

tenance of these last relics of their race and faith.

If I have, in these volumes, sometimes called the Chaldæans "Nestorians," it is because that name has been generally given to them. It is difficult to ascertain when it was first used; probably not before the Roman Catholic missionaries, who were brought into contact with them, found it necessary and politic to treat them as schismatics, and to bestow upon them a title which conveyed the stigma of a heresy. By the Chaldæans themselves the name has ever been disavowed; and although Nestorius is frequently mentioned in their rituals, and book of prayer, as one of the fathers of their church, yet they deny that they received their doctrines from him. Ebedjesus, a Chaldæan, who wrote in the fourteenth century, asserts that "the Orientals have not changed the truth; but, as they received it from the Apostles, so have they retained it without violation. They are therefore called Nestorians without reason, and injuriously. Nestorius followed them, and not they Nestorius." And even Assemani, a member of the Romish church, who wrote their history, calls them "Chaldæans or Assyrians; whom, from the part of the globe which they inhabit, we term Orientals; and, from the heresy they profess, Nestorians."\* Paul V., in a letter to the Patriarch Elias, admits their origin, "A great part of the East," says he, "was infected by this heresy (of Nestorius); especially the Chaldæans; who for this reason have been called Nestorians."† The name still used by the people themselves is, "Chaldani," except when designating any particular tribe; and the Mussulmans apply to them the common epithet of "Nasara." The Patriarch still styles himself, in his letters and in official documents, "the Patriarch of the Chaldæans, or of the Christians of the East;" using the titles which are found on the tombs of such of his predecessors as were buried in the convent of Rabban Hormuzd, before it fell into the possession of the converts to Roman Catholicism ‡

The peculiar doctrine of the Chaldæans—that which has earned for them the epithet of heretics—may be explained in a few words. With Nestorius they assert "the divisibility and separation of the two persons, as well as of the two natures, in Christ;" or, as Assemani has more fully defined it, "the attribution of two persons to Christ, the one being the word of God, the other the man Jesus; for, according to Nestorius, the man formed in the womb of the Virgin was not the only-begotten Word of God, and the Incarnation was not the natural and hypostatic Union of the Word with the human nature, but the mere inhabiting of the Word of God in man—that is, in the human nature subsisting of itself—as it were in its Temple."§ This, of course, involves the refusal of the title of "Mother of God" to the Virgin, which the Chaldæans still reject, although they do not admit, to their full extent, the tenets on account of which they are accused of heresy by the church of Rome. The distinctions they make upon this point, however, are so subtle and so refined, that it is difficult for one who discourses with them to understand that which most probably they scarcely comprehend themselves. The profession of faith adopted by the Fathers of their church, and still repeated twice a day by the Chaldæans, differs in few respects from the Nicene creed. I give it entire, as it is both interesting and important. In their books it is entitled, "The Creed, which was composed by three hundred and eighteen Holy Fathers, who were assembled at Nice, a city of Bithynia, in the time of King Constantine the Pious, on account of Arius, the infidel accursed."

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of all things, which are visible and invisible.

"And in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of his Father before all

worlds; who was not created; the true God of the true Gods; of the same substance with his Father, by whose hands the worlds were made, and all things were created; who for us men and for our salvation descended from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, and became man, and was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered and was crucified, in the days of Pontius Pilate, and died, and was buried, and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right of his Father, and is again to come and judge the living and the dead.

"And we believe in one Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeded from the Father—the Spirit that giveth light:

"And in one holy and universal church.

"We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

It will be perceived that there is nothing in this creed to authorize the violent charge of heresy made against the Chaldæans by their enemies; and it is certainly evident, not only from this document, but from the writings of Nestorius himself and the earliest Fathers of Eastern church, that much more has been made of the matter in dispute than its importance deserves.\* But however this may be, it should be remembered that it is only with *this* fundamental heresy that the Roman Catholic charges the Chaldæan. It is not denied that in other respects they have retained, to a great extent and in all their purity, the doctrines and forms of the primitive church. Mosheim, whose impartiality can scarcely be doubted, thus speaks of them: "It is to the lasting honour of the Nestorian sect, that of all the Christian societies established in the East, they have preserved themselves the most free from the numberless superstitions which have found their way into the Greek and Latin churches"† It is, therefore, highly interesting to a Protestant to ascertain in what respect they differ from other Christian sects, and what their belief and observances really are.

They refuse to the Virgin those titles, and that exaggerated veneration, which were the origin of most of the superstitions and corruptions of the Romish and Eastern Churches.

They deny the doctrine of Purgatory, and are most averse, not only to the worship of images, but even to their exhibition.

The figure of the cross is found in their churches, and they are accustomed to make the sign in common with other Christians of the East; this ceremony, however, is not considered essential, but rather in the light of a badge of Christianity, and a sign of brotherhood among themselves, scattered as they are amidst men of a hostile faith.

In the rejection of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, they agree with the Reformed church; although some of their earlier writers have so treated of the subject as to lead to the supposition that they admit the actual presence. Any such admission is, however, undoubtedly at variance with their present professions, and with the assertions that I have, on more than one occasion, heard from their Patriarch and priests.

Both the bread and wine are distributed amongst the communicants, and persons of all ages are allowed to partake of the sacred elements. Christians of all denominations are admitted to receive the holy sacrament, whilst Chaldæans are allowed to communicate in any Christian church.

With regard to the number and nature of their sacraments, their books are full of discrepancies. Nor were the statements I received from the Patriarch, and various priests, more consistent. The number *seven* is always mentioned in the earliest Chaldæan writers, and is traditionally retained to this day; but what these seven sacraments really are, no one seems to know. Baptism is accompanied by confirmation, as in the Armenian

church, when the *meiron*, or consecrated oil, is used; a drop being placed on the forehead of the child. This confirmation, or consecration, appears to have originated in the custom of giving extreme unction to an infant, in the fear that it might die soon after immersion. Through the ignorance of its origin, this distinct sacrament came to be considered an integral part of baptism: but neither extreme unction nor confirmation appear to have been recognized as a sacrament by the Chaldæans.\* Auricular confession, which once was practised as a sacrament, has now fallen into disuse.†

A doubt also exists as to whether marriage is to be considered a sacrament. In the early ages of the Chaldæan church, the degrees of consanguinity and affinity, within which intermarriages were prohibited, were numerous and complicated. Ebedjesus enumerates sixty-two; but the laws on this subject, if ever very strictly observed, have been greatly relaxed. The Patriarch has the power of pronouncing a divorce, and is the sole judge of the sufficiency of the grounds.

The five lower grades of the clergy, including the Archdeacon,‡ are allowed to marry. In the early ages of the church, the same privilege was extended to the Bishop and Archbishop, and even to the Patriarch.

Ordination is a sacrament. Oil is only used in the ordination of the Patriarch. In other instances prayers are said over the candidates, with an imposition of hands, and with the tonsure of so much of the hair from the crown of the head, as when grasped in the hand rises above it. The early age at which the clergy, including bishops, priests, and deacons, are ordained, has long formed a ground of reproach against the Chaldæan church; which, in this respect, differs not only from all other Eastern churches, but acts in direct opposition to its own statutes.

The fasts of the Chaldæans are numerous, and they are very strictly observed, even fish not being eaten. There are 152 days in the year in which abstinence from animal food is enjoined; and although, during the time I was carrying on my excavations, I frequently obtained from the Patriarch a dispensation for the workmen, they never seemed inclined to avail themselves of it. The feasts are observed with equal strictness. On the Sabbath no Chaldæan performs a journey, or does any work. Their feasts, and fast days, commence at sunset, and terminate at sunset on the following day.

The Patriarch is always chosen, if not of necessity, at least by general consent, from one family. It is necessary that the mother should abstain from meat and all animal food, some months before the birth of a child, who is destined for the high office of chief of the Chaldæan church. The Patriarch himself never tastes meat. Vegetables and milk constitute his only nourishment. He should be consecrated by three Metropolitans, and he always receives the name of Shamoun, or Simon; whilst his rival, the Patriarch of the converted Chaldæans, in like manner, always assumes that of Usuf, or Joseph.

The language of the Chaldæans is a Shemitic dialect allied to the Hebrew, the Arabic, and the Syriac, and still bears the name of Chaldee. Most of their church books are written in Syriac, which, like the Latin in the West, became the sacred language in the greater part of the East. The dialect spoken by the mountain tribes varies slightly from that used in the villages of the plains; but the differences arise chiefly from local circumstances; and it is a singular and interesting fact, that the Chaldæan spoken near Mosul, is almost identical with the language of that very remarkable tribe the Sabæans, or Christians of St. John, as they are vulgarly called,

\* La Croze, *Christianisme des Indes*, lib. iii. p. 176. Assemani, vol. iv. p. 27. Smith and Dwight, *Researches in Armenia*, pp. 227, 228.

† Assemani, vol. iv. p. 285.

‡ The Chaldæan church reckons eight orders of clergy. 1. The Katoleeka, or Patriarch, the head. 2. The Mutran, or Metropolitane, the Archbishop. 3. The Khalifa, or Episkopa, the Bishop. 4. The Arbidjakono, or Archdeacon. 5. The Kaska, or Kesheesha, the Priest. 6. The Shamasha, the Deacon. 7. The Hoopodyakono, or Subdeacon. 8. The Karooya, or Reader.

\* Vol. iv. p. 1.

† Assemani, vol. iv. p. 75.

‡ See previous chapter, p. 199.

§ Assemani, vol. iv. p. 190.

\* See Assemani, vol. iv. p. 192. *Researches in Armenia*, &c., by Smith and Dwight, vol. ii. p. 225. Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist. Cent. XVI. sec. iii.*

† Mosheim, *Cent. XVI. sec. iii. part i.*