

has adopted in its course many diverse elements from most varied sources.

Originally, it would seem, the Christian pantheon was almost exclusively filled by the triune God, in his three developments or "persons," as thus rigorously conceived by the Alexandrian intelligence. But from a very early time, if not from the first dawn of the Christian cult, it was customary to reverence the remains of those who had suffered for the faith, and perhaps even to invoke their aid with Christ and the Father. The Roman branch of the church, especially, accustomed to the Roman ancestor-worship and the Roman reverence for the *Dii Manes*, had its chief places of prayer in the catacombs, where its dead were laid. Thus arose the practice of the invocation of saints, at whose graves or relics prayers were offered, both to the supreme deity and to the faithful dead themselves as intercessors with Christ and the Father. The early Christians, accustomed in their heathen stage to pay respect and even worship to the spirits of their deceased friends, could not immediately give up this pious custom after their conversion to the new creed, and so grafted it on to their adopted religion. Thus the subsidiary founders of Christianity, Paul, Peter, the Apostles, the Evangelists, the martyrs, the confessors, came to form, as it were, a subsidiary pantheon, and to rank to some extent almost as an inferior order of deities.

Among the persons who thus shared in the honours of the new faith, the mother of Jesus early assumed a peculiar prominence. Goddesses had filled a very large part in the devotional spirit of the older religions: it was but natural that the devotees of Isis and Pasht, of Artemis and Aphrodite, should look for some corresponding object of feminine worship in the younger faith. The Theotokos, the mother of God, the blessed Madonna, soon came to possess a practical importance in Christian worship scarcely inferior to that enjoyed by the persons of the Trinity themselves—in certain southern countries, indeed, actually