

The Christian Sun.

A Religious and Miscellaneous Newspaper, devoted to Religion, Morality, Literature, General Intelligence, and the support of the Principles of the Christian Church.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

"THE LORD GOD IS A SUN AND SHIELD."

\$1.50 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE.

VOLUME IX.

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, JUNE 2, 1852.

NUMBER 22.

CHURCH HISTORY,

BY N. SUMMERBELL.
(Continued.)

Tatian, of Assyria, who wrote *The Philosophy of the Barbarians*, says, "When God pleased, the word flowed from his simple essence—the first begotten work of his Spirit, produced by division, not by dispersion—as many torches may be lighted from one, and yet the light of the first torch not be diminished. So the Logos proceeding from the power of the Father, does not leave the Father void of Logos, as I am not void of speech from my speech going to you." Contr. Grecos, p. 145.

Athenagoras wrote an Apology for the Christians, addressed to Marcus Aurelius, and also a treatise in defence of the Resurrection—next, Hermias wrote a satire against the heathen philosophers.

Hegesippus, a church teacher, in the reigns of Hadrian and Antonius Pius, the first church historian, is defended from Ebi- onitism, by Neander 1: 676.

Next Hippolytus, a Bishop or Pastor of Arabia. A notice of his works was found in his statue, dug up in A. D. 1551. I will only notice, among his numerous works, that he compiled a homily in the praise of the Savior, and that he is noted for a writing on the Apocalypse, and a Commentary on Daniel, wherein he sets the end of the 500 years after the birth of Christ.

Pantenus was a Hebrew by descent, and by tradition, and received the true doctrine from Peter, James, John, and Paul. He was a teacher, probably first master in the school of Alexandria, and afterwards labored as a Missionary among the Indians. Good testimony is borne to his character, virtues, godliness, and learning, by Milner (1: 145;) although it is given up by Hawies (1: 164;)—together with Justin Martyr, Origen and Tertullian—as unsound in regard to the Scholastic Trinity; by which we simply understand, that he held the true doctrine, as did all those early Christians who were considered sound in their own day. But, as none of these are of popular authority as "Church Fathers," I pass to notice.

Tertullian, A. D. 194 to 220. He was born in Carthage, and is doubtless one of the most eminent Elders in the ancient church, some of the most eminent of the day may be gathered from his Apology: "We look up to heaven with outstretched hands, because they are harmless, &c.; without a prompter, because we pray from the heart. We pray for the Emperor, whatever Caesar would wish for himself in his private capacity, were we disposed to return evil for evil, it were easy for us to avenge the injuries which we sustain; but God forbid that his people should vindicate themselves by human fire, or be reluctant to endure that by which their sincerity is evinced. Were we disposed to act the part, I will not say of secret assassins, but of open enemies, should we want forces or numbers? Are we not dispersed through the world? It is true we are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all your places, cities, islands, castles, boroughs, counsels, camps, courts, palaces, senate, and forum. We leave you only your tempter. To what war should we not be ready and well prepared, even though unequal in numbers,—we, who die with so much pleasure—were it not that our religion requires us rather to suffer death than to inflict it. We are dead to all ideas of honor and dignity. Nothing is more foreign to us than political concerns. The whole world is our republic! We are a body united together in one bond of religion, discipline, and hope. We meet in our assemblies for prayer. We are compelled to have recourse to the Divine Oracles for caution, &c." See Hawies 1: 174.

From the Apology in full, we learn, that Elders presided in the Churches, that prayer was extempore, that worldly honor was not sought. Politics gave place to religion, rulers were submitted to, and liberality was a constant virtue. These were the true Christians.

Tertullian was a very eminent writer, ranging the whole domain of Christian doctrine and life. His acknowledgment of the Son of God is unequivocal. God said he, was not always a Father or a Judge, since he could not be a Father until he had a Son. Chap. iii., p. 284.

That he joined himself to the Montanists was purely in consequence of his seeing more Christian excellence there. Hawies (1: 173.) He was a strong opposer of a doctrine just being initiated into practice, viz: infant baptism.

A. D. 259. During the persecution, the Christians at Rome remained upwards of a year without choosing a President or Bishop, so much would he be exposed. Novatian was most in favor with the people; but by receiving to his favor Novatus from Africa who had quarrelled with Cyprian, this act enlisted the influence of that powerful Bishop against him. Also his discipline was very strict; but perhaps, more reasonable than that of Cyprian, who demanded rebaptism. Be this as it may, Novatian was chosen Bishop of Rome; but another party chose one Cornelius, the favorite of Cyprian.

Novatian was a Bishop as truly chosen and ordained, from anything which appears as Cornelius—of the soundest principles, and distinguished by the name of Pure. But Cyprian and his African Bishops condemned Novatian, and supported Cornelius in "the See."—See Hawies 1: 215.

Perhaps, Cornelius was first chosen; but being deemed too impure, Novatian was designed to succeed him. Cornelius said that Novatian secretly aspired to the office—but Neander thinks that he had already declined it, and asks—whence had Cornelius the power to penetrate thus into the secrets of his opponent's heart?—See Neander 1: 241.

Yet I have no doubt that Novatus was the moving soul of the Novatian party; and the world may yet have cause to regret their lack of success. Cyprian's appeal against Novatian's treatment of the lapsed, is not to be considered as presenting the whole truth. Novatian would have favored, nourished and cherished them: but he thought that they ought not to be received into the bosom of the Church, who had fallen in the day of trial. Truth unadulterated is not to be found with men, nor unspotted purity with the children of men.

Nepos was an Egyptian Bishop who revived the doctrine of Papias concerning the millennium which had been brought into discredit through the able refutation of the theory by Origen. "Nepos taught that the millennium would take place after the

resurrection, and described the happiness of the saints, as much consisting in corporeal enjoyment." He was a Christian, faithful, zealous, and skillful in the Scriptures.—See Milner 1: 227.

Dionysus of Alexandria, A. D. 250. One of the brightest luminaries of his day, opposed Nepos, and quashed his opinions in the bud. His works are lost except a few extracts preserved by Eusebius. These prove him to have been sound in the Christian faith.

Sabellianism.—He speaks of the Sabellian doctrine as follows, "As many brethren have sent their books and disputations concerning a doctrine lately propagated containing many blasphemies against the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and much infidelity against his only begotten Son, the first begotten of every creature, and the word incarnate; and much ignorance relative to the Holy Ghost."—Milner 1: 226.

The clearness with which he states the distinction between God and the Son, shows clearly that he did not consider them the same, while the denominations given to the Son establishes his divine personality.

Milner says: "Dionysus showed, by unequivocal testimony that the Father was not the same as the Son, nor the Son the same as the Father—the Father cannot say he is separated from the Son, as he is the Father; for that name establishes the relation, neither can the Son be separated from the Father for the word Father implies the union—the spirit is united with the Father and the Son, because it cannot exist separate, either from him who sends it, or from him who brings it."—Milner 1: 228.

Gregory Thaumaturgus—was born in Cappadocia—educated in Pagan idolatry, learned in Platonic Philosophy, with his brother and several other gentlemen attending the lectures of the renowned Origen, were converted to the Christian Religion; and Gregory on returning to Neocaesarea his native city a place wholly given up to sin, was enabled to plant there a Christian Church. A subsequent age has attributed to him a creed, which he is said to have received in a vision from John and the Virgin Mary, the forgery however is evidently the product of a later age.

Cyprian was elected Bishop of Carthage, A. D. 248, and suffered under Valerian 258, he was justly honored as a true pastor, and a devout Christian, yet he was by birth a man of family, of considerable fortune, fair prospects; bred to the bar; possessing a liberal education, being a good orator, elegant writer, of vivid genius and respected erudition. When converted, he literally sacrificed his property, distributing it to the poor: he was elected Bishop by the people, was a married man, and deservedly revered; yet his people were not united in him; but divisions took place and Fortunatus was also elected Bishop." See Hawies 1: 206.

Cyprian's Death, Sept. 13: 258. "The soldiers were sent to his residence to take him: he knew that his end was near; though his whole ministry had been in the midst of persecution, danger and death. He repaired to the Proconsul, was kept prisoner during the night at the house of the officer, which was surrounded by great numbers of Christians ready to die with him: when brought before the Proconsul in the morning, surrounded by a strong guard, and followed by the multitude, the Proconsul said, "Art thou Thacius Cyprian?" Then answered Cyprian, "I am," and the following conversation ensued:

Proconsul. The most sacred Emperors have commanded thee to sacrifice.
Cyprian. I do not sacrifice.
Pro. Be well advised.
Cyp. Do as thou art commanded.
(Pro. Advises with his council.)
Cyp. In so just a cause thou needest no consultation.
Pro. Thou art an enemy of the Gods, and a seducer of the people.

The Proconsul then read his sentence;
It is decreed, that Thacius Cyprian be beheaded.
Cyprian replied, "God be praised;" the people exclaimed, "let us too be beheaded with him."—Wad. 64.

Cyprian's remarks on Novatian on receiving the lapsed again into the Church, are animating and beautiful—"At the day of judgment, it will be laid to our charge that we took no care of the wounded sheep, and that on account of one that was diseased, left many sound ones to perish: that while our Lord left the ninety and nine whole sheep, and went after the one that had wandered and become weary, and when he had found it, brought it away himself on his shoulders, we not only do not seek after the fallen, but even reject them when they return to us.—See 1 Cor. ix: 22—xii: 26, x: 33. The case stands differently with the Philosophers and Stoics, who say, all sins are alike, and that a sound man should not easily be brought to bend; we are bound to keep aloof from what proceeds, not from God's grace, but from the pride of a severe philosophy. Our Lord says again, Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful—the whole need not a physician, but the sick; but such a physician he cannot be who says, 'I take care only of the sound who need no physician.' Behold! yonder lies thy brother, wounded in the battle by his enemy. On the one hand Satan is trying to destroy him whom he has wounded, on the other Christ exhorts us not to leave him to perish, whom he has redeemed. Which cause do we espouse; on whose side do we stand? Do we help the devil finish his work of destruction? Do we, like the Priest and the Levite, pass by our brother lying half dead? Or do we as priests of God and of Christ, snatch the wounded man from the grasp of the enemy; that having done everything for his salvation, we may leave the final decision of his case to the judgment of God."—See Neander 1: 245—6.

Nor was this bare profession. When certain Christians of Numidia had been taken captive and the Churches were unable to raise the ransom, Cyprian raised a contribution of over four thousand dollars and forwarded it for their relief.—Ibid 1: 256.

Yet the charges, that Cyprian ruled with imperious sway and ejected members who displeased him with great haughtiness, seems but too well to accord with his notions of visions and dreams, and of the dignity, and authority, and superiority of the outward and particular developments of the Church. He was but human. None is without fault save God and his Son. The error seems to have been fallen into by some, and Cyprian among the number that baptism was indispensable to the remis-

sion of sins, hence a controversy arose about Baptism.—The question was whether returning penitents, or heretics ought to be rebaptized. Cyprian maintained the baptism of heretics to be null and void; and that even the baptism of Novatian—the pure—ought to be so regarded. Stephen bishop of Rome opposed rebaptizing with much asperity and dogmatism.

SPRINKLING.

In the cause of this controversy Cyprian decided, "that those whose weak state of health did not permit them to be washed in water, were yet sufficiently baptized by being sprinkled, as the virtue of baptism ought not to be estimated, in a carnal manner, by the quantity of external apparatus."—Milner 1: 211.

This innovation we thus see crawling in at first as an invalid upon the sick bed. Hence it is admitted that "immersion was so customary in the ancient Church, that the baptism of the sick who were merely sprinkled, was entirely neglected by some, and by others was thought to be inferior to the baptism of those bathed in water." The Roman Bishop Cornelius said to Cyprian, "Novatian received baptism on a sick bed, by aspersion, if it can be said that such a person received baptism," for, "No person who had during sickness been baptized by aspersion was admitted to the clerical office."—Epi. Cyp. 69. Bib. Theo. Storck & Platt by Schmucker 513.

The change thus taking place in baptism may be marked by the reader in the following extracts, from Moshien, who was himself Pedito-baptist:

First Century. "Baptism was administered in this century by an immersion of the whole body in the baptismal font."—Mosh. 1: 46.

Second Cent. "Baptism was administered publicly twice every year, at the festivals of Easter and Pentecost. The persons to be baptized repeated the Apostle's creed, confessed and renounced their sins &c., and were immersed under the water."—Mosh. 1: 69.

Third Cent. Baptisms were continued twice a year: but now "the candidates had to endure a long course of trial, and preparation, and the ceremony was performed only in the presence of the initiated, and remission of sin was thought to be the immediate happy fruit, and the candidates returned home arrayed in white garments, and adorned with white crowns."—Mosh. 1: 91.

As before seen, some sick persons were sprinkled.

Fourth Cent. "Baptismal fonts were now erected in the porch of each Church" and ceremonies were multiplied.—Ibid 1: 121.

But Moshien says nothing farther about the mode.

MONARCHISM—HERETICS OF THE THIRD CENTURY.

Among the heretics who troubled the Church in this century, Monarchism stands predominant.

We find, says Neander, "the earliest traces of it in the Roman Church:

1st Class were called simply *Monarchians*, and held, that although Christ's birth was supernatural, yet they did not acknowledge an indwelling divine nature in Christ. This class, or at least the leader, Theodotus, was excommunicated by Victor the Roman Bishop."

2d Class. Another class arose in Rome from Artemon, who appealed to Victor in support of his theory: Hence, these could not have been of Theodotus' school.

The second class of Monarchians were called *Patrissians*, because they believed that the Logos was God the Father, and that the Father suffered. This doctrine first came from Praxeas, of Asia Minor. He traveled to Rome and induced the Bishops to excommunicate the Montanists of Asia Minor. Praxeas denied any distinction in God's being, and applied the term Son barely to Christ's appearance on earth. To this class Noetus belonged, who, when cited to answer for his faith, exclaimed: "Of what evil am I guilty? When I glorify Christ, the unity of God and Christ," this only God was his motto.

Berylus of Arabia, one of the most learned teachers in the Church, having excited some notice as a supporter of the Monarchian theory, a Synod was convened, A. D. 244, and the great Origen having confuted him, he returned to the Church; but Sabellius of Africa, proceeded farther in the track of Berylus, and plainly taught that while "the Father remains the same, he involves himself in the Son, and Spirit; thus he received not only the Son, but the whole Triad into his Monarchian theory." (Neander 1: 595.) Said this heretic, "As in the Sun we may distinguish its proper substance, its round shape, and its power of communicating warmth and light; so in God we may distinguish his proper self-subsistent essence, the illuminating power of the Logos, and the power of the Holy Spirit in diffusing warmth and glow of life through the hearts of believers; he ever denoted these personal—these he regarded as personifications &c. The self-expression of the Supreme being is the *on* becoming Logos, which is the ground of all existence. Thus God silent is inactive—he spake and the *on* became Logos, so said he "to the end that we might be created, the Logos came forth from God—or was begotten—God caused the Logos to go forth from him, as a ray from the Sun, and then withdrew it again into himself; but the Logos is in itself only Logos, with its humanization, it first becomes a Son of God, so the Logos having conducted souls to their perfection will return to its oneness with the Father—perhaps this was done at the ascension from the mount of Olives.

"In the conflict with these two classes of Monarchians, the Church doctrine of the Trinity (afterwards) unfolded itself."—Neander 1: 584, 595, 598.

PERSECUTIONS UNDER THE HEATHEN EMPERORS, RECAPITULATED.

There are ten general persecutions recorded under Pagan Rome:

1st. A. D. 31, by Nero, who set fire to the city of Rome; and when the tide of popular fury set hard against him, laid it to the Christians, and punished them accordingly.

2d. A. D. 95, by Domitian, when forty thousand Christians are supposed to have suffered. Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem was crucified. All kinds of torture, rack, searing, broiling, burning, scourging, and hanging were resorted to. Timothy at this time, pastor of Ephesus suffered, A. D. 97.

3d. A. D. 108, Trajan. In this persecution Ignatius was put to death, after being cruelly tortured. Symphora, a widow was scourged, hung by the hair, and afterwards drowned with a stone hung to her neck. This persecution continued for many years.

4th. A. D. 162, Antoninus. Under his reign the Christians were banished from their houses, stoned, imprisoned, plundered, and forced to walk over nails and sharp stones bare-footed, and afterwards put to death. In this persecution Polycarp suffered.

5th. A. D. 180, Commodus. In this persecution, Perpetua and Felicitas, both mothers with their infants, were drawn from prison to the Theatre, and exposed to the fury of horned beasts, and afterwards beheaded with many others.

6th. A. D. 235, Maximinus. In this persecution the Christians were outlawed; Hippolis was tied to a wild horse and dragged to death. Others were burnt.

7th. A. D. 249, Decius. In this persecution many eminent Christians suffered, among whom was Balyilas, pastor of the Church at Antioch. Several females of exemplary piety, endured the most severe tortures with constancy and fortitude. The famous Origen at the age of sixty-four endured much, thrown into a loathsome prison, loaded with chains, his feet and hands extended to the utmost for days in the stocks, his tortures being protracted to prolong his sufferings; in the interim, Decius died, and with a shattered frame Origen was released, and lingered five years with a broken constitution.

8th. A. D. 257, Valerian. In this persecution many suffered, both of men and women. St. Lawrence, a Christian deacon was broiled over the fire on a large grid-iron. Some were burnt, and others sawn asunder.

9th. A. D. 274, Aurelian. Under his reign among others, Felix, pastor (afterwards called Pope) of the Church at Rome suffered.

10th. A. D. Dioclesian. "Are you a Christian?" still continued to be a question, upon the negative answer of which life depended: many however looking for a higher life were enabled by grace to say "We are Christians."

Said Maximus, governor of Cilicia to one:

What are you? He replied,

I am a Christian.

Max. What are you?

C. A Christian.

Max. You should sacrifice to the Gods, and not disturb the State, then you would have riches and honor.

C. I desire no greater honor than to be a Christian.

Max. Strip, and scourge him.

Many women endured the like torture with great fortitude.

One Pagan Father even informed against his sons, who was finally put to death.

The scenes are now about to change. We shall soon see Constantius favoring Christians; and Constantine embracing Christianity, and the government of the Roman Empire passing from the hands of heathen to Christian Emperors: yet whether this was a real good-benefit to the truth, or tended to the glory of God, the reader must judge; certainly it neither dried up the fountain of persecution, nor changed its course materially, though doubtless great and important changes resulted. It is certainly to the credit of Constantine that the A. D. 313, Edict of Milan established universal toleration; but the union of Church and State was properly the rejection of the humble followers of Jesus, who must ever compose the true *Christian Church*, and the establishment of a worldly, Political, or ROMAN CHURCH; composed of those whom this world would love, because they were of this world. And such doubtless was the first foundation stone politic of the religious edifice afterwards called the Roman Catholic Church.

During the first three centuries, the Gospel had been planted in every nation of the Roman Empire. Copies of the Bible were multiplied. Pagan altars were abandoned and the priests were left void of occupation. Far and wide the influence of Christianity was felt. Porphyry, and Celesus, and Lucian battled with weapons of satire, ridicule and controversy in vain. Such writers as Origen and Justin Martyr swept the field of every adversary. The Gospel sailed smoothly on the political sea of Rome—advanced majestically o'er the classic fields of Greece. Rode triumphantly o'er the barbarous domain of Gaul—triumphed gloriously in the sunny climes of France—and nobly reared its banner in the British isles. The Goths, the Vandals, the Lombards, and the Germans acknowledged its influence. The next century will see it sinking in earthly glory and perishing in carnal life. The days of unity are past, and the future reveals the dark picture of human nature wrestling with the divine; and in the very Sanctuary, striving for the mastery.

ROMAN GOVERNMENT BECOMES CHRISTIAN—CONSTANTINE—PERSECUTION OF THE PAGANS.

The morning of the fourth century opened with a gleam of sunshine, and the Emperor Dioclesian's peaceful favor and protection promised a beautiful day. The death of Marcellus an officer in the army, who could not submit to heathen rites, was an exception to the general features of the times; but soon the morning rainbow gave place to dark and lowering clouds, which burst in a terrific storm upon the Church. Dioclesian, to lessen the cares of government, had shared the Empire with Maximian. Each chose a successor: Dioclesian Galerius, and Maximian, Constantius Chlorus. The former occupied the East, and Africa; and the latter the West, with Gaul and Britain. Dioclesian was a lukewarm Pagan, but Galerius breathed fury and slaughter against all Christians.

Maximian was beastly and sensual, but Constantius Chlorus, was a man of candor.

Galerius soon procured an Edict for the suppression of the Christian worship, and the Church of Nicomedia was the first to be leveled to the ground. Christians were next deprived of all places of trust, profit or honor; and a zealous Christian who pulled down the decree was burnt alive.

Former efforts having proved unavailing, a fourth Edict ordered the Magistrates to seize Christians without respect to age, sex, or station, and reclaim them to Paganism by torture, or slay the obstinate. Humanity recoils, nature shudders, and man blushes for his fellow-man as he pursues the pages of suffering, groans, blood and death. Galerius rode into power on the sufferings of his subjects. Dioclesian and Maximian resigned to him their power; Constantius alone stood between him and universal empire, and Constantius was in Britain drawing near his end. He sent to Galerius, for Constantine his son, that he might see him before he died.

(To be continued.)