

peared. The well-known effigy of that goddess, with the infant Horus in her arms, has descended to our days in the beautiful, artistic creations of the Madonna and Child. Such restorations of old conceptions under novel forms were everywhere received with delight. When it was announced to the Ephesians that the Council of that place, headed by Cyril, had decreed that the Virgin should be called "the Mother of God," with tears of joy they embraced the knees of their bishop; it was the old instinct peeping out; their ancestors would have done the same for Diana.

This attempt to conciliate worldly converts, by adopting their ideas and practices, did not pass without remonstrance from those whose intelligence discerned the motive. "You have," says Faustus to Augustine, "substituted your agapæ for the sacrifices of the pagans; for their idols your martyrs, whom you serve with the very same honors. You appease the shades of the dead with wine and feasts; you celebrate the solemn festivities of the Gentiles, their calends, and their solstices; and, as to their manners, those you have retained without any alteration. Nothing distinguishes you from the pagans, except that you hold your assemblies apart from them." Pagan observances were everywhere introduced. At weddings it was the custom to sing hymns to Venus.

Let us pause here a moment, and see, in anticipation, to what a depth of intellectual degradation this policy of paganization eventually led. Heathen rites were adopted, a pompous and splendid ritual, gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax-tapers, processional services, lustrations, gold and silver vases, were introduced. The Roman lituus, the chief ensign of the augurs, became the crozier. Churches were built over the tombs of martyrs, and consecrated with rites borrowed from the

ancient laws of the Roman pontiffs. Festivals and commemorations of martyrs multiplied with the numberless fictitious discoveries of their remains. Fasting became the grand means of repelling the devil and appeasing God; celibacy the greatest of the virtues. Pilgrimages were made to Palestine and the tombs of the martyrs. Quantities of dust and earth were brought from the Holy Land and sold at enormous prices, as antidotes against devils. The virtues of consecrated water were upheld. Images and relics were introduced into the churches, and worshiped after the fashion of the heathen gods. It was given out that prodigies and miracles were to be seen in certain places, as in the heathen times. The happy souls of departed Christians were invoked; it was believed that they were wandering about the world, or haunting their graves. There was a multiplication of temples, altars, and penitential garments. The festival of the purification of the Virgin was invented to remove the uneasiness of heathen converts on account of the loss of their Lupercalia, or feasts of Pan. The worship of images, of fragments of the cross, or bones, nails, and other relics, a true fetich worship, was cultivated. Two arguments were relied on for the authenticity of these objects—the authority of the Church, and the working of miracles. Even the worn-out clothing of the saints and the earth of their graves were venerated. From Palestine were brought what were affirmed to be the skeletons of St. Mark and St. James, and other ancient worthies. The apotheosis of the old Roman times was replaced by canonization; tutelary saints succeed to local mythological divinities. Then came the mystery of transubstantiation, or the conversion of bread and wine by the priest into the flesh and blood of Christ. As centuries passed, the



paganization became more and more complete. Festivals sacred to the memory of the lance with which the Savior's side was pierced, the nails that fastened him to the cross, and the crown of thorns, were instituted. Though there were several abbeys that possessed this last peerless relic, no one dared to say that it was impossible they could all be authentic.

We may read with advantage the remarks made by Bishop Newton on this paganization of Christianity. He asks: "Is not the worship of saints and angels now in all respects the same that the worship of demons was in former times? The name only is different, the thing is identically the same, . . . the deified men of the Christians are substituted for the deified men of the heathens. The promoters of this worship were sensible that it was the same, and that the one succeeded to the other; and, as the worship is the same, so likewise it is performed with the same ceremonies. The burning of incense or perfumes on several altars at one and the same time; the sprinkling of holy water, or a mixture of salt and common water, at going into and coming out of places of public worship; the lighting up of a great number of lamps and wax-candles in broad daylight before altars and statues of these deities; the hanging up of votive offerings and rich presents as attestations of so many miraculous cures and deliverances from diseases and dangers; the canonization or deification of deceased worthies; the assigning of distinct provinces or prefectures to departed heroes and saints; the worshipping and adoring of the dead in their sepulchres, shrines, and relics; the consecrating and bowing down to images; the attributing of miraculous powers and virtues to idols; the setting up of little oratories, altars, and statues in the streets and highways, and on the tops of

mountains; the carrying of images and relics in pompous procession, with numerous lights and with music and singing; flagellations at solemn seasons under the notion of penance; a great variety of religious orders and fraternities of priests; the shaving of priests, or the tonsure as it is called, on the crown of their heads; the imposing of celibacy and vows of chastity on the religious of both sexes—all these and many more rites and ceremonies are equally parts of pagan and popish superstition. Nay, the very same temples, the very same images, which were once consecrated to Jupiter and the other demons, are now consecrated to the Virgin Mary and the other saints. The very same rites and inscriptions are ascribed to both, the very same prodigies and miracles are related of these as of those. In short, almost the whole of paganism is converted and applied to popery; the one is manifestly formed upon the same plan and principles as the other; so that there is not only a conformity, but even a uniformity, in the worship of ancient and modern, of heathen and Christian Rome."

Thus far Bishop Newton; but to return to the times of Constantine: though these concessions to old and popular ideas were permitted and even encouraged, the dominant religious party never for a moment hesitated to enforce its decisions by the aid of the civil power—an aid which was freely given. Constantine thus carried into effect the acts of the Council of Nicea. In the affair of Arius, he even ordered that whoever should find a book of that heretic, and not burn it, should be put to death. In like manner Nestor was by Theodosius the Younger banished to an Egyptian oasis.

The pagan party included many of the old aristocratic families of the empire; it counted among its adherents all the disciples of the old philosophical schools.



It looked down on its antagonist with contempt. It asserted that knowledge is to be obtained only by the laborious exercise of human observation and human reason.

The Christian party asserted that all knowledge is to be found in the Scriptures and in the traditions of the Church; that, in the written revelation, God had not only given a criterion of truth, but had furnished us all that he intended us to know. The Scriptures, therefore, contain the sum, the end of all knowledge. The clergy, with the emperor at their back, would endure no intellectual competition.

Thus came into prominence what were termed sacred and profane knowledge; thus came into presence of each other two opposing parties, one relying on human reason as its guide, the other on revelation. Paganism leaned for support on the learning of its philosophers, Christianity on the inspiration of its Fathers.

The Church thus set herself forth as the depository and arbiter of knowledge; she was ever ready to resort to the civil power to compel obedience to her decisions. She thus took a course which determined her whole future career: she became a stumbling-block in the intellectual advancement of Europe for more than a thousand years.

The reign of Constantine marks the epoch of the transformation of Christianity from a religion into a political system; and though, in one sense, that system was degraded into an idolatry, in another it had risen into a development of the old Greek mythology. The maxim holds good in the social as well as in the mechanical world, that, when two bodies strike, the form of both is changed. Paganism was modified by Christianity; Christianity by Paganism.

In the Trinitarian controversy, which first broke out in Egypt—Egypt, the land of Trinities—the chief point in discussion was to define the position of “the Son.” There lived in Alexandria a presbyter of the name of Arius, a disappointed candidate for the office of bishop. He took the ground that there was a time when, from the very nature of sonship, the Son did not exist, and a time at which he commenced to be, asserting that it is the necessary condition of the filial relation that a father must be older than his son. But this assertion evidently denied the coeternity of the three persons of the Trinity; it suggested a subordination or inequality among them, and indeed implied a time when the Trinity did not exist. Hereupon, the bishop, who had been the successful competitor against Arius, displayed his rhetorical powers in public debates on the question, and, the strife spreading, the Jews and pagans, who formed a very large portion of the population of Alexandria, amused themselves with theatrical representations of the contest on the stage—the point of their burlesques being the equality of age of the Father and his Son.

Such was the violence the controversy at length assumed, that the matter had to be referred to the emperor. At first he looked upon the dispute as altogether frivolous, and perhaps in truth inclined to the assertion of Arius, that in the very nature of the thing a father must be older than his son. So great, however, was the pressure laid upon him, that he was eventually compelled to summon the Council of Nicea, which, to dispose of the conflict, set forth a formulary or creed, and attached to it this anathema: “The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes those who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and



that, before he was begotten, he was not, and that he was made out of nothing, or out of another substance or essence, and is created, or changeable, or alterable." Constantine at once enforced the decision of the council by the civil power.

A few years subsequently the Emperor Theodosius prohibited sacrifices, made the inspection of the entrails of animals a capital offense, and forbade any one entering a temple. He instituted Inquisitors of Faith, and ordained that all who did not accord with the belief of Damasus, the Bishop of Rome, and Peter, the Bishop of Alexandria, should be driven into exile, and deprived of civil rights. Those who presumed to celebrate Easter on the same day as the Jews, he condemned to death. The Greek language was now ceasing to be known in the West, and true learning was becoming extinct.

At this time the bishopric of Alexandria was held by one Theophilus. An ancient temple of Osiris having been given to the Christians of the city for the site of a church, it happened that, in digging the foundation for the new edifice, the obscene symbols of the former worship chanced to be found. These, with more zeal than modesty, Theophilus exhibited in the market-place to public derision. With less forbearance than the Christian party showed when it was insulted in the theatre during the Trinitarian dispute, the pagans resorted to violence, and a riot ensued. They held the Serapion as their headquarters. Such were the disorder and bloodshed that the emperor had to interfere. He dispatched a rescript to Alexandria, enjoining the bishop, Theophilus, to destroy the Serapion; and the great library, which had been collected by the Ptolemies, and had escaped the fire of Julius Cæsar, was by that fanatic dispersed.

The bishopric thus held by Theophilus was in due

time occupied by his nephew St. Cyril, who had commended himself to the approval of the Alexandrian congregations as a successful and fashionable preacher. It was he who had so much to do with the introduction of the worship of the Virgin Mary. His hold upon the audiences of the giddy city was, however, much weakened by Hypatia, the daughter of Theon, the mathematician, who not only distinguished herself by her expositions of the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, but also by her comments on the writings of Apollonius and other geometers. Each day before her academy stood a long train of chariots; her lecture-room was crowded with the wealth and fashion of Alexandria. They came to listen to her discourses on those questions which man in all ages has asked, but which never yet have been answered: "What am I? Where am I? What can I know?"

Hypatia and Cyril! Philosophy and bigotry. They cannot exist together. So Cyril felt, and on that feeling he acted. As Hypatia repaired to her academy, she was assaulted by Cyril's mob—a mob of many monks. Stripped naked in the street, she was dragged into a church, and there killed by the club of Peter the Reader. The corpse was cut to pieces, the flesh was scraped from the bones with shells, and the remnants cast into a fire. For this frightful crime Cyril was never called to account. It seemed to be admitted that the end sanctified the means.

So ended Greek philosophy in Alexandria, so came to an untimely close the learning that the Ptolemies had done so much to promote. The "Daughter Library," that of the Serapion, had been dispersed. The fate of Hypatia was a warning to all who would cultivate profane knowledge. Henceforth there was to be no



freedom for human thought. Every one must think as the ecclesiastical authority ordered him, A. D. 414. In Athens itself philosophy awaited its doom. Justinian at length prohibited its teaching, and caused all its schools in that city to be closed.

While these events were transpiring in the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, the spirit that had produced them was displaying itself in the West. A British monk, who had assumed the name of Pelagius, passed through Western Europe and Northern Africa, teaching that death was not introduced into the world by the sin of Adam; that on the contrary he was necessarily and by nature mortal, and had he not sinned he would nevertheless have died; that the consequences of his sins were confined to himself, and did not affect his posterity. From these premises Pelagius drew certain important theological conclusions.

At Rome, Pelagius had been received with favor; at Carthage, at the instigation of St. Augustine, he was denounced. By a synod, held at Diospolis, he was acquitted of heresy, but, on referring the matter to the Bishop of Rome, Innocent I., he was, on the contrary, condemned. It happened that at this moment Innocent died, and his successor, Zosimus, annulled his judgment, and declared the opinions of Pelagius to be orthodox. These contradictory decisions are still often referred to by the opponents of papal infallibility. Things were in this state of confusion, when the wily African bishops, through the influence of Count Valerius, procured from the emperor an edict denouncing Pelagius as a heretic; he and his accomplices were condemned to exile and the forfeiture of their goods. To affirm that death was in the world before the fall of Adam, was a state crime.

It is very instructive to consider the principles on

which this strange decision was founded. Since the question was purely philosophical, one might suppose that it would have been discussed on natural principles; instead of that, theological considerations alone were adduced. The attentive reader will have remarked, in Tertullian's statement of the principles of Christianity, a complete absence of the doctrines of original sin, total depravity, predestination, grace, and atonement. The intention of Christianity, as set forth by him, has nothing in common with the plan of salvation upheld two centuries subsequently. It is to St. Augustine, a Carthaginian, that we are indebted for the precision of our views on these important points.

In deciding whether death had been in the world before the fall of Adam, or whether it was the penalty inflicted on the world for his sin, the course taken was to ascertain whether the views of Pelagius were accordant or discordant not with Nature but with the theological doctrines of St. Augustine. And the result has been such as might be expected. The doctrine declared to be orthodox by ecclesiastical authority is overthrown by the unquestionable discoveries of modern science. Long before a human being had appeared upon earth, millions of individuals—nay, more, thousands of species and even genera—had died; those which remain with us are an insignificant fraction of the vast hosts that have passed away.

A consequence of great importance issued from the decision of the Pelagian controversy. The book of Genesis had been made the basis of Christianity. If, in a theological point of view, to its account of the sin in the garden of Eden, and the transgression and punishment of Adam, so much weight had been attached, it also in a philosophical point of view became the grand



authority of Patristic science. Astronomy, geology, geography, anthropology, chronology, and indeed all the various departments of human knowledge, were made to conform to it.

As the doctrines of St. Augustine have had the effect of thus placing theology in antagonism with science, it may be interesting to examine briefly some of the more purely philosophical views of that great man. For this purpose, we may appropriately select portions of his study of the first chapter of Genesis, as contained in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth books of his "Confessions."

These consist of philosophical discussions, largely interspersed with rhapsodies. He prays that God will give him to understand the Scriptures, and will open their meaning to him; he declares that in them there is nothing superfluous, but that the words have a manifold meaning.

The face of creation testifies that there has been a Creator; but at once arises the question, "How and when did he make heaven and earth? They could not have been made *in* heaven and earth, the world could not have been made *in* the world, nor could they have been made when there was nothing to make them of." The solution of this fundamental inquiry St. Augustine finds in saying, "Thou spakest, and they were made."

But the difficulty does not end here. St. Augustine goes on to remark that the syllables thus uttered by God came forth in succession, and there must have been some created thing to express the words. This created thing must, therefore, have existed before heaven and earth, and yet there could have been no corporeal thing before heaven and earth. It must have been a creature, because the words passed away and came to an end:

but we know that "the word of the Lord endureth forever."

Moreover, it is plain that the words thus spoken could not have been spoken successively, but simultaneously, else there would have been time and change—succession in its nature implying time; whereas there was then nothing but eternity and immortality. God knows and says eternally what takes place in time.

St. Augustine then defines, not without much mysticism, what is meant by the opening words of Genesis: "In the beginning." He is guided to his conclusion by another scriptural passage: "How wonderful are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all." This "wisdom" is "the beginning," and in that beginning the Lord created the heaven and the earth.

"But," he adds, "some one may ask, 'What was God doing before he made the heaven and the earth? for, if at any particular moment he began to employ himself, that means time, not eternity. In eternity nothing transpires—the whole is present.'" In answering this question, he cannot forbear one of those touches of rhetoric for which he was so celebrated: "I will not answer this question by saying that he was preparing hell for priers into his mysteries. I say that, before God made heaven and earth, he did not make any thing, for no creature could be made before any creature was made. Time itself is a creature, and hence it could not possibly exist before creation.

"What, then, is time? The past is not, the future is not, the present—who can tell what it is, unless it be that which has no duration between two nonentities? There is no such thing as 'a long time,' or 'a short time,' for there are no such things as the past and the future. They have no existence, except in the soul."



The style in which St. Augustine conveyed his ideas is that of a rhapsodical conversation with God. His works are an incoherent dream. That the reader may appreciate this remark, I might copy almost at random any of his paragraphs. The following is from the twelfth book :

“ This, then, is what I conceive, O my God, when I hear thy Scripture saying, In the beginning God made heaven and earth : and the earth was invisible and without form, and darkness was upon the deep, and not mentioning what day thou createdst them ; this is what I conceive, that because of the heaven of heavens—that intellectual heaven, whose intelligences know all at once, not in part, not darkly, not through a glass, but as a whole, in manifestation, face to face ; not this thing now, and that thing anon ; but (as I said) know all at once, without any succession of times ; and because of the earth, invisible and without form, without any succession of times, which succession presents ‘ this thing now, that thing anon ; ’ because, where there is no form, there is no distinction of things ; it is, then, on account of these two, a primitive formed, and a primitive formless ; the one, heaven, but the heaven of heavens ; the other, earth, but the earth movable and without form ; because of these two do I conceive, did thy Scripture say without mention of days, In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. For, forthwith it subjoined what earth it spake of ; and also in that the firmament is recorded to be created the second day, and called heaven, it conveys to us of which heaven he before spake, without mention of days.

“ Wondrous depth of thy words ! whose surface, behold ! is before us, inviting to little ones ; yet are they a wondrous depth, O my God, a wondrous depth !

It is awful to look therein ; an awfulness of honor, and a trembling of love. The enemies thereof I hate vehemently ; O that thou wouldst slay them with thy two-edged sword, that they might no longer be enemies to it : for so do I love to have them slain unto themselves, that they may live unto thee.”

As an example of the hermeneutical manner in which St. Augustine unfolded the concealed facts of the Scriptures, I may cite the following from the thirteenth book of the “ Confessions ; ” his object is to show that the doctrine of the Trinity is contained in the Mosaic narrative of the creation :

“ Lo, now the Trinity appears unto me in a glass darkly, which is thou my God, because thou, O Father, in him who is the beginning of our wisdom, which is thy wisdom, born of thyself, equal unto thee and co-eternal, that is, in thy Son, createdst heaven and earth. Much now have we said of the heaven of heavens, and of the earth invisible and without form, and of the darksome deep, in reference to the wandering instability of its spiritual deformity, unless it had been converted unto him, from whom it had its then degree of life, and by his enlightening became a beautiful life, and the heaven of that heaven, which was afterward set between water and water. And under the name of God, I now held the Father, who made these things ; and under the name of the beginning, the Son, in whom he made these things ; and believing, as I did, my God as the Trinity, I searched further in his holy words, and lo ! thy Spirit moved upon the waters. Behold the Trinity, my God !—Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, Creator of all creation.”

That I might convey to my reader a just impression of the character of St. Augustine’s philosophical