

**Volume 4: Medieval Christianity**  
**From Gregory I to Gregory VII**  
**A.D. 590-1073**

***INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE AGE***

The Middle Age, as the term implies, is the period which intervenes between ancient and modern times and connects them, by continuing the one and preparing for the other. It forms the transition from the Greco-Roman civilization to the Romano-Germanic civilization, which gradually arose out of the intervening chaos of barbarism. The connecting link is Christianity, which saved the best elements of the old and directed and molded the new order of things.

Politically, the Middle Age dates from the great migration of nations and the downfall of the western Roman Empire in the fifth century. For ecclesiastical history it begins with Gregory the Great, the last of the fathers and the first of the popes, at the close of the sixth century. Its termination, both for secular and ecclesiastical history, is the Reformation of the sixteenth century (1517), which introduces the modern age of the Christian era.

The theater of medieval Christianity is mainly Europe which was peopled by a warlike emigration of heathen barbarians from Asia. This great migration of nations marks a turning point in the history of religion and civilization. It was destructive in its first effects but proved the harbinger of a new creation.

The new national forces which now enter upon the arena of church-history may be divided into four groups:

1. The ROMANIC or LATIN nations of Southern Europe, including the Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, and French.
2. The KELTIC race, embracing the Gauls, old Britons, the Picts and Scots, and the Welsh and Irish.
3. The GERMANIC or TEUTONIC nations which spread over Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Scandinavia, the Baltic provinces of Russia, and, since the Anglo-Saxon invasion, also over England and Scotland and the northern (non-Keltic) part of Ireland.

4. The SLAVONIC or SLAVIC races in the East and North of Europe, including the Bulgarians, Bohemians (Czechs), Moravians, Slovaks, Servians, Croatians, Wends, Poles, and Russians. The Eastern Slavs, who are the vast majority, were incorporated with the Greek Church, while the western Slavs, the Bohemians and Poles, became subject to the Papacy.

Medieval Christianity is, on the one hand, a legitimate continuation and further development of ancient Catholicism; on the other hand, it is a preparation for Protestantism. Its leading forces are the papacy, monasticism, and scholasticism, which were developed to their height, and then assailed by growing opposition from within.

The Middle Age may be divided into three periods.

1. The missionary period from Gregory I to Hildebrand or Gregory VII, A.D. 590-1073. It includes the conversion of the northern barbarians, the dawn of a new civilization, the origin and progress of Islam, and the separation of the West from the East.
2. The period of the papal theocracy from Gregory VII to Boniface VIII, A.D. 1073-1294. It includes the height of the papacy, monasticism, and scholasticism, the Crusades, and the conflict between the Pope and the Emperor.
3. The decline of medieval Catholicism and preparation for modern Christianity, from Boniface VIII to the Reformation, A.D. 1294-1517. It includes the papal exile and schism, the Reformatory Councils, the decay of scholasticism and growth of mysticism, the revival of letters and the art of printing, the discovery of America, forerunners of Protestantism, and the dawn of the Reformation.

### ***THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND***

Britain figures into ecclesiastical history from the conversion of the Britons in the second century. Its missionary history is divided into two periods, the Keltic and the Anglo-Saxon, both catholic in doctrine, as far as developed at that time, slightly differing in discipline, yet bitterly hostile under the influence of the antagonism of race, which was ultimately overcome in England and Scotland but is still burning in Ireland, the proper home of the Kelts. The Norman conquest made both races better Romanists than they were before.

The oldest inhabitants of Britain, like the Irish, the Scots, and the Gauls, were of Keltic origin, half-naked and painted barbarians, quarrelsome, rapacious, revengeful, torn by internal factions, which facilitated their conquest. They had adopted, under different names, the gods of the Greeks and Romans. Their priests, called *druids*, dwelt in huts or caverns amidst the silence and gloom of the forest. They possessed all education and spiritual power, professed to know the secrets of nature, medicine, and astrology, and practiced divination.

The first introduction of Christianity into Britain is shrouded in obscurity. Irenaeus of Lyons (died A.D. 202), who enumerates all the churches one-by-one, knows of none in Britain. Yet the connection of Britain with Rome and with Gaul must have brought it early into contact with Christianity. About A.D. 208 Tertullian declares "that places in Britain not yet visited by Romans were subject to Christ." Monumental remains of the British church during the Roman period are recorded or still exist at Canterbury, Dover, Kent, and other places.

The Roman dominion in Britain ceased about A.D. 410. The troops were withdrawn and the country left to govern itself. The result was a partial relapse into barbarism and a demoralization of the church. The intercourse with the Continent was cut off, and the barbarians of the North, unconverted Kelts including Picts and Scots, pressed heavily upon the Britons (converted Kelts). For a century and a half we hear nothing of the British churches. This long isolation accounts in part for the trifling differences and the bitter antagonism between the remnant of the old British church and the new church imported from Rome among the hated Anglo-Saxons.

The difference was not doctrinal, but ritualistic and disciplinary. It concerned the day Easter was to be celebrated as well as the way the head was to be shaved. Moreover, and this was the most important and most irritating difference, the church in Britain had become practically independent of Rome, and transacted their business in councils without referring to the Pope, who began to be regarded on the Continent as the righteous ruler and judge of all Christendom.

With the decline of the Roman power, the Britons, weakened by the vices of Roman civilization, and unable to resist the aggressions of the wild Picts and Scots from the North, turned to Germany for aid. In 449 they called two brother-princes, Hengist and Horsa, reputed descendants of Wodan, the god of war. From this time begins the migration of Saxons, Angles, Jutes, and Frisians from the Continent to Britain. They gave to Britain a new nationality and a new language, the Anglo-Saxon, which forms the base and trunk of the present people and language of England (Angle-land).

These strangers from the Continent successfully repelled the Northern invaders. But being well-pleased with the fertility and climate of the country, and reinforced by frequent accession from their countrymen, they turned upon the confederate Britons, drove them to the mountains of Wales and the borders of Scotland, or reduced them to slavery. Within a century and a half, they made themselves masters of England. From invaders they became settlers, and established seven independent kingdoms, the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy.

With the conquest of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons, who were heathen barbarians, Christianity was nearly extirpated. Priests were cruelly massacred, churches and monasteries were destroyed, together with the vestiges of a weak Roman civilization. But fortunately Christianity was re-introduced.

In the year 596, Pope Gregory I sent the Benedictine abbot Augustin (or Austin, not the famous Augustine of Hippo), thirty other monks, and a priest named Laurentius, with instructions and letters of recommendation to the Frank kings and several bishops of Gaul. The missionaries, accompanied by some interpreters from France, landed on the isle of Thanet in Kent. King Ethelbert met them. He was pleased with the ritualistic and oratorical display of the new religion from distant, mighty Rome, and did not forbid them to preach and convert as many as they were able to their religion. King Ethelbert himself was converted and baptized, and gradually drew his whole nation after him.

Augustin was ordained archbishop of the English nation by order of Pope Gregory in 597, becoming the first primate of England. His talents and character did not rise above mediocrity, and he bears no comparison whatsoever with his great namesake, the theologian and bishop of Hippo. But he was, upon the whole, well-fitted for his missionary work. He built a church and monastery at Canterbury, the mother-church of Anglo-Saxon Christendom. He ordained twelve bishops in the archiepiscopal diocese of Canterbury at the direction of Gregory. He also appointed an archbishop for York who in turn was to ordain twelve bishops when the adjoining country should receive the word of God.

Augustin, with the aid of King Ethelbert, arranged a conference with the British bishops admonishing them to conform to the Roman ceremonial in the observance of Easter Sunday. Augustin had neither wisdom nor charity enough to sacrifice even the most trifling ceremonies on the altar of peace. He met the Britons with the haughty spirit of Rome, which is willing to compromise with heathen customs but demands absolute submission from all other forms of Christianity, and hates independence as the worst of heresies.

The Britons preferred their own traditions. A second conference was called. A venerated hermit advised the British bishops to submit Augustin to a moral test of meekness and humility as required by Christ from his followers. If Augustin, at the meeting, shall rise before them, they should hear him submissively. If he shall not rise, they should despise him as a proud man.

As they drew near, the Roman dignitary remained seated in his chair. He demanded of them three things: compliance with the Roman observance of the time of Easter, compliance with the Roman form of baptism, and aid in efforts to convert the English nation. If they agreed, he would readily tolerate their other peculiarities. They refused, reasoning among themselves, if he will not rise up before us now, how much more will he despise us when we shall be subject to his authority? Augustin indignantly rebuked them and threatened the divine vengeance by the arms of the Saxons. Some years afterwards, 613, Ethelfrith the Wild, the pagan King of Northumbria, attacked the Britons at Chester, and destroyed not only their army but slaughtered several hundred priests and monks who had accompanied the soldiers.

Augustin, the apostle of the Anglo-Saxons, died in 604. He was not a great man, but he did a great work in laying the foundations of English Christianity and civilization. Other priests and monks were sent from Italy, and gradually a native clergy arose in England. The work of Christianization went on among the other kingdoms of the heptarchy. Sussex was the last part of the heptarchy to renounce paganism. It took nearly a hundred years before England was nominally converted to the Christian religion.

The Anglo-Saxon Christianity was and continued to be until the Reformation the Christianity of Rome. It included the Latin mass, the worship of saints, images and relics, monastic virtues and vices, pilgrimages to the holy city (Rome), and much credulity and superstition. Even kings abdicated their crown to show their profound reverence of the supreme pontiff and to secure from him a passport to heaven.

The dispute between the Anglo-Saxon or Roman and the old British ritual was renewed in the middle of the seventh century but ended with the triumph of the former in England proper. The spirit of independence had to take refuge in Ireland and Scotland until the time of the Norman conquest, which crushed it out also in Ireland.

The controversy over Easter ended with conformity to the Roman observance at a synod held in Whitby in 664. The Scottish semi-circular tonsure<sup>1</sup> also gave way to the circular.

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1 The part of a monk's or priest's head that had been shaved.

The fusion of English Christians was completed in the age of Theodorus, archbishop of Canterbury (669-690). The conversion of England was nominal and ritual, rather than intellectual and moral. Education was confined to the clergy and monks. The Anglo-Saxon clergy were only less ignorant than the British. The ultimate triumph of the Roman church was due chiefly to her superior organization, her direct apostolic descent, and the prestige of the Roman Empire.

Among all the Teutonic tribes, the English became the most devoted subjects of the Pope. They sent more pilgrims to Rome and more money into the papal treasury than any other nation. At least thirty of their kings and queens, and an innumerable army of nobles ended their days in cloistral retreats. Nearly all of the public lands were deeded to churches and monasteries. But the exuberance of monasticism weakened the military and physical force of the nation, and facilitated the Danish and the Norman conquests. The Norman conquest did not change the ecclesiastical relations of England, but infused new blood and vigor into the Saxon race, which is all the better for its mixed character.

### ***THE CONVERSION OF IRELAND***

The early history of Ireland (Hibernia) is buried in obscurity. The ancient Hibernians were a mixed race, but predominantly Keltic. They were ruled by petty tyrants, proud, rapacious and warlike, who kept the country in perpetual strife. They were devoted to their religion of Druidism. The Romans made no attempt at subjugation, as they did not succeed in establishing their authority in Caledonia (Scotland).

The first traces of Irish Christianity are found at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century. Ireland was converted by two humble individuals, who probably never saw Rome, St. Patrick, once a slave, and St. Bridget, the daughter of a slave-mother. In 431 Pope Celestine had sent Palladius, a Roman deacon, to Ireland. But Palladius abandoned the field in discouragement and went to North Britain, where he died among the Picts. Where the Roman mission of Palladius failed, the independent mission of Patrick succeeded. He is the true Apostle of Ireland.

St. Patrick, the son of a deacon and grandson of a priest, was carried captive into Ireland as a youth. He served his master six years as a shepherd. While tending his flock in the lonesome field, the teachings of his childhood awakened to new life in his heart without any particular external agency. He escaped to France or Britain, was again enslaved for a short period, and had a remarkable dream, which decided his calling. He saw a man, Victoricus, who handed him

innumerable letters from Ireland, begging him to come over and help them. He obeyed the divine monition and devoted the remainder of his life to the conversion of Ireland (from A.D. 440 to 493, these dates being merely conjectural).

The Christianity of Patrick was substantially that of Gaul and old Britain, i.e., Catholic, orthodox, monastic, ascetic, but independent of the Pope, and differing from Rome in the age of Gregory I in minor matters of polity and ritual. Inseparably connected with him is the most renowned female saint of Ireland, St. Bridget, who survived him many years.

The labors of St. Patrick were carried on by his pupils and by many British priests and monks who were driven from England by the Anglo-Saxon invasion in the fifth and sixth centuries. In less than a century after his death Ireland was covered with churches and convents for men and women.

During the sixth and seventh centuries, Ireland excelled all other countries in Christian piety, and acquired the name of "the Island of Saints." Her apostles went forth to Scotland, North Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, and North Italy. The missionaries left Ireland usually in companies of twelve, with a thirteenth as their leader, representing Christ and the twelve apostles. It is remarkable that this missionary activity of the Irish Church is confined to the period of her independence from the Church of Rome. We hear no more of it after the Norman conquest.

The success of the Roman mission of Augustin among the Anglo-Saxons encouraged attempts to bring the Irish Church under the papal jurisdiction and to force upon it the ritual observances of Rome. Pope Honorius, in 629, addressed to the Irish clergy an exhortation, not in the tone of authoritative dictation but in one of superior wisdom and experience, to conform to the Roman mode of keeping Easter. A synod was held and a deputation sent to the Pope to ascertain the foreign usages of Easter. The deputation was treated with distinguished consideration in Rome, and, after three years' absence, reported in favor of the Roman cycle. It was accordingly adopted in the South of Ireland. Northern Ireland likewise yielded to the Roman practice.

The Norman conquest under William I, with the sanction of the Pope, united the Irish Church still more closely to Rome (1066). Under Henry II, with the effectual aid of Pope Adrian IV, the only Englishman that sat on the papal throne, Ireland was invaded and conquered by England. In a curious bull of 1155, Pope Adrian IV justified and encouraged the intended invasion in the interest of the papacy, and sent the king the ring of investiture as Lord of Ireland calling upon him to enlarge the borders of the (Roman) Church and to secure to St. Peter from each house the

annual pension of one penny. Henry carried out his design in 1171 and with a strong military force easily subdued the whole Irish nation to British rule. A Synod of Cashel in 1172 ordered that all offices of the church should hereafter in all parts of Ireland be conformed to the observances of the Church of England. A papal legate henceforward was constantly residing in Ireland.

In the sixteenth century, the light of the Reformation did not penetrate into the native population. But Queen Elizabeth and the Stuarts set up by force a Protestant state-religion in antagonism to the prevailing faith of the people. In reaction, the Keltic portion of Ireland became more intensely Roman Catholic, being filled with double hatred of England on the ground of difference of race and religion. This glaring anomaly of a Protestant state church in a Roman Catholic country was removed at last by the Irish Church Disestablishment Act in 1869 under the ministry of Gladstone after three centuries of oppression and misrule.

### ***THE CONVERSION OF SCOTLAND***

Before the tenth century, the area we now call *Scotland* or *Scotia* (the northern portion of the same land-mass occupied by England) was included under the name *Britain* (*Britannia*) and did not have a separate name. In contrast, the separate island of *Ireland* (or *Hibernia*) did have a separate name and was never included in what was called Britain. Before the tenth century, the name *Scotia* was actually applied to Ireland. Much earlier, of course, the territory we now call *Scotland* was known to the Romans as *Caledonia* and to the Kelts as *Alban*. The independent history of Scotland begins with the establishment of the Scottish monarchy in the ninth century. At first it was a purely Keltic kingdom, but in the course of time the Saxon race and feudal institutions spread over the country, and the Keltic tribes retreated to the mountains and western islands. The names of Scot and Scotch passed over to the English-speaking people and their language, while the Keltic language, formerly known as Scotch, became known as Irish.

Saint Columba (Columbcille) was the apostle of Scotland. He was descended from one of the reigning families of Ireland. He entered the monastic seminary of Clonard and afterwards another monastery near Dublin and was ordained a priest. St. Columba planted the church at Derry in 545, the monastery of Durrow in 553, and other churches.

In 563, his forty-second year, prompted by a passion for travel and a zeal for the spread of Christianity, Columba sailed with twelve fellow-apostles to the West of Scotland. He was presented with the island of Hy, commonly called Iona, near the Western coast of Scotland. It is

an inhospitable island. By the labors of Columba and his successors, Iona has become one of the most venerable and interesting spots in the history of Christian missions. It was a lighthouse in the darkness of heathenism. We can form no adequate conception of the self-denying zeal of those heroic missionaries of the extreme North, who, in a forbidding climate and exposed to robbers and wild beasts, devoted their lives to the conversion of savages.

The arrival of Columba at Iona was the beginning of the Keltic church in Scotland. He founded a large number of churches and monasteries in Ireland and Scotland directly or through his disciples. The monastery of Iona held for a long time held the pre-eminence over the monasteries and churches of the Picts and Northern Scots. Columba's successors were distinguished for their continency, their love of God, and strict attention to their rules of discipline. They followed the old custom of Easter observance rather than that of the Roman Church.

Adamnan (died 704), was the ninth successor of Columba. In consequence of a visit to the Saxons, he conformed his observance of Easter to the Roman Church, which his brethren refused to do. After his death, the community of Iona became divided on the Easter question, until the Columban monks, who adhered to the old custom, were by royal command expelled (715). With this expulsion the monastic church was broken up or subordinated to the hierarchy of the secular clergy.<sup>2</sup>

After the expulsion of the Columban monks in the eighth century, the term *Culdee* first appears. It probably means servants or worshippers of God. They succeeded the Columban monks and afterwards associated themselves into communities of hermits. They were finally brought under canonical rule along with the secular clergy, until at length the name of Culdee became almost synonymous with that of secular canon.

The turning-point in the history of the Scotch church was the reign of the devout Saxon queen, St. Margaret, one of the best queens of Scotland (1070-1093). The change was effected by the same policy as that of the Norman kings towards Ireland. The church was placed upon a territorial rather than a tribal basis, and a parochial system and a diocesan episcopacy was substituted for the old tribal churches with their monastic jurisdiction and functional episcopacy. Moreover, the great religious orders of the Roman Church were introduced and founded great monasteries as centers of counter influence.

From the time of Queen Margaret, a stream of Saxons and Normans poured into Scotland, not as

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2 In modern English this would be an oxymoron. However, \*\*\*\*\*

conquerors but as settlers. They rapidly acquired, sometimes by royal grant, sometimes by marriage, the most fertile districts from the Tweed to the Pentland Firth. From these settlers almost every noble family of Scotland traces its descent. They brought with them English civilization and religion.

The sons and successors of Margaret enriched the church by magnificent endowments. In the course of a few centuries, one-half of the national wealth passed into the hands of the clergy, who were at the same time in possession of all the learning.

In the latter part of the reign of David I, who ruled Scotland from 1124 to 1153, an active crusade commenced against the Culdee establishments from St. Andrews to Iona, until the very name gradually disappeared.

Thus the old Keltic Church came to an end, leaving no vestiges behind it, save here and there the roofless walls of what had been a church, and the numerous old burying-grounds to the use of which the people still cling with tenacity, and where occasionally an ancient Keltic cross tells of its former state. All else has disappeared; and the only records we have of their history are the names of the saints by whom they were founded preserved in old calendars, the fountains near the old churches bearing their name, the village fairs of immemorial antiquity held on their day, and here and there a few lay families holding a small portion of land, as hereditary custodiers of the pastoral staff, or other relic of the reputed founder of the church, with some small remains of its jurisdiction.

### ***THE CONVERSION OF FRANCE, GERMANY, AND ADJACENT COUNTRIES***

The first wholesale conversions of the Germanic or Teutonic race to the Christian religion took place among the Goths in the time when Arianism was at the height of power in the East Roman Empire. The chief agents were clerical and other captives of war whom the Goths in their raids carried with them from the provinces of the Roman Empire and whom they learned to admire and love for their virtue and supposed miraculous power. Constantine the Great entered into friendly relations with them and is reported by Eusebius to have subjected them to the cross of Christ. It is certain that some ecclesiastical organization was effected at that time.

The real apostle of the Goths was Ulfilas, who was consecrated bishop in 348 at Constantinople and died there in 381 at the age of 70 years. He invented the Gothic alphabet and translated the

Bible into Gothic, but he was an Arian or rather a semi-Arian. This heretical form of Christianity soon gave way to orthodoxy when the Germans became acquainted with it.

The Salian Franks were the first among the Teutonic tribes that were converted to catholic or orthodox Christianity. The conversion of the Franks prepared the way for the downfall of the Arian heresy among the other Germanic nations and for the triumph of the papacy in the German empire under Charlemagne. The conversion of the Salian Franks took place under the lead of their victorious king Clovis. He ruled from 481 to his death in 511. With him begins the history not only of the French empire, its government and laws, but also of the French nation, its religion and moral habits.

### ***THE CONVERSION OF THE SAXONS***

Of all the German tribes, the fierce and warlike Saxons were the last to accept the Christian religion. They differed in this respect very much from their kinsmen who had invaded and conquered England. The Saxons inhabited the districts of modern Hanover, Oldenburg, Brunswick, and Westphalia, which were covered with dense forests. They had driven the Franks beyond the Weser and the Rhine, and they were now driven back in turn by Charles Martel, Pepin, and Charlemagne. They hated the foreign yoke of the Franks and far-off Rome. They hated the tithe which was imposed upon them for the support of the church.

Charlemagne, who became master of the French kingdom in 768, had the noble ambition to unite the German tribes in one great empire and one religion in filial communion with Rome. He employed material force, believing that people become Christians by water baptism, even if baptized against their will. He thought that the Saxons, who were the most dangerous enemies of his kingdom, must be either be subdued and Christianized or killed.

Their subjugation was a work of 33 years, from 772 to 805. The two most powerful Saxon chiefs, Wittekind and Abbio, saw the fruitlessness of their resistance and submitted to baptism in 785. But the Saxons were not entirely defeated until 804, when 10,000 families were driven from house and home and scattered in other provinces. Bloody laws prohibited the relapse into heathenism. The spirit of national independence was defeated but not entirely crushed, and it broke out seven centuries afterwards in another form against the tyranny of Rome under the lead of the Saxon monk Martin Luther.

The war of Charlemagne against the Saxons was the first ominous example of a bloody crusade

for the overthrow of heathenism and the extension of the church. It was a radical departure from the apostolic method and diametrically opposed to the spirit of the gospel. Charlemagne relaxed somewhat the severity of his laws after the year 797.

### ***MOHAMMEDANISM***

While new races and countries in Northern and Western Europe, unknown to the apostles, were added to the Christian Church, there developed in Asia and Africa the opposite spectacle of the rise and progress of a rival religion which is now acknowledged by more than one-tenth of the inhabitants of the globe. It is called *Mohammedanism* from its founder or *Islam* from its chief virtue, which is absolute surrender to the one true God. Like Christianity, it had its birth in the Shemitic race.

Christianity made its conquest by peaceful missionaries and the power of persuasion and carried with it the blessings of home, freedom, and civilization. Mohammedanism conquered the fairest portions of the earth by the sword and cursed them by polygamy, slavery, despotism, and desolation. The moving power of Christian missions was love to God and man; the moving power of Islam was fanaticism and brute force. Christianity has found a home among all nations and climes; Mohammedanism, although it made a most vigorous effort to conquer the world, is after all a religion of the desert, of the tent and the caravan, and confined to nomad and savage or half-civilized nations, chiefly Arabs, Persians, and Turks.

Islam in its conquering march took forcible possession of the lands of the Bible, and the Greek church, seized the throne of Constantine, overran Spain, crossed the Pyrenees, and for a long time threatened even the church of Rome and the German empire, until it was finally repulsed beneath the walls of Vienna. The Crusades which figure so prominently in the history of medieval Christianity, originated in the desire to wrest the holy land from the followers of "the false prophet" and brought the East in contact with the West.

Mohammedanism is a hostile force and the only formidable rival which Christianity ever had. And yet it has not been without beneficial effect upon Western civilization. It aided in the development of chivalry; it influenced Christian architecture; it stimulated the study of mathematics, chemistry, medicine (as is indicated by the technical terms algebra, chemistry, alchemy); and the Arabic translations and commentaries on Aristotle by the Spanish Moors laid the philosophical foundation of scholasticism. Even the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks brought an inestimable blessing to the West by driving Greek scholars with the Greek Testament

to Italy to inaugurate there the revival of letters which prepared the way for the Protestant Reformation.

Viewed in its relation to the Eastern Church, which it robbed of the fairest dominions, Mohammedanism was a well-deserved divine punishment for the unfruitful speculations, bitter contentions, empty ceremonialism, and virtual idolatry which degraded and disgraced the Christianity of the East after the fifth century.

### ***THE CONQUESTS OF ISLAM***

"The sword," says Mohammed, founder of the religion, "is the key of heaven and hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of Allah, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer: whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven, and at the day of judgment his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim." This is the secret of his success. Idolaters had to choose between Islam, slavery, and death; Jews and Christians were allowed to purchase a limited toleration by the payment of tribute, but were otherwise kept in degrading bondage. History records no soldiers of greater bravery inspired by religion than the Moslem conquerors, except Cromwell's Ironsides, and the Scottish Covenanters, who fought with purer motives for a nobler cause.

The Califs, Mohammed's successors, carried on his conquests with the battle cry, "Before you is paradise, behind you are death and hell." Inspired by an intense fanaticism, and aided by the weakness of the Byzantine empire and the internal distractions of the Greek Church, the wild sons of the desert, who were content with the plainest food and disciplined in the school of war, hardship, and recklessness of life, subdued Palestine, Syria, and Egypt. Thousands of Christian churches in the patriarchal dioceses of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, were ruthlessly destroyed or converted into mosques. Twenty-one years after the death of Mohammed, the Crescent ruled over a realm as large as the Roman Empire. In 707 the North African provinces, where once St. Augustine had directed the attention of the church to the highest problems of theology and religion, fell into the hands of the Arabs.

In the ninth century the Moslems subdued Persia, Afghanistan, and a large part of India. Constantinople fell at last into the hands of the Turks in 1453. From Constantinople the Turks threatened the German empire, and it was not until 1683 that they were finally defeated by Sobieski at the gates of Vienna and driven back across the Danube.

## ***THE MOHAMMEDAN RELIGION***

Islam is a compound or mosaic of preexisting elements, a rude attempt to combine heathenism, Judaism, and Christianity. It can be briefly summarized in the following statements.

- Monotheism is the cornerstone and is expressed in the ever-repeated sentence, "There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet." Jesus is not divine and his crucifixion is denied.
- Resignation to the omnipotent will of Allah is the chief virtue. It is the most powerful motive both in action and suffering and is carried to the excess of fatalism and apathy.
- The heathen vice of polygamy and concubinage is perpetuated and encouraged.
- Slavery is recognized and sanctioned as a normal condition of society.
- War against unbelievers is legalized by the Koran. The fighting men are to be slain, the women and children reduced to slavery. Jews and Christians are to be dealt with more leniently than idolaters, but they too must be thoroughly humbled and forced to pay tribute.

## ***GREGORY THE GREAT (A.D. 590-604)***

Gregory the First, or The Great, the last of the fathers and the first of the popes, connects the ancient with the medieval church, the Greco-Roman with the Romano-Germanic type of Christianity. He is one of the best representatives of medieval Catholicism: monastic, ascetic, devout, and superstitious; hierarchical, haughty, and ambitious, yet humble before God; indifferent, if not hostile, to classical and secular culture, but friendly to sacred and ecclesiastical learning; just, humane, and liberal to ostentation; full of missionary zeal in the interest of Christianity and the Roman See, which to his mind were inseparably connected. He combined great executive ability with untiring industry, and amid all his official cares, he never forgot the claims of personal piety. In genius he was surpassed by Leo I, Gregory VII, and Innocent III, but as a man and as a Christian, he ranks with the purest and most useful of the popes. Goodness is the highest kind of greatness, and the church has done right in according the title of "the Great" to him rather than to other popes of superior intellectual power.

During the time of his pontificate, all Europe was in a chaotic state, bordering on anarchy. Serious men, and Gregory himself, thought that the end of the world was near at hand. In one of his sermons he says,

What is it that can at this time delight us in this world? Everywhere we see tribulation, everywhere we hear lamentation. The cities are destroyed, the castles torn down, the fields laid waste, the land made desolate. Villages are empty, few inhabitants remain in the cities, and even these poor remnants of humanity are daily cut down. The scourge of celestial justice does not cease, because no repentance takes place under the scourge. We see how some are carried into captivity, others mutilated, others slain. What is it, brethren, that can make us contented with this life?

Gregory was elected pope in 590. For the first time monasticism ascended the papal throne. Hereafter until his death, he devoted all his energies to the interests of the holy see and the eternal city, in the firm consciousness of being the successor of St. Peter and the vicar of Christ. His activity tended powerfully to establish the authority of the papal chair. He combined a triple dignity, episcopal, metropolitan, and patriarchal. He was bishop of the city of Rome, metropolitan over the seven suffragan (afterwards called cardinal) bishops of the Roman territory, and patriarch of Italy, in fact of the whole West, or of all the *Latin* churches. A certain primacy of honor among all the patriarchs was also conceded, even by the East. But a *universal* episcopate, including an authority of jurisdiction over the *Eastern* or *Greek* church, was not acknowledged, and, what is more remarkable, was not even claimed by him, but emphatically declined and denounced. He stood between the patriarchal and the strictly papal system. He regarded the four patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem as coordinate leaders of the church under Christ, the supreme head, corresponding as it were to the four ecumenical councils and the four gospels as their common foundation, yet after all with a firm belief in a papal primacy.

The patriarch of Constantinople, John IV, the Faster, repeatedly in his letters used for himself the title "universal bishop." This was an honorary title which had been given to patriarchs by the emperors Leo and Justinian, and confirmed to John and his successors by a Constantinopolitan synod in 588. But Gregory I was provoked and irritated beyond measure by the assumption of his Eastern rival and strained every nerve to procure a revocation of that title. He called upon the emperor to punish such presumption and reminded him of the contamination of the see of Constantinople by such arch-heretics as Nestorius. These efforts failed.

After the death of John the Faster in 596, Gregory instructed his ambassador at Constantinople to

demand from the new patriarch, Cyriacus, as a condition of intercommunion, the renunciation of the wicked title. He went so far as to declare that "whosoever calls himself universal priest, or desires to be called so, was the forerunner of Antichrist." In opposition to these high-sounding epithets, Gregory called himself, in proud humility, "the servant of the servants of God."

But his remonstrance was of no avail. Thus, when Phocas ascended the throne after his most atrocious murder of Maurice and his whole family, Gregory hastened to congratulate him and his wife Leontia in most enthusiastic terms, calling on heaven and earth to rejoice at their accession, and vilifying the memory of the dead emperor as a tyrant, from whose yoke the church was now fortunately freed. This is a dark spot, but the only really inexcusable spot, in the life of this pontiff. Cyriacus repaid the favor by acknowledging the Roman church to be "the head of all churches."

While Gregory protested in the strongest terms against the assumption by the Eastern patriarchs of the title of universal bishop, it cannot be denied that he claimed and exercised, as far as he had the opportunity and power, the authority and oversight over the whole church of Christ, even in the East. He was too proud to concede to the patriarch of Constantinople the title of a universal bishop, and yet too humble or too inconsistent to claim it for himself. We have no right to impeach Gregory's sincerity. Nevertheless, he was clearly inconsistent in disclaiming the name and yet claiming the thing itself.

No wonder, therefore, that the successors of Gregory, less humble and more consistent than he, had no scruple to use equivalent and even more arrogant titles than the one against which he so solemnly protested with the warning, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." It is a very remarkable fact, that at the beginning of the unfolding of the greatest power of the papacy one of the best of popes should have protested against the antichristian pride and usurpation of the system.

### ***CHARLEMAGNE OR CHARLES THE GREAT (A.D. 768-814)***

We must now take notice of the reign of Charlemagne, who towers high above the crowned princes of his age and is the greatest as well as the first of the long line of German emperors from the eighth to the nineteenth century. He is the only prince whose greatness has been inseparably blended with his French name. Since Julius Caesar, history had seen no conqueror and statesman of such commanding genius and success. History after him produced only two military heroes that may be compared with him, Frederick II of Prussia, and Napoleon

Bonaparte, but they were far beneath him in religious character, and as hostile to the church as he was friendly to it. His lofty intellect shines all the more brightly from the general ignorance and barbarism of his age. He rose suddenly like a meteor in dark midnight. We do not know even the place and date of his birth, nor the history of his youth and education.

His life is filled with no less than fifty-three military campaigns of which eighteen were against the Saxons and five against the Lombards. His dominion extended from the British Channel to Rome and embraced France, Germany, Hungary, and the greater part of Italy and Spain. His ecclesiastical domain extended over twenty-two archbishoprics or metropolitan sees. He encouraged trade, opened roads, and undertook to connect the Main and the Danube by canal. He gave his personal attention to things great and small. He introduced a settled order and unity of organization in his empire, at the expense of the ancient freedom and wild independence of the German tribes. He secured Europe against future heathen and Mohammedan invasion and devastation. He was universally admired or feared in his age.

Charles had a commanding, and yet winning presence. He was naturally eloquent, and spoke with great clearness and force. He was simple in his attire and temperate in eating and drinking. He was kind to the poor and a liberal almsgiver. His favorite book was Augustine's "City of God." He was a firm believer in Christianity and a devout and regular worshipper in the church, going morning and evening, even after nightfall, besides attending mass.

Charles' respect for the clergy culminated in his veneration for the bishop of Rome as the successor of St. Peter. He cherished the church of St. Peter the Apostle at Rome above all other holy and sacred places and filled its treasury with a vast wealth of gold, silver, and precious stones. He sent great and countless gifts to the popes. Throughout his whole reign, the wish he had nearest at heart was to re-establish the ancient authority of the city of Rome under his care and influence, to defend and protect the church of St. Peter, and to beautify and enrich it out of his own store above all other churches.

Notwithstanding his many and great virtues, Charles was by no means so pure as the poetry and piety of the church represent him and far from deserving canonization. He sacrificed thousands of human beings to his towering ambition and passion for conquest. He converted the Saxons by force of arms, and he waged a war of extermination against them for thirty years. It was indeed a war of religion for the annihilation of heathenism but conducted on the Mohammedan principle: submission to the faith or death.

The most serious defect in his private character was his disregard of the sanctity of the marriage

tie. In this respect he was little better than an Oriental despot or a Mohammedan Caliph. He married several wives and divorced them at his pleasure. The popes never rebuked him for this vice. Charlemagne died after a short illness and after receiving the holy communion, January 28, 814, in his 71st year and the 47th of his reign.

### ***FOUNDING OF THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE***

Charlemagne inherited the protectorate of the temporal dominions of the pope which had been wrested from the Lombards by Pepin. When the Lombards again rebelled, Pope Hadrian appealed to Charlemagne for help. In the third year of his sole reign (774), Charles crossed the Alps with his army and subdued Italy, with the exception of a small part of the South belonging to the Greek empire. His authority over the immediate territory of the Lombards in Northern Italy was as complete as that in France, but the precise nature of his authority over the pope's dominion as Patrician of the Romans became after his death an apple of discord for centuries. Hadrian considered himself as much an absolute sovereign in his dominion as Charles in his.

In 781 Charles revisited Rome with his son Pepin, who on that occasion was anointed by the pope, "King for Italy." In 796 Leo III followed Hadrian as pope. He immediately dispatched to Charles, as tokens of submission, the keys and standards of the city, and the keys of the sepulchre of Peter.

In 799 a terrible riot broke out in Rome in which Pope Leo III was assaulted and almost killed. He was promised assistance from Charles, who the following year once again crossed the Alps and declared his intention to investigate the charges of certain unknown crimes against Leo. No witness appeared, however, and Leo publicly read a declaration of his own innocence, probably at the request of Charles, but with a protest that this declaration should not be taken for a precedent.

While Charles was celebrating Christmas in St Peter's in 800, and kneeling in prayer before the altar, the pope, as if under a sudden inspiration (but no doubt in consequence of a premeditated scheme), placed a golden crown upon his head, and the Roman people shouted three times, "To Charles Augustus, crowned by God, the great and pacific emperor of the Romans, life and victory!" Henceforth he was called Emperor and Augustus, instead of Patrician. On his return to France Charles compelled all his subjects to take a new oath to him as "Caesar."

This act of coronation on the part of the pope was a final declaration of independence and self-

emancipation against the Greek emperor as the legal ruler of Rome. The Greek emperor, being unable to maintain his power in Italy and to defend his own subjects, first against the Lombards and then against the Franks, had virtually forfeited his claim.

For the West the event was the re-establishment, on a Teutonic basis, of the old Roman Empire, which henceforth, together with the papacy, controlled the history of the middle ages. The pope and the emperor represented the highest dignity and power in church and state. But the pope was the greater and more enduring power of the two. He continued, down to the Reformation, the spiritual ruler of all Europe, and is to this day the ruler of an empire much vaster than that of ancient Rome.

The medieval history of Europe now becomes chiefly a history of the papacy and the empire. They were regarded as the two arms of God in governing the church and the world. The papacy acted as a wholesome check upon military despotism, the empire as a check upon the abuses of priestcraft. Both secured order and unity against the disintegrating tendencies of society, but the tendency of both was ultimately self-destructive. They fostered, while seeming to oppose, the spirit of ecclesiastical and national independence.

### ***DEGRADATION OF THE PAPACY IN THE TENTH CENTURY***

The tenth century is the darkest of the dark ages, a century of ignorance and superstition, anarchy and crime in church and state. The first half of the eleventh century was little better. The dissolution of the world seemed to be nigh at hand. Serious men looked forward to the terrible day of judgment at the close of the first millennium of the Christian era, neglected their secular business, and inscribed donations of estates and other gifts to the church with the significant phrase *appropinquante mundi termino*.<sup>3</sup>

In the semi-barbarous state of society during the middle ages, a strong central power was needed in church and state to keep order. Charlemagne was in advance of his times, and his structure rested on no solid foundation. His successors had neither his talents nor his energy, and the popular contempt in which they were held was expressed in such epithets as "the Bald," "the Fat," "the Stammerer," "the Simple," "the Lazy," and "the Child."

The political disorder of Europe affected the church and paralyzed its efforts for good. The papacy itself lost all independence and dignity, and became the prey of avarice, violence, and

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3 Latin, *with the approach of the end of the world*.

intrigue, a veritable synagogue of Satan. It was dragged through the quagmire of the darkest crimes and would have perished in utter disgrace had not Providence saved it for better times. Pope followed pope in rapid succession, and most of them ended their career in deposition, prison, and murder. The rich and powerful marquises of Tuscany and the Counts of Tusculum acquired control over the city of Rome and the papacy for more than half a century. And what is worse, three bold and energetic women of the highest rank and lowest character filled the chair of St. Peter with their paramours and bastards. They turned the church of St. Peter into a den of robbers and the residence of his successors into a harem. And they gloried in their shame. Hence this infamous period is called the *papal pornocracy*.

From this state of infamy the papacy was rescued for a brief time by the interference of the emperor Otho I, justly called the Great (936-973). But the reform of the papacy was merely temporary and was followed by a second period of disgrace, which lasted until the middle of the eleventh century. In the year 1033 a boy of only ten or twelve, of the Tusculan family, ascended the papal throne under the name of Benedict IX (1033-1045). He combined the childishness of Caligula and the viciousness of Heliogabalus. He grew worse as he advanced in years. He ruled like a captain of banditti, committed murders and adulteries in open daylight, robbed pilgrims on the graves of martyrs, and turned Rome into a den of thieves. These crimes went unpunished, for who could judge a pope? He continued in a career of rapine, murder, and every species of felony, until even the people of Rome became weary of his iniquities and expelled him from the city. Sylvester III was elected antipope, but Benedict soon resumed the papacy with all his vices, then sold it for one or two thousand pounds silver to an archpresbyter John Gratian (who took the name Gregory VI) in May, 1045, after he had emptied the treasury of every article of value. But regretting the bargain, Benedict claimed the dignity again (Nov. 1047) until he was finally expelled from Rome in July 1048.

Thus for a while there were three rival popes, Benedict IX (before his final expulsion), Gregory VI, and Sylvester III. Their feuds reflected the general condition of Italy. The streets of Rome swarmed with hired assassins, the whole country with robbers, the virtue of pilgrims was openly assailed, and even churches and the tombs of the apostles were desecrated by bloodshed. The German emperor once again had to interfere for the restoration of order.

### ***HENRY III AND THE SYNOD OF SUTRI, A.D. 1046***

Emperor Henry III was only twenty-two years old, but ripe in intellect, full of energy and zeal, and aimed at a reformation of the church under the control of the empire, as Hildebrand

afterwards labored for a reformation of the church under the control of the papacy. On his way to Rome for the coronation, he held a synod at Sutri, a small town about twenty-five miles north of Rome. A few days later another synod at Rome completed the work. Gregory VI presided at first.

The claims of the three rival pontiffs were considered. Benedict IX and Sylvester III were soon disposed of, the first having twice resigned and the second being a mere intruder. Gregory VI was also deposed for the sin of simony in buying the papacy, but as he had convoked the synod by order of the emperor and was otherwise a worthy person, he was allowed to depose himself or to abdicate. As soon as the humble pope had pronounced his own sentence, he descended from the throne, divested himself of his pontifical robes, and implored pardon on his knees for the usurpation of the highest dignity in Christendom. He was used by the synod for deposing his two rivals, and then for deposing himself. In that way the synod saved the principle that the pope was above every human tribunal and responsible to God alone.

Henry III adjourned the Synod of Sutri to St. Peter's in Rome for the election of a new pope. But no Roman clergyman could be found free of the pollution of "simony and fornication." Then the king, vested by the synod with the green mantle of the patriciate<sup>4</sup> and the plenary authority of the electors, descended from his throne and seated Suidger, bishop of Bamberg, a man of spotless character, on the vacant chair of St. Peter amid the loud hosannas of the assembly. The new pope assumed the name of Clement II, and crowned Henry emperor on the festival of Christmas.

A thorough reformation of the papacy is chiefly the work of Hildebrand or Gregory VII. He is the pope with whom the next period opens.

### ***SEPARATION OF THE GREEK AND LATIN CHURCHES***

No two churches in the world are at this day so much alike and yet so averse to each other as the Oriental or Greek and the Occidental or Roman. They hold, as an inheritance from the patristic age, essentially the same body of doctrine, the same canons of discipline, the same form of worship; and yet their antagonism seems irreconcilable. Their very affinity breeds jealousy and friction. They are equally exclusive: the Oriental Church claims exclusive *orthodoxy*, and looks upon Western Christendom as heretical; the Roman Church claims exclusive *catholicity*, and considers all other churches as heretical or schismatical sects. The Pope and the Czar are the two most powerful rival despots in Christendom.

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4 The nobility or aristocracy.

The Greek and Latin churches were never organically united under one government but differed considerably from the beginning in nationality, language, and various ceremonies. These differences, however, did not interfere with the general harmony of faith and Christian life nor prevent cooperation against common foes. As long and as far as the genuine spirit of Christianity directed them, the diversity was an element of strength to the common cause.

The ultimate separation and incurable antagonism of the churches is due chiefly to three causes. The first cause is the politico-ecclesiastical rivalry of the patriarch of Constantinople backed by the Byzantine empire and the bishop of Rome in connection with the new German empire. The second cause is the growing centralization and overbearing conduct of the Latin church in and through the papacy. The third cause is the stationary character of the Greek and the progressive character of the Latin church during the middle ages.

The Greek church boasts of the imaginary perfection of her creed. She still produced considerable scholars and divines, but they mostly confined themselves to the work of epitomizing and systematizing the traditional theology of the Greek fathers and produced no new ideas, as if all wisdom began and ended with the old ecumenical Councils. She took no interest in the important anthropological and soteriological controversies which agitated the Latin church in the age of St. Augustine, and she continued to occupy the indefinite position of the first centuries on the doctrines of sin and grace. On the other hand, she was much distracted and weakened by barren metaphysical controversies on the abstrusest questions of theology and Christology. These quarrels facilitated the rapid progress of Islam, which conquered the lands of the Bible and pressed hard on Constantinople.

When the Greek church became stationary, the Latin church began to develop her greatest energy. She became the fruitful mother of new and vigorous nations of the North and West of Europe, produced scholastic and mystic theology and a new order of civilization, built magnificent cathedrals, discovered a new Continent, invented the art of printing, and with the revival of learning prepared the way for a new era in the history of the world.

When once the two churches were alienated in spirit and engaged in an unchristian race for supremacy, all the little doctrinal and ritualistic differences, which had existed long before, assumed an undue weight and were branded as heresies and crimes. The bishop of Rome sees in the Patriarch of Constantinople an ecclesiastical upstart who owed his power to political influence, not to apostolic origin. The Eastern patriarchs look upon the Pope as an anti-Christian usurper and as the first Protestant.

## ***MORALS AND RELIGION***

The middle age of Western Christendom resembles the period of the Judges in the history of Israel. It was a time of civil and political commotions and upheavals, of domestic wars and foreign invasions. Society was in a chaotic state and bordering on the brink of anarchy. Upon the whole, the people were more religious than moral. Piety was often made a substitute or atonement for virtue. Belief in the supernatural and miraculous was universal. Skepticism and unbelief were almost unknown. Men feared purgatory and hell, and made great sacrifices to gain heaven by founding churches, convents, and charitable institutions.

The clergy stood at the head of society and shared with kings and nobles the rule of the people. They were supported by the income from landed estates, cathedral funds, and the annual tithes which were enacted after the precedent of the Mosaic law. The priests were expected to excel in virtue as well as in education and to commend their profession by an exemplary life. Upon the whole they were superior to their flock, but not infrequently they disgraced their profession by scandalous immorality. Drunkenness and licentiousness were common vices.

The medieval church inherited the patristic views of slavery. She regarded it as a necessary evil, as a legal right based on moral wrong, as a consequence of sin and a just punishment for it. She put it in the same category with war, violence, pestilence, famine, and other evils. Occasionally a feeble voice was raised against the institution of slavery, especially from monks who were opposed to all worldly possession, and felt the great inconsistency of convents holding slaves as property.

## ***THE TRUCE OF GOD, THE ORDEAL, AND THE TORTURE***

Among all barbarians, individual injury is at once revenged on the person of the enemy, and the family or tribe to which the parties belong identify themselves with the quarrel until the thirst for blood is satisfied. The influence of Christianity was to confine the responsibility for a crime to its author and to substitute orderly legal process for summary private vengeance.

These sporadic efforts prepared the way for one of the most benevolent institutions of the middle ages, the so-called *Truce of God*, which declared that all feuds should cease from Wednesday evening till Monday morning on pain of excommunication. The Synod of Clermont (1095),

under the lead of Pope Urban II, made the Truce of God the general law of the church.

Another heathen custom with which the church had to deal was the so-called *judgment of God* or *ordeal*, that is, a trial of guilt or innocence by a direct appeal to God through nature. The ordeal reverses the correct principle that a man must be held to be innocent until he is proved to be guilty, and throws the burden of proof upon the accused instead of the accuser. It is based on the superstitious and presumptuous belief that the divine Ruler of the universe will at any time work a miracle for the vindication of justice when man in his weakness cannot decide and chooses to relieve himself of responsibility by calling heaven to his aid.

The customary ordeals were water-ordeals and fire-ordeals. The person accused or suspected of a crime was exposed to the danger of death or serious injury by one of these elements. If he escaped unhurt after plunging his arm into boiling water, walking barefoot upon heated plowshares, or after holding a burning ball of iron in his hand, he was supposed to be declared innocent by a miraculous interposition of God.

The medieval church, with her strong belief in the miraculous, could not and did not generally oppose the ordeal, but she baptized it and made it a powerful means to enforce her authority over the ignorant and superstitious people. The Church even invented and substituted new ordeals, which were less painful and cruel than the old heathen forms, but shockingly profane according to our notions. The genuine spirit of Christianity, however, urged towards an abolition rather than improvement of all these ordeals. Occasionally such voices of protest were raised, though for a long time without effect. Several popes, from Leo IV (847-855) to Honorius III (1222), and the fourth Lateran Council (1215), condemned more or less clearly the superstitious and frivolous provocation of miracles. It was by their influence, aided by secular legislation, that these God-tempting ordeals gradually disappeared during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but the underlying idea survived in the torture which for a long time took the place of the ordeal.

*The torture* is an attempt to prove innocence or guilt by imposing a physical pain which no man can bear without special aid from God. When the ordeal had fulfilled its mission, the torture was substituted as a more convenient mode and better fitted for an age less superstitious and more skeptical, but quite as despotic and intolerant. It forms one of the darkest chapters in history. For centuries this atrocious system, utterly revolting to every Christian and humane feeling, was employed in civilized Christian countries and sacrificed thousands of human beings, innocent as well as guilty, to torments worse than death. This system of torture was carried to its utmost limits during the Inquisition. After the Reformation it was still employed in trials of sorcery and

witchcraft until the revolution of opinion in the eighteenth century<sup>5</sup> swept it out of existence, together with cruel forms of punishment.

### ***ECCLESIASTICAL PUNISHMENTS: EXCOMMUNICATION, ANATHEMA, INTERDICT***

The severest penalties of the church were excommunication, anathema, and interdict. They were fearful weapons in the hands of the hierarchy during the middle ages when the church was believed to control salvation and when the civil power enforced her decrees by the strong arm of the law.

***Excommunication*** was the exclusion from the sacraments, especially the communion. The bishop could excommunicate anyone who refused canonical obedience. A bishop could only be excommunicated only by the pope, and the pope by no power on earth. The sentence was often accompanied with awful curses upon the bodies and souls of the offenders. The popes, as they towered above ordinary bishops, surpassed them also in the art of cursing and exercised it with shocking profanity.

Hardened sinners might despise such imprecations, but their effect on believers was necessarily unutterable, when, amid the gorgeous and impressive ceremonial of worship, the bishop, surrounded by twelve priests bearing flaming candles, solemnly recited the awful words which consigned the evil-doer and all his generation to eternal torment with such fearful amplitude and reduplication of malediction, and as the sentence of perdition came to its climax, the attending priests simultaneously cast their candles to the ground and trod them out, as a symbol of the quenching of a human soul in the eternal night of hell. To this was added the expectation, amounting almost to a certainty, that Heaven would not wait for the natural course of events to confirm the judgment thus pronounced, but that the maledictions would be as effective in this world as in the next.

The ***anathema***<sup>6</sup> is generally used in the same sense as excommunication, but in a narrower sense it means the "greater" excommunication, which excludes the offender from all Christian intercourse and makes him an outlaw. The anathema was pronounced with more solemn ceremonies.

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5 The Enlightenment.

6 Greek word meaning *cursed* or *under the curse of God*.

The *interdict*<sup>7</sup> extended over a whole town or diocese or district or country, and involved the innocent with the guilty. It was a suspension of religion in public exercise, including even the rites of marriage and burial; only baptism and extreme unction could be performed, and they only with closed doors. It cast the gloom of a funeral over a country and made people tremble in expectation of the last judgment. The popes employed this fearful weapon against disobedient kings and sacrificed the spiritual comforts of whole nations to their hierarchical ambition. Interdicts were only possible in the middle ages when the church had unlimited power.

### ***PENANCE AND INDULGENCE***

The word *repentance* or *penitence* is an insufficient rendering for the corresponding Greek *metanoia*, which means a radical change of mind or conversion from a sinful to a godly life, and includes, negatively, a turning away from sin in godly sorrow and, positively, a turning to Christ by faith with a determination to follow him.

In the Latin church the idea of repentance was externalized and identified with certain outward acts of self-abasement or self-punishment for the expiation of sin. The public penance before the church went out of use during the seventh or eighth century, except for very gross offenses, and was replaced by private penance and confession. The Lateran Council of 1215 under Pope Innocent III made it obligatory upon every Catholic Christian to confess to his parish priest at least once a year.

Penance was raised to the dignity of a sacrament for sins committed after baptism. It is supposed that baptism secures perfect remission of past sins, but not of subsequent sins, and frees from eternal damnation, but not from temporal punishment, which culminates in death or in purgatory. The Council of Trent<sup>8</sup> declared penance to be necessary to salvation for those who have fallen after baptism, since baptism is necessary for those who have not yet been regenerated.

The sacrament of penance and priestly absolution includes three elements: contrition of the heart, confession by the mouth, and satisfaction by good works. On these conditions, the priest grants absolution, not simply by a declaratory but by a judicial act.

Closely connected with penance is the medieval institution of *pecuniary compensation*. The church in the West, in her zeal to prevent violence and bloodshed, rightly favored the custom of

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7 An ecclesiastical censure.

8 The official Roman Catholic Response to the Protestant Reformation.

the barbarians to substitute pecuniary compensation for punishment of an offense, but the church wrongly applied this custom to the sphere of religion. Thus money might be substituted for fasting and other satisfactions and was clothed with an atoning efficacy. Here is the origin of the *indulgences*, that is, the remission of venial sins by the payment of money and on condition of contrition and prayer. The practice was justified by the scholastic theory that the works of supererogation<sup>9</sup> of the saints constitute a treasury of extra-merit and extra-reward which is under the control of the pope. Hence indulgence assumed the special meaning of papal dispensation or remission of sin from the treasury of the overflowing merits of saints, and this power was extended even to the benefit of the dead in purgatory. The popes found this a convenient means for promoting their power and filling their treasury, and thus the granting of indulgences became a periodical institution.

### ***THE MASS***

The public worship centered in the celebration of the mass as an actual, though unbloody, repetition of the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. In this respect the Eastern and Western churches are fully agreed to this day.

Pope Gregory I improved the Latin liturgy and gave it that shape which it substantially retains in the Roman church. He introduced masses for the dead in connection with the doctrine of purgatory which he developed and popularized. The mysterious character of the Eucharist was changed into the miraculous and even the magical with the spread of the belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>10</sup> But the doctrine was contested in two controversies before it triumphed in the eleventh century.

The language of the mass was Greek in the Eastern, Latin in the Western church. The Latin was an unknown tongue to the barbarian races of Europe. It gradually went out of use among the descendants of the Romans and gave place to the Romanic languages. But the papal church, sacrificing the interests of the people to the priesthood, and rational or spiritual worship to external unity, retained the Latin language in the celebration of the mass to this day, as the sacred language of the church.<sup>11</sup>

9 Works above and beyond the call of Christian duty.

10 *Transubstantiation*, or *the transition of the substance*, refers to the conversion of one substance into another; in Roman Catholic theology, the doctrine holding that the bread and wine of the Eucharist (Communion or Lord's Supper) are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus, although their appearances remain the same.

11 Since the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican ("Vatican II"), priests are allowed to give parts of the mass in the native language of the congregation.

## ***DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSIES - GENERAL SURVEY***

Our period is far behind the preceding patristic and the succeeding scholastic in doctrinal importance, but it mediates between them by carrying the ideas of the fathers over to the acute analysis of the Schoolmen<sup>12</sup> and marks a progress in the development of the Catholic system. It was agitated by seven theological controversies of considerable interest. They are summarized as follows:

1. The controversy about the single or double Procession of the Holy Spirit. This belongs to the doctrine of the Trinity and was not settled, but divides to this day the Greek and Latin churches.
2. The Monotheletic controversy<sup>13</sup> is a continuation of the Eutychian<sup>14</sup> and Monophysitic controversies<sup>15</sup> of the preceding period. It ended with the condemnation of Monotheletism and an addition to the Chalcedonian Christology, namely, the doctrine that Christ has two wills as well as two natures.
3. The Adoptionist controversy<sup>16</sup> is a continuation of the Nestorian.<sup>17</sup> Adoptionism was condemned as inconsistent with the personal union of the two natures in Christ.
4. The first Eucharistic controversy.
5. The second Eucharistic controversy. Together both resulted in the general prevalence of the doctrine of transubstantiation.
6. The Predestinarian controversy between Gottschalk and Hincmar tended to weaken the influence of the Augustinian system and to promote semi-Pelagian views<sup>18</sup> and practices.

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12 According to the *Elwell Evangelical Dictionary*, "Scholasticism is a form of Christian philosophy and theology developed by scholars who came to be called schoolmen. It flourished during the medieval period of European history. The heart of scholasticism insisted upon a system that was clear and definitional in tone. The system attempted to synthesize ideas expressed in classical Roman and Greek writings and in Christian Scripture, the writings of the patristic fathers, and other Christian writings preceding the medieval period. Aristotle's views helped give scholasticism a systematic structure, but Platonism also played a large part in the enterprise."

13 Defined in the next section.

14 Eutychus was a major proponent of monophysitism.

15 Monophysitism is the doctrine that in the person of Jesus was but a single, divine nature, not two natures. Coptic and Syrian Christians today profess this doctrine.

16 An adoptionist was one who held that Christ was the Son of God not by nature but by adoption.

17 Nestorianism, declared heretical in 431, that within Jesus are two distinct persons, divine and human, rather than a single person with two natures, divine and human.

18 Pelagianism denied original sin and affirmed the ability to be righteous by the exercise of free will. This view was propounded by Pelagius, a British monk, and condemned as heresy by the Roman Catholic Church in 416.

7. The Image-controversy, which belongs to the history of worship rather than theology.

### ***THE MONOTHELETIC CONTROVERSY***

The Monotheletic, or one-will controversy, is a continuation of the Christological contests of the post-Nicene age and closely connected with the Monophysitic controversy. This question had not been decided by the ancient fathers and councils, and passages from their writings were quoted by both parties. But in the inevitable logic of theological development, it had to be agitated sooner or later and brought to a conciliar termination.

The controversy had a metaphysical and a practical aspect. The metaphysical and psychological aspect was the relation of *will* to *nature* and to *person*. *Monotheletism* regards the will as an attribute of person, whereas *Dyotheletism* regards it as an attribute of nature. It is possible to conceive of an abstract nature without a will; it is difficult to conceive of a rational human nature without impulse and will; it is impossible to conceive of a human person without a will. Reason and will go together and constitute the essence of personality. Two wills cannot coexist in an ordinary human being. But as the personality of Christ is complex or divine-human, it may be conceived of as including two consciousnesses and two wills. The Chalcedonian Christology at all events consistently requires two wills as the necessary complement of two rational natures. The orthodox doctrine saved the integrity and completeness of Christ's humanity by asserting his human will.

The practical aspect of the controversy is connected with the nature of the Redeemer and of redemption and was most prominent with the leaders of the church. The advocates of Monotheletism reasoned that, as Christ is but one person, he can only have one will; that two wills would necessarily conflict, as in man the will of the flesh rebels against the Spirit; and that the sinlessness of Christ is best secured by denying to him a purely human will, which is the root of sin.

The advocates of Dyotheletism, on the other hand, contended that the incarnation must be complete in order to have a complete redemption; that a complete incarnation implies the assumption of the human will into union with the pre-existing divine will of the Logos; that the

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Semi-pelagianism was a response to Pelagianism by John Cassianus, a French monk (died ca. 448). He modified the position Pelagius by denying human merit and maintaining the necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence; on the other hand, he denied the Augustinian doctrines of election, the inability of man to do good, and the perseverance of the saints. The modern Roman Catholic view is essentially semi-pelagianism.

human will is the originating cause of sin and guilt, and must therefore be redeemed, purified, and sanctified; that Christ, without a human will, could not have been a full man, could not have been tempted, nor have chosen between good and evil, nor performed any moral and responsible act.

Scripture, which must in the end decide the controversy, clearly teaches the human will of Jesus but the other will from which it is distinguished is the will of his heavenly Father, to which he was obedient unto death. The orthodox dogma implies the identity of the divine will of Christ with the will of God the Father, and assumes that there is but one will in the divine tripersonality. It teaches two natures and one person in Christ, but three persons and one nature in God.

The weight of argument and the logical consistency on the basis of the Chalcedonian Dyophysitism,<sup>19</sup> which was acknowledged by both parties, decided in favor of the two-will doctrine. The sixth ecumenical Council in 680 gave the final decision by adopting the following addition to the Chalcedonian Christology:

And we likewise preach *two natural wills* in him [Jesus Christ], and *two natural operations* undivided, inconvertible, inseparable, unmixed, according to the doctrine of the holy fathers; and the two natural wills [are] not contrary (as the impious heretics assert), far from it! but his human will follows the divine will, and is not resisting or reluctant, but rather subject to his divine and omnipotent will. For it was proper that the will of the flesh should be moved, but be subjected to the divine will, according to the wise Athanasius. For as his flesh is called and is the flesh of the God Logos, so is also the natural will of his flesh the proper will of the Logos, as he says himself: "I came from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the Father who sent me" (John 6:38). . . . Therefore we confess two natural wills and operations, harmoniously united for the salvation of the human race.

The triumph of Dyotheletism was the outcome of a bitter conflict of nearly fifty years (633-680). Connected with the Monothelitic heresy was the role of Pope Honorius I (Oct. 27, 625 to Oct. 12, 638) and the bearing he has upon the dogma of *papal infallibility*, which stands or falls with a single official error.

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19 The name for orthodox doctrine accepted at the council of Chalcedon, namely, the belief that Christ has two natures, divine and human, which are inseparably united. It is the position of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches; the Coptic Church does not accept the doctrine.

Honorius taught and favored in several official letters, therefore *ex cathedra*,<sup>20</sup> the one-will heresy. In answer to a letter from Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople, he says, "Therefore we confess *one will* of our Lord Jesus Christ." The question of one or two wills was then new and not yet properly understood. Honorius was, so to say, an innocent heretic before the church had pronounced a decision. As soon as it appeared that the orthodox dogma of two natures required the doctrine of two wills, and that Christ could not be a full man without a human will, the popes changed their position, and Honorius would probably have done the same had he lived a few years longer.

Various attempts have been made by papal historians and controversialists to save the orthodoxy of Honorius in order to save the dogma of papal infallibility. But Honorius was condemned by the sixth ecumenical Council as a heretic and thus bore testimony for papal fallibility. His first successor, Severinus, had a brief pontificate of only three months. His second successor, John IV, apologized for him by putting a forced construction on his language. Agatho prudently ignored him. But his successor, Leo II, who translated the acts of the sixth Council from Greek into Latin, saw that he could not save the honor of Honorius without contradicting the verdict of the council in which the papal delegates had taken part. Therefore he expressly condemned him in the strongest language, both in a letter to the Greek emperor and in a letter to the bishops of Spain, as a traitor to the Roman church for trying to subvert her immaculate fate.

The verdict of history, after the most thorough investigation from all sides and by all parties remains unshaken. The whole church, East and West, as represented by the official acts of ecumenical Councils and Popes, for several hundred years believed that a Roman bishop may err *ex cathedra* in a question of faith and that one of them at least had so erred in fact. The Vatican Council of 1870 decreed papal infallibility in the face of this fact, thus overruling history by dogmatic authority.

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20 Latin phrase meaning *from the authority derived from one's office or position*. In application, however, it is only applied to the Roman Catholic Pope speaking in his role of Vicar of Christ on earth in the seat of St. Peter.