi, 52; viii, 17, 18) imputations of lack of understanding to them.

9. Companionship of the Teacher with "publicans and sinners" (Mt. ix, 10); and, on the other hand, a reference to the publicans as falling far short of the needed measure of loving-kindness (Mt. v, 46).

10. Explicit contrarieties of phrase, not in context (Mt. xii, 30; Lk. xi, 50).

11. Flat contradictions of narrative as to the Teacher's local success (Mt. xiii, 54-58; Lk. iv, 23).

12. Insistence that the Messiah is of the Davidic line (Mt. i; xxi, 15; Lk. i, 27; ii, 4), and that he is not (Mt. xxii, 43-45; Mk. xii, 35-37; Lk. xx).

13. Contradictory precepts as to limitation and non-limitation of forgiveness (Mt. xviii, 17, 22).

Such variously serious discrepancies count for more than even the chronological and other divergences of the records concerning the Birth, the Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, as proofs of diversity of source; and they may be multiplied indefinitely. The only course for criticism is to admit that they stand for the ideas of a variety of sects or movements, or else for an unlimited manipulation of the documents by individual hands. Many of them may very well have come from various so-called "Lords" and "Messiahs"; but they cannot be from a single teacher.

There remains open the fascinating problem as to whether some if not all of the more notable teachings may not be the utterances of one teacher of commanding originality, whose sectaries were either unable to appreciate or unable to keep separate his doctrine.¹ Undoubtedly some of the better teachings came first from men of superior capacity and relatively deep ethical experience. The veto on revenge, and the inculcation of love to enemies, could not come from commonplace minds; and the saying preserved from the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, "Unless ye cease from sacrificing the wrath shall not cease from you," has a remarkable ring.² But

¹ See the impressive argument of Dr. Moncure Conway in his *Solomon and Solomonio Literature*, 1899, ch. xviii.

² See Dr. Nicholson's *The Gospel According to the Hebrews*, 1879, p. 77. Cp. Conway, p. 222. Dr. Nicholson insists that at least the word "sacrificing" must be spurious, because "it is surely impossible that Jesus ever uttered this threat"!

when we compare the precept of forgiveness with similar teachings in the Hebrew books and the Talmud,¹ we realize that the capacity for such thought had been shown by a number of Jewish teachers, and that it was a specific result of the long sequence of wrong and oppression undergone by the Jewish people at the hands of their conquerors. The unbearable, consuming pain of an impotent hate, and the spectacle of it in others—this experience among thoughtful men, and not an unconditioned genius for ethic in one, is the source of a teaching which, categorically put as it is in the gospels, misses its meaning with most who profess to admire it; the proof being the entire failure of most Christians in all ages to act on it. To say nothing of similar teaching in Old Testament books and in the Talmud, we have it in the most emphatic form in the pre-Christian "Slavonic Enoch."²

A superior ethic, then, stands not for one man's supernormal insight, but for the acquired wisdom of a number of wise men. And it is now utterly impossible to name the individual framers of the gospel teachings, good or bad. The central biography dissolves at every point before critical tests; it is a mythical construction.³ Of the ideas in the Sermon on the Mount, many are ancient; of the parabolic and other teachings, some of the most striking occur only in the third gospel, and are unquestionably late. And when we are asked to recognize a unique personality behind any one doctrine, such as the condemnation of sacrifice in the uncanonical Hebrew Gospel, we can but answer (1) that on the face of the case this doctrine appears to come from a separate circle; (2) that the renunciation of sacrifice was made by many Greek and Roman writers,⁴ and by earlier teachers among the Hebrews;⁵ and (3) that in the Talmud, and in such a pre-Christian document as the "Slavonic Enoch," there are teachings which, had they occurred in the gospels, would have been confidently cited as unparalleled in ancient literature. The Talmudic teachings, so vitally necessary in Jewry, that "it is better to be persecuted than persecutor," and that, "were the persecutor a just man and the persecuted an impious, God would still be on the side of the persecuted,"⁶ are not equalled for practical purposes by any in the Christian sacred books; and the Enochic beatitude, "Blessed is he who looks to raise his own hand for labour,"⁷ is no less remarkable. But it is impossible to associate

¹ Cp. the author's *Christianity and Mythology*, pt. iii, div. ii, § 6.

² *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, known as the "Slavonic Enoch," ch. xliv, 1 (Eng. tr. 1896, pp. 60, 67). ³ See the author's *Pagan Christs*, pt. ii. ⁴ Above, p. 215.

⁵ Hosea, vi, 6; Psalm, xl, 6, 7; Ecclesiastes, v, 1.

⁶ Talmud, *Yoma-Derech Eretz*; Midrash, *Vayikra-Rabba*, xxvii, 11 and 12.

⁷ Ch. lli (p. 69).

these teachings with any outstanding personality, or any specific movements; and to posit a movement-making personality in the sole case of certain scattered sayings in the gospels is critically inadmissible.

There is positively no ground for supposing that any selected set of teachings constituted the basis or the original propaganda of any single Christian sect, primary or secondary; and the whole known history of the cult tells against the hypothesis that it ever centred round those teachings which to-day specially appeal to the ethical rationalist. Such teachings are more likely to be adventitious than fundamental, in a cult of sacrificial salvation. When an essentially rationalistic note is struck in the gospels, as in the insistence¹ that a notable public catastrophe is not to be regarded in the old Jewish manner as a punishment for sin, it is cancelled in the next sentence by an interpolation which unintelligently reaffirms the very doctrine denied.² So with the teaching³ that the coming worship is to be neither Judaic nor Samaritan: the next sentence reaffirms Jewish particularism in the crudest way. The main movement, then, was clearly superstitious.

It remains to note the so-far rationalistic character of such teachings as the protests against ceremonialism and sabbatarianism, the favouring of the poor and the outcast, the extension of the future life to non-Israelites, and the express limitation of prayer (Mt. vi, 9; Lk. xi, 2) to a simple expression of religious feeling—a prescription which has been absolutely ignored through the whole history of the Church, despite the constant use of the one prayer prescribed—itsself a compilation of current Jewish phrases.

The expression in the Dominical prayer translated "Give us this day [or day by day] our daily bread" (Mt. vi, 11; Lk. xi, 3) is pointless and tautological as it stands in the English and other Protestant versions. In verse 8 is the assurance that the Father knows beforehand what is needed; the prayer is, therefore, to be a simple process of communion or advocacy, free of all verbiage; then, to make it specially ask for the necessary subsistence, without which life would cease, and further to make the demand each day, when in the majority of cases there would be no need to offer such a request, is to stultify the whole. If the most obvious necessity is to be urged, why not all the less obvious? The Vulgate translation, "Give us to-day our super-substantial bread," though it has the air of providing for the Mass, is presumptively the original sense; and is virtually supported by

¹ Luke xiii, 4.

² Cp. Conway, *Solomon and Solomonic Literature*, 1899, pp. 57, 201, 219. ³ John iv, 21.

McClellan (*N. T.* 1875, ii, 645-47), who notes that the repeated use of the article, τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον, implies a special meaning, and remarks that of all the suggested translations "daily" is "the very one which is mostly manifestly and utterly condemned." Compare the bearing of the verses Mt. vi, 25-26, 31-34, which expressly exclude the idea of prayer for bread, and Lk. xi, 13. The idea of a super-substantial bread seems already established in Philo, *De Legum Allegor.* iii, 55-57, 59-61. Naturally the average theologian (*e.g.*, Bishop Lightfoot, cited by McClellan) clings to the conception of a daily appeal to the God for physical sustenance; but in so doing he is utterly obscuring the original doctrine.

Properly interpreted, the prayer forms a curious parallel to the close of the tenth satire of Juvenal, above cited, where all praying for concrete boons is condemned, on the ground that the Gods know best, and that man is dearer to them than to himself; but where there is permitted (of course, illogically) an appeal for soundness of mind and spiritual serenity. The documents would be nearly contemporary, and, though independent, would represent kindred processes of ethical and rational improvement on current religious practice. On the other hand, the prayer, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"—which again rings alien to the context—would have been scouted by Juvenal as representing a bad survival of the religion of fear. Several early citations and early MSS., it should be noted, give a briefer version of the prayer, beginning, "Father, hallowed be thy name," and dropping the "Thy will be done" clause, as well as the "deliver us from evil," though including the "lead us not into temptation."

It may or may not have been that this rationalization of religion was originally preached by the same sect or school as gave the exalted counsel to resist not evil and to love enemies—a line of thought found alike in India and in China, and, in the moderate form of a veto on retaliation, in Greece and Rome.¹ But it is inconceivable that the same sect originally laid down the doctrines of the blood sacrifice and the final damnation of those who did not accept the Messiah (Mt. x). The latter dogmas, with the myths, naturally became the practical creed of the later Church, for which the counsel of non-solicitous prayer and the love of enemies were unimaginable ideals.² Equally incapable of realization by a State

¹ *E.g.*, Plato, *Crito*, Jowett's tr. 3rd ed. ii, 150; Seneca, *De Ira*, ii, 32. Valerius Maximus (iv, 2, 4) even urges the returning of benefits for injuries.

² It is impossible to find in the whole patristic literature a single display of the "love" in question. In all early Christian history there is nothing to represent it save the attitude of martyrs towards their executioners—an attitude seen often in pagan literature. (*E.g.*, Ælian, *Var. Hist.* xii, 49.)

Church was the anti-Pharisaical and "Bohemian" attitude ascribed to the founder, and the spirit of independence towards the reigning powers. For the rest, the occult doctrine that a little faith might suffice to move mountains—a development from the mysticisms of the Hebrew prophets—could count for nothing save as an incitement to prayer in general. The freethinking elements in the gospels, in short, were precisely those which historic Christianity inevitably cast aside.

§ 2

Already in the Epistles the incompatibility of the original critical spirit with sectarian policy has become clear. Paul—if the first epistle to the Thessalonians be his—exhorts his converts to "prove all things, hold fast what is good";¹ and by way of making out the Christist case against unpliant Jews he argues copiously in his own way; but as soon as there is a question of "another Jesus"² being set up, he is the sectarian fanatic pure and simple, and he no more thinks of applying the counsel of criticism to his dogma³ than of acting on his prescription of love in controversy. "Reasonings" (*λογισμοὺς*) are specially stigmatized: they must be "cast down."⁴ The attitude towards slavery now becomes a positive fiat in its support;⁵ and all political freethinking is superseded by a counsel of conformity.⁶ The slight touch of rationalism in the Judaic epistle of James, where the principle of works is opposed to that of faith, is itself quashed by an anti-rational conception of works.⁷ From a sect so taught, freethinking would tend to disappear. It certainly obtruded itself early, for we have the Pauline complaint⁸ that "some among you say there is no rising from the dead"; but men of that way of thinking had no clear ground for belonging to the community, and would soon be preached out of it, leaving only so much of the spirit of criticism as produced heresies within the sphere of supernaturalism.

§ 3

When the new creed, spreading through the Empire, comes actively in contact with paganism, the rationalistic principle of

¹ 1 Thess. v, 21.

² 2 Cor. xi, 4; Gal. i, 6.

³ Cp. Rom. ix, 14-21.

⁴ 2 Cor. x, 5. Needless to say, such an expression savours strongly of late invention; but in any case it tells of the attitude of the Christian teachers of the second century.

⁵ 1 Cor. vii, 20-24 (where the phrase translated in English "use it rather" unquestionably means "rather continue" = remain a slave. Cp. Eph. vi, 5, and *Variorum Teacher's Bible in loc.*).

⁶ Rom. xiii, 1. Cp. 1 Peter ii, 13-14; Tit. iii, 1. The anti-Roman spirit in the Apocalypse is Judaic, not Gentile-Christian; the book being of Jewish origin.

⁷ James ii, 21.

⁸ 1 Cor. xv, 12.

anti-idolatry, still preserved by the Jewish impulse, comes into prominence; and insofar as they criticized pagan myths and pagan image-worship, the early Christians may be said to have rationalized.¹ Polytheists applied the term "atheistical" alike to them² and the Jews.³ As soon as the cult was joined by lettered men, the primitive rationalism of Evêmeros was turned by them to account; and a series of Fathers, including Clement of Alexandria, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Augustine, pressed the case against the pagan creeds with an unflagging malice which, if exhibited by later rationalists towards their own creed, Christians would characterize in strong terms. But the practice of criticism towards other creeds was, with the religious as with the philosophical sects, no help to self-criticism. The attitude of the Christian mass towards pagan idols and the worship of the Emperor was rather one of frenzy⁴ than of intellectual superiority;⁵ and the Fathers never seem to have found a rationalistic discipline in their polemic against pagan beliefs. Where the unbelieving Lucian brightly banter, they taunt and asperse, in the temper of barbarians deriding the Gods of the enemy. None of them seems to realize the bearing against his own creed of the pagan argument that to die and to suffer is to give proof of non-deity.⁶ In the end, the very image-worship which had been the main ground of their rational attack on paganism became the universal usage of their own Church; and its worship of saints and angels, of Father, Son, and Virgin Mother, made it more truly a polytheism than the creed of the later pagans had been.⁷ It is therefore rather to the heresies within the Church than to its attacks on the old polytheism that we are to look for early Christian survivals of ancient rationalism; and for the most part, after the practically rationalistic refusal of the early Ebionites to accept the doctrine of the Virgin Birth,⁸ these heresies were but combinations of other theosophies with the Christian.

Already in the spurious Epistles to Timothy we have allusion to the "antitheses of the *gnosis*"⁹ or pretended occult knowledge; and

¹ The Apology of Athenagoras (2nd c.) is rather a defence of monotheism than a Christian document; hence, no doubt, its speedy neglect by the Church.

² Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* c. 5; Min. Felix, *Octavius*, c. 10.

³ "The inhabitants of Cœlesyria, Idumea, and Judea are principally influenced by Aries and Ares, and are generally audacious, atheistical, and treacherous" (Ptolemy, *Tetra-biblos*, ii, 3—Paraphrase of Proclus).

⁴ Cp. Tertullian, *De Idolatria*, *passim*, and *Ad Scapulam*, c. 5.

⁵ For the refusal to worship men as Gods they had, of course, abundant pagan precedent. See above, p. 186, *note*.

⁶ E.g., Tertullian, *De Testimonio Animæ*, c. 1; Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, i, 41, etc.; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, c. xv; *Epit.* c. vii.

⁷ Cp. J. A. Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity*, ch. vii.

⁸ Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, i, 26. Cp. Hagenbach, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3te Aufl. § 23, 4 (p. 37), as to Cerinthus.

⁹ 1 Tim. vi, 20. The word persistently translated "oppositions" is a specific term in Gnostic lore. Cp. R. W. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, 1854, p. 115, *note*.

to early Gnostic influences may be attributed those passages in the gospel, above cited, which affirm that the Messiah's teaching is not for the multitude but for the adepts.¹ All along, Gnosticism² stood for the influence of older systems on the new faith; an influence which among Gentiles, untrained to the cult of sacred books, must have seemed absolutely natural. In the third century Ammonios Saccas, of Alexandria, said to have been born of Christian parents, set up a school which sought to blend the Christian and the pagan systems of religion and philosophy into a pantheistic whole, in which the old Gods figured as subordinate dæmons or as allegorical figures, and Christ as a reformer.³ The special leaning of the school to Plato, whose system, already in vogue among the scholars of Alexandria, had more affinity than any of its rivals⁴ to Christianity, secured for it adherents of many religious shades,⁵ and enabled it to develop an influence which permanently affected Christian theology; this being the channel through which the doctrine of the Trinity entered. According to Mosheim, almost no other philosophy was taught at Alexandria down to the sixth century.⁶ Only when the regulative zeal of the Church had begun to draw the lines of creed definitely⁷ on anti-philosophic lines did the syncretic school, as represented by Plotinus, Porphyry, and Hierocles,⁸ declare itself against Christianity.

Among the Church sects, as distinguished from the philosophic, the syncretic tendency was hardly less the vogue. Some of the leading Fathers of the second century, in particular Clement of Alexandria and Origen, show the Platonic influence strongly,⁹ and are given, the latter in particular, to a remarkably free treatment of the sacred books, seeing allegory wherever credence had been made difficult by previous science,¹⁰ or inconvenient by accepted dogma. But in the multiplicity of Gnostic sects is to be seen the main proof

¹ Cp. Harnack, *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, Mitchell's trans. p. 77 (ch. vi), p. 149 (bk. ii, ch. vi); Gieseler, *Comp. of Eccles. Hist.* i, § 63, Eng. tr. i, 234, as to the attitude of Origen.

² The term "Gnostic," often treated as if applicable only to heretical sects, was adopted by Clemens of Alexandria as an honourable title. Cp. Gieseler, p. 241, as cited.

³ Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. i, §§ 4-12. Cp., however, Abbé Cognat, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 1859, pp. 421-23, and Ueberweg, i, 239, as to the obscurity resting on the original teaching of Ammonios.

⁴ Cp. Gieseler, *Compendium*, i, § 52 (tr. vol. i, p. 162).

⁵ *Id.* §§ 54, 55, pp. 186-90.

⁶ *E. H.* 3 Cent. pt. ii, ch. i, §§ 2-4.

⁷ As to the earlier latitudinarianism, cp. Gieseler, as cited, p. 166.

⁸ Gieseler, § 55.

⁹ Mosheim, *E. H.* 3 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 1-7; Gieseler, as cited, § 53, pp. 162-65; Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* vi, 19; B. Saint-Hilaire, *De l'école d'Alexandrie*, 1845, p. 7; Baur, *Ch. Hist.* Eng. tr. ii, 3-8. But cp. Cognat, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, l. v, ch. v.

¹⁰ Cp. Mosheim on Origen, *Comm. de rebus Christ. ante Const.* §§ 27, 28, summarized in Schlegel's note to *Ec. Hist.* Reid's ed. pp. 100-101; Gieseler, § 63; Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 114, 140. Dr. Hatch (*Influence of Greek Ideas on the Christian Church*, pp. 82-83) notes that the allegorical method, which began in a tendency towards rationalism, came later to be typically orthodox.

of the effort of Christians, before the complete collapse of the ancient civilization, to think with some freedom on their religious problems.¹ In the terms of the case—apart from the Judaizing of the Elcesaites and Clemens Romanus—the thought is an adaptation of pagan speculation, chiefly oriental and Egyptian; and the commonest characteristics are: (1) in theology, an explanation of the moral confusion of the world by assuming two opposed Powers,² or by setting a variety of good and bad subordinate powers between the world and the Supreme Being; and (2) in ethics, an insistence either on the inherent corruptness of matter or on the incompatibility of holiness with physical pleasure.³ The sects influenced chiefly from Asia teach, as a rule, a doctrine of two great opposing Powers; those influenced from Egypt seek rather the solution of gradation of power under one chief God. All alike showed some hostility to the pretensions of the Jews. Thus:—

1. Saturninus of Antioch (second century) taught of a Good and an Evil Power, and that the world and man were made by the seven planetary spirits, without the knowledge or consent of either Power; both of whom, however, sought to take control, the Good God giving men rational souls, and subjecting them to seven Creators, one of whom was the God of the Jews. Christ was a spirit sent to bring men back to the Good God; but only their asceticism could avail to consummate the scheme. (Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, i, 24; Epiphanius, *Hæreses*, xxiii.)

2. Similarly, Marcion (son of a bishop of Pontus) placed between the good and bad Powers the Creator of the lower world, who was the God and Lawgiver of the Jews, a mixed nature, but just: the other nations being subjects of the Evil Power. Jesus, a divine spirit sent by the Supreme God to save men, was opposed by both the God of the Jews and the Evil Power; and asceticism is the way to carry out his saving purpose. Of the same cast were the sects of Bardesanes and Tatian. (Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, i, 27, 28; Epiphanius,

¹ "Gnosis was an attempt to convert Christianity into philosophy; to place it in its widest relation to the universe, and to incorporate with it the ideas and feelings approved by the best intelligence of the times." Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, p. 109. But cp. the *per contra* on p. 110: "it was but a philosophy in fetters, an effort of the mind to form for itself a more systematic belief in its own prejudices." Again (p. 115): "a reaction towards freethought was the essence of Gnosis." So also Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1882, pt. i, pp. 4-5, 153.

² This view could be supported by the Platonists from Plato, *Laws*, bk. x. Cp. Chaignet, *La vie et les écrits de Platon*, 1871, p. 422; and Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. ii, ch. v, ed. Paris, 1840, i, 288. It is explicitly set forth by Plutarch, *I. and O.*, cc. 45-49.

³ On the subject in general cp. Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v; also his *Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before Constantine*, Eng. tr. vol. ii; Harnack, *Outlines of the Hist. of Dogma*, ch. iv; King, *The Gnostics and their Remains*; Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pt. iii, §§ 10, 11, 12; Renan, *L'Eglise Chrétienne*, chs. ix, x; Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. ii, ch. v; Lardner, *Hist. of Heretics*, in *Works*, ed. 1835, vol. viii; Baur, *Church History*, pt. iii; Jeremie, *Hist. of the Chr. Church in 2nd and 3rd Cent.* ch. v (in *Encyc. Metropolitana*).

Hæreses, c. 56; Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* iv, 30. Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 7-9. As to Marcion, see Harnack, *Outlines*, ch. v; Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pt. iii, §§ 7, 12, 13; Irenæus, iv, 29, 30; Tertullian, *Against Marcion*.)

3. The Manichean creed (attributed to the Persian Mani or Manichæus, third century) proceeded on the same dualistic lines. In this the human race had been created by the Power of Evil or Darkness, who is the God of the Jews, and hence the body and its appetites are primordially evil, the good element being the rational soul, which is part of the Power of Light. By way of combining Christism and Mithraism, Christ is virtually identified with Mithra, and Manichæus claims to be the promised Paraclete. Ultimately the Evil Power is to be overcome, and kept in eternal darkness, with the few lost human souls. Here again the ethic is extremely ascetic, and there is a doctrine of purgatory. (Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. iii, ch. i; Mosheim, *E. H.* 3 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 2-11; Beausobre, *Hist. Critique de Manichée et du Manichéisme*, 1734; Lardner, *Cred. of the Gospels*, pt. ii, ch. lxiii.)

4. Among the Egyptian Gnostics, again, Basilides taught that the one Supreme God produced seven perfect secondary Powers, called Æons (Ages), two of whom, Dynamis and Sophia (Power and Wisdom), procreated superior angels, who built a heaven, and in turn produced lower grades of angels, which produced others, till there were 365 grades, all ruled by a Prince named Abraxas (whose name yields the number 365). The lowest grades of angels, being close to eternal matter (which was evil by nature), made thereof the world and men. The Supreme God then intervened, like the Good Power in the oriental system, to give men rational souls, but left them to be ruled by the lower angels, of whom the Prince became God of the Jews. All deteriorated, the God of the Jews becoming the worst. Then the Supreme God sent the Prince of the Æons, Christ, to save men's souls. Taking the form of the man Jesus, he was slain by the God of the Jews. Despite charges to the contrary, this system too was ascetic, though lenient to paganism. Similar tenets were held by the sects of Carpocrates and Valentinus, all rising in the second century; Valentinus setting up Thirty Æons, male and female, in pairs, with four unmarried males, guardians of the Pleroma or Heaven—namely, Horus, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus. The youngest Æon, Sophia, brought forth a daughter, Achamoth (*Scientia*), who made the world out of rude matter, and produced Demiourgos, the Artificer, who further manipulated matter. (Irenæus, bk. i, chs. 24, 25; bk. ii.)

These sects in turn split into others, with endless peculiarities.

Such was the relative freethought of credulous theosophic fantasy,¹ turning fictitious data to fresh purpose by way of solving the riddle of the painful earth. The problem was to account for evil consistently with a Good God; and the orientals, inheriting a dualistic religion, adapted that; while the Egyptians, inheriting a syncretic monotheism, set up grades of Powers between the All-Ruler and men, on the model of the grades between the Autocrat, ancient or modern, and his subjects. The Manichæans, the most thoroughly organized of all the outside sects, appear to have absorbed many of the adherents of the great Mithraic religion, and held together for centuries, despite fierce persecution and hostile propaganda, their influence subsisting till the Middle Ages.² The other Gnosticisms fared much worse. Lacking sacred books, often setting up a severe ethic as against the frequently loose practice of the churches,³ and offering a creed unsuited to the general populace, all alike passed away before the competition of the organized Church, which founded on the Canon⁴ and the concrete dogmas, with many pagan rites and beliefs⁵ and a few great pagan abracadabras added.

§ 4

More persistently dangerous to the ancient Church were the successive efforts of the struggling spirit of reason within to rectify in some small measure its most arbitrary dogmas. Of these efforts the most prominent were the quasi-Unitarian doctrine of ARIUS (fourth century), and the opposition by PELAGIUS and his pupil CÆLESTIUS (early in fifth century) to the doctrine of hereditary sin and predestinate salvation or damnation—a Judaic conception dating in the Church from Tertullian, and unknown to the Greeks.⁶

The former was the central and one of the most intelligible conflicts in the vast medley of early discussion over the nature of

¹ "Mysticism itself is but an insane rationalism" (Hampden, Bampton Lect. on *Scholastic Philosophy*, 3rd ed. intr. p. liii). It may be described as freethought without regard to evidence—that "lawless thought" which Christian polemicists are wont to ascribe to rationalists.

² Gieseler, §§ 61, 86 (pp. 228, 368, 370).

³ In the fourth century and later, however, the gospel of asceticism won great orthodox vogue through the writings of the so-called Dionysius the Areopagite. Cp. Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, c. iii, § 12; Westcott, *Religious Thought in the West*, 1891, pp. 190-91.

⁴ Compare the process by which the Talmudic system unified Judaism. Wellhausen, *Israel*, as cited, pp. 541-42; Milman, *History of Christianity*, bk. ii, ch. 4, ed. Paris, 1840, i, 276.

⁵ "There is good reason to suppose that the Christian bishops multiplied sacred rites for the sake of rendering the Jews and the pagans more friendly to them" (Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iv. Cp. ch. iii, § 17; ch. iv, §§ 3-7; 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 1-3; ch. iv, §§ 1-2; 5 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 2). This generalization is borne out by nearly every other Church historian. Cp. Harnack, *Outlines*, pt. ii, bk. i, ch. i; Milman, bk. iv, ch. 5, pp. 367-74; Gieseler, §§ 98, 99, 101, 104; Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, 3e edit. p. 630. Baur, *Church History*, Eng. tr. ii, 285-89.

⁶ Gieseler, § 87, p. 373; Hagenbach, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3te Aufl. § 108.

the Person of the Founder—a theme susceptible of any conceivable formula, when once the principle of deification was adopted. Between the Gnosticism of Athenagoras, which made the Logos the direct manifestation of Deity, and the Judaic view that Jesus was “a mere man,” for stating which the Byzantine courier Theodotos was excommunicated at Rome by Bishop Victor¹ in the third century, there were a hundred possible fantasies of discrimination;² and the record of them is a standing revelation of the intellectual delirium in the ancient Church. Theodotos the courier is said to have made disciples³ who induced one Natalius to become “a bishop of this heresy”; and his doctrine was repeatedly revived, notably by Artemon. According to a trinitarian opponent, they were much given to science, in particular to geometry and medicine.⁴ But such an approach to rationalism could not prosper in the atmosphere in which Christianity arose. Arianism itself, when put on its defence, pronounced Jesus to be God, after beginning by declaring him to be merely the noblest of created beings, and thus became merely a modified mysticism, fighting for the conception *homoiousios* (of similar nature) as against that of *homoousios* (of the same nature).⁵ Even at that, the sect split up, its chief dissenters ranking as semi-Arians, and many of the latter at length drifting back to Nicene orthodoxy.⁶ At first strong in the east, where it persecuted when it could, it was finally suppressed, after endless strifes, by Theodosius at the end of the fourth century; only to reappear in the west as the creed of the invading Goths and Lombards. In the east it had stood for ancient monotheism; in the west it prospered by early missionary and military chance till the Papal organization triumphed.⁷ Its suppression meant the final repudiation of rationalism; though it had for the most part subsisted as a fanaticism, no less than did the Nicene creed.

More philosophical, and therefore less widespread, was the doctrine associated in the second century with the name of Praxeas, in the third with those of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata, and in

¹ Eusebius, v, 28; Gieseler, § 60, p. 218.

² Cp. Gieseler, §§ 80–83, pp. 328–53; Harnack, *Outlines*, pt. ii, bk. i, esp. pp. 201–202.

³ One being another Theodotos, a money-changer.

⁴ Eusebius, as last cited. The sect was accused of altering the gospels to suit its purposes. The charge could probably be made with truth against every sect in turn, as against the Church in general.

⁵ In the end the doctrine declared orthodox was the opposite of what had been declared orthodox in the Sabellian and other controversies (Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 9); and all the while “the Arians and the orthodox embraced the same theology in substance” (Murdock, note on Mosheim, Reid’s ed. p. 161). An eminent modern Catholic, however, has described Arianism as “a deistic doctrine which had not the courage to bury itself in the fecund obscurities of dogma” (Ozanam, *La Civilisation chrétienne chez les Francs*, 1849, p. 35).

⁶ Gieseler, § 83, p. 345.

⁷ Cp. the author’s *Short History of Christianity*, 2nd ed. pp. 176–81.

the fourth with that of Photinus. Of this the essence was the conception of the triune deity as being not three persons but three modes or aspects of one person—a theorem welcomed in the later world by such different types of believer as Servetus, Hegel, and Coleridge. Far too reasonable for the average believer, and far too unpropitious to ritual and sacraments for the average priest, it was always condemned by the majority, though it had many adherents in the east, until the establishment of the Church made Christian persecution a far more effective process than pagan persecution had ever been.

Pelagianism, which unlike Arianism was not an ecclesiastical but a purely theological division,¹ fared better, the problem at issue involving the permanent crux of religious ethics. Augustine, whose supreme talent was for the getting up of a play of dialectic against every troublesome movement in turn, without regard to his previous positions,² undertook to confute Pelagius and Cælestius as he did every other innovator; and his influence was such that, after they had been acquitted of heresy by a church council in Palestine and by the Roman pontiff, the latter was induced to change his ground and condemn them, whereupon many councils followed suit, eighteen Pelagian bishops being deposed in Italy. At that period Christendom, faced by the portent of the barbarian conquest of the Empire, was well adjusted to a fatalistic theology, and too uncritical in its mood to realize the bearing of such doctrine either on conduct or on sacerdotal pretensions. But though the movement in its first form was thus crushed, and though in later forms it fell considerably short of the measure of ethical rationalism seen in the first, it soon took fresh shape in the form of so-called semi-Pelagianism, and so held its ground while any culture subsisted;³ while Pelagianism on the theme of the needlessness of "prevenient grace," and the power of man to secure salvation of his own will, has been chronic in the Church.

For a concise view of the Pelagian tenets see Murdock's note on Mosheim, following Walch and Schlegel (Reid's edition, pp. 208–209). They included (1) denial that Adam's sin was inherited; (2) assertion that death is strictly natural, and not a mere punishment for Adam's sin; (3) denial that children and virtuous adults dying unbaptized are damned, a middle

¹ "Pelagianism is Christian rationalism" (Harnack, *Outlines*, pt. ii, bk. ii, ch. iv, § 3, p. 364).

² He was first a Manichean; later an anti-Manichean, denying predestination; later, as an opponent of the Pelagians, an assertor of predestination. Cp. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pt. v, § 15. As to his final Manicheanism, see Milman, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, 3rd ed. i, 152.

³ Cp. Harnack, *Outlines*, pt. ii, bk. ii, ch. v, § 1 (p. 386).

state being provided for them; (4) assertion that good acts come of a good will, and that the will is free; grace being an enlightenment of the understanding, and not indispensable to all men. The relative rationalism of these views is presumptively to be traced to the facts that Pelagius was a Briton and Cælestius an Irishman, and that both were Greek scholars. (When tried in Palestine they spoke Greek, like the council, but the accuser could speak only Latin.) They were thus bred in an atmosphere not yet laden with Latin dogma. In "confuting" them Augustine developed the doctrine (intelligible as that of an elderly polemist in a decadent society) that all men are predestined to salvation or damnation by God's "mere good pleasure"—a demoralizing formula which he at times hedged with illogical qualifications. (Cp. Murdock's note on Mosheim, as cited, p. 210; Gieseler, § 87.) But an orthodox champion of Augustine describes him as putting the doctrine without limitations (Rev. W. R. Clarke, *St. Augustine*, in "The Fathers for English Readers" series, p. 132). It was never adopted in the east (Gieseler, p. 387), but became part of Christian theology, especially under Protestantism. On the other hand, the Council of Trent erected several Pelagian doctrines into articles of faith; and the Protestant churches have in part since followed. See Sir W. Hamilton's *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, 1852, pp. 493-94, note; and Milman, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, i, 142, 149.

The Latin Church thus finally maintained in religion the tradition of sworn adherence to sectarian formulas which has been already noted in the Roman philosophic sects, and in so doing reduced to a minimum the exercise of the reason, alike in ethics and in philosophy. Its dogmatic code was shaped under the influence of (1) Irenæus and Tertullian, who set scripture above reason and, when pressed by heretics, tradition above even scripture,¹ and (2) Augustine, who had the same tendencies, and whose incessant energy secured him a large influence. That influence was used not only to dogmatize every possible item of the faith, but to enforce in religion another Roman tradition, formerly confined to politics—that of systematic coercion of heretics. Before and around Augustine there had indeed been abundant mutual persecution of the bitterest kind between the parties of the Church as well as against pagans; the Donatists, in particular, with their organization of armed fanatics, the Circumcelliones, had inflicted and suffered at intervals all the worst horrors of civil war in Africa during a hundred years; Arians and Athanasians came again and again to mutual bloodshed;

¹Cp. Hampden, Bampton Lectures on *The Scholastic Philosophy*, 1848, pp. xxxv-xxxvi, and refs.

and the slaying of the pagan girl-philosopher, Hypatia,¹ by the Christian monks of Alexandria is one of the vilest episodes in the whole history of religion. On the whole, it is past question that the amount of homicide wrought by all the pagan persecution of the earlier Christians was not a tithe of that wrought by their successors in their own quarrels. But the spirit which had so operated, and which had been repudiated even by the bitter Tertullian, was raised by Augustine to the status of a Christian dogma,² which, of course, had sufficient support in the sacred books, Judaic and Jesuist, and which henceforth inspired such an amount of murderous persecution in Christendom as the ancient world had never seen. When, the temple revenues having been already confiscated, the pagan worships were finally overthrown and the temples appropriated by the edict of Honorius in the year 408, Augustine, "though not entirely consistent, disapproved of the forcible demolition of the temples."³ But he had nothing to say against the forcible suppression of their worship, and of the festivals. Ambrose went as far;⁴ and such men as Firmicus Maternus would have had the emperors go much further.⁵

Economic interest had now visibly become at least as potent in the shaping of the Christian course as it had ever been in building up a pagan cult. For the humble conditions in which the earlier priests and preachers had gained a livelihood by ministering to scattered groups of poor proselytes, there had been substituted those of a State Church, adopted as such because its acquired range of organization had made it a force fit for the autocrat's purposes when others had failed. The sequent situation was more and more unfavourable to both sincerity of thought and freedom of speech. Not only did thousands of wealth-seekers promptly enter the priesthood to profit by the new endowments allotted by Constantine to the great metropolitan churches. Almost as promptly the ideal of toleration was renounced; and the Christians began against the pagans a species of persecution that proceeded on no higher motive than greed of gain. Not only were the revenues of

¹ Sokrates, *Eccles. Hist.* bk. vii, ch. 15.

² *Epist.* 93. Cp. Schlegel's notes on Mosheim, in Reid's ed. pp. 159, 198; Rev. W. R. Clarke, *Saint Augustine*, pp. 86-87 (a defence); Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, bk. ii, ch. ii, 3rd. ed. i, 163; Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, 2e édit. i, 69-79. Harnack's confused and contradictory estimate of Augustine (*Outlines*, pt. ii, bk ii, chs. iii, iv) ignores this issue. He notes, however (pp. 362-63), some of Augustine's countless self-contradictions.

³ Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. iii, ch. viii; ed. cited, ii, 182, 188, and *note*. For the views of Ambrose see p. 184. In Gaul, St. Martin put down the old shrines by brute force. *Id.* p. 179.

⁴ Cp. Beugnot, *Histoire de la destruction du paganisme en Occident*, 1835, i, 430.

⁵ *De errore profanarum religionum*, end.

the temples confiscated as we have seen, but a number of Christians took to the business of plundering pagans in the name of the laws of Constantius forbidding sacrifice, and confiscating the property of the temples. Libanius, in his *Oration for the Temples*¹ (390), addressed to Theodosius, circumstantially avers that the bands of monks and others who went about demolishing and plundering temples were also wont to rob the peasants, adding:—

They also seize the lands of some, saying "it is sacred"; and many are deprived of their paternal inheritance upon a false pretence. Thus those men thrive upon other people's ruin who say "they worship God with fasting." And if they who are wronged come to the pastor in the city.....he commends (the robbers) and rejects the others.....Moreover, if they hear of any land which has anything that can be plundered, they cry presently, "Such an one sacrificeth, and does abominable things, and a troop ought to be sent against him." And presently the self-styled reformers (*σωφρονισται*) are there..... Some of these.....deny their proceedings.....Others glory and boast and tell their exploits.....But they say, "We have only punished those who sacrifice and thereby transgress the law which forbids sacrifice." O emperor, when they say this, they lie.....Can it be thought that they who are not able to bear the sight of a collector's cloak should despise the power of your government?.....I appeal to the guardians of the law [to confirm the denial].²

The whole testimony is explicit and weighty,³ and, being corroborated by Ammianus Marcellinus, is accepted by clerical historians.⁴ Ammianus declares that some of the courtiers of the Christian emperors before Julian were "glutted with the spoils of the temples."⁵

The official creed, with its principle of rigid uniformity and compulsion, is now recognizable as the only expedient by which the Church could be held together for its economic ends. Under the Eastern Empire, accordingly, when once a balance of creed was attained in the Church, the same coercive ideal was enforced, with whatever differences in the creed insisted on. Whichever phase of dogma was in power, persecution of opponents went on as a matter

¹ See it translated in full by Lardner in his *Testimonies of Ancient Heathens*, ch. xlix. *Works*, ed. 1835, vol. viii.

² Lardner, as cited, pp. 25-27.

³ As to the high character of Libanius, who used his influence to succour his Christian friends in the reign of Julian, see Lardner, pp. 15-17.

⁴ Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. iii, ch. vi; vol. ii, p. 131. See the passage there cited from the Funeral Oration of Libanius *On Julian*, as to Christians building houses with temple stones; also the further passages, pp. 129, 161, 212, of Mr. King's tr. of the Oration in his *Julian the Emperor* (Bohn Lib.).

⁵ Ammianus, xxii, 4.

of course.¹ Athanasians and Arians, Nestorians and Monophysites, used the same weapons to the utmost of their scope; Cyril of Alexandria led his fanatics to the pillage and expulsion of the Jews, as his underling Peter led them to the murder of Hypatia; other bishops wrought the destruction of temples throughout Egypt;² Theodosius, Marcian, St. Leo, Zeno, Justinian, all used coercion against every heresy without a scruple, affirming every verbal fantasy of dogma at the point of the sword. It was due to no survival of the love of reason that some of the more stubborn heresies, driven into communion with the new civilization of the Arabs, were the means of carrying some of the seeds of ancient thought down the ages, to fructify ultimately in the mental soil of modern Europe.

§ 5

Against the orthodox creed, apart from social and official hostility, there had early arisen critics who reasoned in terms of Jewish and pagan beliefs, and in terms of such rationalism as survived. Of the two former sorts some remains have been preserved, despite the tendency of the Church to destroy their works. Of the latter, apart from Lucian, we have traces in the Fathers and in the Neo-Platonists.

Thus Tertullian and Lactantius tell of the many who believe in a non-active and passionless God,³ and disdain those who turn Christian out of fear of a hereafter; and again⁴ of Stoics who deride the belief in demons. A third-century author quoted by Eusebius⁵ speaks of ἀπίστοι who deny the divine authorship of the holy scriptures, in such a fashion as to imply that this was done by some who were not merely pagan non-Christians but deniers of inspiration. Jamblichos, too,⁶ speaks of opponents of the worship of the Gods in his day (early in the fourth century).⁷ In the fifth century, again, Augustine complains bitterly of those impious and reckless persons who dare to say that the evangelists differ among themselves.⁸ He argues no less bitterly against the *increduli* and *infideles* who would not believe in immortality and the possibility of eternal torment;⁹ and he meets them in a fashion which constantly recurs in Christian apologetics, pointing to natural anomalies, real or alleged, and concluding that since we cannot understand all

¹ Gibbon, ch. xlvii. Bohn ed. v, 211-52, 264, 268, 272. Mosheim, *passim*.

² Milman, as cited, p. 178.

⁴ Tertullian, as cited, c. 3.

⁶ *On the Mysteries*, bk. x, ch. 2.

⁸ *De consensu evangelistarum*, i, 10.

³ *De Testimonio Animæ*, c. 2; *De Ira Dei*.

⁵ B. vi, ch. 28.

⁷ Cp. Minucius Felix (2nd c.), *Octavius*, c. 5.

⁹ *De civ. Dei*, xxi, 2, 5-7.

we see we should believe all we hear—from the Church. Those who derided the story of Jonah and the whale he meets by accusing them of believing the story of Arion and the dolphin.¹ In the same way he meets² their protest against the iniquity of eternal punishment by a juggle over the ostensible anomaly of long punishments by human law for short misdeeds. Whatever may have been his indirect value of his habit of dialectic, he again and again declares for prone faith and against the resort to reason; and to this effect may be cited a long series of Fathers and ecclesiastics, all eager to show that only in a blind faith could there be any moral merit.³

Such arguments were doubtless potent to stupefy what remained of critical faculty in the Roman world. In the same period Salvian makes a polemic against those who in Christian Gaul denied that God exercised any government on earth.⁴ They seem, however, to have been normal Christians, driven to this view by the barbarian invasions. Fronto, the tutor of Marcus Aurelius, again, seems to have attacked the Christians partly as rationalist, partly as conservative.⁵

In general, the orthodox polemic is interesting only insofar as it preserves that of the opposition. The *Dialogue with Trypho* by Justin Martyr (about 150) is a mere documental discussion between a Christian and a Jew, each founding on the Hebrew Scriptures, and the Christian doing nearly all of the argument. There is not a scintilla of independent rationalism in the whole tedious work.⁶ Justin was a type of the would-be "philosopher" who confessedly would take no trouble to study science or philosophize, but who found his sphere in an endless manipulation of the texts of sacred books. But the work of the learned Origen *Against Celsus* preserves for us a large part of the *True Discourse* of Celsus, a critical and extremely well-informed argument against Christianity by a pagan of the Platonic⁷ school in the time of Marcus Aurelius,⁸ on grounds to a considerable extent rationalistic.⁹ The line of rejoinder followed by Origen, one of the most cultured of the Christian

¹ *Id.* i, 14.

² *Id.* xxi, 11.

³ See the citations in Abailard's *Sic et non*, § 1. *Quod fides humanis rationibus sit adstruenda, et contra.*

⁴ *De Gubernatione Dei*, l. 4.

⁵ See Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 493. As to Crescens, the enemy of Justin Martyr (2 *Apol.* c. 3), see *id.* p. 492. Cp. Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, *passim*, as to pagan objections. What remains of Porphyry will be found in Lardner's *Testimonies of the Heathen*, ch. xxxvii. Cp. Baur, *Church History*, Eng. tr. ii, 179-87.

⁶ The *Controversy between Jason and Papiscus regarding Christ*, mentioned by Origen (*Ag. Celsus*, bk. iv, ch. 4), seems to have been of the same nature.

⁷ Origen repeatedly calls him an Epicurean; but this is obviously false. The Platonizing Christian would not admit that a Platonist was anti-Christian.

⁸ Origen places him in the reign of Hadrian; but the internal evidence is all against that opinion. Kain dates the treatise 177-78.

⁹ Cp. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, 3e édit. pp. 346-71.

Fathers, is for the most part otherwise. When Celsus argues that it makes no difference by what name the Deity is called, Origen answers¹ that on the contrary certain God-names have a miraculous or magical virtue for the casting out of evil spirits; that this mystery is known and practised by the Egyptians and Persians; and that the mere name of Jesus has been proved potent to cast out many such demons. When, on the other hand, Celsus makes a Jew argue against the Christist creed on the basis of the Jewish story that the founder's birth was illegitimate,² the Father's answer begins in sheer amiable ineptitude,³ which soon passes into shocked outcry.⁴ In other passages he is more successful, as when he convicts Celsus's Jew of arguing alternately that the disciples were deceived, and that they were deceivers.⁵ This part of the discussion is interesting chiefly as showing how educated Jews combated the gospels in detail, at a level of criticism not always above that of the believers. Sometimes the Jew's case is shrewdly put, as when he asks,⁶ "Did Jesus come into the world for this purpose, that we should not believe him?"—a challenge not to be met by Origen's theology. One of the acutest of Celsus's thrusts is the remark that Jesus himself declared that miracles would be wrought after him by followers of Satan, and that the argument from miracles is thus worthless.⁷ To this the rejoinder of Origen is suicidal; but at times the assailant, himself a believer in all manner of miracles, gives away his advantage completely enough.

Of a deeper interest are the sections in which Celsus (himself a believer in a Supreme Deity and a future state, and in a multitude of lower Powers, open to invocation) rests his case on grounds of general reason, arguing that the true Son of God must needs have brought home his mission to all mankind;⁸ and sweeps aside as foolish the whole dispute between Jews and Christians,⁹ of which he had given a sample. Most interesting of all are the chapters¹⁰ in which the Christian cites the pagan's argument against the homo-centric theory of things. Celsus insists on the large impartiality of Nature, and repudiates the fantasy that the whole scheme is adjusted to the well-being and the salvation of man. Here the Christian, standing for his faith, may be said to carry on, though in the spirit of a new fanaticism, the anti-scientific humanism first set up by Sokrates; while the pagan, though touched by religious apriorism, and prone to lapse from logic to mysticism in his turn, approaches

¹ B. i, cc. 24, 25.

⁴ cc. 37, 39.

⁷ B. ii, c. 49.

² B. i, cc. 28, 32.

⁵ B. ii, c. 26.

⁸ B. ii, c. 30.

¹⁰ B. iv, cc. 23-30, 54-60, 74.

³ c. 32.

⁶ B. ii, c. 78.

⁹ B. iii, c. 1.

the scientific standpoint of the elder thinkers who had set religion aside.¹ Not for thirteen hundred years was his standpoint to be regained among men. His protest against the Christian cultivation of blind faith,² which Origen tries to meet on rationalistic lines, would in a later age be regarded as conveying no imputation. Even the simple defensive subtleties of Origen are too rationalistic for the succeeding generations of the orthodox. The least embittered of the Fathers, he is in his way the most reasonable; and in his unhesitating resort to the principle of allegory, wherever his documents are too hard for belief, we see the last traces of the spirit of reason as it had been in Plato, not yet paralysed by faith. Henceforth, till a new intellectual life is set up from without, Christian thought is more and more a mere disputation over the unintelligible, in terms of documents open always to opposing constructions.

Against such minds the strictest reason would be powerless; and it was fitting enough that LUCIAN, the last of the great freethinkers of the Hellenistic world, should merely turn on popular Christianity some of his serene satire³—more, perhaps, than has come down to us; though, on the other hand, his authorship of the *De Morte Peregrini*, which speaks of the “crucified sophist,” has been called in question.⁴ The forcible-feeble dialogue *Philopatris*, falsely attributed to Lucian, and clearly belonging to the reign of Julian, is the last expression of general skepticism in the ancient literature. The writer, a bad imitator of Lucian, avows disbelief alike in the old Gods and in the new, and professes to respect, if any, the “Unknown God” of the Athenians; but he makes no great impression of intellectual sincerity. Apart from this, and the lost anti-Christian work⁵ of Hierocles, Governor of Bithynia under Diocletian, the last direct literary opponents of ancient Christianity were Porphyry and Julian. As both were believers in many Gods, and opposed Christianity because it opposed these, neither can well rank on that score as a freethinker, even in the sense in which the speculative Gnostics were so. The bias of both, like that of Plutarch, seems to have been to the utmost latitude of religious belief; and, apart from personal provocations and the ordinary

¹ Cp. A. Kind, *Teleologie und Naturalismus in der altchristlichen Zeit*, 1875; Soury, *Bréviaire de l'histoire du Matérialisme*, pp. 331-40.

³ Cp. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 373-77.

² B. i, chs. 9-11; iii, 44.

⁴ Christian excisions have been suspected in the *Peregrinus*, § 11 (Bernays, *Lucian und die Kyniker*, 1879, p. 107). But see Mr. J. M. Cotterill's *Peregrinus Proteus*, Edinburgh, 1879, for a theory of the spuriousness of the treatise, which is surmised to be a fabrication of Henri Etienne.

⁵ *Logoi Philaletheis*, known only from the reply of Eusebius, *Contra Hieroclem*. Hierocles made much of Apollonius of Tyana, as having greatly outdone Jesus in miracles, while ranking simply as a God-beloved man.

temper of religious conservatism, it was the exiguity of the Christian creed that repelled them. Porphyry's treatise, indeed, was answered by four Fathers,¹ all of whose replies have disappeared, doubtless in fulfilment of the imperial edict for the destruction of Porphyry's book—a dramatic testimony to the state of mental freedom under Theodosius II.² What is known of his argument is preserved in the incidental replies of Jerome, Augustine, Eusebius, and others.³ The answer of Cyril to Julian has survived, probably in virtue of Julian's status. His argumentations against the unworthy elements, the exclusiveness, and the absurdities of the Jewish and Christian faith are often reasonable enough, as doubtless were those of Porphyry;⁴ but his own theosophic positions are hardly less vulnerable; and Porphyry's were probably no better, to judge from his preserved works. Yet it is to be said that the habitual tone and temper of the two men compares favourably with that of the polemicists on the other side. They had inherited something of the elder philosophic spirit, which is so far to seek in patristic literature, outside of Origen.

The latest expressions of rationalism among churchmen were to the full as angrily met by the champions of orthodoxy as the attacks of enemies; and, indeed, there was naturally something of bitterness in the resistance of the last few critical spirits in the Church to the fast-multiplying insanities of faith. Thus, at the end of the fourth century, the Italian monk JOVINIAN fought against the creed of celibacy and asceticism, and was duly denounced, vituperated, ecclesiastically condemned, and banished, penal laws being at the same time passed against those who adhered to him.⁵ Contemporary with him was the Eastern AERIUS, who advocated priestly equality as against episcopacy, and objected to prayers for the dead, to fasts, and to the too significant practice of slaying a lamb at the Easter festival.⁶ In this case matters went the length of schism. With less of practical effect, in the next century, VIGILANTIUS of Aquitaine made a more general resistance to a more manifold superstition, condemning and ridiculing the venera-

¹ Methodius, Eusebius, Apollinaris, and Philostorgius.

² Cod. Justin. *De Summa Trinitate*, l. I, tit. i, c. 3.

³ Citations are given by Baur, *Ch. Hist.* ii, 180 sq.

⁴ Cp. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, p. 160. Chrysostom (*De Mundi Creatione*, vi, 3) testifies that Porphyry "led many away from the faith." He ably anticipated the "higher criticism" of the Book of Daniel. See Baur, as cited. Porphyry, like Celsus, powerfully retorted on the Old Testament the attacks made by Christians on the immorality of pagan myths, and contemned the allegorical explanations of the Christian writers as mere evasions. The pagan explanations of pagan myths, however, were of the same order.

⁵ Gieseler, § 106, ii, 75. Cp. Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 22.

⁶ Gieseler, § 106, vol. ii, p. 74; Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 2; and Schlegel's note in Reid's ed. p. 152.

tion of tombs and bones of martyrs, pilgrimages to shrines, the miracle stories therewith connected, and the practices of fasting, celibacy, and the monastic life. He too was promptly put down, largely by the efforts of his former friend Jerome, the most voluble and the most scurrilous pietist of his age, who had also denounced the doctrine of Jovinian.¹ For centuries no such appeal was heard in the western Church.

The spirit of reason, however, is well marked at the beginning of the fifth century in a pagan writer who belongs more truly to the history of freethought than either Julian or Porphyry. MACROBIUS, a Roman patrician of the days of Honorius, works out in his *Saturnalia*, with an amount of knowledge and intelligence which for the time is remarkable, the principle that all the Gods are but personifications of aspects or functions of the Sun. But such doctrine must have been confined, among pagans, to the cultured few; and the monotheism of the same writer's treatise *On the Dream of Scipio* was probably not general even among the remaining pagans of the upper class.²

After Julian, open rationalism being already extinct, anti-Christian thought was simply tabooed; and though the leading historians for centuries were pagans, they only incidentally venture to betray the fact. It is told, indeed, that in the days of Valens and Valentinian an eminent physician named Posidonius, son of a great physician and brother of another, was wont to say, "that men do not grow fanatic by the agency of evil spirits, but merely by the superfluity of certain evil humours; and that there is no power in evil spirits to assail the human race";³ but though that opinion may be presumed to have been held by some other physicians, the special ascription of it to Posidonius is a proof that it was rarely avowed. With public lecturing forbidden, with the philosophic schools at Athens closed and plundered by imperial force,⁴ with heresy ostracized, with pagan worship, including the strong rival cult of Mithraism, outwardly suppressed by the same power,⁵ unbelief was naturally little heard of after the fifth century.

¹ Milman, *Hist. of Chr.* bk. iii, ch. xi (ii, 268-70); Mosheim, 5 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 14; Gilly, *Vigilantius and his Times*, 1844, pp. 8, 389 sq., 470 sq. As to Jerome's persecuting ferocity see also Gieseler, ii, 65 note. For a Catholic polemic on Jerome's side see Amedée Thierry, *Saint Jérôme*, 2e édit. pp. 141, 363-66.

² See a good account of the works of Macrobius in Prof. Dill's *Roman Society in the last Century of the Western Empire*, bk. i, ch. iv.

³ Philostorgius, *Eccles. Hist. Epit.* bk. viii, ch. x.

⁴ By Justinian in 529. The banished thinkers were protected by Chosroes in Persia, who secured them permission to return (Gibbon, Bohn ed. iv, 355-56; Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. Tozer, i, 277, 287). Theodosius II had already forbidden all public lectures by independent teachers (*id.* pp. 282-83).

⁵ Theodosius I, Arcadius, and Theodosius II (379-450) successively passed laws forbidding and persecuting paganism (Finlay, i, 286; Beugnot, *Hist. de la destr. du paganisme en*

About its beginning we find Chrysostom boasting¹ that the works of the anti-Christian writers had persuaded nobody, and had almost disappeared. As regarded open teaching, it was only too true, though the statement clashes with Chrysostom's own complaint that Porphyry had led many away from the faith.² Proclus was still to come (410-485), with his eighteen *Arguments against the Christians*, proceeding on the principle, still cherished from the old science, that the world was eternal. But such teaching could not reach even the majority of the more educated; and the Jewish dogma of creation *ex nihilo* became sacrosanct truth for the darkening world. In the east Eusebius,³ and in the west Lactantius,⁴ expressed for the whole Church a boundless contempt of everything in the nature of scientific research or discussion; and it was in fact at an end for the Christian world for well-nigh a thousand years. For Lactantius, the doctrine of a round earth and an antipodes was mere nonsense; he discusses the thesis with the horse-laughter of a self-satisfied savage.⁵ Under the feet of arrogant and blatant ignorance we see trampled the first form of the doctrine of gravitation, not to be recovered for an æon. Proclus himself cherished some of the grossest pagan superstitions; and the few Christians who had in them something of the spirit of reason, as Cosmas "Indicopleustes," "the Indian navigator," who belongs to the sixth century, were turned away from what light they had by their sacred books. Cosmas was a Nestorian, denying the divinity of Mary, and a rational critic as regards the orthodox fashion of applying Old Testament prophecies to Jesus.⁶ But whereas pagan science had inferred that the earth is a sphere, his Bible taught him that it is an oblong plain; and the great aim of his *Topographia Christiana, sive Christianorum opinio de mundo*, was to prove this against those who still cultivated science.

Such pleadings were not necessary for the general Christian public, who knew nothing save what their priests taught them. In Chrysostom's day this was already the case. There remained but a

occident, i, 350 sq.). Mithraism was suppressed in the same period (Jerome, *Epist.* cvii, *ad Laetam*, Sokrates, *Eccles. Hist.* bk. v, ch. xvi). It is to be remembered that Constans and Constantius, the sons of Constantine, had commenced, at least on paper, to persecute paganism as soon as their father's new creed was sufficiently established (Cod. Theod. xvi, 10, 2, 4), and this with the entire approval of the whole Church. It was not their fault that it subsisted till the time of Theodosius II (cp. Gieseler, § 75, pp. 306-308; and Beugnot, i, 138-48). On the edict of Theodosius I see Milman, bk. iii, ch. viii: ed. cited, p. 186.

¹ *In S. Babylam, contra Julianum*, c. ii. Cp. his Hom. iv on 1st Cor. Eng. tr. 1839, p. 42.

² There is also a suggestion in one passage of Chrysostom (Hom. in 1 Cor. vi, 2, 3) that some Christians tended to doubt the actuality of apostolic miracles, seeing that no miracles took place in their own day.

³ *Præparatio Evangelica*, xv, 61.

⁴ *Div. Inst.* iii, 3.

⁵ *Id.* iii, 24.

⁶ *Topographia*, lib. v, cited by Murdock in note on Mosheim, 5 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 5, Reid's ed. p. 192. Cp. same ed. p. 219, note; and Gibbon, Bohn ed. iv, 259; v, 319.

few rational heresies. One of the most notable was that of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the head of the school of Antioch and the teacher of Nestorius, who taught that many of the Old Testament prophecies commonly applied to Jesus had reference to pre-Christian events, and discriminated critically among the sacred books. That of Job he pronounced to be merely a poem derived from a pagan source, and the Song of Songs he held to be a mere epithalamium of no religious significance. In his opinion Solomon had the *λόγος γνώσεως*, the love of knowledge, but not the *λόγος σοφίας*, the love of wisdom.¹ No less remarkable was the heresy of Photinus, who taught that the Trinity was a matter not of persons, but of modes of deity.² Such thinking must be pronounced the high-water mark of rational criticism in the ancient Church; and its occurrence in an age of rapid decay is memorable enough. But in the nature of things it could meet with only the scantiest support; and the only critical heresy which bulked at all largely was that of the Unitarian Anomœans or Eunomians,³ who condemned the worship of relics,⁴ and made light of scriptural inspiration when texts, especially from the Old Testament, were quoted against them.⁵ Naturally Chrysostom himself denounced them as unbelievers. Save for these manifestations, the spirit of sane criticism had gone from the Christian world, with science, with art, with philosophy, with culture. But the verdict of time is given in the persistent recoil of the modern spirit from the literature of the age of faith to that of the elder age of nascent reason; and the historical outcome of the state of things in which Chrysostom rejoiced was the re-establishment of universal idolatry and practical polytheism in the name of the creed he had preached. Every species of superstition known to paganism subsisted, slightly transformed. While the emperors savagely punished the pagan soothsayers, the Christians held by the same fundamental delusion; and against the devices of pagan magic, in the reality of which they unquestioningly believed, they professed triumphantly to practise their own sorceries of holy water, relics, prayer, and exorcism, no man daring to impugn the insanities of faith.⁶ On the face of religious life, critical reason was extinct.

¹ *Acta concilia Constantinop.* apud Harduin, ii, 65, 71.

² See Schlegel's note on Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 19.

³ The first name came from *Ανόμοιος*, "unlike-natured (to the Father)," that being their primary doctrinal heresy concerning Jesus. The second seems to have been a euphemism of their own making, with the sense of "holding the good law."

⁴ Jerome, *Adv. Vigilantium*, cc. 9, 11. ⁵ Epiphanius, *Adv. Hæres.* lxx, § 6.

⁶ Cp. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, viii, 15-19; xxi, 6; *De Trinitate*, iii, 12, 13 (7, 8); *Epist.* cxxxviii, 18-20; *Sermo* cc, in *Epiph. Dom.* ii; Jerome, *Vita S. Hilarion.* cc. 6, 37.

§ 6

It might safely have been inferred, but it is a matter of proved fact, that while the higher intellectual life was thus being paralysed, the primary intellectual virtues were attained. As formerly in Jewry, so now in Christendom, the practice of pious fraud became normal: all early Christian literature, and most of the ecclesiastical history of many succeeding centuries, is profoundly compromised by the habitual resort to fiction, forgery, and interpolation. The mystical poetry of the pagans, the Jewish history of Josephus, the gospels, the Epistles, all were interpolated in the same spirit as had inspired the production of new Gospels, new Epistles, new books of Acts, new Sibylline verses. And even where to this tendency there was opposed the growing demand of the organized Church for a faithful text, when the documents had become comparatively ancient, the disposition to invent and suppress, to reason crookedly, to delude and mislead, was normal among churchmen. This is the verdict of orthodox ecclesiastical history, a dozen times repeated.¹ It of course carries no surprise for those who have noted the religious doctrine of Plato, of Polybius, of Cicero, of Varro, of Strabo, of Dio Cassius.

While intelligence thus retrograded under the reign of faith, it is impossible to maintain, in the name of historical science, the conventional claim that the faith wrought a countervailing good. What moral betterment there was in the decaying Roman world was a matter of the transformed social conditions, and belongs at least as much to paganism as to Christianity: even the asceticism of the latter, which in reality had no reformative virtue for society at large, was a pre-Christian as well as an anti-Christian phenomenon. It is indeed probable that in the times of persecution the Christian community would be limited to the more serious and devoted types²—that is to say, to those who would tend to live worthily under any creed. But that the normal Christian community was superior in point of morals is a poetic hallucination, set up by the legends concerning the martyrs and by the vauntings of the Fathers, which are demonstrably untrustworthy. The assertion, still at times made by professed Positivists, that the discredit of the marriage tie in Roman

¹ Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 8, 15; 3 Cent. pt. i, ch. i, § 5; pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 10, 11; 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 3, 16; Gieseler, § 63, p. 235; Waddington, *Hist. of the Church*, 1833, pp. 38-39; Milman, *Hist. of Chr.* bk. iv, ch. iii, ed. cited, ii, 337. Cp. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pp. 11-12.

² Cp. the explicit admissions of Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 16; 3 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 4, 6; 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 8; ch. iii, § 17; Gieseler, § 103, vol. ii, p. 56. It is to be noted, however, that even the martyrs were at times bad characters who sought in martyrdom remission for their sins (Gieseler, § 74, p. 206; De Wette, as there cited).

life necessitated a new religion, and that the new religion was regenerative, is only a quasi-scientific variation of the legend.

The evidence as to the failure of the faith to reform its adherents is continuous from the first generation onwards. "Paul" complains bitterly of the sexual licence among his first Corinthian converts (1 Cor. v, 1, 2), and seeks to check it by vehement commands, some mystical (*id. v. 5*), some prescribing ostracism (*vv. 9-13*)—a plain confession of failure, and a complete reversal of the prescription in the gospel (Mt. xviii, 22). If that could be set aside, the command as to divorce could be likewise. Justin Martyr (*Dial. with Trypho*, ch. 141) describes the orthodox Jews of his day as of all men the most given to polygamy and arbitrary divorce. (Cp. Deut. xxiv, 1; Edersheim, *History*, p. 294.) Then the Christian assumption as to Roman degeneration and Eastern virtue cannot be sustained.

At the beginning of the third century we have the decisive evidence of Tertullian that many of the charges of immorality made by serious pagans against Christians were in large part true. First he affirms (*Ad Nationes*, l. i, c. 5) that the pagan charges are not true of all, "not even of the greatest part of us." In regard to the charge of incest (c. 16), instead of denying it as the earlier apologist Minucius Felix had done in the age of persecution, he merely argues that the same offence occurs *through ignorance* among the pagans. The chapter concludes by virtually admitting the charge with regard to misconduct in "the mysteries." Still later, when he has turned Montanist, Tertullian explicitly charges his former associates with sexual licence (*De Jejuniiis*, cc. 1, 17: *De Virginibus Velandis*, c. 14), pointing now to the heathen as showing more regard for monogamy than do the Christians (*De Exhort. Castitatis*, c. 13).

From the fourth century onward the history of the Church reveals at every step a conformity on the part of its members to average pagan practice. The third canon of the Nicene Council forbids clerics of all ranks from keeping as companions or housekeepers women who are not their close blood relations. In the fifth century Salvian denounces the Christians alike of Gaul and Africa as being boundlessly licentious in comparison with the Arian barbarians (*De Gubernatione Dei*, lib. 5, 6, 7). They do not even, he declares, deny the charge, contenting themselves with claiming superior orthodoxy. (Cp. Bury, *Hist. of the Later Roman Empire*, i, 198-99, and Finlay, ii, 219, for another point of view.) On all hands heresy was reckoned the one deadly sin (Gieseler, § 74, p. 295, and refs.), and all real misdeeds came to seem venial by comparison. As to sexual vice and crime among the Christianized Germans, see Gieseler, § 125, vol. ii, 158-60.

In the East the conditions were the same. The story of the indecent performances of Theodora on the stage (Gibbon, ch. xl), probably untrue of her, implies that such practices openly occurred. Milman (*Hist. of Chr.* bk. iv, ch. ii. ed. cited, ii, 327) recognizes general indecency, and notes that Zosimus charged it on Christian rule. Salvian speaks of unlimited obscenity in the theatres of Christian Gaul (*De Gub. Dei*, l. 6). Cp. Gibbon as to the character of the devout Justinian's minister Trebonian; who, however, was called an atheist. (Suidas, *s.v.*) On the collapse of the iconoclastic movement, licence became general (Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. Tozer, ii, 162). But even in the fourth century Chrysostom's writings testify to the normality of all the vices, as well as the superstitions, that Christianity is supposed to have banished; the churches figuring, like the ancient temples, as places of assignation. (Cp. the extracts of Lavollée, *Les Mœurs Byzantines*, in *Essais de littérature et d'histoire*, 1891, pp. 48-62, 89; the S.P.C.K.'s *St. Chrysostom's Picture of his Age*, 1875, pp. 6, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102-104, 108, 194; Chrysostom's *Homilies*, Eng. tr. 1839, Hom. xii on 1st Cor. pp. 159-64; Jerome, *Adv. Vigilantium*, cited by Gieseler, ii, 66, note 19, and in Gilly's *Vigilantius and his Times*, 1844, pp. 406-407.) The clergy were among the most licentious of all, and Chrysostom had repeatedly to preach against them (Lavollée, ch. iv; Mosheim, as last cited; Gibbon, ch. xlvii, Bohn ed. iv, 232). The position of women was practically what it had been in post-Alexandrian Greece and Asia-Minor (Lavollée, ch. v; cp. *St. Chrysostom's Picture of his Age*, pp. 180-82); and the practice corresponded. In short, the supposition that the population of Constantinople as we see it under Justinian, or that of Alexandria in the same age, could have been morally austere, is fantastic.

It would indeed be unintelligible that intellectual decline without change of social system should put morals on a sound footing. The very asceticism which seeks to mortify the body is an avowal of the vice from which it recoils, and insofar as this has prevailed under Christianity it has specifically hindered general temperance,¹ inasmuch as the types capable of self-rule thus leave no offspring.

On the other hand, with the single exception of the case of the gladiatorial combats (which had been denounced in the first century by the pagan Seneca,² and in the fourth by the pagan Libanius, but lasted in Rome long after Christianity had become the State religion;³ while the no less cruel combats of men with wild beasts were suppressed only when the finances of the falling Empire could no longer

¹ Cp. Gieseler, ii, 67-68.

² *Epist.* vii, 5; xcv, 33. Cp. Cicero, *Tusculans*, ii, 17.

³ Cp. the Bohn ed. of Gibbon, note by clerical editor, iii, 359.

maintain them),¹ the vice of cruelty seems to have been in no serious degree cast out.² Cruelty to slaves was certainly not less than in the Rome of the Antonines; and Chrysostom³ denounces just such atrocities by cruel mistresses as had been described by Horace and Juvenal. The story of the slaying of Hypatia, indeed, is decisive as to Christian ferocity.⁴

In fine, the entire history of Christian Egypt, Asia, and Africa, progressively decadent till their easy conquest by the Saracens, and the entire history of the Christian Byzantine empire, at best stagnant in mental and material life during the thousand years of its existence, serve conclusively to establish the principle that in the absence of freethought no civilization can progress. More completely than any of the ancient civilizations to which they succeeded, they cast out or were denuded of the spirit of free reason. The result was strictly congruous. The process, of course, was one of socio-political causation throughout; and the rule of dogma was a symptom or effect of the process, not the extraneous cause. But that is only the clinching of the sociological lesson.

Of a deep significance, in view of the total historical movement, is the philosophical teaching of the last member of the ancient Roman world who exhibited philosophical capacity—the long famous BOETHIUS, minister of the conqueror Theodoric, who put him to death in the year 525. Ostensibly from the same hand we have the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, which is substantially non-Christian, and a number of treatises expounding orthodox Christian dogma. In the former “we find him in strenuous opposition.....to the Christian theory of creation; and his Dualism is at least as apparent as Plato’s. We find him coquetting with the anti-Christian doctrine of the immortality of the world, and assuming a position with regard to sin which is ultra-Pelagian and utterly untenable by a Christian theologian. We find him, with death before his eyes, deriving consolation not from any hopes of a resurrection.....but from the present contempt of all earthly pain and ill which his divine mistress, ‘the perfect solace of wearied

¹ The express declaration of Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*, l. 6. On the general question compare Mr. Farrer’s *Paganism and Christianity*, ch. x; Milman, as last cited, p. 331; and Gieseler, ii, 71, note 6. The traditional view that the games were suppressed by Honorius, though accepted by Gibbon and by Professor Dill (*Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, 2nd ed. p. 56), appears to be an error. Cp. Beugnot, *Destr. du Paganisme*, ii, 25; Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, i, 236.

² As to the specially cruel use of judicial torture by the later Inquisition, see H. C. Lea, *Superstition and Force*, 3rd ed. p. 452.

³ Lavollée, as cited, p. 92. Cp. *St. Chrysostom’s Picture of his Age*, p. 112, and the admissions of Milman, bk. iv, ch. i.

⁴ As to the spirit of hatred roused by controversy among believers, see Gieseler, § 104, vol. ii, pp. 64-67; and Ullmann’s *Gregory of Nazianzum*, Eng. tr. 1851, pp. 177-80.

souls,' has taught him."¹ Seeing that Theodoric, though a professed admirer of the ancient life, had absolutely put down, on pain of death,² every remaining religious practice of paganism, it is certain that Boethius must have officially professed Christianity; but his book seems to make it certain that he was not a believer. The only theory on which the expounder of such an essentially pagan philosophy can be conceived as really the author of the Christian tractates ascribed to Boethius is that, under the stroke of undeserved ruin and unjust doom, the thinker turned away from the creed of his official life and sought healing in the wisdom of the older world.³ Whether we accept this solution or, in despite of the specific testimony, reject the theological tractates as falsely ascribed—either by their writer or by others—to Boethius,⁴ the significant fact remains that it was not the Christian tracts but the pagan *Consolation* that passed down to the western nations of the Middle Ages as the last great intellectual legacy from the ancient world. It had its virtue for an age of mental bondage, because it preserved some pulse of the spirit of free thought.

¹ H. Fraser Stewart, *Boethius: An Essay*, 1891, pp. 100-101.

² Cp. Beugnot, *Destruction du Paganisme*, ii, 282-83.

³ *Id.* p. 159. Mr. Stewart in another passage (p. 106) argues that "*The Consolation* is intensely artificial"—this by way of explaining that it was a deliberate exercise, not representing the real or normal state of its author's mind. Yet he has finally to avow (p. 107) that "it remains a very noble book"—a character surely incompatible with intense artificiality.

⁴ This is the view of Maurice (*Medieval Philosophy*, 2nd ed. 1859, pp. 14-16), who decides that Boethius was neither a Christian nor a "pagan"—*i.e.*, a believer in the pagan Gods. This is simply to say that he was a rationalist—a "pagan philosopher," like Aristotle. But, as is noted by Prof. Bury (ed. of Gibbon, iv, 199), Boethius's authorship of a book, *De sancta trinitate, et capita quædam dogmatica, et librum contra Nestorium*, is positively asserted in the *Anecdota Holderi* (ed. by Usener, Leipzig, 1877, p. 4), a fragment found in a 10th century MS.

CHAPTER VIII

FREETHOUGHT UNDER ISLAM¹

§ 1

THE freethinking of Mohammed may be justly said to begin and end with his rejection of popular polytheism and his acceptance of the idea of a single God. That idea he ostensibly held as a kind of revelation, not as a result of any traceable process of reasoning; and he affirmed it from first to last as a fanatic. One of the noblest of fanatics he may be, but hardly more. Denouncing all idolatry, he anchored his creed to the Ka'aba, the sacred black stone of the remote past, which is to this day its most revered object.

That the monotheistic idea, in its most vivid form, reached him in middle age by way of a vision is part of the creed of his followers; and that it derived in some way from Jews, or Persians, or Christians, as the early unbelievers declared,² is probable enough. But there is evidence that among his fellow-Arabs the idea had taken some slight root before his time, even in a rationalistic form, and it is clear that there were before his day many believers, though also many unbelievers, in a future state.³ There is no good ground for the oft-repeated formula about the special monotheistic and other religious proclivities of "the Semite";⁴ Semites being subject to religious influences like other peoples, in terms of culture and environment. The Moslems themselves preserved a tradition that one Zaid, who died five years before the Prophet received his first inspiration, had of his own accord renounced idolatry without becoming either Jew or Christian; but on being told by a Jew to

¹ The strict meaning of this term, given by Mohammed ("the true religion with God is Islam"; Sura, iii, 17), is "submission"—such being the attitude demanded by the Prophet. "Moslem" or "Muslim" means one who accepts Islam. Koran means strictly, not "book," but "reading" or recitation.

² Rodwell's tr. of the Koran, ed. 1861, pref. p. xv.

³ Sale, *Preliminary Discourse* to tr. of the Koran, ed. 1833, i, 42; Muir's *Life of Mohammad*, ed. Weir, 1912, p. 78. Cp. Freeman, *History and Conquests of the Saracens*, 1856, p. 35. The late Prof. Palmer, in introd. to his tr. of the Koran (Sacred Books of the East series), i, p. xv, says that "By far the greater number had ceased to believe in anything at all"; but this is an extravagance, confuted by himself in other passages—*e.g.* p. xi.

⁴ These generalizations are always matched, and cancelled, by others from the same sources. Thus Prof. D. B. Macdonald writes of "the always flighty and skeptical Arabs," and, a few pages later, of the God-fearing fatalism "of all Muslim thought, the faith to which the Semite ever returns in the end." *Development of Muslim Theology*, etc. (in "Semitic Series"), New York, 1903, pp. 122, 126.

become a *Hanyf*,¹ that is to say, of the religion of Abraham, who worshipped nothing but God, he at once agreed.² In the oldest extant biography of Mohammed an address of Zaid's has been preserved, of which six passages are reproduced in the Koran;³ and there are other proofs⁴ that the way had been partly made for Mohammedanism before Mohammed, especially at Medina, to which he withdrew (the Hej'ra) with his early followers when his fellow-tribesmen would not accept his message. He uses the term *Hanyf* repeatedly as standing for his own doctrine.⁵ In some of the Arab poetry of the generation before Mohammed, again, there is "a deep conviction of the unity of God, and of his elevation over all other beings," as well as a clearly developed sense of moral responsibility.⁶ The doctrine of a Supreme God was indeed general;⁷ and Mohammed's insistence on the rejection of the lesser deities or "companions of God" was but a preaching of unitarianism to half-professed monotheists who yet practised polytheism and idolatry. The Arabs at his time, in short, were on the same religious plane as the Christians, but with a good deal of unbelief; "Zendékism" or rationalistic deism (or atheism) being charged in particular on Mohammed's tribe, the Koreish;⁸ and the Prophet used traditional ideas to bring them to his unitary creed. In one case he even temporarily accepted their polytheism.⁹ The several tribes were further to some extent monolatrous,¹⁰ somewhat as were the Semitic tribes of Palestine; and before Mohammed's time a special worshipper of the star Sirius sought to persuade the Koreish to give up their idols and adore that star alone. Thus between their

¹ The word means either convert or pervert; in Heb. and Syr. "heretic"; in Arabic, "orthodox." It must not be confounded with *Hanyfite*, the name of an orthodox sect, founded by one Hanyfa.

² See Rodwell's tr. of the Koran, ed. 1861, pref. pp. xvi, xvii; and Sura, xvi (lxxiii in Rodwell's chron. arrangement), v. 121, p. 252, note 2.

³ Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, 1861-65, i, 83 sq. Cp. p. 60 sq.

⁴ Rodwell, p. 497, note to Sura iii (xcvii) 19; and pref. p. xvi; Caussin de Perceval, *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme*, 1847, i, 321-26; Nicholson, *Lit. Hist. of the Arabs*, pp. 69, 149. "To the great mass of the citizens of Mecca the new doctrine was simply the Hanyfism to which they had become accustomed; and they did not at first trouble themselves at all about the matter." Palmer, introd. to tr. of Koran, i, p. xxiv. Cp. Sprenger, as cited, i, 46-60, 65.

⁵ The word *Hanyf* or *Hanif* recurs in Sura ii, 129; iii, 60, 89; iv, 124; vi, 79, 162; x, 105, xvi, 121; xxii, 32; xxx, 29. Cp. H. Derenbourg, *La science des religions et l'Islamisme* 1886, pp. 42-43. Palmer's translation, marred as it unfortunately is by slanginess, is on such points specially trustworthy. Rodwell's does not always indicate the use of the word *Hanyf*; but the German version of Ullmann, the French of Kasimirski, and Sale's, do not indicate it at all. Sprenger (p. 43) derives the *Hanyfs* from Essenes who had almost lost all knowledge of the Bible. Cp. p. 67. Prof. Macdonald writes that the word "is of very doubtful derivation. But we have evidence from heathen Arab poetry that these *Hanyfs* were regarded as much the same as Christian monks, and that the term *hanif* was used as a synonym for *rahib*, monk." Work cited, p. 125.

⁶ Sprenger, as cited, p. 13.

⁷ Cp. Sale's *Prelim. Discourse*, as cited, i, 38; and Palmer, introd. p. xv; and Nicholson, pp. 139-40.

⁸ Al Mostaraf, cited by Pococke, *Specimen Histor. Arab.* p. 136; Sale, *Prelim. Disc.* as cited, p. 45.

⁹ Cp. Nicholson, pp. 155-56 and refs.

¹⁰ Sale, as cited, pp. 39-41.

partially developed monotheism, their partial familiarity with *Hanyf* monotheism, and their common intercourse with the nominally monotheistic Jews and Christians, many Arabs were in a measure prepared for the Prophet's doctrine; which, for the rest, embodied many of their own traditions and superstitions as well as many orally received from Christians and Jews.

"The Koran itself," says Palmer, "is, indeed, less the invention or conception of Mohammed than a collection of legends and moral axioms borrowed from desert lore and couched in the language and rhythm of desert eloquence, but adorned with the additional charm of enthusiasm. Had it been merely Mohammed's own invented discourses, bearing only the impress of his personal style, the Koran could never have appealed with so much success to every Arab-speaking race as a miracle of eloquence."¹

Kuenen challenges Sprenger's conclusions and sums up: "We need not deny that Mohammed had predecessors; but we must deny that tradition gives us a faithful representation of them, or is correct in calling them *hanyfs*."² On the other hand, he concedes that "Mohammed *made* Islam out of elements which were supplied to him very largely from outside, and which had a whole history behind them already, so that he could take them up as they were without further elaboration."³

"During the first century of Islam the forging of Traditions became a recognized political and religious weapon, of which all parties availed themselves. Even men of the strictest piety practised this species of fraud, and maintained that the end justified the means."⁴

The final triumph of the religion, however, was due neither to the elements of its Sacred Book nor to the moral or magnetic power of the Prophet. This power it was that won his first adherents, who were mostly his friends and relatives, or slaves to whom his religion was a species of enfranchisement.⁵ From that point forward his success was military—thanks, that is, to the valour of his followers—his fellow citizens never having been won in mass to his teaching.⁶ Such success as his might conceivably be gained by a mere military chief. Nor could the spread of Islam after his death have taken place save in virtue of the special opportunities

¹ Palmer, introd. to his *Haroun Alraschid*, 1882, p. 14. Cp. Derenbourg, *La science des religions et l'islamisme*, p. 44, controverting Kuenen.

² Hibbert Lectures, *On National and Universal Religions*, ed. 1901, p. 21 and Note II.

³ *Id.* p. 31.

⁴ Nicholson, *Lit. Hist. of the Arabs*, p. 145.

⁵ Rodwell, note to Sura xcvi (R. i), 10.

⁶ Sprenger estimates that at his death the number really converted to his doctrine did not exceed a thousand. Cp. Nicholson, pp. 153-58.

for conquest lying before its adherents—opportunities already seen by Mohammed, either with the eye of statesmanship or with that of his great general, Omar.¹ It is an error to assume, as is still commonly done, that it was the unifying and inspiring power of the religion that wrought the Saracen conquests. Warlike northern barbarians had overrun the Western Empire without any such stimulus; the prospect of booty and racial kinship sufficed them for the conquest of a decadent community; and the same conditions existed for the equally warlike Saracens,² who also, before Mohammed, had learned something of the military art from the Græco-Romans.³ Their religious ardour would have availed them little against the pagan legions of the unbelieving Cæsar; and as a matter of fact they could never conquer, though they curtailed, the comparatively weak Byzantine Empire; its moderate economic resources and traditional organization sufficing to sustain it, despite intellectual decadence, till the age of Saracen greatness was over. Nor did their faith ever unify them save ostensibly for purposes of common warfare against the racial foe—a kind of union attained in all ages and with all varieties of religion. Fierce domestic strifes broke out as soon as the Prophet was dead. It would be as true to say that the common racial and military interest against the Græco-Roman and Persian States unified the Moslem parties, as that Islam unified the Arab tribes and factions. Apart from the inner circle of converts, indeed, the first conquerors were in mass not at all deeply devout, and many of them maintained to the end of their generation, and after his death, the unbelief which from the first met the Prophet at Mecca.⁴ Against the creed of Mohammed “the conservative and material instincts of the people of the desert rose in revolt; and although they became Moslems *en masse*, the majority of them neither believed in Islam nor knew what it meant. Often their motives were frankly utilitarian: they expected that Islam would bring them luck.....If things went ill, they blamed Islam and turned their backs on it.”⁵ It is told of a Moslem chief of the early days that he said: “If there were a God, I would swear by his

¹ Renan ascribes the idea wholly to Omar. *Études d'histoire et de critique*, ed. 1862, p. 250. The faithful have preserved a sly saying that “Omar was many a time of a certain opinion, and the Koran was then revealed accordingly.” Nöldeke, *Enc. Brit.* art. on KORAN, in *Sketches from Eastern History*, 1892, p. 28. On the other hand, Sedillot decides (*Histoire des Arabes*, 1854, p. 60) that “in Mohammed it is the political idea that dominates.” So Nicholson (p. 169): “At Medina the days of pure religious enthusiasm have passed away for ever, and the prophet is overshadowed by the statesman.” Cp. pp. 173, 175.

² On the measure of racial unity set up by Abyssinian attacks as well as by the pretensions of the Byzantine and Persian empires, see Sedillot, pp. 30, 38. Cp. Van Vloten, *Recherches sur la domination arabe*, Amsterdam, 1894, pp. 1-4, 7.

³ Professor Stanislas Guyard, *La Civilisation Musulmane*, 1884, p. 22.

⁴ Cp. Renan, *Études*, pp. 257-66; Hauri, *Der Islam in seinem Einfluss auf das Leben seiner Bekenner*, 1882, pp. 64-65; Nicholson, p. 235. It was at Medina that a strict Mohammedanism first arose.

⁵ Nicholson, pp. 178-79, and ref.

name that I did not believe in him."¹ A general fanaticism grew up later. But had there been no Islam, enterprising Arabs would probably have overrun Syria and Persia and Africa and Spain all the same.² Attila went further, and he is not known to have been a monotheist or a believer in Paradise. Nor were Jenghiz Khan and Tamerlane indebted to religious faith for their conquests.

On the other hand, when a Khalifate was anywhere established by military force, the faith would indeed serve as a nucleus of administration, and further as a means of resisting the insidious propaganda of the rival faith, which might have been a source of political danger. It was their Sacred Book and Prophet that saved the Arabs from accepting the religion of the states they conquered as did the Goths and Franks. The faith thus so far preserved their military polity when that was once set up; but it was not the faith that made the polity possible, or gave the power of conquest, as is conventionally held. At most, it partly facilitated their conquests by detaching a certain amount of purely superstitious support from the other side. And it never availed to unify the race, or the Islamic peoples. On the fall of Othman "the ensuing civil wars rent the unity of Islam from top to bottom, and the wound has never healed."³ The feud between Northern and Southern Arabs "rapidly developed and extended into a permanent racial enmity."⁴ And when, after the Ommayade dynasty had totally failed to unify Semite and Aryan in Persia, the task was partially accomplished by the Abassides, it was not through any greater stress of piety, but by way of accepting the inevitable, after generations of division and revolt.⁵

§ 2

It may perhaps be more truly claimed for the Koran that it was the basis of Arab scholarship; since it was in order to elucidate its text that the first Arab grammars and dictionaries and literary collections were made.⁶ Here again, however, the reflection arises that some such development would have occurred in any case, on the basis of the abundant pre-Islamic poetry, given but the material conquests. The first conquerors were illiterate, and had to resort to the services and the organization of the conquered⁷ for all purposes of administrative writings, using for a time even the Greek and

¹ Hauri, *Der Islam*, p. 64.

² Cp. Montesquieu, *Grandeur et décadence des Romains*, ch. 22.

³ Nicholson, p. 190.

⁴ *Id.* p. 199.

⁵ Van Vloten, p. 70 and *passim*.

⁶ Prof. Guyard, as cited, pp. 16, 51; C. E. Oelsner, *Des effets de la religion de Mohammed*, etc., 1810, p. 130.

⁷ Guyard, p. 21; Palmer, *Haroun Alraschid*, introd. p. 19.

Persian languages. There was nothing in the Koran itself to encourage literature; and the first conquerors either despised or feared that of the conquered.¹

When the facts are inductively considered, it appears that the Koran was from the first rather a force of intellectual fixation than one of stimulus. As we have seen, there was a measure of rationalism as well as of monotheism among the Arabs before Mohammed; and the Prophet set his face violently against all unbelief. The word "unbeliever" or "infidel" in the Koran normally signifies merely "rejector of Mohammed"; but a number of passages² show that there were specific unbelievers in the doctrine of a future state as well as in miracles; and his opponents put to him challenges which showed that they rationally disbelieved his claim to inspiration.³ Hence, clearly, the scarcity of miracles in his early legend, on the Arab side. On a people thus partly "refined, skeptical, incredulous,"⁴ much of whose poetry showed no trace of religion,⁵ the triumph of Islam gradually imposed a tyrannous dogma, entailing abundance of primitive superstition under the ægis of monotheistic doctrine. Some moral service it did compass, and for this the credit seems to be substantially due to Mohammed; though here again he was not an innovator. Like previous reformers,⁶ he vehemently denounced the horrible practice of burying alive girl children; and when the Koran became law his command took effect. His limitation of polygamy too may have counted for something, despite the unlimited practice of his latter years. For the rest, he prescribes, in the traditional eastern fashion, liberal almsgiving; this, with normal integrity and patience, and belief in "God and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Scriptures, and the Prophets,"⁷ is the gist of his ethical and religious code, with much stress on hell-fire and the joys of Paradise, and at the same time on predestination, and with no reasoning on any issue.

§ 3

The history of Saracen culture is the history of the attainment

¹ The alleged destruction of the library of Alexandria by Omar is probably a myth, arising out of a story of Omar's causing some Persian books to be thrown into the water. See Prof. Bury's notes in his ed. of Gibbon, v, 452-54. Cp. Oelsner, as cited, pp. 142-43.

² Sura, vi, 25, 29; xix, 67; xxvii, 68-70; liv, 2; lxxxiii, 10-13. According to lviii, 28, however, some polytheists denied the future state.

³ Cp. Renan, *Études d'histoire et de critique*, pp. 232-34.

⁴ Renan, as cited, p. 232.

⁵ *Id.* p. 235. Renan and Sprenger conflict on this point, the former having regard, apparently, to the bulk of the poetry, the latter to parts of it.

⁶ Sedillot, p. 39. One of these was Zaid. Nicholson, p. 149.

⁷ See the passage (Sura ii) cited with praise by the sympathetic Mr. Bosworth Smith in his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 2nd ed. p. 181; where also delighted praise is given to the "description of Infidelity" in Sura xxiv, 39-40. The "infidels" in question were simply non-Moslems.

of saner ideas and a higher plane of thought. Within a century of the Hej'ra¹ there had arisen some rational skepticism in the Moslem schools, as apart from the chronic schisms and strifes of the faithful. A school of theology had been founded by Hasan-al-Basri at Bassorah; and one of his disciples, Wasil ibn Attâ, following some previous heretics—Mabad al Jhoni, Ghailan of Damascus, and Jonas al Aswari²—rejected the predestination doctrine of the Koran as inconsistent with the future judgment; arguing for free-will and at the same time for the humane provision of a purgatory. From this beginning dates the Motazileh or class of Motazilites (or Mu'tazilites),³ the philosophic reformers and moderate free-thinkers of Islam. Other sects of a semi-political character had arisen even during the last illness of the Prophet, and others soon after his death.⁴ One party sought to impose on the faithful the "Sunna" or "traditions," which really represented the old Arabian ideas of law, but were pretended to be unwritten sayings of Mohammed.⁵ To this the party of Ali (the Prophet's cousin) objected; whence began the long dispute between the Shiah or Shiites (the anti-traditionists), and the Sunnites; the conquered and oppressed Persians tending to stand with the former, and generally, in virtue of their own thought, to supply the heterodox element under the later Khalifates.⁶ Thus Shiites were apt to be Motazilites.⁷ On Ali's side, again, there broke away a great body of Kharejites or Separatists, who claimed that the Imaum or head of the Faith should be chosen by election, while the Shiites stood for succession by divine right.⁸ All this had occurred before any schools of theology existed.

The Motazilites, once started, divided gradually into a score of sects,⁹ all more or less given to rationalizing within the limits of monotheism.¹⁰ The first stock were named *Kadarites*, because insisting on man's power (*kadar*) over his acts.¹¹ Against them were

¹ The Flight (of the Prophet to Medina from Mecca, in 622), from which begins the Mohammedan era.

² Sale, as cited, p. 160.

³ Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, ii, 261-64; Dugat, *Histoire des philosophes et des théologiens Mussulmans*, 1878, pp. 48-55; H. Steiner, *Die Mu'taziliten, oder die Freidenker im Islam*, 1865, pp. 49-50; Guyard, p. 36; Sale, p. 161 (sec. viii); Nicholson, p. 222 sq. The term Motazila broadly means "dissenter," or "belonging to a sect."

⁴ Steiner, p. 1.

⁵ Palmer, *Introd. to Haroun Alraschid*, p. 14.

⁶ As to the Persian influence on Arab thought, cp. A. Müller, *Der Islam*, i, 469; Palmer, as last cited; Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, ii, 114 ff.; Nicholson, p. 220; Van Vloten, *Recherches sur la domination arabe*, p. 43. Van Vloten's treatise is a lucid sketch of the socio-political conditions set up in Persia by the Arab conquest.

⁷ Weil, ii, 261.

⁸ G. Dugat, *Histoire des philosophes et des théologiens Mussulmans*, p. 44; Sale, pp. 161, 174-78.

⁹ Dugat, p. 55; Steiner, p. 4; Sale, p. 162.

¹⁰ "Motazilism represents in Islam a Protestantism of the shade of Schleiermacher" (Renan, *Averroès et l'Averroïsme*, 3e ed. p. 104). Cp. Syed Ameer Ali, *Crit. Exam. of Life of Mohammed*, pp. 300-308; Sale, p. 161.

¹¹ Dugat, pp. 28, 44; Guyard, p. 36; Steiner, pp. 24-25; Renan, *Averroès*, p. 101. The *Kadarites*, as Sale notes (pp. 164-65), are really an older group than the Motazilites.

promptly ranged the *Jabarites*, who affirmed that man's will was wholly under divine constraint (*jabar*).¹ Yet another sect, the *Sifatites*, opposed both of the others, some of them² standing for a literal interpretation of the Koran, which is in part predestinationist, and in parts assumes freewill; while the main body of orthodox, following the text, professed to respect as insoluble mystery the contradictions they found in it.³ The history of Islam in this matter is strikingly analogous to that of Christianity from the rise of the Pelagian heresy.

It is to be noted that, while the heretics in time came under Greek and other foreign influences, their criticism of the Koran was at the outset their own.⁴ The Shiites, becoming broadly the party of the Persians, admitted in time Persian, Jewish, Gnostic, Manichæan, and other dualistic doctrines, and generally tended to interpret the Koran allegorically.⁵ A particular school of allegorists, the Bathenians, even tended to purify the idea of deity in an agnostic direction.⁶ All of these would appear to have ranked generically as Motazilites; and the manifold play of heretical thought gradually forced a certain habit of reasoning on the orthodox,⁷ who as usual found their advantage in the dissidences of the dissenters. On the other hand, the Motazilites found new resources in the study and translation of Greek works, scientific and philosophical.⁸ They were thus the prime factors, on the Arab side, in the culture-evolution which went on under the earlier of the Abasside Khalifs (750-1258). Greek literature reached them mainly through the Syrian Christians, in whose hands it had been put by the Nestorians, driven out of their scientific school at Edessa and exiled by Leo the Isaurian (716-741);⁹ possibly also in part through the philosophers who, on being exiled from Athens by Justinian, settled for a time in Persia.¹⁰ The total result was that already in the ninth century, within two hundred years of the beginning of Mohammed's preaching, the Saracens in Persia had reached not only a remarkable height of material civilization, their

so-called, their founder having rejected predestination before Wasil did. Kuenen (Hibbert Lect. p. 47) writes as if all the Motazilites were maintainers of freewill, but they varied. See Prof. Macdonald, as cited, p. 135 sq. ¹ Sale, pp. 165, 172-73.

² For a view of the various schools of Sifatites see Sale, pp. 166-74.

³ Guyard, pp. 37-38; G. D. Osborn, *The Khalifs of Baghdad*, 1878, p. 134.

⁴ Steiner, p. 16. Major Osborn (work cited, p. 136) attributes their rise to the influence of Eastern Christianity, but gives no proof.

⁵ Guyard, p. 40. Cp. Sale, p. 176; Van Vloten, p. 43.

⁶ Dugat, p. 34. Thus the orthodox sect of Hanyfites were called by one writer followers of reason, since they relied rather on their judgment than on tradition.

⁷ Steiner, p. 5; Nicholson, p. 370.

⁸ Steiner, pp. 5, 9, 88-89; Sale, p. 161; Macdonald, p. 140.

⁹ Sedillot, *Hist. des Arabes*, p. 335; Prof. A. Müller, *Der Islam* (in Oncken's series), i, 470; Ueberweg, i, 402.

¹⁰ Ueberweg, p. 403; Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, ii, 281.

wealth exceeding that of Byzantium, but a considerable though quasi-secret measure of scientific knowledge and rational thought,¹ including even some measure of pure atheism. All forms of rationalism alike were called *zendēkism* by the orthodox, the name having the epithetic force of the Christian terms "infidelity" and "atheism."²

Secrecy was long imposed on the Motazilites by the orthodoxy of the Khalifs,³ who as a rule atoned for many crimes and abundant breaches of the law of the Koran by a devout profession of faith. Freethinking, however, had its periods of political prosperity. Even under the Ommayade dynasty, the Khalif Al Walid Ibn Yazid (the eleventh of the race) was reputed to be of no religion, but seems to have been rather a ruffian than a rationalist.⁴ Under the Abassides culture made much more progress. The Khalif Al Mansour, though he played a very orthodox part,⁵ favoured the Motazilites (754-775), being generally a patron of the sciences; and under him were made the first translations from the Greek.⁶ Despite his orthodoxy he encouraged science; and it was as insurgents and not as unbelievers that he destroyed the sect of Rewandites (a branch of the anti-Moslem Ismailites), who are said to have believed in metempsychosis.⁷ Partly on political but partly also on religious grounds his successor Al Mahdi made war on the Ismailites, whom he regarded as atheists, and who appear to have been connected with the Motazilite "Brethren of Purity,"⁸ destroying their books and causing others to be written against them.⁹ They were anti-Koranites; hardly atheists; but a kind of informal rationalism approaching to atheism, and involving unbelief in the Koran and the Prophet, seems to have spread considerably, despite the

¹ For an orthodox account of the beginnings of freethinking (called *zendēkism*) see Weil, ii, 214. Cp. p. 261; also Tabari's *Chronicle*, pt. v, ch. xcvi; and Renan, *Averroès*, p. 103. Already, among the Ommayade Khalifs, Yezid III held the Motazilite tenet of freewill. Weil, p. 260.

² Nicholson, pp. 372, 375. The name *zendēk* (otherwise spelt *zindiq*) seems to have originally meant a Manichæan. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, ii (1906), 295; Nicholson, p. 375 and ref. Macdonald, p. 134, thinks it literally meant "initiate."

³ Steiner, p. 8. An association called "Brethren of Purity" or "Sincere Brethren" seem to have carried Motazilism far, though they aimed at reconciling philosophy with orthodoxy. They were in effect the encyclopedists of Arab science. Ueberweg, i, 411; Nicholson, p. 370 sq. See Dr. F. Dieterici, *Die Naturanschauung und Naturphilosophie der Araber im 10ten Jahrhundert, aus den Schriften der lautern Brüder*, 1861, Vorrede, p. viii, and Flügel, as there cited. Flügel dates the writings of the Brethren about 970; but the association presumably existed earlier. Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, p. 104; and S. Lane-Poole's *Studies in a Mosque*, 1893, ch. vi, as to their performance. Prof. Macdonald is disposed to regard them as "part of the great Fatimid propaganda which honeycombed the ground everywhere under the Sunnite Abassids," but admits that the Fatimid movement is "the great mystery of Muslim history" (pp. 165-70).

⁴ Sale, pp. 82-83, note.

⁵ He made five pilgrimages to Mecca, and died on the last, thus attaining to sainthood.

⁶ Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, ii, 81; Dugat, pp. 59-61; A. Müller, *Der Islam*, i, 470; Macdonald, p. 134. In Mansour's reign was born Al Allaf, "Sheikh of the Motazilites."

⁷ Dugat, p. 62. The Hâyetians, who had Unitarian Christian leanings, also held by metempsychosis. Sale, p. 163.

⁸ Nicholson, p. 371 and refs.

⁹ Dugat, p. 71. He persecuted *Zendēks* in general. Nicholson, pp. 373-74.

slaughter of many unbelievers by Al Mahdi. Its source seems to have been Persian aversion to the alien creed.¹ The great philosophic influence, again, was that of Aristotle; and though his abstract God-idea was nominally adhered to, the scientific movement promoted above all things the conception of a reign of law.² Al Hadi, the successor of Al Mahdi, persecuted much and killed many heretics; and Haroun Al Raschid (Aaron the Orthodox) menaced with death those who held the moderately rational tenet that "the Koran was created,"³ as against the orthodox dogma (on all fours with the Brahmanic doctrine concerning the Veda) that it was eternal in the heavens and uncreated. One of the rationalists, Al Mozdar, accused the orthodox party of infidelity, as asserting two eternal things; and there was current among the Motazilites of his day the saying that, "had God left men to their natural liberty, the Arabians could have composed something not only equal but superior to the Koran in eloquence, method, and purity of language."⁴

Haroun's crimes, however, consisted little in acts of persecution. The Persian Barmekides (the family of his first Vizier, surnamed Barmek) were regarded as protectors of Motazilites;⁵ and one of the sons, Jaafer, was even suspected of atheism, all three indeed being charged with it.⁶ Their destruction, on other grounds, does not seem to have altered the conditions for the thinkers; but Haroun's incompetent son Emin was a devotee and persecutor. His abler brother and conqueror Al Mamoun (813-833), on the other hand, directly favoured the Motazilites, partly on political grounds, to strengthen himself with the Persian party, but also on the ground of conviction.⁷ He even imprisoned some of the orthodox theologians who maintained that the Koran was not a created thing, though, like certain persecutors of other faiths, he had expressly declared himself in favour of persuasion as against coercion.⁸ In one case, following usage, he inflicted a cruel torture. "His fatal error," says a recent scholar, "was that he invoked the authority of the State in matters of the intellectual and religious life."⁹ Compared with others, certainly, he did not carry his

¹ *Id.* p. 72; Sale, pp. 184-85; Tabari's *Chronicle*, pt. v, ch. xcvi, Zotenberg's tr. 1874, iv, 447-53. Tabari notes (p. 448) that all the Moslem theologians agree in thinking *zendekism* much worse than any of the false religions, since it rejects all and denies God as well as the Prophet.

² Cp. Steiner, pp. 55 sq., 66 sq.; Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.* i, 405.

³ Dugat, p. 76. See Sale, pp. 82-83, 162-63, as to the champions of this principle.

⁴ Sale, p. 83; Macdonald, p. 150.

⁵ Dugat, p. 79; Osborn, *The Khalifs of Baghdad*, p. 195.

⁶ Palmer, *Haroun Alraschid*, p. 82. They were really theists.

⁷ Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, ii, 215, 261, 280; A. Müller, *Der Islam*, pp. 514-15. "It was believed that he was at heart a *zindiq*." Nicholson, p. 368.

⁸ Dugat, pp. 85-96.

⁹ Prof. Macdonald, as cited, p. 154.

coercion far, though, on being once publicly addressed as "Ameer of the Unbelievers," he caused the fanatic who said it to be put to death.¹ In private he was wont to conduct meetings for discussion, attended by believers and unbelievers of every shade, at which the only restriction was that the appeal must be to reason, and never to the Koran.² Concerning his personal bias, it is related that he had received from Kabul a book in old Persian, *The Eternal Reason*, which taught that reason is the only basis for religion, and that revelation cannot serve as a standing ground.³ The story is interesting, but enigmatic, the origin of the book being untraceable. Whatever were his views, his coercive policy against the orthodox extremists had the usual effect of stimulating reaction on that side, and preparing the ultimate triumph of orthodoxy.⁴ The fact remains, however, that Mamoun was of all the Khalifs the greatest promoter of science⁵ and culture; the chief encourager of the study and translation of Greek literature;⁶ and, despite his coercion of the theologians on the dogma of the eternity of the Koran, tolerant enough to put a Christian at the head of a college at Damascus, declaring that he chose him not for his religion but for his science. In the same spirit he permitted the free circulation of the apologetic treatise of the Armenian Christian Al Kindy, in which Islam and the Koran are freely criticized. As a ruler, too, he ranks among the best of his race for clemency, justice, and decency of life, although orthodox imputations were cast on his subordinates. His successors Motasim and Wathek were of the same cast of opinion, the latter being, however, fanatical on behalf of his rationalistic view of the Koran as a created thing.⁷

A violent orthodox reaction set in under the worthless and Turk-ruled Khalif Motawakkel⁸ (847-861), by whose time the Khalifate was in a state of political decadence, partly from the economic exhaustion following on its tyrannous and extortionate rule; partly from the divisive tendencies of its heterogeneous sections; partly from the corrupting tendency of all despotic power.⁹ Despite the official restoration of orthodoxy, the private cultivation of science

¹ Dugat, p. 83.

² Osborn, *Khalifs*, p. 249.

³ Nicholson, pp. 358-59. He it was who first caused to be measured a degree of the earth's surface. The attempt was duly denounced as atheistic by a leading theologian, Takyuddin. Montucla, *Hist. des Mathématiques*, éd. Lalande, i, 355 sq.; Draper, *Conflict of Religion and Science*, p. 109.

⁴ A Müller, *Der Islam*, i, 509 sq.; Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, ii, 280 ff.

⁵ Dugat, pp. 105-11; Sale, p. 82. Apart from this one issue, general tolerance seems to have prevailed. Osborn, *Khalifs*, p. 265.

⁶ Dugat, p. 112; Steiner, p. 79. According to Abulfaragius, Motawakkel had the merit of leaving men free to believe what they would as to the creation of the Koran. Sale, p. 82.

⁷ A good analysis is given by Dugat, pp. 337-48.

⁸ See extract by Major Osborn, *Khalifs*, p. 250.

⁹ Macdonald, pp. 154-58, 167.

and philosophy proceeded for a time; the study and translation of Greek books continued;¹ and rationalism of a kind seems to have subsisted more or less secretly to the end. In the tenth century it is said to have reached even the unlearned; and though the Motazilites gradually drifted into a scholastic orthodoxy, downright unbelief came up alongside,² albeit secretly. Faith in Mohammed's mission and law began again to shake; and the learned disregarded its prescriptions. Mystics professed to find the way to God without the Koran. Many decided that religion was useful for regulating the people, but was not for the wise. On the other side, however, the orthodox condemned all science as leading to unbelief,³ and developed an elaborate and quasi-systematic theology. It was while the scientific encyclopedists of Bassorah were amassing the knowledge which, through the Moors, renewed thought in the West, that Al Ashari built up the *Kalâm* or scholastic theology which thenceforth reigned in the Mohammedan East;⁴ and the philosopher Al Gazzali (or Gazel), on his part, employed the ancient and modern device of turning a profession of philosophical scepticism to the account of orthodoxy.⁵

In the struggle between science and religion, in a politically decadent State, the latter inevitably secured the administrative power.⁶ Under the Khalifs Motamid (d. 892) and Motadhed (d. 902) all science and philosophy were proscribed, and booksellers were put upon their oath not to sell any but orthodox books.⁷ Thus, though philosophy and science had secretly survived, when the political end came the popular faith was in much the same state as it had been under Haroun Al Raschid. Under Islam as under all the faiths of the world, in the east as in the west, the mass of the people remained ignorant as well as poor; and the learning and skill of the scholars served only to pass on the saved treasure of Greek thought and science to the new civilization of Europe. The fact that the age of military and political decadence was that of the widest diffusion of rationalism is naturally fastened on as giving the explanation of the decline; but the inference is pure fallacy. The Bagdad Khalifate

¹ The whole of Aristotle, except, apparently, the *Politics*, had been translated in the time of the philosopher Avicenna (fl. 1000).

² Macdonald, pp. 200, 205-206.

³ Steiner, *Die Mu'taziliten*, pp. 10-11, following Gazzali (Al Gazel); Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, iii, 72.

⁴ Guyard, pp. 41-42; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 104-5; Macdonald, p. 186 sq. The cultivators of *Kalâm* were called *Motecallemin*.

⁵ Ueberweg, i, 405, 414; Steiner, p. 11; Whewell, *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. i, 193-94. Compare the laudatory account of Al Gazzali by Prof. Macdonald (pt. iii, ch. iv), who pronounces him "certainly the most sympathetic figure in the history of Islam" (p. 215).

⁶ Hence, among other things, a check on the practice of anatomy, religious feeling being opposed to it under Islam as under Christianity. Dugat, pp. 62-63.

⁷ Dugat, pp. 123-28.

declined as the Christianized Roman Empire declined, from political and external causes; and the Turks who overthrew it proceeded to overthrow Christian Byzantium, where rationalism never reared its head.

The conventional view is thus set forth in a popular work (*The Saracens*, by Arthur Gilman, 1887, p. 385): "Unconsciously Mamun began a process by which that implicit faith which had been at once the foundation and the inspiration of Islam, which had nerved its warriors in their terrible warfare, and had brought the nation out of its former obscurity to the foremost position among the peoples of the world, was to be taken from them." We have seen that this view is entirely erroneous as regards the rise of the Saracen power; and it is no less so as regards the decline. At the outset there had been no "implicit faith" among the conquerors. The Eastern Saracens, further, had been decisively defeated by the Byzantines in the very first flush of their fanaticism and success; and the Western had been routed by Charles Martel long before they had any philosophy. There was no overthrow of faith among the warriors of the Khalifate. The enlistment of Turkish mercenaries by Mamoun and Motasim, by way of being independent of the Persian and Arab factions in the army and the State, introduced an element which, at first purely barbaric, became as orthodox as the men of Haroun's day had been. Yet the decadence, instead of being checked, was furthered.

Nor were the strifes set up by the rationalistic view of the Koran nearly so destructive as the mere faction-fights and sectarian insurrections which began with Motawakkel. The falling-away of cities and provinces under the feeble Muktader (908-932) had nothing whatever to do with opinions, but was strictly analogous to the dissolution of the kingdom of Charlemagne under his successors, through the rise of new provincial energies; and the tyranny of the Turkish mercenaries was on all fours with that of the Pretorians of the Roman Empire, and with that of the Janissaries in later Turkey. The writer under notice has actually recorded (p. 408) that the warlike sect of Ismailitic Karmathians, who did more than any other enemy to dismember the Khalifate, were unbelievers in the Koran, deniers of revelation, and disregards of prayer. The later Khalifs, puppets in the hands of the Turks, were one and all devout believers.

On the other hand, fresh Moslem and non-Moslem dynasties arose alternately as the conditions and opportunities determined. Jenghiz Khan, who overran Asia, was no Moslem; neither was Tamerlane; but new Moslem conquerors did overrun India, as pagan Alexander had done in his day. Theological ideas

counted for as little in one case as in the other. Sultan Mahmoud of Ghazni (997-1030), who reared a new empire on the basis of the province of Khorassan and the kingdom of Bokhara, and who twelve times successfully invaded India, happened to be of Turkish stock; but he is also recorded to have been in his youth a doubter of a future state, as well as of his personal legitimacy. His later parade of piety (as to which see Baron De Slane's tr. of Ibn Khallikan's *Biog. Dict.* iii, 334) is thus a trifle suspect (*British India*, in Edin. Cab. Lib. 3rd ed. i, 189, following Ferishta); and his avarice seems to have animated him to the full as much as his faith, which was certainly not more devout than that of the Brahmans of Somnauth, whose hold he captured. (Cp. Prof. E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, ii (1906), 119.) During his reign, besides, unbelief was rife in his despite (Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, iii, 72), though he burned the books of the Motazilites, besides crucifying many Ismailian heretics (Browne, p. 160). The conventional theorem as to the political importance of faith, in short, will not bear investigation. Even Freeman here sets it aside (*Hist. and Conq. of the Saracens*, p. 124).

§ 4

It is in the later and nominally decadent ages of the Bagdad Khalifate, when science and culture and even industry relatively prospered by reason of the personal impotence of the Khalifs, that we meet with the most pronounced and the most perspicacious of the Freethinkers of Islam. In the years 973-1057 there dwelt in the little Syrian town of Marratun-Numan the blind poet ABU'L-ALA-AL-MA'ARRI, who wrote a parody of the Koran,¹ and in his verse derided all religions as alike absurd, and yet was for some reason never persecuted. He has been pronounced "incomparably greater" than Omar Khayyám "both as a poet and as an agnostic."² One of his sayings was that "The world holds two classes of men—intelligent men without religion, and religious men without intelligence."³ He may have escaped on the strength of a character for general eccentricity, for he was an ardent vegetarian and an opponent of all parentage, declaring that to bring a child into the world was to add to the sum of suffering.⁴ The fact that he was latterly a man of wealth, yet in person an ascetic and a generous giver, may be the true explanation. Whatever be the explanation

¹ Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, ii (1906), 290, 293; R. A. Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, 1907, p. 318.

² Browne, as cited, p. 292. Cp. Von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients*, 1875-77, ii, 386-95; Macdonald, p. 199.

³ Dugat, p. 167; Weil, iii, 72.

⁴ Dugat, pp. 164-68.

of his immunity, the frankness of his heterodoxy is memorable. Nourished perhaps by a temper of protest set up in him by the blindness which fell upon him in childhood after smallpox, the spirit of reason seems to have been effectually developed in him by a stay of a year and a-half at Bagdad, where, in the days of Al Mansour, "Christians and Jews, Buddhists and Zoroastrians, Sabians and Sufis, materialists and rationalists," met and communed.¹ Before his visit, his poems are substantially orthodox; later, their burden changes. He denies a resurrection, and is "wholly incredulous of any divine revelation. Religion, as he conceives it, is a product of the human mind, in which men believe through force of habit and education, never stopping to consider whether it is true." "His belief in God amounted, as it would seem, to little beyond a conviction that all things are governed by inexorable Fate." Concerning creeds he sings in one stave:—

Now this religion happens to prevail
 Until by that one it is overthrown;
 Because men will not live with men alone,
 But always with another fairy-tale²—

a summing-up not to be improved upon here.

A century later still, and in another region, we come upon the (now) most famous of all Eastern freethinkers, OMAR KHAYYÁM. He belonged to Naishápúr in Khorassan, a province which had long been known for its rationalism,³ and which had been part of the nucleus of the great Asiatic kingdom created by Sultan Mahmoud of Ghazni at the beginning of the eleventh century, soon after the rise of the Fatimite dynasty in Egypt. Under that Sultan flourished Ferdusi (Firdausi), one of the chief glories of Persian verse. After Mahmoud's death, his realm and parts of the Khalifate in turn were overrun by the Seljuk Turks under Togrul Beg; under whose grandson Malik it was that Omar Khayyám, astronomer and poet, studied and sang in Khorassan. The Turk-descended Shah favoured science as strongly as any of the Abassides; and when he decided to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight experts he employed to do it. Thus was set up for the East the Jaláli calendar, which, as Gibbon has noted,⁴ "surpasses the Julian and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style." Omar was, in fact, one of the ablest mathematicians of his age.⁵

¹ Nicholson, pp. 314-15.

² *The Diwan of Abu'l-Ala*, by Henry Baerlein, 1908, st. 36. Cp. 1, 37, 41, 42, 53, 81, 86, 94, and the extracts given by Nicholson, pp. 316-23.

³ Weil, ii, 215.

⁴ *Decline and Fall*, ch. lvii. Bohn ed. vi, 382, and note. Cp. E. H. Whinfield, *The*

Quatrains of Omar Khayyám, 1882, p. 4.

⁵ See the preface to Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubáiyát*.

His name, Omar ibn Ibrahim al-Khayyámi, seems to point to Arab descent. "Al-Khayyámmi" means "the tent-maker"; but in no biographic account of him is there the slightest proof that he or his father ever belonged to that or any other handicraft.¹ Always he figures as a scholar and a man of science. Since, therefore, the patronymic al-Khayyámi is fairly common now among Arabs, and also among the still nomadic tribes of Khuzistan and Luristan, the reasonable presumption is that it was in his case a patronymic also.² His father being a man of some substance, he had a good schooling, and is even described in literary tradition as having become an expert Koran scholar, by the admission of the orthodox Al Gazzali, who, however, is represented in another record as looking with aversion on Omar's scientific lore.³ The poet may have had his lead to freethought during his travels after graduating at Naishapur, when he visited Samarkhand, Bokhara, Ispahan, and Balk.⁴ He seems to have practised astrology for a living, even as did Kepler in Europe five hundred years later; and he perhaps dabbled somewhat in medicine.⁵ A hostile orthodox account of him, written in the thirteenth century, represents him as "versed in all the wisdom of the Greeks," and as wont to insist on the necessity of studying science on Greek lines.⁶ Of his prose works, two, which were of standard authority, dealt respectively with precious stones and climatology.⁷

Beyond question the poet-astronomer was undevout; and his astronomy doubtless helped to make him so. One contemporary writes: "I did not observe that he had any great belief in astrological predictions; nor have I seen or heard of any of the great (scientists) who had such belief."⁸ The biographical sketch by Ibn al Kifti, before cited, declares that he "performed pilgrimages not from piety but from fear," having reason to dread the hostility of contemporaries who knew or divined his unbelief; and there is a story of a treacherous pupil who sought to bring him into public odium.⁹ In point of fact he was not, any more than Abu' l-Ala, a convinced atheist, but he had no sympathy with popular religion. "He gave his adherence to no religious sect. Agnosticism, not faith, is the keynote of his works."¹⁰ Among the sects he saw everywhere strife and hatred in which he could have no part. His earlier English translators, reflecting the tone of the first half

¹ In one quatrain, of doubtful authenticity, is the line "Khayyám, who longtime stitched the tents of learning" (Whinfield, xxxviii), which excludes the idea of literal handicraft.

² J. K. M. Shirazi, *Life of Omar Al-Khayyámi*, ed. 1895, pp. 30-41.

³ *Id.* pp. 51, 58.

⁴ *Id.* p. 54.

⁵ *Id.* p. 56.

⁶ *Id.* p. 59.

⁷ *Id.* pp. 62-63.

⁸ *Id.* p. 93.

⁹ *Id.* pp. 59-61.

¹⁰ *Id.* pp. 69-76, 86-88.

of the last century, have thought fit to moralize censoriously over his attitude to life; and the first, Prof. Cowell, has austere decided that Omar's gaiety is "but a *risus sardonius* of despair."¹ Even the subtler Fitzgerald, who has so admirably rendered some of the audacities which Cowell thought "better left in the original Persian," has the air of apologizing for them when he partly concurs in the same estimate. But despair is not the name for the humorous melancholy which Omar, like Abu' l-Ala, weaves around his thoughts on the riddle of the universe. Like Abu' l-Ala, again, he talks at times of God, but with small signs of faith. In epigrams which have seldom been surpassed for their echoing depth, he disposes of the theistic solution and the lore of immortality; whereafter, instead of offering another shibboleth, he sings of wine and roses, of the joys of life and of their speedy passage; not forgetting to add a stipulation for beneficence.² It was his way of turning into music the undertone of all mortality; and that it is now preferable, for any refined intelligence, to the affectation of zest for a "hereafter" on which no one wants to enter, would seem to be proved by the remarkable vogue he has secured in modern England, chiefly through the incomparable version of Fitzgerald. Much of the attraction, certainly, is due to the canorous cadence and felicitous phrasing of those singularly fortunate stanzas; and a similar handling might have won as high a repute among us for Abu' l-Ala, whom, as we have seen, some of our Orientalists set higher, and whose verse as recently rendered into English has an indubitable charm. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, has added much to Omar. But the thoughts of Omar remain the kernels of Fitzgerald's verses; and whereas the counsel, "Gather ye roses while ye may," is common enough, it must be the weightier bearing of his deeper and more daring ideas that gives the quatrains their main hold to-day. In the more exact rendering of those translators who closely reproduce the original he remains beyond question a freethinker,³ placing ethic above creed, though much given to the praise of wine. Never

¹ Cited in introd. to Dole's variorum ed. of the *Rubáiyát*, 1896, i, p. xix. Cp. Macdonald, p. 199.

² "Dost thou desire to taste eternal bliss?

Vex thine own heart, but never vex another." (Whinfield, vi.)

"Seek not the Kaaba, rather seek a heart." (*Id.* vii.)

This note is often repeated. *E.g.* xxxii, li.

³ See in the very competent translation of Mrs. H. M. Cadell (who remarked that "Fitzgerald has rather written a poem upon Omar than translated him"), quatrains 12, 14, 15, 20, 28, 29, 42, 45, 48, 51*d*, 85, 88*b*, 133, 141, 143, etc.; in the artistically turned version of Mr. A. H. Talbot, which follows very faithfully the literal prose translation of Mr. Heron-Allen, Nos. 1, 3, 15, 18, 19, 24, 33, 41, 45, 59, 72, 91, 115, 123, 148; and in Whinfield's version, Nos. 10, 25, 32, 41, 45, 46, 62, 68, 77, 84, 87, 104, 105, 111, 113, 118, 142, 144, 148, 151, 157, 161, 179, 195, 200, 201, 203, 216.

popular in the Moslem world,¹ he has had in ours an unparalleled welcome; and it must be because from his scientific vantage ground in the East, in the period of the Norman Conquest, he had attained in some degree the vision and chimed with the mood of a later and larger age.

That Omar in his day and place was not alone in his mood lies on the face of his verse. Many quatrains ascribed to him, indeed, are admittedly assignable to other Persian poets; and one of his English editors notes that "the poetry of rebellion and revolt from orthodox opinion, which is supposed to be peculiar to him, may be traced in the works of his predecessor Avicenna, as well as in those of Afdal-i-Káshí, and others of his successors."² The allusions to the tavern, a thing suspect and illicit for Islam, show that he was in a society more Persian than Arab, one in which was to be found nearly all of the free intellectual life possible in the Moslem East;³ and doubtless Persian thought, always leaning to heresy, and charged with germs of scientific speculation from immemorial antiquity, prepared his rationalism; though his monism excludes alike dualism and theism. "One for two I never did misread" is his summing up of his philosophy.⁴

But the same formula might serve for the philosophy of the sect of Sufis,⁵ who in all ages seem to have included unbelievers as well as devoutly mystical pantheists. Founded, it is said, by a woman, Rabia, in the first century of the Hej'ra,⁶ the sect really carries on a pre-Mohammedan mysticism, and may as well derive from Greece⁷ as from Asia. Its original doctrine of divine love, as a reaction against Moslem austerity, gave it a fixed hold in Persia, and became the starting point of innumerable heterodox doctrines.⁸ Under the Khalif Moktader, a Persian Sufi is recorded to have been tortured and executed for teaching that every man is God.⁹ In later ages, Sufism became loosely associated with every species of

¹ Shirazi, pp. 102-108. Early in the thirteenth century he was denounced by a Sufi mystic as an "unhappy philosopher, atheist, and materialist." Browne, *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, ii, 250. Abu' l-Ala, of course, was similarly denounced.

² Whinfield, cited by Browne, pp. 109-110.

³ Cp. Mrs. Cadell, *The Rub'iyat of Omar Khayam*, 1899. Garnett's introd. pp. xvii xviii-xxi, xxiv, and Shirazi, as cited, pp. 79-80.

⁴ Fitzgerald's pref. 4th ed. p. xiii; Whinfield, No. 147. Cp. quatrains cited in art. SUFISM, in *Relig. Systems of the World*, 2nd ed. pp. 325-26.

⁵ Cp. Whinfield, p. 86, note on No. 147.

⁶ Guyard, as cited, p. 42. But cp. Ueberweg, i, 411; Nicholson, pp. 233-34.

⁷ It is not impossible, Max Müller notwithstanding, that the name may have come originally from the Greek *sophoi*, "the wise," though it is usually connected with *sufi*=the woollen robe worn by the Sufite. There are other etymologies. Cp. Fraser, *Histor. and Descrip. Account of Persia*, 1834, p. 323, note; Dugat, p. 326; and art. SUFISM in *Relig. Systems of the World*, 2nd ed. p. 315. On the Sufi system in general see also Max Müller, *Psychol. Relig. Lect.* vi.

⁸ Cp. Renan, *Averroës*, p. 293, as to Sufi latitudinarianism.

⁹ Guyard, p. 44; *Relig. Systems*, p. 319.

independent thinking; and there is reason to suspect that the later poets SADI (fl. thirteenth century) and HAFIZ¹ (fl. fourteenth century), as well as hundreds of lesser status, held under the name of Sufism views of life not far removed from those of Omar Khayyám; who, however, had bantered the Sufis so unmercifully that they are said to have dreaded and hated him.² In any case, Sufism has included such divergent types as Al Gazzali,³ the skeptical defender of the faith; devout pantheistic poets such as Jâmi;⁴ and singers of love and wine such as Hafiz, whose extremely concrete imagery is certainly not as often allegorical as serious Sufis assert, though no doubt it is sometimes so.⁵ It even became nominally associated with the destructive Ismaïlism of the sect of the Assassins, whose founder, Hassan, had been the schoolfellow of Omar Khayyám.⁶

Of Sufism as a whole it may be said that whether as inculcating quietism, or as widening the narrow theism of Islam into pantheism, or as sheltering an unaggressive rationalism, it has made for freedom and humanity in the Mohammedan world, lessening the evils of ignorance where it could not inspire progress.⁷ It long anticipated the semi-rationalism of those Christians who declare heaven and hell to be names for bodily or mental states in this life.⁸ On its more philosophic side too it connects with the long movement of speculation which, passing into European life through the Western Saracens, revived Greek philosophic thought in Christendom after the night of the Middle Ages, at the same time that Saracen science passed on the more precious seeds of real knowledge to the new civilization.

§ 5

There is the less need to deal at any length in these pages with the professed philosophy of the eastern Arabs, seeing that it was from first to last but little associated with any direct or practical repudiation of dogma and superstition.⁹ What freethought there

¹ Hafiz in his own day was reckoned impious by many. Cp. Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia*, 1827, ii, 100.

² Fitzgerald's pref. p. x.

³ Yet he was disposed to put to death those who claimed mystic intercourse with Deity. Sale, pp. 177-78.

⁴ Whose *Salaman and Absal*, tr. by Fitzgerald, is so little noticed in comparison with the *Rubáiyát* of Omar.

⁵ E. C. Browne, in *Religious Systems*, as cited, p. 321; Dugat, p. 331.

⁶ Shirazi, pp. 22-28; Fitzgerald's pref. following Mirkhond; Fraser, *Persia*, p. 329.

⁷ Cp. Dugat, p. 336; Syed Ameer Ali, pp. 311-15; Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, 2e édit. p. 68.

⁸ Sale, p. 176. The same doctrine is fairly ancient in India. (Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v, 313, note.) A belief that hell-fire will not be eternal was held among the Motazilite sect of Jâhedhians. Sale, p. 164. The Thamamians, again, held that at the resurrection all infidels, idolaters, atheists, Jews, Christians, Magians, and heretics, shall be reduced to dust. *Id. ib.*

⁹ Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, p. 101. Cp. p. 172.

was had only an unwritten currency, and is to be traced, as so often happens in later European history, through the protests of orthodox apologists. Thus the Persian Al Gazzali, in the preface to his work, *The Destruction of the Philosophers*, declares of the subjects of his attack that "the source of all their errors is the trust they have in the names of Sokrates, Hippokrates, Plato, and Aristotle; the admiration they profess for their genius and subtlety; and the belief, finally, that those great masters have been led by the profundity of their faculty to reject all religion, and to regard its precepts as the product of artifice and imposture."¹ This implies an abundant rationalism,² but, as always, the unwritten unbelief lost ground, its non-publication being the proof that orthodoxy prevailed against it. Movements which were originally liberal, such as that of the Motecallemin, ran at length to mere dialectic defence of the faith against the philosophers. Fighting the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of matter, they sought to found a new theistic creationism on the atoms of Demokritos, making God the creator of the atoms, and negating the idea of natural law.³ Eastern Moslem philosophy in general followed some such line of reaction and petrification. The rationalistic AL KINDI (fl. 850) seems to have been led to philosophize by the Motazilite problems; but his successors mostly set them aside, developing an abstract logic and philosophy on Greek bases, or studying science for its own sake, though as a rule professing a devout acceptance of the Koran.⁴ Such was AVICENNA (Ibn Sina: d. 1037), who taught that men should revere the faith in which they were educated; though in comparison with his predecessor Al Farabi, who leant to Platonic mysticism, he is a rationalistic Aristotelian,⁵ with a strong leaning to pantheism. Of him an Arabic historian writes that in his old age he attached himself to the court of the heretical Ala-ud-Dawla at Ispahan, in order that he might freely write his own heretical works.⁶ After Al Gazzali (d. 1111), who attacked both Avicenna⁷ and Al Farabi somewhat in the spirit of Cicero's skeptical Cotta attacking the Stoics and the Epicureans,⁸ there seems to have been a further development of skepticism, the skeptical defence of

¹ Renan's tr. in *Averroès*, p. 166. The wording of the last phrase suggests a misconstruction.

² Cp. p. 172.

³ Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 104-107.

⁴ Steiner, *Die Mu'taziliten*, p. 6.

⁵ Ueberweg, i, 412; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 44, 96.

⁶ E. G. Browne, *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, ii, 107.

⁷ Whom he pronounced a pagan and an infidel. Hauréau, II, i, 29.

⁸ Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 57, 96-98; Whewell, *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd. ed. i, 193. Renan, following Degenerando (cp. Whewell, as cited), credits Gazzali with anticipating Hume's criticism of the idea of causation; but Gazzali's position is that of dogmatic theism, not of naturalism. See Lewes, *Hist. of Philos.* 4th ed. ii, 57.

the faith having the same unsettling tendency in his as in later hands. Ibn Khaldun seems to denounce in the name of faith his mixture of pietism and philosophy; and Makrisi speaks of his doctrines as working great harm to religion¹ among the Moslems. But the socio-political conditions were too unpropitious to permit of any continuous advance on rational lines. Ere long an uncritical orthodoxy prevailed in the Eastern schools, and it is in Moorish Spain that we are to look for the last efforts of Arab philosophy.

The course of culture-evolution there broadly corresponds with that of the Saracen civilization in the East. In Spain the Moors came into contact with the Roman imperial polity, and at the same time with the different culture elements of Judaism and Christianity. To both of these faiths they gave complete toleration, thus strengthening their own in a way that no other policy could have availed to do. Whatever was left of Græco-Roman art, handicraft, and science, saving the arts of portraiture, they encouraged; and whatever of agricultural science remained from Carthaginian times they zealously adopted and improved. Like their fellow-Moslems in the East, they further learned all the science that the preserved literature of Greece could give them. The result was that under energetic and enlightened khalifs the Moorish civilization became the centre of light and knowledge as well as of material prosperity for medieval Europe. Whatever of science the world possessed was to be found in their schools; and thither in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries flocked students from the Christian States of western and northern Europe. It was in whole or in part from Saracen hands that the modern world received astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, botany, jurisprudence, and philosophy. They were, in fact, the revivers of civilization after the age of barbarian Christianity.² And while the preservation of Greek science, lost from the hands of Christendom, would have been a notable service enough, the Arabs did much more. Alhazen (d. 1038) is said to have done the most original work in optics before Newton,³ and in the same century Arab medicine and chemistry made original advances.⁴

While the progressive period lasted, there was of course an

¹ Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, Ptie II, i, 35.

² Cp. Seignobos, *Hist. de la Civ.* ii, 58; Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Moors in Spain*, pref.; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 108-18; U. R. Burke, *History of Spain*, i, ch. 16; Baden Powell, as cited, pp. 94-104; Gebhart, *Origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, 1879, pp. 185-89; and *post.* ch. x.

³ Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, p. 97; Whewell, *Hist. of the Induct. Sciences*, 3rd ed. ii, 273-74.

⁴ Dr. L. Leclerc, *Hist. de la Médecine Arabe*, 1876, i, 462; Dr. E. von. Meyer, *Hist. of Chemistry*, Eng. tr. 2nd ed. p. 28.

abundance of practical freethought. But after a marvellously rapid rise, the Moorish civilization was arrested and paralysed by the internal and the external forces of anti-civilization—religious fanaticism within and Christian hostility without. Everywhere we have seen culture-progress depending more or less clearly on the failure to find solutions for political problems. The most fatal defect of all Arab civilization—a defect involved in its first departure by way of conquest, and in its fixedly hostile relation to the Christian States, which kept it constantly on a military basis—was the total failure to substitute any measure of constitutional rule for despotism. It was thus politically unprogressive, even while advancing in other respects. But in other respects also it soon reached the limits set by the conditions.

Whereas in Persia the Arabs overran an ancient civilization, containing many elements of rationalism which acted upon their own creed, the Moors in Spain found a population only slightly civilized, and predisposed by its recent culture, as well as by its natural conditions,¹ to fanatical piety. Thus when, under their tolerant rule, Jews and Christians in large numbers embraced Islam, the new converts became the most fanatical of all.² All rationalism existed in their despite, and, abounding as they did, they tended to gain power whenever the Khalif was weak, and to rebel furiously when he was hostile. When, accordingly, the growing pressure of the feudal Christian power in Northern Spain at length became a menacing danger to the Moorish States, weakened by endless intestine strife, the one resource was to call in a new force of Moslem fanaticism in the shape of the Almoravide³ Berbers, who, to the utmost of their power, put down everything scientific and rationalistic, and established a rigid Koranolatry. After a time they in turn, growing degenerate while remaining orthodox, were overrun by a new influx of conquering fanatics from Africa, the Almohades, who, failing to add political science to their faith, went down in the thirteenth century before the Christians in Spain, in a great battle in which their prince sat in their sight with the Koran in his hand.⁴ Here there could be no pretence that "unbelief" wrought the downfall. The Jonah of freethought, so to speak, had been thrown overboard; and the ship went down with the flag of faith flying at every masthead.⁵

¹ Cp. Buckle, *Introd. to Hist. of Civ. in England*, 1-vol. ed. p. 70.

² Lane-Poole, *The Moors in Spain*, p. 73.

³ Properly Morabethin=men of God or of religion; otherwise known as "Marabouts."

⁴ Sedillot, p. 298.

⁵ Cp. Dozy, *Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne*, iii, 248-86; Ueberweg, i, 415.

It was in the last centuries of Moorish rule that there lived the philosophers whose names connect it with the history of European thought, retaining thus a somewhat factitious distinction as compared with the men of science, many of them nameless, who developed and transmitted the sciences. The pantheistic AVEMPACE (Ibn Badja: d. 1138), who defended the reason against the theistic skepticism of Al Gazzali,¹ was physician, astronomer, and mathematician, as well as metaphysician; as was ABUBACER (Abu Bekr, also known as Ibn Tophail: d. 1185), who regarded religious systems as "only a necessary means of discipline for the multitude,"² and as being merely symbols of the higher truth reached by the philosopher. Both men, however, tended rather to mysticism than to exact thought; and Abubacer's treatise, *The Self-taught Philosopher*, which has been translated into Latin (by Pococke in 1671), English, Dutch, and German, has had the singular fortune of being adopted by the Quakers as a work of edification.³

Very different was the part played by AVERROËS (Ibn Roshd), the most famous of all Moslem thinkers, because the most far-reaching in his influence on European thought. For the Middle Ages he was pre-eminently the expounder of Aristotle, and it is as setting forth, in that capacity, the pantheistic doctrine which affirms the eternity of the material universe and makes the individual soul emanate from and return to the soul of all, that he becomes important alike in Moslem and Christian thought. Diverging from the asceticism and mysticism of Avempace and Abubacer, and strenuously opposing the anti-rationalism of Al Gazzali, against whose chief treatise he penned his own *Destruction of the Destruction of the Philosophers*, Averroës is the least mystical and the most rational of the Arab thinkers.⁴ At nearly all vital points he oppugns the religious view of things, denying bodily resurrection, which he treats (here following all his predecessors in heretical Arab philosophy) as a vulgar fable;⁵ and making some approach to a scientific treatment of the problem of "Freewill" as against, on the one hand, the ethic-destroying doctrine of the Motecallemin, who made God's will the sole standard of right, and affirmed predestination (Jabarism); and against, on the other hand, the anti-determinism of the Kadarites.⁶ Even in his politics he was original; and in his paraphrase of Plato's *Republic* he has said a notable word for women, pointing out how small an opening is offered for their

¹ Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 98-99.

² Renan, *Averroës*, p. 99.

³ *Id.* pp. 156-58.

⁴ Ueberweg, i, 415; Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 32, 99.

⁵ Renan, *Averroës*, p. 145.

⁶ *Id.* pp. 159-60.

faculties in Moslem society.¹ Of all tyrannies, he boldly declared, the worst is that of priests.

In time, however, a consciousness of the vital hostility of his doctrine to current creeds, and of the danger he consequently ran, made him, like so many of his later disciples, anxious to preserve priestly favour. As regards religion he was more complaisant than Abubacer, pronouncing Mohammedanism the most perfect of all popular systems,² and preaching a patriotic conformity on that score to philosophic students.

From him derives the formula of a two-fold truth—one truth for science or philosophy, and another for religion—which played so large a part in the academic life of Christendom for centuries.³ In two of his treatises, *On the harmony of religion with philosophy* and *On the demonstration of religious dogmas*, he even takes up a conservative attitude, proclaiming that the wise man never utters a word against the established creed, and going so far as to say that the freethinker who attacks it, inasmuch as he undermines popular virtue, deserves death.⁴ Even in rebutting, as entirely absurd, the doctrine of the creation of the world, and ascribing its currency to the stupefying power of habit, he takes occasion to remark piously that those whose religion has no better basis than faith are frequently seen, on taking up scientific studies, to become utter *zendēks*.⁵ But he lived in an age of declining culture and reviving fanaticism; and all his conformities could not save him from proscription, at the hands of a Khalif who had long favoured him, for the offence of cultivating Greek antiquity to the prejudice of Islam. All study of Greek philosophy was proscribed at the same time, and all books found on the subject were destroyed.⁶ Disgraced and banished from court, Averroës died at Morocco in 1198; other philosophers were similarly persecuted;⁷ and soon afterwards the Moorish rule in Spain came to an end in the odour of sanctity.⁸

So complete was now the defeat of the intellectual life in Western Islam that the ablest writer produced by the Arab race in the period of the Renaissance, Ibn Khaldun of Tunis (1332–1406), writes as a bigoted believer in revelation, though his writings on the science of history were the most philosophic since the classic

¹ Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 160–62.

² Ueberweg, i, 416; Steiner, p. 6; Renan, *Averroës*, p. 162 sq.

³ Ueberweg, i, 460; Renan, pp. 258, 275.

⁴ Renan, *Averroës*, p. 169, and references.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 165–66.

⁶ *Id.* p. 5. Cp. the *Avertissement*, p. iii.

⁷ Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 31–36. Renan surmises that the popular hostility to the philosophers, which was very marked, was largely due to the element of the conquered Christians, who were noted for their neglect of astronomy and natural science.

⁸ Cp. Ueberweg, i, 415–17.

period, being out of all comparison superior to those of the Christian chroniclers of his age.¹ So rationalistic, indeed, is his method, relatively to his time, that it is permissible to suspect him of seeking to propitiate the bigots.² But neither they nor his race in general could learn the sociological lessons he had it in him to teach. Their development was arrested for that period.

§ 6

Of later freethought under Islam there is little to record as regards literary output, but the phenomenon has never disappeared. Buckle, in his haste, declared that he could write the history of Turkish civilization on the back of his hand;³ but even in Turkey, at a time of minimum friendly contact with other European life, there have been traces of a spirit of freethinking nearly as active as that astir in Christendom at the same period. Thus at the end of the seventeenth century we have circumstantial testimony to the vogue of a doctrine of atheistic Naturalism at Constantinople. The holders of this doctrine were called *Muserin*, a term said to mean "The true secret is with us." They affirmed a creative and all-sustaining Nature, in which Man has his place like the plants and like the planets; and they were said to form a very large number, including Cadis and other learned as well as some renegade persons.⁴ But Turkish culture-conditions in the eighteenth century were not such as to permit of intellectual progress on native lines; and to this day rationalism in that as in other Moslem countries is mainly a matter of reflex action set up by the impact of European scientific knowledge, or social contact. There is no modern rationalistic literature.

Motazilism, so-called, is still heard of in Arabia itself.⁵ In the Ottoman Empire, indeed, it is little in evidence, standing now as it does for a species of broad-church liberalism, analogous to Christian Unitarianism;⁶ but in Persia the ancient leaning to rationalism is still common. The old-world pantheism which we have seen conserved in Omar Khayyám gave rise in later centuries to similar developments among the Parsees both in Persia and in India; and from the sixteenth century onwards there are clear traces among

¹ Cp. Flint, *History of the Philosophy of History*, ed. 1893, vol. i, p. 169.

² Cp. Flint, p. 129, as to their hostility to him.

³ Huth, *Life and Writings of Buckle*, ii, 171.

⁴ Ricaut, *Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 1686, p. 245.

⁵ Dugat, p. 59. The Ameer Ali Syed, Moulvi, M.A., LL.B., whose *Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammed* appeared in 1873, writes as a Motazilite of a moderate type.

⁶ Macdonald, pp. 120, 196, 286.

them of a number of rationalizing heresies, varying from pantheism and simple deism to atheism and materialism.¹ In Persia to-day there are many thinkers of these casts of thought.² About 1830 a British traveller estimated that, assuming there were between 200,000 and 300,000 Sufis in the country, those figures probably fell greatly short of the number "secretly inclined to infidelity."³ Whatever be the value of the figures, the statement is substantially confirmed by later observers;⁴ missionaries reporting independently that in Persia "most of the higher class, of the nobility, and of the learned professions.....are at heart infidels or sceptics."⁵ Persian freethought is of course, in large part, the freethought of ignorance, and seems to co-exist with astrological superstition;⁶ but there is obviously needed only science, culture, and material development to produce, on such a basis, a renaissance as remarkable as that of modern Japan.

The verdict of Vambéry is noteworthy: "In all Asia, with the exception of China, there is no land and no people wherein there is so little of religious enthusiasm as in Persia; where freethinkers are so little persecuted, and can express their opinions with so little disturbance; and where, finally, as a natural consequence, the old religious structure can be so easily shattered by the outbreak of new enthusiasts. Whoever has read Khayyám's blasphemies against God and the prophet, his jesting verses against the holiest ceremonies and commandments of Islam; and whoever knows the vogue of this book and other works directed against the current religion, will not wonder that Bâb with the weapon of the Word won so many hearts in so short a time."⁷

The view that Bâbism affiliates to rationalism is to be understood in the sense that the atmosphere of the latter made possible the growth of the former, its adherents being apparently drawn rather from the former orthodox.⁸ The young founder of the sect, Mirza-

¹ A. Franck, *Études Orientales*, 1861, pp. 241-48, citing the *Dabistan*.

² Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, 2e édit. ch. v; J. K. M. Shirazi, *Life of Omar Khayyâmi*, ed. 1905, p. 102. The latter writer notes, however, that "the cultured classes, who ought to know better, are at no pains to dissipate the existing religious prejudice against one [Omar] of whose reputation every Persian may well feel proud." "At the present time.....the name of Omar is no less execrated by the Shi-ite mob in Persia than it was in his own day." *Id.* p. 108.

³ Fraser, *Persia*, p. 330. This writer (p. 239) describes Sufism as "the superstition of the freethinker," and as "often assumed as a cloak to cover entire infidelity."

⁴ E.g., Dr. Wills, *The Land of the Lion and the Sun*, ed. 1891, p. 339.

⁵ Smith and Dwight, *Missionary Researches in Armenia*, 1834, p. 340. Cp. Rev. H. Southgate, *Tour through Armenia*, etc. 1840, ii, 153; and Morier's *Hadji Baba of Ispahan* (1824), ch. xlvii, near end.

⁶ Fraser, *Persia*, p. 331; Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia*, ii, 108; Gobineau, as cited, ch. v.

⁷ H. Vambéry, *Der Islam im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, 1875, pp. 32-33. Vambéry further remarks: "The half-fanatical, half-freethinking tone of Persians has often surprised me in my controversies with the most zealous Shiites."

⁸ As to the rise of this sect see Gobineau, as cited, pp. 141-358; E. G. Browne's *The Episode of the Bâb*; and his lecture on Babiism in *Religious Systems of the World*. Cp. Renan, *Les Apôtres*, pp. 378-81.

Ali-Mohammed, declared himself "The Bâb," *i.e.* "the Gate" (to the knowledge of God), as against the orthodox Moslem teachers who taught that "since the twelve Imâms, the Gate of Knowledge is closed." Hence the name of the sect. Mirza-Ali, who showed a strong tendency to intolerance, quickly created an aggressive movement, which was for a time put down by the killing of himself and many of his followers.

Since his execution the sect has greatly multiplied and its doctrines have much widened. For a time the founder's intolerant teachings were upheld by Ezél, the founder of one of the two divisions into which the party speedily fell; while his rival Béha, who gave himself out as the true Prophet, of whom the Bâb was merely the precursor, developed a notably cosmopolitan and equalitarian doctrine, including a vague belief in immortality, without heaven, hell, or purgatory. Ezél eventually abandoned his claims, and his followers now number less than two thousand; while the Béhaïtes number nearly three millions out of the seven millions of the Persian population, and some two millions in the adjacent countries. The son of Béha, Abbas Effendi, who bears the title of "The Great Branch," now rules the cult, which promises to be the future religion of Persia.¹ One of the most notable phenomena of the earlier movement was the entrance of a young woman, daughter of a leading ulema, who for the first time in Moslem history threw off the regulation veil and preached the equality of the sexes.² She was one of those first executed. Persecution, however, has long ceased, and as a result of her lead the position of woman in the cult is exceptionally good. Thus the last century has witnessed within the sphere of Islam, so commonly supposed to be impervious to change, one of the most rapid and radical religious changes recorded in history. There is therefore no ground for holding that in other Moslem countries progress is at an end.

Everything depends, broadly speaking, on the possibilities of culture-contact. The changes in Persia are traceable to the element of heretical habit which has persisted from pre-Moslem times; future and more scientific development will depend upon the assimilation of European knowledge. In Egypt, before the period of European intervention, freethinking was at a minimum; and though toleration was well developed as regarded Christians and

¹ H. Arakélian, *Mémoire sur Le Bâbisme en Perse*, in the *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1902, 2 Ptie. Fasc. i.

² Gobineau, pp. 167 sq.; 180 sq.; Arakélian, p. 94.

Jews, freethinking Moslems dared not avow themselves.¹ Latterly rationalism tends to spread in Egypt as in other Moslem countries; even under Mohammed Ali the ruling Turks had begun to exhibit a "remarkable indifference to religion," and had "begun to undermine the foundations of El-Islam"; and so shrewd and dispassionate an observer as Lane expected that the common people would "soon assist in the work," and that "the overthrow of the whole fabric may reasonably be expected to ensue at a period not very remote."² To evolve such a change there will be required a diffusion of culture which is not at all likely to be rapid under any Government; but in any case the ground that is being lost by Islam in Egypt is not being retaken by Christianity.

In the other British dominions, Mohammedans, though less ready than educated Hindus to accept new ideas, cannot escape the rationalizing influence of European culture. Nor was it left to the British to introduce the rationalistic spirit in Moslem India. At the end of the sixteenth century the eclectic Emperor Akbar,³ himself a devout worshipper of the Sun,⁴ is found tolerantly comparing all religions,⁵ depreciating Islam,⁶ and arriving at such general views on the equivalence of all creeds, and on the improbability of eternal punishment,⁷ as pass for liberal among Christians in our own day. If such views could be generated by a comparison of the creeds of pre-British India they must needs be encouraged now. The Mohammedan mass is of course still deeply fanatical, and habitually superstitious; but not any more immovably so than the early Saracens. In the eighteenth century arose the fanatical Wahabi sect, which aims at a puritanic restoration of primeval Islam, freed from the accretions of later belief, such as saint-worship; but the movement, though variously estimated, has had small success, and seems destined to extinction.⁸ Of the traditional seventy-three sects in Islam only four to-day count as orthodox.⁹

It may be worth while, in conclusion, to note that the comparative prosperity or progressiveness of Islam as a proselytizing

¹ Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 5th ed. 1871, i, 349, 356. "There are, I believe," says Lane (writing originally in 1836), "very few professed Muslims who are really unbelievers; and these dare not openly avow their unbelief through fear of losing their heads for their apostacy. I have heard of two or three such who have been rendered so by long and intimate intercourse with Europeans; and have met with one materialist, who has often had long discussions with me."

² *Id.* ii, 309. (Suppl. III, "Of Late Innovations in Egypt.")

³ See the documents reproduced by Max Müller, *Introd. to the Science of Religion*, ed. 1882, App. 1.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 214, 216.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 210, 217, 224, 225.

⁶ *Id.* pp. 224, 226.

⁷ *Id.* pp. 226, 229.

⁸ Guyard, p. 45; Steiner, p. 5, note; Lane, *The Modern Egyptians*, ed. 1871, i, 137-38. Cp. Spencer, *Study of Sociology*, ch. xii, p. 292; Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 2nd ed. pp. 315-19.

⁹ Derenbourg, p. 72; Steiner, p. 1; Lane, i, 79.

and civilizing force in Africa—a phenomenon regarded even by some Christians with satisfaction, and by some with alarm¹—is not strictly or purely a religious phenomenon. Moslem civilization suits with negro life in Africa in virtue not of the teaching of the Koran, but of the comparative nearness of the Arab to the barbaric life. He interbreeds with the natives, fraternizes with them (when not engaged in kidnapping them), and so stimulates their civilization; where the European colonist, looking down on them as an inferior species, isolates, depresses, and degrades them. It is thus conceivable that there is a future for Islam at the level of a low culture-stage; but the Arab and Turkish races out of Africa are rather the more likely to concur in the rationalistic movement of the higher civilization.

Even in Africa, however, a systematic observer notes, and predicts the extension of, “a strong tendency on the part of the Mohammedans towards an easy-going rationalism, such as is fast making way in Algeria, where the townspeople and the cultivators in the more settled districts, constantly coming in contact with Europeans, are becoming indifferent to the more inconvenient among their Mohammedan observances, and are content to live with little more religion than an observance of the laws, and a desire to get on well with their neighbours.”² Thus at every culture-level we see the persistence of that force of intellectual variation which is the subject of our inquiry.

¹ Cp. Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, Lectures I and IV; Canon Isaac Taylor, address to Church Congress at Wolverhampton, 1887, and letters to *Times*, Oct. and Nov. 1887. On the other or anti-Mohammedan side see Canon Robinson, *Hausaland*, 3rd ed. 1900, p. 186 sq.—a somewhat obviously prejudiced argument. See pp. 190–91.

² Sir Harry H. Johnston, *History of the Colonization of Africa by Alien Races*, 1899, p. 283.

CHAPTER IX

CHRISTENDOM IN THE MIDDLE AGES

IT would be an error, in view of the biological generalization proceeded on and the facts noted in this inquiry, to suppose that even in the Dark Ages, so called,¹ the spirit of critical reason was wholly absent from the life of Christendom. It had simply grown very rare, and was the more discountenanced where it strove to speak. But the most systematic suppression of heresies could not secure that no private heresy should remain. As Voltaire has remarked, there was "nearly always a small flock separated from the great."² Apart too from such quasi-rationalism as was involved in semi-Pelagianism,³ critical heresy chronically arose even in the Byzantine provinces, which by the curtailment of the Empire had been left the most homogeneous and therefore the most manageable of the Christian States. It is necessary to note those survivals of partial freethinking, when we would trace the rise of modern thought.

§ 1. *Heresy in Byzantium*

It was probably from some indirect influence of the new anti-idolatrous religion of Islam that in the eighth century the soldier-emperor, Leo the Isaurian, known as the Iconoclast, derived his aversion to the image-worship⁴ which had long been as general in the Christian world as ever under polytheism. So gross had the superstition become that particular images were frequently selected as god-parents; of others the paint was partly scratched off to be mixed with the sacramental wine; and the bread was solemnly put in contact with them.⁵ Leo began (726) by an edict simply causing

¹ This label has been applied by scholars to the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. One writer, who supposes it to cover the period from 500 to 1400, and protests, is attacking only a misconception. (M. A. Lane, *The Level of Social Motion*, New York, 1902, p. 232.) The Renaissance is commonly reckoned to begin about the end of the fourteenth century (cp. Symonds, *Age of the Despots*, ch. i). But the whole period from the fall of the Roman Empire to the fall of Constantinople, or to the Reformation, is broadly included in the "Middle Ages."

² *Essai sur les Mœurs*, ch. xlv.

³ According to which God predestinated good, but merely foreknew evil.

⁴ For Leo's contacts with the Saracens see Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. Tozer, ii, 14-20, 24, 31-32, 34-35, 37, etc., and compare p. 218. See also Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1833, p. 78, note 2; and Waddington, *History of the Church*, 1833, p. 187, note.

⁵ Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. i, 252.

the images to be placed so high that they could not be kissed, but on being met with resistance and rebellion he ordered their total removal (730). One view is that he saw image-worship to be the main hindrance to the spread of the faith among Jews and Moslems, and took his measures accordingly.¹ Save on this one point he was an orthodox Christian and Trinitarian, and his long effort to put down images and pictures was in itself rather fanatical² than rationalistic, though a measure of freethinking was developed among the religious party he created.³ Of this spirit, as well as of the aversion to image-worship,⁴ something must have survived the official restoration of idolatry; but the traces are few. The most zealous iconoclasts seem never to have risen above the flat inconsistency of treating the cross and the written gospels with exactly the same adoration that their opponents paid to images;⁵ and their appeal to the scriptures—which was their first and last argument—was accordingly met by the retort that they themselves accepted the authority of tradition, as did the image-worshippers. The remarkable hostility of the army to the latter is to be explained, apparently, by the local bias of the eastern regions from which the soldiers were mainly recruited.

In the ninth century, when Saracen rivalry had stung the Byzantines into some partial revival of culture and science,⁶ the all-learned Patriarch PHOTIUS (c. 820–891), who reluctantly accepted ecclesiastical office, earned a dangerous repute for freethinking by declaring from the pulpit that earthquakes were produced by earthly causes and not by divine wrath.⁷ But this was an almost solitary gleam of reason in a generation wholly given up to furious strife over the worship of images, and Photius was one of the image-worshippers. The battle swung from extreme to extreme. The emperor Michael II, “the Stammerer” (820–828), held a medium position, and accordingly acquired the repute of a freethinker. A general under Leo V, “the Armenian,” he had conspired against him, and when on the verge of execution had been raised to the

¹ Kurtz, p. 253.

² As to his hostility to letters see Gibbon, ch. liii—Bohn ed. vi, 228. Of course the other side were not any more liberal. Cp. Finlay, ii, 222.

³ Gieseler, ii, 202. Per. III, Div. I, pt. i, § 1. In the next century this was said to have gone in some churches to the point of rejection of Christ. *Id.* p. 207, note 28.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 205, 207; Finlay, ii, 195.

⁵ Neander, *Hist. of Chr. Church*, Bohn tr. v, 289; vi, 266.

⁶ On their connection at this time with the culture-movement of the Khalifate of Mamoun, see Finlay, ii, 224–25; Gibbon, ch. liii—Bohn ed. vi, 228–29.

⁷ Finlay, ii, 181, note. The enemies of Photius accused him of lending himself to the emperor's buffooneries. Neander, vi, 303–304. Cp. Mosheim, 9 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 7; and Gibbon, ch. xxxiii—ed. cited, vi, 229. Finlay declares (p. 222) that no Greek of the intellectual calibre of Photius, John the Grammarian, and Leo the Mathematician, has since appeared.

throne in place of Leo, who was assassinated at the altar. The new emperor aimed above all things at peace and quietness; but his methods were thoroughly Byzantine, and included the castration of the four sons of Leo. Michael himself is said to have doubted the future resurrection of men, to have maintained that Judas was saved, and to have doubted the existence of Satan because he is not named in the Pentateuch¹—a species of freethinking not far removed from that of the Iconoclasts, whose grounds were merely Biblical. A generation later came Michael IV, "the Sot," bred a wastrel under the guardianship of his mother, Theodora (who in 842 restored image-worship and persecuted the Paulicians), and her brother Bardas, who ultimately put her in a convent. Michael, repeatedly defeated by the Saracens, long held his own at home. Taking into favour Basil, who married his (Michael's) mistress, he murdered Bardas, and a year later (867) was about to murder Basil in turn, when the latter anticipated him, murdered the emperor, and assumed the purple. It was under Basil, who put down the Iconoclasts, that Photius, after formally deposing and being deposed by the Pope of Rome (864-66) was really deposed and banished (868), to be restored to favour and office ten years later. In 886, on the death of Basil, he was again deposed, dying about 891. In that kaleidoscope of plot and faction, fanaticism and crime, there is small trace of sane thinking. Michael IV, in his disreputable way, was something of a freethinker, and could even with impunity burlesque the religious processions of the clergy,² the orthodox populace joining in the laugh; but there was no such culture at Constantinople as could develop a sober rationalism, or sustain it against the clergy if it showed its head. Intelligence in general could not rise above the plane of the wrangle over images. While the struggle lasted, it was marked by all the ferocity that belonged from the outset to Christian strifes; and in the end, as usual, the more irrational bias triumphed.

It was in a sect whose doctrine at one point coincided with iconoclasm that there were preserved such rude seeds of oriental rationalism as could survive the rule of the Byzantine emperors, and carry the stimulus of heresy to the west. The rise of the Paulicians in Armenia dates from the seventh century, and was nominally by way of setting up a creed on the lines of Paul as against the paganized system of the Church. Rising as they did on the borders of Persia, they were probably affected from the first by

¹ Neander, vi, 280.

² Finlay, ii, 174-75, 180.

Mazdean influences, as the dualistic principle was always affirmed by their virtual founder, Constantine, afterwards known as Sylvanus.¹ Their original tenets seem to have been anti-Manichean, anti-Gnostic (though partly Marcionite), opposed to the worship of images and relics, to sacraments, to the adoration of the Virgin, of saints, and of angels, and to the acceptance of the Old Testament; and in an age in which the reading of the Sacred Books had already come to be regarded as a privilege of monks and priests, they insisted on reading the New Testament for themselves.² In this they were virtually founding on the old pagan conception of religion, under which all heads of families could offer worship and sacrifice without the intervention of a priest, as against the Judæo-Christian sacerdotalism, which vetoed anything like a private *cultus*. In the teaching of Sylvanus, further, there were distinct Manichean and Gnostic characteristics—notably, hostility to Judaism; the denial that Christ had a real human body, capable of suffering; and the doctrine that baptism and the communion were properly spiritual and not physical rites.³ In the ninth century, when they had become a powerful and militant sect, often at war with the empire, they were still marked by their refusal to make any difference between priests and laymen. Anti-ecclesiasticism was thus a main feature of the whole movement; and the Byzantine Government, recognizing in its doctrine a particularly dangerous heresy, had at once bloodily attacked it, causing Sylvanus to be stoned to death.⁴ Still it grew, even to the length of exhibiting the usual phenomena of schism within itself. One section obtained the protection of the first iconoclastic emperor, who agreed with them on the subject of images; and a later leader, Sergius or Tychicus, won similar favour from Nicephorus I; but Leo the Armenian (suc. 813), fearing the stigma of their other heresies, and having already trouble enough from his iconoclasm, set up against them, as against the image-worshippers, a new and cruel persecution.⁵ They were thus driven

¹ Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1853, p. 85. It is noteworthy that the "heathen" Magyars held the Mazdean dualistic principle, and that their evil power was named Armanyos (=Ahrimanes). Mailáth, *Geschichte der Magyaren*, 1828, i, 25-26.

² Gibbon, ch. liv; Mosheim, 9 Cent. pt. ii, ch. 5; Gieseler, Per. III, Div. I, pt. i, § 3; G. S. Faber, *The Ancient Vallenses and Waldenses*, 1838, pp. 32-60. Some fresh light is thrown on the Paulician doctrines by the discovery of the old Armenian book, *The Key of Truth*, edited and translated by F. C. Conybeare, Oxford, 1898. It belonged to the Armenian sect of Thonraki, or Thonrakians, or Thondrakians—people of the village of Thondrac (Neander, vi, 347)—founded by one Sembat, originally a Paulician, in the ninth century (Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, p. 201; Neander, last cit.). For a criticism of Mr. Conybeare's theories see the *Church Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1899, Art. V.

³ Gieseler, Per. III, §§ 45, 46, vol. ii, pp. 489, 492; Hardwick, p. 86. The sect of Euchites, also anti-priestly, seem to have joined them. Faber denies any Manichean element.

⁴ Gibbon, as cited, vi, 241.

⁵ Gibbon, vi, 242; Hardwick, pp. 88-90.

over to the Saracens, whose advance-guard they became as against the Christian State; but the iconoclast Constantine Copronymus sympathetically¹ transplanted many of them to Constantinople and Thrace, thus introducing their doctrine into Europe. The Empress Theodora (841–855), who restored image-worship,² sought to exterminate those left in Armenia, slaying, it is said, a hundred thousand.³ Many of the remnant were thus forced into the arms of the Saracens; and the sect did the empire desperate mischief during many generations.⁴

Meantime those planted in Thrace, in concert with the main body, carried propaganda into Bulgaria, and these again were further reinforced by refugees from Armenia in the ninth century, and in the tenth by a fresh colony transplanted from Armenia by the emperor John Zimisce, who valued them as a bulwark against the barbarous Slavs.⁵ Fresh persecution under Alexius I at the end of the eleventh century failed to suppress them; and imperial extortion constantly drove to their side numbers of fresh adherents,⁶ while the Bulgarians for similar reasons tended in mass to adopt their creed as against that of Constantinople. So greatly did the cult flourish that at its height it had a regular hierarchy, notably recalling that of the early Manicheans—with a pope, twelve *magistri*, and seventy-two bishops, each of whom had a *filius major* and *filius minor* as his assistants. Withal the democratic element remained strong, the laying on of the hands of communicants on the heads of newcomers being part of the rite of reception into full membership. Thus it came about that from Bulgaria there passed into western Europe,⁷ partly through the Slavonic sect called Bogomiles or Bogomilians⁸ (= *Theophiloi*, “lovers of God”), who were akin to the Paulicians, partly by more general influences,⁹ a contagion of democratic and anti-ecclesiastical heresy; so that the very name Bulgar became the French *bougre* = heretic—and worse.¹⁰ It specified the most

¹ Gibbon, vi, 245, and *note*; Finlay, ii, 60.

² Despite the express decision, the use of statues proper (*ἀγάλματα*) gradually disappeared from the Greek Church, the disuse finally creating a strong antipathy, while pictures and *ikons* remained in reverence (Tozer's note to Finlay, ii, 165; cp. Waddington, *History of the Church*, 1833, p. 190, *note*). It is probable that the sheer loss of artistic skill counted for much in the change. Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, bk. xiv, ch. ix; 4th ed. ix, 308–12. It is noteworthy that, whereas in the struggle over images their use was for two long periods legally abolished, it was in both cases restored by empresses Irene and Theodora.

³ Hardwick, p. 80, *note*; Neander, vi, 340.

⁴ Cp. Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. i, 271.

⁵ Gibbon, vi, 246; Finlay, iii, 64; Mosheim, 10 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v. ⁶ Finlay, iii, 66.

⁷ Gibbon, as cited; R. Lane Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought*,

1884, pp. 91–96; Mosheim, 11 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v.

⁸ Finlay, iii, 67–68; Mosheim, 12 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 2. Hardwick, pp. 302–305; Kurtz,

i, 270–73. ⁹ Gieseler, Per. III, Div. II, pt. iii, § 46.

¹⁰ Gibbon, vi, 249, *note*; Poole, p. 91, *note*; De Potter, *L'Esprit de L'Église*, 1821, vi, 16, *note*.

obvious source of the new anti-Romanist heresies of the Albigenses, if not of the Vaudois (Waldenses).

§ 2. *Critical Heresy in the West*

In the west, meanwhile, where the variety of social elements was favourable to new life, heresy of a rationalistic kind was not wholly lacking. About the middle of the eighth century we find one Feargal or Vergilius, an Irish priest in Bavaria, accused by St. Boniface, his enemy, of affirming, "in defiance of God and his own soul," the doctrine of the antipodes,¹ which must have reached him through the ancient Greek lore carried to Ireland in the primary period of Christianization of that province. Of that influence we have already seen a trace in Pelagius and Cœlestius; and we shall see more later in John the Scot. After being deposed by the Pope, Vergilius was reinstated; was made Bishop of Salzburg, and held the post till his death; and was even sainted afterwards; but the doctrine disappeared for centuries from the Christian world.

Other heresies, however, asserted themselves. Though image-worship finally triumphed there as in the east, it had strong opponents, notably Claudius, bishop of Turin (fl. 830) under the emperor Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, and his contemporary Agobard, bishop of Lyons.² It is a significant fact that both men were born in Spain; and either to Saracen or to Jewish influence—the latter being then strong in the Moorish and even in the Christian³ world—may fairly be in part attributed their marked bias against image-worship. Claudius was slightly and Agobard well educated in Latin letters, so that an early impression⁴ would seem to have been at work in both cases. However that may be, they stood out as singularly rationalistic theologians in an age of general ignorance and superstition. Claudius vehemently resisted alike image-worship, saint-worship, and the Papal claims, and is recorded to have termed a council of bishops which condemned him "an assembly of asses."⁵ Agobard, in turn, is quite extraordinary in the thoroughness of his rejection of popular superstition, being not only an iconoclast but an enemy to prayer for change in the

¹ Boniface, *Ep.* lxvi, cited by Poole, p. 23; Reid's *Mosheim*, p. 263, note 3; Neander, *Hist. of the Christian Church*, Bohn tr. v, 86-87; Hardwick, p. 23.

² For excellent accounts of both see Mr. Poole's *Illustrations*, pp. 28-50. As to Claudius ep. Monastier, *Hist. of the Vaudois Church*, Eng. tr. 1848, pp. 13-42, and Faber, *The Ancient Vallenses*, bk. iii, ch. iv.

³ See Mr. Poole's *Illustrations*, pp. 46-48, for an account of the privileges then accorded to Jews.

⁴ This is not incompatible with their having opposed both Saracens (Claudius in actual war) and Jews, as Christian bishops.

⁵ Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 37.

weather, to belief in incantations and the power of evil spirits, to the ordeal by fire, to the wager of battle,¹ and to the belief in the verbal inspiration of the Sacred Books. In an age of enormous superstition and deep ignorance, he maintained within the Church that Reason was the noble gift of God.² He was a rationalist born out of due time.³

A grain of rationalism, as apart from professional self-interest, may also have entered into the outcry made at this period by the clergy against the rigidly predestinarian doctrine of the monk Gottschalk.⁴ His enemy, Rabanus or Hrabanus (called "the Moor"), seems again to represent some Saracen influence, inasmuch as he reproduced the scientific lore of Isidore of Seville.⁵ But the philosophic semi-rationalism of JOHN SCOTUS (d. 875), later known as Erigena (John the Scot=of Ireland—the original "Scots" being Irish), seems to be traceable to the Greek studies which had been cherished in Christianized Ireland while the rest of western Europe lost them, and represents at once the imperfect beginning of the relatively rationalistic philosophy of Nominalism⁶ and the first western revival of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, howbeit by way of accommodation to the doctrine of the Church.⁷

That John the Scot was an Irishman remains practically certain, even if we give up the term "Erigena," which, as has been shown by Floss, the most careful editor of his works, is not found in the oldest MSS. The reading there is Ierugena, which later shades into Erugena and Eriugena. (Cp. Ueberweg, i, 359; Poole, pp. 55-56, note; Dr. Th. Christlieb, *Leben und Lehre des Johannes Scotus Erigena*, 1860, p. 14 sq.; and Huber, *Johannes Scotus Erigena: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie im Mittelalter*, 1861, pp. 38-40.) From this elusive cognomen no certain inference can be drawn, too many being open; though the fact that John had himself coined the term *Graingena* for a late Greek writer makes it

¹ This when the Church found its account in adopting all such usages. Lea, *Superstition and Force*, pp. 242, 280, etc. It is to be noted, however, that one Council, that of Valence, 855, perhaps under the influence of Agobard's teaching, published a canon prohibiting all duels, and praying the emperor to abolish them. Cited by Waddington, *History of the Church*, 1833, p. 242, note, from Fleury.

² *De Grandine et tonitruis*, c. 3; and *De imaginibus*, c. 13, cited by Reuter.

³ "He had the clearest head in the whole ninth century; and as an influence (*Mann der Tendenz*) is above comparison" (Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 24). As to his acute handling of the thorny question of reason and authority see Reuter, i, 40-41.

⁴ Noack, *Philosophie-Geschichtliches Lexikon*, s. v. RABANUS. As to the doubtful works in which Rabanus coincides with Scotus Erigena, cp. Poole, p. 336; Noack, as cited; Ueberweg, i, 367-68.

⁵ Ueberweg, pp. 366, 371; Poole, pp. 99, 101, 336.

⁶ Ueberweg, pp. 356-65. That there was, however, an Irish scholasticism as early as the eighth century is shown by Mosheim, 8 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 6, note 3. Cp. Huber, *Johannes Scotus Erigena*, 1861, p. 428 sq.; Taillandier, *Scot Érigène et la philosophie scolastique*, 1843, p. 198.

likely that he called himself *Ierugena* in the sense of "born in the holy (island)" = Ireland. But the name Scotus, occurring without the *Ierugena*, is common in old MSS.; and it is almost impossible that any save a Scot of Ireland should have possessed the scholarship of John in the ninth century. In the west, Greek scholarship and philosophy had been special to Ireland from the time of Pelagius; and it is from Greek sources that John draws his inspiration and cast of thought. M. Taillandier not unjustly calls the Ireland of that era "l'île des saints, mais aussi l'île des libres penseurs." (*Scot Érigène et la philosophie scolastique*, 1843, p. 64.) To the same effect Huber, pp. 40-41. In writing that Johannes "was of Scottish nationality, but was probably born and brought up in Ireland," Ueberweg (i, 358) obscures the fact that the people of Ireland were the Scoti of that period. All the testimony goes to show "that Ireland was called *Scotia*, and its ruling people *Scoti*, from the first appearance of these names down to the eleventh century. But that [the] present Scotland was called *Scotia*, or its people *Scoti*, before the eleventh century, not so much as one single authority can be produced" (Pinkerton, *Enquiry into the History of Scotland*, 1789, ii, 237). Irish Scots gave their name to Scotland, and it was adopted by the Teutonic settlers.

While the land of John the Scot's birth is thus fairly certain, the place of his death remains a mystery. Out of a statement by Asser that King Alfred made one John, a priest, Abbot of Athelney, and that the said Abbot was murdered at the altar by hired assassins, there grew a later story that Alfred made John the Scot Abbot of Malmesbury, and that he was slain with the *styli* of two of his pupils. It is clear that the John of Asser was an "Old Saxon," and not the philosopher; and it is difficult to doubt that the second story, which arises in the twelfth century, is a hearsay distortion of the first. Cp. Christlieb, who argues (p. 42 sq.) for two Johns, one of them Scotus, and both assassinated, with Huber, who sets forth (p. 108 sq.) the view here followed. There is really no adequate ground for believing that John the Scot was ever a priest. We know not where or when he died; but the presumption is that it was in France, and not long after the death of his patron Charles—877. (Huber, p. 121.)

Called in by Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, himself a normally superstitious believer,¹ to answer Gottschalk, John Scotus in turn was accused of heresy, as he well might be on many points of his treatise, *De Praedestinatione*² (851). He fiercely and not very

¹ Lea, as cited, p. 280.

² "The learned and freethinking guest of Charles le Chauve," Hardwick calls him, p. 176. It needed the protection of Charles to save him from the orthodox, Hincmar included. See Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, 1840, iii, 94-95, as to the anger against him.

fairly condemned Gottschalk as a heretic, charging him with denying both divine grace and freewill, but without disposing of Gottschalk's positive grounds; and arguing that God could not be the cause of sin, as if Gottschalk had not said the same thing. His superior speculative power comes out in his undertaking to show that for the Divine Being sin is *non-ens*; and that therefore that Being cannot properly be said either to foreknow or to predestinate, or to punish. But the argument becomes inconsistent inasmuch as it further affirms Deity to have so constituted the order of things that sin punishes itself.¹ It is evident that in assimilating his pantheistic conceptions he had failed to think out their incompatibility with any theistic dogma whatever; his reasoning, on the whole, being no more coherent than Gottschalk's. He had in fact set out from an arbitrary theistic position that was at once Judaic, Christian, and Platonic, and went back on one line to the Gnostics; while on another his argument that sin has no real existence is a variant from an old thesis—made current, as we saw, by Euclides of Megara—with which orthodoxy had met the Manicheans.² But to the abstract doctrine he gave a new practical point by declaring that the doctrine of hell-fire was a mere allegory; that heaven and hell alike were states of consciousness, not places.³ And if such concrete freethinking were not enough to infuriate the orthodox, they had from him the most explicit declarations that authority is derivable solely from reason.⁴

In philosophy proper he must be credited, despite his inconsistency, with deep and original thought.⁵ Like every theologian of philosophic capacity before and since, he passes into pantheism as soon as he grapples closely with the difficulties of theism, and "the expressions which he uses are identical with those which were afterwards employed by Spinoza.....It was a tradition of the fourth or fifth century transferred to the ninth, an echo from Alexandria."⁶ Condemned by Pope Nicholas I and by two Church Councils,⁷ his writings none the less availed to keep that echo audible to later centuries.

The range and vigour of his practical rationalism may be

¹ See the whole argument summarized by Huber, p. 59 sq.

² Cp. Poole, *Illustrations*, pp. 61, 63, 65; Neander, Bohn tr. vi. 198 sq.; and the present writer's introd. to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, ed. 1900, p. xxxiv. And see above, p. 184.

³ *De divisione Naturæ*, l. v; *De Prædestinatione*, c. 17; Poole, pp. 71-72; Neander, vi. 198-99; Huber, as cited, p. 405.

⁴ In the treatise *On the Division of Nature*. See the extracts given in the Cabinet Cyclopædia survey of *Europe in the Middle Ages*, ii. 266-68. They prove, says the author of the survey, "that John Erigena had none of the spirit of Christianity."

⁵ Poole, pp. 64, 76.

⁶ S. Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pp. 25-26.

⁷ Huber, pp. 435-40.

gathered from his attitude in the controversy begun by the abbot Paschasius Radbert (831) on the nature of the Eucharist. Paschasius taught that there was a real transformation of the bread and wine into the divine body and blood; and the doctrine, thus nakedly put, startled the freer scholars of the time, who were not yet habituated to Latin orthodoxy. Another learned monk, Ratramnus, who had written a treatise on predestination at the request of the rationalizing emperor, Charles the Bald (discussing the problem in Gottschalk's sense¹ without naming him), produced on the same monarch's invitation a treatise in which transubstantiation was denied, and the "real presence" was declared to be spiritual²—a view already known to Paschasius as being held by some.³ John Scotus, also asked by the emperor to write on the subject, went so far as to argue that the bread and wine were merely symbols and memorials.⁴ As usual, the irrational doctrine became that of the Church;⁵ but the other must have wrought for reason in secret. For the rest, he set forth the old "modal" view of the Trinity, resolving it into the different conceptual aspects of the universe, and thus propounding one more vital heresy.⁶

Nothing but a succession of rationalizing emperors could have secured continuance for such teaching as that of Ratramnus and John the Scot. For a time, the cruelty meted out to Gottschalk kept up feeling in favour of his views; Bishop Remigius of Lyons condemned Hincmar's treatment of him; and others sought to maintain his positions, with modifications, though Hincmar carried resolutions condemning them at the second Synod of Chiersy. On the other hand, Archbishop Wenilo of Sens, Bishop Prudentius of Troyes, and Florus, a deacon of Lyons, all wrote against the doctrines of John the Scot; and the second Synod of Valence (855), while opposing Hincmar and affirming duplex predestination, denounced with fury the reasonings of John the Scot, ascribing them to his nation as a whole.⁷ The pope taking the same line, the fortunes of the rationalistic view of the eucharist and of hell-fire were soon determined for the Middle Ages, though in the year 950 we find the Archbishop of Canterbury confronted by English ecclesiastics who asserted that there was no transubstantiation, the elements being merely a figure of the body and blood of Christ.⁸

¹ Cp. Neander, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Bohn tr. vi, 192.

² *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, rep. Oxford, 1838, cc. 8-16, 29, 56, 72-76, etc.

³ C. 19: "Non sicut quidam volunt, anima sola hoc mysterio pascitur." Neander, vi, 210.

⁴ Hardwick, pp. 178, 181; Neander, vi, 217.

⁵ Poole, p. 69.

⁶ Cp. Neander, vi, 219.

⁷ C. 6: "Ineptas quæstiunculas et aniles pæne fabulas Scotorumque pultes." Neander, vi, 207.

⁸ Neander, vi, 219, citing Mabillon, *Analecta*, i, 207.

The economic explanation clearly holds alike as regards the attack on John and the condemnation of Gottschalk for a doctrine which had actually been established for centuries, on the authority of Augustine, as strict orthodoxy. In Augustine's time, the determining pressures were not economic: a bankrupt world was seeking to explain its fate; and Augustine had merely carried a majority with him against Pelagius, partly by his personal influence, partly by force of the fatalist mood of the time. But in the renascent world of Gottschalk's day the economic exploitation of fear had been carried several stages forward by the Church; and the question of predestination had a very direct financial bearing. The northern peoples, accustomed to compound for crimes by money payments, had so readily played into the hands of the priesthood by their eagerness to buy surcease of purgatorial pain that masses for the dead and "penitential certificates" were main sources of ecclesiastical revenue. Therefore the condemnations of such abuses passed by the Councils, on the urging of the more thoughtful clergy, were constantly frustrated by the plain pecuniary interest of the priests.¹ It even appears that the eucharist was popularly regarded not as a process of religious "communion," but as a magical rite objectively efficacious for bodily preservation in this life and the next. Thus it came about that often "priests presented the offering of the mass alone and by themselves, without any participation of the congregation."²

If then it were to be seriously understood that the future lot of all was foreordained, all expenditure on masses for the dead, or to secure in advance a lightening of purgatorial penance, or even to buy off penance on earth, was so much waste; and the Teutons were still as ready as other barbarians to make their transactions with Church, God, and the saints a matter of explicit bargain.³ Gottschalk, accordingly, had to be put down, in the general interests of the Church. It could not truthfully be pretended that he deviated from Augustine, for he actually held by the "semi-Pelagian" inconsistency that God predestinates good, but merely foreknows evil.⁴

¹ Compare the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* of Giraldus Cambrensis for an inside view of the avarice of the clergy in his day.

² Neander, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, v, 187. See the whole section for a good account of the general economic and moral evolution. Neander repeatedly (pp. 186-87) insists on the "magical" element in the doctrine of the mass, as established by Gregory the Great.

³ See Neander, as cited, v, 183. The point was well put some centuries later by the Italian story-teller Masuccio, an orthodox Catholic but a vehement anti-clericalist, in a generalization concerning the monks: "The best punishment for them would be for God to abolish Purgatory; they would then receive no more alms, and would be forced to go back to their spades." Cited by Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. tr. 1892, p. 461.

⁴ Neander, vi, 182. Rabanus Maurus distinctly belied him on this score. (*Id.* p. 183.)

There was in fact no clear opposition between his affirmations and those of Rabanus Maurus, who also professed to be an Augustinian; but the latter laid forensic stress on the "desire" of God that all men should be saved, and on the formula that Christ died for all; while Gottschalk, more honestly, insisted that predestination is predestination, and applied the principle not merely, as had been customary, to the future state of the good, but to that of the bad,¹ insisting on a *prædestinatio duplex*. His own fate was thus economically predestinate; and he was actually tortured by the scourge till he cast into the fire his written defence, "a document which contained nothing but a compilation of testimonies from Scripture, and from the older church-teachers."²

Gottschalk later challenged a fourfold ordeal of "boiling water, oil, and pitch." His primary doctrine had been the immutability of the divine will; but he brought himself to the belief that God would work a miracle in his favour. His conception of "foreordination" was thus framed solely with regard to the conception of a future state. The ordeal was not granted, the orthodox party fearing to try conclusions, and he died without the sacraments, rather than recant. Then began the second reaction of feeling against his chief persecutor, Hincmar. Neander, vi, 190.

A recent writer, who handles very intelligently and temperately the problem of persecution, urges that in that connection "one ought not to lay great stress on the old argument of the Hallam and Macaulay school as to the strength of vested interests, though it has a certain historical importance, because the priest must subsist somehow" (*Religious Persecution: a Study in Psychology*, by E. S. P. Haynes, 1904, p. 4). If the "certain importance" be in the ratio of the certainty of the last adduced fact, the legitimate "stress" on the argument in question would seem sufficient for most purposes. The writer adds the note: "It is not unfair, however, to quote the case of Dr. Middleton, who, writing to Lord Radnor in 1750 in respect of his famous work on Miracles, admits frankly enough that he would never have given the clergy any trouble, had he received some good appointment in the church." If the essayist has met with no other historic fact illustrative of the play of vested interests in ecclesiastical history, it is extremely candid of him to mention that one. Later on, however, he commits himself to the proposition that "the history of medieval persecution leads one to infer that the clergy as a whole were roused to much

¹ Formerly, only the saved had been spoken of as *prædestinati*, the reprobate being called *præsciti*. Neander, vi, 181.

² Neander, vi, 187. Cp. Hampden, Bampton Lectures on *The Scholastic Philosophy*, 3rd ed. p. 418; and Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de France*, 1840, iii, 92.

greater activity by menaces to their material comforts in this world than by an altruistic anxiety for the fate of lay souls in the next" (*id.* p. 60. Cp. p. 63). This amount of "stress" on vested interests will probably satisfy most members of the Hallam and Macaulay school; and is ample for the purposes of the present contention.

From this point onward, the slow movement of new ideas may for a time be conveniently traced on two general lines—one that of the philosophic discussion in the schools, reinforced by Saracen influences, the other that of partially rationalistic and democratic heresy among the common people, by way first of contagion from the East. The latter was on the whole as influential for sane thought as the former, apart from such ecclesiastical freethinking as that of Berengar of Tours and Roscelin (Rousselin), Canon of Compiègne. Berengar (*c.* 1050) was led by moral reflection¹ to doubt the priestly miracle of the Eucharist, and thenceforth he entered into a stormy controversy on the subject, in the course of which he twice recanted under bodily fear, but passionately returned to his original positions. Fundamentally sincere, and indignantly resentful of the gross superstition prevailing in the Church, he struck fiercely in his writings at Popes Leo IX and Nicholas II and Archbishop Lanfranc,² all of whom had opposed him. At length, after much strife, he threw up the contest, spending the latter part of his long life in seclusion; Pope Gregory VII, who was personally friendly to him, having finally shielded him from persecution. It seems clear that, though accused, with others of his school, of rejecting certain of the gospel miracles,³ he never became a disbeliever; his very polemic testifying to the warmth of his belief on his own lines. His teaching, however, which went far by reason of the vividness of his style, doubtless had the effect of promoting not only the rationalistic-Christian view of the Eucharist,⁴ but a criticism which went further, inasmuch as his opponents forced on the bystanders the question as to what reality there was in the Christian creed if his view were true.⁵ All such influences, however, were but slight in total mass compared with the overwhelming weight of the economic interest of the priesthood; and not till the Reformation was Berengar's doctrine accepted by a single organized sect. The orthodox doctrine, in fact, was all-essential to the Catholic Church. Given the daily miracle of the "real presence," the Church had a vital hold on the Christian

¹ Poole, p. 103. Cp. Neander, vi, 225

³ *Id.* pp. 255-56.

⁵ *Id.* p. 258. As to the wide extent of the discussion see Reuter, *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 112.

² Neander, vi, 237-38.

⁴ *Id.* p. 257.

world, and the priest was above all lay rivalry. Seeing as much, the Council of the Lateran (1059) met the new criticism by establishing the technical doctrine of the real presence for the first time as an article of faith; and as such it will doubtless stand while there is a Catholic priesthood. Berengar's original view must have been shared by thousands; but no Catholic carried on his propaganda. The question had become one of life and death.

Berengar's forced prevarications, which are unsympathetically set forth by Mosheim (11 Cent., pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 13-18), are made much more intelligible in the sympathetic survey of Neander (vi, 225-60). See also the careful inquiry of Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 91 sq. As to Berengar's writings, see further Murdock's note to Mosheim, last cit., § 18. The formal compromise forced on him by Pope Hildebrand, who was personally friendly to him, consisted in adding to his denial of the change of the bread and wine into "body and blood" the doctrine that the body and blood were "superadded to the bread and wine in and by their consecration." This formula, of course, did not represent the spirit of Berengar's polemic. As to the disputes on the subject, which ran to the most unseemly length of physiological detail, see Voltaire, *Essai sur les Mœurs*, ch. xlv. It is noteworthy that Augustine had very expressly set forth a metaphorical interpretation of the Eucharist—*De doctrina christiana*, l. iii, c. 16. But just as the Church later set aside the verdict of Thomas Aquinas that the Virgin Mary was "born in sin," so did it reverse Augustine's judgment on the Eucharist. Always the more irrational view carried the day, as being more propitious to sacerdotal claims.

So far as the Church by her keenly self-regarding organization could attain it, all opinion was kept within the strict bounds of her official dogma, in which life in the Middle Ages so long stagnated. For centuries, despite the turmoil of many wars—which, indeed, helped to arrest thought—the life of the mind presented a uniformity hardly now conceivable. The common expectation of the ending of the world, in the year 1000, in particular had an immense prepotency of paralysing men's spirits; and the grooves of habit thus fixed were hard to alter. For most men, the notion of possible innovation in thought did not exist: the usual was the sacred: the very ideal of an improvement or reformation, when it arose, was one of reaching back to a far-away perfection of the past, never of remoulding things on lines laid down by reason. Yet even into this half-stifled world there entered, by eastern ways, and first in the guise of rude demotic departures from priestly prescription, the indestructible spirit of change.

§ 3. *Popular Anti-Clerical Heresy*

The first Western traces of the imported Paulician heresy are about the year 1000,¹ when a rustic of Châlons is heard of as destroying a cross and a religious picture, and asserting that the prophets are not wholly to be believed.² From this time forward, the world having begun to breathe again after the passing of the year 1000 without any sign of the Day of Judgment, heresy begins to multiply, the chief movers being "distinguished by a tendency to rationalism."³ In 1010 there is trace of it in Aquitaine.⁴ In the year 1022 (or, as the date is sometimes put, in 1017) we hear of the unveiling of a secret society of rationalizing mystics at Orleans, ten canons of one church being members.⁵ An Italian woman was said to be the founder, and thirteen were burned alive on their refusal to recant. According to the records, they denied all miracles, including the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection; rejected baptism and the miracle of the Eucharist; took the old "Docetic" view of Jesus, denying his actual humanity; and affirmed the eternity of matter and the non-creation of the world. They were also accused, like the first Christians, of promiscuous nocturnal orgies and of eating sacrificed infants; but unless such charges are to be held valid in the other case, they cannot be here.⁶ The stories told of the Manichean community who lived in the castle of Monforte, near Asti in Lombardy, in the years 1025-1040, and who at length were likewise burned alive, are similarly mixed with fable.⁷ On this case it is recorded that, while the Archbishop of Milan investigated the heresy, the burning of the victims was the work of the fanatical populace of Milan, and was done against his will.

A less savage treatment may have made possible the alleged success of Gerhard, bishop of Cambray and Arras, in reconciling to the Church at Arras, in 1025 or 1030, a number of laymen—also said to have been taught by an Italian—who as a body rejected all external worship, setting aside priestly baptism and the sacraments, penance and images, funeral rites, holy oil, church bells, cross-

¹ In 945, however, Atto, Bishop of Verceil, is found complaining that some people from the Italian border had introduced heresies.

² Mosheim, 10 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 3; Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 91.

³ Hardwick, p. 203. ⁴ Kurtz, *History of the Christian Church*, Eng. tr. 1868, i, 435.

⁵ Hénault, *Abrégé chronologique*, ann. 1022; Neander, *Hist. of the Chr. Relig. and Church*, Eng. tr. Bohn ed. vi, 349 sq.; Mosheim, 10 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 3; De Potter, *L'Esprit de l'Eglise*, vi, 18-19; Poole, pp. 96-98; Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 104, 108-109, 218; Gieseler, *Per. III, Div. ii, § 46*. The contemporary accounts say nothing as to the heretics being Manicheans. Neander, p. 350, *note*.

⁶ Cp. Murdock's note on Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 386; Monastier, *Hist. of the Vaudois Church*, p. 33; Waddington, p. 356; Hardwick, p. 203, *note*, and p. 207.

⁷ De Potter, pp. 20-21; Gieseler, as cited, p. 497; Lea, i, 104, 109.