

wire of this harp, strung by heavenly fingers, "Good-will toward men," soon snapped asunder amid the rough strivings of selfishness.

The great solar idea of Christianity is, that the Almighty God is our Father; but that truth faded away into the heathen conception of a Mighty Thunderer, sitting aloft in the heavens, and hurling abroad his bolts of vengeance over a trembling world. The men of war of that fierce period thought the Creator altogether such an one as themselves. The Jewish doctors on one side, and the Platonic philosophers on the other, largely imported their own doctrines into the Christian creeds. The Gnostic and Manichæan doctrines corrupted the Fathers, and the Fathers corrupted Christianity. Arius introduced some errors, and Athanasius others. Augustine opened the way for Calvin, and Calvin moulded and colored the whole Protestant world with his dark, but potent faith.

Now it is vain to say, that all this while there were the words of Christ to correct the errors of his followers. But they were wrested. They were diluted. They were forgotten. They were put aside, by no pagan persecutors, but by the very Church herself, as if in shame at her disloyalty. The Bible was denied to the laity, and was little read by the monks and priests. Luther did not see a complete copy of the Scriptures until he was twenty-two years of age. Such closing of the word of God necessarily shut the door to progress. The Church became the prison of Christ. For more than one thousand years, the Gospel was the captive of monks and priests, her truths hidden, her services corrupted, her progress stayed, and her name used for the purposes of ambition and tyranny and pollution. Ages of unreprieved war, ages of priest-