

in character. As the saints increased in importance, new holy places sprang up around their bodies ; and some of these holy places, containing their tombs, became centres of pilgrimage for the most distant parts of Christendom ; as did also in particular the empty tomb of Christ himself, the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

The growth of the priesthood kept pace with the growth of ceremonial in general, till at last it culminated in the mediæval papacy, with its hierarchy of cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, and other endless functionaries. Vestments, incense, and like accompaniments of sacerdotalism also rapidly gained ground. All this, too, is a common trait of higher religious evolution everywhere. So likewise are fasting, vigils, and the ecstatic condition. But asceticism, monasticism, celibacy, and other forms of morbid abstinence are peculiarly rife in the east, and found their highest expression in the life of the Syrian and Egyptian hermits.

Lastly, a few words must be devoted in passing to the rise and development of the Sacred Books, now excessively venerated in North-western Christendom. These consisted in the first instance of genuine or spurious letters of the apostles to the various local churches (the so-called Epistles), some of which would no doubt be preserved with considerable reverence ; and later of lives or legends of Jesus and his immediate successors (the so-called Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles). Furthermore, as Christianity adopted from Judaism the cult of its one supreme divine figure, now no longer envisaged as Jahweh, the national deity of the Hebrews, but as a universal cosmopolitan God and Father, it followed naturally that the sacred books of the Jewish people, the literature of Jahweh-worship, should also receive considerable attention at the hands of the new priesthood. By a gradual process of selection and elimination, the canon of scripture was evolved from these heterogeneous materials : the historical or quasi-historical and prophetic He-