

HISTORY
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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Christianus sum: Christiani nihil a me alienum puto

A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED

NICENE AND POST-NICENE CHRISTIANITY

FROM CONSTANTINE THE GREAT TO GREGORY THE GREAT

A.D. 311-600

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CHAPTER IX.

THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES, AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY.

§ 117. *General Observations. Doctrinal Importance of the Period. Influence of the Ancient Philosophy.*

THE Nicene and Chalcedonian age is the period of the formation and ecclesiastical settlement of the ecumenical orthodoxy; that is, the doctrines of the holy trinity and of the incarnation and the divine-human person of Christ, in which the Greek, Latin, and evangelical churches to this day in their symbolical books agree, in opposition to the heresies of Arianism and Apollinarianism, Nestorianism and Eutychianism. Besides these trinitarian and christological doctrines, anthropology also, and soteriology, particularly the doctrines of sin and grace, in opposition to Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism, were developed and brought to a relative settlement; only, however, in the Latin church, for the Greek took very little part in the Pelagian controversy.

The fundamental nature of these doctrines, the greatness of the church fathers who were occupied with them, and the importance of the result, give this period the first place after the apostolic in the history of theology. In no period, excepting the Reformation of the sixteenth century, have there been so momentous and earnest controversies in doctrine, and so lively an interest in them. The church was now in possession of the ancient philosophy and learning of the Roman empire,

and applied them to the unfolding and vindication of the Christian truth. In the lead of these controversies stood church teachers of imposing talents and energetic piety, not mere book men, but venerable theological characters, men all of a piece, as great in acting and suffering as in thinking. To them theology was a sacred business of heart and life,¹ and upon them we may pass the judgment of Eusebius respecting Origen: "Their life was as their word, and their word was as their life."

The theological controversies absorbed the intellectual activity of that time, and shook the foundations of the church and the empire. With the purest zeal for truth were mingled much of the *odium* and *rabies theologorum*, and the whole host of theological passions; which are the deepest and most bitter of passions, because religion is concerned with eternal interests.

The leading personages in these controversies were of course bishops and priests. By their side fought the monks, as a standing army, with fanatical zeal for the victory of orthodoxy, or not seldom in behalf even of heresy. Emperors and civil officers also mixed in the business of theology, but for the most part to the prejudice of its free, internal development; for they imparted to all theological questions a political character, and entangled them with the cabals of court and the secular interests of the day. In Constantinople, during the Arian controversy, all classes, even mechanics, bankers, frippers, market women, and runaway slaves took lively part in the questions of Homousion and sub-ordination, of the begotten and the unbegotten.²

The speculative mind of the Eastern church was combined

¹ Or, as Gregory Nazianzen says of the true theologian, contemplation was a prelude to action, and action a prelude to contemplation, *ἡρώσιον* (a religious walk) *ἐπιβασίς θεωρίας* (actio gradus est ad contemplationem), Oratio xx. 12 (ed. Bened. Paris. tom. i. p. 383).

² So Gregory of Nyssa (not Nazianzen, as J. H. Kurtz, wrongly quoting from Neander, has it in his large K. Gesch. i. ii. p. 99) relates from his own observation: Orat. de Deitate Filii et Spiritus S. (Opera ii. p. 898, ed. Paris. of 1615). He compares his cotemporaries in this respect with the Athenians, who are always wishing to hear some new thing.

with a deep religious earnestness and a certain mysticism, and at the same time with the Grecian curiosity and disputatiousness, which afterwards rather injured than promoted her inward life. Gregory Nazianzen, who lived in Constantinople in the midst of the Arian wars, describes the division and hostility which this polemic spirit introduced between parents and children, husbands and wives, old and young, masters and slaves, priests and people. "It has gone so far that the whole market resounds with the discourses of heretics, every banquet is corrupted by this babbling even to nausea, every merry-making is transformed into a mourning, and every funeral solemnity is almost alleviated by this brawling as a still greater evil; even the chambers of women, the nurseries of simplicity, are disturbed thereby, and the flowers of modesty are crushed by this precocious practice of dispute."¹ Chrysostom, like Melancthon at a later day, had much to suffer from the theological pugnacity of his times.

The history of the Nicene age shows clearly that the church of God carries the heavenly treasure in earthly vessels. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was likewise in fact an incessant war, in which impure personal and political motives of every kind had play, and even the best men often violated the apostolic injunction to speak the truth in love. But we must not forget that the passionate and intolerant dogmatism of that time was based upon deep moral earnestness and strong faith, and so far forth stands vastly above the tolerance of indifferentism, which lightly plays with the truth or not rarely strikes out in most vehement intolerance against the faith. (Remember the first French revolution.) The overruling of divine Providence in the midst of these wild conflicts is unmistakable, and the victory of the truth appears the greater for the violence of error. God uses all sorts of men for his instruments, and brings evil passions as well as good into his service. The Spirit of truth guided the church through the rush and the din of contending parties, and always triumphed over error in the end.

¹ Orat. xxvii. 2 (Opera, tom. i. p. 488). Comp. Orat. xxxii. (tom. i. p. 581 Carmen de vita sua, vers. 1210 sqq. (tom. ii. p. 787 sq.).

The ecumenical councils were the open battle-fields, upon which the victory of orthodoxy was decided. The doctrinal decrees of these councils contain the results of the most profound discussions respecting the Trinity and the person of Christ; and the Church to this day has not gone essentially beyond those decisions.

The Greek church wrought out Theology and Christology, while the Latin church devoted itself to Anthropology and Soteriology. The one, true to the genius of the Greek nationality, was predominantly speculative, dialectical, impulsive, and restless; the other, in keeping with the Roman character, was practical, traditional, uniform, consistent, and steady. The former followed the stimulation of Origen and the Alexandrian school; the latter received its impulse from Tertullian and Cyprian, and reached its theological height in Jerome and Augustine. The speculative inclination of the Greek church appeared even in its sermons, which not rarely treated of the number of worlds, the idea of matter, the different classes of higher spirits, the relation of the three hypostases in the Godhead, and similar abstruse questions. The Latin church also, however, had a deep spirit of investigation (as we see in Tertullian and Augustine), took an active part in the trinitarian and christological controversies of the East, and decided the victory of orthodoxy by the weight of its authority. The Greek church almost exhausted its productive force in those great struggles, proved indifferent to the deeper conception of sin and grace, as developed by Augustine, and after the council of Chalcedon degenerated theologically into scholastic formalism and idle refinements.

The fourth and fifth centuries are the flourishing, classical period of the patristic theology and of the Christian Græco-Roman civilization. In the second half of the fifth century the West Roman empire, with these literary treasures, went down amidst the storms of the great migration, to take a new and higher sweep in the Germano-Roman form under Charlemagne. In the Eastern empire scholarship was better maintained, and a certain connection with antiquity was preserved through the medium of the Greek language. But as the Greek

church had no middle age, so it has had no Protestant Reformation.

The prevailing philosophy of the fathers was the Platonic, so far as it was compatible with the Christian spirit. The speculative theologians of the East, especially those of the school of Origen, and in the West, Ambrose and pre-eminently Augustine, were moulded by the Platonic idealism.

A remarkable combination of Platonism with Christianity, to the injury of the latter, appears in the system of mystic symbolism in the pseudo-Dionysian books, which cannot have been composed before the fifth century, though they were falsely ascribed to the Areopagite of the book of Acts (xvii. 34), and proceeded from the later school of New-Platonism, as represented by Proclus of Athens († 485). The fundamental idea of these Dionysian writings (on the celestial hierarchy; on the ecclesiastical hierarchy; on the divine names; on mystic theology; together with ten letters) is a double hierarchy, one in heaven and one on earth, each consisting of three triads, which mediates between man and the ineffable, transcendent, hyper-essential divinity. This idea is a remnant of the aristocratic spirit of ancient heathenism, and forms the connecting link with the hierarchical organization of the church, and explains the great importance and popularity which the pseudo-Dionysian system acquired, especially in the mystic theology of the middle ages.¹

In Synesius of Cyrene also the Platonism outweighs the Christianity. He was an enthusiastic pupil of Hypatia, the famous female philosopher at Alexandria, and in 410 was called to the bishopric of Ptolemais, the capital of Pentapolis. Before taking orders he frankly declared that he could not forsake his philosophical opinions, although he would in public accommodate himself to the popular belief. Theophilus of Alexandria, the same who was one of the chief persecutors of the admirers

¹ Comp. ENGELHARDT: *Die angeblichen Schriften des Areop. Dionysius* übersetzt und erklärt, 1828, 2 Parts; RITTER: *Geschichte der christl. Philosophie*, Bd. ii. p. 515; BAUR: *Geschichte der Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit*, ii. 207 f., and his *Geschichte der Kirche*, from the fourth to the sixth century, p. 59 ff.; JOH. HUBER: *Die Philosophie der Kirchenväter*, pp. 327-341; and an article of K. Voigt, in *Hezog's Encycl.* iii. p. 412 ff.

of Origen, the father of Christian Platonism, accepted this doubtful theory of accommodation. Synesius was made bishop, but often regretted that he exchanged his favorite studies for the responsible and onerous duties of the bishopric. In his hymns he fuses the Christian doctrine of the Trinity with the Platonic idea of God, and the Saviour with the divine Helios, whose daily setting and rising was to him a type of Christ's descent into Hades and ascension to heaven. The desire of the soul to be freed from the chains of matter, takes the place of the sorrow for sin and the longing after salvation.¹

As soon as theology assumed a scholastic character and began to deal more in dialectic forms than in living ideas, the philosophy of Aristotle rose to favor and influence, and from John Philoponus, A. D. 550, throughout the middle age to the Protestant Reformation, kept the lead in the Catholic church. It was the philosophy of scholasticism, while mysticism sympathized rather with the Platonic system.

The influence of the two great philosophies upon theology was beneficial or injurious, according as the principle of Christianity was the governing or the governed factor. Both systems are theistic (at bottom monotheistic), and favorable to the spirit of earnest and profound speculation. Platonism, with its ideal, poetic views, stimulates, fertilizes, inspires and elevates the reason and imagination, but also easily leads into the errors of gnosticism and the twilight of mysticism. Aristotelianism, with its sober realism and sharp logical distinctions, is a good discipline for the understanding, a school of dialectic practice, and a help to logical, systematic, methodical treatment, but may also induce a barren formalism. The truth is, Christianity itself is the highest philosophy, as faith is the highest reason; and she makes successive philosophies, as well as the arts and the sciences, tributary to herself, on the Pauline principle that "all things are hers."²

¹ Comp. CLAUSEN: *De Synesio philosopho*, Hafn. 1831; HUBER: *Philos. der Kirchenväter*, pp. 315-321; BAUR: *Church Hist. from the fourth to the sixth century*, p. 52 ff., and W. MÖLLER in *Herzog's Encycl.* vol. xv. p. 335 ff.

² Concerning the influence of philosophy on the church fathers, comp. RITTER's *Geschichte der christl. Philosophie*; ACKERMANN, and BAUR: *Ueber das Christliche*

§ 118. *Sources of Theology. Scripture and Tradition.*

Comp. the literature in vol. i. § 75 and § 76. Also: EUSEBIUS: *Hist. Ecol.* iii. 8; vi. 25 (on the form of the canon in the Nicene age); LEANDER VAN ESS (R. C.): *Ohrysostomus oder Stimmen der Kirchenväter für's Bibellesen.* Darmstadt, 1824.

VINOENTIUS LIRINENSIS († about 450): *Commonitorium pro cathol. fidei antiquitate et universitate adv. profanas omnium hæ. novitates*; frequent editions, e. g. by Baluzius (1668 and 1684), Gallandi, Coster, Klüpfel (with prolegom. and notes), Viennæ, 1809, and by Herzog, Vratisl. 1889; also in connection with the *Opera Hilarii Arelatensis*, Rom. 1781, and the *Opera Salviani*, Par. 1669, and in Migne's *Patrologia*, vol. 50, p. 626 sqq.

The church view respecting the sources of Christian theology and the rule of faith and practice remains as it was in the previous period, except that it is further developed in particulars.¹ The divine Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as opposed to human writings; and the oral tradition or living faith of the catholic church from the apostles down, as opposed to the varying opinions of heretical sects—together form the one infallible source and rule of faith. Both are vehicles of the same substance: the saving revelation of God in Christ; with this difference in form and office, that the church tradition determines the canon, furnishes the key to the true interpretation of the Scriptures, and guards them against heretical abuse. The relation of the two in the mind of the ancient church may be illustrated by the relation between the supreme law of a country (such as the Roman law, the Code Napoleon, the common law of England; the Constitution of the United States) and the courts which expound the law, and decide between conflicting interpretations. Athanasius, for example, "the father of orthodoxy," always bases his conclusions upon Scripture, and appeals to the authority of

im Platonismus; HUBER'S *Philosophie der Kirchenväter* (Munich, 1859); NEANDER'S *Dogmengeschichte*, I. p. 59 sqq.; ARCHER BUTLER'S *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*; SHEDD'S *History of Christian Doctrine*, vol. i. ch. 1 (*Philosophical Influences in the Ancient Church*); ALB. STÖCKL: *Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Mainz, 1865, 2 Bde.

¹ Comp. vol. i. § 75 and 76.

tradition only in proof that he rightly understands and expounds the sacred books. The catholic faith, says he, is that which the Lord *gave*, the apostles *preached*, and the fathers have *preserved*; upon this the church is founded, and he who departs from this faith can no longer be called a Christian.¹

The sum of doctrinal tradition was contained in what is called the APOSTLES' CREED, which at first bore various forms, but after the beginning of the fourth century assumed the Roman form now commonly used. In the Greek church its place was supplied after the year 325 by the NIOENE CREED, which more fully expresses the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Neither of these symbols goes beyond the substance of the teaching of the apostles; neither contains any doctrine specifically Greek or Roman.

The old catholic doctrine of Scripture and tradition, therefore, nearly as it approaches the Roman, must not be entirely confounded with it. It makes the two identical as to substance, while the Roman church rests upon tradition for many doctrines and usages, like the doctrines of the seven sacraments, of the mass, of purgatory, of the papacy, and of the immaculate conception, which have no foundation in Scripture. Against this the evangelical church protests, and asserts the perfection and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures as the record of divine revelation; while it does not deny the value of tradition, or of the consciousness of the church, in the interpretation of Scripture, and regulates public teaching by symbolical books. In the Protestant view tradition is not coördinate with Scripture, but subordinate to it, and its value depends on its agreement with the Scriptures. The Scriptures alone are the *norma fidei*; the church doctrine is only the *norma doctrinæ*. Protestantism gives much more play to private judgment and

¹ Ad Serap. Ep. i. cap. 28 (Opera, tom. i. pars ii. p. 676): "Ἴδωμεν . . . τὴν τῆς ἀρχῆς παράδοσιν καὶ διδασκαλίαν καὶ πίστιν τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας ἣν ὁ μὲν κύριος ἔδωκεν, οἱ δὲ ἀπόστολοι ἐκήρυξαν, καὶ οἱ πατέρες ἐφύλαξαν. Voigt (Die Lehre des Athanasius, &c. p. 13 ff.) makes Athanasius even the representative of the formal principle of Protestantism, the supreme authority, sufficiency, and self-interpreting character of the Scriptures; while Möhler endeavors to place him on the Roman side. Bot'i are biassed, and violate history by their preconceptions.

free investigation in the interpretation of the Scriptures, than the Roman or even the Nicene church.¹

I. In respect to the HOLY SCRIPTURES :

At the end of the fourth century views still differed in regard to the *extent of the canon*, or the *number* of the books which should be acknowledged as divine and authoritative.

The Jewish canon, or the Hebrew Bible, was universally received, while the Apocrypha added to the Greek version of the Septuagint were only in a general way accounted as books suitable for church reading,² and thus as a middle class between canonical and strictly apocryphal (pseudonymous) writings. And justly; for those books, while they have great historical value, and fill the gap between the Old Testament and the New, all originated after the cessation of prophecy, and they cannot therefore be regarded as inspired, nor are they ever cited by Christ or the apostles.³

Of the New Testament, in the time of Eusebius, the four Gospels, the Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul, the first Epistle of John, and the first Epistle of Peter, were universally recognized as canonical,⁴ while the Epistle to the Hebrews, the second and third Epistles of John, the second Epistle of Peter, the Epistle of James, and the Epistle of Jude were by many disputed as to their apostolic origin, and the book of Revelation was doubted by reason of its contents.⁵ This indecision in reference to the Old Testament Apocrypha prevailed still

¹ On this point compare the relevant sections in the works on Symbolic and Polemic Theology, and Schaff's *Principle of Protestantism*, 1845.

² Βιβλία αναγινωσκόμενα (libri ecclesiastici), in distinction from κανονικά or κανονιζόμενα on the one hand, and ἀπόκρυφα on the other. So Athanasius.

³ Heb. xi. 85 ff. probably alludes, indeed, to 2 Macc. vi. ff.; but between a historical allusion and a corroborative citation with the solemn ἡ γραφή λέγει there is a wide difference.

⁴ Hence called δμολογούμενα.

⁵ Hence called ἀπιλεγόμενα, which, however, is by no means to be confounded with ἀπόκρυφα and νόθα. There are no apocrypha, properly speaking, in the New Testament. The apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Apocalypses in every case differ greatly from the apostolic, and were never received into the canon. The idea of apocrypha in the Old Testament is innocent, and is applied to later Jewish writings, the origin of which is not accurately known, but the contents of which are useful and edifying.

longer in the Eastern church; but by the middle of the fourth century the seven disputed books of the New Testament were universally acknowledged, and they are included in the lists of the canonical books given by Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Amphilochius of Iconium, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Epiphanius; except that in some cases the Apocalypse is omitted.

In the Western church the canon of both Testaments was closed at the end of the fourth century through the authority of Jerome (who wavered, however, between critical doubts and the principle of tradition), and more especially of Augustine, who firmly followed the Alexandrian canon of the Septuagint, and the preponderant tradition in reference to the disputed Catholic Epistles and the Revelation; though he himself, in some places, inclines to consider the Old Testament Apocrypha as *deutero*-canonical books, bearing a subordinate authority. The council of Hippo in 393, and the third (according to another reckoning, the sixth) council of Carthage in 397, under the influence of Augustine, who attended both, fixed the catholic canon of the Holy Scriptures, including the Apocrypha of the Old Testament, and prohibited the reading of other books in the churches, excepting the Acts of the Martyrs on their memorial days. These two African councils, with Augustine,¹ give forty-four books as the canonical books of the Old Testament, in the following order: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings (the two of Samuel and the two of Kings), two books of Paralipomena (Chronicles), Job, the Psalms, five books of Solomon, the twelve minor Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Tobias, Judith, Esther, two books of Ezra, two books of Maccabees. The New Testament canon is the same as ours.

This decision of the transmarine church, however, was subject to ratification; and the concurrence of the Roman see it received when Innocent I. and Gelasius I. (A. D. 414) repeated the same index of biblical books.

This canon remained undisturbed till the sixteenth century,

¹ De doctr. Christ. l. ii. c. 8.

and was sanctioned by the council of Trent at its fourth session.

Protestantism retained the New Testament canon of the Roman church,¹ but, in accordance with the orthodox Jewish and the primitive Christian view, excluded the Apocrypha from the Old.²

The most eminent of the church fathers speak in the strongest terms of the full *inspiration* and the infallible *authority* of the holy Scriptures, and commend the diligent reading of them even to the laity. Especially Chrysostom. The want of general education, however, and the enormous cost of books, left the people for the most part dependent on the mere hearing of the word of God in public worship; and the free private study of the Bible was repressed by the prevailing spirit of the hierarchy. No prohibition, indeed, was yet laid upon the reading of the Bible; but the presumption that it was a book of the priests and monks already existed. It remained for a much later period, by the invention of printing, the free spirit of Protestantism, and the introduction of popular schools, to make the Bible properly a people's book, as it was originally designed to be; and to disseminate it by Bible societies, which now print and circulate more copies of it in one year, than were made in the whole middle age, or even in the fifteen centuries before the Reformation.

The oldest *manuscripts* of the Bible now extant date no further back than the fourth century, are very few, and abound in unessential errors and omissions of every kind; and the

¹ The well-known doubts of Luther respecting some of the *antilegomena*, especially the Epistle of James, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Revelation, are mere private opinions, which have latterly been re-asserted by individual Lutheran divines, like Philippi and Kahnis, but have had no influence upon the church doctrine.

² The more particular history of the canon belongs to historical and critical Introduction to the Bible. Besides the relevant sections in works of this sort, and in LARDNER'S *Credibility of the Gospel History*, and KIRCHHOFFER'S *Quellensammlung* (1844), comp. the following special treatises: THIERSCH: *Herstellung des historischen Standpunkts für die Kritik der N. T'lichen Schriften*, 1845; CREDNER: *Zur Geschichte des Kanons*, 1847; OEHLER: *Kanon des A. Ts. in Herzog's Encyclopädie*, vol. vii. pp. 243-270; LANDERER: *Kanon des Neuen Testaments*, *ibid.* pp. 270-303; also an extended article: *Canon of Scripture*, in W. SMITH'S *Dictionary of the Bible* (London and Boston, 1860), vol. i. pp. 250-268.

problem of a critical restoration of the original text is not yet satisfactorily solved, nor can it be more than approximately solved in the absence of the original writings of the apostles.

The oldest and most important manuscripts in uncial letters are the Sinaitic (first discovered by Tischendorf in 1859 and published in 1862), the Vatican (in Rome, defective), the Alexandrian (in London); then the much mutilated codex of Ephraim Syrus in Paris, and the incomplete codex of Cambridge. From these and a few other uncial codices the oldest attainable text must be mainly gathered. Secondary sources are quotations in the fathers, the earliest versions, such as the Syriac Peshito and the Latin Vulgate, and the later manuscripts.¹

The faith which rests not upon the letter, but upon the living spirit of Christianity, is led into no error by the defects of the manuscripts and ancient and modern versions of the Bible, but only excited to new and deeper study.

The spread of the church among all the nations of the Roman empire, and even among the barbarians on its borders, brought with it the necessity of *translating* the Scriptures into various tongues. The most important of these versions, and the one most used, is the Latin *Vulgate*, which was made by the learned Jerome on the basis of the older *Itala*, and which afterwards, notwithstanding its many errors, was placed by the Roman church on a level with the original itself. The knowledge of Hebrew among the fathers was very rare; the Septuagint was considered sufficient, and even the knowledge of Greek diminished steadily in the Latin church after the invasion of the barbarians and the schism with the East, so that the Bible in its original languages became a sealed book, and remained such until the revival of learning in the fifteenth century.

In the *interpretation* of the Scriptures the system of allegorical exposition and imposition was in high repute, and

¹ Full information on this subject may be found in the Introductions to the New Testament, and in the Prolegomena of the critical editions of the New Testament, among which the editions of Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Alford are the most important. Comp. particularly the eighth large edition of Tischendorf, begun in 1865, and diligently employing all existing critical helps.

often degenerated into the most arbitrary conceits, especially in the Alexandrian school, to which most of the great dogmatic theologians of the Nicene age belonged. In opposition to this system the Antiochian school, founded by Lucian († 311), and represented by Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and best by John Chrysostom and Theodoret, advocated a soberer grammatical and historical exegesis, and made a sharper distinction between the human and the divine elements in the Scriptures. Theodore thereby incurred the suspicion and subsequently even the condemnation of the Greek church.

Among the Latin fathers a similar difference in the interpretation of Scripture appears between the discerning depth and lively play of Augustine and the grammatical and archæological scholarship and dogmatical superficiality of Jerome.

II. The Holy Scriptures were universally accepted as the supreme authority and infallible rule of faith. But as the Scriptures themselves were variously interpreted, and were claimed by the heretics for their views, the fathers of our period, like Irenæus and Tertullian before them, had recourse at the same time to TRADITION, as preserved from the apostles through the unbroken succession of the bishops. With them the Scriptures are the supreme law; the combined wisdom and piety of the catholic church, the organic body of the faithful, is the judge which decides the true sense of the law. For to be understood the Bible must be explained, either by private judgment or by the universal faith of Christendom.

Strictly speaking, the Holy Ghost, who is the author, is also the only infallible interpreter of the Scriptures. But it was held that the Holy Ghost is given only to the orthodox church, not to heretical and schismatic sects, and that he expresses himself through assembled orthodox bishops and universal councils in the clearest and most authoritative way. "The heretics," says Hilary, "all cite the Scriptures, but without the sense of the Scriptures; for those who are outside the church can have no understanding of the word of God." They imagine they follow the Scriptures, while in truth they

follow their own conceits, which they put into the Scriptures instead of drawing their thoughts from them.

Even Augustine, who of all the fathers stands nearest to evangelical Protestantism, on this point advocates the catholic principle in the celebrated maxim which he urges against the Manichæans: "I would not believe the gospel, if I were not compelled by the authority of the universal church." But he immediately adds: "God forbid that I should not believe the gospel."¹

But there are different traditions; not to speak of various interpretations of the catholic tradition. Hence the need of a criterion of true and false tradition. The semi-Pelagian divine, VINCENTIUS, a monk and priest in the South-Gallic cloister of Lirinum († 450),² otherwise little known, propounded the maxim which formed an epoch in this matter, and has since remained the standard in the Roman church: We must hold "what has been *everywhere, always, and by all* believed."³

¹ "Ego vero evangelio non crederem, nisi me Catholicæ ecclesiæ commoveret autoritas. . . . Sed absit ut ego Evangelio non credam. Illi enim credens, non invenio quomodo possim etiam tibi [Manichæus] credere. Apostolorum enim nomina, quæ ibi leguntur, non inter se continent nomen Manichæi." *Contra Epist. Manichæi, quam vocant fundamenti, cap. 6* (ed. Bened. tom. viii. p. 154). His object in this argument is to show that the Manichæans have no right in the Scriptures, that the Catholic church is the legitimate owner and interpreter of the Bible. But it is an abuse to press this argument at once into the service of Rome as is so often done. Between the controversy of the old Catholic church with Manichæism, and the controversy of Romanism with Protestantism, there is an immense difference.

² Lirinum or Lirinum (now St. Honorat) is one of the group of small islands in the Mediterranean which formerly belonged to Roman Gaul, afterwards to France. In the fifth century it was a seminary of learned monks and priests for France, as Faustus Regiensis, Hilarius Arelstensis, Salvianus, and others.

³ *Commonit. cap. 2* (in MIGNÉ'S *Patrolog.* vol. 50, p. 640): "In ipsa item Catholica Ecclesia magnopere curandum est, ut id teneamus quod *ubique*, quod *semper*, quod *ab omnibus* creditum est." The Commonitorium was composed, as we learn from the preface and from ch. 42, about three years after the ecumenical council of Ephesus, therefore about 434, under the false name of Peregrinus, as a help to the memory of the author that he might have the main points of ecclesiastical tradition constantly at hand against the heretica. Baronius calls it "opus certe aureum," and Bellarmin "parvum mole et virtute maximum." It consisted originally of two books, but the manuscript of the second book was stolen from the author, who then added a brief summary of both books at the close of the first (c. 41-43). Vossius,

Here we have a threefold test of the ecclesiastical orthodoxy: Catholicity of place, of time, and of number; or ubiquity, antiquity, and universal consent;¹ in other words, an article of faith must be traced up to the apostles, and be found in all Christian countries, and among all believers. But this principle can be applied only to a few fundamental articles of revealed religion, not to any of the specifically Romish dogmas, and, to have any reasonable meaning, must be reduced to a mere principle of majority. In regard to the *consensus omnium*, which properly includes both the others, Vincentius himself makes this limitation, by defining the condition as a concurrence of the *majority* of the *clergy*.² To the voice of the people neither he nor the whole Roman system, in matters of faith, pays the slightest regard. In many important doctrines, however, there is not even a *consensus patrum*, as in the doctrine of free will, of predestination, of the atonement. A certain freedom of divergent private opinions is the indispensable condition of all progress of thought, and precedes the ecclesiastical settlement of every article of faith. Even Vincentius expressly asserts a steady advance of the church in the knowledge of the truth, though of course in harmony with the previous steps, as a man or a tree remains identical through the various stages of growth.³

Vincentius is thoroughly Catholic in the spirit and tendency of his work, and has not the most remote conception of

Cardinal Norisius (*Historia Pelagiana*, l. ii. c. 11), Natalis Alexander, Hefele, and Schmidt give this work a polemic aim against strict Augustinism, for which certainly the Greek church cannot be claimed, so that the three criteria of catholicity are wanting. There is pretty strong evidence in the book itself that Vincentius belonged to the semi-Pelagian school which arose in Marseille and Lirinum. He was probably also the author of the *Vincentianæ objectiones* against Augustine's doctrine of predestination. Comp. on Vincentius, Tillemont's *Mémoires*, tom. xv. pp. 143-147; the art. *Vincentius v. L.* by H. Schmidt in Herzog's *Encykl.* vol. xvii. pp. 211-217; and an essay of C. J. Hefele (R. O.), in his *Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte, Archäologie und Liturgik*, vol. i. p. 146 ff. (Tüb. 1864).

¹ As Vincentius expresses himself in the succeeding sentence: *Universitas, antiquitas, consensus*. Comp. c. 27.

² "*Consensio omnium vel certe pars omnium sacerdotum pariter et magistrorum,*" etc. Common. c. 2 (in Migne, p. 640).

³ Cap 23 (in Migne, vol 50, p. 667 sqq.).

the free Protestant study of the Scriptures. But on the other hand he would have as little toleration for new dogmas. He wished to make tradition not an independent source of knowledge and rule of faith by the side of the Holy Scriptures, but only to have it acknowledged as the true interpreter of Scripture, and as a bar to heretical abuse. The criterion of the antiquity of a doctrine, which he required, involves apostolicity, hence agreement with the spirit and substance of the New Testament. The church, says he, as the solicitous guardian of that which is intrusted to her, changes, diminishes, increases nothing. Her sole effort is to shape, or confirm, or preserve the old. Innovation is the business of heretics, not of orthodox believers. The canon of Scripture is complete in itself, and more than sufficient.¹ But since all heretics appeal to it, the authority of the church must be called in as the rule of interpretation, and in this we must follow universality, antiquity, and consent.² It is the custom of the Catholics, says he in the same work, to prove the true faith in two ways: first by the authority of the holy Scriptures, then by the tradition of the Catholic church; not because the canon alone is not of itself sufficient for all things, but on account of the many conflicting interpretations and perversions of the Scriptures.³

In the same spirit says pope Leo I.: "It is not permitted to depart even in one word from the doctrine of the Evangelists and the Apostles, nor to think otherwise concerning the Holy Scriptures, than the blessed apostles and our fathers learned and taught."⁴

¹ Cap. 2: "Quum sit *perfectus* Scripturarum Canon et sibi *ad omnia satis superque sufficial,*" etc. Cap. 29.

² "Hoc facere curabant . . . ut divinum canonem secundum universalis ecclesie traditiones et juxta catholici dogmatis regulas interpretentur, in qua item catholica et apostolica ecclesia sequantur necesse est universitatem, antiquitatem, consensionem." *Commonit.* cap. 27 (in Migne, vol. 50, p. 674). *Comp.* c. 2-4.

Cap. 29 (in Migne, vol. 50, p. 677): "Non quia canon solus non sibi ad universa sufficiat, sed quia verba divina, pro suo plerique arbitratu interpretantes, varias opiniones erroresque concipiunt," etc.

⁴ *Epist.* 82 ad *Episc. Marcianum* Aug. (*Opera*, tom. i. p. 1044, ed. Ballerini, and in Migne, liv. p. 918): "Quum ab evangelica apostolicaque doctrina ne uno quidem verbo liceat dissidere, aut aliter de Scripturis divinis sapere quam beati apostoli et patres nostri didicerunt atque docuerunt," etc.

The catholic principle of tradition became more and more confirmed, as the authority of the fathers and councils increased and the learned study of the Holy Scriptures declined; and tradition gradually set itself in practice on a level with Scripture, and even above it. It fettered free investigation, and promoted a rigid, stationary and intolerant orthodoxy, which condemned men like Origen and Tertullian as heretics. But on the other hand the principle of tradition unquestionably exerted a wholesome conservative power, and saved the substance of the ancient church doctrine from the obscuring and confusing influence of the pagan barbarism which deluged Christendom.

I.—TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSIES.

GENERAL LITERATURE OF THE ARIAN CONTROVERSIES.

I. SOURCES: On the *orthodox* side most of the fathers of the fourth century; especially the dogmatic and polemic works of ATHANASIUS (*Orationes c. Arianos; De decretis Nicænsæ Synodi; De sententia Dionysii; Apologia c. Arianos; Apologia de fuga sua; Historia Arianorum, etc.*, all in tom. i. pars i. ii. of the Bened. ed.), BASIL (*Adv. Eunomium*), GREGORY NAZIANZEN (*Orationes theologicæ*), GREGORY OF NYSSA (*Contra Eunom.*), EPIPHANIUS (*Ancoratus*), HILARY (*De Trinitate*), AMBROSE (*De Fide*), AUGUSTINE (*De Trinitate, and Contra Maximimum Arianum*), RUFINUS, and the Greek church historians.

On the *heretical* side: The fragments of the writings of ARIUS (*Θάλεια*, and two Epistolæ to Eusebius of Nicomedia and Alexander of Alexandria), preserved in quotations in Athanasius, Epiphanius, Socrates, and Theodoret; comp. *Fabricius*: *Biblioth. gr.* viii. p. 809. *Fragmenta ARIANORUM* about 388 in *Angelo Mai*: *Scriptorum veterum nova collect.* Rom. 1828, vol. iii. The fragments of the Church History of the Arian PHILOSTORGIUS, A. D. 350-425.

II. WORKS: TILLEMONT (R. C.): *Mémoires, etc.* tom. vi. pp. 239-825, ed. Paris, 1699, and ed. Ven. (the external history chiefly). DIONYSIUS PETAVIUS (Jesuit, † 1652): *De theologicis dogmatibus*, tom. ii., which treats of the divine Trinity in eight books; and in part tom. iv. and v. which treat in sixteen books of the Incarnation of the Word. This is still, though incomplete, the most learned work of the Roman church in the History of Doctrines; it first appeared at Paris, 1644-'50, in five volumes fol., then at Amsterdam, 1700 (in 6 vols.), and at Venice, 1757 (ed. Zacharia), and has been last edited by Passaglia and Schrader in Rome, 1857. J. M. TRAVASA (R. C.): *Storia critica della vita*

di Ario. Ven. 1746. S. J. MAIMBURG: Histoire de l'Arianisme Par. 1675. JOHN PEARSON (bishop of Chester, † 1686): An Exposition of the Creed (in the second article), 1689, 12th ed. Lond. 1741, and very often edited since by Dobson, Burton, Nichols, Chevalier, etc. GEORGE BULL (Anglican bishop of St. David's, † 1710): Defensio fidei Nicænæ. Ox. 1685 (Opp. Lat. fol. ed. Grabe, Lond. 1708. Complete Works, ed. Burton, Oxf. 1827, and again in 1846, vol. 5th in two parts, and in English in the Anglo-Catholic Library, 1851). This classical work endeavors, with great learning, to exhibit the Nicene faith in all the *ante-Nicene* fathers, and so belongs more properly to the previous period. DAN. WATERLAND (archdeacon of Middlesex, † 1780, next to Bull the ablest Anglican defender of the Nicene faith): Vindication of Christ's Divinity, 1719 ff., in Waterland's Works, ed. Mildert, vols. i. ii. iii. Oxf. 1848. (Several acute and learned essays and sermons in defence of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity against the high Arianism of Dr. Sam. Clarke and Dr. Whitby.) CHR. W. F. WALOH: Vollständige Historie der Ketzereien, etc. 11 vols. Leipzig, 1762 ff. Vols. ii. and iii. (exceedingly thorough and exceedingly dry). GIBBON: History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ch. xxi. A. MÖHLER (R. C.): Athanasius der Grosse u. die Kirche seiner Zeit. Mainz (1827); 2d ed. 1844 (Bk ii.-vi.). J. H. NEWMAN (at the time the learned head of Puseyism, afterwards R. C.): The Arians of the Fourth Century. Lond. 1838; 2d ed. (unchanged), 1854. F. CHR. BAUR: Die christl. Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit u. Menschwerdung in ihrer geschichtl. Entwicklung. 8 vols. Tübingen, 1841-'43. Vol. i. pp. 306-325 (to the council of Chalcedon). Comp. also BAUR's Kirchengesch. vom 4ten bis 6ten Jahrh. Tüb. 1859, pp. 79-123. JA. A. DORNER: Entwicklungsgesch. der Lehre von der Person Christi. 1836, 2d ed. in 2 vols. Stuttg. 1845-'53. Vol. i. pp. 773-1080 (English transl. by W. L. Alexander and D. W. Simon, in Clark's Foreign Theol. Library, Edinb. 1861). R. WILBERFORCE (at the time archdeacon of East Riding, afterwards R. C.): The Doctrine of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 4th ed. Lond. 1852. Bishop KAYE: Athanasius and the council of Nicæa. Lond. 1853. C. JOA. HEFELÉ (R. C.): Conciliengeschichte. Freib. 1855 ff. Vol. i. p. 219 ff. ALBERT PRINCE DE BROGLIE (R. C.): L'église et l'empire romain, au IV. siècle. Paris, 1856-'66, 6 vols. Vol. i. p. 331 sqq.; vol. ii. 1 sqq. W. W. HARVEY: History and Theology of the Three Creeds. Lond. 1856, 2 vols. H. VOIET: Die Lehre des Athanasius von Alexandrien. Bremen, 1861. A. P. STANLEY: Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church. 2d ed. 1862 (reprinted in New York). Sects. ii.-vii. (more brilliant than solid). Comp. also the relevant sections in the general Church Histories of FLEURY, SOHRÖCKH (vols. v. and vi.), NEANDER, GIESELER, and in the Doctrine Histories of MÜNSCHER-CÖLLN, BAUMGARTEN-CRUSIUS, HAGENBACH, BAUR, BECK, SHEDD.

§ 119. *The Arian Controversy down to the Council of Nicæa.*
318-325.

The Arian controversy relates primarily to the deity of Christ, but in its course it touches also the deity of the Holy Ghost, and embraces therefore the whole mystery of the Holy Trinity and the incarnation of God, which is the very centre of the Christian revelation. The dogma of the Trinity came up not by itself in abstract form, but in inseparable connection with the doctrine of the deity of Christ and the Holy Ghost. If this latter doctrine is true, the Trinity follows by logical necessity, the biblical monotheism being presumed; in other words: If God is one, and if Christ and the Holy Ghost are distinct from the Father and yet participate in the divine substance, God must be triune. Though there are in the Holy Scriptures themselves few texts which directly prove the Trinity, and the name Trinity is wholly wanting in them, this doctrine is taught with all the greater force in a living form from Genesis to Revelation by the main facts of the revelation of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, besides being indirectly involved in the deity of Christ and the Holy Ghost.

The church always believed in this Trinity of revelation, and confessed its faith by baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This carried with it from the first the conviction, that this revelation of God must be grounded in a distinction immanent in the divine essence. But to bring this faith into clear and fixed knowledge, and to form the baptismal confession into doctrine, was the hard and earnest intellectual work of three centuries. In the Nicene age minds crashed against each other, and fought the decisive battles for and against the doctrines of the true deity of Christ, with which the divinity of Christianity stands or falls.

The controversies on this fundamental question agitated the Roman empire and the church of East and West for more than half a century, and gave occasion to the first two ecumenical councils of Nicæa and Constantinople. At last the orthodox doctrine triumphed, and in 381 was brought into the form

in which it is to this day substantially held in all orthodox churches.

The external history of the Arian controversy, of which we first sketch the main features, falls into three stages:

1. From the outbreak of the controversy to the temporary victory of orthodoxy at the council of Nicæa; A. D. 318–325.

2. The Arian and semi-Arian reaction, and its prevalence to the death of Constantius; A. D. 325–361.

3. The final victory, and the completion of the Nicene creed; to the council of Constantinople, A. D. 381.

Arianism proceeded from the bosom of the Catholic church, was condemned as heresy at the council of Nicæa, but afterwards under various forms attained even ascendancy for a time in the church, until at the second ecumenical council it was cast out forever. From that time it lost its importance as a politico-theological power, but continued as an uncatholic sect more than two hundred years among the Germanic nations, which were converted to Christianity under the Arian domination.

The roots of the Arian controversy are to be found partly in the contradictory elements of the christology of the great Origen, which reflect the crude condition of the Christian mind in the third century; partly in the antagonism between the Alexandrian and the Antiochian theology. Origen, on the one hand, attributed to Christ eternity and other divine attributes which logically lead to the orthodox doctrine of the identity of substance; so that he was vindicated even by Athanasius, the two Cappadocian Gregories, and Basil. But, on the other hand, in his zeal for the personal distinctions in the Godhead, he taught with equal clearness a separateness of essence between the Father and the Son,¹ and the subordination of the Son, as a second or secondary God beneath the Father,² and thus furnished a starting point for the Arian

¹ Ἐτερότης τῆς οὐσίας, ἢ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου. De orat. c. 15.

² Hence he termed the Logos δεύτερος Θεός, or Θεός (without the article, comp. John i. 1), in distinction from the Father, who is absolute God, ὁ Θεός, or αὐτόθεος *Deus per se*. He calls the Father also the root (ρίζα) and fountain (πηγή) of the whole Godhead. Comp. vol. i. § 78. Redepenning: Origenes, ii. 304 sq., and Thomasius: Origenes, p. 118 sq.

heresy. The eternal generation of the Son from the will of the Father was, with Origen, the communication of a divine but secondary substance, and this idea, in the hands of the less devout and profound Arius, who with his more rigid logic could admit no intermediate being between God and the creature, deteriorated to the notion of the primal creature.

But in general Arianism was much more akin to the spirit of the Antiochian school than to that of the Alexandrian. Arius himself traced his doctrine to Lucian of Antioch, who advocated the heretical views of Paul of Samosata on the Trinity, and was for a time excommunicated, but afterwards rose to great consideration, and died a martyr under Maximinus.

ALEXANDER, bishop of Alexandria, made earnest of the Origenistic doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son (which was afterwards taught by Athanasius and the Nicene creed, but in a deeper sense, as denoting the generation of a person of the *same* substance from the *substance* of the Father, and not of a person of *different* substance from the *will* of the Father), and deduced from it the homo-ousia or consubstantiality of the Son with the Father.

ARIUS,¹ a presbyter of the same city after 313, who is represented as a tall, thin, learned, adroit, austere, and fascinating man, but proud, artful, restless, and disputatious, pressed and overstated the Origenistic view of the subordination, accused Alexander of Sabellianism, and taught that Christ, while he was indeed the creator of the world, was himself a creature of God, therefore not truly divine.²

The contest between these two views broke out about the year 318 or 320. Arius and his followers, for their denial of the true deity of Christ, were deposed and excommunicated by a council of a hundred Egyptian and Libyan bishops at Alexandria in 321. In spite of this he continued to hold religious assemblies of his numerous adherents, and when driven from

¹ Ἀρειος.

² This, however, is manifestly contrary to Origen's view, which made Christ an intermediate being between the uncreated Father and the creature. *Contra Celso* iii 84.