

more than simply to rehearse the leading particulars of the extended period, while the modern history of the Church we did not enter on at all—Making, however, a selection from among the mass of events presented to our view, we dwell with greater particularity on such as these: the gifts conferred on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost; the rapid propagation of the Gospel, as illustrating its truth; the causes assigned by Gibbon for the remarkable success of the Gospel; the causes and effects of the various persecutions by the Jews and by the gentiles; the nature and sources of the heresies which afflicted the Church in early times—more especially those of Arian and Pelagian; the progress of Church power and of Papal claims; the rise and progress of Mohammedanism; the history of monasticism; the influence of the crusades on the state of Europe; the causes of the decline of literature, and the progress of barbarism in the dark ages; the witnesses for God during these dark ages; and the circumstances which led to the revival of letters and the Lutheran Reformation. My wish has been to go along with you in your enquiries into these subjects, giving such hints as might be useful, and directing to the proper sources of further information. In this closing address we shall advert briefly to some of the more prominent topics that occupied our minds, and suggest a few thoughts of a practical character for your guidance in the prosecution of the study.*

Our attention has been directed to those parts of the history of the Church which furnish the most complete specimens of *Christian evidence*. The fulfilment of prophecies that went before, prove incontestably that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah. The miracles of the Redeemer evince His divine commission, "for no man could do such miracles as He did, had not God been with Him." The rapid success of a preached Gospel in the hands of a few fishermen of Galilee, establishes its claim to be received as from God. The striking contrast of what the men of Galilee really and did, with what from their education and nationality might have been expected of them, Archbishop Sumner has successfully adduced as a noble chapter in the field of evidence, and that we have been permitted to survey. The divisions of the early Church we have seen with regret, and yet with a feeling of conviction that the great Head designed thereby to secure the purity and uncorrupted preservation of the sacred canon as the common property of all, and the subject of appeal successively to each. In a word, the portion of Church History which has been gone over, is replete with illustrations of the Christian evidence, at once plain, palpable, and popular. In the course of your scriptural exhortations as catechists, and in following out your missionary commissions at the firesides of your people, you will find much in these sketches of history to suggest what will be instructive to your own minds, and pleasingly profitable to theirs.

The *causes of error* have been historically exhibited, and truth has come forth to your view in its variegated loveliness. We have seen in the early Gnostics and other dreamers, the tendency of the human mind to form to itself new combinations of images; and comparing these with some more novel specimens of transcendentalism, we have seen that the progress of error has ever proceeded on the same scale, and been regulated by the same laws: if those things can be termed laws which resolve themselves rather into figments of the fancy. The pride of reason, and the sad want of intellectual diffidence, have stood forth very prominently before us in the wilder theories of the later Platonists, and in the more pernicious tendency of the Arian and of the Pelagian systems.

* I regret that want of time put it out of my power to go any length in the Monday's exposition of the Acts of the Apostles. One hour in the fortnight was all that was allotted me for this purpose; and this I found utterly inadequate to do justice to the subject.

The refusal of men to bow to the holy verdict of inspiration, and the consequent wanderings of intellect in the fields of an ideal creation, have at once proved to us man's need of divine teaching, and his liability to err, from the sheer love of philosophy for the sake of mental display or the gratification of a prying curiosity. We have learned in all these salutary lessons, which young and active minds must not disdain to admit. A Boyle and a Newton may well teach you the humility that becomes a candid enquirer, and their example, as set before you in your preliminary studies, contrasts amazingly with the daring flights of minds which, amid growing darkness and superstition, sought to be wise above what has been written even by the finger of Jehovah.

Our historical narrative brought us into contact with the *changes* effected on the Church by the *accession of Constantine* to the ranks of believers; the character of his efforts and of his legislation; the mingled issues of the complex system of civil and ecclesiastical affinity; the causes which led to the sad deterioration of the Christian Church in the fourth and fifth centuries; the deepening shades of darkness which wrapt in their embrace the nations and the Churches of Europe; the traces of a wonderful Providence in subjugating to the cause of incipient civilisation, the Crusades; the chivalry of the West; the learning of the East; the minstrelsy of the bards, the Scalds, the troubadours of the age; the commercial republicanism of a Venice, a Pisa, and a Marseilles; the formidable array of the Hanseatic league; and the classic patronage of the family of the Medici. The concentration of events in the course of one century—the fall of Constantinople—the invention of printing—the discovery of the mariners's compass—the access to India by the Cape of Good Hope—and the addition of a new world to the range of geographical knowledge—could not fail to arrest attention, and to elicit recognizing acknowledgments of the hand of the almighty.

The gradual but rapid *developments of the Papacy* engaged our attention, and furnished a clue for unravelling the turnings and the windings of the mystery of iniquity. Of Popery we discovered plain traces in the airy formations of orientalism; the wild combinations of the cabala; the monkish freaks of St. Anthony and Simon Stylites; and the ever-shifting products and plans of the self-righteous spirit. In one sense we found Popery and Puseyism very ancient, for they seem coeval with the era of degraded and defiled humanity; while, in another sense, we found them very modern, when tried by the test of historical analysis. The fourth Lateran Council in the thirteenth century, has the inglorious distinction of having given an imprimatur to the monster figment of transubstantiation; and the eighth and ninth centuries beheld a Charlemagne and an Alfred refusing to bend before the dagon of assumed infallibility in the matter of image worship.

The vaunted *claims of the Papal hierarchy*, we saw shrieking into an absolute nothingness in the resistance to them by the city of Milan, for two centuries after more distant adherents had prostrated themselves in base subserviency; in the flight of the Pope to Avignon, and the succeeding seventy years' captivity; in the contests of France and Imperial Germany with the Pope, and the consequent division of the infallibility, first into two and thereafter into three compartments, each launching its thunders against the others; in the varying phases which the tedious contest about "investitures" assumed; and the ever-shifting policy of imperial and Papal interests, as the one or the other chanced to be in the ascendant. "These things happened long ago," say the modern apologists for Popery, forgetting that infallibility cannot be measured by age, and that an argument based on acknowledged and invincible matters of fact, is stereotyped for all ages.

We found "the woman"—the lamb's bride—immured in the wilderness so early as in the seventh century; and many witnesses for the

truth passed in rapid review before us. The Caldees—those high-crested ancestors of the Free Church of more modern days—the Paulicians, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, those noble-minded contenders for a pure faith and a scriptural worship in times when all men seemed to be following after the beast; an Alfred, an Anselm, a Berengarius, a Claud of Turin, a Huss, a Jerome of Prague, a John Wickliffe, among the precursors and morning-stars of a coming reformation;—these were the proofs and illustrations afforded us in evidence that God had never left himself without a witness to the heavenly energy of truth and his own covenanted faithfulness.

Our desire has been to excite in your minds a taste for the studies of Church History, and to nourish it by a selection of befitting instances.—It belongs to yourselves to prosecute the enquiry, and to follow out the course which has been indicated. A few well chosen books taken with you to the scenes of your summer labors, will co-operate with your own recollections and reflexions to fill up the outline we have drawn. Such of you as have taken full notes of the lectures—and some admirable specimens of note-taking have come before me—will find the correcting, the revising, and the expanding of these, a most agreeable and useful employment of a leisure hour. We mean you not to be mere chroniclers of occurrences; we mean you to methodise your materials, and to form out of them a logical compend of ecclesiastical events. Nor do we mean you to be simply recorders or annalists; we desire that you shall judge for yourselves of every thing; sifting evidence in all questions of historical doubt; tracing events to their causes; and seeking to illustrate divine truth by the progress of events and the practical exhibitions of human character.

We live in an age when ignorance is neither the mother of devotion nor the guardian of orthodoxy in the faith. Every thing is in the process of undergoing a most searching scrutiny; and we desire that the students of our seminary, shall not only possess minds filled with ideas, but that they shall have these ideas extremely well arranged. With this view, clearness of apprehension we consider as essential, together with accurate methodical arrangement. To catch at birds on the wing will not do; and even after you have possessed yourselves of things and not of shadows, the business of synthetic arrangement is still to be gone through. Read with the pencil or the pen, mark what may appear worthy of a re-perusal, and set up a landmark where an additional observation may require to be taken. Condense your thoughts and reflections now and then in the shape of a short historical essay; embodying the lineaments of some matter of history—such as Julian's rebuilding of the temple, the revival of Sabianism, the national christianity of Armenia, the persecution of the celebrated Athanasius, the character of Eusebius as an historian, or the common accounts of Constantine's vision, and his celebrated "labarum." Such historical sketches will prove pleasing relaxations from severer toil, while they will add to the sterling value of your mental acquirements.

Let me recommend to your serious attention the contrast which we have often had occasion to notice betwixt the nominal church of God and the community of faithful ones. The history of the Church like the history of man has been too often a history of crimes and corruption. A knowledge of the facts recorded in the writings of our ordinary church historians is necessary to the student, and particularly is he bound to examine the history of literature and philosophy in their relations to religion and morals. But the pious mind will often retreat from the hurry and the turmoil of human passions to the calm and tranquil abodes of the Christian graces. It is in the examples of humble piety here and there presented on the theatre of events that we see the impress of heavenly truth, and are thus furnished with satisfactory and germane evidences of the reality of the Gospel. Such examples as presented in the conduct of the ministers and teachers of the church are especially