

Choice Literature.

Jovianian: or the Early Days of Papal Rome.

CHAPTER I.—THE TWO PONTIFFS.

The glorious sun rose in undimmed splendor on a morning in the early part of the fourth century over everlasting Rome, his rays glancing on countless temples, statues, columns, and towers, on long lines of aqueducts and other public edifices, and proud mansions of the patricians which covered the slopes and crowned the summits of her seven hills. The populace were already astir, bent on keeping holiday, for a grand festival was about to be held in honor of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and his two associate divinities Juno and Minerva. The flamines, with their assistants, and the vestal virgins, aided by many fair patrician matrons and maidens eager to show their piety and to gain the favor of the gods, had been labouring all night in decorating the temples; and already the porticoes and the interior columns appeared adorned with wreaths and festoons of green leaves and gay flowers; while wax tapers in silver candlesticks, on countless shrines, had been prepared for lighting at the appointed moment. At the entrance of each temple, a perfumed incense burner stood on a tripod, was an aquilifer, a basin of silver or gold, freshly filled to the brim with holy water, with which salt had been united; a minor flamen in white robes, with brush in hand, standing ready to sprinkle any who might desire the purging process. Others of their fraternity were busy in hanging up in the temples of Esculapius votive offerings—in the shape of arms, legs, and other parts of the human body, representing the limbs of his worshippers, which by his powerful instrumentality had been restored to health. Bands of musicians with a variety of instruments, and dancers in scanty dresses, were moving about singing and playing, and exhibiting their terpsichorean before the temples and minor shrines erected at the corners of the principal highways. The fronts of the shrines were, like the temples, adorned with wreaths of flowers; while tapers, in horn lanterns, burned before them. Swarms also of mendicant priests, habited in coarse robes, with shaven crowns, and huge sacks on their backs, were parading the streets, going from house to house begging for doles and holding up small images of the gods to be adored by the ignorant populace; they never failing to bestow their heaviest maledictions on those who refused them alms, cursing them as Christian atheists.

It was yet early when two persons, quitting the Curia Hostilia at the foot of the Coelian Hill, took their way past the magnificent Flavian Amphitheatre towards the Sacra Via. Their costume was alike, and consisted of a fine toga, with a deep purple border, and on the head an apex—a conical cap surmounted by a spike of olive wood—which showed them to belong to the Holy College of the Pontiffs. The dress of the elder of the two had, in addition, stripes of purple marking his superior rank. To prevent their togas from being soiled by the dust on the road, they had drawn them up under their right shoulders, so as to allow the skirts to hang gracefully over their left arms, exhibiting the richly-embroidered thong which secured their sandals. They passed onward with a dignified and haughty air. Both were fine-looking men. The eldest, and evidently the chief, as his dress betokened, possessed a handsome countenance; his firm-set mouth, high brow, and keen piercing eyes, showed determination and acuteness of intellect, though at the same time the expression was rather repulsive than pleasing. His companion's features were less handsome, and it might have been seen at a glance that he was fond of the good things of life.

They had nearly reached the colossal statue of Nero—now wearing the head of Appollo, planted on it by Vespasian instead of that of the tyrant—which towered almost as high as the lofty walls of the amphitheatre. After having hitherto kept silence, Absinth in his own thoughts, the elder Pontiff addressed the younger.

"We shall triumph still, Caius, though, by the Immortals, these Christians have made fearful progress of late. They swarm in this city, and even, as I hear, throughout every part of the world; for since the time when the Emperor Diocletian wisely resolved to put them down, by destroying the places where they met to worship, preventing their secret assemblies, and burning their books, they have once more risen in an audacious manner, and walk about with all the airs of freedmen. I hope ere long to see the arena of the amphitheatre again filled with the atheists, struggling against the wild beasts let in on them, to tear them limb from limb. I well remember many such a scene. The populace delight in it even more than in the games of Carinus, the magnificent displays of the Naumachia, or even than in the combats of a thousand gladiators. The exhibition we have prepared for to-day will do much, I suspect, to win back the fickle multitude to the worship of the gods. The ignorant naturally delight in gorgeous shows and spectacles of all sorts, incapable as they are of comprehending the refinements of philosophy, and when they benefit by the flesh of the victims distributed among them, they will, depend on it, be strong advocates for the continuance of sacrifices to the gods."

"I hope, Caius, that we shall succeed, but in truth these Christians have hitherto shown a wonderful amount of obstinacy, not only in adhering to their mysteries, but in propagating them in all directions. I cannot understand their faith—without even a visible representation of a God before which to bow down, or a single object for the eye to fix on," observed the younger pontiff. "I know, however, something about their belief; but even were I not a pontiff I should object to it. In addition to the hatred they display towards the ancient religion, they would deprive us poor mortals of all the pleasures of life. They rail against rich viands and generous wines, and, by Bacchus, were they to have their way, the gods and what is of more consequence, we their priests, would no longer be supported, and these our magnificent temples

would fall to decay. Still, I confess that, would they consent to worship publicly before the shrines of the gods, they might, as far as I am concerned, practise their rites in secret, and attend, as they are wont to do, to the sick and suffering. I have less hatred for them than contempt."

"For my part, I hate them with an undying hatred, if it is of the accursed Nazarenes you speak, Caius," said Cocus, gnashing his teeth.

"You speak, Cocus, of the Nazarenes with less than your usual philosophical calmness," observed the younger pontiff.

"I have cause to do so; one of the vile wretches dared to cross my path and rob me of a jewel I valued more than life itself," exclaimed the elder pontiff, his eye flashing and his lips quivering with rage. "While yet the hot blood of youth coursed through my veins, I met the beautiful Eugenia, daughter of the patrician Gentianus, at an exhibition of the Naumachia. To see her once was to love, to adore her; in grace and beauty she surpassed Venus herself; in majesty of form she was Juno's rival; while on her brow sat the calm dignity of Minerva. I soon obtained an introduction to Gentianus; and though I found him somewhat reserved, I had reason to believe that he was not unfavorable to my suit. Eugenia, aware of the admiration she had excited, received me kindly, and I did everything I could to gain her good graces. Matters were progressing favorably, when I perceived a change in her and her father. I was admitted as before, but her manner became cold and distant, and Gentianus no longer looked on me with a favorable eye. I discovered, as I believed, the cause. A rival had appeared, Severus by name, a stranger in Rome; not in good looks, in figure, or manners to be compared to me. I watched Severus with a jealous eye, and employed spies to track his footsteps. I learnt that he attended the sacred meetings of the Nazarenes. He had, in truth, a soft and silvery tongue, and by his art and eloquence had won over Eugenia and Gentianus to his accursed faith. Still, knowing that wealth is all-potent in Rome as elsewhere, I resolved to demand the hand of Eugenia of her father. He neither refused nor accepted my offer, but, instead, endeavored to explain to me the doctrines of the new faith. Astonished, I bluntly asked whether he had himself adopted them. 'I have,' he replied, 'and as a Christian I could not allow my daughter to wed an idolater! for so he dared to call me. I dissembled my anger, while he continued speaking, decrying the immortal gods, and endeavoring to induce me to adopt the tenets of his religion. It might have been, at that time, that Severus was not, as I had supposed, affianced to Eugenia; but ere long they were betrothed, and she ultimately became his wife. Still, I could not abandon all hope of winning her—a dagger might end her husband's life—and while brooding over my disappointment, and seeking for some means of gratifying my love and revenge, the edict of Diocletian against the Christians was promulgated. Numbers of the fanatics were seized, and once more the Flavian Amphitheatre witnessed their tortures and death—some compelled to do battle with trained gladiators, others, naked and unarmed, to struggle with ferocious lions. The time for which I had longed had arrived. I fully expected to get the hated Severus and his father-in-law, Gentianus, into my power, resolving not to rest till I had given the former over to the wild beasts, and compelled the old man to renounce his creed, and consent to his daughter becoming my bride. Believing that their capture was certain, I went off with a band of faithful followers, and surrounded their house; but when, broken open the door, what was my rage to discover that my intended prey had fled. I sent emissaries, under various disguises, to every part of the city to search for them; I ascertained, however, that scarcely an hour before I visited their house, they had left it, and made their way out of the city towards the entrance of those numerous galleries hewn in the sand-rock far down beneath the surface of the earth. Not to be defeated, I ordered a trusty band to search for the fugitives in those subterranean regions, but having no wish to descend to Avernus before my time, I remained outside. My people were some time away; they came back at length, dragging four or five trembling wretches of the meaner sort, while their swords were dripping with the blood of several others they had slain. Whether or not the chief quarry had escaped, I was left in doubt as they brought no token to prove who were those who had fallen, and they vowed that they would not return to run the risk of losing their way, and perishing miserably amid the labyrinthine passages of that underground region. The shades of evening compelled me at last to return to the city with the wretched prisoners who had been captured, and I registered a vow at the shrine of Bellona that I would wreak my vengeance on the head of Gentianus and Severus should I ever get them into my power. In vain, however, did I seek for Eugenia and her father; they had either made their escape from the neighborhood of Rome, or had carefully concealed themselves underground. I had good reason, however, ere long to know that the latter was the case. I have since in vain searched for them; concealed by their fellow-religionists, they have eluded my vigilance. That abominable edict which our politic emperor issued at Milan, allowing the Christians to enjoy their religion in peace, made me abandon all expectation of being able to wreak my vengeance on the head of Severus by open means, though I still cherished the hope that he would come forth from his hiding place, when the assassin's dagger would quickly have finished his career, and give me my beloved Eugenia. Still, I have reason to believe that they are in existence, and that Gentianus, knowing that I am not likely to break my vow, is afraid to issue from his concealment; notwithstanding that on the revocation of the edicts by Maximian the Nazarenes have generally ventured forth from their hiding-places. They have, indeed, since then, in vast numbers, appeared in public, openly declaring their creed; and diligently endeavouring to obtain proselytes from all classes, thus daringly showing their hatred and contempt of the gods whose priests we are. It is high time, indeed, since the emperors no longer care

to preserve the ancient faith, that we should be up and doing; and if we cannot employ open means, should by craft and subtlety put a stop to the pernicious system. What say you, Caius?"

"I can fully enter into your feelings," observed Caius. "I myself have been crossed more than once by these Nazarenes; although were it not that our order is in some peril, I confess that I have felt no great antipathy to them. Indeed, some years ago my only sister Livia became indoctrinated with their opinions, and married one of them. He was seized, and died, with many hundreds more, in yonder arena; but she escaped and disappeared for some years from sight. I again at length met her, reduced to great distress, supported, I believe by her co-religionists, but so poverty-stricken were they that they could only afford her the common necessities of life. She was a sweet and gentle creature, and, though I condemned her heresy, I had not the heart to leave her to perish. You will say, Cocus, that I should have been more stoical, but I had a motive which will excuse me in your sight. She had an only child, a handsome boy, the young Jovianian, who reminded me of her in the days of her youth and beauty. Once, too, I should have said, she tended me when I was sick, and might have died, in spite of all the offerings my friends made to Esculapius, and the skill of the Physicians who attended me, had it not been for her watchful care. Gratitude induced me to visit her; I procured the best assistance medical skill could afford; but whether it was counteracted by the visits of her Nazarene friends I know not, so the gods willed it, she gradually sank. Her only thoughts seemed to be about the welfare of her boy, and in spite of all the offers I made to give him a college education befitting his patrician rank—for his father was of our order as well as his mother—and to watch over his advancement in life, she would not yield him to me, but preferred rather to confide him to the care of a miserable poverty-stricken relative, who was the means originally of her perversion from the ancient faith. Visiting her one day, I found her boy with her. She was evidently much worse. In vain I endeavored to console her; she breathed her last shortly afterwards. It was truly piteous to hear the child calling on her to speak to him. At length, discovering the truth, he sank fainting over her inanimate body. I took him in my arms, and, in spite of his struggles, bore him away, intending to send the Libertarii to arrange for poor Livia's funeral. Wrapping him in a lacerna, and shrouding his head in the hood to stifle his cries, I committed him to the slaves in attendance outside, who carried him off to our college, where he could be well looked after. As they bore him along the narrow streets several persons, who were, I suspect, Nazarenes, looked out from the overhanging balconies to watch us. My object was to prevent my relative Amulius from discovering what had become of the boy. I had little doubt that I should reconcile him to the change, and teach him to worship the gods of his fathers. I have had, I must own, more difficulty than I had expected. He was continually talking of his mother, but not with the sorrow I should have anticipated, as he seemed satisfied that she was in the realms of bliss, a glorious place in which she had taught him to believe, while he offered petitions to some unknown being to help and support him, and to keep him faithful to the creed with which she had indoctrinated his young mind. It seemed surprising that at so early an age he should be so determined in his belief. He, indeed, as I understood him, prayed continually to an Almighty God, to whom he could approach boldly by the intercession of One he called Jesus, without the intervention of demigod or priest. I gained more knowledge of the extraordinary faith of the Nazarenes from the young boy than I had hitherto possessed. It seems wonderfully simple. They believe that one Almighty God rules the universe; that man was placed on the earth free to accept or reject this mighty God, but bound to obedience; that being disobedient, he and all his descendants had become prone to sin, but yet this Almighty Being, loving men, sent One, a portion of Himself, down on earth, born of a woman; who, offering Himself as a sacrifice for their sins, was put to death on the accursed Cross, thus satisfying the Almighty's justice, the guiltless One being punished instead of the guilty. Thus all who believe on Him are considered free from sin and reconciled to the great Being whom, by their sins, they have offended. Can you understand this doctrine, Cocus?"

"Not in the slightest degree," answered the pontiff, who had been paying but little attention to what his companion was saying, his mind being engaged on projects for the maintenance of his order, which he had good reason to fear was in danger. "It is to me incomprehensible."

"So, by Bacchus, it is to me, though I understand pretty clearly the principles of the system," observed Caius. "What I greatly object to in it is, that these Nazarenes seem to require no priests nor sacrifices, and worship without any forms or ceremonies, as they declare that this Jesus is their sole priest, and that He is at the right hand of their great God, pleading His own sacrifice, whereby all their sins were purged away. I have done my utmost, I should say, as in duty bound, to drive such notions out of the mind of my nephew. I forgot to mention that after I had made such arrangements for the funeral of my sister as became her rank, when the Libertarii arrived with the slaves to wash and anoint the body, and to place a coin on its mouth to pay the ferryman in Hades, and to plant a branch of cypress at the door of the house in which she died, it was found that the Nazarenes had removed it, in order to inter it according to their own rites, some way without the city, instead of allowing it to be carried, as I should have wished, on a handsome bier, followed by mourners and bands of music, to the bustum, there to be consumed on the funeral pyre."

"It matters little what became of the poor dame; she must have been a weak creature," observed Cocus, in a supercilious tone, re-arranging the folds of his toga, and walking on.

(To be continued.)

PRESBYTERIAN PAPERS.

No. 1.

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK.

At the late General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in Halifax, Rev. Dr. Morrison, M.A., Pastor of Knox's Church, Owen Sound, presented the report on Christian Life and Work. We print a summary of the Report and the debate on the occasion, as the subject is one of vital importance.

STATE OF RELIGION.

Rev. Mr. Morrison, of Owen Sound, read the report of the Committee on the state of Religion from which the following particulars are obtained:—Of the congregations of the Church 305 had reported to their several Presbyteries, and every Presbytery except those of Newfoundland and Manitoba had had the subject of religion under their consideration. The reports generally were of a cheering kind, more so perhaps than in any previous year during the history of Presbyterianism in this country. The following is the order in which the Synods stand in point of excellence in sending up reports:—1. Hamilton and London; 2. Maritime Provinces; 3. Kingston and Toronto; 4. Montreal and Ottawa. Of the Presbyteries Huron stands first in this respect in the Synod of Hamilton and London; Pictou in that of the Maritime Provinces; Lindsay first in the Synod of Kingston and Toronto—first in the whole Church; and Brockville, first in the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa. The total number added to the Communion roll during the year, so far as reported, is 11,195; removals, 5,427, leaving an increase of 5,768. The total number now on the roll is 93,788. Though this is a large number the Committee refer to the fact that some 100,000 adult persons are nominally within the bounds of the Church without having made a confession of their faith, and recommend ministers to exercise a friendly care over young men just growing into manhood. This care should take the form of personal and private conversation with them, instead of lectures in the family circles especially directed to this class. In regard to family worship, the Committee states that the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa reports that about one-half of the families within the bounds observe it. In other Synods it is pretty generally observed. One or two congregations in the Presbytery of Lindsay report that family worship is universal. Generally the Committee believe that it is largely neglected, and they urge the necessity of finding out those families in which it is not observed, and of calling the attention of such to the importance of attending to the duty. Prayer meetings were very generally held, and in addition to congregational prayer-meetings, district prayer-meetings had been held in many cases with great good. Complaints were very generally made by ministers that so few elders would take an active part in the work of the Church at prayer-meetings, death-beds, and so on. The Committee was of opinion that this arose, not from unwillingness or inability on the part of elders to engage in such exercises, but from the fact that the people were not trained to exercise gifts in that direction. They recommend that ministers lay themselves out to train such as were likely to be useful in the Church. A considerable portion of the report is devoted to the subject of evangelists' work. About thirty congregations had been the scenes of great religious awakening. A large amount of good had been accomplished. The report speaks in cheering terms of the Sabbath School work of the year, remarking that nearly all children that were capable of availing themselves of Sabbath School instruction do so during the whole or part of the year. The number of teachers reported during 1876 was 7,000, the number of pupils 79,204, of whom 17,099 were in the Bible classes. This year the numbers were considerably in advance of those above given. The report refers to the unsystematic and fragmentary character of the teaching in some cases, and to the fact that the Shorter Catechism is not used in many schools. The Committee urge the necessity of having teachers who were well grounded in the fundamental doctrines of Presbyterianism. They also advise the publication of a letter by the Moderator to be read in all the congregations calling special attention to the recommendations of the report. Mr. Morrison said: I have to regret that the report is so defective, and in some respects so crude, the materials only reaching me piece-meal a little before I left, and even on my way, and since I arrived. It is hard to put them together in such a form as one would like to put them for the reception of the General Assembly, and to make the very best use of them that might be. One circumstance which tells against the fulness and accuracy of the report is, that it is the product of so many pens. I think if Mr. Wardrop or myself had had to deal with the original sheets, instead of them having to pass through so many presbytery clerks and synod clerks and conveners of committees, that we would have been able to give you

A TRUER AND FULLER REPORT

of the state of religion in the Church. For, I need not tell you, with every desire to present the real facts, there is a constant tendency to divergence, and when a report has to pass through several stages in its compilation as this has to do, it is clear that we can only claim something like an approximation of the real state of things. But even this, which is all that can be expected, may be of great value to the Church in the way of suggestion, and quickening the life of our people. Family worship and the kindred duty of dealing personally with the children with the view of bringing them to Christ is a subject which occupies a large space in these sheets, and I am sure that I speak not only the mind of the Committee, but of every one in this house, when I say it should. It will be a dark day for Canada when the Church gives an uncertain sound on this subject, or suffers it to go into abeyance, and I am sure no one has listened to what the report says on the subject of

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

and the tendency there is to remit the duty of instructing children in divine things to

the Sunday School teachers, but with deep concern. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there is such a tendency—that the old custom of catechising on the Sabbath evening is passing away, that blessed custom that not only gave the child a light, but a memory—not only instruction, but instruction associated with a father's worth and a mother's love, which followed the child like ministering angels through life, and speaks to him when they can speak no more. A story lately went the round of the papers to the effect that a man and his little daughter went out to walk on a bright summer day, and after walking a mile the man lay down to rest beneath a tree while the little girl went round gathering flowers. There was a very dangerous precipice near by of which the man knew nothing, and the child tampered by the wild flowers she saw on the rocks, was tempted to her destruction. He awoke by-and-by and soon learned the sad fact, and began to pour forth unavailing regrets. And how many parents now slumbering will yet rise to everlasting shame and pour forth unavailing regrets in that world where no Sabbath instruction can be given. There is one fact on this head, a very awful fact, which I am sure every one must have noted with some concern, and that is the fact that a large proportion of our people of mature years have never taken Christian ground, are living unplugged to that new life to which we are called. Ninety-three thousand out of three hundred thousand have done so, and making allowances for 100,000 under the age of eighteen years, we are forced to come to the awful conclusion that we have about 100,000 of our people trained in our Sunday Schools, preached to in our churches, visited by our ministers, and yet standing at a distance from God and his holy ordinances. This is a fact that meets us everywhere, in every street, in every congregation, in town and country, in high life and low. One minister tells us that of about 400 he had married, not more than forty of these had

ENTERED INTO COMMUNION

with the Church. Think of the prospect of such families, and the prospect of a country where such an evil prevails. It is said that Xerxes when he saw his magnificent army crossing the Hellespont to invade Greece, the elephants and war chariots, and the glittering banners and ships by thousands—he shed tears; and when asked by one why he shed tears, said, "Because in less than 100 years all those will be gone." Standing on a loftier eminence, and moved with a more awful prospect, have we not reason to shed tears over the thousands that are rushing on to destruction like the war horse to the battle. But our position is not simply one of commiseration, but of help. We are ministers of the Lord Jesus, with a gospel of infinite love in our hands, and resources of infinite power at our back, the aids and influences of the Holy Ghost who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly far above what we can ask or think, and in view of his promises who would not say, "Come Holy Spirit, come! Awake O north wind and come thou south." I would like to say a word about these

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER MEETINGS

which are so generally observed through all the churches, and especially about that almost universal wall that has been raised in regard to the small share taken in these meetings by many of the elders. There can be no doubt that there is a great lack of properly qualified persons for conducting such meetings, but instead of weeping and walling over this want, we should set ourselves as ministers to meet the want by teaching and training such of our people as are likely to be useful. What is to hinder me from saying to my young communicants when admitted to the Church, when dealing with them in private: Now you are going to be members of the Church of Christ and you will be expected to take a share in carrying forward the work of the Church. If you can sing, lead in prayer, visit a sick man, teach a class in the Sabbath School, you will hold yourself in readiness for that which you can do best. And I am very sure if we resolutely set ourselves to the work of teaching and training and organization, we shall not hear much about the want of suitable persons to take part in such meetings. I think there is a great deal of latent talent and piety in the eldership, a great deal of power locked up which might be turned to the best account, and which were it turned to account would make the wheels of God's chariot move on, and the heart of many a minister rejoice, whose hands hang down, whose knees are feeble, and whose feet are ready to turn out of the way. These elders are all ecclesiastics, all ordained men, and they are not to neglect the gift that was committed to them by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. I must not sit down without referring once more to that

GREAT EVANGELISTIC WORK

which has been the subject of so much consideration in the inferior courts. This work may be considered a new wheel in relation to Presbyterianism, a new wheel in its organization, just as the Sunday School was a new thing some fifty years ago; and seeing that it is very likely that an order of men called Evangelists may grow out of it, it is all the more necessary that the Church wake up to the importance of this work. There are two views prevailing in the country, in regard to these evangelistic services, to be avoided: one is that such services in every form should be discontinued; and the other is that these services in every form should be received and hailed with gladness. It seems to me that if any office is too guided and guarded and regulated, it is the office of the evangelist, for if every one that calls himself an evangelist is to be made welcome, if Sunday Schools are to be thrown open to them, pulpits thrown open to them, Y.M.C.A. Associations thrown open to them, troubles may arise of which we can form no conception. The confession of faith, directions for family worship, chap. v. points to this danger, and says, "Let no idler who hath no particular calling, or vagrant person under pretence of a calling, be suffered to perform worship in families, or seeing persons tainted with errors or aiming at division, may be ready to creep into