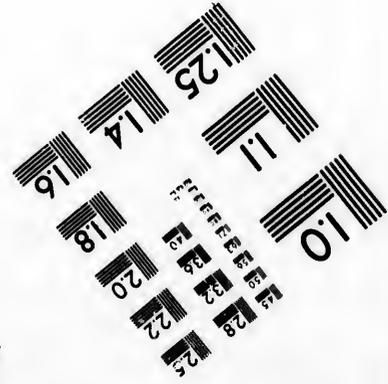
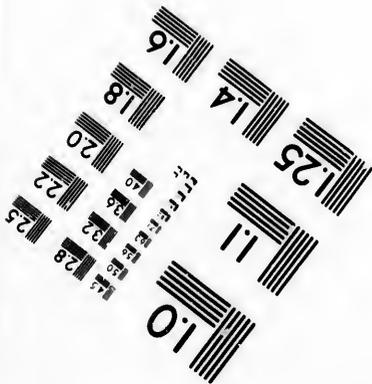
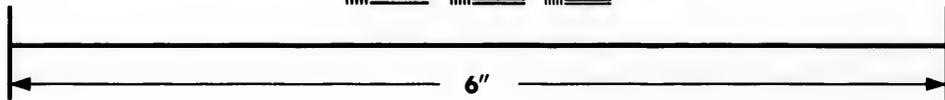
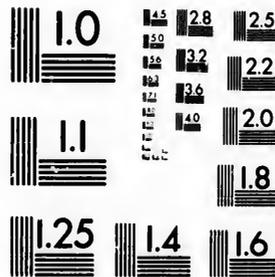


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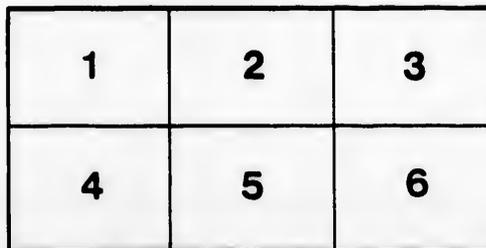
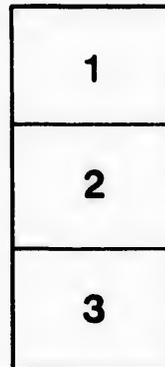
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PRIMITIVE CHURCH,  
ON THE SUBJECT OF  
RELIGIOUS CELIBACY;

WITH A  
VINDICATION OF THE EARLY CHURCH FROM THE MISTAKES OF  
THE AUTHOR OF  
" ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY."

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IN THREE PARTS.

---

BY  
JAMES BEAVEN, M.A  
CURATE OF LEIGH.

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PRINTED FOR J. G. F. & J. RIVINGTON,  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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IN ordinary times the question of religious celibacy may be fairly left to the private judgment of individual Christians, and to their own separate ideas of what the word of God teaches, or their private circumstances may require. For not being amongst the duties, nor amongst the things prohibited, but in the number of those things which are good or evil, according to the spirit in which they are taken up, and the practice being from the nature of the case not contemplated by any party for Christians in general, it can scarcely ever be suited for bringing forward as a subject of public discussion. But there are times in which old foundations are generally disturbed or broken up, and extreme opinions propounded on either side. Again, there are times in which reflecting men have felt that the whole current of the feelings and habits of society has mischievously set in one direction, and in which they

consequently exert all their endeavours in an opposite one: and this again generates a tendency to extremes; each party, in dread of the principles of the other, putting a high colouring on their own views, and actually giving them stronger tints than they would otherwise have thought of doing. In such times particular subjects not only have an importance given to them which they would not otherwise possess; but they actually *become* of more importance in themselves: because upon them great principles are oftentimes tried and fought out, to be applied, when once settled, to other subjects more permanently and universally interesting.

In this predicament the subject of *religious celibacy* appears to be at the present time. The Church from various causes has been thrown upon the study of Christian antiquity. In searching the records of early ages, much has come to light again which had been forgotten; and whilst we have sufficiently established our connexion with the primitive Church upon main points, we have been compelled to note our wide difference upon minor and accessory ones of various degrees of importance. Thus the whole range of the doctrine and discipline, and moral and religious habits, and tone of mind of the primitive depositories of the faith, have been to a certain extent examined; and amongst the rest the question of the esteem in which celibacy was held.

Again, it has been observed by many thoughtful persons, by the simple light of reason and Scripture,

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that, as I have said, the feelings of the age are in many respects perverted. For instance, Scripture itself indicates, what an acquaintance with its structure would, on grounds of common sense, have led us to expect, that we must look elsewhere for a fuller development of its principles on some points. And yet the current of opinion has, till of late, confined us in a great degree to the mere letter of the Scripture. So again, there are passages of Holy Writ, which either with or without reflection upon individual cases, would show that there may be a utility and an honour in celibacy; and yet has not the feeling of the times been to treat it as a state inferior to matrimony, and less useful? Have not the very designations, by which those are marked out who have continued long unmarried, become by-words? Has not this been emphatically the case in regard to the weaker sex? Nay, has it not been taken for granted, that no one could remain unmarried altogether from choice? So far have we been from the spirit which prompted *religious* celibacy!

This has been noticed by some, and they have been compelled to acknowledge, that the feeling of the age, at all events in the degree in which it prevails, is not only opposed to Holy Scripture, but even independently of Scripture may be seen to be positively pernicious; that it has prevented many, of both sexes, from remaining in a state in which they might have been usefully and honourably em-

ployed, and driven them into another for which they were not fitted, and which they have consequently not adorned nor derived comfort from. Acquaintance with other countries has shown that we are almost alone in such habits of thinking. A slight knowledge of history informs us, that formerly a different feeling prevailed amongst ourselves; and at the same time, by exhibiting the abuses to which it was allowed to lead, discloses the origin of the opposite extreme into which we have fallen. Research into the primeval records of our religion opens to us a state of things more in accordance with Scripture. And this has confirmed our own impressions derived from that sacred source, and encouraged persons either to act by them, or to point out to others the indications of the word of God for their guidance, or at all events for the removal of their erroneous prejudices.

It is possible that some of these persons may have expressed themselves indiscreetly on the subject, or even have given indications of a feeling akin to that which in other communions dictates the *vow* of celibacy<sup>1</sup>. And hence those who have a strong perception of the mischiefs produced by that vow take the alarm, and array themselves even against those views which an unbiassed examination of the Scripture would naturally lead to; confounding together prin-

<sup>1</sup> I am not alluding here to Dr. Pusey, whose remarks on the subject, in his Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, are Scriptural and beautiful in a very high degree.

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ciples and their distortion or misapplication, exaggerating and misstating facts, and all with the view of alienating the mind of the Church from the whole system of those who reverence antiquity.

I allude more particularly to a publication which professes to compare together "Ancient Christianity and the doctrine of the Oxford Tracts;" in which, with great natural ability and power of language, and extensive though hasty reading, there appears much misapprehension, much carelessness, and a degree of unfairness, caused by strong prejudices, which the writer himself, if he could see it in its true light, would certainly recoil from.

The impression produced by this writer has no doubt been great, especially from the circumstance that he has some points in common with several parties. He won the attention of high churchmen by the very able and forcible manner in which he pointed out the untenability of the position adopted by the modern and popular opponents of Popery, and the absurdity of looking on the Church as if it had been newly created at the Reformation. He has carried away many of those who, being high churchmen, do not, nevertheless, think proper to identify themselves with the writers of the Oxford Tracts, by pointing out (truly, as they think,) the *tendency* of views and feelings entertained by some of that party. And he has taken with him the whole body of low churchmen, and of those who were coming over unwillingly to high-church principles, by supplying

them with arguments taken from the Fathers themselves, with whose writings they were for the most part unacquainted: thus happily enabling them to cope, as they think, with their more learned opponents, and that with their own weapons. He has obtained the attention of many of all parties, from the knowledge that he *had been* a dissenter, had become a churchman from conviction, and that his former writings were marked by great candour and freedom from prejudice; by the evident *extent* of his reading, and apparent sincere desire to do justice to the subject. Nor was it among his least recommendations in some quarters that he promised, at but little trouble or expense, to remove the veil which those whom he assailed had, as he said, held up to shroud Christian antiquity from the gaze of the vulgar, and to admit them behind the scenes, *so far as it might be decent to do so.*

Under these circumstances, and knowing the effect produced in many quarters, it has appeared to the writer of these remarks desirable, that a person like himself, unconnected with the party principally attacked, but agreeing with them in old-fashioned high-church principles, such as were held by Hooker and Hall, Taylor, Sanderson and Sancroft, Wilson, Waterland, and Law, alike, should take up the subject which this writer has chiefly selected; and after having detected some of his most glaring errors, show what the Word of God really teaches, and how its principles may be fairly applied to our own times.

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It will then be time to examine how far succeeding ages of the Church agree with or depart from the spirit of Christ and his Apostles, and to indicate the cautions thence to be derived in the application of divinely given principles.

It might perhaps have been expected that some one of the gifted and earnest-minded writers of the Oxford Tracts should descend into the arena with this writer. Whether this is likely to be the case or not, time only can show. But there is this antecedent improbability, that he has in very few cases specified where we are to find in their writings the opinions with which he charges them: and of course no one of them can be supposed to be responsible for all the vagaries of opinion in which persons attached to their party may indulge. Indeed, strictures upon his publications on this subject have already appeared in well-established periodicals<sup>1</sup>. But there are large masses of persons not in the habit of reading those periodicals. And even were it not so, there are reasons why the main subject upon which "Ancient Christianity" hinges should be calmly discussed, apart from the prejudices of the age in which we live, and with a view to their correction.

<sup>1</sup> See particularly some very excellent papers in the "British Magazine," for January and the succeeding months of this year.

## CHAPTER I.

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MR. TAYLOR (for such is avowed to be the name of the author of "Ancient Christianity"), after an introductory discussion, sets out with this premiss, which will be readily conceded, that if there is any one point upon which it can be clearly proved that the ancient Church was from the very beginning radically wrong, and continued so universally down to the time of the Reformation, so that the test, "semper, ubique et ab omnibus" will apply to this one point; then it must be granted that the authority of the ancient Church need not be much accounted of. He then asserts that these requirements will apply, unquestionably and fully, to the ancient doctrine and practice of *religious celibacy*; which he thenceforward sets himself to prove: and upon this he confidently relies that all enlightened persons and good Protestants will for the time to come throw the Fathers overboard, as authorities in matters of religion.

It was impossible that Mr. Taylor should do otherwise than lower himself in the eyes of all well-judging and candid persons, by the tone he assumes to-

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wards the authors of the Oxford Tracts. To assert or insinuate of them, that they were either so irredeemably prejudiced by the study of the Fathers that they were incapable of perceiving their defects<sup>1</sup>, or not sufficiently candid to communicate to others their real views<sup>2</sup>: that in editing the Fathers they would make such selections as would suit a party purpose, and refrain from giving to the world such as would tell against that purpose<sup>3</sup>: such assertions and insinuations might suit the meridian of the "Dublin Review," but in a person professing peculiar candour were peculiarly unseemly. And they will appear still more so, when Mr. Taylor's own real, although one would hope not intentional, unfairness is taken into the account; instances of which I shall now proceed to specify.

It will be recollected that he undertakes to prove that the primitive Church, from the very age subsequent to the Apostles, held erroneous opinions, and countenanced abuses connected with religious celibacy, which are equally deserving of reprobation with any that prevailed subsequently<sup>4</sup>. In order to prove this, instead of going to Scripture for sound prin-

<sup>1</sup> See Ancient Christianity, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 391.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 367. 414, 415.

<sup>4</sup> P. 61. "They (the Oxford Tract writers) know that this opinion (the angelic excellence of virginity) and concomitant practice, was no *accident* of the system, but its very nucleus; . . . and that . . . this opinion comes down to us sanctioned by . . . the entire *catena patrum*."

P. 62. "Had it been possible, at any moment during the first

ciples, he begins to build upon the particular prejudices of this age; and having laid them down as undeniable truths, he then proceeds to revolt the minds of his readers by quotations from the excited language of the Roman Catholic St. Bernard; some of which however appears to be from suspected writings. From thence he transports us to the Nicene era, and finds little difficulty in furnishing us with language equally excited. As he proceeds onward and upward, the language becomes more calm; and one would have thought this would have shown him that those who lived nearer to the Apostles felt more as the Apostles did. But no: this would not suit the theory; and so we are told that the later language was merely a further deve-

five centuries to have withdrawn this opinion and these practices altogether from the ecclesiastical system, the entire structure of polity and worship must have crumbled to the dust."

P. 65. "Instead of a regular and slow developement of error, there was a very early expansion of false and pernicious notions in their *nature* proportions, and those attended by some of their *worst* fruits."

P. 67. "The extreme evils usually considered as inseparable from these notions (the merit and angelic virtues of celibacy) attached to them from the *earliest* times."

P. 104. "At the earliest period at which we find this doctrine and those practices distinctly mentioned, they are referred to in such a manner as to make it certain that they were at that time no novelties or recent innovations."

P. 118. "It is thus with the practices with which we are now concerned; and which are as ancient as any other characteristics of ancient Christianity."

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lopement of the earlier principles, which are therefore chargeable with the extravagances of the Nicene age<sup>1</sup>. This might be a very good *argumentum ad hominem* to those who think the system of the fourth and fifth centuries legitimate developments of Scriptural principles, but it will scarcely be granted by any one besides. In this way it would not be very difficult to trace the whole of Popery to the early Fathers.

He had *stated* that the *worst abuses* of religious celibacy prevailed *from the beginning*; and the proof of this statement is essential to his argument; but he nowhere endeavours to make it good by instances. In fact, there is not a shadow of a proof of it earlier than Cyprian. There was an abuse certainly which prevailed in some parts of the Church, in Tertullian's time, that of married persons separating permanently on religious grounds; but that was not one of the *worst* abuses. He had said again<sup>2</sup> that celibacy appeared on almost every page of the Fathers: whereas Ignatius, Justin, and Athenagoras only once or twice allude to it, and the other writers of that age not at all. In Clement of Alexandria, and Cyprian, there are not twenty pages each relating to the subject; and it is very little noticed in either Origen or Minucius Felix. And they bring us down to 225 years after the death of Christ.

In drawing his proofs from the age immediately succeeding to the apostles, he of course looked into

<sup>1</sup> P. 144.

<sup>2</sup> P. 133.

the Epistles of Ignatius. But will it be believed, that this gentleman, who set out with such large professions and resolutions of enlightening the whole Church<sup>1</sup>, and dragging forth into day the blemishes of the Fathers, actually does not know the genuine writings of Ignatius from the spurious and interpolated ones? He has actually 'quoted the Epistle to the Antiochians, to Hero, and to the Philippians, as though they were genuine'<sup>2</sup>! At that rate it will certainly be easy to bring forward matter which the Editors of the Library of the Fathers would pass over.

So again, the Apostolical Constitutions, which he acknowledges to be a "spurious work," (p. 120), "betraying the ecclesiastical *costume* of the fourth century," (p. 325,) are brought forward in conjunction with Ignatius "as good evidence in the present inquiry," as exhibiting "the general feeling of the ancient church, upon which Tertullian labours to

<sup>1</sup> Dedication, p. vii. "The time is now manifestly come, when the Christian community at large must be thoroughly informed concerning the spiritual and the moral condition of the Church during the morning hour of its existence, which, too easily, alas! has been surrounded with attributes of celestial splendour, dignity, and purity. To collect and diffuse this now indispensable information, is then the task I have undertaken." p. ix. "As actually possessing the Greek and Latin church writers, and as being, in some degree, used to their company."

<sup>2</sup> P. 119. Some alterations have been made in the second edition, but the quotations from these epistles have been preserved, and that by the gentleman who is "somewhat used to the company of the Greek and Latin Fathers."

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<sup>1</sup> P.

build a still loftier doctrine." So that this spurious work of the fourth century (or at least of which we cannot be sure that any part was earlier than that time, unless it is confirmed from other sources) is treated as embodying the general feeling of the Church prior to Tertullian.

To go a step forward. Every one who knows any thing on the subject, is aware that Tertullian was a Montanist in the latter years of his life, and that many of his treatises were written after he became a Montanist. Indeed Mr. Taylor himself alludes to the circumstance. Now no one, we should have thought, would bring forward the opinions which Tertullian espoused after he became a Montanist, as specimens of the opinion of the Catholic Church of his period. Most persons would even suspect the whole of his writings as being liable to be tinged with unsoundness. But Mr. Taylor betrays very slight misgivings. He quotes Tertullian without hesitation, as a witness to Church feeling<sup>1</sup>, and his Montanist treatises equally with his Catholic ones<sup>2</sup>.

He not only quotes him, but also misunderstands or misrepresents him in an astonishing manner. He entitles the tract, "*De Velandis Virginibus*," "Concerning the veiling of Nuns<sup>3</sup>," and adds, in a parenthesis, "Do not startle at the term as employed by a writer of the pristine age; for at this time the

<sup>1</sup> P. 107.

<sup>2</sup> P. 90--92. 94, 95.

<sup>3</sup> P. 94.

word *virgo* had, among church-writers, already acquired its technical sense, and, in fact, conveyed all the meaning afterwards attached to the more peculiar epithet *nonna*." Will it be believed that the very opening of this treatise shows that it was Tertullian's object in it to induce *all unmarried women*<sup>1</sup> to veil themselves? And though there can be no doubt, from other portions of his writings, that there were persons of both sexes who silently dedicated their virginity to God, yet it is very doubtful whether they were at all extensively marked as a class; and no doubt whatever, that for ages after, none *secluded* themselves, at least in societies. And where, then, is the truth of applying the term *nun* to such females (even if the Latin word *nonna* was in after times applied to them), when we all know that in English it necessarily implies *seclusion*, and that in societies?

The same fallacy appears in another passage<sup>2</sup>, where he explains the expression, "Our sisters whose names are with the Lord," to signify "enrolled as nuns in the church-books." Even if they were enrolled in the church-books *by name* (which could only

<sup>1</sup> His words are, "Ostendam virgines nostras velari oportere, *ex quo transitum ætatis suæ fecerint*." This evidently has nothing to do with *professed* virgins: for even Mr. Taylor will not pretend that in Tertullian's age girls were dedicated before they had attained the age of puberty. Indeed, he elsewhere speaks of it as a monstrous thing that a virgin of twenty should be entered on the church-books.

<sup>2</sup> P. 90.

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be that they might receive a share in the church almæ along with the widows, which again could be necessary for none but the poor amongst them), yet the natural meaning of the expression surely is nothing more than that of St. Paul, "whose names are written in heaven;" *i. e.* as having given up the lawful pleasures of life for the promotion of the glory of God. Mr. Taylor again<sup>1</sup> attributes to Tertullian the doctrine "that Christianity, as revealed and verbally expressed in the canonical writings, is a mere sketch, or rough draft, of that mature truth which, by little and little, was to be granted to the Church, through the medium of its doctors, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit;" and calls this "his fundamental church axiom," by which he supported "the characteristic sentiments and artificial notions, which were the strength of the institution," of "religious celibacy, as a standing and prominent part of the ecclesiastical system." Now, I appeal to any candid person, whether he would not suppose that Mr. Taylor was here stating an acknowledged axiom of the Church, exhibited in the writings of Tertullian. And what must be the surprise of such a person when he finds, that, in the passage quoted from that father, he is reasoning on the Montanistical fancy that a new dispensation of the Holy Ghost had arisen, which *superseded* to a considerable extent the dispensation of Jesus, and the reveries of

<sup>1</sup> P. 96.

whose prophets were to be set above the teaching of the Apostles; and that in various parts of his writings, Tertullian, upon the strength of this fancy, opposes the whole Catholic Church of his period! And yet that is the simple fact, which a very slight acquaintance with his writings would show, and which appears, indeed, in the very passage Mr. Taylor has translated.

Clement of Alexandria, on the other hand, whose language happens to be calm and sensible, and who actually opposes the exalted ideas of some of the *Gnostics* on marriage and celibacy, is brought forward as though he were but a single individual, opposing in vain a tide of fanaticism amongst "all around him<sup>1</sup>;" which fanaticism, for aught that appears, had not yet gained any head in the Church at large, whatever it might have done amongst heretics.

He endeavours, indeed, to rebut this objection by "turning to contemporary *orthodox* writers and their immediate successors." Now, the only "contemporary writer" he *can* bring forward is the *Montanist* Tertullian; whose evidence, at the very outside, extends to only a section of the Church: and the "immediate successor" must be Cyprian; whom, however, in another place, he represents as Clement's junior<sup>2</sup>; although it is generally agreed that Clement and Tertullian died before A. D. 220, whilst Cyprian was only made bishop in A. D. 248.

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<sup>2</sup> P. 115.

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And, to come to Cyprian, his great stronghold prior to the Nicene age. He misapprehends even the meaning of his words. Thus he entitles his tract, *De habitu Virginum*, “On the attire of Nuns<sup>1</sup>.” Of the misnomer of *nuns* for *virgins*, at a time when there was no *seclusion*, I have already spoken ; and a writer in the *British Magazine*<sup>2</sup> has shown, what indeed the tract itself would have led one to see, that the proper rendering is, “On the Conduct or Habits of Virgins.” Thus, again, he quarrels with Cyprian<sup>3</sup> for quoting passages of Scripture, in which the word *disciplina* occurs in the Latin version, in support of “that system of ecclesiastical *discipline* which the vow of celibacy involved,” or “the rules of this artificial *discipline*, enjoined for enforcing the system of factitious purity :” where it is perfectly evident, that all that Cyprian means by the term is, the correction and restraint of all sin, which the rulers of the Church were, as a matter of course, bound to exercise, and in which it was the duty of the people to support them<sup>4</sup>. Whether he rightly applies Scrip-

<sup>1</sup> P. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Feb. 1840. P. 160. It must, however, be granted that the mistake was not unnatural ; for Mr. Thornton, who translated Cyprian for the *Library of the Fathers*, has, “On the Dress of Virgins,” to which Mr. Newman has likewise set his *imprimatur*.

<sup>3</sup> P. 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Pomponium*. His words are “Primo igitur in loco, frater carissime, et præpositis et plebi nihil aliud elaborandum est, quam ut qui Deum timemus, cum omni observatione disciplinæ divina præcepta tencamus, nec patiamur errare fratres nostros, et pro arbitrio et ructu suo vivere.”

ture may in some cases be doubted; but that there is any perversion of mind intended in accommodating passages to purposes for which they were not at first intended, or taking words in a shade of meaning different from that which the writer meant them to have, I should not have imagined that any reader of the New Testament, where many such accommodations are to be found, would have contended. In the tract quoted previously, Cyprian takes *disciplina* in a wider sense, as signifying the *moral training* under which God puts us, and under which we ought to put ourselves, as members of His Church<sup>1</sup>.

But these are trifles. From a single tract of his, written whilst he was yet a presbyter, some exaggerated and rhetorical language is brought forward; and that is treated as a specimen of the feeling of *his age*, although no other part of his writings, nor of those of his contemporaries, contains such language: so far from it, that Origen and Minucius Felix, who speak slightly on the subject, are perfectly calm and rational, and never hint at any abuse as arising from the practice<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In the same captious spirit Mr. Taylor censures the Christian writers of a later age (p. 210) for having adopted the terms *φιλοσοφία* and *disciplina*, to signify religion; when, if he had considered a moment, he would have seen that they were only following the example of Solomon, who uses for it the cognate Hebrew term, which we translate *wisdom*.

<sup>2</sup> Minutii Felicis Octavius, 31. Origen. *in Matt.* tom. xv. 4. These references will be given at length in a subsequent portion of these papers.

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So again from the same tract we learn, that some of the professed virgins, in the place of which he was presbyter, had the indecency to frequent the public baths; and from a letter of his, when a bishop, we find that in a single diocese in Africa a considerable number of them were guilty of even worse conduct. But what unprejudiced or ordinarily candid person would have brought forward these delinquencies, confined, so far as appears, to limited localities, as symptoms of the general state of the virgins throughout the Church<sup>1</sup>? Or again, who would have inferred from the indiscretion or guilt of a single deacon in all the dioceses of the African church, that of a considerable body of the clergy? And yet this is what Mr. Taylor has expressly assumed. According to him, the virgins, or "nuns," as he chooses to miscall them<sup>2</sup>, "had, under the colour of spiritual intercourse with the clergy, to whose care they had been consigned, and who themselves generally professed continence, (this has not been proved,) admitted the grossest familiarities, and thus diffused an extreme corruption of manners among the very men to whom was entrusted the moral welfare of the people." So again<sup>3</sup> he speaks of their "clerical paramours," and asserts that, "as it regarded the ministers of religion at least, the whole of that genial influence

<sup>1</sup> P. 71. 75. 78.

<sup>2</sup> P. 71. 75.

<sup>3</sup> P. 73.

which is found to arise from christianized domestic relations was turned aside; and in its place came habits and modes of feeling, which may not be spoken of." Will it be believed that all this is made out of the single delinquent deacon above mentioned? In this way, no doubt, it may be easy to prove any abuse to have been universal.

But this writer is not contented with destroying in this way the credit of a considerable body of clergy for the fault of one, he even goes so far as to hint away, by conjectures entirely of his own invention, the character of Cyprian himself, and the whole clerical body. After stating<sup>1</sup> that the poor, the widows, the virgins, (and he might have added the clergy,) were dependent more or less for support upon the general fund, which was all in the keeping of the bishop, and remarking upon the patronage and power he must thence acquire, and the addition these must receive from "every addition made to the permanent pensionary establishment," he subjoins this very charitable corollary:—"Cyprian then was quite right, in an *economic* sense, (though perhaps he did not distinctly mean as much,) when he said that the glory of mother church bore proportion to the numbers included in the quire of virgins. There is no mystery in all this: nothing but the ordinary connexions of cause and effect is involved; and yet so obvious a bearing of the celibate institution upon

<sup>1</sup> P. 384.

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the power and influence of the clergy, has been very little regarded." And lest we should not apprehend the force of this inuendo, we find further on<sup>1</sup>, "Can we believe that the singular animation which marks the style of the Nicene orators, when they are lauding the monastic life, received no heightening from the unconfessed influence of inferior motives?" And again: "it is then a sheer infatuation, to cite seraphic hymns and glowing orations concerning the 'angelic life,' and to forget the homely import of the entire system in pounds, shillings, and pence." Still more strongly<sup>2</sup>, "the nuns might worm themselves through all the crevices of society, and at the same time, as they habitually 'confessed' to the clergy, and received instructions from them, they might be employed to effect any nefarious practice." Can any thing equal the cruelty of these insinuations, but the low tone of mind which suggests them?

If I went no further than this, I might perhaps think that I had done enough to raise a doubt, whether Mr. Taylor is altogether the sort of guide one should like implicitly to follow, and whether he is peculiarly qualified to remedy the alleged errors of prejudice and partiality committed by the Oxford Tract writers.

I have very little doubt that I might point out corresponding mistake and misrepresentation every

<sup>1</sup> P. 386.

<sup>2</sup> P. 387.

where. But the fact is, that I have not the advantage which Mr. Taylor enjoys of "actually possessing the Greek and Latin church writers:" and I can therefore, for the present, only rest upon what he himself has stated of the later writers, to whom, however, I hope to come in due time, and to make use of them fairly. The use, however, which he made of such authors as I happened to have, led me to doubt whether, if I had possessed the others, I should not have found that he was quoting spurious or doubtful works of the authors he alleged, without any suspicion that they were not genuine. Indeed, if I had been ever so rich in Fathers, I could not have availed myself of them to any extent, from the want of references in the first edition of his work. In the second, however, these misgivings are entirely confirmed by finding that the documents he chiefly relies on are such as he is obliged to confess to be doubtful as to their authorship, and freedom from interpolation. It is true that he endeavours to get over this difficulty by alleging that these doubts are quite unfounded; (as indeed the Romanist Dupin agrees with him in thinking;) but other persons will think that the business is not to be so quietly settled, and will take the liberty to doubt on, in company with higher authorities.

And this brings me to another charge I have to bring against him: and that is, that he confounds together, in his sweeping accusations, living persons who differ decidedly in opinion. Thus, for instance,

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he charges the whole of the new school of high churchmen, with adopting the doctrine of *development*; by which it is supposed that principles of the Gospel may remain, and have remained in abeyance for ages, and have then been developed; or that the system prevalent in the fourth century, was but the development, under more favourable circumstances, of that which came from the hands of the Apostles. This is very probably the opinion of individuals, but surely not of any considerable number: and whether it is so or not, we have no *proof* of it. It is all matter of assertion. And if that is unfair, how much more so is it to charge by implication the whole body of high churchmen, all who reverence antiquity, and receive the principles implied in the service books of the church, with a desire to adopt the ecclesiastical system of the Nicene age. There may be, and no doubt are, *points* in the institutions of that age which many of us would wish to revive; but I am scarcely too bold in asserting, that the idea of adopting the whole *en masse* never entered into the mind of any sane person. There is the same unfairness in charging upon the principles of high churchmen the extreme opinions or unguarded language of some of the new school. We respect them for their piety and earnest sincerity; we strive to follow their piety: but we regard them as in some respects mistaken; and some well-known high churchmen have shown, and are actually at this moment showing, in what respects they conceive them to have erred.

I have thought it necessary to say so much in disparagement of "Ancient Christianity," and its author, partly because of the great vogue which his book has had, and still more from its high pretension, and the tone of covert or open disparagement with which he has thought fit to treat others. And I trust that if any of my readers has at all surrendered his judgment to the apparent completeness of his proofs, he will now at least begin to doubt whether he has done wisely in so doing. At all events I have clearly established, I conceive, that his attempt to show that the test "semper, ubique et ab omnibus," applies to the erroneous opinions and abuses which have been connected with religious celibacy, has been entirely unsuccessful; that he has totally failed in carrying up the chain of proof to the Church authorities of the first ages; and consequently his argument in disparagement of the Fathers, and of that test as a criterion of truth or falsehood, entirely falls to the ground. For even if he should succeed in proving the Nicene Fathers to have been ever so unsound on the point of celibacy, their unsoundness does not implicate the Church which succeeded to the Apostles. The error, whatever it was, did not obtain countenance in that age, and the abuses did not even exist. And even where he does prove errors and abuses, he cannot do away with the force of the *testimony* of those who countenance them as to the great facts of the doctrine and discipline of their day. He uses their *testimony*

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himself, and he cannot deny to us the use of it. And if only that be granted, even if we account the *authority* of the writers as nothing, we can obtain sufficient support for those principles which are insisted on by the great body of high churchmen.

If my object, therefore, had been merely to show that Mr. Taylor's writings were not trustworthy, I might stop here. But as I conceive that much unscriptural prejudice exists on the subject of religious celibacy, which the general tone of this publication is calculated to foster, I will proceed to a careful, and, as I hope, candid consideration of this subject. In so doing, I purpose to reverse the plan pursued by Mr. Taylor, and to *begin* by showing what *the word of God* really teaches on the subject. In so doing, I trust I shall have with me the suffrages of all really candid persons, and all who desire to know the truth. And whether it be so or not, I shall not be deterred by the fear of being classed with those who covertly wish to bring back Popish practices, if such there are<sup>1</sup>; being conscious that I have all my life simply sought the truth, and have been prepared to follow it out whithersoever it might lead me. Neither shall I be influenced by the fear of being classed with the party who are the especial objects of this writer's antipathy; being equally conscious that I have never yet attached myself to any but that of the old-fashioned high

<sup>1</sup> See Pref. vii. and pp. 63. 101.

churchmen ; and even that not from education or in the spirit of party, but because in the pursuit of truth my convictions have hitherto been more and more coincident with their opinions. For if I, like Mr. Taylor, may speak of myself, although brought up a churchman, and having become an early communicant, I was yet from my childhood in constant and daily association with dissenters of almost every class, and in the habit of frequenting their places of worship and reading their books ; and was thus imbued with many of their prejudices, and filled with their objections against the Church. I was thus necessitated, when it was proposed to me to enter into holy orders, to examine, portion by portion, the whole ground of the Church. And although much time was thus spent in doubt and suspense, at a time of life when the mind has most need of unshaken belief, and many years elapsed before early prejudices were eradicated, yet I am thankful for that discipline, whatever it was, which has ended in the unwavering convictions I now possess ; and in my being privileged to have a fellow feeling with those in all ages who have held " church principles," and have contributed to the strength and spiritual authority of the church, instead of its division and consequent weakness for the great ends for which it was established. This egotism, I trust, will be pardoned me, inasmuch as it shows that I am not, (what however I think with Dr. Hook a more excellent state,) one of those unhappy bigots who

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have been brought up in the principles they at present hold; and consequently may entitle me to be considered as at least equally unprejudiced with the writer whom I am opposing. It may likewise perhaps be not amiss to mention, that I am so far likely to be unprejudiced on this particular subject, as that I have made trial of both the unmarried and the married state.

## CHAPTER II.

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The portion of Holy writ which naturally comes first under our consideration, both as standing earlier than any other in the New Testament, and as coming directly from our Lord himself, is that contained in Matthew xix. 10—12. If we read the context, we shall see that Christ had been speaking against the habit of divorce for comparatively slight causes, which was then prevalent amongst the Jews, and had laid it down as a rule, that it was not lawful to effect a divorce, except for adultery. Some of his disciples, feeling probably that they might be placed in circumstances in which they would be glad to profit by the liberty they at present possessed, remarked, that if they were to be so irrevocably bound, it would be better to abstain from marriage altogether. To this our Lord rejoined, that the correctness of this conclusion would depend upon the circumstances of the individual person; and that to most persons marriage, whatever might be its drawbacks, was most desirable. "He said unto

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them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." But that there were persons who, whether from nature or from violence, or from a divine gift accompanied by an overpowering desire of devoting themselves to the service of God, were more or less indifferent to marriage, and that such persons would do well to remain unmarried. "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it<sup>1</sup>."

If it should be inquired why the expression, "have made themselves eunuchs," is applied to religious celibacy, my reply is—1st, That the earliest writers who quote or allude to the phrase, (as, for instance, Clement of Alexandria<sup>2</sup>, and Ter-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Taylor agrees with me upon this passage in the main, although the tendency of his book is to disparage celibacy. For instance, he speaks with scorn of the idea of an unmarried man being a bishop. "The meagre, heartless, nerveless, frivolous, or abstracted and visionary cœlebs—make him a bishop! The very last thing he is fit for: let him rather trim the lamps and open the church doors, or brush cobwebs from the ceiling!—how should such a one be a father to the Church?" p. 393. Alas! for the responsibility of those who made Taylor and Andrews bishops!

<sup>2</sup> *Strom.* III. i. § 1. Ἡμεῖς εὐνουχίαν μὲν καὶ οἷς τοῦτο δεδωρηται ὑπὸ Θεοῦ μακαρίζομεν, μονογαμίαν δὲ καὶ τὴν περὶ τὸν ἕνα γάμον σεμνότητα θαυμάζομεν.

*Ibid.* xviii. § 105. Ἐξὼν ἐλθεῖσθαι τὴν εὐνουχίαν κατὰ τὸν ὕγιῃ

tullian<sup>1</sup>;) apply it to that practice, although opposed to each other as to its value; 2ndly, That Origen, who in early life acted on its literal interpretation, has recorded his recantation of that opinion<sup>2</sup>; and lastly, That the Valesii, who supported that interpretation, were condemned by the Church at large.

It is evident, I think, that the counsel of our Lord, "He that can receive it, let him receive it," must apply especially to those who choose celibacy for the kingdom of heaven's sake; because, in the two cases previously mentioned, there are obvious reasons why the parties are so little at liberty, that it would almost amount to a sin for them to enter into the state of wedlock. And at all events, unless all marriage whatever be undesirable, their condition can scarcely be spoken of as a gift of heaven. Or even if, with Origen, we take a figurative meaning throughout<sup>3</sup>, and consider the first class as those

κανόνα μετ' εὐσεβείας, εὐχαριστοῦντα μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ δοθείσῃ χάριτι, οὐ μισοῦντα δὲ τὴν κτίσιν, οὐδὲ ἐξουθενοῦντα τοὺς γεγαμηκότας.

<sup>1</sup> *De virginibus velandis*, 10. Viri tot virgines, tot spadones voluntarii.

*De cultu feminarum*, II. 9. Non enim et multi ita faciunt et se spadonatui obsignant, propter regnum Dei tam fortem et utique permissam voluptatem sponte ponentes.

<sup>2</sup> *In Matt.* tom. xv. 4. Ἐναλαβὼν . . . τὴν . . . μάχαιραν τοῦ Πνεύματος, . . . μὴ ἀπτόμενος τοῦ σώματος. And again, καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἴονται οἱ σωματικῶς τὰ κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἐξεληφότες.

<sup>3</sup> Origen's words in the passage I have twice mentioned are these. Εὐνοῦχοι τροπικῶς νῦν οἱ ἀργοὶ πρὸς ἀφροδίσια λέγουντ' ἂν, καὶ μὴ ἐπιειδόντες ἑαυτοὺς ταῖς κατὰ ταῦτα ἀσελγείαις καὶ

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ἀκαθαρσία ἀργούντων τοιοῦτοι, πλόγων μὲν πάσης τῆς τὴν τοιαύτην κατόρθωσι φιλοσοφῆσαι ἀπέχεσθαι δηλοῦσθαι εἰ τὸν λόγον ὑπὲρ πάντων στολος, μὴ ἰπτόμ οὐρανῶν, βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ. σωματικῶ οὐρανῶν.

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who are naturally indisposed to sensual pleasure, but not incapable of it; and the second, as those who have been persuaded by *mere* human reasoning, such as might weigh with a heathen or an infidel, or by heretical notions, to renounce it; we cannot, from the simple force of the terms, speak of this second state as a gift of God. It remains, therefore, that the case contemplated by our Lord as such, is that in which persons find in themselves, or have acquired by mortification and prayer, a comparative indifference to celibacy, at the same time that they feel a strong desire to devote their undivided thoughts and powers to the service of religion. And in such a case

ἀκαθαρσίαιε, ἢ τὰ παραπλήσια αὐτοῖε. Εἰσὶ δὲ τῶν πρὸε ταῦτα ἀργούντων διαφοραὶ οἶμαι τρεῖε. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ κατασκευῆε εἰε τοιοῦτοι, περὶ ὧν λέγουιτ' ἂν τό' εἰεὶ . . . . οὔτωε. Οἱ δὲ ἐκ λόγων μὲν ἀσκούε προτραπέντεε τὴν τῶν ἀφροδισίων ἀποχήν, καὶ πάσῃε τῆε περὶ τὸν τόπον ἀκολασίαιε. Οὐ μὴν τὸ γεννήσαν αὐτοῖε τὴν τοιαύτην πρόθεειν καὶ ἄσκηειν, καὶ τὴν, ἔν' οὔτωε ὀνομάσω, κατόρθωειν λόγουε γέγονε Θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ ἀνθρώπινοι λόγοι, εἴτε τῶν φιλοσοφησάντων παρ' Ἑλληειν, εἴτε τῶν κωλυόντων γαμῆιν, ἀπέχεεθαι βρωμάτων, ἐν ταῖε αἰρέεεειν. Οἷτοι δὴ μοι δοκοῦεε δηλοῦεθαι ἐν τῷ' εἰεῖν . . . . ἀνθρώπων. Τὸ δ' ἀποχῆε ἀεῖον, εἰ τὸν λόγον τιε ἀναλαβῶν τὸν ζῶντα καὶ ἐνεργῆ καὶ τομώτερον ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίετομον, καὶ τὴν, ὡε ὀνόμαεεν ὁ Ἀπόετολοε, μάχαιραν τοῦ Πνεύματοε, ἐκτέμνοι τὸ τῆε ψυχῆε παθητικὸν, μὴ ὑπτόμενοε τοῦ σώματοε' καὶ τοῦτο ποιοῖ καὶ νοήεασε βασιλειαν οὐρανῶν, καὶ μέγιστον συμβαλλόμενον πρὸε τὸ κληρονομηῆεαι βασιλειαν οὐρανῶν τὸ ἐκτεμῆιν λόγουε τὸ παθητικὸν τῆε ψυχῆε αὐτοῦ. Τοῖε δὲ τοιοῦτοιε ἀρμόζοι ἂν, καὶ οὐχ ὡε οἶονταὶ οἱ σωματικῶε τὰ κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἐξειληφότεε, τό' εἰεῖν . . . . οὐρανῶν.

nothing appears to be more clear than that Christ *advises* them to choose celibacy for that special end.

But it is to be remarked that this indifference to marriage, whatever be the degree of it, is clearly spoken of as a *gift*. "No man can receive this saying, save he to whom it is *given*." And from this it results in the first place, that no one can be expected to continue in celibacy permanently, even for a religious end, who has not what the Church of England calls "the gift of continency;" 2ndly, That although, like other divine gifts, it may be granted to prayer, especially if accompanied by fasting, yet that even then it must not be looked upon as a matter of course, since it is not a gift essentially necessary to salvation; 3rdly, That it cannot be right for any person to bind himself irreversibly to celibacy, because, supposing him to have the gift at present, he cannot be certain how long it may be continued to him; and lastly, That it therefore cannot be right for *classes* of persons, of either sex, to be *required* to bind themselves by such an irreversible vow, because by that means a snare is laid for the conscience, and some will find themselves under a necessity of sinning, if in no other way, at least by breaking their vow.

From these words of our Lord I come to the consideration of two passages in St. Paul's Epistles; the first in which he speaks by divine inspiration<sup>1</sup>, the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 1—9.

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other in which he gives his own judgment<sup>1</sup>. I make this distinction, because the Church of England, in her translation of the epistle, evidently makes it; but I am aware that the propriety of it has been questioned. If, however, we consider both portions as equally written under inspiration, my case will be so much the more strengthened. In any event the judgment of an apostle, and such a one as St. Paul, will not be disputed by many.

What were the particular inquiries in reply to which he wrote this chapter it may not be easy to say. In the first passage, however, he appears to be contending with the Jewish notion, and one which prevailed to a considerable extent in Greece, that it was the duty of every man to marry. In opposition to this idea he declares that marriage is a thing of permission, and not of commandment, and that celibacy and widowhood are conditions equally good in themselves. For after affirming at the outset, that chaste celibacy is a state good in itself, and yet for some reasons recommending marriage to the mass of mankind, he goes on to say, "But this I speak by permission, and not of commandment." Nay he even declares his preference for the unmarried state, supposing that persons have the power from God to remain in that state without a snare. "For I would that all men were even as I myself;" (which from the whole context must imply either virginity or widowhood;) "but every man hath his proper

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 25—40.

gift of God, one after this manner and another after that." It is worthy of observation, that all this is said *in the abstract*, and without any reference to particular times or circumstances, and that it lies in that part of the chapter which is undeniably written by divine inspiration. And does not the whole passage, especially the apostle's declaration, that "it is good for a man not to touch a woman," his expressed wish that all men were like himself, and his assertion that marriage is a thing permitted, and not commanded, show that he regarded celibacy as, on some accounts, a higher state?

In the second part the apostle appears to be replying to an inquiry dictated by a very different school; namely, that of those who doubted whether it was not desirable to keep their daughters altogether unmarried. In stating this to have been the question, I am not ignorant that another interpretation of this part of the chapter has been proposed; but since, if I should adopt this more recent interpretation, I should be deciding as an individual against the Church of which I am a minister, I prefer to adhere to the evident intention of "the authorized translation;" which supposes such a question as I have suggested. In replying to the question, however, whatever was the nature of it, St. Paul does not confine himself to the female sex, but lays down principles applicable to both. He gives his judgment, that, at all events, during the existing pressure of persecution, it was most desirable for all persons to remain un-

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married, so long as they did not find celibacy a snare to their consciences; and therefore, that where parents found that no evil was likely to arise from keeping their daughters unmarried, it was most advisable that they should do so.

But in the course of the discussion, St. Paul brings forward principles which do *not* apply peculiarly to times of persecution. And if we are to adopt the whole of what he has said, we must not only admit his decision upon the point immediately before him, but also the principles which he lays down incidentally in deciding that point: and I press this observation, because most Protestant commentators, fearful apparently lest so great an apostle should be found to uphold religious celibacy in the abstract, have endeavoured to bind down his decision to the particular case which he immediately had in hand, and to others of a similar character. But where he says, "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife;" and again, "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband;" I think I am not making too strong an assertion in saying that his remarks apply to all ages and to all countries. In fact, does not our own experience and observation, at this distance of time

and place, prove the assertion to be correct? He does not of course intend to assert this of all unmarried and married persons indiscriminately; but what he does intend evidently is, that supposing the unmarried and the married to have an equal intention of serving the Lord, the married person has stronger temptations on the side of the world than the unmarried. The very affection and consideration for each other's weaknesses, which not only nature would prompt us to in the wedded state, but the Gospel expressly requires, becomes a temptation to go further in humouring each other's foibles than the Gospel would authorize. In the unmarried state we have our own follies alone to contend with, and we do not feel bound to show them any quarter; in the married state we have those of another, which we feel bound to treat with respect, or at all events with delicacy; and the more amiable the disposition of either party, the stronger will be the temptation to that party. These are observations applicable to all ages and countries; and they show that where the object is to devote one's self to distinctly religious objects, a state of celibacy is *in the abstract* preferable; nay, that the ordinary walk of a religious life is easier to the unmarried than to the married<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Taylor is obliged to grant "the practical advantages of a single life, in relation . . . . . to extraordinary labours of evangelic zeal, or to any circumstances under which a Christian might think himself or herself free to use the privilege of 'waiting upon the Lord without distraction.'"

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But although this consideration may induce those persons to remain in celibacy, to whom that state itself presents no snare, yet it can impose no obligation upon those who have not the necessary gift. It may lead them to seek it; and even by those more unusual means, which are expressly pointed out by our Lord as useful for the attainment of extraordinary gifts. But, on the other hand, there is this opposite consideration, that if we are called to marriage, with its higher responsibilities, and stronger temptations, there is at least the grace common to all to enable us to cope with its difficulties; there is a higher degree of attainment in those who struggle with them successfully; and as a natural and inevitable consequence, a corresponding additional reward in a future state of existence<sup>1</sup>.

So that St. Paul follows out our Lord's idea, and explains it more fully. Christ had declared the power of celibacy to be a divine gift, and had indicated the purpose for which it was given. Now being a divine gift, there must be some advantage or benefit connected with it, having reference to the end to which it is suited; and that advantage St. Paul has distinctly specified, viz. that a state of celibacy offers fewer hindrances and distractions to those who are disposed to devote themselves to the service of God and his Church, and that it is less liable to

<sup>1</sup> I will not deny myself the pleasure of referring to the beautiful language of Dr. Pusey, on the subject of marriage, in his *Letter* before mentioned, p. 210.

the temptation to worldliness of spirit. Not however that celibacy *disposes* to piety; but that it offers fewer impediments to it, for those who are already disposed to it. Neither is it at all implied that *to most persons* matrimony may not be a preferable state: on this account especially, that to those to whom it is desirable, it supplies an honourable object for natural passions; and to those who use it aright, it makes those passions holy and pure, and from a curse transmutes them into a blessing. But still I apprehend it must be acknowledged that it does become to both parties an inducement to think of the things of the world, in order to gratify each other, and minister to each other's weaknesses.

It will be said perhaps, that in this passage St. Paul is merely expressing his private opinion. It may be so: but I imagine it is an opinion corroborated by the experience of most of us; and whether it be so or not, even the private opinion of such a person as St. Paul, favoured as he was by the continual special aid of the Holy Ghost, cannot be put upon the same footing as the opinions of any ordinary Christian.

There is another passage which has a less powerful bearing upon the subject, inasmuch as it is not in itself so indisputably clear: I mean that in the 14th chapter of the Book of the Revelation. In this chapter St. John sees in a vision 144,000 standing with the Lamb on Mount Sion, having his Father's name written in their foreheads, and he declares respecting them, "These are they which were not defiled with

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women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God."

We cannot, I say, argue with *absolute* certainty from this passage. But it surely is remarkable, that the *immediate* attendants upon Christ in heaven, and those who are represented as in *constant* attendance upon him ("who follow him whithersoever he goeth,") should be those who have never married. Nay, the very form of the expression is remarkable: for it is not said, "they are virgins, for they have not defiled themselves with women," which would simply imply that they were strictly chaste, whether married or unmarried: but "they were not defiled with women, for they are virgins."

It is not however to be hastily concluded that there is any implication of defilement in marriage, (for that would be directly contrary to another passage of Scripture,) but simply that they were so far from having sustained any pollution, that they had not even tasted of lawful pleasure.

It is, I know, affirmed that the expression is altogether figurative or mystical, and that nothing more is meant than that they were not in any sense tainted with idolatry, false worship, or heresy<sup>1</sup>. But there is

<sup>1</sup> This is Mr. Taylor's view, and he contends, that "if these

this strong objection to any such interpretation ; that in the Book of the Revelation there is no other spiritual whoredom spoken of but that with " the great whore," who is never spoken of in the plural form. There are no doubt passages of Scripture in which idolatry is spoken of under the figure of adultery : but then the guilty party is supposed to be a wife who is unfaithful to her husband, and not a virgin who forfeits her chastity, still less an unmarried *man* who has become a profligate. The passage which goes the nearest to support the figurative interpretation is that where St. Paul, speaking to the Corinthians, says, " I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." But even here the Apostle is merely using the well-known figure of the prophets with a slight change. If a virgin is spoken of, it is a virgin *espoused*. And he is not speaking of individuals, but of the Church collectively. He does not say " chaste virgins," but " a chaste virgin." Moreover he paints the Church as a *female*, which is not the case with regard to those spoken of in the Revelation. In short, my own conviction is, that there is not a single passage, the analogy of which will bear us out in giving to this the figurative meaning which modern

terms are to be understood in their literal sense, so must other terms with which they are connected, and then the endeavour to expound the book in any portion of it will be hopeless." I trust that I have shown that these terms stand upon different ground from others somewhat similar.

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commentators in general have agreed to put upon it.  
 And I can scarcely believe that any person acquainted  
 with the figurative language of the Bible would have  
 felt himself justified in departing from the literal  
 meaning, had it not been for the dread of giving sup-  
 port to Popish abuses, or of finding in Scripture a  
 dignity attached to celibacy, which our hereditary  
 bias has taught us to regard as unscriptural. But I  
 think it must be granted by every unprejudiced mind,  
 or, if that be an impossible supposition, by every mind  
 which regards truth as an emanation from God, and  
 therefore to be cherished wherever found, that no  
 dread of consequences should deter us from adopting  
 that interpretation of Scripture which sound criticism  
 decides to be the correct one; especially where, as is  
 here unequivocally the case, that interpretation is  
 supported by the voice of the early Church. If all  
 men had studied the New Testament with the bias  
 which requires a figurative interpretation of such a  
 passage as this, should we ever have escaped from  
 the errors and superstitions which once possessed our  
 native Church; which may, one and all, be supported  
 by forced interpretations of Scripture?

Mr. Taylor takes an objection, that "such an in-  
 terpretation excludes from the privileged quire  
 several of the Apostles<sup>1</sup>:" but it does not appear that  
 there is not a quire higher than this, in which the  
 Apostles may be included. He asks again "What

<sup>1</sup> P. 297.

has been the general moral condition of those whom it must include?" In raising this difficulty, however, he forgets that they are by the hypothesis "blameless," and therefore can only be those unmarried Christians who have *kept themselves pure*.

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### CHAPTER III.

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THESE appear to be all the passages which bear directly upon the subject; and from the principles contained in them, there are some conclusions which flow so naturally and evidently, that they may be said to be necessary corollaries.

First, then, it must surely be evident that the spirit which too much prevails in our own times, which considers all persons, or at least all women, as necessarily desirous of marrying, and yet despises them for being so; and regards those, who remain long unmarried, in the light of disappointed adventurers, and as proper subjects of banter and jest, is an improper spirit. Few of us but must have known persons in this condition, whom all would regard as amongst the excellent of the earth; whose lives have been spent in doing good; who have given examples of patience, and meekness, and humility, and self-denial, and in short self-sacrifice, which most of us would be glad to hope that we could imitate. And we must be perfectly

sensible that many of these have expressly abstained from marriage, from the disinterested wish to devote themselves to the care of aged relatives, or the bringing up of the children of others. Now we surely must feel that such a character is much more elevated and unselfish than that of those who marry; and that it is a kind of sacrilege to make persons like these the subjects of a heartless jest. And if we admit this in the case of those who thus abstain from motives of benevolence towards others, how much more must we confess it, in regard to those who thus deny themselves from the desire of devoting themselves more unreservedly to the promotion of religion! But this is not the only point. For when we consider that our Lord himself evidently speaks of the capacity for celibacy as a divine gift, who can tell whether we may not be mocking at the results of God's special favour? And when we reflect further, that he has likewise encouraged persons to remain in celibacy from religious motives, and for the special advancement of his kingdom, saying, "He that is able to receive it, *let him receive it*," who can say what *real* sacrilege we may commit in indulging such a habit; whether we may not, in some cases, be doing our best to bring to nought the counsel of the Lord, and hinder the strengthening or extension of his kingdom, by entangling those in worldly and selfish cares, who might have been employed on higher errands? This of course has not been thought of: and to some, from its novelty, it

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may bear somewhat of a fanciful aspect. But I appeal to every reflecting, every candid mind, whether it does not inevitably follow from an impartial study of the Standard of all truth.

There is also a very prevalent feeling connected with this habit. I mean that by which nearly every young person (and especially every young woman) is impelled by the opinion of others, and independently of his own wishes and inclinations, to seek out a matrimonial connexion as one of the great ends of earthly existence. There can be no doubt whatever, even looking at the matter with the mere eye of common sense, that much mischief is done by this prevailing impulse: that not only are many driven into matrimony, who would have been well enough contented with a single life, (if left to their own feelings,) and would have been highly useful in it; but that many likewise, who remain from various causes unmarried, are rendered unhappy in that state solely by the pernicious influence of general feeling. The one have no peculiar desire for marriage, but the spirit of society dictates it to them; and they comply, often to the ruin of their usefulness by being involved in worldly cares,—often to the degradation of their characters, by the various arts and manœuvres they have recourse to, that they may not be left behind in the forlorn list of the unmarried, or by the petty shifts to which an incompetency to the management of ordinary affairs afterwards reduces them. The other seek it without success, become debased by

unworthy arts in the pursuit of it, and are fretted and vexed for the remainder of their lives by the disappointment. And thus characters which, for aught we know, might have been unsullied by artifice or selfishness, are almost irredeemably degraded, and valuable powers are lost to society, and to the Church of Christ, because misdirected, or discouraged from flowing in their natural channel. These, and similar considerations, must surely show that this feeling is altogether a mistaken one. And when we come further to view it in the light of Scripture, and to perceive that it not only interferes unjustifiably and cruelly with individual liberty, and perniciously both with individual character and with the general good, but also opposes itself, as it must do in many cases, to a direct appointment of Heaven, and makes useless the gifts of God, it surely must appear that it ought by all means to be abandoned and discouraged.

And if this be the case with regard to Christians in general, I think it must appear to be especially the case with regard to the clergy. For although no doubt every private Christian is bound to promote the kingdom of God, yet every one acknowledges that this is their peculiar office. If therefore persons of any class ought to be free from temptations to a worldly spirit, so as to serve the Lord without distraction, it must be those of the sacred order. And yet it must be familiar to many of us, that it has been a current opinion, nay, maintained

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by some as a precept of Holy Writ<sup>1</sup>, that clergymen, of all men, should be married; and a constant advice to young clergymen, having parochial charge, to enter with all speed into that deeply responsible state, without any the least doubt suggested or implied, whether to some of them celibacy may not be a preferable condition. If, however, the considerations I have brought forward have any weight, it must, I think, appear (unless indeed it be contended that marriage in the present day brings with it peculiar *exemptions* from care) that such opinion and advice are altogether mistaken and most pernicious.

Let it not, however, be supposed that I am advocating the celibacy of the whole body of the clergy as a class. I am simply contending, that, as our Lord has informed us that God has bestowed on some men the gift of continence, and that it is advisable for such persons to avail themselves of that

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Taylor has taken this ground; and because St. Paul has directed that the person who desires to enter into holy orders should be "the husband of one wife," he contends (pp. 109. 305. 399.) that he must needs be a married man. Now there is no doubt that St. Paul *might* have had such a meaning in his words; but I imagine that most persons will allow that the natural meaning of the Apostle (especially taking into consideration what he has said in favour of celibacy) is, that candidates for the sacred ministry should either have been only once married, which was the prevalent interpretation in the earliest age, or should not have divorced one wife to marry another, (a common custom with Jews and heathens,) which was the interpretation of Theodoret.

gift for the furtherance of his kingdom; and St. Paul has informed us how it may be useful to that end, by leaving us at liberty to promote religion without let or hindrance: and since it is the especial business of the clergy to promote piety in others, they of all men should not be seduced by stress of public sentiment into throwing away a gift which many of them may haply possess. From the very nature of the case this cannot include the whole body of the clergy; for it cannot be denied that there are many important ends to be answered by a married clergy, which nothing else can supply; and therefore no doubt God has communicated to each his gift, some after this manner and some after that<sup>1</sup>.

Besides the general reasons for protesting against the current feeling upon this point, particularly as regards the clergy, there are others derived from the circumstances of these times. And on that ground we may avail ourselves of the Apostle's authority to the full, even supposing that we could not upon abstract and general grounds. For although this is not a time of persecution, as was that in which St. Paul lived, yet it cannot be denied that the Church is under a kind of stress at this period which it does not always sustain. Independently of a pressure from without, it is well known that there is a demand for greater exertion from all the friends of the Church, to enable her not merely to keep her

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Pusey's Letter, p. 214.

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ground, but also to regain that which she had lost through the supineness of the generation which has passed away. It is equally well known, that it has become a matter of great difficulty to find a body of clergy competent to occupy the ground and to cultivate the soil of the out-stations of the Church, and also willing to undertake that duty. This difficulty arises from two sources; viz., that such posts require an unusual degree of activity and zeal, both bodily and mental, united with prudence and temper, and that the incomes are in most cases quite inadequate to the duty to be performed. Now it cannot be denied, that men unencumbered with personal anxieties and duties are better suited to the engagement and activity of such stations, and that those who have none dependent on them must require less for their support. To this necessity for augmented labour on the part of the Clergy, we must add the greater need of theological information to cope with all the errors, both old and new, which this age appears to furnish in never-failing abundance, and more especially to sustain the controversy effectually with the partizans of Rome; which degree of knowledge cannot so easily be attained by those who are distracted by the cares and thoughts of the world, and whose time is taken up, as that of many married clergymen must be, in the education of their children. To this must be added another consideration, viz. that the habits of the present day render it all but impossible for a

married clergy to be supported in comfort upon a large proportion of the benefices; and thence that many of those who are married are constrained, either to accept pluralities, or to employ themselves in some other pursuit, which withdraws their attention from professional duties, and wastes the powers which should have been devoted to them. All these circumstances combine to show that the present is an age, almost equally with that of St. Paul, in which it is desirable for as large a proportion of the clergy as possible to be even as the Apostle was, if not during their whole lives, at least during the earlier part of them. Neither ought this, I think, to be deemed a hardship: for even then they would only be placed in the same predicament as young men of corresponding stations in other walks of life, who, for the most part, are debarred from marrying at an early age from motives of ordinary prudence. And surely some amongst the clergy may be expected to act with the same prudence and self-denial! Surely it is not unreasonable to look to the sacred order for examples of celibacy united with chastity, to that extensive portion of the community to which I have adverted. Why should not even those whose purpose it is to marry ultimately, exhibit as much patience and forbearance as are required from their equals amongst the laity?

And even if there were a degree of hardship in thus acting, is the time come when the ministers of Christ are no longer to "endure hardness" in his

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service? Is this age, in which many in our crowded towns and cities have to be reclaimed from a condition worse than that of the heathen, one in which there are no public and marked examples required of a different and more severe kind of religion than that which now prevails; one more akin to that of those who, in the apostolical and primitive ages, spent themselves, and relinquished wives and children for the kingdom of heaven's sake, and to whom, on that very account, our Lord promised a reward<sup>1</sup>?

I am fully aware that in thus contending I lay myself open to the charge, which Mr. Taylor appears to stand ready to fix upon any person who, at the present crisis, advocates celibacy<sup>2</sup>, especially the celibacy of clergymen, viz. that I am only feeling the way for reintroducing the idea of "the angelic excellence of virginity," and its ancient consequence, the general celibacy of the sacred order; and no doubt he will class me with those pestilent persons, the writers of the Oxford Tracts. I can only say, that my objects are neither more nor less than I have expressed; that I am so far from acting in concert with those much abused persons, that I am but slightly known to two of them; and that I disapprove some of their publications almost as heartily as Mr. Taylor; for instance, Mr. Froude's "Remains," and the practical conclusions of the Tract on "Reserve in imparting Religious Knowledge," together with the

<sup>1</sup> See Pusey's Letter, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 101. 388. 389.

“Lectures on the Scripture Proof of the Doctrines of the Church,” which, if read by undisciplined minds, appear to me calculated to produce infidelity or popery. But no fear of misrepresentation will, I trust, deter me from the pursuit of truth, nor from its defence when put forth by others, if circumstances appear to call upon me to defend it: and I freely confess that I shall esteem myself only too happy if my lot may be with such persons as they in the great day of general doom. Humility, devotion, and charity, and even “submissiveness,” must be better preparatives for the last account, than self-sufficiency, presumption, hasty imputation, and the spirit of the scorner.

THE END OF PART I.

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## PART II.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE two main objections to the early Fathers seem to be, that they have erred in doctrine, and that the moral condition of the early Church was not such as to entitle it to much deference; and these two objections appear to have been blended into one in Mr. Taylor's recent attack upon their principles and practices as connected with *religious celibacy*. In reference to this subject he has contended that false principles and great moral abuses prevailed in the Church from the very earliest times subsequent to the very age of the apostles; that they extended to every part of the Church, and that they have continued down to our own times. Now it is well known that the supporters of Church principles have always contended, that if we can discover any doctrine or practice which was received by the Church in the age succeeding the apostles, which then uni-

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versally prevailed, and which has been continued in the Church more or less extensively ever since, that this by itself is an argument, and one of the very strongest kind, that such doctrine or practice is of divine origin; and consequently, that whosoever impugns such a doctrine, or would do away with such a practice, must bring authority of the most infallible kind in opposition to it. In short, we contend that, with regard to such doctrine or practice, it is, in fact, impossible to produce divine authority in contravention of it.

But the opponents of Church principles turn round upon us and say, Your notion is very good in theory, but in practice it entirely fails. We can produce both doctrine and practice answering to all these requirements, which you yourselves, if you are truly Protestants, must acknowledge to have been erroneous in the highest degree; namely, the primitive doctrine and practice of religious celibacy: and therefore the boasted test, of "semper, ubique, et ab omnibus," falls to the ground.

They say, moreover, You have been in the habit of attaching great weight to the authority of the early Church, and of quoting its writers as testimonies to the doctrine and polity which the apostles left behind them: but if the primitive Church itself was in material error from the very beginning on this subject, what security have we that in any point it is to be relied upon? If it departed so egregiously from truth upon this point, what security have we

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that it has not so departed upon any other point that can be taken up? And to what purpose is it then to go to them at all? Why may we not keep ourselves to the Scriptures, and understand them as we best can?

It must be confessed, that it would be most portentous if such a line of argument could be maintained; if it could be proved that our own Reformation, for instance, was based upon insecure principles, and that all the appeals of our standard writers, from the authors of the Homilies downwards, were futile. But since such a line of argument has been taken up, it is useful to meet it, and to show how utterly void of foundation it is.

In my former remarks I endeavoured to clear the way, by showing what is the true doctrine of the Holy Scripture on the subject, which of course is very important to be noticed; because if, instead of judging of the Fathers by the word of God, we measure them by the prejudices of any particular age or country, we may indeed possibly come to a right conclusion, if those prejudices happen to coincide with the doctrine of the Scripture: but we have gone upon a wrong principle, and have set up for our standard the judgment of men. If indeed the subject were one which was dark and doubtful in the Scripture, the case might be different; but here it can scarcely be called so. Even those whose feelings are totally in an opposite direction, are compelled to grant in the main the conclusions I drew:

and even if it were otherwise, the Scripture is not therefore to be reckoned doubtful, because prejudiced persons refuse to acknowledge its plain meaning. If we grant this, we shall open the way to universal scepticism.

The conclusions, then, which I drew from the Word of God were, that He has given to some the gift of continency for the extension and support of his kingdom: that marriage is a state in which it is abstractedly more difficult to serve God without distraction than a state of celibacy: that to the mass of persons marriage notwithstanding is, from the constitution of their nature, most desirable: that by those to whom God has vouchsafed the gift of continency, celibacy is most properly chosen as being in itself a state in which they who are thus gifted can best promote the honour of God and the extension of his kingdom: and that celibacy is therefore not to be disparaged or discouraged, but rather to be acknowledged as a state of privilege, and in some respects higher than that of matrimony. These conclusions are all either distinctly laid down in Scripture, or directly implied in what is distinctly expressed.

It appears to me in vain to say that these views may lead to an over-exaltation of celibacy, and to a direct disparagement of matrimony. I am quite prepared to grant that they may; nay, more, I am prepared expressly to show that they have done so: but that does not prove them to be wrong. It only

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proves that they are capable of being pushed to extremes: and what truth is not thus capable?

With these views, then, I purpose to address myself to the writings of the primitive Church; and I shall endeavour to show, in opposition to Mr. Taylor's statements, that the sub-apostolical age was scriptural on this subject: that corruption of doctrine on the subject came in gradually, and from sources either extrinsical to the Church, or not necessarily connected with celibacy: that no great corruption of practice followed in the sub-apostolical age, and no general corruption for many ages after: and if life and opportunity are granted me, I trust to point out those lessons on the subject which we may fitly draw from the whole history.

The first notice we have of the subject is in the epistle of St. Ignatius to Polycarp<sup>1</sup> and his Church; and in this epistle St. Ignatius has this advice to those who remained in celibacy. "If any is able to remain in chastity in honour of the Lord of the flesh<sup>2</sup>, let him so remain without boasting. If he boasts, he is lost; and should he be more highly thought of<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> § 5.

<sup>2</sup> The Latin version has "in honour of the Lord's flesh;" but it is putting a force upon the original so to render it. It is *εἰς τιμὴν τοῦ Κυρίου τῆς σαρκός*: and there is no various reading of any authority.

<sup>3</sup> This appears to be the most natural rendering of *εἰάν γινωσθῆ πλέον*; but the Latin version seems to have led all the interpreters to other senses. This version gives *si videri velit*. Smith paraphrases it thus: *Si se magis æquo spectandum cognoscendumque*

than the bishop, he is corrupted." Here we find no unscriptural *principle* even hinted at. To choose celibacy with a view to the honour of him who is Lord of the flesh equally with the spirit, seems to be only another way of looking at the scriptural idea of doing it for the kingdom of God's sake. But we have no doubt a hint at a practical abuse, namely, that some who had the gift were disposed to boast of it, and that some had begun to attach undue value to the gift when seen in others. This, I say, appears to be hinted at, although not expressly stated. But what does it amount to? Is this "one of the worst abuses" of religious celibacy? Would to God it was. Is it even peculiar to celibacy? Is it not what all God's gifts are liable to? Do we not find in the epistles of St. Paul himself that the gift of tongues gave occasion to vainglory in the possessors, and to their being unduly exalted by those who heard them? Nay, more, to all parties actually setting themselves up against, not merely their bishop, but one of the very inspired apostles? Do we see any thing unnatural in this, however lamentable? Do we hear St. Paul discourage the exercise of the gift? nay, rather, does he not actually say, "Desire spiritual gifts." Is it made by any one to cast a slur upon the

*velit, ut in aliorum opinione episcopo præferatur*: Archbishop Wake, *If he should desire to be more taken notice of*: and Mr. Jacobson, the recent editor of the Apostolical Fathers, *If he should glory over*. I do not deny that it might have this sense, but I have sought in vain for any authority for it.

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gift of tongues? Nothing of the kind. And why then should we not look in the same manner upon the case of religious celibacy? St. Paul cautioned the Corinthians against the abuse of the gifts, and the attaching undue importance to them; and Ignatius felt himself similarly called upon in regard to the gift of celibacy.

Exception has likewise been taken against this passage, as though Ignatius had spoken slightingly of matrimony in calling chaste celibacy by the name of *chastity* (*ἀγνεία*): but until it can be shown that this was a term specially invented by him or by the advocates of religious celibacy, it cannot be argued with any fairness that he or they intended thereby to disparage marriage. Nor, indeed, even then: for what other term could have been used with equal propriety? *Ἄγαμία*, or any equivalent term, would not express that such persons were not only unmarried, but also chaste: and when the main idea to be expressed was that of the *absolute chastity* of the individuals, it is no wonder that the governing idea was taken to include all. It is true that *ἄγαμος* is the term employed by Athenagoras<sup>1</sup>; but then he adds, *ἐλπιδὶ τοῦ μᾶλλον συνέσεσθαι τῷ Θεῷ*, which fixes the meaning. Justin Martyr<sup>2</sup> uses *ἄφθορος*, a term corresponding to *ἀγνεία*. Justin, indeed, has also been blamed for applying this term to celibacy, as though he intended to imply that marriage was a

<sup>1</sup> *Leg.* 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Apol.* ii. 15.

pollution. But Clement of Alexandria, who contends at great length<sup>1</sup> for the purity and holiness of marriage, uses ἄφθορος in the same sense as Justin, applying it to the son of Nicolas the deacon, who, as well as his sisters, never married<sup>2</sup>. And, indeed, Ignatius himself elsewhere applies the same term ἀγνεία to the purity of married persons, thereby showing beyond a doubt that he had no idea of disparaging marriage.

Besides the opinion of Ignatius himself, it would perhaps appear at first sight, from a passage in his epistles<sup>3</sup>, that *virgins* had in his time displaced widows as servants or dependents of the Church; for he salutes *the virgins called widows*, without mentioning widows at all in any other way. Whether this may have been a peculiarity of Smyrna, that virgins acted as deaconesses, we have no direct information: but as we know from the Canons of various councils, that widows, as distinct from virgins, were an order of the Church for centuries afterwards, it is most probable that the substitution which had taken place at Smyrna was peculiar and local. Indeed Tertullian, long after, speaks<sup>4</sup> of it as an astonishing and even monstrous thing, that a virgin should be reckoned amongst the widows. His words are, "Plane scio alicubi virginem in viduatu ab annis non-

<sup>1</sup> *Strom.* III. vi. § 45-56.

<sup>2</sup> *Strom.* III. vi. § 46. Τῶν ἐκείνου τέκνων θηλείας μὲν καταγῆράσαι παρθένους, ἄφθορον δὲ διαμεῖναι τὸν υἱόν.

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Smyrn.* 13.

<sup>4</sup> *De Virg. Veland.* 9.

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custom was uncommon, even in Tertullian's time.

The only writers of the sub-apostolical age who  
mention the subject are, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras,  
and Dionysius of Corinth. Justin<sup>1</sup>, in showing the  
excellence of the Christian religion, boasts that there  
were instances every where occurring of persons who  
from impurity were converted to chastity; and even  
of persons who, having become disciples of Christ in  
their childhood, and being then sixty or seventy  
years of age, had remained chaste. This, it is true,  
does not necessarily signify celibacy; but the same  
word is used by Clement of Alexandria, as we have  
seen, in such a connexion as almost necessarily to  
imply celibacy: and this, coupled with the circum-  
stance that Athenagoras, who was contemporary with  
Justin, but somewhat his junior, in his Apology to  
Antoninus Pius, brings forward the circumstance  
that many Christians "continued to old age unmar-  
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munion with God," has decided most persons to  
believe that Justin alluded to the same thing.

But we have somewhat more decisive evidence  
than this, in a prelate of great influence in those

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.* ii. 15.

days, but of whom scarcely any remains have come down to us: I mean Dionysius of Corinth. In the time of Eusebius there were extant no less than seven epistles of his to different churches, in two of which he touches upon this subject. It seems that Pinytus, bishop of Gnossus in Crete, had pressed the subject of celibacy upon his people; and this calls for the fraternal advice of Dionysius, who, amongst other things, exhorts him "not to lay upon them so heavy a burden, as to make celibacy a duty, but to consider the infirmity of the generality of persons!" And it is added, that Pinytus expressed great esteem for Dionysius and assent to what he had said; but at the same time it would seem that he took umbrage at him for his interference; for although he very courteously requested him to write again, he desires that it may be upon deeper subjects, and suggests to him, whether, by treating Christians always like babes, he does not risk their growing old before they have left off leading strings. Dionysius has another epistle, in which, like St. Paul, he treats, amongst other things, upon marriage and celibacy. But what is there surprising in all this? After St. Paul's recorded wishes on the subject, is it wonderful that we find a single bishop, of more zeal than judgment, endeavouring, as he might think, to carry out the Apostle's ideas more fully? Natural, however, as this was,

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. *Hist.* IV. xxiii. 4. Μὴ βαρὺ φορτίον ἐπάναγκες τὸ περὶ ἀγνείας τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐπιτιθέναι, τῆς ἐξ τῶν πολλῶν καταστοχάζεσθαι ἰσθερείας.

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we immediately find the indiscretion reproved and checked by one of the most influential bishops of his day.

We are now come down to 125 years from the death of Christ; *i. e.* we have passed over a space of time equally great with that which had elapsed from the accession of King George the First to the present time. Within that time we have the writings which go under the name of Barnabas and Hermas, with the undoubted epistles of Ignatius and Polycarp, and the acts of their martyrdom; we have the whole of the writings of Justin Martyr, his two Apologies, his Dialogue with Trypho, his Exhortation to the Gentiles, and his Epistle to Diognetus, together with the discourse of Tatian to the Gentiles, the Apology of Athenagoras, and his Treatise on the Resurrection; and the five or six allusions to the subject of religious celibacy are all that are to be found. Have they disclosed any thing unscriptural in the doctrine and feeling of *the Church* of that age? Do we learn any thing more than that there were Christians who followed their Lord's advice, and "made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake?" that some of the female portion of them were admitted to be deaconesses of the Church of Smyrna? that some at that place were inclined to be proud of the gift? and that Christians justly exulted in this amongst many other proofs of the controlling and purifying power of the Gospel, especially as contrasted with the impurities of paganism? And if we

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take in Irenæus, we advance nearly twenty years further, and hear no more on the subject; for he never so much as alludes to it. So far is it from being true that unscriptural doctrine and corrupt practices were connected with religious celibacy from the beginning.

And it is well worthy of being remarked, that this age is the one of most importance to us as members of the Church of England; for in it we have our own distinctive principles developed beyond a doubt, and none which are opposed to us. We have infant baptism, we have regeneration in baptism, we have the three orders of clergy, we have the supremacy of bishops, we have the apostolical succession, we have scripture as a standard and tradition as accessary; and we have not papal supremacy, nor transubstantiation, nor, in short, any of the points in dispute between ourselves and the Romanist on the one hand, or the Dissenter on the other. Up to this point we have the succession of men who had conversed with the disciples of the apostles; and, up to this time, for any thing that can be shown to the contrary, apostolical doctrine and discipline prevailed generally in the Church, and in all its high places.

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## CHAPTER II.

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BUT we now come to the times of Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian; and in their writings we shall see reason to think, that, although the Church at large had not countenanced any thing erroneous upon this subject, yet that in some quarters exaggerated ideas were beginning to creep in.

These two fathers were, as I have said, contemporaries, and appear to have died about the year 220, after having filled the public eye for about twenty years, the former at Alexandria, the latter at Carthage, and perhaps subsequently in Asia Minor. I shall cite the former first, for the simple reason, that he was never accused of heterodoxy,—and that he must have enjoyed a full share of the confidence of the Church, from the circumstance of his filling without blame the responsible station of Master of the Christian School at Alexandria, in which catechumens were trained for baptism. Even the office of a Bishop was scarcely more important than this; and, although, no doubt, a person might

be appointed to fill it, who afterwards proved unsound, (and, therefore, the mere appointment is no proof of orthodoxy,) yet, for a man to hold it entirely without blame, he must have accorded with the bishops and clergy of the Egyptian Church, and in them with the Church Catholic. Now, it is very true that in his time we can discover that there were corrupt notions on the subject of celibacy prevailing: for some<sup>1</sup> professed to abstain from marriage on the ground of its being a pollution, and declared that they were true followers of Jesus, who never married. But there is not the slightest proof that he was aware of such opinions being held by sound members of the Church. When he has to contend with them he connects them distinctly with the Gnostics; who, however they might in many instances escape excommunication by concealing or disguising their real sentiments, were regularly excluded when they showed themselves in their true colours. Now the Gnostics were of two kinds, the profligate and the ascetic: they both agreed in teaching that the flesh was the work of a being inferior to the Supreme Being; but the former taught that all actions were indifferent and could not affect the soul, or that every one must for his own sake try every kind of action; the latter, that all works of the flesh were as much as possible to be abstained from, by way of showing abhorrence of

<sup>1</sup> Strom. III. vi. § 49.

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<sup>1</sup> I. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Strom.  
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<sup>4</sup> Strom  
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him who made the flesh. And it was against this latter class that Clement had to contend. It may perhaps be imagined that none but Christians would have revered Jesus sufficiently to imitate Him: but Irenæus<sup>1</sup> informs us that some of the Gnostics declared him to be of their party, and Clement<sup>2</sup> records that Valentinus fancied that his body had qualities different from those of ordinary men. Mr. Taylor indeed, as we have already seen, contends that the fanaticism Clement was opposing was general in the Church: but he brings no proof of his assertion.

We will now see what were Clement's own views, which, from his position, may be reasonably taken to be the views of the Church; and we shall find them to be strictly in accordance with what we have already elicited from the Sacred Writings. He speaks of the power of celibacy as a divine gift, regards those as happy who possess it<sup>3</sup>, (in strict accordance with St. Paul's own feeling), and the gift itself as one for which the recipient should give thanks<sup>4</sup>; which, however, is not to be regarded as

<sup>1</sup> I. iii. 1. xxiv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Strom. III. vii. § 5.

<sup>3</sup> Strom. III. i. § 4. Ἡμεῖς ἐννουχίαν μὲν καὶ οἷς τοῦτο δεδωρηται ὑπὸ Θεοῦ μακαρίζομεν, μονογαμίαν δὲ καὶ τὴν περὶ τὸν ἕνα γάμον σεμνότητι θωμίζομεν, συμπάσχειν δὲ δεῖν λέγοντες καὶ ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζειν, μὴ ποτέ τις δοκῶν καλῶς ἐστάναι καὶ αὐτὸς πέσῃ· περὶ δὲ τοῦ δευτέρου γάμου, εἰ πυροῖ, φησὶν ὁ ἀπόστολος, γάμησον.

<sup>4</sup> Strom. III. xviii. § 105. Ἐξὸν ἐλέσθαι τὴν ἐννουχίαν κατὰ τὸν ἰγὴ κανόνα μετ' εὐσεβείας, ἐνχαριστοῦντα μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ δωθείσῃ χάριτι; οὐ μισοῦντα δὲ τὴν κτίσιν, οὐδὲ ἐξουθειοῦντα τοὺς γεγαρηκότας, κτι-

virtuous unless it be taken up from love towards God<sup>1</sup>, and, therefore, is to be adopted with self-distrust, and reverence, and gratitude, and maintained without vainglory towards those who marry. Every one must recognise the sobriety of judgment evinced in these views, and their strict accordance with Scripture: and his estimation of religious celibacy is the more worthy of notice from the copiousness and energy with which he contends elsewhere for the purity of marriage<sup>2</sup>. And if he does hint that some took up celibacy from secondary or even from unworthy motives, this is not a taint peculiarly attending that state; for it is what happens every day in regard to any point whatever in which one man appears better or stricter than another.

But Clement is not the only writer of this generation. There was another of a very different stamp in another part of the Church, whose writings have come down to us, "the fiery Tertullian," a presbyter of the Church of Carthage: but before I quote a single sentence from his writings, it will be necessary to consider a little what importance ought rightfully to attach to them. Tertullian then cannot be quoted with confidence as a *Church* writer; for this sufficient reason, that for some years

στὸς γὰρ ὁ κόσμος, κτιστὴ δὲ ἡ εὐνουχία· ἄμφω δὲ εὐχαριστούντων ἐν οἷς ἐτάχθησαν, εἰ γινώσκουσι καὶ ἕφ' οἷς ἐτάχθησαν.

<sup>1</sup> Strom. III. vi. § 51. Οὐδ' ἡ εὐνουχία ἐνάρετον, εἰ μὴ δι' ἀγάπην γίνωται τὴν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.

<sup>2</sup> Strom. III. xii.—xiv.

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before his death he was not only a heretic in doctrine, but also a schismatic in discipline, having become a warm partisan of the imposture of Montanus, and having quitted the Church to join his sect. Now, besides the peculiar *doctrines* which characterize this sect, there was a disposition to a harsh and overexalted puritanism, which regarded the discipline and practices of the Church as too lax, and separated from it partly on that ground: and Tertullian actually wrote a treatise, invidiously styled *De Pudicitia*, against the Church, and particularly against the then Bishop of Rome, because they thought proper to readmit to communion persons who had been guilty of fornication or adultery, after they had done public penance; and in this treatise, as well as in others, he draws a broad line between the Church and his own sect, calling the latter *spiritual*, and the former *carnal*. This being the case, it must be clear to any one that those of his treatises which were written after he had imbibed Montanist principles must in many respects express feelings at variance with those which prevailed in the Church at large; and especially upon any point, where the question was one of greater or less strictness or severity of life or discipline: and this is precisely one of those questions.

But I go further than this. For does not all experience show, that where a man ultimately becomes a separatist, and especially a leader of schism, there has all along been the tendency or propensity,

either to singularity, or to sourness of temper, or to mysticism, or in short, to whatever it may be which forms the centre notion of the system he finally adopts? And if we must own this in general, an acquaintance with the writings of Tertullian will show that, when writing to Christians, there was always a disposition to an excited and rigid view of things. That being the case, we shall not only be compelled to reject as evidence of Church feeling the decidedly Montanistical treatises, but likewise to consult the whole of his writings with great caution: whilst, on the other hand, if we find him any where asserting sentiments such as we have seen in the sacred Scriptures, and in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, we shall be safe in concluding that they were the current sentiments of the Catholic Church in his age. But if he states things as facts, we shall be generally right in regarding them as true, especially if he appears to speak of what came under his own knowledge: for, with the exception that where excited, he is liable to exaggeration, there is no ground for charging him with misrepresentation.

With these cautions then, which, although not altogether unknown to Mr. Taylor, have been practically neglected by him, let us come to the writings of Tertullian. And first as to facts; he testifies that many in his time made themselves eunuchs, (i. e. abstained from marriage,) for the kingdom of heaven's sake; some from the time of their baptism:

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor.

may, that even married persons abstained from matrimonial intercourse, from taking the passage, 1 Cor. vii. 29. in a literal sense<sup>1</sup>. This latter element is clearly contrary to the advice of St. Paul, in another unequivocal passage<sup>2</sup>. But as Tertullian represents them as so doing from a feeling of the degradation of sexual intercourse, a feeling which we do not as yet find supported by any authority in the Church we are warranted in supposing that these might be persons of the same fanatical tendencies as Tertullian himself; who, in another of his treatises, expressly speaks of matrimony as akin to fornication, and distinctly dissuades from mar-

<sup>1</sup> *De Cultu Feminarum*, ii. 9. Si ergo uxores quoque ipsas sic habendas demonstrat tanquam non habeantur, propter angustias temporum, quid sentiat de vanis instrumentis earum? (i.e. their ornaments.) Non enim et multi ita faciunt, et se spodonatui obsignant, propter regnum Dei tam fortem et utique permissam voluptatem sponte ponentes?

*Ad Uxorem*, i. 5, 6. Quot enim sunt qui statim a lavaero carnem suam obsignant? Quot item qui consensu pari inter se matrimonii debitum tollunt, voluntarii spadones pro cupiditate regni cœlestis?

*De Virgin. Veland.* 10. Cæterum satis inhumanum, si feminae quidem, per omnia viris subditæ, honorigeram notam virginitatis suæ præferant, quasi suspiciantur et circumspiciantur et magnificentur a fratribus, *vir*i autem tot *virgines*, tot spadones voluntarii, cæco bono suo incedant, nihil gestantes, quod et ipsos faceret illustres.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 24, 27.

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riage<sup>1</sup>. At the same time it may be conceded that these persons were probably in the Church, since they are mentioned by him in his tracts to his wife, which were certainly written before he had taken up such extreme views as I have just alluded to.

We learn again from the treatise *on the veiling of virgins*, that there were those who were acknowledged and recognised as professors of virginity<sup>2</sup>; but in what way does not appear. It is not, however, necessary that we should suppose any particular declaration. No doubt it was customary for young women in general to marry as soon as they were marriageable; and the simple fact of continuing unmarried after they were grown up, was considered a declaration that they did so for religion's sake.

<sup>1</sup> *De Exhortatione Castitatis*, 9. 'Ergo,' inquis, 'jam et primas, id est, unas nuptias destruis.' 'Nec immerito, quoniam et ipsæ ex eo constant, quo et stuprum.'

<sup>2</sup> *De Veland. Virg.* 9. Quid prærogativæ meretur adversus conditionem suam, si qua virgo est et carnem sanctificare proposuit? § 16. Nupsisti enim Christo: illi tradidisti carnem suam; illi sponsasti maturitatem tuam. Incede secundum sponsi tui voluntatem.

*Ad Uxorem*, 4. Et tu, adversus consilia hæc ejus, adhibe sororum nostrarum exempla, quarum nomina penes Dominum, quæ nullam formæ vel ætatis occasionem, præmissis maritis, sanctitati anteponunt: malunt enim Deo nubere.

*De Præscriptione Hæreticorum*, 3. Si episcopus, si diaconus, si vidua, si virgo, si doctor, si etiam martyr lapsus a regula fuerit.

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Now it appears very evident, from Tertullian's tract above alluded to, that Christian women when married immediately took the veil, whilst unmarried girls remained unveiled. It appears highly probable that this usage was not confined to Christians, but only observed more strictly by them. In the Church then, when virginity came to be frequently preserved, there rose up the anomaly of grown women, with their heads uncovered, which offended Tertullian's feelings: and the tract in question was written for the purpose, not, as Mr. Taylor supposes, of putting a distinction upon the professed virgins, by giving them the veil; but of inducing the Church where he was to make a regulation, that every young person whatever should be veiled, who had passed the age of puberty<sup>1</sup>. Some indeed, probably of the *professed* virgins, wished to preserve the uncovered head *as a distinction*: but he contends very warmly, not only on the immodesty and inconsistency of one who lived only for Christ, wishing to be marked out to the eye of man, but also on the unfairness to the eelibates of the other sex, who had no distinction whatever<sup>2</sup>. All this tends strongly to

<sup>1</sup> See above, Part i. p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> § 10. Adeo nihil virgini ad honorem de loco permissum est. Sic nec de aliquibus insignibus. Ceterum satis inhumanum, si feminæ quidem, per omnia viris subditæ, honorigræam notam virginittatis suæ præferant, quasi suspiciantur et circumspiciantur et magnificentur a fratribus, viri autem tot virgines, tot spadones voluntarii, cæco bono suo incedant, nihil gestantes, quod et ipsos faceret illustres.

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show that there was not in Tertullian's time, any known characteristic to mark the professed virgin, beyond that of her continuing unmarried beyond the customary time; and consequently not adopting the veil at the usual time, although in other respects she dressed like a matron, and not like a very young person<sup>1</sup>. It is evident, however, from the whole tone of the tract, that the virgins were not all so from religious motives: that a degree of credit had begun to attach to mere celibacy, and that some, probably, were desirous of personal admiration, and for that reason did not marry, lest they should be compelled to conceal their charms, whilst others adopted the profession from interested motives, because they were gainers by it in a pecuniary point of view<sup>2</sup>.

There was likewise an *esprit de corps* creeping in, which led them to wish for a public distinction, to attract others to their body<sup>3</sup>. Against this desire

<sup>1</sup> § 12. Quid quod etiam hæ nostræ etiam habitu mutationem ætatis confitentur; simulque se mulieres intellexerunt de virginibus educuntur, a capite quidem ipso deponentes quod fuerunt. Vertunt capillum, et acu lasciviore comam sibi inserunt, crinibus a fronte divisim apertam professæ mulieritatem.

<sup>2</sup> § 14. Æmulatio enim illas, non religio producit: aliquando et ipse venter Deus earum, quia facile virgines fraternitas suscipit.

<sup>3</sup> § 14. Referunt aliquando dictum a quadam, cum primum quæstio ista tentata est, 'Et quomodo ceteras sollicitabimus ad hujusmodi opus?' i. e. if there were no outward distinction. It is evident, however, that they uncovered their heads only in

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Tertullian strongly contends, and points out the grave evils which would certainly arise, if the then state of things were allowed to continue, and some resolution were not come to for the purpose of preventing a virgin from being outwardly distinguished from a married woman. Whether any of these evils had yet arisen does not appear certain: but Tertullian, from the existing state of manners, foresaw them, as they afterwards appeared more distinctly in the time of Cyprian. Not only this, but he actually pointed out the sources of all, or nearly all, the mischiefs which have followed in any subsequent time. "A constrained and unwilling virginity," he said, "occasions such enormities:" not as stating what had actually occurred, but as foretelling what inevitably would occur in the gross and semi-barbarous state, in which that part of the world was.

No prophecy can be truer, as we know by the event; and if he saw the real germ of the mischief, in its then earliest indications, and warned the Church of it, and urged in the warmest manner the true remedy, of removing all outward distinction or external stimulus, however he may have used rhetorical expressions in speaking of a pure and disinterested celibacy, he can scarcely be charged with fostering evils he did his utmost to prevent. Neither again is

the assemblies of Christians. § 13. Certe in ecclesia virginitatem suam abscondant, quam extra ecclesiam celant.

it to be forgotten, that Tertullian, in stating the mischiefs, either open or latent, which he witnessed or feared, is speaking not of the Church universal, but only of that part to which he belonged, the Church of north-western Africa, one of the least civilized and most degenerate portions of the Roman empire. We know, in our own day, that there is a great difference in different Christian countries, in regard to particular points of morals, and even in the same country in different periods; and no doubt it was so in all ages. It is not correct, therefore, to argue from the state of things at Carthage, that virginity every where indicated the same abuses. Indeed Tertullian expressly informs us, that the Church of Corinth required<sup>1</sup> its unmarried women to be veiled, equally with the married; and thus, in his opinion, avoided the great danger to which a contrary practice exposed those who observed, or professed to observe, religious virginity.

We now see still more fully how fallacious was the representation which Mr. Taylor made of the object of this tract of Tertullian. His idea evidently was, that Tertullian was speaking of the *peculiar* habit which his "nuns" were to wear, by way of distinction, and as a mark of their peculiar class; whereas there is no evidence whatever that the professed virgins were a class; (although those who

<sup>1</sup> *De Virg. Veland.* 8. Hodie denique virgines suas Corinthii velant.

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received church alms must have been so, so long as they were in the receipt of them;) and Tertullian's great object was to have all women veiled, *in order that there might be no distinction* of professed virgins from other women, except that which was made by their remaining unmarried.

From the state of feeling in the Church at large, we come to Tertullian's own views; although that part of the subject has been in some degree anticipated. There can be no difficulty in conceding that his language and his feeling as to the excellence of the state of virginity is exaggerated. The passage which Mr. Taylor has quoted<sup>1</sup>, however, does not speak of it in the abstract. He is only speaking of those who, thinking with St. Paul, that holiness is more easily preserved or maintained in a state of celibacy, do really sacrifice inclination to the desire of serving God more perfectly, and of giving that

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Uxorem*, i. 4. Adhibe sororum nostrorum exempla, quarum nomina penes Dominum; quæ nullam formæ vel ætatis occasionem, præmissis maritis, sanctitati anteponunt; malunt enim Deo nubere. Deo speciosæ, Deo sunt puellæ. Cum illo vivunt, cum illo sermocinantur. Illum diebus et noctibus tractant. Orationes suas, velut dotes, Domino adsignant: ab eodem dignationem, velut munera dotalia, quotiescunque desiderant, consequuntur. Sic æternum sibi bonum donum Domini occupaverunt, ac jam in terris non nubendo de familia angelica deputantur. Taliū exemplis feminarum ad æmulationem te continentix exereens, spirituali affectione carnalem illam concupiscentiam humabis, temporalia et volatica desideria formæ vel ætatis immortalium bonorum compensatione delendo.

time to exercises of devotion which they would in the married state be required to devote to worldly cares. This, it is clear from other passages of this father, was not the case with all the professed virgins, and, therefore, he cannot be supposed to be speaking of them all. It is not abstaining from marriage in the abstract that he so extols, but abstaining from such motives. And although it is somewhat exaggerated to say of such persons that they "are reckoned as belonging to the *angelic* household;" it is yet an exaggeration not so very violent, as if we supposed with Mr. Taylor that he was speaking of virginity in the abstract. I doubt if most of us do not regard a young person of devotional and pious habits, living not for herself, but for God and his Church, as more akin to heaven than to earth. And I doubt if we should not regard such an one's marriage as a weakness, and almost as a disappointment. And if such feelings are experienced by many, and expressed by them, in this refined state of society,—refined by the longer prevalence of Christian principles; can it be wonderful that Tertullian, who lived in an age when faith had to struggle not only with the flesh within, but with a general grossness of manners without, so that he probably saw but few examples of marriage from true Christian affection, (indeed it is very evident that he had no conception of such a thing<sup>1</sup>;) should

<sup>1</sup> "It is scarcely conceivable that the early Christians should have regarded this holy state altogether as we do . . . All around

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have them in an extreme degree? His opinions are no doubt exaggerated. Self-denial with him assumed but one aspect, and that a sexual one: and what would have been perfectly true of it taken in its larger sense he applies to it in its more restricted one<sup>1</sup>. He adopts the Gnostic notion, reprobated by Clement of Alexandria, of our Lord's abstinence from marriage being an example to us<sup>2</sup>.

us, all our laws and institutions, all the etiquettes of social life, the refinements and graces of polished company, revolve round matrimony, and are sustained by a recognition of its true idea; its true idea, I mean, in an earthly point of view, and without referring to its sacramental nature. It is no peculiarity of the religious character either to assert or to feel the sanctity of the marriage tie: with us the sentiment is spontaneous; with the early Christians it was in its way matter of faith, and a badge of their separation from other men. The laws under which they lived, and the mass of society around them, instead of aiding, were counteracting influences. How could the essential purity and beauty of the married state be habitually felt and remembered by those who lived under laws which afforded to every one the easiest means of divorce, and in a state of society reeking with impurity?"—*British Magazine*, June, 1840. p. 625 The series of papers from which this extract is made will amply repay the perusal.

<sup>1</sup> For instance, he uses language such as this: (*Ad Uxorem*, i. 7.) Nobis continentia ad instrumentum æternitatis demonstrata est a Domino salutis, ad testimonium fidei, ad commendationem carnis istius exhibendæ superventuro indumento incorruptibilitatis, ad sustinendam novissime voluntatem Dei.

<sup>2</sup> *De Monogamia*, 3. Ipso Domino spadonibus aperiente regna cælorum, ut et ipso spadone: ad quem spectans et Apostolus, propterea et ipse castratus, continentiam mavult.

Not only this, but he actually enunciates the idea, no where appearing in the Scripture, nor in the sound Church writers down to this period, of the abstract degradation of sexual intercourse<sup>1</sup>. This no doubt is at the bottom of all the false notions which have prevailed on the subject from his age to the present: but I repeat that it now appears for the first time in any Church writer, and it will be seen that it is not again taken up for a considerable time to come. Whether it arose in the Church from the influx of Gnostic feeling I will not pretend to say; but it is *not* connected with the Gnostic doctrine, that matter was made by an inferior being: nor do I think that we can say with certainty that the feeling is peculiarly Gnostic. It appears to me to arise naturally in a person of aspiring mind, whose temptations lie peculiarly that way, and who feels himself unable, by any endeavours he has yet made, to separate the use from the abuse; and who, moreover, judges of all other persons by himself: and I doubt whether it is not tacitly felt by the mass of persons whose feelings have not been kept pure from childhood, and who, consequently, find earthly passion and guilt *everywhere* intruding, even into lawful indulgence<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> § 1. Nihil tunc (*i. e.* in heaven) inter nos dedecoris voluptuosi resumetur: non enim tam frivola, tam spurca Deus suis pollicetur.

<sup>2</sup> "They (the early Christians) lived in a state of society, to the impurity of which modern Europe presents no parallel, and

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*  
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below.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

If we find such views as these in a treatise which affords no distinct trace of Montanism, (except its harmony on these points with subsequent treatises,) we need not wonder to find the same thoughts more systematized, and more exaggerated still in those of his writings which were composed after he left the Church. In these he takes sanctification in the sense of abstinence from marriage<sup>1</sup>; he parallels marriage with whoredom<sup>2</sup>, and he avows his wish to dissuade all persons whatever from marrying<sup>3</sup>. But in the

which it is difficult for us even to imagine, and still more, adequately to recollect. In this abyss of pollution many of them passed the prime of their lives before they even heard of the Gospel. . . . Even after their reception into the Church they had, speaking generally, to maintain a struggle with uncleanness much harder than *need* fall to the lot of Christians now-a-days." —*British Magazine*, May, p. 501.

<sup>1</sup> *De Exhortatione Castitatis*, 1. Sanctificationem in species distribue complures, ut in aliqua earum deprehendamus. Prima species est virginitatis a natiuitate; secunda virginitatis a secunda natiuitate, id est, a lavacro, quæ aut in matrimonio purificat ex compacto, aut in viduitate perseverat ex arbitrio; tertius gradus superest monogamia, quum post matrimonium unum interceptum exinde sexui renuntiat.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 9. Quæ res et viris et feminis omnibus adest ad matrimonium et stuprum? Commixtio carnis scilicet, ejus concupiscentiam Dominus stupro adæquavit. 'Ergo,' inquis, 'jam et primas, id est, unas nuptias destruis.' Nec immerito; quoniam et ipsæ ex eo constant, quo et stuprum. Ideo optimum est homini mulierem non attingere: et ideo virginis principalis sanctitas, quia caret stupri adfinitate. Also *De Virg. Veland.* 10. cited below.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

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midst of all this, it is very remarkable, that when he comes to speak of *merit*, he puts absolute celibacy in a lower rank than abstaining from a second marriage<sup>1</sup>; showing, after all, that it is the *self-denial* exercised that he thinks of most consequence, and that he regards virginity as rather a state of privilege than of merit. It is very evident, therefore, that though his feelings on the subject were radically wrong, he is not to be classed with those who voluntarily extolled the merit of celibacy in the abstract, and apart from the religious motives which prompted it, or supposed that it would have higher rewards in the world to come. And that the subject cannot have occupied a very large portion of his thoughts may be judged by the circumstance that the whole of the tracts I have quoted, one of them containing much extraneous matter, do not amount to more than one part in

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. 1. Prima, virginitas, felicitatis est; non nosse in totum a quo postea optabis liberari; secunda (virginitatis a lavacro) virtutis est; contemnere cujus vim optime noris: reliqua species hactenus nubendi post matrimonium: morte disjunctum, præter virtutis etiam modestiæ laus est.

*Ad Uxorem*, I. 8. Gloriosior continentia quæ jus suum sentit; quæ quid viderit novit. Poterit virgo feliciores haberi, at vidua laboriosior. In illa gratia, in ista virtus coronatur. Quædam enim sunt divinæ liberalitatis, quædam nostræ operationis: Quæ a Domino indulgentur sua gratia gubernantur; quæ ab homine captantur studio perpetrantur.

*De Virginibus Veland.* 10. Non enim et continentia virginitati antistat, sive viduarum, sive qui ex consensu contumeliam commiserunt jam recusaverunt? Nam virginitas gratia constat, continentia vero virtute.

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thirty of his writings, such as they now remain to us : whilst in speaking of the power of celibacy as a gift, a grace, a happiness, springing from divine bounty, he agrees with those who preceded him in the Church, and exhibits no doubt the opinion of Christians in general in his own time. And further, as we find no trace of any other person contemporary with him in the Church expressing his exaggerated opinions, we may justly conclude that up to his time they did not prevail at all generally ; since we are not to conclude hastily that even those married persons who bound themselves to non-intercourse, did so upon the precise ground which he has stated ; for nothing is more common than for persons to pursue the same course from very different motives. If they merely thought, as many did in his time, that the end of the world was every day to be expected, and took in a literal sense St. Paul's direction, that those who had wives should be as though they had them not, it will sufficiently account for their conduct, without supposing that they had adopted the idea of degradation attaching to matrimonial intercourse.

Contemporary with Tertullian, though somewhat his juniors, are Minutius Felix and Origen ; the former a layman of the Roman Church, the latter the pupil and successor of Clement of Alexandria, and ordained late in life. We have thus the means of comparing together the state of feeling in various parts of the Church, when Tertullian's writings had begun to be known ; and may thus see more dis-

tinctly whether any such exaggerated views as his were general.

In this light the tract of Minutius Felix, although short, is valuable, inasmuch as his style has led critics to suppose that he was of African descent; he has used expressions borrowed from Tertullian, thus showing that he had read some of his writings; and he was a member of the Church of Rome, where, by the confluence from all parts of the world, there was for many generations a better opportunity of knowing what was the general feeling in the Church than in any other place. Minutius is arguing with a friend, who is a heathen, and in proof of the power of the Gospel to change human nature, he brings forward the ease of the religious celibacy, which, as we have seen, was common amongst Christians<sup>1</sup>. He speaks of it in a perfectly calm tone, and merely remarks that those who lived in this state, rather enjoyed it as a privilege than boasted of it as a merit. His language is worthy of observation on two accounts; both because it shows that the tone of feeling on the subject at Rome, that most important Church, was perfectly in accordance with the Scriptures, and because it is a clear proof that up to that period it had been attended with no more corruption or abuse than what must always attend human efforts; for if the

<sup>1</sup> Octavius, 21. Casto sermone, corpore castiore, plerique in-  
violati corporis virginitate perpetua fruntur potius quam glorian-  
tur. Tantum abest incesti cupido, ut nonnullis rubori sit etiam  
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virgins and celibates had not been for the most part exemplary, they would not have been appealed to so confidently by an intelligent layman like Minutius Felix. It may perhaps be thought that the mention of some who "blushed even at a chaste union," proves that the views Tertullian advocates had reached Rome. They might perhaps have prevailed with a few (*nonnulli*); but at all events we hear nothing of the coarse comparisons instituted by that Father, and the instances are brought forward simply to show the contrast between heathenism and Christianity, and the power of the latter to control natural impulses, without giving any opinion of them in the abstract; nay, he distinctly calls marriage "a chaste union."

We next come to Origen, and of him our notice must be very slight indeed. The chief passage I have been able to discover bearing on the subject, has been already exhibited in part, and the conclusion is here subjoined, together with another of the same cast<sup>1</sup>; but from them we cannot gather with any certainty that he advocated celibacy at all. Every thing he says may apply to perfect purity of mind, in the married equally with the single state:

<sup>1</sup> Tom. xv. 5. Μεγάλη δὲ δύναμις τὸ χωρῆσαι τὸν ἀπὸ λόγου τῆς ψυχῆς εὐνουχισμόν, ὃν οὐ πάντες. . . δέδοται. Δέδοται δὲ πᾶσι τοῖς αἰτήσασιν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ τὴν λογικὴν μάχαιραν, καὶ δεόντως αὐτῇ χρῆσασμένοις, ἵν' εὐνουχήσωσιν κ. τ. λ.

xiv. 25. Πρὸς τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Σωτὴρ, διδάσκων ἡμᾶς ὅτι οὐκ εἶναι τὸ διδόμενον ἀπὸ Θεοῦ τὴν παντελῆ καθάρευσιν, καὶ οὐ μόνον ἀσκήσει παραγιγόμενον, ἀλλὰ μετ' εὐχῶν ἰπὸ Θεοῦ διδόμενον, τό' οὐ πάντες κ. τ. λ.

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and when we consider the station he held for so many years as master of the Catechetical School at Alexandria, where his reputation attracted to him more pupils than he could instruct, and caused him to be sent for by an Arabian prince, to instruct him in the faith of Christ,—that his residence was not confined to Alexandria, but extended to Rome, to Greece, and to Syria,—that by a rare exception he was called upon at Cæsarea by the Bishops of Syria, although only a layman, to preach in their presence,—and was thought of so much importance that, when ordained priest by the Bishop of Jerusalem, contrary to the Canons, and consequently excommunicated by his own proper bishop, the Patriarch of Alexandria, the Churches of Palestine, Arabia, Phœnicia, and Achaia, still held with him against the whole Christian world,—when we consider, moreover, that his life was uncommonly strict and secluded, and that he had actually adopted mechanical means to enable himself to live in celibacy without fear of temptation,—his silence upon such a point, and his spiritualization of the leading passage upon which the doctrine of religious celibacy is built, in the voluminous remains we have, is one of the strongest proofs that the body of the Church in his time had not come to attach to it any undue or unscriptural importance.

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### CHAPTER III.

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BUT if the body of the Church cannot be justly charged with any material taint, there was a corner, and in that age not an unimportant one, in which the ill-omened sentiments of Tertullian were producing their proper fruit,—as the evils which he foretold were coming forth into undesirable notoriety. I allude to the Church of Carthage, of which in that age Cyprian was the chief and most illustrious prelate. He was contemporary with Origen, for they both went to their rest about the same time; but it is probable that he was somewhat the younger of the two; nor does it appear that they had ever any communication with each other. Indeed Cyprian was the disciple of Tertullian, and not only that, but his warm admirer; and when we add to this that he was not, like Origen, bred a Christian, but converted at mature age, and that his previous profession of a rhetorician had accustomed him to overcolour every thing, we must not be surprised if we find his feelings in some degree stern and harsh, his ideas

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somewhat exalted and puritanical, and his modes of expression somewhat overcharged: and we must be on our guard against concluding that his opinions were necessarily the same as those held by his co-bishops.

There are two portions of his writings which have reference to this subject, the Tract *De Habitu Virginum*, and his *Letter to Pomponius*.

There can be no doubt that by *Virgins* in the first of these, he means not unmarried women in general, but *professed* Virgins; or, as he expressed it, those "who dedicated themselves to Christ, and as well in flesh as in spirit, devoted themselves to God!" How the profession was made does not appear: nor is it by any means certain that any thing more was done, than when, in certain societies in our own time, persons are understood to have "given themselves to the Lord" more especially than others. In particular it is very clear that there was no such distinction of dress as to resemble the Quakers, or *Religieuses* of modern times: for if there had been he would not have had to caution the virgins of the Church against such habits as those of applying

<sup>1</sup> *De habitu Virginum*. Ut quæ se Christo dicaverint, et a carnali concupiscentia recedentes, tam carne quam mente se Deo voverint, consumment opus suum magno præmio destinatum; nec ornari jam aut placere cuiquam nisi Domino suo studeant, a quo et mercedem virginitatis expectant, dicente ipso, 'Non omnes, &c'

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antimony<sup>1</sup> to darken their eye lashes, and rouge<sup>2</sup> to improve their complexion, and yellow dye<sup>3</sup> to beautify their hair, and piercing their ears<sup>4</sup> for earrings, and using other artificial means<sup>5</sup> to alter their features and amend their figures.

The three points Cyprian takes up are dress, frequenting the public baths, and attending wedding festivities: the former more copiously than the rest.

He represents to the virgins that if they so attired themselves as to show that they desired to attract attention from men, they were doing extremely wrong: that it was contrary to their profession of seeking the kingdom of heaven, to set their hearts on worldly gewgaws; that it was contrary to their profession, as devoted to Christ, to desire to attract the eyes of men; that to do so, whilst professing celibacy, was a sign of impurity of mind. He then replies to the wealthier portion of them, who thought that elegant dress and expensive ornaments were proper appendages of their station in

<sup>1</sup> Oculos circumducto nigrore fucare . . . . . nigro pulvere.

<sup>2</sup> Genas mendacio ruboris inficere.

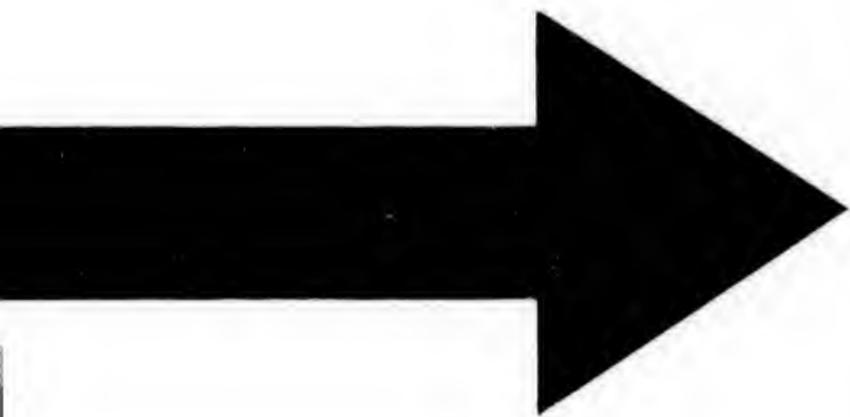
<sup>3</sup> Mutare adulterinis coloribus erinem . . . . . adhibito flavo colore . . . . . Malo præsigio futurorum capillos jam tibi flammeos auspicaris.

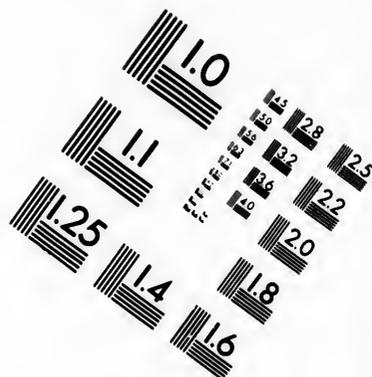
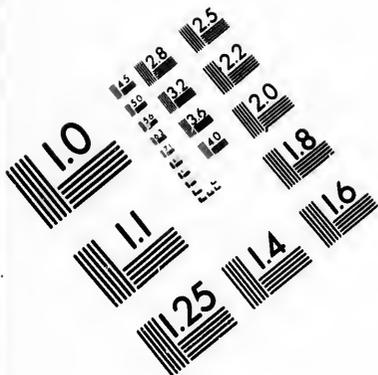
<sup>4</sup> An vulnera inferri auribus Deus voluit, quibus innocens adhuc infantia et mali secularis ignara crucietur; ut postea . . . pretiosa grana dependant.

<sup>5</sup> Quolibet lineamenta nativa corrumpente medicamine . . . . . Expugnata est mendacio facies, figura corrupta est.

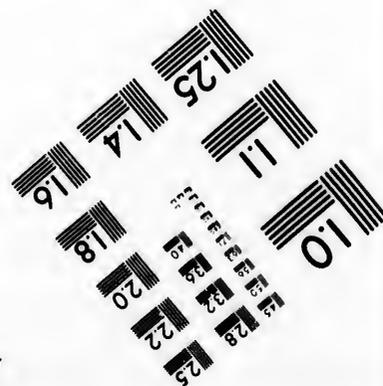
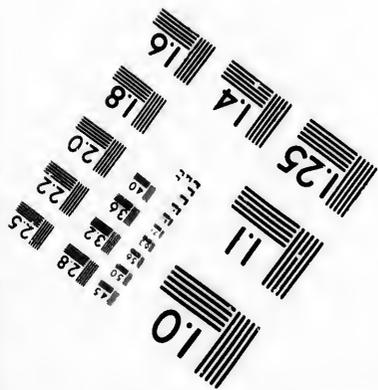
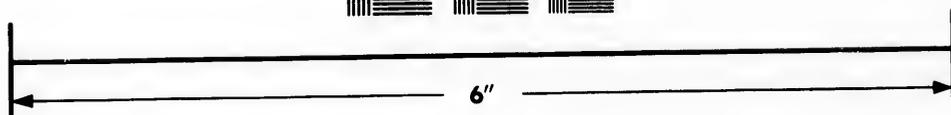
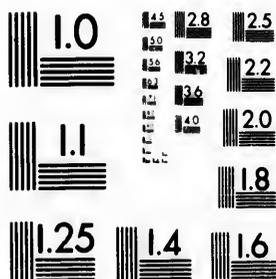
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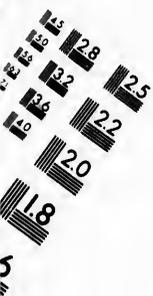


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society; and represents to them the impropriety of a Christian setting a value upon wealth and station, and the prohibition which St. Peter and St. Paul have laid upon all women against seeking their ornament in dress; the evil they do by attracting the attention of young men, and kindling the fire of passion in their bosoms which, from the nature of the case, cannot be chaste; the good they might do by devoting their superfluous wealth to relieving the necessities of the poor; the impropriety of Christian women resembling harlots; and the displeasure of God which they must incur by attempting to alter and amend his works. His arguments upon this latter point will be regarded by most persons as weak and inconclusive; being such as this, that we never find *scarlet or purple sheep*. The other arguments do not appear unnatural, considering the state of society, although they betray a mind somewhat ascetic and severe, such as we might expect in an admirer of Tertullian. But then, as I have said, we must consider the state of society; for we shall, I apprehend, find that religion, when earnest and sincere, will, in the uneducated or half-educated, always take a rigid aspect amongst persons surrounded by a gross and profligate population. We may see it even in our own day, if we have the opportunity of examining attentively the habits of the middle and lower classes in our large manufacturing towns. In such a condition of society the minds of most men appear to be unable to maintain

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their footing, except by withdrawing as far as possible from the confines of immorality. Even such a man as Dr. Johnson was accustomed to say that he could abstain from wine altogether, but that he could not enjoy it in moderation: and no doubt Cyprian, and such as he, especially if converted in mature age, had much of the same feeling, both for themselves and for others.

The second point he takes up is the attendance of the virgins at nuptial festivities. *A priori* we might argue that a man's mind must be in a very unhealthy state to see any thing indecorous in such attendance. But we have only to read his arguments to see that festivities, such as he depicts<sup>1</sup>, were such as *no* Christian ought to have countenanced, to say nothing of modest young women. One expression there is in which, after reading Tertullian, one may for a moment suppose that he calls matrimonial intercourse by the name of *stuprum*; but upon reflection, it is evident that he does not speak of that intercourse generally, but only when stimulated by excess and lascivious language.

The third abuse he notices is that of the professed

<sup>1</sup> Quasdam non pudet nubentibus interesse, et in illa lascivientium libertate sermonum colloquia incesta miscere, audire quod non decet, quod non licet dicere, observare; et esse presentes inter verba turpia et temulenta convivia, quibus libidinum fomes accenditur, sponsa ad patientiam stupri, ad audaciam sponsus animatur.

virgins frequenting the public baths, in which men and women could see each other. To us this appears so utterly and irredeemably gross, that one wonders that the thing should be possible. But supposing such a state of things, there is nothing in Cyprian's mode of treating the subject which can be objected to.

This tract is generally supposed to have been written when he was only a presbyter, and certainly in its style savours strongly of the profession of a rhetorician, which he had so long practised. We shall find, for the first time, in an unquestioned Church writer, those excited and artificial notions which have prevailed in various parts of the Church to the present day. The merit of the martyrs, we know, acquired for them privileges which we regard as extravagant and subversive of all order and discipline. And why was this, but that their example was seen to make the strongest impression upon the heathen, and to be a fruitful source of conversion? And so, no doubt, it was with virginity. The company of virgins for life, a phenomenon produced by Christianity alone, was a powerful and striking argument of its divine origin and transcendent claims. It was felt to be such, and was constantly appealed to as such by Christian writers. Not that they, for the most part, mention the celibates of the female sex alone, but that these were, from the nature of the case, less capable of making a deceitful profes-

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<sup>4</sup> Magn  
maximum

sion. They, therefore, came to be regarded as next in honour<sup>1</sup> in Cyprian's mind, and probably in those of his contemporaries: nor did he feel it the less from having been a convert from heathenism. He therefore, as one of the most persuasive arguments, to induce them to live worthily of their vocation, magnifies as much as possible the honour and dignity of their condition, if preserved untainted: nor can we doubt that his panegyric is so much the more highly coloured, from the habits of his original profession. With every allowance, however, his language is exaggerated, as may be judged when he calls them "the image of God, corresponding to the Lord's purity<sup>2</sup>, the more illustrious portion of Chr.st's flock;" and tells them, "When ye continue chaste virgins ye are equal to the angels<sup>3</sup>:" and again, "Great gain awaits you, the ample prize of virtue, the highest reward of chastity<sup>4</sup>." He likewise repeats and adopts the idea of imitating Christ by virginity; but still no more than by purity, holiness,

<sup>1</sup> Ut apud martyrem non est carnis et seculi cogitatio, nec parva et levis et delicata congressio; sic et in vobis, quarum ad gloriam merces secunda est, sic et virtus ad tolerantiam proxima.

<sup>2</sup> Dei imago respondens ad sanctimoniam Domini, illustrior portio gregis Christi.

<sup>3</sup> Cum castæ perseveratis et virgines, angelis Dei estis æquales.

<sup>4</sup> Magna vos merces manet, præmium grande virtutis, munus maximum castitatis.

truth<sup>1</sup>, &c. It is evident, indeed, from the passage I have last quoted, that he thinks it only one amongst many excellencies, and not one which comprised or could supersede all others; and that, whatever be the excitement of his previous language, he regards that one virtue as of no avail, unless accompanied by the rest<sup>2</sup>.

The request with which he concludes<sup>3</sup> that they would remember him, "when virginity should begin to be honoured in them," has been quoted as though Cyprian countenanced prayers to departed saints. The expression is certainly obscure; but the most natural meaning seems to be, that when they had reformed their manners, and had thus ceased to bring discredit upon virginity, he on his part should regard their remembrance as valuable, and they on their's could not make him a more fitting recompense for bringing them back into the right path. There is evidently not the slightest foundation here for addressing those who had already quitted life.

Before I pass on to the next subject, I have a

<sup>1</sup> Quomodo portavimus imaginem ejus qui de limo est, portemus et imaginem ejus qui de cælo est. Hanc imaginem virginitas portat, portat integritas, sanctitas portat et veritas: portant disciplinæ Dei memores, justitiam cum religione tenentes, stabiles in fide, humiles in timore, ad omnem tolerantiam fortes, ad sustinendam injuriam mites, ad faciendam misericordiam faciles, fraterna pace unanimes atque concordēs.

<sup>2</sup> Quæ vos *singula* observare, diligere, implere *debetis*.

<sup>3</sup> Tantum mentem tunc nostri, cum incipiet in vobis virginitas honorari.

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remark or two to make. First, it must be very evident, from the high terms in which Cyprian speaks of the virgins as a body, that the faults he pointed out could not have prevailed very extensively, otherwise they would have been a disgrace to the Church, instead of a grace and an ornament. Secondly, the degeneracy of the virgins was not peculiar to them, but was shared by the whole North-African Church, They had enjoyed a long season of prosperity, and it is only ignorance which supposes that in any age of Christianity the sunshine of the world has had any other effect than that of producing relaxation in piety. Accordingly, in the persecution which followed not long after this tract of Cyprian's was written, the great body of professed Christians in that part of Africa denied their Lord, by conforming to the observances of paganism, to avoid suffering or death. It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that the profession of celibacy is entirely to blame; although, no doubt, the credit in all cases, and the pecuniary advantage to the poor, which attended it in those days, had some share in producing the mischief. If, however, Tertullian's advice had been attended to,—if the rule had been established that every adult female should dress like a married woman, or in any other way the outward distinction of the virgins had been done away with, much of the evil would have been prevented, especially such as we find developed in the next portion of Cyprian's writings in which the subject is taken up.

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This is a letter written by him after he became Bishop of Carthage, to Pomponius, a fellow-bishop. The occasion was this, that some of the professed virgins<sup>1</sup> in the diocese of which Pomponius was bishop, had been found to be in the habit of sleeping with men, and had confessed it to be their practice. One of these men was a deacon. Pomponius immediately excommunicated the deacon, and wrote to Cyprian as his primate, for advice what to do with the virgins. It seems that, extraordinary as it may appear, the greater part of them declared themselves to be innocent of any criminal intercourse, and offered to submit to the most rigorous test. It must be owned at once, that the habits of society must have been very barbarous and gross in which any of these occurrences could have taken place: but those who are acquainted with the habits of the agricultural classes in some parts of England at the beginning of this century, will not think it *impossible* that it may all have happened without any *crime*. Cyprian shows his feeling of the monstrous nature of the circumstances related, and recommends to Pomponius various degrees of penance according to the degrees of immodesty.

We gain very little additional light from this letter, either as to his own opinions, or those which prevailed in the Church at large on the subject in

<sup>1</sup> Quæ in statu suo esse, et continentiam firmiter tenere decreverint.

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<sup>2</sup> Quod  
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hand. It is fully established that the virgins he speaks of were those who had in some well-known way signified that they had taken upon them the character of perpetual virginity<sup>1</sup>; but yet this is so far from being considered as absolutely binding them to persevere under all circumstances, that, whilst he holds out as before the reward of virginity to those who persevered in modesty and chastity; he distinctly recommends marriage to those who were unable or unwilling to continue in their resolution<sup>2</sup>. It is likewise observable that there is none of the excited and rhetorical language which we find in his earlier tract; although we may perceive that he expresses with great energy his feelings of abhorrence of the conduct of the guilty persons, and of ardent desire for their restoration. But there is not that panegyric of the state itself which was so conspicuous in the tract. It may, therefore, not unfairly be argued, that experience had rendered him more cautious and less sanguine. It is likewise perfectly clear from his advice, that those who were either unable or unwilling to preserve absolute continency

<sup>1</sup> See above. Other passages are, *Si ex fide se Christo dicaverunt*; and, *Virginem suam sibi dicatam, et sanctitati suæ destinatam*. He likewise alludes to celibates of the other sex, *Qui se castraverunt propter regnum cœlorum*.

<sup>2</sup> *Quod si ex fide se Christo dicaverunt, pudice et caste sine ulla fabula perseverent; ita fortes et stabiles præmium virginitatis expectent. Si autem perseverare nolunt vel non possunt, melius est nubant, quam in ignem delictis suis cadant.*

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should marry<sup>1</sup>, that the profession of virginity did not in those days amount to a vow for life, and that the opinion of Cyprian himself would have been against its being made so.

This is a calm view of these transactions. It is obvious that they were confined to a mere corner of the universal Church. There is no evidence whatever that the irregularities complained of in the earlier paper existed beyond the city of which Cyprian was one of the priests; and it is evident that those mentioned in the latter one were confined to the diocese of Pomponius, else we should have heard of similar complaints from other quarters. But they have been magnified and dwelt upon as though they had been universally prevalent; and occasion has been thence taken to disparage the piety and invalidate the authority of the Church of that period: whereas it is evident from St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians that irregularities and crimes equally extraordinary occurred in some quarters, even in the apostolic age. What wonder if they had sprung up in greater abundance, (of which, however, we have not the slightest proof,) as soon as the Apostles quitted this earthly scene?

It may, perhaps, have been expected, from the great stress which has been laid upon the point by Mr. Taylor, that I should mention that Cyprian had

<sup>1</sup> Si autem perseverare nolunt, vel non possunt, melius est nubant, quam in ignem delictis suis cadant.

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<sup>2</sup> Non i  
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sanctioned celibacy by his own example; but such does not appear to have been the case. His biographer, Pontius, does indeed mention it as an extraordinary circumstance that, in the very dawn of his conversion, before he became a Christian, he had, by an unusual grace, begun to discipline himself by self-denial in the desires of the flesh, under the persuasion that he should thus be better prepared to receive God's truth<sup>1</sup>, and he may *perhaps* mean that he bound himself to strict chastity. But nothing more can be gathered from the words without the advantage of Mr. Taylor's comment: and there is a subsequent passage which appears to imply that he was a married man<sup>2</sup>. Indeed Bishop Pearson understood it in that sense, and I do not see how without violence it could admit any other. I do not lay any great stress upon the circumstance; but it is only another instance of the great doubtfulness, to say the least, of some of Mr. Taylor's most confident assertions. I will merely mention further

<sup>1</sup> Inter fidei suæ prima rudimenta nihil aliud credidit Deo dignum, quam si continentiam tueretur: tunc enim posse idoneum fieri pectus, et sensum ad plenam viri capacitatem pervenire, si concupiscentiam carnis robusto atque integro sanctimonix vigore calcaret. Quis unquam tanti miraculi meminit? Nondum secunda nativitas novum hominem splendore toto divinæ lucis oculaverat, et jam veteres et pristinas tenebras sola lucis paratura vincebat.

<sup>2</sup> Non illum penuria, non dolor fregit: non uxoris suadela deflexit: non proprii corporis dira pœna concussit.

that these two tracts of Cyprian are only about a fortieth part of his works.

Contemporary with Cyprian were Gregory Thaumaturgus, and Dionysius of Alexandria. Their remains, it is true, are not large; but as they have both left some rules of discipline, if "the excellence of virginity" appeared in every page of the Fathers, and formed the centre notion of the ancient Church system, we might expect some slight notice of them; but in fact we have nothing. Dionysius indeed advises old persons not to marry again, but to give themselves to devotion; which many a person would do, whose notions were very far from exalted, and without the slightest reference to the desirableness of marriage, or the contrary, for those in earlier life. And thus we are carried on to the year 265, in which they both died: that is to say, we have arrived at a distance of time from the foundation of the Church as great as that which has now elapsed since the first years of Charles the First, without finding the general prevalence in the Church of any unscriptural doctrine on the subject of religious celibacy, or any general abuse arising from the practice. At the same time we find indications of a value generally attached to it, which might easily be pushed to excess; and language adopted by persons of high reputation, which, if dwelt upon and amplified by kindred minds, might be made very mischievous.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

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WE have now to pass over a space of nearly forty years, in which we have no indications of the progress of opinion. In the beginning of the next century died Methodius, a bishop of the Eastern Church, who has left behind him an express Treatise on Religious Celibacy. How far we have his own opinions in it may be doubtful; for it is in the form of a set of discourses by a company of professed virgins, in which different shades of opinion are expressed by the different speakers: but perhaps it is on that account more valuable, as expressing in all probability the views of the higher class of minds in the Eastern Church on the subject. I say the higher class of minds, for it contains a refined and philosophical train of thought, which could not be appreciated and would not be read by persons of ordinary capacity and attainments.

There is a perfect harmony between all the speakers upon one subject, and that is the great

advantage of celibacy, as a means of detaching us from earth, and training ourselves up for heaven. The lady in whose garden the entertainment is given, at which these discourses are supposed to be delivered, addresses them as "the boast of her exultation," and congratulates them upon "cultivating the pure meadows of Christ with unmarried hands<sup>1</sup>." The first speaker declares that "virginity is a great thing, wonderful and glorious beyond nature; and, if we must speak openly, following the Holy Scriptures, the source and flower and firstfruits of immortality, and by itself the most excellent and most honourable endowment<sup>2</sup>;" and that, "if we intend to resemble God and Christ, we shall be zealous in adorning virginity<sup>3</sup>." But if we come to inquire further whether it is celibacy in the abstract that she so admires, we shall find her saying that "it is not sufficient that the body should be kept pure, (as it is not seemly that the temple should be more handsome than the image of the divinity that inhabits it,) but that the soul, which inhabits the body, as the image does the temple, should be kept in order, and

<sup>1</sup> ΑΡΕΤΕ. Ὡ νεάνιδες, ἐμῆς ἀρχήματα μεγαλοφροσύνης, ὧ καλλιπαρθένοι, τοὺς ἀκηράτους Χριστοῦ γεωργῶσαι λειμῶνας ἀνυμφεύτους χερσὶ.

<sup>2</sup> MARCELLA. Μεγάλη τίς ἐστίν, ὑπερφνωῶς καὶ θαυμαστῆ καὶ ἔνδοξος ἡ Παρθενία· καὶ εἰ χρεὶ φανερωῶς εἰπεῖν ἐπομένην ταῖς ἀγίαις γραφαῖς, τὸ οὐθαρ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας καὶ τὸ ἄνθος καὶ ἡ ἀπαρχὴ αὐτῆς, τὸ ἄριστον καὶ κάλλιστον ἐπιτήδευμα μόνον τυγχάνει.

<sup>3</sup> Καὶ ἡμεῖς ἄρι, εἰ μέλλοιμεν καθ' ὁμοίωσιν ἔσεσθαι Θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ, φιλοτιμώμεθα τὴν παρθενίαν τιμῆν.

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<sup>4</sup> Οὐ γάρ  
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<sup>3</sup> Τὸ διὰ  
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adorned with righteousness:" and that "it is to be kept in order and cleansed by zealous and unwearied attention to the words of God<sup>1</sup>."

The next speaker is afraid that an impression might have been produced by the former to the disparagement of marriage; she therefore sets herself to counteract that impression. A few quotations will show the train of thought which Methodius thought most correct. "I seem to myself to have clearly discerned from the Scriptures, that the word did not intend, when virginity came, to do away with parentage; for it does not follow that, because the moon is greater than the stars, therefore the light of the other heavenly bodies is done away with<sup>2</sup>." "The commandment to produce children is confessedly fulfilled up to the present time<sup>3</sup>." "We must not vilify marriage, but extol and prefer virginity. For

<sup>1</sup> Οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἄφθορα τὰ σώματα τηρεῖσθαι δεῖ, ὡς περ οὐδε τοὺς ναοὺς κρείττονας ἀποφαίνεσθαι τῶν ἀγαλμάτων· ἀλλὰ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀγάλματα τῶν σωμάτων οὐσας θεραπεύεσθαι χρὴ κοσμουμένας δικαιοσύνη. Θεραπεύονται δὲ καὶ ἀποσμήχονται τότε μᾶλλον, ὅποτε ἀόκνως κατακούειν τῶν θείων ἀμιλλώμενοι λόγων, μὴ ἀπολήγῃσι πρὶν αὐτοῦ ἐφάψασθαι ὃ ἐστιν ἀληθές, ἐπὶ σοφῶν ἀφικνούμενοι θύρας.

This speaker is made to quote Rev. xiv. 3, as absolutely defining the number of virgins of both sexes.

<sup>2</sup> ΤΗΘΡΟΗΙΛΑ.—Ἐγὼ γὰρ καθεωρακέναι μοι δοκῶ σαφῶς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, ὅτι παρθενίος ἐλθούσης, ὁ λόγος οὐκ ἀνέϊλε πάντη τὴν τεκνογονίαν. Οὐ γὰρ ἐπειδὴ τῶν ἀστέρων ἢ σελήνη μείζων ἐστὶ παρὰ τοῦτο τῶν ἄλλων ἀστέρων τὸ φῶς ἀναιρεῖται.

<sup>3</sup> Τὸ διάταγμα τὸ ἐπὶ τεκνοποιίας ὁμολογουμένως μέχρι καὶ νῦν συμπληροῦται.

it does not follow that because honey is sweeter and more agreeable than other things, therefore every thing else is in consequence to be reckoned bitter<sup>1</sup>." Then after quoting 1 Cor. vii. 37, 38, she subjoins, "For assuredly the word does not, by recommending the better and the sweeter thing, forbid and do away with the other, but allots to each person in possession that which is suitable and profitable for him<sup>2</sup>." "For the inspired word deems fit to compare the Church to a meadow decked with abundant and many-coloured flowers, varied and adorned with the blossoms, not only of virginity, but also of parentage and voluntary widowhood<sup>3</sup>."

The third speaker replies to the commandment to "increase and multiply," quoted by the previous speaker, that this is sufficiently fulfilled by the spiritual increase and multiplying in the Church; and presses the point that St. Paul's recommendation of marriage was not in the abstract, but simply as a remedy for incontinence. But following him she

<sup>1</sup> Μη βδελύσσεσθαι παιδοποιίαν, ἐπαινεῖν δὲ καὶ προτιμᾶν Ἄγνοιαν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπειδὴ τῶν ἄλλων ἡδύτερόν ἐστι καὶ προσηνέστερον τὸ μέλι, τὰ λοιπὰ δὴ τῇ ταύτῃ νομιζέσθαι προσήκει πικρά.

<sup>2</sup> Οὐ γὰρ δὴ τῇ τοῦ κρείττονος καὶ γλυκύτερου παραθέσει, τὸ ἕτερον ἀνεῖλεν ἀπαγορεύσας ὁ λόγος· ἀλλ' ἐκάστῳ τὸ οἰκεῖον καὶ λυσιτελὲς ἀπονέμειν διαθεσμοθετεῖ. Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ οὐδέπω συνεχώρησε παρθενίας τυχεῖν.

<sup>3</sup> Ἀνηροτάτῳ γὰρ καὶ ποικιλοτάτῳ λειμῶνι ἀπεικάζεσθαι λόγος ἔχει προφητικὸς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, οὐ μόνον τοῖς τῆς ἀγνείας πεποικιλμένην καὶ κατεστημένην ἄνθεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς τῆς τεκνογονίας καὶ τοῖς ἐγκρατείας.

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<sup>2</sup> ΑΡΕΤΕ.  
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expressly *recommends* those persons to marry, who after professing religious celibacy, find that they cannot keep their resolution, or have not the wish to keep it<sup>1</sup>.

It is not my intention to follow all the speakers. It is sufficient to say, that they support the grand idea of the perfection of the virgin state by various allegories; and at length the lady who gives the entertainment, winds up the subject by sundry cautions and advices, showing that although they thus extolled celibacy as a means of perfection, yet that the strictest celibacy was not by itself available: that pride and vainglory, and despising of others, and love of money and selfishness, if cherished, tarnished all its beauty and rendered it unavailing<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ΤΗΛΙΑ.—Τοὺς κατὰ πρόφασιν κενόδοξίας τῶν ἀκρατεστέρων ἐπὶ τοῦτο παρεληλυθότας ἀποβάλλεται, συμβουλευὼν γαμεῖν.

Προκρίνων τὸν γάμον τῆς ἀσχημοσύνης, ἐπὶ τῶν ἐλομένων μὲν παρθενεύειν, δυσανασχετούντων δὲ τὸ μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἀποκιμόντων· καὶ λόγῳ μὲν, δι' αἰδῶ τὴν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους, ἀυχούντων ἐπιμένειν, ἔργῳ δὲ οὐδὲ μακρότερον ἐνδιατρίψαι ἐναμένων τῷ εὐνουχισμῷ.

<sup>2</sup> ΑΡΕΤΕ.—Οὐ γὰρ ὅπου τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα τῆς κατὰ συνουσίαν ἄγευστον ἡδονῆς φιλοτιμεῖται τηρεῖν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν ἄλλων μὴ κρᾶτιῶν, ἀγνεῖαν τιμᾶ.

Οὐδέ γε ὅταν, πρὸς τὰς ἔξωθεν ἐπιθυμίας διαπονηῖ καρτερῶν, ὑπεραίρηται δὲ φυσιοῦμενος, ἀντὶ δὴ ταύτῃ τῷ δύνασθαι τῶν τῆς σάρκος ὑπεκκαυμάτων κρατεῖν, καὶ πάντας ὡς οὐδὲν ἐξουδενῶν, ἡγεῖται ἀγνεῖαν τιμᾶν.

Οὐδέ γε ὅπου ἐναβρύνεται τις χρήμασι, τιμᾶν αὐτὴν σπουδάζει.

Οὐδέ γε ὁ ἑαυτοῦ ὑπερφυῶς ἡγούμενος φιλεῖν, καὶ τὸ ἑαυτῷ μόνῳ συμφέρον σπουδάζων σκοπεῖν, ἄφροντις δὲ τῶν πλεθίων, ἀγνεῖαν τιμᾶ.

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There is a discussion at the end between the lady who is supposed to have heard and reported this discussion, and the gentleman to whom she reported it, showing that different opinions were held as to the excellence of virginity when free from sensual desire, or when held in spite of it; in which the palm of *merit* appears to be given to the latter.

Upon the whole, although there is much in this tract to curb and check extravagant views on the subject of virginity, I think it must be admitted that the general tone of it is exaggerated and unscriptural; that it goes too much upon the assumption of the superior corporal purity of virginity, which at most is barely hinted at in Scripture; and that the concluding discussion is at variance with the spirit of the Scripture and of more primitive times, which regarded that state as one of privilege and not of merit, and certainly did not suppose any violent struggle or conflict in maintaining it. There is, however, a little inconsistency; for in a previous part of the treatise we find the sentiment that, "the word of God has not granted to all the privilege of virginity<sup>1</sup>." Perhaps it is safest to regard this work rather as a philosophical recreation, embodying the various sentiments afloat in the Church on the subject, than as a didactic or hortatory treatise.

Methodius died about the year 302 or 303; and his treatise must have been written at some indefi-

<sup>1</sup> See note <sup>2</sup>, p. 108.

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<sup>2</sup> Capit.

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nite time previous. It probably had considerable weight. But whatever importance we may attach to the work of any individual writer, we begin now to have evidence of a different kind, viz. that of synodical canons, some of which show the feeling of particular branches of the Church, and others of the Church universal.

The first Church rules which come to our notice bearing on the subject are those of Eliberis in Spain. Their enactments as regards virgins will not be looked upon as very rigorous. We have no prohibition to marry, but the reverse. If a virgin is debauched<sup>1</sup>, she is kept from communion for one year only, without any other penance, if she has been only once guilty, *and marries* the person with whom she has sinned. This is not much like "forbidding to marry." At the same time we find very unequivocal symptoms of discouragement given to the marriage of clergymen. It is true that there were married clergymen in the Church<sup>2</sup>; but still

<sup>1</sup> *Concilium Eliberitanum*. A. C. 313.

Capit. XIV.—Virgines quæ virginitatem non custodierint, si eosdem, qui eas violaverint, duxerint et tenuerint maritos; eo quod solas nuptias violaverint, post annum sine pœnitentia reconciliari debebunt. Vel si alios cognoverint viros; eo quod mœchatae sint, placuit, per quinquennii tempora acta legitima pœnitentia, admitti eas ad communionem oportere.

<sup>2</sup> Capit. LXV.—Si ejus clerici uxor fuerit mœchata, et scierit eam maritus suus mœchari, et non eam statim projecerit, nec in sine accipiat communionem; ne ab iis, qui exemplum bonæ conversationis esse debent, ab iis videantur scelerum magisteria procedere.

the marriage of clergymen was discouraged by a distinct rule of this council<sup>1</sup>. What was the ground of this discouragement we are not told. Something might be due to the consideration that the clergy were all supported out of one common stock, and that the addition of a wife and children was so much added to the burdens of the Church. But no doubt it was partly from the same causes which produced the general exaltation of virginity. The days of persecution were not yet gone by; and it was looked upon as a mark of too much worldliness of mind, and too little self-command, for one whose whole business was to train others to indifference to the world, to wish to entangle himself in worldly cares, and to indulge in earthly pleasures. And, therefore, although from necessity many married persons were made clergymen, because, otherwise the needs of the Church could not be supplied, yet when an unmarried man was ordained, it was expected of him that he should continue unmarried. And as in some cases this regulation was evaded by clergymen introducing females into their houses under the character of friends and housekeepers; this practice was forbidden, no doubt to avoid scandal and the evils every one would foresee as likely to arise<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Capit. XXXIII. — Placuit in totum prohiberi episcopis, presbyteris, et diaconibus, vel omnibus clericis positus in ministerio, abstinere se a conjugibus suis et non generare filios; quicumque vero fecerit, ab honore clericatus exterminetur.

<sup>2</sup> Capit. XXVII.—Episcopus, vel quilibet alius clericus, aut

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<sup>1</sup> Κατὰ  
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<sup>2</sup> Can.

There is no reason to suppose that any actual moral inconvenience was yet found to arise from these enactments: the reason I have given sufficiently accounts for the 27th cano.n.

This Council was held very early in the fourth century: and what is there enforced we find taken up in exactly the same spirit in the East. In the Council of Ancyra, held A. D. 314, it is ordained that unless a person declared at the time of his ordination that he wished to reserve to himself the right of marrying, he should be considered as taking a vow of celibacy; and that if, being ordained without any such declaration, he married, he should be deprived of his function<sup>1</sup>. These Canons were signed by eighteen bishops of Asia Minor, Pontus, and other parts of the East. The Council of Neo-Cæsarea, held about the same time, declares that if a priest marries after ordination, he is to be degraded<sup>2</sup>. These enactments show a growing feeling in the Church that marriage was unsuitable for a clergyman; but it must not thence be hastily concluded, that the idea of pollution was attached to marriage by all who united in making these regulations. The provision for the clergy was not then so abundant in

*sororem, aut filiam virginem dicatam Deo, tantum secum habeat; extraneam nequaquam habere placuit.*

<sup>1</sup> *Κανὼν α΄.—Ἐὶ ἐμαρτύρατο καὶ ἔφασκεν χρῆσαι γαμῆσαι, μὴ δυνάμενοι οὕτως μένειν, οὗτοι μετὰ ταῦτα γαμήσαντες ἔστωσαν ἐν τῇ ὑπηρεσίᾳ.*

<sup>2</sup> Can. i.

proportion to their number as it afterwards became ; and a married clergyman was therefore generally compelled to bring a greater burden upon the Church funds than an unmarried one. On that account a bishop in particular, as being the treasurer of the Church, was regarded with suspicion if he was married, because he lay under a strong temptation to apply too large a portion of the common stock to the needs of his own family. But if the marriage of the clergy was not in this way objectionable, it was so on another ground, viz. that it compelled them, as it does many of us whose incomes are insufficient, to encumber themselves with worldly cares, and to engage in worldly business, in a degree which not only operated unfavourably upon their own piety, but also actually prevented them, however well-intentioned, from giving that attention, that devotedness of heart, that portion of their time and talents to the service of the Church, which their unencumbered brethren in the ministry could readily give. That they did think celibacy a higher state than matrimony, we have seen ; but when we find the same persons protesting that they do not wish to cast a slur upon matrimony, we are bound to believe them equally on that side : and the very fact that they gave a person the power, when ordained, of reserving to himself, if so disposed, the power of marrying, proves that they did not think marriage a pollution, otherwise they would have altogether prohibited it. But it seems to be clear that, when

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unmarried men could be had, they preferred them; and that nothing but the deficiency of an unmarried clergy induced them to consent to leave a man at liberty.

I have omitted to mention that the 19th Canon of the Council of Ancyra contains two enactments concerning virgins of either sex, viz. that those who marry should be regarded as bigamists, and punished with the same penance, and that virgins could not be allowed to live with unmarried men<sup>1</sup>. It is easy to see incidentally, that a second marriage was discouraged in the early Church; but this Canon does not refer to a second marriage after the death of a first wife, but during her lifetime; for Bishop Beveridge<sup>2</sup> remarks, that no penance was ever imposed upon a layman for a second marriage.

But the Canon shows unequivocally that the profession of virgins was publicly made, and was itself the natural consequence of the public profession; for the vow had been made to the Church, and the breach of it therefore naturally involved Church censures. Nor, supposing the vow thus publicly made, was the Canon without scriptural foundation; for St. Paul expressly censures those widows, who, after *professing* widowhood, married, as having "waxed

<sup>1</sup> Κανὼν ιθ'. — "Ὅσοι παρθενίαν ἐπαγγελλόμενοι, ἀθετοῦσι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, τὸν τῶν διγάμων ὄρον ἐκπληροῦτωσαν. Τὰς μὲν τοι συνερχομένας παρθένοις τισὶν, ὡς ἀδελφάς, ἐκωλύσαμεν.

<sup>2</sup> In his remarks on the seventh canon of the Council of Neo-Cæsarea.

wanton against Christ;" and what more natural than to extend the principle to virgins? The great error lay in the accepting a public profession.

The latter part of the Canon was, so far as appears, nothing but a provision to avoid scandal. It would be absurd to deny that an unmarried man and woman might live together in the same house in perfect purity and correctness; but there can be as little doubt that the *enforcement* of the vow of celibacy, or the imposing a penance upon the breaking of it, must lead to many evasions; and this was one of them, that those who became personally attached would seek to gratify their partiality, by living together as brother and sister. There is no need of supposing any hypoerisy in this, or any impurity in the majority of cases; but in an impure age, impurity would be suspected, and was in some cases likely to take place, and therefore the Canon was made. The real evil lay in the public profession of celibacy. It must be remembered, however, that this was not a canon of the universal Church.

These regulations, then, so far as we have yet seen, were not general. In the Council of Nice, which was a council of the whole Church, an attempt was made to introduce a regulation, not indeed restricting the marriage of the clergy, but requiring that in future those who were married should live as though unmarried. By what number of persons it was supported does not appear: and as it presupposes a previously established law, that those

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who entered holy orders unmarried should remain so, (which clearly did not exist,) there may be some doubt whether the proposition made to the council was so extreme as this. We are told, however, by the same authorities that it was opposed by Paphnutius, an Egyptian bishop, himself an example of celibacy in his own person; but in the true principle maintained by the primitive Church as a body hitherto, opposed to laying upon others a burden which might prove too great for them to bear. It has been represented by Mr. Taylor, as though he were a solitary opponent; but this is to forget the fact that the proposal was *rejected by the council*: and nothing whatever was enacted by them on the subject of virgins of the other sex<sup>1</sup>. It is clear, therefore, that a majority of the members of the council, and by natural consequence a majority in the Catholic Church, however much disposed to exalt virginity, had not yet come to make the observance of the vow compulsory upon any one. It appears, however, if the historians were rightly informed, that it was acknowledged by Paphnutius to be an ancient custom in the Church for those who entered holy orders unmarried to remain so, although no absolute law had been passed to that effect: but the canon of the council of Ancyra, cited above, shows that although probably very general, it was not universal. The great error of Popery on this subject was not therefore as yet adopted by the

<sup>1</sup> See Socr. *Hist. Ecc.* i. 8. Sozom. i. 22.

Church at large, whatever progress it may have made in particular localities.

And now we have arrived at another era, the Nicene, which Mr. Taylor makes our grand resting-place after the apostolical age, and which he charges with all sorts of corruptions; and what do we find, up to this time, to have been the opinion and practice of the Church on the subject of religious celibacy? There can be no doubt that it was recognised by the great body of Christians as in itself preferable to marriage, and more perfect than that state; and there can be as little doubt that it was on that account regarded as more suitable for clergymen, and that it was by many pressed upon all who were willing to receive it. But we do not as yet find any indication that the Church at large had committed itself either to the enforcement of the vow of virgins and widows, or to the requirement of any vow upon the part of clergymen. One canon only of the universal Church bears upon the subject, viz. that which required that bishops, priests, and deacons, or any ecclesiastical officers, should not have any females to live familiarly with them but near relations<sup>1</sup>. This regulation shows that *in point of fact* celibacy was common with the ecclesiastical orders; and the

<sup>1</sup> *Concilium Nicænum.* A. C. 325.

Κανὼν γ'.—Ἀπηγόρευσε καθόλου ἡ μεγάλη σύνοδος, μήτε ἐπισκόπῳ, μήτε πρεσβυτέρῳ, μήτε διακόνῳ, μήτε ὄλως τινὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ κλήρῳ, ἐξεῖναι συνείσακτον ἔχειν· πλὴν εἰ μὴ ἄρα μητέρα, ἢ ἀδελφήν, ἢ θεῖαν, ἢ ἡ μόνα πρόσωπα πᾶσαν ὑποψίαν διαπέφυγε.

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very reason given for it, viz. "to avoid suspicion," whilst it shows that the Church was anxious to avoid the appearance of evil, and that the evils of the celibacy of the clergy were beginning to be apparent, by its very silence authorizes us in inferring that they were not as yet great or general. Indeed Bishop Beveridge<sup>1</sup> informs us that the single case of Leontius, who kept with him a professed virgin of the name of Eustolia, was the cause of this canon being made.

We see then how unfounded are the charges of Mr. Taylor against the primitive Catholic Church up to this great era. For we have passed over a space of time as long as that from the fifteenth year of Queen Elizabeth to this time without any corruption of doctrine on the subject of religious celibacy which can be fairly laid to the charge of the Catholic Church, and without any *general* moral evil produced by the exaggerated value put upon celibacy by the mass of the people, and by some distinguished writers, who, we must grant, do not appear since the time of Clement of Alexandria to have met with any contradiction. So that the real state of things seems to have been this; that since the time of Cyprian, exaggerated notions of the merit of religious celibacy appear to have been gaining ground in many directions; that the public profession of virginity, unheard of in the earliest age, had been spreading, and was *probably* become general; that a very considerable number of the bishops and clergy, *possibly* a majority

<sup>1</sup> In his annotations on this canon.

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of them, professed celibacy; that in *some* parts of the Church this vow was enforced by penance or degradation; that the improprieties and scandals which Tertullian had foreseen from anything which should operate to enforce celibacy, did in some, perhaps many, instances appear; and that matters appeared *tending* to the universal prohibition of marriage to the clergy, and the universal enforcement of the vow, by whomsoever taken. And if Mr. Taylor had confined himself to such a statement, no contradiction would have been necessary. Every age of the Church has its actual evils and its evil tendencies: but, thank God, the monstrous charge that, upon *any* point, corruption of doctrine, and consequent corruption of morals, prevailed throughout the primitive Church, down to the Nicene era, cannot be substantiated.

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## PART III.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE plan I have proposed to myself is really to do what Mr. Taylor promised to do, but did not fulfil; viz. to give persons the power of judging for themselves by a direct and explicit chain of evidence, as to the doctrine and practice of celibacy in the Primitive Church, and in so doing to rebut whatever part of his charges against the ancient Church may be untrue: for that there should be no truth in them is not to be imagined. No person of character, no person who thought himself candid, (both of which I readily accord to Mr. Taylor,) could have made such statements without *any* foundation in fact. There are then five principal points to which I have endeavoured to confine my attention. First, to show that no corruption on this subject, whether of doctrine or of practice, other than such abuses as any the divinest gift is liable to, can be traced to the sub-apostolical age; secondly, therefore, to disprove his attack upon the integrity of the rule, “semper

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ubique et ab omnibus," as applied for a test of doctrine or practice; thirdly, to show, in opposition to his statement, by what *degrees* corruptions of doctrine or practice came in; fourthly to prove, in regard to the post Nicene Church, that the awful charge of apostacy, on the subject of marriage, cannot be substantiated against her; and lastly to consider the practical lessons we may draw from the whole subject. That plan therefore obliges me to carry on my quotation of passages through the next century: and although there will necessarily be some tediousness in the process, and it cannot be made so entertaining as a more discursive style of writing, yet I trust it will be satisfactory to those who simply wish to know the truth of early Church history. And if I confine myself strictly to this branch of the subject, and take no notice of other charges brought by Mr. Taylor against the ancient Church, it is because he himself in the opening of his subject lays the chief stress of his arguments upon this branch, and because I feel this alone sufficiently ample for the time I am enabled to spare from other duties. Moreover my object is not merely to reply to Mr. Taylor, but to trace the history of religious celibacy; and to derive such lessons from it as may be useful in the present day.

I shall therefore go back a little from the period to which I had arrived, the era of the council of Nice, to mark the language and feeling of a religious layman on the subject; the more especially as we

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may see in the sentiments of a layman much more exactly the *prevalent* feeling than in those of a clergyman. He is giving an account of Christianity for the use of the heathen; and, discoursing on its power of redeeming men from the dominion of lust, shows its effects upon married life; and from thence he proceeds to show that it should reach not only the actions, but also the thoughts. Foresceing, however, that his heathen readers would be apt to think his doctrine impracticable, he proceeds to say<sup>1</sup>, "nor let any one think it difficult to *curb* pleasure, and to confine it, naturally disposed as it is to roam, within the bounds of chastity and modesty: for the idea of even *conquering* it is held forth to mankind, and numbers have retained the blessed and unbroken virginity of the body; and there are many who enjoy with the greatest pleasure that heavenly me-

<sup>1</sup> *Divin. Institut.* vi. 23. Nec vero aliquis existimet difficile esse frænos imponere voluptati, eamque vagam et errantem castitatis pudicitiaque limitibus includere: cum propositum sit hominibus eam vincere; ac plurimi beatam atque incorruptam corporis integritatem retinuerint, multique sint qui hoc cœlesti genere vitæ felicissime perfruantur. Quod quidem Deus non ita fieri præcepit tanquam astringat, (quia generari homines oportet,) sed tanquam sinat; scit enim quantam his affectibus imposuerit necessitatem. Si quis hoc, inquit, facere potuerit, habebit eximiam incomparabilemque mercedem. Quod continentia genus quasi fastigium est omniumque consummatio virtutum. Ad quam siquis eniti atque eluctari potuerit, hunc servum Dominus, hunc discipulum Magister agnoscit: hic terram triumphabit: hic erit consimilis Deo, qui virtutem Dei cepit.

thod of living. Which, however, God has not so enjoined to be done, as though he bound us to it, (because it is necessary that the human race should be perpetuated,) but as though he made a privilege of it: for he knows what degree of necessity he has imposed upon these passions. If any one, he says, has the power of doing this, he will have a distinguished and incomparable reward. And this kind of continence is as it were the topstone and finishing of all virtues: and if any one by strenuous efforts can reach it, such a servant his Master will acknowledge, such a disciple his Teacher: he shall triumph over earth; he shall be like unto God, because he has attained the excellency of God."

This passage indeed, shows that Lactantius had a very high, and somewhat exaggerated notion of the excellence of virginity, but still there is no discouragement given to marriage; whilst he regards pure celibacy as the *perfection* of bodily purity, he yet cordially allows the modesty and chastity of marriage; and regards the former as a state to which God has not seen fit that all should reach, but only those who have the privilege granted them: and he treats it not as a virtue in itself, so much as a special grace and ornament, which when other virtues are practised, may be added to them as a kind of finishing.

From the African Lactantius we return to the Asiatic Eusebius, the famous historian of the Church. He is valuable as illustrating the feeling with which

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celibacy was honoured in all, and matrimony discouraged in the clergy in his time; for he shows that it was not from any idea of the comparative impurity of the matrimonial connexion, but because it was supposed that the peculiar business of the clergy, viz. the saving of men's souls, was a more important business than building up a family. In fact no sensual idea appears to have entered into his thoughts in speaking on the subject. He simply took the facts as they were, and discusses the question, what was the reason of the apparent opposition between the Old Testament and the New upon that subject? Why were the ancients more intent upon perpetuating the race than Christians<sup>1</sup>?

For this he gives three reasons: 1. That there is not the same motive for multiplying the species as formerly, every corner of the world being full: 2. That men have a greater pressure of business and a less facility of procuring sustenance than formerly, and are consequently, if parents, more liable to be drawn away from the care of the soul; and upon that head he quotes St. Paul in those passages which I have myself cited: 3. That there is a more pressing need of persons disengaged from worldly cares to spread the knowledge of God, since Christ has opened his kingdom to the whole world. His language so entirely confirms what I have formerly said upon the

<sup>1</sup> *Demonstr. Evang.* i. 9. Τί δῆτα οἱ μὲν περὶ γάμους καὶ παιδοποιίας πλεῖστον εἰσῆγον σπουδὴν, ἡμῶν δὲ τοῦτο παραμερίζεται τὸ μέρος;

motives for clerical celibacy in those days, that I shall translate his words<sup>1</sup>.

“ We may see with our own eyes multitudes of races and nations, throughout the cities and villages, and scattered habitations, through the doctrine of the Gospel of our Saviour, hastening together to God, and flocking to the divine learning of the doctrine of the Gospel; for whom it is highly desirable that there should be a possibility of supplying the teachers and preachers of the word of godliness, free from all the ties of life and from distracting cares. Chiefly, therefore, do they as a matter of duty at the present time study to abstain from marriage, that they may have leisure for more important things; forasmuch as they are busied in begetting a divine and spiritual seed, not of one or two children only, but have undertaken the nurture of a thronging and numerous multitude, and their godly education, and the care of their conduct for the

<sup>1</sup> Θεῶν διὰ τῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν εὐαγγελικῆς διδασκαλίας, μυρία ἔθνη καὶ λαοὺς, κατὰ τε πόλεις καὶ χώρας καὶ ἀγροὺς, πάρεσθιν ἡμῖν ὀφθαλμοῖς ὄρα ἡμῶν σπεύδοντα κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ, καὶ συντρέχοντα ἐπὶ τὴν κατὰ Θεὸν μάθησιν τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς διδασκαλίας· οἷς ἀγαπητὸν εὐνοεῖσθαι ἐξαρκεῖν τοὺς διδασκάλους καὶ κήρυκας τοῦ τῆς θεοσεβείας λόγου, πάντων ἀπολελυμένους τῶν τοῦ βίου δεσμῶν καὶ τῶν πολυμερῶν φροντίδων. Μάλιστα δ' οὖν τούτοις ἀναγκαιῶς τὰ νῦν διὰ τὴν περὶ τὰ κρείττω σχολῆν, ἢ τῶν γάμων ἀναχώρησις σπουδάζεται· ἅτε περὶ τὴν ἔνθεον καὶ ἄσαρκον παιδοποιεῖν ἀσχολουμένους οὐχ ἑνὸς οὐδὲ δυεῖν παιδῶν, ἀλλ' ἀθρώως μυρίου πλήθους τὴν παιδοτροφίαν καὶ τὴν κατὰ Θεὸν παιδεύσιν τῆς τε ἄλλης ἀγωγῆς τοῦ βίου τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ἀναδεδεγμένους.

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rest of their life." In the same spirit he says<sup>1</sup> that "it is *fitting* that those who are busied about the service of God should abstain for the future from matrimonial intercourse;" but that for others "the word almost advises marriage." So far again is Eusebius from forbidding to marry, or from exalting virginity unduly.

In his time Christian hermits and ascetics begin to attract attention, whether living solitary or in a kind of societies: but although we first hear of them now, it is evident that the habit was no new thing. It was not peculiar to any religion; but equally practised by the worshippers of the true God and by idolaters. Elijah was evidently in the habit of retiring into solitude; and the same may be said of John the Baptist. The schools of the prophets were a species of religious communities. And so throughout the East, from time immemorial, false religions have had their solitaries and their monastic communities. Philo testifies to the prevalence of religious communities in his time, worshippers of the

<sup>1</sup> Τοσοῦτον ἐπισημηνάμενοι, ὅτι καὶ κατὰ τοὺς τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης νόμους οὐ πᾶμπαν ἀπηγορεύεται τὰ τῆς παιδοποιίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτῃ τὰ παραπλήσια τοῖς πάλαι θεοφιλέσιν διατέτακται. Χρῆναι γὰρ φησιν ὁ λόγος τὸν ἐπίσκοπον γεγονέναι μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα. Πλὴν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἱερωμένοις καὶ περὶ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ θεραπείαν ἀσχολουμένοις ἀνέχειν λοιπὸν σφᾶς αὐτοὺς προσήκει τῆς γαμικῆς ὁμιλίας· ὅσοι δὲ μὴ τῆς τοσαύτης ἠξίωται ἱερουργίας, τούτοις ὁ λόγος καθυφίσει μονονουχὶ διαβῆδην ἅπασιν κηρύττων, ὅτι δὴ τίμιος κ. τ. λ.

true God, readers of the Jewish Scriptures, given to fasting and celibacy, to study and devotion. But though he expressly affirms that they were to be found in many places, it is remarkable that after his time we find them in Egypt alone ; and that we do not meet with them again, until they are clad in the garb of Christianity. It may perhaps be argued from the circumstance that Clement of Alexandria dissuades<sup>1</sup> wealthy men from renouncing their property, that some in his time adopted this principal feature of the ascetic life : but this does not necessarily follow, for he is only arguing as to the proper understanding of a passage of Scripture. (Matt. xix. 21.) And by instancing the old stoics as persons who renounced worldly goods, he seems to imply that in his time there was no *class* who did so. So again he uses the term *μονήρης βίος*, *a single life*, which afterwards signified the ascetic discipline ; but he uses it simply to signify a state of celibacy, which he compares with matrimony, and thinks inferior in usefulness. There is no indication of any *class* making a profession of it. When, therefore, we encounter the ascetics and hermits and monks in the writings of Eusebius and Athanasius and subsequent writers,

<sup>1</sup> He shows that we may renounce it in spirit whilst we retain the use of it to the honour of God and the good of others. *De Divite servando*, 13.16. He says, § 14. Οὐκ ἄρα ἀπορρίπτέον τὰ καὶ τοὺς πέλας ὠφελοῦντα χρήματα· κτήματα γὰρ ἐστὶ κτητὰ ὄντα, καὶ χρήματα χρήσιμα ὄντα, καὶ εἰς χρῆσιν ἀνθρώπων παρεσκευασμένα ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

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we must remember that religious seclusion did not arise from Christian celibacy, but was the produce of natural religion in a certain class of minds, grafted upon the faith and profession of the Gospel. The ascetics and cœnobites already existing in Egypt before the Gospel was brought there, would find something in the Gospel which suited themselves. The Christians who met together *daily* for devotional exercises in Jerusalem, who gave up all their goods and had all things in common, would carry the same feelings with them when they were scattered abroad every where preaching the word. And the devout worshipper of one God in Egypt, would have a mind prepared for the reception of the Gospel, and would not find that he must necessarily change his characteristic habits when he received it. If he was in habitual celibacy, it was rather an accident of the system, than the end of it. He wished to withdraw his heart from the world, and therefore he would not involve himself in worldly cares. It was not from any aversion to marriage itself, but to its worldly entanglements. Shall we say that he would have done much better to mingle in the world, and set a good example, and exert himself for the benefit of his fellow creatures? No doubt that, *if well performed*, would have been a more honourable part; but it was far from being an easy one. He felt it much easier to retire, and endeavour to save his own soul, by training it to the habits which he thought likely to prevail in heaven; to reading and devotion,

and godly conversation, and intercourse with God. Neither was he inactive and void of charity. He read in order that he might instruct others, either by writing or by teaching under the direction of the bishop, or some more famous hermit. Or he laboured with his hands at some mechanical or laborious employment, and the produce of his industry he bestowed where it was needed. And if a brother required aid, whether for body or soul, or a heathen came in his way whom he thought likely to be a convert, or if from any undefined cause he felt an attachment to any one, he gave himself to promote his eternal good. Moreover he was much in prayer. He showed his charity in prayer for others; what he could not do himself, God could do. It might be the vocation of others to be wealthy, and to use wealth aright,—to marry and beget children, and bring them up for Christ, to enter into the arduous duties of the Christian ministry and the government of Churches; for himself he preferred not to mix with men, lest he should become such as they, but to cultivate continual intercourse with God, and to bring down His Almighty Spirit by prayer to influence the hearts of others. Who shall say that he was wrong? Who shall say that prayer may not oftentimes do more than the most active exertions? Who shall say that we in this day should not be more mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds of sin, if many of us were less busy, and more prayerful? Who shall say that we are not as

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much indebted even now to the prayers of the shy and secluded, few as they are, as to the activity of the bustling and vigorous? Is not each useful in his vocation?

To illustrate what I have said I will tell a story I once read in Ephrem Syrus. It is indeed from memory, but the main features of it are correct. Father Abram was a hermit, who had given a handsome fortune into the hands of trustees, and had retired from the city of Alexandria into a lonely place in its vicinity, and by his devotional and quiet habits, by his meekness and unflinching charity, had gained the veneration and love of all that knew him. There was likewise a heathen town in its neighbourhood, which had resisted the efforts of missionary upon missionary: every one returned baffled and dispirited. At length the bishop and some of the clergy bethought them of Abram, and hoped that his deep piety and venerable character might prevail where no one else had succeeded. He combated their persuasions for some time; but at length he suffered himself to be ordained, and undertook the mission. But he did not undertake it in the ordinary way. He did not go and preach to them: he went and built them a church, though he knew well that there was not a Christian in the place. He went to his trustees, requested from them the relics of his fortune, collected materials and workmen, and superintended the erection of a beautiful little temple. When it was erected he did not go through the

streets and invite the people to come and hear him *preach*; he did not invite the bishop and neighbouring clergy to celebrate the *consecration* of it by an imposing ceremonial; he went in alone and *prayed*. He made his church his dwelling, and prayer his occupation. Curiosity was excited. The inhabitants entered, and found him praying for them. They were enraged, and beat him very severely. Still he resumed his prayers, and was again beaten. But he was not to be deterred so long as life lasted, whilst his enemies became wearied of *their* occupation. One of them began to think that they were cowardly to beat one who did not resist, and ungrateful to injure one who had spent so much and who bore so much for no other perceivable end but their good. He even proposed to his neighbours to come with him and invite Father Abram to discourse to them. To bring my story to a conclusion: they heard, they believed, they were baptized. The whole place became Christian. Abram then sent to the bishop to provide some one to take charge of the Christian community; and he himself quitted his church and his converts, and returned back to his solitude.

Shall we say that such a man was useless in the world? Shall we say that such a victory as this was not well purchased by a life of solitude? Can we affirm that it could have been achieved without it?

I think my tale will speak for itself, and show that the solitary was not altogether the selfish caricature of a Christian we have been accustomed too much

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to think. He may not have been a Christian such as we see in a highly civilized and refined community: he may have mistaken the right application of Christian precepts in his own time even; but he did positive good in the world; he acted beneficially upon the minds of his contemporaries. It was for this reason no doubt that Athanasius, with the whole of his contemporaries, revered the solitaries, and acknowledged their services, although he did not himself choose that way of life. But there was a circumstance in the times in which Athanasius lived which would have attached him to them warmly, even if he had entertained no previous prejudices in their favour. We are to remember that Athanasius was in his own day the great champion of the Divinity of Christ; that he acted, and wrote, and suffered and triumphed for this great doctrine: that every event, and every institution and every individual took its hue and colouring in his eyes from its support or opposition to the cause in which he was embarked. When therefore he was engaged in this vital struggle, and the ordinary Christian population vacillated and fluctuated, and yielded to the storm of persecution, and fell in with the court doctrine whatever it might be, whilst on the other hand the ascetics held fast the true faith under every change; and not only this, but Antony the most revered and influential of their body, was so moved in the holy cause, that he broke through all the ties of habitual solitude, and that fear of the allurements of ambition

which kept him in solitude, and came once more upon the public stage of the Church for no other purpose but to lift up his voice in support of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel; can we wonder under such circumstances that Athanasius should regard him as one nearer to heaven than most men? Can we wonder that he should admire the institutions and habits which had thus preserved an unbroken band of supporters of true doctrine, when no other class in the Christian Church had faith or courage to remain unshaken? Can we wonder that he should receive with unscrupulous belief, even with trusting credulity, all the wonders these men recounted to him?

But still, it will be replied, does not this show that his feelings and prejudices were liable to run away with his judgment? Suppose we grant that it does, what does this amount to, but that we ought to read his arguments and reasonings with caution, and that we are to take his facts with a grain of allowance, when he took them from the recital of others. But what has this to do with the use we make ordinarily of Athanasius? Is it because we rely upon his *judgment* that we look upon him as one of the most valued champions of orthodoxy? Does he himself profess to *derive* his faith from reasoning? Does he regard himself as any thing more than the depository of the faith once delivered to the saints, and by the saints in every successive age handed down? of a tradition universal when he was a

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young man? He believed the truth because it was the ancient universal faith of the Church. He *confirmed* it from Scripture; but he had not *learnt* it from Scripture. If he had, he might have distrusted his judgment. But it was not the produce of his own meditations. It had been handed down from the beginning, and was consonant with Scripture; and therefore he contended and suffered for it. Athanasius therefore is of value to us, not for his judgment, but as a *witness*; as one witness amongst many; as a witness who showed that he was honest by suffering the loss of all things, and risking life itself for the truth he had received. He is valuable, moreover, as an example of what one faithful man, of unflinching courage, and unceasing perseverance, can do against the combination of all worldly power, and the timidity or faithlessness of those who ought to have supported him.

I return to give an account of Athanasius' estimate of celibacy, and of that of his contemporaries. We find that young people who were not of age, sometimes professed virginity, and that he admired this power of Christ in them which led them so to do<sup>1</sup>; we find him calling it an image of the holiness

<sup>1</sup> *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*, 51. Τίς οὖν ἀνθρώπων μετὰ θάνατον, ἢ ἄλλως, ζῶν περὶ παρθενίας ἐδίδαξε, καὶ οὐκ ἀδύνατον εἶναι τὴν ἀρετὴν ταύτην ἐν ἀνθρώποις; ἀλλ' ὁ ἡμέτερος Σωτὴρ καὶ τῶν πάντων βασιλεὺς Χριστὸς τοσοῦτον ἴσχυεν ἐν τῇ περὶ ταύτης διδασκαλίᾳ, ὡς καὶ παιδίῳ, μὴπω τῆς νομίμης ἡλικίας ἐπιβάντα, τὴν ὑπὲρ τὸν νόμον ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι παρθενίαν.

of angels<sup>1</sup>, and declaring that the members of the virgins were the peculiar property of Christ<sup>2</sup>. He relates on his own return to Alexandria, after a long banishment, that the spirit of religion which was well nigh extinct, began to revive; and as one great proof of it he remarks, "How many of the unmarried, who were previously disposed to marry, remained in celibacy for Christ's sake! How many young men seeing others who had embraced the solitary life, loved it also! How many fathers exhorted their children to these steps, and how many parents were advised by their children not to be hindered from disciplining themselves for Christ's sake! How many wives persuaded their husbands, and how many husbands their wives to give themselves up to prayer, according to the apostle's exhortation<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Constantinum Apologia*, 33. 'Ο τοῦ Θεοῦ Υἱὸς ὁ Κύριος καὶ Σωτὴρ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, ἄνθρωπος γενόμενος δι' ἡμᾶς, καὶ καταργήσας τὸν θάνατον ἐλευθερώσας τε τὸ γένος ἡμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς, ἐχαρίσατο, πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσι, καὶ εἰκόνα τῆς τῶν ἀγγέλων ἀγιότητος ἔχειν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ γῆς τὴν παρθενίαν. Τὰς γοῦν ταύτην ἐχούσας τὴν ἀρετὴν, νόμφως τοῦ Χριστοῦ καλεῖν εἴωθεν ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία· ταύτας δὲ "Ἕλληνες ὀρώντες, ὡς ναὸν οὐσας τοῦ Λόγου θαυμάζουσι· παρ' οὐδενὶ γὰρ ἀληθῶς τοῦτο τὸ σεμνὸν καὶ οὐράνιον ἐπάγγελμα κατορθοῦται, ἢ παρὰ μόνοις ἡμῖν τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς. Μάλιστα γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο μέγα τεκμήριόν ἐστι, τοῦ παρ' ἡμῖν εἶναι τὴν ὄντως καὶ ἀληθῆ θεοσεβείαν.

<sup>2</sup> Οὗτοι (the Arians, who tormented and wounded them when they prevailed) τὴν μαριάν τοῦ Πιλάτου νενικήκασιν, ὅτι μὴ μίαν πλευράν, ἀλλ' ἀμφοτέρως ἔξεσαν. Τὰ γὰρ μέλη τῶν παρθένων ἔξαιρέτως ἴδια τοῦ Σωτήρος ἐστι.

<sup>3</sup> *Historia Arianorum ad Monachos*, 25. Μεγάλη γοῦν ἦν

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But Athanasius goes further than this; he even speaks of marriage itself, as Milton does, as a corrupt thing and the first fruits of the fall<sup>1</sup>. Herein, however, of orthodox writers, he is almost or quite alone; being, as we shall see, contradicted by the great body of fathers and councils.

He testifies to the wide prevalence of ascetic habits in his day: but it is doubtful whether any thing like a modern monastery was then to be found. The *μοναστήριον* of his days seems to have been either a single cell, not necessarily connected with any other, or a collection of such cells. The progress of things may be exemplified by the case of Antony. He first lived in a single cell, in or very near Alexandria: from thence he withdrew to a retired spot in the country, and, his reputation rising, he was followed by those

εὐφροσύνη τῶν λαῶν ἐν ταῖς συνάξεσι παροξυνάντων ἀλλήλους εἰς ἀρετήν. Πόσοι τῶν ἀγάμων, πρότερον οὔσαι πρὸς γάμον ἔτοιμοι, ἔμειναν παρθένοι τῷ Χριστῷ; Πόσοι νεώτεροι, βλέποντες ἑτέρους, τὸν μονήρη βίον ἠγάπησαν; Πόσοι πατέρες προέτρεπον τέκνα; πόσοι δὲ καὶ παρὰ τέκνων ἠξιώθησαν μὴ ἐμποδίζεσθαι τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἀσκήσεως; Πόσοι γυναῖκες ἔπεισαν ἄνθρας; πόσοι δὲ παρὰ ἀνθρώπων ἐπέισθησαν σχολάζειν τῇ προσευχῇ, ὡς εἶπεν ὁ Ἀπόστολος;

<sup>1</sup> *Expositio in Psalm. 1. 7.* 'Ἐπειδὴ ὁ προηγορούμενος σκοπὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἦν τοῦ μὴ διὰ γάμον γένεσθαι ἡμᾶς καὶ φθορᾶς· ἡ δὲ παράβασις τῆς ἐντολῆς τὸν γάμον εἰσήγαγεν διὰ τὸ ἀνομῆσαι τὸν Ἀδὰμ, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἀθετῆσαι τὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ δοθέντα αὐτῷ νόμον . . . .

Τὸ δὲ καί· ἐν ἀμαρτίαις, κ. τ. λ. σημαίνει ὅτι ἡ Εὔα πλάντων ἡμῶν ἡ μητὴρ πρώτη ἐκίσσῃσεν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, ὡσπερ ὄργωσα τὴν ἡδονήν. It must be observed, however, that it is doubted, even by the Romanist Dupin, whether this commentary is really Athanasius's.

who were desirous of being under his guidance. Fearing, however, the effects of so much respect on his own mind, he withdrew secretly into the desert; but there he was found out; and as he had built a cell for himself, so those who followed him built each his separate cell near his. Finally, to be entirely alone, he withdrew to an almost inaccessible mountain. This, no doubt, was the origin of Christian monasteries. The reputation which the Egyptian solitaries gained in the great Arian conflict caused their example to be followed. Athanasius saw it spread to Italy; and in fifty years more the system had taken a settled form, and was become a regular discipline. It seems probable too, but far from certain, from a passage in Athanasius's life of Antony, that there were regular establishments for the professed virgins, in which they lived together in society.

There is one thing, however, perfectly clear from the panegyrics of Athanasius upon religious celibacy, and from the increasing popularity of asceticism, that the moral conduct of the devotees must have been generally unexceptionable; that father himself testifies to the scrupulous modesty of the virgins<sup>1</sup>. Indeed we learn from him that religious celibacy and martyrdom, were the standing miracles of the

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Arianorum*, 55. Εἰδότες γὰρ (the Arians) τὸ σεμνὸν τῶν παρθένων, καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀκοῆς ἄχραντον, καὶ ὅτι μᾶλλον λιθοῦς καὶ ξίφης, ἢ τὰ τῆς αἰσχρορῆρῆμοσύνης φέρειν δύνανται ῥήματα, τοῦτοις ἐχρῶντο κατ' αὐτῶν ἐπερχόμενοι.

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<sup>2</sup> *Histo*  
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<sup>4</sup> *Canon*

Church in his day, which wrought most powerfully with the heathen<sup>1</sup>. It is evident likewise from their regular attendance publicly in the churches, that there was no seclusion as yet introduced amongst them, although they veiled themselves<sup>2</sup>. From his mention likewise of monks who married and had children, it is evident that the profession was not irreversible<sup>3</sup>; and from that of bishops who became fathers, that they were not yet bound to the rule proposed in the council of Nice, and negatived there.

The first Synod of Carthage, which was held A.D. 348, the year of Athanasius's first return from exile, added not<sup>4</sup> to the stringency of the celibate. It merely prohibited those who had taken the vow, and widows, from having persons of the other sex living with them<sup>4</sup>, for the sake of avoiding scandal

<sup>1</sup> *Epist. ad Dracontium*, 7. "Ἡ οὐχὶ μέγα σημεῖον κόρην ποιῆσαι παρθενεύειν, καὶ νεώτερον ἐγκρατεύεσθαι;

*De incarnatione Verbi Dei*, 48. Παρίτω γὰρ ὁ βουλόμενος, καὶ θεωρεῖτω τῆς μὲν ἀρετῆς τὸ γνῶρισμα ἐν ταῖς Χριστοῦ παρθένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς σωφροσύνην ἀγνεύουσι νεωτέροις, τῆς δὲ ἀθανασίας τὴν πίστιν ἐν τῷ τοσοῦτῳ τῶν μαρτύρων αὐτοῦ χορῶ. See moreover note<sup>1</sup> p. 136. ταύτας δὲ Ἕλληνες κ. τ. λ.

<sup>2</sup> *Historia Arian.* 56. Τὰ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἅγια σώματα κατέκοπτον πληγαῖς οἱ ἄθεοι (the Arians), εἴλκοντε τὰ σκεπάσματα καὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν ἐγύμνουσι.

<sup>3</sup> *Epist. ad Dracont.* 9. Πολλοὶ δὲ τῶν ἐπισκόπων οὐδὲ γεγενησὶ, μοναχοὶ δὲ πατέρες τέκνων γεγονάσιν· ὡσπερ καὶ ἐπισκόπους πατέρας τέκνων καὶ μοναχοὺς ἐξ ὀλοκλήρου γένους τυγχόντας.

<sup>4</sup> *Canon* iii. and iv.

and temptation. These canons undoubtedly show that there were some who took the vow, who afterwards gave reason to think that they did not keep it from the heart. The more natural course, as we imagined, would have been to prohibit the taking up a public profession; but this we have learnt by experience. The feeling of those days was, that as the vow was taken to God, it was necessary to keep it; and therefore to remove all temptation to break it.

The next author we shall have recourse to is St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, a contemporary still of Athanasius, but of a very different school. His style is for the most part simple and didactic, with just so much of the figurative as to show him an oriental, and with extremely little of exaggeration. His opinions may therefore be taken as a fair specimen of the average opinion of his age: and there cannot be selected a fairer specimen of his views than that to be found in the fourth of his Catechetical Lectures.

He first of all totally condemns those who regarded the body as the cause of the soul's degradation, and consequently punished it in every way<sup>1</sup>. "Tell me not, that the body is the cause of sin.—It is not the body which sins of itself, but the soul by means of the body. The body is the instrument,

<sup>1</sup> *Cat.* iv. 23. Μὴ λέγε μοι τὸ σῶμα παραιτίον ἁμαρτίας εἶναι . . . . . Τὸ σῶμα οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει καθ' ἑαυτὸ, ἀλλὰ διὰ σώματος ἢ ψυχῆ· ἐργαλιὸν ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα, καὶ ὡσπερ ἰμάτιον καὶ στολὴ ψυχῆς· κἂν μὲν ὑπὸ ταύτης πορεύῃ παραδοθῆ, γίνεται ἀκά-

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and as it were the garment and robe of the soul; if then it be abandoned by the soul to fornication, it becomes unclean; but if it dwell with a holy soul, it becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost.

“And as to the doctrine of chastity, above all, let the order of solitaries and of virgins attend to it, who are establishing in the world an angelic life; and then the rest of the Church’s people also. Great is the crown laid up for you, brethren; for a poor indulgence barter not a high dignity.—Having been enrolled in the angelical books for thy purpose of chastity, beware lest thou be blotted out again for thy deed of fornication.

“Nor again on the other hand, whilst observing chastity, be thou puffed up against those who choose the humbler path of wedlock. For ‘marriage is honourable, and the bed undefiled,’ as saith the Apostle. Thou too, who keepest thy purity, wert

*θαρον' ἐὰν δὲ ἅγια ψυχῇ συνοικήση, γίνεται ναὸς Ἁγίου Πνεύματος. . . . .*

*Καὶ τὸν περὶ σωφροσύνης λόγον, προηγουμένως μὲν ἀκουέτω τῶν μοναζόντων καὶ τῶν πικθέντων τὸ τάγμα τῶν τὸν ἰσαγγελον βίον ἐκ κόσμῳ κατορθούντων. Μέγας ὑμῖν ἀπόκειται στέφανος, ἀδελφοί. Μὴ μικρᾶς ἡδονῆς ἀντικαταλλάξετε μεγάλην ἀξίαν. . . . Ἐν ταῖς εὐαγγελικαῖς βίβλοις λοιπὸν ἐγγραφήση διὰ τὴν πρόθεσιν τῆς σωφροσύνης. Βλέπε μὴ πάλιν ἐξαλειφθῆς διὰ τὴν πορνικὴν ἐργασίαν.*

*Μήδε αὐ πάλιν κατορθῶν τὴν σωφροσύνην τυφλωθῆς κατὰ τῶν ὑποβεβηκότων ἐν γάμῳ· τίμιος γὰρ ὁ γάμος καὶ ἡ κοίτη ἁμιάνοτος, ὡς φησὶν ὁ ἀπόστολος. Καὶ σὺ, ὁ τὴν ἀγνείαν ἔχων, ἄρα οὐκ ἐκ τῶν γεγαμηκότων ἐγεννήθης; Μὴ γὰρ, ὅτι χρυσοῦ κτήσιον ἔχεις, τὸ*

thou not born of married persons? Do not, because thou hast a possession of gold, set at nought the silver. But let those who are married be of good cheer, who use marriage lawfully; who subject their marriage to laws, not making it wanton by unbounded licence; who observe seasons of abstinence, 'that they may give themselves unto prayer;' who with clean raiment bring their bodies also clean to the assemblies of the Church; who have entered into the state of matrimony not for indulgence, but for the sake of issue. And let not those who have been but once married, set at nought them who have involved themselves in a second marriage. Continence is indeed a noble thing and an admirable; yet we should make allowance for a second marriage, that the weak may not commit fornication."

This language was used by Cyril, when appointed to deliver lectures in Lent, to the candidates for baptism. They may therefore be considered as the settled doctrine of the Church of Jerusalem in his time. We may see that in this particular department

ἀργύριον ἀποδοκίμαζε. Ἄλλ' ἐέλπιδες ἔστωσαν καὶ οἱ ἐν γάμφῳ νομίμως τῷ γάμφῳ χρώμενοι· οἱ γάμον ἔνθεσμον, ἀλλὰ μὴ τοῦτον ἀσελγῆ κατασκευάζοντες διὰ τὴν ἄμετρον ἔξουσιαν· οἱ γινώσκοντες καιροὺς ἀνέσεως, ἵνα σχολάζωσι τῇ προσευχῇ· οἱ μετὰ τῶν ἐνδυμάτων καθαρὰ προφέροντες ἐν ταῖς συνάξεσιν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν τὰ σώματα· οἱ διὰ τὸ τεκνογονεῖν ἀλλ' οὐ διὰ τὸ φιληδονεῖν τῷ γάμφῳ προσεληλυθότες.

Καὶ οἱ μονόγαμοι δὲ τοὺς δευτέρῳ συμπεριενεχθέντας μὴ ἀποδοκιμαζέτωσαν· καλὸν μὲν γὰρ ἡ ἐγκράτει καὶ θαυμάσιον· συγγνωστὸν δὲ καὶ τῷ δευτέρῳ γάμφῳ προσελθεῖν, ἵνα μὴ πορνεύσωσιν οἱ ἀσθενεῖς.

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of morals, he does unquestionably regard celibacy as at the top of the tree; but not on account of any impurity in marriage, which he takes pains to deny.

Another passage will be sufficient to give a full view of his doctrine and feelings <sup>1</sup>:

"Adored be the Lord, born of a virgin, and let the virgins understand what is the crown of their own condition. Also let the order of Solitaries understand the renown of chastity; for we too are allowed the same dignity. For nine months was the Saviour in the womb of the Virgin; but the Lord was a man for three-and-thirty years; so that if a virgin has to boast of those nine months, much more we of those many years.

"But run we all by the grace of God the race of chastity, young men and maidens, old men and children; not going after licentiousness, but praising the name of Christ. Let us not be ignorant of the

<sup>1</sup> *Cat.* xii. 33. Προσκυνείσθω ὁ ἐκ παρθένου γεννηθεὶς Κύριος. Καὶ γνωριζέτωσαν αἱ παρθένοι τῆς οἰκείας πολιτείας τὸν στέφανον. Γνωρίζετω δὲ τῶν μοναζόντων τὸ τίγμα τῆς ἀγνείας τὸ ἐπίδοξον· οὐ γὰρ ἀπεστερήμεθα τοῦ τῆς ἀγνείας ἀξιώματος. Ἐν γαστρὶ μὲν παρθένου γέγονεν ὁ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἐννεαμηναῖος ὁ χρόνος, ἀνὴρ δὲ γέγονεν ὁ Κύριος τριάκοντα καὶ τρία ἔτη· ὥστε εἰ σεμνύνεται παρθένος διὰ τὸν ἐννεαμηναῖον χρόνον, πολὺ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς διὰ τὸ πολυτετές τῶν χρόνων.

Πάντες δὲ τὸν τῆς ἀγνείας δρόμον τῷ Θεοῦ χάριτι δράμωμεν, νεανίσκοι καὶ παρθένοι, πρεσβύτεροι μετὰ νεωτέρων, οὐκ ἀκολασίας μετιόντες ἀλλ' αἰνοῦντες τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Μὴ ἀγιοήσωμεν τῆς ἀγνείας τὸ ἔνδοξον· ἀγγελικὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ στέφανος καὶ ὑπερ

glory of chastity; for its crown is angelic, and its perfection superhuman. Let us be chary of these our bodies, which are to shine as the sun. Let us not for a little pleasure pollute a body of such capacity and dignity: for the sin is small and only for an hour, but the shame is for many years, yea, eternal. Angels on earth are they who follow chastity; the virgins have their part with Mary the Virgin. Let all vain ornament be banished away, and every hurtful look and wanton gait, and all dress and perfumes, which are the baits of pleasure. The perfume of all of us be the prayer of sweet savour, even of good works, and the sanctification of our bodies; that the virgin-born Lord may say of us also, both of men who keep their chastity, and of women who receive the chaplet, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people:—To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

ἄνθρωπον τὸ κατόρθωμα. Φεισώμεθα τῶν σωμάτων τῶν μελλόντων λάμπειν ὡς ὁ ἥλιος. μὴ διὰ μικρὰν ἡδονὴν τὸ τηλικούτον καὶ τοσοῦτον σῶμα μολύνωμεν\* μικρὰ μὲν γὰρ καὶ πρὸς ὥραν ἡ ἁμαρτία, πολυετής δὲ καὶ αἰώνιος ἡ αἰσχύνη. Ἄγγελοι περιπατοῦντες ἐπὶ γῆς εἰσιν οἱ τῆς ἀγνείας ἐργάται. αἱ παρθένοι μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου ἔχουσι τὸ μέρος. Ἐξοριζέσθω πᾶς καλλωπισμὸς καὶ πᾶν ἄτηρον βλέμμα καὶ πᾶς περίπατος περισευρμένος, καὶ πᾶσα στολὴ καὶ θυμίαμα ἡδονῆς δελεαστικόν. θυμίαμα δὲ ἐν πᾶσιν ἔστω ἡ προσευχὴ τῆς εὐωδίας καὶ ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν πράξεων, καὶ ὁ τῶν σωμάτων ἀγασμός\* ἵνα ὁ ἐκ παρθένου γεννηθεὶς Κύριος εἶπῃ καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀνδρῶν τε τῶν ἀγενούντων καὶ γυναικῶν τῶν στεφανουμένων, Ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν Θεὸς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι λαός. Ὡς ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων. Ἀμήν.

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One passage more<sup>1</sup>; and I quit this Father. "Consider, I pray, of each nation, bishops, priests, deacons, solitaries, virgins, and other laity; and then behold the Great Protector and Dispenser of their gifts: how throughout the world he gives to one chastity, to another perpetual virginity, to another almsgiving, to another voluntary poverty, to another power of repelling hostile spirits."

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## CHAPTER II.

THERE can be but little doubt that from this time forward, for a very considerable time, the doctrine of Cyril was generally held in the Church. I shall therefore, in my further citations not think it necessary to mention particularly those who agree with him. But if I meet with any case which shows that the Church was not committed to any false doctrine on the subject, or any instances of persons of eminence who do not appear to have gone to the extent of the general feeling, these I will mention.

The next writer then I will adduce is Zeno,

<sup>1</sup> *Cat.* xvi. 22. Βλέπε μοι ἐκάστου ἔθνους επισκόπους, πρεσβυτέρους, διακόνους, μονάζοντας, παρθένους, καὶ λοιποὺς λαϊκοὺς, καὶ βλέπε τὸν μέγαν Προστίτην καὶ τῶν χαρισμάτων Πάροχον, ὅπως ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ τῷ μὲν ἀγγελίαν, τῷ δὲ ἡειπαρθενίαν, ἄλλῃ δὲ ἀκτημοσύνην, ἄλλῃ ἀπέλασιν πνευμάτων ἀντικειμένων εἶδωσι.

of Verona, who flourished about 360; of whom we have ninety sermons remaining. My object in quoting him is to show, that although he recognizes the virgins and widows, and admires their condition, he yet equally recognizes the honour of the married state, and that he extols other virtues, patience for instance, in the same terms in which he exalts virginity.

Thus in his *Sermon on Continence* he shows that popular feeling in his part of the Church was in favour of marriage and against virginity, and expressly declares that in recommending the latter, he did not condemn the former<sup>1</sup>. Again, he classes together the married and the celibates, as having an equal share in the joys of the Gospel<sup>2</sup>. "Exult ye

<sup>1</sup> Si cui forte asperum videtur ac durum, quod fiducialiter loquimur, fratres, rem pene contra naturam; jam jamque designat permoveri, intelligens Christianæ virtutis hanc esse maximam gloriam ipsam calcare naturam. Sed quia virtus voluptates semper offuscat, nihilque cuique nisi quod amaverit rectum est, maxime quod uno desiderio omnes excolunt populi, dubium non est, quin aut hostis publicus, aut certe judicetur insanus, quisquis nuptias dissuaserit. At ego non pertimescam sermonis publici quæ de me fabuletur invidia: non enim nuptias condemno, sed nuptiis meliora propono: et quidem ipso Apostolo hortante. Sic Paulo, &c.

Itaque in statu quo nata est permanens, virgo, gloriare; sanetique pudoris florem nulli legi subjectam fidei thesaurum custodi. Esto sancta et corpore et spiritu. Amore Christi ignem carnis extingue.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermo de spiritali Edificatione domus Dei.* Exultate seniores: vos estis lapidibus adamantinis meliores. Exultate pueri, sacræ turris dulces et sine pectio margaritæ. Felicia

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aged, ye are better than rocks of adamant. Exult ye children; sweet and inestimable pearls of the sacred tower. Exult ye happy marriages; ye engrave gems preferable for adornment to yourselves. Exult ye widows: by the exact proportion of your virtue ye unite in marriage with the Corner Stone. Exult ye virgins: ye adorn all these honourable conditions by the beauty of your own bloom. Exult ye rich, &c. Exult ye poor, &c."

So again he classes together the chastity of married persons and celibates: for in his sermon *on chastity*<sup>1</sup>, after declaring that it was the cement of society and of all domestic relations, he goes on thus to apostrophize it. "How admirable art thou, O chastity, who wouldst not be extolled in any other way than by being kept, content with the single ornament of a good conscience. Thou in virgins art happy, in widows powerful, in married persons faith-

exultate conjugia: meliores ornatui gemmas sculptitis, quam vos estis. Exultate viduæ: quadratura vestræ virtutis angularis lapidis conjugio cohæretis. Exultate virgines: omnem istam celebritatem honore vestri floris ornatis. Exultate divites, &c. Exultate pauperes, &c.

<sup>1</sup> *De pudicitia.* Hæc totius humani generis fundamenta confirmat: hæc nominum proprietates universis affectibus præstat: hæc parentum, conjugum, liberorumque sacra jura custodit.

Quanta est [Q. es] miranda pudicitia, quæ aliter laudari te nonvis, quam ut custodiaris, solo bonæ conscientiæ ornamento contenta. Tu in virginibus felix; in viduis fortis; in conjugiiis fidelis; in sacerdotibus pura; in martyribus gloriosa; in angelis clara; in omnibus vero regina."

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ful, in the clergy pure, in martyrs glorious, in the angels bright, and in all a queen."

In what stronger terms could the purity and worth of marriage be expressed? So that we find a contemporary of Cyril in a distant part of the vineyard, and one like him averse from the strifes of the age, and given to the promotion of practical piety, affording his testimony, that even yet the Church was not as a body corrupt in her doctrine. His language, it is true, in speaking of virginity is strong and rhetorical, and so it is in speaking on other subjects. For example, he thus apostrophizes *patience*<sup>1</sup>. "O how could I desire, if possible, to extol thee more, Patience, queen of all things, by my own habits. . . . Thou standest by virginity, that her bloom may not drop off through any blight, through any length of time. Thou art the appointed and faithful haven of pitiable widowhood, in the frequent hurricanes of the ever-changing inclemency of the weather. Thou like a skilful charioteer, with gentle rein directest those who submit their untaught necks to the most holy yoke of wedlock, to an equal effort of toil or

<sup>1</sup> *Sermo de Patientia.* O quam vellem te, si possim, rerum omnium regina Patientia, magis moribus concelebrare . . . . . Tu virginitati præstas, ne flos ejus ullo morbo, ullo tempore deflorescat. Tu variarum semper intempestatum crebris turbinibus constituta fidissimus miserandæ viduitatis es portus. Tu sanctissimo conjugali jugo rudi cervice subeuntes in nisum laboris vel amoris æqualem, retinaculis blandis, quasi quidam peritus auriga componis.

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love." In what age of the Church shall we find a juster appreciation of the true dignity of wedlock?

Thus again Titus of Bostra, in Arabia Petrea, (A. D. 362) expressly declares<sup>1</sup>, that the practice of celibacy no more goes upon the idea of any impurity in marriage, than that of fasting upon any sin in eating; but that both are taken up on the selfsame grounds of discipline and humiliation.

It is very unfortunate that all the poems ascribed to Damasus of Rome are spurious; else they might have furnished Mr. Taylor some delightful specimens of superstition, especially in the article of prayers to saints, who happen to be virgins and celibates. But even Bellarmine gives them up, and therefore Mr. Taylor will scarcely like to avail himself of them.

We therefore pass on to the Council of Gangra, which is reckoned by Dupin to have been held about

<sup>1</sup> *Contra Manichæos*, ii. Sed quomodo esset in hominibus decor pudicitiae privatae, nisi natura esset quod titillaret, et ratione coerceretur? Ubi esset apud mulieres virginitas, aut apud viros intractatio nuptiarum, nisi ratio amorem sanctitatis haberet, quæ naturaliter certans eos, qui recte cupiditatem insitam reprimunt et domant, victores declararet? idque non ad contumeliam naturæ, sed ad exercitationem tolerantiae et sanctitatis. Sic sane cibus et potionibus delectamur, non criminosa voluptate fruentes (naturalis enim hæc est): et tamen jejuniis nos exercemus; non quod est supra naturam contra naturam exerceantes, sed tolerantiam amplectentes, et Deum per humilitatem placantes et propitium reddentes. Nunquam exercitationem jejunii susciperemus, nisi fames esset in corpore.

this time, although Bishop Beveridge places it thirty or forty years earlier. The canons of this council testify to the existence of a small party in the Church, the Eustathians, who held extreme notions on the subject of virginity. What they were we shall learn by the canons themselves.

The first canon condemns those who regard marriage as a pollution, and believe that a married person cannot be saved<sup>1</sup>. The fourth is against those who say that we must not take the communion from the hands of a married priest<sup>2</sup>. The ninth is against those who keep their virginity, not because of its excellence, but because they think marriage to be an abominable thing<sup>3</sup>. The tenth is against those celibates who insult married persons<sup>4</sup>. The fourteenth is against those who forsake their husbands, as considering marriage a pollution<sup>5</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> Καν. α'. Εἴ τις τὸν γάμον μέμφοιτο καὶ τὴν καθεύδουσαν μετὰ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς, οὐσαν πιστὴν καὶ εὐσεβῆ, βδελύσσοιτο ἢ μέμφοιτο, ὡς ἂν μὴ δυναμένην εἰς βασιλείαν εἰσελθεῖν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. This was levelled against the Eustathians.

<sup>2</sup> δ'. Εἴ τις διακρίνοιτο περὶ πρεσβυτέρου γεγαμηκότος, ὡς μὴ χρῆναι λειτουργήσαντος αὐτοῦ προσφορᾶς μεταλαβεῖν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

<sup>3</sup> θ'. Εἴ τις παρθένοι ἢ ἐγκρατεῦσι, ὡς ἂν βδελύττων τῶν γάμων ἀναχωρῶν, καὶ μὴ δι' αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἅγιον τῆς παρθενίας, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

<sup>4</sup> ι'. Εἴ τις τῶν παρθενοῦντων διὰ τὸν Κύριον κατεπαίροιτο τῶν γεγαμηκότων, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

<sup>5</sup> ιδ'. Εἴ τις γυνὴ καταλιμπάνοι τὸν ἀνδρα καὶ ἀναχωρεῖν ἐθέλοι, βδελυττομένη τὸν γάμον, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

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sixteenth is against those children who under pretence of piety forsake their parents <sup>6</sup>.

The fathers of this council conclude in the following words <sup>1</sup>: "We ordain these things, not to exclude those members of the Church of God, who would, according to the advice of Holy Scripture, discipline themselves: but those who use austerity for a pretence to gratify their ambition, who despise those who lead an ordinary life, and who introduce innovations contrary to Scripture and the laws of the Church. We admire virginity when it is accompanied with humility; we praise self-denial which is joined with purity and prudence; we respect that retirement from worldly business which is made with humility: but we also respect the honourable intercourse of marriage. . . . In a word, we wish and desire that those things may be observed in the Church,

<sup>1</sup> 15'. Εἴ τινα τέκνα γονέων, μάλιστα πιστῶν, ἀναχωροίη προφάσει θεοσεβείας, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

<sup>2</sup> Ταῦτα δὲ γράφομεν, οὐκ ἐκκόπτοντες τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς ἀσκήσθαι βουλομένους, ἀλλὰ τοὺς λαμβάνοντας τὴν ὑπόθεσιν τῆς ἀσκήσεως εἰς ὑπερηφανίαν, κατὰ τῶν ἀφελέστερον βιούτων ἐπαιρομένους τε καὶ παρὰ τὰς γραφὰς καὶ τοὺς ἐκκλησιαστικοὺς κανόνες καινισμοὺς εἰσάγοντας. Ἰμεῖς τοιγαροῦν καὶ παρθενίαν μετὰ ταπεινοφροσύνης θαυμάζομεν, καὶ ἐγκρατείαν μετὰ θεοσεβείας καὶ σεμνότητος γινομένην ἀποδεχόμεθα, καὶ ἀναχώρησιν τῶν ἐγκοσμίων πραγμάτων κατὰ ταπεινοφροσύνης ἀποδεχόμεθα, καὶ γάμον συνοίκησιν σεμνὴν τιμῶμεν . . . . . Καὶ, πάντα συνελόντως εἰπεῖν, τὰ παραδοθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν θείων γραφῶν καὶ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν παριδύσεων ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ γίνεσθαι εὐχόμεθα.

which we have learnt from the Scripture and the tradition of the Apostles."

This, be it observed, is not the opinion of an individual, however distinguished or trusted; nor of a national or provincial Church. It was so generally approved, that ninety years later we find these Canons quoted as generally received throughout the Church. And it is remarkable how sober is its language on the subject we are discussing, and how strongly in its canons it reprobates the erroneous practices and opinions which prevailed more or less at that period. It is further to be remarked, that there were three important councils held in this generation, those of Antioch, A.D. 341; of Sardica, A.D. 347; and of Laodicea, A.D. 365; in which many important and minute regulations were made affecting both clergy and laity, and yet that not a single canon was made in either of them upon the subject of virgins, solitaries, or the celibacy or marriage of the clergy. The first canon of that of Laodicea enjoins a short penance on persons who contracted a second marriage<sup>2</sup>, and that is all that in any way relates to the subject: so entirely were those matters left to the choice of individuals and

<sup>1</sup> Κατ. α'. Περὶ τοῦ δεῖν κατὰ τὸν ἐκκλησιαστικὸν κανόνα τοὺς ἐλευθέρως καὶ νομίμως συναφθέντας δευτέρους γάμοις, μὴ λαθρογαμήσαντας, ὀλίγου χρόνου παρελθόντος, καὶ σχολάσαντας ταῖς εὐχαῖς καὶ νηστείας, κατὰ συγγνώμην ὑποκίδοσθαι αὐτοῖς τὴν κοινωνίαν.

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the regulation of parties on the spot in each separate Church!

I scarcely know in what better place than this to introduce the compilation commonly called the *Apostolica* Constitutions. They are known to be as ancient as this period, for they are quoted by Epiphanius<sup>1</sup>, whom I shall soon have occasion to adduce; and they cannot as a whole have existed much above fifty years earlier, because they mention church-officers, such as *singers* and *door-keepers*, which do not appear earlier than this period<sup>2</sup>. They may therefore be taken as a fairer specimen of the general feeling of the period of the Council of Nice than the writings of any individual; and on that ground I am sorry that I did not bring them forward at an earlier stage of the discussion. They are known to have been somewhat tampered with; but the passages I shall adduce are too primitive in sentiment to have been any part of the doubtful matter. They speak of celibacy, as a thing, not of duty, but of choice, depending upon the power of the person choosing it; taken up as a vow, and not made the subject of special consecration; not to be lightly profaned; not intended as a stigma upon marriage, but to obtain leisure for devotion<sup>3</sup>: and they declare the second marriage of professed widows to be a sin,

<sup>1</sup> In *Hæres.* 25 he quotes Lib. v. c. 14, 17. of the Constitutions; in *H.* 45 a passage towards the commencement; and in *H.* 80. lib. i. c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> See Bingham, III. vi. 1. vii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Const. Apost. IV. 14. Περὶ δὲ τῆς παρθενίας ἐντολὴν οὐκ

not because there is any thing sinful in a second marriage, but because the person has been guilty of falsehood in breaking a promise<sup>1</sup>.

They likewise assert it to be the discipline of the church that no person in *holy* orders should marry twice or after ordination; but they recommend persons in the inferior orders to marry, if they feel disposed to it, to avoid temptation to sin<sup>2</sup>. Now when we consider that persons were not ordained deacons till about twenty-five years of age, and consequently that all the previous period was left open for those who were disposed to marry; and that those who were so disposed were actually recommended so to do, there appears but little community of sentiment

ἐλάβομεν· τῇ δὲ τῶν βουλομένων ἐξουσίᾳ τοῦτο ἐπιτρέπομεν, ὡς ἐνχίρ· ἐκεῖνο μὲν οὖν αὐτοῖς παραινούντες, μὴ προχείρως τι ἐπαγγείλασθαι.

VIII. 24. Παρθένος οὐ χειροτονεῖται· ἐπιταγὴν γὰρ Κυρίου οὐκ ἔχομεν. Γνώμης γάρ ἐστι τὸ ἔπαθλον, οὐκ ἐπὶ διμβολῇ τοῦ γάμου, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σχολῇ τῆς εὐσεβείας.

<sup>1</sup> III. 1. Οὐχ ὅτι δευτέρῳ γάμῳ συνήφθη, ἀλλ' ὅτι τὴν ἐαυτῆς ἐπαγγελίαν οὐκ ἐφύλαξε.

2. Διγαμίαν δὲ μετὰ ἐπαγγελίαν παράνομον, οὐ διὰ τὴν συνίφειαν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ψεῦδος.

<sup>2</sup> VI. 17. Ἐπίσκοπον καὶ πρεσβύτερον καὶ διάκονον εἴπομεν μονογάμους καθίστασθαι, κὰν ζῶσιν αὐτῶν αἱ γαμεταὶ κὰν τεθνᾶσι· μὴ ἐξεῖναι δὲ αὐτοῖς μετὰ χειροτονίαν ἀγάμους ὄσιν ἐπὶ γάμον ἔρχεσθαι, ἢ γεγαμηκόσιν ἐτέραις συμπλέκεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἀρκεῖσθαι ἢ ἔχοντες ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὴν χειροτονίαν. Ὑπηρέτας δὲ, καὶ ψαλτφδοὺς καὶ ἀναγνώστας καὶ πυλωροὺς, καὶ αὐτοὺς μονογάμους εἶναι κελεύομεν· εἰ δὲ πρὸ γάμου εἰς κλῆρον παρῆλθωσιν, ἐπιτρέπομεν αὐτοῖς γαμεῖν, εἰ γε πρὸς τοῦτο πρόσθεσιν ἔχουσιν, ἵνα μὴ ἀμαρτήσοιτες κοιλίσεως τύχωσιν.

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between the current feeling of the age in which these sentiments were popular, and that of those who would forbid to marry.

And whilst I am upon this subject, I must correct an error into which I fell on the subject of the council of Eliberis, through trusting too much to the judgment of others. I have quoted the thirty-third canon of that council as though it *required* the clergy to abstain from the rites of marriage, whereas it positively *forbids* them to cease their intercourse with their wives<sup>1</sup>. The simple truth is that I trusted to the general candour of Dupin in drawing up that part of the history, and did not get a copy of the canon till I was going to press; when I did not remark that its language was directly in the teeth of Dupin's statement. We must therefore remember that up to this time there was no restriction put upon the marriage of the clergy in any part of the Church, excepting that they were not allowed to marry *after* ordination.

### CHAPTER III.

FROM councils we return back to fathers, of whom we have a whole host contemporaries; Epiphanius and Ephrem Syrus, Basil and the Gregories of Nazianzum and Nyssa, Ambrose and Jerome; who have

<sup>1</sup> Placuit in totum prohiberi episcopis, &c. *abstinere se a conjugibus suis et non generare filios.*

all expressed either their own opinions or the practice of their several churches, or both.

Epiphanius was bishop of Salamis in Cyprus. He was a person of a turbulent temper, and committed several breaches of discipline; but that does not do away with the value of his testimony to facts. He mentions with approbation<sup>1</sup> the various classes of virgins, ascetics or solitaries, married persons who abstained from intercourse, and widows: but he classes with them "holy marriage," which he asserts to be in great honour, especially that which is not repeated, and is attended with observance of the commandments. He declares likewise<sup>2</sup>, that the clergy were chosen, if possible, from those who had taken the vow of celibacy, or, if not, from the solitaries; or in default of any such, from those who refrained

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Hæres.* III. ii. 21. Καὶ πρῶτον μὲν κρηπὶς, καὶ, ὡς εἰπεῖν, βαθμὸς ἐν αὐτῇ [the Church] ἡ παρθενία, ἀσκουμένη τε καὶ φυλαττομένη παρὰ πολλοῖς καὶ ἐνδοξασμένη. Συνέπεται δὲ τῇ αὐτῇ παρθενία ἡ μονότης, παρὰ πλείοσι τῶν μοναζόντων καὶ μοναζουσῶν. Μετὰ ταύτην ἐγκράτεια ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτὸν δρόμον τεθεμελιωμένη. Ἐπειτα δὲ χηρσὸν μετὰ πάσης προσοχῆς καὶ ἀχράϊτου συναπιστροφῆς. Ταύταις δὲ ταῖς τάξεσιν ἀκόλουθος ὁ σεμνὸς γάμος ἐν μεγάλῃ τιμῇ, ὃ ἐν μοινογαμίᾳ μάλιστα, καὶ παραφυλακῇ ἐνταλμάτων κ.τ.λ.

<sup>2</sup> Στεφάνῃ δὲ τούτων πάντων ἡ μήτηρ, ὡς εἰπεῖν, καὶ γενήτρια ἡ ἀγία ἱερωσύνη, ἐκ μὲν παρθένων τὸ πλεῖστον ὀρμωμένη· εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐκ παρθένων, ἐκ μοναζόντων· εἰ δὲ μὴ εἶεν ἰκανοὶ εἰς ὑπηρεσίαν ἀπὸ μοναζόντων, ἐκ ἐγκρατευσμένων τῶν ἰδίων γυναικῶν, ἢ χηρυσάντων ἀπὸ μοινογαμίας. Δευτερόγαμον δὲ οὐκ ἔξεστι δέχεσθαι ἐν αὐτῇ εἰς ἱερωσύνην, κἂν τε ἐγκρατευσόμενος εἴη χῆρος ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, τάξεως ἐπισκόπου καὶ πρεσβυτέρου καὶ διακόνου καὶ ὑποδιακόνου. There is a similar passage at II. i. 3.

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from their wives, or from widowers who have been only once married. He likewise declares<sup>1</sup> it to be a sin for a person who has determined celibacy to turn back to marriage; and the ground he takes is that which I have already adverted to, that St. Paul declares that those professed widows who married again, incurred condemnation thereby.

From Ephrem Syrus, who was so determined a solitary, that he never chose to rise above the order of deacon, and absolutely refused to be a bishop, we should naturally look for excited notions upon the subject of celibacy. Accordingly we are not surprised to find him exclaim<sup>2</sup>: "Blessed are those who practise self-denial; blessed are they who keep their baptism pure; blessed are they who forsake this world for the sake of Christ; blessed are the bodies of virgins; blessed are they who have wives as though they had them not." Neither again

<sup>1</sup> II. i. 6. Παρέδωκαν τοίνυν οἱ ἅγιοι Θεοῦ ἀπόστολοι τῇ ἁγίᾳ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἐφίμωτον εἶναι τὸ, μετὰ τὸ ὀρίσαι παρθενίαν, εἰς γάμον τρέπεσθαι. In support of this assertion he quotes 1 Tim. v. 11; and then proceeds, Εἰ τοίνυν καὶ ἡ μετὰ πείραν κόσμον χηρέυσασα γυνή, διὰ τὸ τετάχθαι τῷ Θεῷ, ἔπειτα γήμισα κρίμα ἔξει, ἀθετήσασα τὴν πρώτην πίστιν· πόσῳ γε μᾶλλον ἡ καὶ αὐτὴν ἄνευ πείρας κόσμον ἀναθεῖσα παρθένος Θεῷ, γαμήσασα· πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον αὐτῇ ὑπὲρ περισσοῦ κατεστρηνίασε Χριστοῦ, καὶ τὴν μείζονα πίστιν ἠθέτησε, καὶ ἔξει κρίμα ὡς ἀναχασθεῖσα τῆς ἰδίας κατὰ Θεὸν προθέσεως;

<sup>2</sup> On Sorrow for Sin. Μακάριοι οἱ ἐγκρατεῦόμενοι· μακάριοι οἱ τὸ βιάπτισμα ἀγνὸν φυλάξαντες· μακάριοι οἱ διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀποταξιόμενοι τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ· μακάρια τὰ σώματα τῶν παρθένων· μακάριοι οἱ ἔχοντες γυναῖκας ὡς μὴ ἔχοντες.

is it astonishing that he regarded the ascetic virtues, such as "tears and lamentation, fasting and watching, psalmody and virginity, patience and mercifulness," as the fitting qualifications for heaven<sup>1</sup>. But still it is satisfactory to find that he does not confine self-denial to one only point. For in his treatise on that subject, he treats of the government of the tongue, of the hearing, of the temper, of the thoughts, of meat and drink, and lastly of the sensual desires. Nor is his language upon that subject exactly such as we might have expected. "Self-denial<sup>2</sup>," he says, "in regard to lust and sinful pleasure, is to master our thoughts, not to succumb to the desires which chance to be awakened in us, not to fall in with reasonings which suggest indulgence, not to take pleasure in the imaginary committing of abomination, not to work the will of the flesh,

<sup>1</sup> Καὶ νῦν παρακαλεῖς εἰσελθεῖν ὅπου οὐδὲν προέπεμψας; ὅπου οὐδὲν ἔχεις ἀποκείμενον; οὐ δάκρυα, οὐ κλαυθμὸν, οὐ νηστείαν, οὐκ ἀγρυπνίαν, οὐ ψαλμῳδίαν, οὐ παρθενίαν, οὐχ ὑπομονήν, οὐκ ἐλεημοσύνην. Οὐδὲν ἀπὸ τούτων μὴ προπέμψας ὧδε, [i. e. to heaven] τί ζητεῖς; τοῦτο τὸ κατοικτήριον οἱ δι' ἐμέ πτωχεύσαντες οἰκοῦσιν. αὕτη ἡ βισιλεία τῶν ἐλεημόνων ἐστίν. αὕτη ἡ εὐφροσύνη τῶν πενθησάντων ἐστίν. αὕτη ἡ χαρὰ τῶν μετανοησάντων καὶ κλαυσάντων ἐστίν, καὶ τῶν θρηνησάντων τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἁμαρτίας. αὕτη ἡ ἀνάπαυσις τῶν ἀγρυπνούστων καὶ νηστευόντων ἐστίν. αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ τῶν χηρῶν καὶ ὄρφανῶν ἐστίν. ὧδε οἱ πεινάσαντες καὶ διψήσαντες εὐφραίνονται εἰς τὰς αἰῶνας.

<sup>2</sup> Ἐγκράτεια ἐπὶ ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ἡδονῆς πονηρᾶς, τὸ κρατεῖν τῆς αἰσθήσεως, καὶ μὴ συγκαταπίπτειν ταῖς συμβαινούσαις ἐπιθυμίαις, τὸ μὴ κατατίθεσθαι τοῖς λογισμοῖς ἡδονάθειαν ὑποβάλλουσι, τὸ μὴ ἡδύνασθαι ὡς ἄτε δι' ἡδονῶν τὸ μῖσος, τὸ μὴ ποιεῖν τὸ θέλημα

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but to rein in our feelings by the fear of God. For the truly continent is he who has the desire of the eternal good things, and fixing the eyes of his mind upon them turns away from lust. He abhors fleshly intercourse, as nothing but a shadow. He does not rejoice in the countenance of women, nor delight in their figures, nor yield to their graces, nor please himself with their sweet breath, nor is taken with words of flattery. He does not frequent the company of women, especially of the unguarded, nor spend his time in their conversation. The truly manly and self-denying person, who reserves himself for that infinite bliss, keeps a check upon every imagination, and masters every lust, through desire of a better life, and fear of the life to come." This is but a specimen of his sentiments: but, as he writes much to ascetics, and upon subjects connected with their mode of life, which he evidently regards as an anticipation of heaven, we might fill pages with similar extracts. They show at all events that

τῆς σαρκὸς, ἀλλὰ χαλινοῦν τῷ φόβῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὰ πάθη. Ὁ γὰρ ἀληθῶς ἐγκρατὴς ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν, ὃ ἔχων ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν ἀθανάτων ἐκείνων ἀγαθῶν, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰ ἀτενίζων τῷ νῷ, ταύτην ἀποστρέφεται τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν. Τὴν συνοουσίαν βδελύσσεται, ὡς σκιὰν τὴν οὐρανῶν· προσώποις τῶν θηλειῶν οὐ χιῖρει· σώμασιν οὐ τέρπεται· κάλλεσιν οὐ συμπίπτει· πνοαῖς ἠδίσταις οὐχ ἠδύνηται· λόγοις κολακείας οὐ δελεάζεται· μετὰ θελειῶν, καὶ μάλιστα ἀσέμωνων, οὐκ ἐνδελεχίζει· ἐν ὀμιλίαις γυναικῶν οὐκ ἐγχρονίζει. Ὁ ἀληθὴς ἀνδρῆτος καὶ ἐγκρατὴς, καὶ ἐαυτὸν τηρῶν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἄμετρον ἀνάπαυσιν, ἐπὶ παντὸς λογισμοῦ ἐγκρατεύεται, καὶ πάσης ἐπιθυμίας κρατεῖ, ἐπιθυμίᾳ τοῦ κρείττοτος, καὶ φόβῳ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος.

he did not regard the bodily purity as every thing, or even the chief thing.

His forty-seventh discourse to the young ascetics of Egypt is interesting, from showing that they led any thing but an idle life: for he enumerates casually the various employments in which they passed that portion of their lives, which they did not give to devotion, as making of chains and caskets, copying manuscripts, making purses and baskets, weaving and making up linen garments, baking, gardening, cookery, and the manufacture of other articles of utility, the use of which can now only be guessed at. It appears likewise that deacons were commonly expected to have wives and children <sup>1</sup>.

That Basil the great patron of monastic institutions should be brought forward in this controversy, can afford no surprise; that his views upon some points were very harsh and severe we shall see by and by; but as his personal history bears upon the subject, and shows by what steps he was led to take the views he did, it will be advantageous to look into it a little. Happily we have those parts of it, which throw light upon the subject in hand from his own pen, not indeed formally drawn up, but appearing in various portions of the correspondence, which he kept up with persons of emi-

<sup>1</sup> *Interrogationes et Responsiones*, iii. 216. "Ἀμα δὲ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι καὶ πᾶς ἐξ ἐπιστῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ, ὑπὲρ τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ τέκνων καὶ παιδίων καὶ παιδισκῶν δώσει λόγον.

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nence in the Christian world, and especially with his friend Gregory of Nazianzum.

My first extract shall be from his letter to Eustathius of Sebastea, after the breach between them, occasioned by the false dealing of Eustathius, who had joined the Arian party. It appears that he was the son of Christian parents, in comfortable circumstances, and after a domestic education went to finish his studies at Athens, in company with Gregory, where he seems to have gained a taste for the heathen philosophical writers, which he kept up after his return.

“After spending much time<sup>1</sup>,” he says, “in vanity, and wasting almost all my youth in vain labour, bestowed in persevering endeavours to acquire a knowledge of that wisdom, which with God is folly; when at length I awoke as out of a deep sleep, I fixed my eyes upon the wonderful light of the truth of the Gospel, and saw clearly the inutility of the wisdom of the rulers of this world who come to nought; with deep regret for my wretched course of life, I desired that a guide might be given me, to introduce me to

<sup>1</sup> Ἐγὼ πολὺν χρόνον προσαναλώσας τῇ ματαιότητι, καὶ πᾶσαν σχεδὸν τὴν ἔμμαντοῦ νεύτητα ἐναφανίσας τῇ ματαιοποσίᾳ, ἣν εἶχον προσδιατρέψων τῇ ἀναλήψει τῶν μαθημάτων τῆς παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ μωρῆ θείσης σοφίας, ἐπειδὴ ποτε, ὡσπερ ἐξ ὕπνου βαθέως διαναστάς, ἀπέβλεψα μὲν πρὸς τὸ θαυμαστὸν φῶς τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, κατεῖδον δὲ τὸ ἄχρηστον τῆς σοφίας τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τῶν καταργουμένων· πολλὰ τὴν ἔλεονίην μου ζῶν ἀποκλαύσας, ἠύχόμην εὐθὺν αἰ μοι χειραγωγὸν πρὸς τὴν εἰσαγωγὴν

an acquaintance with the doctrines of religion. And above all things, I was anxious to make an improvement in my habits, which had been long perverted by associating with the wicked. Wherefore having perused the Gospel, and having read therein, that the greatest means of perfection would be to sell my property and impart it to the poor brethren, and in short not to be anxious about this life, and not to set my soul's affections upon things here; I was desirous of finding some brother who had chosen that way of living, in company with whom I might cross the deep tide of this life. And indeed I found many about Alexandria and in the rest of Egypt, and others in Coelosyria and Mesopotamia, whose temperate mode of life and hardihood under toil I admired, whose perseverance in prayers filled me with amazement; and how they vanquished sleep,

τῶν δογματικῶν τῆς εὐσεβείας. Καὶ πρό γε πιάτων ἐπιμελὲς ἦν μοι  
 εὐφροσίν τινά τοῦ ἡθους ποιήσασθαι, πολλὸν χρόνον ἐκ τῆς πρὸς  
 τοὺς φαύλους ὁμιλίας διαστροφέντος· καὶ τοίνυν ἀναγνοὺς τὸ εὐαγ-  
 γέλιον, καὶ θεασάμενος ἐκεῖ μεγίστην ἀφορμὴν εἰς τελείωσιν τὴν  
 διαίτησιν τῶν ὑπερχύπτων καὶ τὴν πρὸς τοὺς ἐνδεεῖς τῶν ἀδελφῶν  
 κοινωνίαν, καὶ ὅπως τὸ ἀφροντίστος ἔχειν τοῦ βίου τούτου καὶ  
 ὑπὸ μηδεμίᾳ συμπαιδείας πρὸς τὰ ὧδε τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπιστρέφεισθαι,  
 ἠύχουμι εὐρεῖν τινά τῶν ἀδελφῶν ταύτην ἐλόμενον τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ  
 βίου, ὥστε αὐτῷ συμπεριωθῆναι τὸν βαθὸν τούτου βίου κλύδωνι.  
 Καὶ εἶ πολλοὺς μὲν εὔρον κατὰ τὴν Ἀλεξανδρείαν, πολλοὺς δὲ  
 κατὰ τὴν λοιπὴν Αἴγυπτον, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς Παλαιστίνης ἐτέρους καὶ  
 ἐπὶ Κοίλης Συρίας καὶ Μεσοποταμίας, ὧν ἐθαύμαζον μὲν τὸ περὶ  
 τὴν διαίτην ἐγκρατεῖς, ἐθαύμαζον δὲ τὸ καρτερικὸν ἐν πόνοις·  
 ἐξεπλάγην [τε] τὴν ἐν προσευχαίᾳ εὐνοίαν, ὅπως δὲ ὕπνου κατεκρα-

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being bowed down by no necessity of nature, keeping the bent of their souls always lofty and unenslaved, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, not giving way to the body, nor submitting to bestow any thought upon it, but as though living in bodies not their own, they showed practically how to be sojourners here, and how to have their home in heaven. Wherefore admiring and blessing the life of these men, how they show practically that they bear about the death of Jesus in the body, I was desirous as far as I was capable of it, to imitate them. For this end, seeing some in my own country endeavouring to imitate them, I thought that I had found a help towards my own salvation. And I made outward things a declaration of things invisible: for since our inward thoughts and feelings do not appear, I thought humility of dress a sufficient indication of humility of mind, and the coarse cassock

τοῦν ὑπ' αὐδεμίας φυσικῆς ἀνάγκης κατακαμπτόμενοι, ὑψηλὸν αἰεὶ καὶ ἀδούλωτον τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ φρόνημα διασώζοντες, ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψῃ, ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι, μὴ ἐπιστρεφόμενοι πρὸς τὸ σῶμα μηδὲ καταδεχόμενοι αὐτῷ προσημιλῶσαι τινὰ φροντίδα· ἄλλ', ὡς ἐν ἄλλοτρίᾳ τῇ σαρκὶ διαύγοντες ἔργῳ ἔδειξαν, τί τὸ παροικεῖν τοῖς ὄδε καὶ τί τὸ πολίτευμα ἔχειν ἐν οὐρανῷ. Ἐκεῖνα θαυμάσας, καὶ μακαρίσας τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὴν ζωὴν, ὅτι ἔργῳ δεικνεύουσι τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, ἠυχόμενοι καὶ αὐτοῖς, καθ' ὅσον ἐμοὶ ἔφικτον, ζηλωτῆς εἶναι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκείνων. Τοῦτου γοῦν ἵτεκεν, θεασάμενός τις ἐπὶ τῆς πατρίδος ζηλοῦν τὰ ἐκείνων ἐπιχειροῦντας, ἐνόμισά τινα βοήθειαν εὐρηκέναι πρὸς τὴν ἑμῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίαν. Καὶ ἀπόδειξιν ἐποικίμην τῶν ἀφανῶν τὰ ὁρώμενα· ἐπεὶ οὖν ἄδηλα τὰ ἐν τῷ κρύπτῳ ἐκάστου ἡμῶν, ἠγούμην ἀντάρκη μὴνύματι εἶναι τῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης τὸ ταπεινὸν τοῦ ἐνδύματος.

and girdle became abundantly sufficient to me. And although many endeavoured to detach me from my association with these men, I would not give way, seeing that they preferred enduring hardness to a life of pleasure, and I was emulous of them on account of the surpassing excellence of their institutions."

This is his general statement, made many years afterwards: but he did not all at once join any society of this description, nor at first attempt to gather a society under him. From the first, he was no doubt deterred by that infirmity of bodily constitution, of which he complains in after life as having accompanied him from his earliest years down to old age. He took what had been the original course of Antony, the father of the Solitaries; he withdrew into a retired spot in Pontus, and commenced hermit. But this was not altogether his choice. His friend Gregory was to have joined him, and he had been looking out for a place of retirement which might suit them both. After waiting in vain for his joining him to proceed thither, (for he excused himself for a while on the particular ground of the illness of his mother, and then on the general one of duty to his parents,) he set out without him, and before he was well settled, he thus addressed him. "I have heard from my brother

*καὶ ἤρκει μοι πρὸς πληροφάνειαν τὸ παχὺ ἱμάτιον καὶ ἡ ζωὴ. Καὶ πολλῶν ἀπαγόντων με τῆς πρὸς αὐτοὺς συνηθείας, οὐκ ἤνειχόμην, ὁρῶν αὐτοὺς τοῦ ἀπολαυστικοῦ βίου τὸν καρτερικὸν προτιμῶντα· καὶ εὐαὶ τὸ περιηλλαγμένον τῆς πολιτείας ζηλοτύπως εἶχον πρὸς αὐτούς.*

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Gregory (of Nyssa) that you have been for some time wishing to cast in your lot with me; and he adds that you have even determined on it: but partly having become slow to believe it from frequent disappointments, and partly being distracted with business, I could wait no longer; for I must set out for Pontus, where by the blessing of God, I trust some time to rest from my roamings. For I have with difficulty bid adieu to the vain hopes which I had in you, . . . and departed to seek my sustenance in Pontus, where God has pointed me out a place exactly suited to my turn of mind, such as we often used, when at leisure, to amuse ourselves in fashioning together in imagination." He then describes<sup>1</sup> a very picturesque and delightful retirement, at the foot of a woody hill, shut in by a mountain stream, and two deep dells, abounding in flowers and fruits and fish, free from wild beasts, excepting such as furnished amusement and food to the sportsman, and possessing only one access, of which he himself had the entire command. With this picture he hoped to wile Gregory into joining him.

This letter appears to have been followed by two of playful banter from Gregory, to which he replied in another of great interest, which I need not transcribe, after the beautiful paraphrase of it given by

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Newman has translated Basil's own words in his "Church of the Fathers," doing that justice to them which no one, not gifted with the spirit of poetry, can do.

Mr. Newman, in his "Church of the Fathers." He had now found by experience, that although he had quitted the temptations of a city, he could not leave his own heart behind him<sup>1</sup>: "for since we carry about us our innate passions and affections, we dwell every where with the same commotions; so that I have got no benefit from this solitude:" but still he intended to stay, and struggle to attain a quiet mind. He felt the disadvantages of celibacy in his own case<sup>2</sup>. "The man who is not yet united in the bonds of wedlock has his peace broken by frantic desires, and impulses difficult to be restrained, and sometimes by love without affection." But on the other hand marriage has its tumultuous crowd of cares, which he enumerates. He then speaks at some length of the benefit he expected from solitude, as the means of

<sup>1</sup> Ἐγὼ δὲ ἂ μὲν ποιῶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τῆς ἐσχατιᾶς ταύτης νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας γράφειν ἀισχύνομαι. Κατέλιπον μὲν γὰρ τὰς ἐν ἄσπει διωτριβὰς, ὡς μυρίων κακῶν ἄφορμὰς, ἑμαυτὸν δὲ οὐπω ἀπολιπεῖν ἠδυνήθην . . . . Τὰ γὰρ ἔνοικα πάθη συμπεριφέροντες, πανταχοῦ μετὰ τῶν ὁμοίων θορύβων ἔσμεν ὥστε οὐδὲν μέγα τῆς ἐρημίας ἀπωρόμεθα ταύτης. Ἄ μέντοι ποιεῖν ἔδει, καὶ ὅθεν ὑπῆρξεν ἡμῖν τῶν ἰχνῶν ἔχεσθαι τοῦ πρὸς σωτηρίαν καθηγησαμένου, . . . . ταῦτα ἐστίν· ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ τὸν νοῦν ἔχειν πειρᾶσθαι προσήκει κ.τ.λ.

<sup>2</sup> Ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν οὐπω τοῖς δεσμοῖς τοῦ γάμου συνεξευγμένον λυσσώδεις ἐπιθυμίαι καὶ ὄρμαι δυσκαθεκτοὶ καὶ ἔρωτές τινες δυσέρωτες ἐκταράσσουσι· τὴν δὲ ἤδη κατεληγμένον ὁμοζύγῳ ἔτερος θόρυβος φροντίδων ἐκδέχεται· ἐν ἀπαιδίᾳ παιδῶν ἐπιθυμία, γυναικὸς φυλακῆ, οἴκου ἐπιμέλεια, οἰκετῶν προστασίαι, αἱ κατὰ τὰ συμβάλλαια βλάβαι, οἱ πρὸς τοὺς γείτονας διαπληκτισμοὶ, αἱ ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις συμπλοκαὶ, τῆς ἐμπορίας οἱ κίνδυνοι, αἱ τῆς γεωργίας διαπονήσεις. . . . . Τούτων δὲ φυγὴ μία, ὁ χωρισμὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ

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calming his mind and preparing it for the reception of divine truth. He purposed with his companions (for he had already been joined by one or more) to begin the day, and to accompany his labours, with prayer and praise; and expects that when the tongue, the eye and the ear are no longer made the inlets of dissipation, the mind may fall back upon itself and ascend to the contemplation of Almighty God. "But," he says, "the chief way of discovering duty is the study of the inspired writings: for in these are found the treasuries of practice, and the lives of blessed men are handed down in writing, and lie before us as living patterns of heavenly conversation for imitation in our actions. And therefore, where- insoever any one discovers himself deficient, by dwelling upon it, he finds, as from a public dispensary, the appropriate remedy for his peculiar infirmity." This subject he carries on into instances. He then

κόσμου παντός. Κόσμου δὲ ἀναχώρησις, οὐ τὸ ἔξω αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι σωματικῶς, ἀλλὰ τῆς πρὸς τὸ σῶμα συμπαθείας τὴν ψυχὴν ἀποβρῆ- ξι . . . . Ἐτοιμασίᾳ δὲ καρδίας ἢ ἀπομάθησις τῶν ἐκ πονηρᾶς συνηθείας προκατεχόντων αὐτὴν διδαγμάτων . . . . Πρὸς δὲ τοῦτο μέγιστον ὄφελος ἡμῖν ἢ ἐρημία παρέχεται, κατευνάζουσα ἡμῶν τὰ πάθη κ.τ.λ. . . . Μεγίστη δὲ ὁδὸς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ καθήκοντος εὐρεσιν καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῶν θεοπνεύστων γραφῶν ἐν ταύταις γὰρ καὶ αἱ τῶν πράξεων ὑποθήκαι εὐρίσκονται καὶ οἱ βίοι τῶν μακαρίων ἀνδρῶν, ἀνάγραπτοι παραδεδομένοι, ὡς εἰκόνας τινές ἐμψυχοῦ τῆς κατὰ Θεὸν πολιτείας, τῇ μιμήματι τῶν ἔργων προκείνται. Καὶ τοίνυν, περὶ οὐπὲρ ἴν ἕκαστος ἐνδεῶς ἔχοντος ἐαυτὸν αἰσθάνηται, ἐκεῖνῳ προσδιατρίβων, ὡς ἀπὸ τινος κοινοῦ ἰατροῦ τοῦ πρόσφορον εὐρίσκει τῇ ἀρρώστῃματι φάρμακον κ.τ.λ.

adds, that "reading was succeeded by prayer, which found the soul in a more fresh and vigorous state, and affected by Divine love, and rendered the loving-kindness of God more manifest to the soul: and this, (he says,) is the indwelling of God, viz., the having Him fixed in one's-self by means of the memory; so that He may never be driven out of our minds by earthly thoughts or unlooked for passions, but the lover of God, fleeing from every thing else, may retire to Him<sup>1</sup>." He then shows what benefits he expected from this calm and subdued and unworldly temper, in his intercourse with others; how it would affect his conversation, his aspect, his carriage, his dress. He spoke of his temperate food, his grace before and after meat, his light sleep, his happy vigils, his exclusion of evil, his working together with God.

Basil did not remain in this retirement, although he had companions there; but returned into the world and sustained the various offices of the Church, until at length he was made Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia. But his love for monastic institutions

<sup>1</sup> Εὐχαὶ πάλιν, τίς ἀναγνώσεις διαδεχόμεναι, νευρωτέραν τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ἀκραιότεραν, τῷ πρὸς Θεὸν πόθῳ κεινημένην, παραλαμβάνουσι. Εὐχὴ δὲ καλὴ ἡ ἐναργῆ ἐμποιοῦσα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐννοίαν τῆ ψυχῆ· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνοίκησης, τὸ διὰ τῆς μνήμης ἔχειν ἐνιδρυμένον ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν Θεόν. Οὕτω γινόμεθα ναοὺς Θεοῦ, ὅταν μὴ φροντίσι γηΐναις τὸ συνεχὲς τῆς μνήμης διακόπτηται, μηδὲ τοῖς ἀπρυσδοκῆτοις πάθειν ὁ νοῦς ἐκτιναρῆται· ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀποφυγῶν ὁ φιλόθεος ἐπὶ Θεὸν ἀναχωρῆ . . . .

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underwent no change, but rather increased with age ; and the severities he first practised in his youth he introduced with augmented rigour into the rules which he gave to the societies he founded. His patronage of these institutions was in after life objected against him. One of his replies we have already given. The other we find in the letter addressed by him to the clergy of Neo-Cæsarea, when on a visit in their neighbourhood to the place of his former retirement <sup>1</sup>.

“ I am accused because I encourage men devoted to religion, who have bid farewell to the world and to all worldly cares, which the Lord likens to thorns which do not allow the word to spring up and bring forth fruit. Such men bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and taking up their cross follow God. Now of all my life I most cherish this my offence, that I have with me, and under my direction, men who have chosen this discipline. And now I hear that the same excellence is to be

<sup>1</sup> Ἐγκαλούμεθα δὲ ὅτι καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἔχομεν τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀσκητᾶς, ἀποταξαμένους τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ πίσσις ταῖς βιωτικαῖς μερίμναις, ἃς ἀκάνθαις περικιάζει ὁ Κύριος, εἰς καρποφορίαν ἀνελθεῖν τὸν λόγον μὴ συγχωρούσαις. Οἱ τοιοῦτοι τὴν νεκρότητα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέρουσι, καὶ ἄραντες τὸν ἑαυτῶν σταυρὸν ἔπονται τῷ Θεῷ. Ἐγὼ δὲ ἐκ παντὸς ἂν τιμησαίμην τοῦ ἑμαντοῦ βίου ἐμοὶ εἶναι τὴν ἀδικήματι ταῦτα, καὶ ἔχειν ἀνδρας παρ' ἑμαντῶ, ὑπ' ἐμοὶ διδασκάλῳ, τὴν ἀσκησιν ταύτην προελομένους. Νῦν δὲ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ μὲν ἀκούω τισαύτην εἶναι ἀνδρῶν ἀρετήν· καὶ τάχα τινὲς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς Παλαιστίνης τὴν κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πολιτείαν κατορθοῦσιν· ἀκούω δὲ τινεὶ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς μέσης τῶν ποταμῶν τελείους καὶ μακαρίους

found in Egypt ; and perhaps some also in Palestine have set up this evangelical association ; and I hear that there are also some of these perfect and blessed men in Mesopotamia. For myself, I am but a child, in comparison with the perfect. And if there are women who have chosen to live according to the Gospel, who prefer celibacy to marriage, who subdue the bent of the flesh, and live in a blessed mortification, blessed are they for their choice, in whatever quarter of the world they live. But with me there is but little of this : I am but learning the elements and introduction to religion. If, indeed, they cause anything unseemly in the conduct of women, I do not undertake to excuse them : but this I protest to you, that the very things which Satan, the father of lies, has never undertaken to say, hearts void of fear and mouths unbridled always utter without scruple. But I wish you to know that I desire to have com-

ἀνδρας. Ἡμεῖς δὲ παῖδες ἐσμέν, πρὸς γε τὴν τῶν τελείων σύγκρισιν. Εἰ δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες, εὐαγγελικῶς ζῆν προελόμενοι, παρθενίαν μὲν γάμου προτιμῶσαι, δουλαγωγῶσαι δὲ τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, καὶ ἐν πενθεῖ ζῶσαι τῷ μακαριζομένῳ, μακαρίαί τῆς προαιρέσεως, ὅπου ἂν ᾧσι τῆς γῆς. Παρὰ δὲ ἡμῶν μικρὰ ταῦτα, στοιχειουμένων ἔτι, καὶ εἰσαγομένων πρὸς τὴν εὐσέβειαν. Εἰ δὲ τινα ἀκοσμίαν τῷ βίῳ τῶν γυναικῶν ἐπιφέρουσιν, ἀπολογεῖσθαι μὲν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν οὐ καταδέχομαι· ἐκεῖνο δὲ ἡμῖν διαμαρτύρομαι, ὅτι ἂ μὲχρι νῦν ὁ σατανᾶς ὁ πατὴρ τοῦ ψεύδους εἰπεῖν οὐ κατεδέξατο, ταῦτα αἱ ἄφοβοι καρδίαι καὶ τὰ ἀχαλίνωτα στόματα αἰεὶ φθέγγεται ἀδεῶς. Γινώσκειν δὲ ἡμῖς βούλομαι ὅτι ἡμεῖς εὐχόμεθα καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν συστήματα ἔχειν, ᾧν τὸ πολίτευμά ἐστιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, τῶν τὴν σάρκα σταυρωσάντων σὺν τοῖς παθήμασι καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυ-

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panies of men and women whose conversation is in heaven, who crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, who care not for food and clothing, but waiting upon the Lord without distraction, give themselves to prayer night and day; whose mouths discourse not of the deeds of men, but sing hymns to our God; who continually labour with their own hands, that they may have to give to him that needeth." He then describes their mode of worship at matins, before day-break; how they began with prayer; then dividing into two companies chanted the psalms alternately; next attended to the reading of the Scriptures; afterwards had an anthem sung by a single person, the rest joining in the chorus; and finally at day-break united in the fifty-first Psalm, each person making the words apply to his own case: and he affirms that this custom prevailed in Lybia, in the Thebais, in Palestine, in Arabia, in Phœnicia, in Syria, on the Euphrates, and indeed wherever watching and prayer and congregational psalmody was practised.

This then was the Basil whose opinions we have to consider; these were the regulars, mostly laymen, whom he patronized: and these were his views of the ascetic life, and of monasteries properly so called.

μίαις· οἱ οὐ μεριμνῶσι περὶ βρωμάτων καὶ ἐνδυμάτων, ἀλλ' ἀπερί-  
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 ταῖς δεήσεσιν· ὧν τὸ στόμα οὐ λαλεῖ τὰ ἔργα τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλὰ  
 ψάλλουσι ὕμνον τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν· διηλεκτῶς ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἑαυτῶν  
 χερσίν, ἵνα ἔχωσιν μεταδιδόναι τοῖς χρείαν ἔχουσι.

As he found them, not bound by any vow of eelibacy, and free to quit the society whenever they chose ; a society in which they might learn subordination and self-discipline, might accustom themselves to devotion and self-denial, might learn to study the Scriptures, and not to be ashamed of poverty ; I cannot but look upon them as an instrument raised up by God to counteract the worldliness and luxury which were beginning to overflow the Church, and to prepare a set of men for holy offices who should be found willing to abide by the Scriptural truth which had hitherto been handed down in the Church, and able from their renunciation of worldly comforts to cope with that infinitely varied sea of persecution, upon which the orthodox for many years were tossed. But although I think we must admit that they thus rendered excellent service to the Church, I am equally convinced that the strictness of the rule which Basil introduced, and which his great reputation made permanent, contributed to their corruption and weakness. He has been supposed, indeed, to have laid it down throughout his archdiocese, that the marriages of clergymen, monks and virgins were to be regarded as fornication, and to be nullified ; but this is not the fact. He simply ordained that if such persons were guilty of fornication, every effort should be made to prevent them from marrying those with whom they had offended<sup>1</sup>. What the pre-

<sup>1</sup> Καν. 5'. Τῶν κανονικῶν τὰς πορνείας εἰς γάμον μὴ καταλογίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ παντὶ τρόπῳ διωσπᾶν αὐτῶν τὴν συνάφειαν. Τοῦτο

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cise motive for this regulation was we are not informed, further than that it was to avoid the sneers of the heretics against the laxity of discipline in the Church. It was, however, evidently nothing more than a rule of discipline, to meet a peculiar irregularity. But still we may think that such a rule was an evil; and though the ill effects of it might not be immediately visible, time was sure to bring them out. But still this was only *his* rule, it was not as yet that of the universal Church. He likewise introduced the custom of binding monks by an explicit vow, which had not prevailed previously<sup>1</sup>. So that compulsory celibacy made great strides wherever he had influence. This was not, however, forbidding to marry in general: he expressly recognizes the right of a widow who had taken no vow to marry again. He only reasoned from St. Paul's language in regard to the Church widows, that when a vow was once made to God, the infraction of it was to be restrained by the Church; and admitting the propriety of

γὰρ καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρὸς ἀσφάλειαν λυσιτελές, καὶ τοῖς αἱρετικοῖς οὐ δώσει καθ' ἡμῶν λαβὴν, ὡς εὐὰ τὴν τοῦ ἁμαρτάνειν ἄδειαν ἐπισημμένων πρὸς ἐαυτούς.

<sup>1</sup> Καν. α'. Ἄνδρῶν δὲ ὁμολογίαν οὐκ ἔγνωμεν, πλὴν εἰ μὴ τινας ἐαυτούς τῷ τάγματι τῶν μοναζόντων ἐγκατηρίθμησαν, οἱ κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον δοκοῦσι παραδέχεσθαι τὴν ἀγαμίαν. Πλὴν καὶ ἐπ' ἐκείνων ἐκεῖνο ἠγοῦμαι προηγεῖσθαι προσήκειν, ἐρωτᾶσθαι αὐτούς καὶ λαμβάνεσθαι τὴν παρ' αὐτῶν ὁμολογίαν ἐναργῆ, ὥστε ἐπειδὴν μετατίθενται πρὸς τὸ φιλόσαρκον καὶ ἡδονικὸν βίον, ὑπάγειν αὐτούς τῷ τῶν πορνενόντων ἐπιτιμίῳ.

making the vow publicly, the conclusion can scarcely be contravened.

Besides these indications of St. Basil's opinion, it is but natural to have recourse to his treatise on virginity, which we should of course do without hesitation, (as it is well-known that he wrote such a treatise, and this which we have agrees in all main points with the description of it given by St. Gregory, of Nazianzum,) were it not for passages<sup>1</sup> in it which appear to speak of matrimonial intercourse as a sort of pollution. Now it is well-known that this opinion was condemned in the Eustathians by the Synod of Gangra; and that Basil was very much opposed to this sect: so that it is improbable that he would have held opinions in common with them. Still there is nothing *impossible* in his having in this point differed from the Church of his day, and symbolized with the adverse party; as we know that he had adopted a rule of ascetic discipline from them, and that he patronized the monks, although accused of favouring the Arian heresy. Or if this be not thought likely, he may have used the term *φθορά* in a modified sense, as implying not *absolute* but *relative* im-

<sup>1</sup> Ὁ τῶν σωμάτων νύμφιος τὴν ἄφθορον παρθένον τῇ νυμφεύσει φθείρων γυναῖκα ποιεῖ.

"Ἀρχηγός τε καὶ ἀρχὸν τῆς κατὰ τὴν γαμετὴν φθορᾶς ὁ ἀνὴρ.

It likewise asserts that Jesus did not marry because it was necessary that he should be free from *φθορὰ σώματος* διὰ τοῦ γάμου, and declares that but for the fall the human race would have been produced in some other way.

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purity; because carnal intercourse is the necessary channel by which original sin is propagated; and therefore, although not sinful in itself, cannot be disconnected from pollution, in a more especial sense than other human actions. There is, moreover, a strict resemblance between the language he holds in his canons, on the subject of the marriage of professed virgins, and that which is used in this treatise: so that there appears considerable ground for thinking that the greater portion of it was written by him: and as the more extravagant language all occurs in the latter part, it may be supposed not to have been a part of the original treatise. Taking this, therefore, for granted, there are some parts of this treatise which are especially worthy of attention.

For instance, he takes especial care to say that when he magnifies and exalts virginity, he does not mean merely strict bodily purity, which, be it as strict as it may, he regards as merely the handmaid of the true divine virginity of the soul. The passage is so indicative of his sentiments that I will transcribe it<sup>1</sup>.

“Beyond doubt virginity is a great thing, rendering man (to say all in one word) like to the incorruptible God. But it does not pass from the body to the soul, but being especially the property of the

<sup>1</sup> Μέγα μὲν γὰρ, ὡς ἀληθῶς, παρθενία, τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ Θεῷ, ὡς ἐν κεφαλαίῳ εἰπεῖν, ἕξομοιοῦσα τὸν ἄνθρωπον. Οὐκ ἀπὸ σωμάτων δὲ ἄρα ἐπὶ ψυχᾶς αὐτῆ ὀδεύει, ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς τῆς ἀσωμάτου οὕσα ἐξαιρέτως, τῇ ταύτης Θεοφιλεῖ παρθενίᾳ ἀφθορα φυλάττει τὰ σώματα.

soul when separate from the body, it preserves the body incorrupt by its own divinely loved virginity. For the soul, having the conception of that which is really excellent, aiming only to serve the incorruptible God as he ought to be served, makes use of the bodily virginity as a handmaid, to attend upon that which is excellent in itself. And since it is desirous of always having its undistracted aid in the contemplation of God, it repels from it as far as possible the pleasures of the body which keep up a tumult within it, using self-denial in carnal pleasures as a handmaid to bodily virginity, and that again to absolute virginity; so that by preserving its virginity free from the taint of every disturbing thought, it may attain an established resemblance to the incorruptible God, whilst he sheds the bright beams of his graces upon it, as from a spotless mirror, to its own advancement and praise."

It will be seen from this extract, that ascetic

Τοῦ γὰρ ὄντως καλοῦ ἡ ψυχὴ φαντασίαν λαβούσα . . . . τὸν ἄφθορον Θεὸν θεραπεύεσθαι μόνως πρὸς ἀξίαν ἀθροῦσα, τὴν τοῦ σώματος παρθενίαν θερίπαιναν εἰς τὴν τοῦ καθ' ἑαυτὴν κάλλους θεριπέειν ἐπάγεται. Καὶ πάρεδρον ἀοχλήτως πρὸς τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ θεωρίαν ταύτην ἔχειν αἰεὶ βουλομένη, τὰς ἐνοχλοῦσας αὐτῇ τοῦ σώματος ἡδονὰς ὡς πορρωτάτω ἐλαύνει, τὴν μὲν τῶν ὑπὸ γαστέρι ἡδονῶν ἐγκράτειαν τῆς σωματικῆς παρθενίας θερίπαιναν, αὐτὴν ἐξ ταύτης τῆς καθ' ἑαυτὴν ποιουμένη . . . . ἵνα τὴν ἑαυτῆς πικρῆς παρθενίας ἀπίσης μοχθηρᾶς ἐννοίας φυλάξασιν, τὴν πρὸς τὸν ἄφθορον Θεὸν ἐξομοίωσιν, ὡς περ ἐν ἀκηλιδώτῳ κατόπτρῳ λοιπὸν, αὐτοῦ τὰς παρ' ἑαυτοῦ αὐτῇ ἐνουγάζοντος χάριτας, εἰς κάλλος ἑαυτῆς καὶ ἔπιπνον καταρθωθεῖσιν κερδήσῃ.

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habits had led St. Basil to the same view of the depths of religion which St. Paul had, when he penned these words: (2 Cor. iii. 18,) "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." It is very true that he took a mystical view of religion. He did look to the contemplation of the Divine Being, as a means of being brought to a resemblance of Him: and for that purpose thought it expedient that the soul should have as few impediments as possible to this habitual contemplation. Now earthly pleasure of every sort, he regarded as having the effect of binding us to earth, and therefore avoided it, not in the light so much of a thing which *polluted*, as of one which *disturbed* the mind. When the soul therefore could habitually turn to the contemplation of God, he regarded it as having attained to absolute virginity, to perfect union with God. The language to us seems strange, as the whole machinery of the book of Canticles does, but it was not necessarily incorrect. The bodily virginity was therefore not sought for its own sake, but because without it, the mind could not expect to be able to wait upon the Lord without distraction. The misfortune was that many persons, mistaking their vocation, would have so sharp a contest with the flesh, that the preliminary step of weaning themselves from animal pleasures, would take up all their efforts; and their view would thus become limited to the corporeal celibacy,

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and that which was only intended to be a means to an end would become their end. Or again, the self-denial they had to practise to conquer the animal desires would so weaken all their powers, that they would be unequal to those devotional exercises, which were to be their highest and most chosen employment: and the mind thus weakened, would be open to Satan's assaults, and become liable to be a prey to spiritual vices. These dangers Basil saw: but he was not willing to allow any relaxation of the resolution. To turn back was with him a spiritual adultery: weakness was sin. At least that was his view at that period of his life, when his Canons were drawn up. But there is a passage in his treatise on virginity, in which he appears to recommend marriage to those who did not choose celibacy for religious ends. His words are:—<sup>1</sup> "If whilst she rejects the yoke of a husband, she is to be useless for the life for which she was created, for the government of the house and the production of offspring, and likewise a discredit to the virgin state which she has vowed, it is all loss, whilst she cor-

<sup>1</sup> Εἰ μέλλοι, τὸν πρὸς ἄνδρα ζυγὸν ἀποβρίψασα, ἄχρηστος καὶ τῷ βίῳ πρὸς ὃν εἰς οἰκουρίαν καὶ τεκνογονίαν ἐπλάσθη, καὶ τῇ ἐπαγγελιομένη παρθενίᾳ ἐπίψογος γίνεσθαι, τὸ ὄλον ζημία, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπαιδεύτοις ἐννοίαις καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀνέτοις σκιρτήμασι φθείρουσα. Πολλῶ αἰρετώτερον ἀνδρὶ συναφθεῖσαν τούτῳ πρὸς τὸν βίον ἠρωχεῖσθαι· τὸ τε χρειώδεις εἰς βοήθειαν κατὰ τὸν οἶκον ἀμοιβὴν τῆς προστασίας αὐτῷ ἀντεκτινύουσαν, καὶ γηροκόμους παῖδας εἰς διαδουλίαν τοῦ γένους ἀγαθοῦς παριστᾶσαν· καὶ ἐν γούν μέρει ταῦς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ζηλοτυπίας, ὡς οὐδὲν τε, τῷ Θεῷ παρθευέουσαν.

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rupts her soul with unbridled thoughts, and her body with unrestrained wantonings. Much more preferable would it be to be united to a husband and to have him to guide her conduct, and both to recompense him for his oversight of her, by making herself a useful aid in his house, and bring up his children, so that they may take care of him in his age and keep up his family; and so through her husband's jealous care in one way at least be a virgin to God."

Now all this is so strangely different in sentiment from what we have seen in other passages, that it is very difficult to reconcile them: so that as I have hinted, many persons have been led to think that the more extreme views were introduced into the treatise by copyists. The very circumstance of speaking of the employments of a married woman with respect, and as a divine appointment, and the very end of creation, and of purity in that state, as being one method of consecration to God, is so contradictory to the idea of matrimonial intercourse being a pollution: and especially the recommending a professed virgin to marry, is so contrary to the energetic remonstrances made against such a step in other parts of the treatise, that it is inconceivable that the same feelings should have existed in the same mind at the same time.

When he comes to speak of marriage again, as it ought to be entered upon, in support of his idea that the marriage of a professed virgin who has fallen

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into sin, is nothing better than licensed impurity, he expresses in substance the feeling of every Christian mind upon the subject. "For this is lawful<sup>1</sup> and scriptural matrimony, not when pleasure has been indulged in before the law has been complied with, but when due consideration, having for its aim the aid each party is to render to the other, and the keeping up of the family, brings about an union really honourable; when the relatives pre-arrange the marriage upon due consideration, and the holy foundation has been laid in the Lord according to the laws, and lawful indulgence is found to follow as a necessary consequence of marriage, making of twain one flesh." Making allowance for difference of usages, and for the circumstance that women in those days did not mix in promiscuous society, and that young persons had no recognized way of forming matrimonial connexions, except through their relatives, there is nothing in this passage to object to; on the contrary it shows a pure and refined view of marriage. But it is very clear that love in the Christian sense before marriage, was almost totally

<sup>1</sup> Τότε γὰρ νόμος καὶ κατὰ τὰς θείας γραφὰς συνίσταται γάμος, ὅταν μὴ πάθος ἡδονῆς προκαταλάβῃ τοῦ νόμου τὴν χρείαν, λογισμὸς τοῦ τε εἰς βοήθειαν ἀναγκαίου καὶ τῆς τῶν παιδῶν διαδοχῆς τοῦ γάμου προσθεῖς τὸν σκοπὸν, τίμων ὄντως μνηστεύει τὸν γάμον ὅτε τῶν ἀναγκαιῶν τοῦ γάμου προειληφότων τῷ λογισμῷ, καὶ κρηγῆδος ἀγίας ἐν Κυρίῳ κατὰ νόμον τεθείσης, ἐπακολούθημα τοῦ κατὰ τὸν γάμον ἀναγκαίου ἢ ἐκ τῆς μίξεως ἡδονῆ, μίαν σάρκα τοὺς δύο ποιῶσα εὐρίσκεται.

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unknown, and that if the ideas of Basil were above those of Christians at large, it was because the Gospel had to contend with the degraded ideas of the married state generated by heathenism, just as in the time of St. Paul himself. It is perfectly clear that Basil's views were precisely those of the patriarchs of the Old Testament: and, polygamists though they were, it is by no means certain, that marriage amongst us has become purer by recognizing the passion commonly called love, as the ordinary preparation to it; a passion in most persons totally distinct from true affection, and the more intensely it is felt, the less likely to terminate in real love.

But let us turn from the recluse Ephrem and Basil, the great promoters of monachism, to the married Gregory of Nazianzum, the personal friend of Basil, but a man who was more capable of feeling the strength of domestic ties. His father had been converted at mature age through the instrumentality of his wife, and he had reason therefore to speak well of marriage: he accordingly thus expresses his feelings<sup>1</sup>: "Marriage is honourable; but I cannot say that it is higher than virginity. For virginity would not be a great thing, if it were not more honourable than that which is itself honourable. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *Orat.* iii. Καλὸν ὁ γάμος. Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν ὅτι καὶ ὑψηλότερον παρθενίας· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν ἦν τι μέγυ ἢ παρθενία, μὴ καλοῦ καλλίων τυγχάνουσα. . . . Πλὴν ἀλλήλαις συνδεσμεῖσθε καὶ παρθέναι καὶ γυναῖκες, καὶ ἐν ἑστὲ ἐν Κυρίῳ καὶ ἀλλήλων καλλώπισμα. Οὐκ ἂν ἦν ἄγαμος, εἰ μὴ γάμος.

But, ye virgins and wives, be united to each other, and be one in the Lord, and an ornament to each other. For there could not be the unmarried, if there were no marriage." This shows a different estimate of things from what we have seen in many others. He even implies that there were those who doubted whether marriage were not the highest state: but he shows that his own feeling was that each was good in its way, and both acceptable to God. Thus again in his thirty-second Oration <sup>1</sup>, he classes together as equally pure, a chaste married woman and a consecrated virgin. Again in another discourse, arguing with some one who was disposed to baptism, but from some misunderstanding of the Christian vow of renouncing the flesh, dreaded to take it upon him, lest he should wish to marry afterwards, he assures him <sup>2</sup> that he need have no misgivings on that score, for that marriage was pure, else Christ would not have wrought a miracle at a wedding, and honoured it with his presence. This no doubt indicates the presence of much false feeling on the subject; but it is likewise, we may safely

<sup>1</sup> § 43 Γυναικῶν ὅσον ὑπὸ ζῆγον Θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ σαρκὶ συντελεμένον, ὅσον ἄζυγον καὶ ἐλεύθερον Θεῷ τὸ πᾶν καθιερωμένον.

<sup>2</sup> *Orat.* xi. Οὐπω σαρκὶ συνεζεύχθη; μὴ φοβηθῆς τὴν τελείωσιν. Καθαρὸς εἶ καὶ μετὰ τὸν γάμον. Ἐμὸς ὁ κίνδυνος· ἐγὼ τούτου συναρμωστής· ἐγὼ νυμφοστόλος. Οὐ γὰρ ἐπεὶ ἡ παρθενία τιμωτέρα, ἐν ταῖς ἀτίμοις ὁ γάμος. Μιμήσομαι Χριστὸν, τὸν καθαρὸν νυμφαγωγὸν καὶ νυμφίον, ὅς καὶ θουματοουργεῖ γάμψ καὶ τιμῇ συζυγίαν τῇ παρουσίᾳ.

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conclude, a proof that all were not led away equally, and that, in the East at least, the tide was beginning to turn. The same spirit is shown again in his 193rd Epistle, to his intended son-in-law Diocles, at whose marriage he purposed to be present; and in his 56th Ode, which is addressed to a young married lady on her conduct in that condition. His friend Basil would not have married himself, nor would he have willingly sanctioned the marriage of a daughter, if we may judge from the general tenor of his writings.

But one of the most beautiful of the compositions of Gregory of Nazianzum, is his Eulogium on his sister Gorgonia. She was married, and he thus describes her excellence in that state<sup>1</sup>: "She so much excelled in modesty, and so much surpassed all those about her who had the highest character for modesty, that she avoided the disadvantages to which the two conditions are liable, between which the life of all is distributed, I mean marriage and celibacy, and chose out and brought into one the excellencies of both: and since the one is loftier and more divine, but at the same time more difficult and perilous, and the other more humble and safer, she adopted the

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<sup>1</sup> *Orat. xi.* Σωφροσύνη μὲν γε τοσοῦτον εὐήμεγεν, καὶ τοσοῦτον ὑπερῆρεν τὰς κατ' αὐτὴν ἀπάσας, ὣν ὁ πολὺς ἐπὶ σωφροσύνῃ λόγος, ὥστε εἰς δύο ταῦτα διηρημένου πᾶσι τοῦ βίου, γάμιον λέγω καὶ ἀγαμίαν, καὶ τῆς μὲν οὔσης ὑψηλοτέρας τε καὶ θειωτέρας, ἐπιπονεστέρας δὲ καὶ σφαλερωτέρας, τοῦ δὲ ταπεινωτέρου τε καὶ ἀσφαλεστέρου, ἀμφοτέρων φυγοῦσα τὸ ἀηδὲς, ὅσον κάλλιστόν ἐστιν ἐν ἀμφοτέροις ἐκλέξασθαι, καὶ εἰς ἑν ἀγαγεῖν, τῆς μὲν τὸ ὕψος, τοῦ δὲ τὴν ἀσπί-

loftiness of the one and the security of the other, and became modest without pride, mingling with marriage the honour of celibacy; and showing that neither of these so absolutely binds either to God or to the world, or on the other hand separates from them, as that the one is in its own nature to be avoided by every one, and the other to be magnified in the abstract; but that it is reason which rightly presides over both wedlock and virginity, and that they, like some material, are arranged and fashioned to excellence by the artist reason. For it did not follow that because she was united to the flesh, therefore she was separated from the spirit; or because she had a husband for her head, therefore she knew not the first Head: but having for a while sacrificed to the world and to nature, and to such an extent as the law of the flesh required, or rather he who gave laws to the flesh, she consecrated herself entirely to God. And, what is most honourable

λειαν, καὶ γενέσθαι σώφρων ἄτυφος, τῷ γάμῳ τῆς ἀγαμίας κάλον κέρασαι· καὶ δείξαισα ὅτι μήθ' ἕτερον τούτων ἢ Θεῷ πάντως ἢ κόσμῳ συνδεῖ καὶ ἐάσθησι πάλιν, ὥστε εἶναι τὸ μὲν παντὶ φευκτὸν κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν φύσιν, τὸ δὲ τελῶς ἐπαινετὸν· ἀλλὰ νοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ καὶ γάμῳ καὶ παρθενίᾳ καλῶς ἐπιστατῶν, καὶ ὥσπερ ὕλη τις ταῦτα τῷ τεχνίτῃ λόγῳ ῥυθμίζεται καὶ δημιουργεῖται πρὸς ἀρετήν. Οὐ γὰρ ἐπεὶ σαρκὶ συνήφθη, διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη τοῦ Πνεύματος· οὐδ' ὅτι κεφαλὴν ἔσχε τὸν ἄνδρα, διὰ τοῦτο τὴν πρώτην κεφαλὴν ἠγνόησε· ἀλλ' ὀλίγα λειτουργήσασα κόσμῳ καὶ φύσει, καὶ ὅσον ὁ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐξβούλετο νόμος, (μᾶλλον δὲ ὁ τῆ σαρκὸς ταῦτα νομοθετήσας,) Θεῷ τὸ πᾶν ἑαυτῇ καθιέρωσεν. Ὁ δὲ κάλλιστον καὶ σεμνότατον, ὅτι καὶ τὸν ἄνδρα πρὸς ἑαυτῆς ἐποίησας, καὶ οὐ δεσπότην ἄσπον, ἀλλ' ὁμιόουλον ἀγαθὸν προσεκτήσαστο· οὐ μόνον δὲ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ σώματος

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and creditable, she also brought her husband to feel with her, and found him consequently, not an arbitrary master, but a good fellow-servant. Not only this, but she also made the fruit of her body, her children and her children's children, the fruit of the Spirit; consecrating to God her whole family and all her substance, in return for [her own] one soul, and rendering also wedlock a subject of praise through her admirable conduct in it, and the good fruit she produced from it."

How much does this panegyric speak! Does it not show clearly that one of the great reasons why marriage was not looked on as it ought to be, was that in fact there were so few instances in which it was made to adorn the profession of the Gospel: that the state was not generally redeemed from the grossness into which paganism had plunged it? But when we see the Gospel raise and sanctify that state, the natural consequence is that it obtains its proper honour. At the same time we may observe in this Father, fully as much as in the greatest ascetic, that a wrong estimate of the excellence of virginity was prevalent; for if it had been restricted to its proper use, it could not have been regarded as more perilous than matrimony. It is only when persons continue in it, who have no natural or acquired fitness

καρπὸν, τὰ τέκνα λέγω καὶ τέκνα τέκνων, καρπὸν τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐποιήσατο· γένος ὅλον καὶ οἰκίαν ὅλην ἀντὶ μιᾶς ψυχῆς Θεῷ καθ-  
αγρίσασα, καὶ ποιήσασα καὶ γάμον ἐπαινετὸν διὰ τῆς ἐν γάμῳ εὐαρε-  
στήσεως καὶ τῆς καθῆς ἐντεῦθεν καρποφορίας.

for it, that danger attaches to it. But on the other hand again, it was no doubt the prevalent low condition of marriage, the circumstance that in very few cases was there any idea of *love in the Christian sense* before marriage, and that almost every man was sensible that in marrying he had but legalised a passion which he felt not to have been pure, that drove so many into celibacy as the only means of escaping impurity. The admiration of celibacy, was therefore the fruit, rather than the cause of the low state of morals. And that is why we find that admiration so much more strongly felt by the heathen than by Christians, by the later Church than by the earlier. When the Church was persecuted, Christian families, no doubt, were more distinct from the heathen, and consequently the domestic relations were less liable to become tainted by intercourse with tainted minds. But when the barrier was removed by prosperity, then intercourse became more unrestrained; and as a natural consequence, the high tone of feeling in the Church at large began to wear away. There became no doubt more professed Christians, and in all probability the number of Christians indeed became enlarged: but the standard of feeling amongst the mass would become lower and lower; the domestic relations would assimilate more to those of the heathen; and as marriage became a polluted thing, so in the Church the admiration of celibacy would rise. And this accounts for the later fathers insisting so much on the honour of marriage.

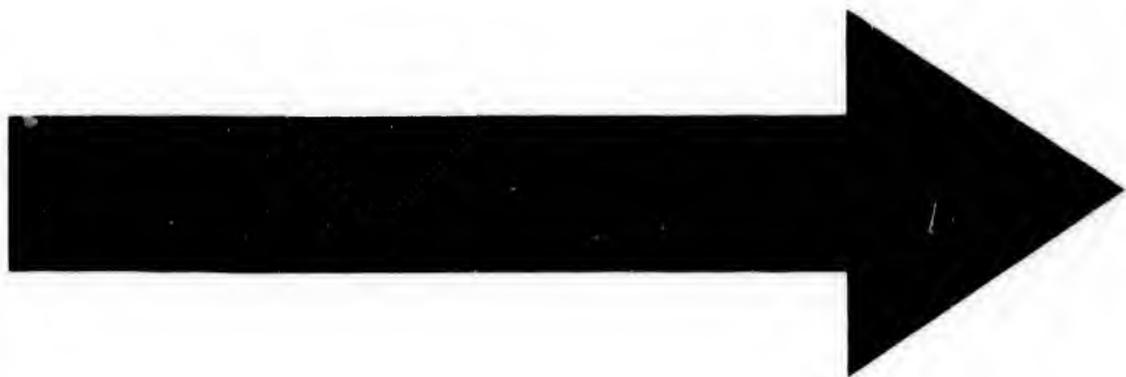
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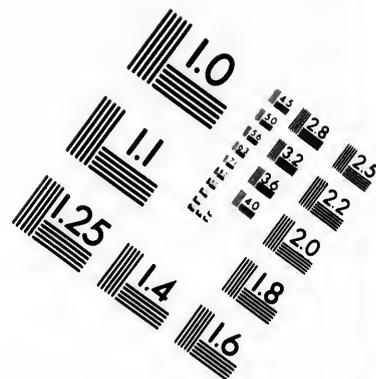
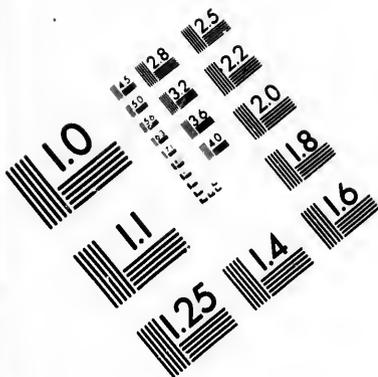
<sup>1</sup> Or  
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whilst at the same time they appear to cast an indirect slur upon it. The Scripture *required* them to acknowledge that it was honourable, and the experience of too many persons told them that *they* at least had not made it pure.

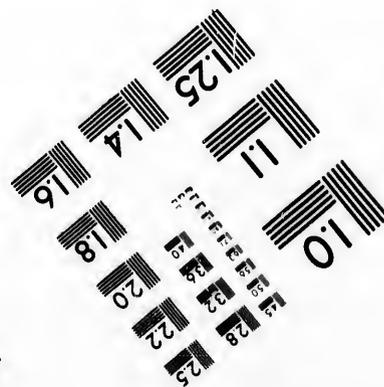
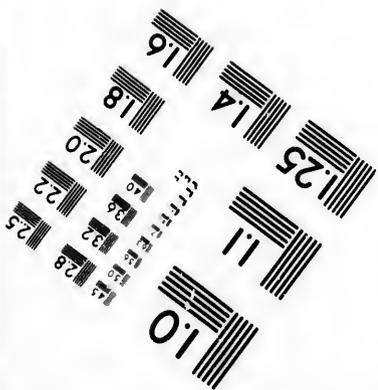
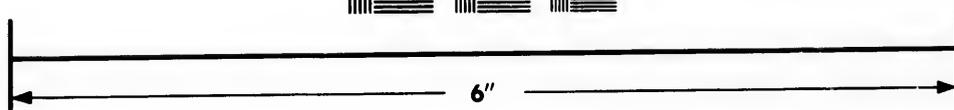
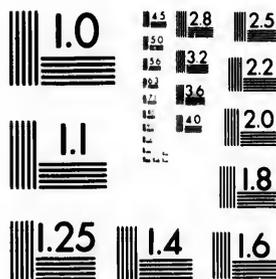
But in this age, viz. the post-Nicene, the tide, as I have said, in the east at least, appears to have taken a turn. So Amphilochius, the friend of the Gregory from whom I have just quoted, has language in direct praise of marriage, although he himself appears for a considerable period to have led a solitary life. So in his third discourse he speaks thus: <sup>1</sup> "Now honourable marriage excels every earthly gift; as a fruitful tree; as a pleasant plant; as the root of virginity; as the cultivator of intelligent and living branches; as the blessing of the increase of the world; as the encourager of the species; as the fashioner of mankind; as the painter of the divine image; as having obtained the Lord's blessing; as having been privileged to sustain the whole world; as being intimately connected with him who humbled himself to become man; as being able to say boldly, behold me, and the children

<sup>1</sup> *Orat.* iii. 'Ο δὲ τίμιος γάμος ὑπερκείται παντὸς δώρου γηένου· ὡς ἔγκαρπον δένδρον· ὡς ἀστεῖον φυτόν· ὡς ῥίζα τῆς παρθενίας· ὡς γεωργὸς τῶν λογικῶν καὶ ἐμφύχων κλάδων· ὡς εὐλογία τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ἀύξησης· ὡς παρήγορος τοῦ γένους· ὡς δημιουργὸς τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος· ὡς τῆς θεϊκῆς εἰκόνης ζωγράφος· ὡς τὸν Δεσπότην εὐλογοῦντα κεκτημένος· ὡς πάντα τὸν κόσμον φέρειν δεχόμενος· ὡς ἐκείνῳ πολιτευόμενος, ὃν καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαι ἐδυσώπησεν· ὡς ἐννάμενος λέγειν μετὰ παρρησίας, "Ἴδου ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ παιδία ἃ μοι



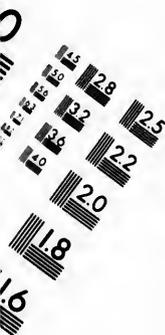


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whom God hath given me. Take away honourable marriage, and where will you find the flower of virginity? for thence and no where else is the flower of virginity gathered. And in saying these things, beloved, we are not bringing up a quarrel between virginity and marriage: but we admire both as useful to each other, since the Lord and Provider does not balance one against the other. For in relation to each we keep hold on religion: for without honourable and God-fearing religion, neither virginity is respectable nor marriage honourable."

I am sorry for the tediousness of these quotations, but since Mr. Taylor has charged the ancient Church with what he calls "the ascetic apostacy," or forbidding to marry, it is necessary to bring a chain of evidence to rebut his assertions and partial quotations. I quite grant that an exaggerated value did attach very generally to virginity, and therefore I bring but little evidence on that side: but on the other I shall endeavour to complete my chain. I come therefore to Optatus, Bishop of Milevi in Numidia. He thus gives his opinion of the claims of virginity<sup>1</sup>.

ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεός. Περίελε τὸν τίμιον γάμον, καὶ ποῦ εὐρήσεις τὸ τῆς παρθενίας ἔνθος; ἔνθεν γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἄλλοθεν τὸ τῆς παρθενίας ἄνθος ἀναλέγεται. Ταῦτα δὲ λέγοντες, ὑγαπητοί, οὐ μάχην περιεσβάλλομεν μεταξὺ παρθενίας καὶ γάμου· τὰ ἑκάτερα δὲ ὡς ἀλληλόχρεα θαυμάζομεν, ἐπειδὴν τῶν ἑκατέρων ὁ Δεσπότης καὶ Προνοητὴς οὐκ ἀντιταλαντεύει ἕτερον τῷ ἑτέρῳ· πρὸς γὰρ τὰ ἑκάτερα τῆς θεοσεβείας ἔχεται· ἄνευ γὰρ τῆς τιμίας καὶ θεοσεβοῦς εὐσεβείας οὔτε παρθενίᾳ σεμνῇ οὔτε γάμῳ τίμῳ.

<sup>1</sup> *De Schismate Donatistarum*, vi. 4. Virginitas enim voluntatis res est, non necessitatis . . . . Paulus Apostolus . . . . docuit

“Virginitas est a materia electionis et non a materia officii . . . . Paulus apostolus . . . . docuit quomodo conjugales Christiani debeant vivere: a quo cum quaereretur quid de virginibus praeciperet, respondit nihil esse mandatum . . . .

“In respectu virginum, Paulus non praecipit, sed docet: non impeditur illis qui volunt, nec cogitur qui nolent. ‘Qui dedit virginem suam bene facit, et qui non dedit melius facit.’ haec sunt verba consilii; nec ulla sunt praecipita conjuncta, vel de qua lana mitella fiet, &c.

I need scarcely ask, what can be more moderate? And yet this was the countryman of Cyprian and Tertullian.

St. Gregory of Nyssa was brother of Basil the great, and though married himself, may therefore be supposed to be prejudiced in favour of celibacy. In fact he wrote a treatise, in which he sets forth the advantages of celibacy and the inconveniences of marriage. But he is so far from insisting upon

quomodo conjugales Christiani debeant vivere: a quo cum quaereretur quid de virginibus praeciperet, respondit nihil esse mandatum.

Non praecipit sed consilium rogat Paulus ad virginitatem; nec impedimento est volentibus, nec nolentes impellit aut cogit. ‘Qui dedit virginem suam bene facit, et qui non dedit melius facit.’ haec sunt verba consilii; nec ulla sunt praecipita conjuncta, vel de qua lana mitella fiet, &c.

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celibacy, that in his first chapter he thinks it bad policy to extol it excessively, for fear of rendering it suspected; in the third, he confesses that he is a married man, and treats virginity not as meritorious or profitable in itself, but simply as a means to an end: and in the eighth chapter he expressly cautions his readers against supposing that he blamed marriage, and excuses his not setting forth its praises, on the ground that nature and pleasure are sufficient incitements to it; except perhaps for the sake of the impure, who break the laws of the Church.

To read Mr. Taylor's pages, we might suppose that all the Fathers were engaging in a conspiracy to eject marriage from the Church. Let us therefore now turn to Ambrose, who is one of the strongest advocates for virginity and continence in all its shapes, and whose writings upon that and kindred subjects, amount to 300 pages out of 1200. In his commentary on St. Luke he thus writes: <sup>1</sup> "Nor was it without an object that in the very beginning of Genesis, by the command of God, marriage is instituted: but it was done that heresy might be destroyed. For God so approved marriage, that He united in wedlock; He so rewarded it, that the divine goodness granted children to those, to whom

<sup>1</sup> *Expos. Ev. Luc.* i. 30. Nec otiose in principio statim Genesis Dei jussu conjugium copulatur, nisi ut hæresis destruat. Sic enim Deus conjugium probavit, ut jungeret; sic remuneratus est, ut quibus sterilitas filios denegasset, pietas divina concederet.

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barrenness denied them." From another passage<sup>1</sup> we learn that the Church was so far from forbidding to marry, that whosoever publicly condemned marriage incurred the penalty of excommunication. He expressly declares that virginity<sup>2</sup> is not for the many but for the few, that it is above<sup>3</sup> the generality of persons, and rather to be wished for than enjoined. He uses the same language which we have before met with, as to the various but not discordant merits of the various conditions of celibacy, widowhood, and marriage. <sup>4</sup> "The Church therefore is a farm rich in various products. Here you may behold the shoots of virginity teeming with blossoms; then, as in the glades of a forest, widowhood excelling in the depth of its foliage; in another quarter the corn field of the Church filling the granaries of the world with

<sup>1</sup> iv. 10. Vidit illibatum et illibatæ castimonie virum : suadet ut nuptias damnet, que reiciatur ab ecclesia, et studio castitatis a casto corpore separetur.

<sup>2</sup> *De Virginibus*, l. v. 35. Non itaque dissuadeo nuptias, sed fructus sacratæ virginitatis enumero. Paucarum quippe hoc munus est, illud omnium. Nec potest esse virginitas, nisi habeat unde nascatur.

<sup>3</sup> § 23. Non enim imperari potest virginitas sed optari : nam quæ supra nos sunt, in voto magis quam in magisterio sunt.

<sup>4</sup> *De Virginitate*, § 34. Est ergo Ecclesia ager diversis fecundus copiis. Hic cernas germina virginitatis flore vernantia ; illic tanquam in campis silvæ viduitatem gravitate pollentem ; alibi tanquam uberi fruge conjugii Ecclesiæ segetem replentem mundi horrea, ac veluti maritatæ vineæ fetibus torcularia Domini Jesu redundantia, in quibus fidelis conjugii fructus exuberat.

the rich fruits of wedlock, and the wine-presses of the Lord Jesus overflowing with the produce of the married vineyard; amongst which the fruits of faithful wedlock are most abundant."

It is remarkable how much more the Latin Fathers of this age press the subject of virginity, than the Greeks do. Jerome asserts, indeed, that in the most considerable of the ancient Churches, no person was made a clergyman who was not either under a vow of celibacy, or unmarried, or bound to live with his wife as with a sister<sup>1</sup>. And it would seem<sup>2</sup> as though in his time a bishop, or other clergyman, subjected himself to the same penalty as an adulterer, if he had children after he was in orders. He admits, it is true, that married men were chosen for ordination; but for the reason I have already given<sup>3</sup>, that otherwise a sufficient number of

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Vigilantiam*. Quid facient Orientis ecclesie? Quid Ægypti et sedis apostolicæ? quæ aut virgines clericos accipiunt, aut continentes, aut si uxores habuerint, mariti esse desinunt.

<sup>2</sup> *Adversus Jovinianum*, i. Certe confiteris non posse esse episcopum, qui in episcopatu filios faciat: alioqui, si deprehensus fuerit, non quasi vir tenebitur, sed quasi adulter damnabitur.

It may be observed, by the bye, that Jovinian was condemned at Rome, not for advocating the marriage of the clergy, as Mr. Taylor asserts, but for asserting that baptism delivers us from sin, future as well as past, from sin as well as from guilt. See Jerome's treatise *against the Pelagians*, iii. near the beginning.

<sup>3</sup> *Adver. Jovin.* i. Eliguntur mariti in sacerdotium, non nego, quia non sunt tanti virgines, quanti necessarii sunt sacerdotes.

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eligible persons could not be found for the priesthood. But that celibacy by itself was no recommendation, he expressly declares<sup>1</sup>; and shows by his expressions, that there was a strict inquisition into the character of those who were to be ordained. This had now been necessary, even from the time before the council of Nice; for the Church afforded stations of influence and power, if not of great wealth; and now that persecution no longer kept out the unprincipled, it was become still more imperative. The Church offered a station exempt from bodily labour, and attended with a certain degree of honour; and although the emoluments were not great, they were sufficient for unmarried men. To those, therefore, who understand human nature, it is not to be wondered at that exclusion should now be necessary, when formerly it was difficult to find persons to undertake the onerous responsibility of holy offices. The confidence, likewise, which was reposed by all ranks of men in the clergy, which had done away, in a great degree, with the necessity of deaconesses, by permitting them free access to the females of families, and to the virgins of the Church, began to operate as a temptation to frivolous and pleasure-

<sup>1</sup> Et quomodo, inquires, frequenter in ordinatione sacerdotali virgo negligitur, et maritus assumitur? Quia forte cetera opera non habet virginitati congruentia. Aut virgo putatur et non est; aut est virginitas infamis; aut certe ipsa virginitas ei parit superbiam, et dum sibi applaudit de sola corporis castitate, virtutes ceteras negligit.

loving men : for Jerome tells us<sup>1</sup>, that there were now men found who cared for little but dress, who notwithstanding sought to enter the sacred ministry ; and for what purpose ? That they might have free access to women. And yet this very circumstance shows, that, hitherto at least, the general conduct of the clergy must have been such as to inspire confidence, otherwise the ancient jealousy would have been kept up, which had excluded them formerly from the apartments of women, equally with all other men.

But Jerome's testimony likewise painfully shows that at Rome the old corruptions which we have seen appearing at Carthage in Cyprian's time, were breaking out again. There were to be found consecrated maidens<sup>2</sup> who endeavoured to attract public admiration, and draw after them crowds of young men. Nay worse, there were those<sup>3</sup> who openly and systematically allowed themselves to share the same dwelling, the same chamber, the same bed with favoured individuals of the other sex, and yet called those suspicious who imagined any evil in such intimacy. This indeed was a natural conse-

<sup>1</sup> *De Custodia Virginitatis*. Sunt alii, qui ideo Presbyteratum et Diaconatum ambiunt, ut mulieres licentius videant. Omnis his cura de vestibus, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Quæ per publicum notabiliter incedunt, et furtivis oculorum nutibus adolescentium greges post se trahunt.

<sup>3</sup> *Eadem domo, uno cubiculo, sæpe uno tenentur et lectulo, et suspiciosos nos vocant, si aliquid existimamus.*

quence, where persons of immature piety bound themselves by a vow of celibacy. It naturally arose from that vow, when the Church was no longer hedged in by the thorny fence of persecution. And accordingly from this time it seems to appear more distinctly.

But the very fact, that with a keen perception of these evils, when they appeared, such a man as Jerome should have upheld religious celibacy with all his power, shows at least that the general and all but universal condition of the celibates must have been granted to be pure. For he was a man bound to no opinions but his own. He set at nought his ecclesiastical superiors when he thought proper. And he even ventured, in consequence of a systematic study of the Hebrew originals of the Old Testament, to set all antiquity at defiance, and to dislodge the Septuagint version of the Scriptures from that high veneration in which it was held in the Church. So that *he*, at least, was not shackled by the voice of his contemporaries. He owns moreover that he did not belong to the celibatic order. And the natural conclusion therefore to which we come, is, that the moral condition of those of that order had not sustained any *general* deterioration in his time.

Neither in his estimation of virginity did he venture upon detracting from marriage. He expressly acknowledges that it was good in itself<sup>1</sup>; and argues that the very fact of comparing virginity

<sup>1</sup> *Epist. xviii. ad Eustochium.* Dicat aliquis, Et audes nuptiis detrudere, quæ a Deo benedictæ sunt? Non est detrudere nup-

with it by way of enhancing the merits of the latter, proved that he acknowledged its intrinsic excellence: for "no one," he says, "compares a bad thing with a good one."

There are two or three other documents of this age which require our attention. The first is the Council of Valence in France, of the year 374. One of its decrees concerns clergymen, and the other virgins. The first<sup>1</sup> forbids those to be ordained for the future, who had been twice married or had married widows, but professedly refrains from interfering with digamists who had been previously ordained. It is clear from this that the rules spoken of by Jerome and Epiphanius were not universal; for here we have not only clergy married, but even twice married.

The second canon<sup>2</sup> shows that the severity of punishing the marriage of consecrated virgins with penance, was extended to France: for it decrees

tiis, quum illis virginitas antefertur. Nemo malum bono comparat.

<sup>1</sup> *Can. i.* Sedit igitur, neminem post hanc synodum, qua ejusmodi illicitis vel sero succurritur, de digamis aut internuptarum (iterum nuptarum. Du Cange.) maritis ordinari clericum posse. Nec requirendum utrumne initiati sacramentis divinis, anne gentiles, hac se infelicis sortis necessitate macularint, cum divini precepti casta sit forma. Sed quia fratrum nostrorum vel imperitiam vel simplicitatem vel etiam præsumptionem damnare non possumus, nec per omnes ecclesias quæ sunt jampridem male gesta corrigere, placuit etiam de eorum statu qui prius ordinati [sint] nihil revolvi, si nulla extrinsecus causa procedat, qua indigni ministerio comprobentur.

<sup>2</sup> *Can. ii.* De puellis vero quæ se Deo voverunt, si ad terrenas

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that they are not to be admitted to communion again till after full penance.

The Council of Saragossa in Spain, which was held the next year, is worthy of attention, both as showing that an ascetic mania had spread into Spain, and that more as a fashion than from a real self-denial, and that there was that turn in the tide which I have before noticed. For its sixth canon<sup>1</sup> decrees the excommunication of those clergymen who should forsake the active duties of their profession to become solitaries; and the eighth<sup>2</sup> forbids virgins to take the veil, that is, to profess themselves so publicly, until they should be of the age of forty. When the *veil* came to be the distinction of the female celibate we do not learn; but that it was so at this period appears very evident from the writings of St. Ambrose.

The general Council of Constantinople, which was held this year, *made no decree* on the subject of virginity or the celibacy of the clergy: so that, as

nuptias sponte transierint, id custodiendum esse decrevimus, ut pœnitentia his nec statim datur, et cum data fuerit, nisi plene satisfecerint Deo in quantum ratio poposecerit, earundem communio differatur.

<sup>1</sup> *Cun. vi.* Si quis de clericis propter luxum vanitatemque præsumptam de officio sponte discesserit, ac velut observatorem legis monachum videri voluerit magis quam clericum, ita de ecclesia repellendum, ut nisi rogando atque observando plurimis temporibus satisfecerit, non recipiatur.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid. viii.* Non velandas esse virgines, quæ se Deo voverint, nisi quadraginta annorum probata ætate quam sacerdos comprobaverit.

yet, whatever was done was matter of usage, or of rule in particular churches, but was not decreed by the representatives of the Church universal.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

TEN or fifteen years more bring us on to the time at which St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom were the luminaries of the Church, the one in the west, the other in the east.

The language of St. Augustine indicates no general relaxation in the estimation of virginity in the west, or in the strictness of the discipline by which the obligation of its vow was enforced. On the contrary it appears <sup>1</sup> that those who had made the profession could not marry with impunity. But still, he himself declares of such, that, although he regards those who, after taking the vow, from the prevalence of sensual passion longed to break it, as being in a state of deadly sin, yet they would do much better to marry than continue in such a state of mind. And he unites with all who have gone

<sup>1</sup> *De Virginitate*, 34. Hæ igitur quæ nubere volunt, et ideo non nubunt quia impune non possunt, quæ melius nubercnt quam urerentur, id est, quam occulta flamma concupiscentiæ in ipsa conscientia vastarentur, quas pœnitet professionis et piget professionis, nisi correctum cor dirigant et Dei timore rursus libidinem vincant, in mortuis deputandæ sunt.

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before him in warning<sup>1</sup> the professed not to contemn marriage as a bad thing in itself, or as having any thing of impurity in it, for that virginity<sup>2</sup> of soul is just as much the duty of the faithful generally, as virginity of person of a few. This last passage is especially worthy of observation, because it shows that, whatever appearances there are of a latent idea of inferior purity in marriage, it was not one which was deliberately avowed; for the soul, which is the real seat of purity, was regarded as equally capable of purity in marriage as in celibacy. Indeed four of St. Augustine's letters (252--255.) are concerning a young lady, left in his guardianship as bishop, for whom he was looking out for a suitable opportunity of marrying.

The Councils of Carthage which took place in his day, one in A.D. 397, a second in 398, and a third in 401, and at which he, as bishop of Hippo, of course assisted, give us some insight into the practical working of celibacy. It was found necessary in both the first to keep up the regulation against clergymen having strangers for their house-keepers or companions<sup>3</sup>. It appears from one of

<sup>1</sup> *De sancta Virginitate*, 18. Unde sectatores et sectatrices perpetuæ continentiæ et sacræ virginitatis admoneo, ut bonum suum ita præferant nuptiis, ne malum judicent nuptias.

Qui ergo sine conjugio permanere voluerint, non tanquam foveam peccati nuptias fugiant; sed tanquam collem minoris boni transcendant, ut in majoris continentiæ monte requiescant.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermo* 341. § 5. Virginitas corporis in paucis ecclesiæ, virginitas mentis in omnibus fidelibus esse debet.

<sup>3</sup> *Concil. iii. Can. xvii.* Ut cum omnibus omnino clericis

each<sup>1</sup>, that danger was apprehended from too frequent intercourse between the church virgins and widows, and the ministers of the church, and that the latter were not permitted to visit them unaccompanied. It appears likewise that the church readers were now required<sup>2</sup> either to marry, or to make a vow of chastity, when they came to proper age; but that it was left to their option which they should do: but bishops, priests, and deacons, if married, were now bound to live with their wives as with sisters<sup>3</sup>.

extraneæ feminæ non cohabitent, sed solæ matres, aviæ, materæ, amitæ, sorores et filiæ fratrum aut sororum, et quæcunque ex familia domestica necessitate etiam antequam ordinarentur jam cum eis habitabant; vel si filii eorum jam ordinatis parentibus uxores acceperint; aut, servis non habentibus in domo quas ducant, aliunde ducere necessitas fuerit.

Concil. iv. Can. xlvi. Clericus cum extraneis non habitat.

<sup>1</sup> Con. iii. Can. xxv. Ut clerici vel continentcs ad viduas vel virgines, nisi jussu vel permissu episcoporum, non accedant. Et hoc non soli faciant, sed cum clericis vel cum his cum quibus episcopus jusserit vel presbyter: nec ipsi episcopi aut presbyteri soli habeant accessum ad hujusmodi feminas, nisi aut clerici præsentcs sint aut graves aliqui Christiani.

Con. iv. Can. cii. Ad reatum episcopi pertinet vel presbyteri qui parochiæ præest, si sustentandæ vitæ causa adolescentiores viduæ vel sanctimoniales clericorum . . . . subjiciantur.

<sup>2</sup> Con. iii. Can. xix. Placuit ut lectores, cum ad annos pubertatis venerint, cogantur aut uxores ducere aut continentiam profiteri.

<sup>3</sup> Concil. v. Capit. iii. Præterea cum de quorundam clericorum, quamvis erga uxores proprias, incontinentia referretur, placuit episcopus et presbyteros et diaconos, secundum propria

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It would seem likewise that in Africa, it now began to be felt necessary to restrict the profession of virginity: for we have a regulation that none shall be allowed to profess till they are of the age of twenty-five<sup>1</sup>. A particular habit appears to have been established<sup>2</sup>: and although it was most usual for the virgins to live with their friends<sup>3</sup>, there were establishments in which those who chose, or were destitute, might live in common, under the superintendance of the bishop. St. Paul's opinion concerning those church widows who married a second time was enforced by excommunication<sup>4</sup>.

statuta, etiam ab uxoribus continere: quod nisi fecerint, ab ecclesiastico removeantur officio. Ceteros autem clericos ad hoc non cogi; sed secundum uniuscujusque ecclesiæ consuetudinem observari debere.

<sup>1</sup> Con. iii. Can. iv. Placuit ut ante 25 annos ætatis nec diaconi ordinentur nec virgines consecrentur.

<sup>2</sup> Con. iv. Can. xi. Sanctimonialis virgo, cum ad consecrationem suo episcopo offertur, in talibus vestibus applicetur, qualibus semper usura est, professioni et sanctimoniam aptis. See Can. civ.

<sup>3</sup> Con. iii. Can. xxxiii. Ut virgines sacræ, cum parentibus a quibus custodiebantur privatæ fuerint, episcopi providentia, vel presbyteri ubi episcopus absens est, in monasterio virginum vel gravioribus feminis commendentur, et simul habitantes invicem se custodiant; ne passim vagantes ecclesiæ lædent existimationem.

<sup>4</sup> Con. iv. Can. civ. Sicut bonum est castitatis præmium, ita et majori observantia et præceptione custodiendum est: ut si quæ viduæ, quantumlibet adhuc in minoribus annis positæ et matura ætate a viro relictæ, se devoverunt Domino, et veste

One of these councils thinks it necessary that a bishop, previously to his consecration, should expressly declare that he did not condemn marriage<sup>1</sup>.

The progress of austerity towards the clergy and those who professed celibacy in the west, further appears from the council of Toledo in Spain, which was contemporaneous with the last of these African councils. It appears that up to that time, married clergymen were not prohibited from cohabiting with their wives: but that from this time the regulation was to be strictly enforced, that no such person could rise to a higher rank than he then occupied<sup>2</sup>. The widow of a bishop, priest, or deacon, could not

laicali abjecta sub testimonio episcopi et ecclesiae religioso habitu apparuerint, postea vero ad nuptias sæculares transierint, secundum Apostolum damnationem habebunt, quoniam fidem castitatis quam Domino voverunt irritam facere ausæ sint. Tales ergo personæ sine Christianorum communione maneat, quæ etiam nec in convivio cum Christianis communicent.

<sup>1</sup> Con. iv. Capit. i. Qui episcopus ordinandus est . . . . . Quærendum etiam ab eo . . . . . si nuptias non improbet, si secunda matrimonia non damnet, si carnum perceptionem non culpet, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Capit. i. Placuit, ut diacones, si vel integri vel casti sint, et continentis vitæ, etiamsi uxores habeant, in ministerio constituentur: ita tamen, ut si qui etiam ante interdictum, quod per Lusitanos episcopos constitutum est, incontinenter cum uxoribus suis vixerint, presbyterii honore non cumulentur; si quis vero ex presbyteris ante interdictum filios susceperit, de presbyterio ad episcopatum non permittatur.

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marry again <sup>1</sup>, nor the daughter of a bishop, priest, or deacon, who had professed, marry at all, without incurring the penalty of excommunication, not to be relaxed till the death-bed <sup>2</sup>. It does not, however, appear what penalty, if any, existed against the marriage of other widows and virgins.

We now come to St. John Chrysostom, who like all of his age wrote in favour of virginity, and especially thought it his duty to stand up in defence of the ascetic life. I have already remarked a disposition to austerity in the writers of the western church, which was not sanctioned by the eastern; and St. Chrysostom confirms my observation. The great distinction is, that it does not appear that as yet there was any punishment consequent on the marriage of those who had taken the vow in the eastern church, and that some of the eastern fathers even recommended it in certain cases; amongst whom was the father of whom we are now speaking.

<sup>1</sup> xviii. Si qua vidua episcopi sive presbyteri aut diaconi maritum acceperit, nullus clericus, nulla religiosa, cum ea convivium sumat, nunquam communicet; morienti tantum ei sacramentum subveniat.

<sup>2</sup> xix. Episcopi sive presbyteri sive diaconi filia, si Deo devota fuerit, et peccaverit et maritum duxerit, si eam pater vel mater in affectum receperit, a communionē habeantur alieni. Pater vero causas in concilio se noverit præstaturum; mulier vero non admittatur ad communionem, nisi marito defuncto egerit pœnitentiam. Si autem vivente eo secesserit et pœniterit vel petierit communionem, in ultimo vitæ deficiens accipiat communionem.

This we see in his remonstrance<sup>1</sup> against the practice which we have already seen the Church troubled to repress, viz. that of professed virgins living in the same house with unmarried men; in which he absolutely recommends those to marry who wished for the society of men: and declares that such a marriage was neither condemned by God nor censured by men. He likewise acknowledges that many quitted the monasteries to marry<sup>2</sup>. So again in the treatise on virginity, in opposition to those who spoke ill of marriage, he says<sup>3</sup>, "Marriage is good, because it preserves a man in modesty, &c. Therefore censure it not, for it has great advantage." And he affirms with regard to celibacy, that St. Paul<sup>4</sup> "has not condemned those who have not the power to observe it, but to those who have the power he has pointed out a great and lofty enter-

<sup>1</sup> Περὶ τοῦ μὴ κανονικὰς συνοικεῖν ἀνδράσιν.

Εἰ γὰρ ἄνδρας ἐπιθυμεῖς ἔχειν συνοικοῦντας, οὐκ ἔδει παρθενίαν ἐλέσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὸν γάμον ἐλθεῖν· πολλῶν γὰρ βέλτιον γαμεῖν ἐκείνως, ἢ παρθενεύειν οὕτως. Τὸν μὲν γὰρ τοιοῦτον γάμον οὔτε ὁ Θεὸς καταδικάζει, οὔτε ἄνθρωποι διαβάλλουσι· τίμιον γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα, οὐδένα ἀδικοῦν οὐδὲ πλήττον.

<sup>2</sup> *Adversus Vitæ Monasticæ Oppugnatores*, iii. 14. Οὔτε γὰρ τοσοῦτοι πρὸς τὸν γάμον ἀπὸ τῶν μοναστηρίων ἐκβαίνουσι, ὅσοι πρὸς πύρνας ἀπὸ τῆς ἐνῆς ἀνίστανται τῶν γυναικῶν.

<sup>3</sup> *De Virginitate*, 25. Καλὸν ὁ γάμος, ὅτι ἐν σωφροσύνῃ τὸν ἄνδρα διατηρεῖ κ. τ. λ. Μὴ τοίνυν αὐτὸν διαβάλλῃς· πόλυ γὰρ ἔχει τὸ κέρδος.

<sup>4</sup> 2. Τοὺς μὲν μὴ δυναμένους οὐ κατέκρινε, τῶν δὲ δυναμένων πόλυν καὶ ὑπέρογκον τὸν ἀγῶνα ἀπέδειξε.

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prize." But he draws a most lamentable picture of the state of society in Constantinople in his time. I say of the state of society *generally*, for although no doubt his subject leads him to *specify* the sins of the professed virgins<sup>1</sup>, yet there are indications of much general depravity. Thus in his treatise in favour of the monastic life, granting to his opponents that the vow was not always kept, and that many monks quitted the monasteries in order to marry, he affirms<sup>2</sup> that there were fewer who did so, than of those in ordinary life who quitted the embraces of a wife for those of a harlot. When society in general was thus polluted, was it surprising that those who lived in the world, as the consecrated virgins did hitherto, should become occasionally polluted with the atmosphere that surrounded them? But on the other hand, we must bear in mind that he is not speaking of the Christian world at large, but of the population of a corrupt capital. Let the condition therefore of the church virgins have been as deplorable as it might be there, and at Rome, is it right to conclude without explicit evidence, as Mr. Taylor does, that it was equally so elsewhere? Jerome, let us remember, was a clergyman of Rome, Chrysostom patriarch

<sup>1</sup> *De Virginitate*, 8. Οὔτος γὰρ δεύτερος, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ τρίτος ἡμῖν μολυσμῶν καὶ ἀκαθαρσίας ἐπινενόηται τρόπος· καὶ αἱ τῶν γάμον ὡς ἐναγιῆ φεύγουσαι αὐτῷ τούτῳ τῷ φεύγειν πάντων γεγονατε ἐναγεστέροι, παρθεῖν εὐροῦσαι πορνείας μιαιωτέραν.

<sup>2</sup> See note <sup>2</sup>, p. 204.

of Constantinople, both capitals, and both inheriting, in all their dreadful rankness, the deeply dyed vices of heathenism. And Christianity was no longer persecuted, but honoured: so that the world thronged into the Church, with much of the spirit of heathenism along with it. Is it reasonable then to attribute the decrease of piety in the Church to the influence of the practice of celibacy, or to attribute the deterioration of all classes of Christians to that one general cause, which operated equally upon all?

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## CHAPTER V.

HAVING now carried on the chain of evidence to Chrysostom, I imagine most of my readers will be satisfied that I have gone far enough for the purpose of exhibiting the doctrine of the Primitive Church. Those who are acquainted with the state of things after this period will feel that, except in the preservation of purity of doctrine on the great fundamentals of Christianity, the Church as a body had lamentably little in common with the Churches of the subapostolical age. The rules of discipline enacted, indeed, were more minute and more stringent than was thought necessary in earlier times, but that very

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minuteness and stringency proves the growing corruption. Not, I imagine, that there were numerically fewer pious persons in the Church than formerly, but that they were so outnumbered by the multitudes who now professed the Gospel, without attempting to reduce it to practice. And even in Chrysostom's time, that was the case to a great extent. It began with the cessation of persecution, and had gone on increasing ever since.

But I am desirous of carrying on the investigation in a somewhat slighter and more perfunctory manner to a much later period, for the purpose of showing to what extent the Church, as a body, was committed *at any period* to restricting marriage, either amongst clergy, or amongst laity. I shall therefore advance to the council of Chalcedon, in the middle of the fifth century, which sat upon the Eutychian controversy.

But before I quote its canons, it will be necessary to cite the remarks of M. Dupin, the Roman Catholic historian, upon them. He says, "As for myself, I much doubt whether this collection of canons were made in any session of the council, but do rather believe that they were composed since, and taken out of the several actions. 'Tis easy to find the places." Now, after this remark, we must see how very doubtful it must be whether any of the canons, which we cannot trace to something more authentic than the "collection" of them, can be regarded as canons of the universal Church.

Its first canon<sup>1</sup> confirms the rules of all the synods hitherto, which Bishop Beveridge interprets of those of Nice, Ancyra, Neocæsarea, Gangra, Antioch, and Laodicea. It therefore decrees, that virgins who violate their profession, should be subjected to the same penance as those who married a second time<sup>2</sup>, and that if a priest marries after ordination, he shall be degraded<sup>3</sup>? With regard, however, to the confirmation of these canons by this council, there must be some doubt, from there being a canon, professedly of Chalcedon<sup>4</sup>, declaring that it is not lawful for a professed virgin, or a monk, to marry, appointing excommunication as the penalty, but still leaving them to the clemency of their respective bishops. The meaning probably is, that if either of these should marry, they should be excluded from the Holy Communion until they had performed such penance as the Bishop might appoint. It is however declared, unequivocally, if we accept this as one of the undoubted decrees of this council, that it

<sup>1</sup> Καν. α'. Τοὺς παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων καθ' ἑκάστην σύνοδον ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν ἐκτεθέντας κανόνας κρατεῖν ἐδικαιώσαμεν.

There is something very loose and undefined in this. If it is to include any other than the general councils, how is it to be shown which were included?

<sup>2</sup> Concil. Ancyr. Can. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Concil. Neocæsar. Can. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Can. 16. Παρθένον ἀναθεῖσαν ἑαυτὴν τῷ Δεσπότη Θεῷ, ὡσαύτως καὶ μονάζοντας, μὴ ἐξέιναι γάμψ προσομιλεῖν' εἰ δέ γε εὐρεθῆεν τοῦτο ποιοῦντες, ἔστωσαν ἀκοινωνήτοι. Ὀρίσασμεν δὲ ἔχειν τὴν ἀθνετεῖαν τῆς ἐπ' αὐτοῖς φιλανθρωπίας τὸν κατὰ τύπον ἐπίσκοπον.

is not lawful for those who have vowed celibacy to break their vow. But after all, what is this but declaring what we must all feel to be true? The error was, as I have said, in urging persons to take the vow, or in accepting it publicly: but on this point the council only takes matters as it found them, without defining either one way or another; although it must be allowed that it gives the practice a sanction by regulating it.

If, however, the council of Chalcedon did actually ratify the first canon of Neocæsarea, it was not considered universally binding in the Church: for (A. D. 459) we find a letter of Lupus, bishop of Troyes, and Euphronius, bishop of Autun, to Thalassius, bishop of Anjou, in which they say, that it is *better* for the clergy to abstain from marriage, *but in this they must follow the custom of the Churches.*

To show more strongly, that the professed canons of the council of Chalcedon are to be received with a degree of doubt, we will go on to the supplement to the sixth general council of Constantinople, (sometimes called Quini-sexth,) which indeed is not recognized by Roman Catholics as a general council, for reasons which will appear very obviously, when we come to cite its canons.

The second canon acknowledges the authority of the eighty-five canons, commonly called apostolical: it recognizes them *as* apostolical, and consequently shows that they must at that time have possessed considerable antiquity; although many things in

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them betray an age considerably subsequent to that of the Apostles. Now the canon<sup>1</sup> of this collection expressly enacts, that if any bishop, priest, or deacon, should under pretence of religion put away his wife, he should be debarred from the Holy Communion, and if he persevered, should be deposed. There appears, indeed, a sort of contradiction to this, in the twelfth canon of the Quini-sexth, or Trullan council<sup>2</sup>, which ordains that a *bishop* on his consecration should separate from his wife. But the council declares, that the enactment was made, not to oppose the apostolical canon, but to avoid scandal; and the next canon<sup>3</sup> expressly declares that, "For as much as it has come to our knowledge, that it has been enacted in the Church of the Romans,

<sup>1</sup> Καν. ε'. Ἐπίσκοπος ἢ πρεσβύτερος ἢ διάκονος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα μὴ ἐκβαλλέτω προφάσει εὐλαβείας· εἰν δὲ ἐκβάλλῃ ἀφοριζέσθω· ἐπιμένων δὲ καθαιρείσθω.

<sup>2</sup> Καν. ιβ'. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ εἰς γνώσιν ἡμετέραν ἦλθεν, ὡς ἔν τε τῇ Ἀφρικῇ καὶ Λιβύῃ καὶ ἑτέροις τόποις, οἱ τῶν ἐκεῖσε θεοφιλέστατοι πρόεδροι συνοικεῖν ταῖς ἰδίαις γαμεταῖς καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς προελθούσαν χειροτονίαν οὐ παρηγοῦντο, πρόσκομμα τοῖς ἐντεῦθεν ἄλλοις τιθέντες καὶ σκάνδαλον. Πολλῆς οὖν ἡμῖν σπουδῆς οὔσης τοῦ πάντα πρὸς ὠφέλειαν τῶν ὑπὸ χεῖρα ποιμνίων διαπράττεσθαι, ἔδοξεν ὥστε μηδαμῶς τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν γίνεσθαι. Τοῦτο δὲ φημὲν, οὐκ ἐπ' ἀθετήσει ἢ ἀνατροπῇ τῶν ἀποστολικῶς νενομοθετημένων, ἀλλὰ τῆς σωτηρίας καὶ τῆς προκοπῆς τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ κρεῖττον τῶν λαῶν προθυμούμενοι, καὶ τὸ μὴ δοῦναι μῶμψ τινὲ τὰ τῆς ἱερατικῆς καταστάσεως· φησὶ γάρ ὁ θεῖος Ἀπόστολος· πάντα εἰς δόξαν . . . καθὼς καὶ γὰρ Χριστοῦ. Εἰ δὲ τις φωραθῆῃ τὸ τοιοῦτο πράττειν, καθαιρείσθω.

<sup>3</sup> Καν. ιγ'. Ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐν τάξει κανόνος

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that those who are about to be ordained deacons or priests, should promise to have no further matrimonial intercourse with their wives, *we, following the ancient rule of apostolical strictness and order, decree that the lawful unions of priests shall remain from henceforward established*, by no means loosening the tie which binds them to their wives, or depriving them of intercourse with each other at suitable times; wherefore if any one should be found worthy of ordination as subdeacon, deacon or priest, *let him by no means be hindered from advancement to that degree, though cohabiting with his lawful wife*, so that we may not from henceforth be compelled to insult marriage, which was instituted by God, and blessed by his presence. . . . . We know, indeed, as the members of the Synod at Carthage

παραδεδῶσθαι διέγνωμεν, τοὺς μέλλοντας διακόνου ἢ πρεσβυτέρου χειροτονίας ἀξιούσθαι, καθομολογεῖν ὡς οὐκέτι ταῖς αὐτῶν συνάπτονται γαμεταῖς· ἡμεῖς τῷ ἀρχαίῳ ἐξακολουθοῦντες κανόνι τῆς ἀποστολικῆς ἀκριβείας καὶ τάξεως, τὰ τῶν ἱερῶν ἀνδρῶν κατὰ νόμους συνοικέσια καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἐρῶσθαι βουλόμεθα, μηδαμῶς αὐτῶν τὴν πρὸς γαμετὰς συνάφειαν διαλύοντες, ἢ ἀποστεροῦντες αὐτοὺς τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους κατὰ καιρὸν τὸν προσήκοντα ὁμιλίας· ὥστε, εἴ τις ἀξιος εὐρεθῆι πρὸς χειροτονίαν ὑποδιακόνου ἢ διακόνου ἢ πρεσβυτέρου, οὗτος μηδαμῶς κωλύεσθω ἐπὶ τοιοῦτον βαθμὸν ἐμβιβάζεσθαι, γαμετῇ συνοικῶν νομίμῳ· μήτε μὴν ἐν τῷ τῆς χειροτονίας· καιρῷ ἀπαιτεῖσθω ὁμολογεῖν, ὡς ἀποστήσῃται ἀπὸ τῆς νομίμου πρὸς τὴν οἰκίαν γαμετὴν ὁμιλίας· ἵνα μὴ ἐντεῦθεν τὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ νομοθετηθέντα καὶ εὐλογηθέντα τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ, γάμον καθυβρίζειν ἐκβιασθῶμεν· τῆς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου φωνῆς βοώσης, " Ἄ ὁ Θεὸς κ. τ. λ. καὶ τοῦ ἀποστόλου διδάσκοντος, τίμιον τὸν γάμον καὶ τὴν κοίτην ἀμίαντον, καὶ, Δέξασαι γυναικὶ, μὴ ζήτηε λύσιν. " Ἴσμεν δὲ, ὡσπερ καὶ οἱ ἐν Καρθαγένῃ συνεληθότες, τῆς ἐν βίῳ σεμνότητος τῶν λειτουργῶν τιθέμενοι πρό-

said, providing for the decorum of the life of those who minister, that according to their peculiar rules subdeacons who handle the holy mysteries, and deacons and priests, refrain from their wives. But that we also may equally guard what has been handed down from the Apostles, and sanctioned by antiquity itself, knowing that there is a time for every thing, especially for fasting and prayer: (for it behoves those who wait at the altar, during the time of their taking in hand the holy things, to deny themselves in every thing, that they may attain what they ask from God in singleness of mind:) *if, therefore, any one should dare, contrary to the apostolical canons, to deprive any of those in holy orders, (that is, priests or deacons, or subdeacons,) of their union and communion with their lawful wives, let him be deposed: and, likewise, if any priest or deacon shall put away his wife, under pretence of religion, let him be excommunicated; and if he persists, let him be deposed.*"

νοϊαν, ἔφασαν, ὥστε τοὺς ὑποδιακόνους, τοὺς τὰ ἱερὰ μυστήρια ψηλαφῶντας, καὶ τοὺς διακόνους καὶ πρεσβυτέρους, κατὰ τοὺς ἰδίους ὄρους καὶ ἐκ τῶν συμβίων ἐγκρατεύεσθαι. "Ἴνα καὶ τὸ διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων παραδοθὲν, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς ἀρχαιότητος κρηθῆν καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμοίως φυλάξωμεν, καιρὸν ἐπὶ παντός ἐπιστάμενοι πράγματος, καὶ μάλιστα νηστείας καὶ προσευχῆς· (χρὴ γὰρ τοὺς τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ προσεδρεύοντας ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς τῶν ἁγίων μεταχειρήσεως ἐγκρατεῖς εἶναι ἐν πᾶσιν, ὅπως δυναθῶσιν ὁ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀπλῶς αἰτοῦσιν ἐπιτυχεῖν) εἴ τις οὖν τολμήσῃ, παρὰ τοὺς ἀποστολικοὺς κανόνας κινούμενος, τινὰς τῶν ἱερωμένων, πρεσβυτέρων φαμέν ἢ διακόνων ἢ ὑποδιακόνων, ἀποστερεῖν τῆς πρὸς τὴν νόμιμον γυναικα συναφείας τε καὶ κοινωνίας, καθαιρεῖσθω· ὡσαύτως καὶ εἴ τις πρεσβύτερος ἢ διάκονος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναικα προφάσει ἐυλαβείας ἐκβάλλει, ἀφοριζέσθω· ἐπιμένων δὲ, καθαιρεῖσθω.

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Since, therefore, it is so abundantly clear from this canon, that the whole Eastern Church strenuously insisted on putting no restriction on the intercourse of the married clergy with their wives; and appealed to antiquity as sanctioning their resolution, the conclusion to which we naturally come, is, that the regulation respecting bishops was to avoid some temptation, to which bishops were more especially exposed. Now bishops had the management of all the Church goods; and therefore lay under the temptation of employing the public money in encouraging pomp and luxury at home: and it is, most probably, with a view to the scandal arising therefrom, that this rule was made. At all events, we have a distinct repudiation of any prohibition of the marriage of the clergy generally, and a distinct denial that there is any religious reason for abstinence from matrimonial intercourse, on the part of clergymen of any class. When, therefore, we find that in their sixth canon<sup>1</sup> they declare, that no clergyman shall marry after ordination, and that if any one wishes to marry, it must be before he is ordained; and that by

<sup>1</sup> Καν. ε'. Ἐπειδὴ παρὰ τοῖς ἀποστολικοῖς κανόσιν εἶρηται, τῶν εἰς κλῆρον προσαγμένων ἀγάμων μόνους ἀναγνώστας καὶ ψάλτας γαμῆν καὶ ἡμεῖς τοῦτο παραφυλάττοντες, ὀρίζομεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηδαμῶς ὑποδιάκονον ἢ διάκονον ἢ πρεσβύτερον, μετὰ τὴν ἐπ' αὐτῷ χειροτονίαν, ἔχειν ἄδειαν ἐν αὐτῷ συνιστᾶν συνοικέσιον· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο τολμήσῃ ποιῆσαι, καθαιρεῖσθω. Εἰ δὲ βούλοιο τις τῶν εἰς κλῆρον προερχομένων γάμον νόμφ συνάπτεισθαι γυναικί, πρὸ τῆς τοῦ ὑποδιακόνου ἢ διακόνου ἢ πρεσβυτέρου χειροτονίας τοῦτο πραττέτω.

recognizing the so-called apostolical canons, it ordains that only readers and singers shall marry after ordination ; we must distinctly understand that there was no religious reason for the regulation, but reasons of discipline alone.

The thirtieth canon<sup>1</sup> of this council is not very intelligible. It was not intended as a rule for the whole Church, but for Churches in uncivilized countries. It ordains, that if the priests of those Churches choose by mutual consent to abstain from matrimonial intercourse with their wives, they shall entirely cease to live with them : and it makes this a concession to their weakness and unsettled habits. But whatever be the object of it, as it was professedly made to suit peculiar localities, it cannot be regarded as a rule generally binding, and for that reason may safely be passed without further notice.

From this time the history of the discipline of the Church, on the subject of celibacy, may be given in few words. The canon of the Trullan council still

<sup>1</sup> Καν. λ'. Πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας βουλούμενοι διαπραύττεσθαι, καὶ τοὺς ἐν ταῖς βαρβαρικαῖς ἐκκλησίαις ἱερέας οἰκονομεῖν διεγνώκαμεν. "Ὡστε εἰ τὸν ἀποστολικὸν κανόνα, τὸν περὶ τοῦ προφάσει εὐλαβείας τὴν οἰκίαν γαμετὴν μὴ ἐκβάλλειν, ὑπεραναβαίνειν οἴονται δεῖν, καὶ πέρα τῶν ὀρισθέντων ποιεῖν· ἐκ τούτου τε μετὰ τῶν οἰκείων συμφωνοῦντες συμβίωιν, τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὀμιλίας ἀπέχονται· ὀρίζομεν τούτους μηκέτι ταύταις συνοικεῖν καθ' οἰονδῆτινα τρόπον· ὡς ἂν ἡμῖν ἐντεῦθεν ἐντελὴ τῆς ὑποσχέσεως παρέξοιεν τὴν ἀπόδειξιν. Πρὸς τοῦτο δὲ αὐτοῖς οὐ δι' ἄλλο τι, ἢ διὰ τὴν τῆς γνώμης μικροψυχίαν καὶ τὸ τῶν ἡθῶν ἀπεξενώμενον καὶ ἀπαγές, ἐνδεδώκαμεν.

literally rules the Eastern Church, but the spirit of it has gradually departed: for although no bishop can be a married man, and consequently the members of that order are universally chosen from the monastic order, celibacy is so far from being encouraged amongst the parochial clergy, that it is in practice absolutely forbidden; every parish priest being required to be married before he can be ordained. So that if any clergyman wishes to continue unmarried, his only course is to enter a convent.

In the Western Church, as it came more and more under the influence of Rome, the marriage of the clergy, and the monks and virgins, was more and more restrained. Opinion condemned the marriage of the latter, and at length it was generally visited with excommunication, until the parties separated. With regard to the former, they continued more or less at liberty, until at length, in 1074, Pope Hildebrand was able to procure a general obedience to the rule, that all married clergymen should separate from their wives, and that all thenceforth to be ordained should make a vow of celibacy. But long before this time it had been a rule in the greater part of the West, always excepting England, that no priest should cohabit with his wife, as we learn from the complaints made by Ratramnus in the ninth century, and by Leo IX., that the Greeks not only permitted a married clergy to wait at their altars, but also put no restraint upon them in regard to their intercourse with their wives.

## CHAPTER VI.

I HAVE now I think carried this investigation down to a point, from which we can with advantage look back, and fulfil those objects with which I set out upon my present undertaking.

The two first points I trust I sufficiently cleared up, in the two former parts of these papers; namely, that no corruption of doctrine in regard to celibacy, and no abuse of practice but such as any divine gift is liable to, can be traced in the Church in the age subsequent to the Apostles; and secondly, that, (whatever is the real application of the test "semper, ubique, et ab omnibus") Mr. Taylor's attack upon it on this ground is perfectly futile and groundless. The details into which I have entered, will have sufficiently established my third position, that whatever corruptions came in (and different minds will appreciate differently their extent and importance) were introduced *gradually*, and that gross misconduct on the part of those who professed celibacy only appeared in localities where the church at large had already attained a high pitch of corruption. I will now direct the attention of my readers more particularly to my fourth object, namely, to prove that there was nothing in the teaching of the post-Nicene age on the subject of celibacy, to justify the awful charge of apostacy, which he brings against it.

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The ground which is taken is as follows: St. Paul, (1 Tim. iv. 1—3.) foretells that “in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils . . . . forbidding to marry:” the Church as a body, did, in the Nicene age, forbid to marry: therefore the Nicene Church apostatized from the faith.

Now here the answer simply is: *Negatur minor*. It is not true that the Nicene Church, or the Church of any age forbad to marry. We have seen the nature of the regulations of the Church in that age. We have seen that for a long series of years, beginning at some indefinite time before the council of Nice, it had been a rule pretty generally observed, that no priest or bishop should marry after his ordination. We have seen likewise that after the council of Nice, it became a rule that Church virgins, and afterwards that those who entered ascetic communities, should not marry. So that the whole extent of the sin of the Nicene Church (supposing it to be a sin) is, that it forbad marriage to three classes of persons, who from the nature of the case must be a minority of the community, *every individual of whom had a previous choice in entering those classes or not*. How then can forbidding those to marry who had the choice whether they would put themselves under the prohibition or not, be construed into forbidding to marry? It is true that in thus arguing, I exonerate the Roman Church from the charge which has been brought against it of having this

mark of apostacy: but this I do rejoicingly. For it would be a very painful thing to think that so large a portion of the Christian world, was actually apostate; and equally painful to reflect that the Church of England had for so many centuries, even since the Reformation, been holding such a degree of communion with an apostate church, as to recognize her sacraments, her confirmation and her ordination. But further than this. The Church never actually *forbad* the clergy to marry. It simply decreed that those who did so, should not rise to any higher degree.

These considerations might be sufficient to exonerate the Nicene Church from so grave a charge. But who can have failed to observe the perpetual anxiety of writers and councils to show that in advocating virginity, they had no intention of forbidding marriage? Do we not remark that even its most ardent patrons take express care to rebut the charge as it were by anticipation? We find this in the whole chain of fathers. With what colour of reason then can any one charge them with forbidding marriage? Does not even *Ambrose* go out of his way to speak in favour of marriage?

But what if there was from time to time in the Church or out of it, a sect of persons who did actually declaim against marriage *in all cases*, and dissuade men *universally* from it, as a device of the enemy of mankind? What if these same men did *likewise* command to *abstain from flesh* as the production of the same evil being? What if the

Church at various times condemned these doctrines, and excommunicated those who held them? What if these things are evident upon the face of the documents which every one must consult who wishes to ascertain the state of the Nicene Church? What then becomes of the judgment or competency to reason from facts of the person who talks of the "ascetic apostacy of the Nicene Church?" And yet these are all facts. Some of the Gnostics, the Bogomili, and the Eustathians, forbade to marry, and commanded to abstain from meats, as esteeming both abominations. The Council of Gangra (A.D. 370) condemned these doctrines; and the fifty-first of the Apostolical Canons, which were authority at all events in the post-Nicene Church, whatever they may have been before that period, expressly deposes and excommunicates those who abetted them<sup>1</sup>. I trust I have sufficiently refuted the figment of the "ascetic apostacy."

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## CHAPTER VII.

I now come to the last portion of my undertaking, and that which I feel to be the most difficult. In that which has gone before, all that has been requisite, was to have a sincere desire to ascertain truth,

<sup>1</sup> See likewise pages 191, 202, 212.

sufficient diligence to seek for it, leisure and opportunity of consulting books, and ordinary capacities of reflection and arrangement. In that portion which remains it will be requisite to view other times in part with the eye of one living amongst the actors in them, in part with that of a person acquainted with the real condition of things in our own age; so that we may have no misunderstanding of the real nature of things then, and may know what we are doing when we draw comparisons between both.

In order to understand the real state of any particular question as connected with the ancient Church, it will be necessary to have some idea of the general condition of it, at its particular periods. Now it is obvious that so long as apostles and inspired men, and such as had associated familiarly with the apostles, remained in the Church, one great instrument by which the true spirit of the Gospel was kept up and transmitted, would be personal sympathy. Persons would have seen and dwelt with those who were, as far as human frailty admits, perfect specimens of the spirit and temper of Christ, and thus they would have imbibed the same spirit, each in the degree in which he was capable of it, by imitation and the contagion of a good example. The characters of such men would have an authority about them, which nothing subsequent could have. Ignatius, for instance, who had conversed with several apostles, Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, and Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, must have had

a more vivid idea and feeling of what the spirit of a disciple of Christ ought to be, than their successors a hundred years afterwards: for, in addition to all the helps those successors had, they possessed living examples, who had derived their spirit from the fountain head. I will not pretend to determine how long that influence might continue: but it is evident that in a generation or two it would be extinct, and that all Christians would be left to gather the spirit of the Gospel from the Scriptures, and by the ordinary means of grace, and the conduct of ordinary Christians, just as we have to do at present; with the additional disadvantages of not having the Scriptures so constantly in their hands as we may, and of being surrounded with a grossness, in the heathen amongst whom they lived, of which we have no conception.

Whatever therefore was not matter of necessary doctrine, or embodied in positive institutions, would be in great danger of becoming corrupted, and of course the Christian spirit could rarely be seen in its perfection. The efforts of what has been called *natural piety* would have to be regulated by the Scripture; and independently of the working of the Divine Spirit, the true Christian temper could only be kept up by an intimate and constant acquaintance with the Scripture: whilst the aid of the Divine Spirit would have to be sought in the use of the ordinances of religion, and in the exercises of private devotion. And only in proportion as the true Christian temper was kept up, would true principles pre-

vail in the Church, or voluntary institutions of any kind rest upon a proper basis.

These remarks will, I think, be seen to have an application in the case of religious celibacy. It has been in all ages, and with whatever abuses, either really or professedly an exertion or working of natural piety. In the commencement of it, and in those persons who kept up the credit of it, it would be really so: in subsequent times, and in others, only professedly. But, like fasting, it was never made the subject of a divine command; it was only regulated, and the true notion and spirit of it indicated by the gospel; i. e. *to us* by the New Testament. It is remarkable therefore that, down to the time of the Council of Nice, we hear of no appeal whatever to tradition on the subject of celibacy, and even then only to this extent, that the priesthood were expected not to marry after ordination. And as the account we have of this council, in which this matter is mentioned, is not earlier than A. D. 423, that is a century after the council itself, there are considerable doubts whether we have the exact words of the speaker; whether, in fact, the refraining from marriage after entering the priesthood was *at the time* of the Council of Nice an ancient tradition, or merely an established custom. But whatever be the case in regard to this point, we never find the advocacy of celibacy in the early writers made to rest upon tradition, but always upon Scripture. All Tertullian's notions on the

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subject rest upon Scripture, or his deductions and reasonings from Scripture. It is from Scripture that he draws his notion of the angelical nature of a single life; it was from Scripture that he reasoned to the comparative impurity of marriage. It was from Scripture again that others, and finally the Church at large, settled that it was heretical to attach the term impurity to marriage. We have found one of the interlocutors in Methodius taking this ground, and Ambrose and Augustine, who of all the Church writers, are most full and most systematic on the subject, rest all their statements upon Scripture. The angelical excellence of virginity, its superiority to marriage in the abstract, its excellence as a means of detaching ourselves from the world, and training ourselves for heaven, the regarding marriage as a state of comparative imperfection and weakness and worldly-mindedness, the propriety of married persons refraining from matrimonial intercourse, and especially if the husband happened to be a clergyman, the bindingness of the vow of celibacy, and the sin and impurity of marrying after having taken it, are all deductions from Scripture, and deductions so natural from the passages appealed to, (independently of inference from others, or of experience,) that it can never be wonderful that any set of persons should have drawn them; and it is only wonderful that no Protestant sect should have arisen, taking them for their ground. Indeed, once grant the propriety of the vow of virginity, and the

propriety of making that vow to the Church, and all the rest naturally follows. The celibacy of the clergy is only another form of the vow: for no one is compelled to be a clergyman.

It is true that the considerations I have pointed out in the first part of these papers, would lead to the conclusion that to take such a vow was placing one's self under an unnecessary snare; but how have *we* learnt to reason in this way? Is it in any other way than by *experience*? Has not the experience of the evils of compulsory celibacy, as it once existed, led us to search out and discover wherein lay the error of former reasonings from Scripture? But that experience the ancients do not appear to have had, at least generally. In here and there a place some mischief arose; but an abuse does not prove the evil of the thing abused. Besides they saw great and remarkable good arising from the practice of professed celibacy: and, if we may judge from the language of the early writers, good, for many generations, far surpassing the occasional evil. What then should lead them to question the propriety of the vow? They knew that God had encouraged vows under the Old Testament; witness the Nazarites' vow, and the Rechabites' vow.

It may perhaps be asked, why the reserved and cautious language of St. Paul did not teach the fathers more caution. But that very language supplied them with an argument to neutralize any such hint, even when they felt it. "He refrains," they

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say, "from pressing celibacy, because of the weakness of the new converts: but if he had lived in our times, when faith had been longer established, and was become stronger, he would have felt no such scruples; but would have encouraged it to the utmost. He showed his wishes; he points out his difficulty. We have not the same difficulty now. Many voluntarily undertake it; and what evil arises? Is there any but what every good thing is attended with? Are there some who do not keep their vow? And so may not any vow be broken? Nay are there not fewer who break the vow of celibacy, than there are who break the vow of marriage? Are there some who keep it hypocritically? But is not every virtue liable to false pretenders? Are there some who make virginity every thing? But is not that an abuse to which every virtue is liable? People naturally value themselves upon that in which they excel others, until they have found out the evil of spiritual pride."

And supposing any one of us had lived then, with our present notions, but without our experience, what could we have said? Should we have said, "You put a mere corporeal abstinence, no where commanded, in the place of real holiness?" "Nay," they would have replied, "we only regard it as a means to an end. We do not deny that holiness may be attained in matrimony; but we think it may be more easily attained, or that a higher degree of it may be attained in celibacy. You must allow that

St. Paul expressly points out that worldly mindedness is apt to adhere to marriage, and whatever cherishes worldly mindedness, must of course check holiness of spirit. Besides what criterion of a system can you propose better than the fruits of it? And on the whole, are not the celibates the most exemplary of the Christian body?"

Supposing we urged St. Paul's choice of marriage, or rather the choice made by God himself of it, to signify the mystical union between Christ and his Church: they would reply perhaps, "Yes, we grant all this. It shows what married persons ought to aspire to be. It shows, as we contend against the heretics, that there is no real impurity in marriage itself; but that is not the question. We take things as they are. And what are the facts? Is marriage generally speaking chosen for holy ends? Is it not with most persons at best a weakness, a self-indulgence? Did you ever hear of any one choosing marriage for the sake of self-denial? Did you ever hear of any one marrying in order to live more to the Lord than he could in celibacy, unless indeed his temptations on the side of the flesh were strong, and he thought it better to marry than do worse?"

And what, *in those days*, should we have had to set against this? We might have reasoned and prophesied; and we might have reasoned and prophesied rightly, as Tertullian in one respect did. But we could not have had the advantage which we

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have now, of *experience*, to show that our view of Scripture, and our anticipations of the *ultimate* consequences of thus exalting virginity, were right. For instead of its being the fact that the worst consequences of the vow were constantly appearing in the early Church, there is no evidence that those evils ever appeared till the Church of Carthage became very corrupt, and the majority ready on the first persecution to apostatize: nor is there any sufficient evidence that they came forth subsequently, unless contemporaneously with general corruption arising from other causes.

Similar remarks may apply to asceticism, whether practised in a solitary life, or in societies. The whole of the ascetic rule was built upon Scripture; wrongly applied, we say. But what was there to show with convincing evidence to the solitary or the monk, that he was wrong in selling all his goods to give to the poor? or in keeping under his body and bringing it into subjection in that particular point? or in labouring with his hands the thing which was good, that he might have to give to him that needeth, instead of working to support a wife and children? or in spending all his leisure time in reading the Scriptures or psalmody, or devout meditation or prayer? Why was he to feel himself bound to associate with his neighbours further than was for their direct good, either temporal or spiritual? Why might he not retire from temptation, and content himself with securing his own salvation, without

risking it altogether by remaining in the world? And why might not those who were similarly minded associate together for mutual encouragement, and mutual profit, and especially to secure that daily joint devotion which the Church at Jerusalem had in its best days, but which in the Church at large was fast fading away? "How do we know," they might say, "but these societies may be the means of preserving that earnest piety which now appears to be rapidly departing from the Church at large?"

We might have rejoined: "This sounds very well, but somehow or other your religion does not appear to us Scriptural." But they might have replied, "We do not know how this is: but can you show us any set of persons who study the Scriptures more than we do, or who bring forth better fruits of piety?"

If we replied again: "But you are too formal, not sufficiently spiritual, building up a righteousness of your own, without sufficient dependence on God;" they might still answer, "Our aim in retiring from the world has been to avoid temptations to pride, and to cultivate a nearer and closer communion with God." But I have the less wish to dwell upon this branch of the subject, because in referring to the life of St. Antony in Mr. Newman's "Church of the Fathers," I am sure I shall give a high treat to every dispassionate person, to every one who wishes to see what may be said on the opposite side of the question to that which Mr. Taylor has taken; to

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every one who wishes to see the ancient Church viewed in a spirit of love and sympathy for its good points, instead of one of cavil and exaggeration of all its bad and doubtful ones. That Mr. Newman is impartial I do not pretend to say; because at his time of life and with his decided principles, impartiality is impossible; but that he has chosen to look the difficulties of Antony's history in the face, and give us the reflections of a sincere, and thoughtful, and highly gifted mind upon them, is no light matter.

But, although without experience, we might have been unable to make any great impression upon the advocates of asceticism, the experience of centuries since that time, enables us to speak with much more authority. The first evil which arose in the practice of religious celibacy was the *publicity* of the *profession* (although without any vow) coupled with the honour unavoidably attached to it. This led persons to take it up from a love of distinction, and from vain-glory; and these, of course, could not adhere to it. No doubt in this state of things, many were supposed to have taken up celibacy from religious motives, and voluntarily, with whom it was scarcely a matter of choice: and thus scandal would attach to the profession which did not properly belong to it. But this alone did not continue to be the case: a *vow* taken before the bishop, and a solemn *consecration* by him, succeeded; and from that time the Church virgins became a class, the individual members of

which were ascertainable, and capable of being brought under Church censures for any impropriety of conduct. Accordingly, it was made a fault, punishable by penance, to associate familiarly with persons of the other sex, or even to live in the same house with unmarried men. But marriage was not forbidden; and thus they might, if they chose, escape penance by marrying. But opinion rose on the subject of the marriage of consecrated virgins. It was considered that the vow was made to God and the Church: marriage was a breach of the vow; therefore marriage itself was spiritually an adultery, and was to be punished. This caused the former evils to increase, rather than diminish. Every shift was tried to indulge passion, and yet to escape censure. For this state of things two remedies were attempted; one, not to permit persons to dedicate themselves till a somewhat mature age, the other, to confine them in convents. The former, however, does not seem to have prevailed at all extensively, at least not in the west; but the latter was tried in all the various degrees of rigour, of which the case was capable, until the nuns were debarred from ever leaving the walls of the convent, or ever speaking to a person of the other sex, excepting their religious adviser. Whether this was effectual or not, would of course depend upon the strictness or easiness of the governing person, and upon the general wish to preserve the vow. But experience has shown that, when either the superior was lax or unprincipled, or

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where any considerable number of the nuns became tired of their vow, any breaches of it whatever were possible; and the most frightful profligacy might be carried on, and the most awful crimes committed, under the profession of superior sanctity.

In the Eastern Church the history of virgin celibacy is not so clear: but the impossibility of enforcing it seems at length to have led to the cessation of all efforts for the purpose, or the profession itself fell into desuetude: so that, if I mistake not, female convents, or professed virgins, are in that portion of the Church now unknown. They are now so far in the same condition as ourselves; not exactly as the primitive Church; for in that virgins had a distinct and useful function, viz. that of deaconesses. But as that institution, from change of manners, is altogether become obsolete, so all experience shows the wisdom of leaving virginity to the voluntary choice of individuals, bound by no vow, unshackled by any profession; at liberty to marry whenever it may appear desirable, but honoured in celibacy, if their works show that they devote their state to God.

The history of the celibacy of men is somewhat different. It does not appear to have taken any definite shape in the time of Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian; nor were those who practised it known by any definite tokens. Towards the time of the council of Nice, however, they appear to have adopted something like a regular habit, and to have united with celibacy religious retirement, discipline,

and voluntary poverty. To all this there could be no objection, further than to the spirit of fanaticism, or of Pharisaism mingled with it. But, as amongst the ignorant and zealous, there will always be fanaticism, so it was better to have some outlet for it in connexion with the Church, than to drive it to form schisms. Not to say that the ascetic virtues were always a lesson to the mass of the Church, to teach them visibly that the world *can* be forsaken, that riches are not coveted by *all* men, that there is something more exalted than a refined self-indulgence. For many of the recluses were men of substance, who had forsaken all literally for Christ's sake. Many of them were men of refined minds and polished manners, who showed that these qualifications may be united with poverty and solitude. At the time of the council of Nice, things were in a state of transition from the eremitical to the monastic state; and in the time of Basil, and under his patronage and of the other great lights of the Church, monkery was ripened into a perfect system; the direct vow was added, and the breach of that vow was made penal. Still there were many who merely professed a single life with religious ends; and of this class were those whom St. John Chrysostom so sarcastically describes as busied in female toils, like the race of French *abbés* before the revolution. This latter class has never become totally extinct, though much discouraged after the rise of the conventual system, which was no doubt in some respects an improve-

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ment upon the eremitical and solitary, as it bound men to a certain discipline: but it exists to this day in the East. The conventual system has branched out into various rules, according to the will of various founders: but all experience has shown that no rules, nothing in short but voluntary zeal and piety can ever keep a body of men pure and useful; and consequently that binding men to continue in a body, the institutions and habits of which go to deny them lawful indulgences, must lead and always will lead to the vilest enormities in men of one character, and to mere indolent uselessness in those of another.

The experience of ages then goes to confirm the positions with which I set out; viz. that both in men and in women celibacy should always be left entirely voluntary; that those only should be encouraged to adopt it, who are disposed to devote themselves to the service of God in some work of piety; that, in case of any person mistaking his vocation, he should be allowed to retire without reproach or remark, and endeavour to serve God in the lower, but easier and safer path of wedlock: easier and safer, I mean, as far as actual gross sin is concerned, but, as a road to perfection, more arduous and more difficult.

Nor is the case altered in respect to the clergy. In the history of the Nicene Church we find, co-existent with clerical celibacy, rules against allowing any females but near relations to live with a clergyman; and what does this show but that evil was at

least feared? And indeed does not Jerome's language show that, even at that time it was frequently realized. It took many ages, however, before it was thought necessary for a clergyman, after ordination, to abstain from matrimonial indulgence; and still more before absolute celibacy was enforced. The ground taken for the former was, that, as it was the duty of the clergy to preach abstinence from carnal indulgence, they should set an example of what they preached. It is to be remarked moreover that there is no one period we can fix on, when complete abstinence was binding throughout the Church. For a long time it was not enforced in the East. When it appears to have been enforced there, it was not established in all parts of the West, especially here in England. And when again it was established here, the eastern Churches had gone back, and ceased to enforce it on the clergy at large. Moreover the absolute celibacy of the clergy, viz. that they should not be married at all, has never been the rule or practice of the universal Church, but only of those Churches which are under obedience to Rome. But the enforcement of it in these Churches has led to excesses and positive vice on the part of the clergy which are unknown elsewhere. All through Spain and in considerable portions of Italy, Switzerland, and Germany, it is extremely common to find that clergymen, although not suffered to marry, habitually keep concubines. And although in countries where Protestantism prevails, nothing so openly gross

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is seen, yet, to those who have had an opportunity of looking below the surface, there can be but little doubt that the obligation to celibacy renders the clergy unsafe to the morals of the female portion of their congregations. The *obligation* is not one of God's appointment; it is never even hinted at in Scripture: and the attempt to *enforce* it must always produce great evils.

The utmost we can do is to take away discouragements to it, to encourage those who are willing to remain in that state, to point out the evils likely to arise from clergymen of confined incomes entering upon the married state, and the advantage to the Church for peculiar purposes of having some of her ministers bound by no worldly ties; to give the honour which is rightfully due to those who choose, for the sake of other men's souls, or to avoid worldliness of mind, to forego the comforts and enjoyments of the married state. But beyond this we cannot go. No slur ought to be cast upon those who choose to marry prudently. No attempt ought to be made to affix a distinction on the unmarried, simply as such. No encouragement, but rather positive discouragement, should be given to *vows* of celibacy. They are a snare upon the conscience, and nothing more. Every sufficient end of them is answered by a continued voluntary endeavour to adhere to a well considered resolution; which we are better able to keep, in such a case, without a vow than with one.

But although all experience shows that vows or public declarations, or professions of perpetual celibacy, are dangerous, there appears no sufficient reason why those who choose to remain in celibacy, whether clergymen or others, should not associate themselves together in communities. There can be but little doubt that many persons of a social turn of mind are driven or beguiled into marriage, who have to repent of it all their lives after, by no other circumstance than the want of suitable society. A person of refined and studious mind cast into the midst of a community of tradesmen will find nothing congenial to his habits amongst the men; and however duty may lead him to associate with them, he will seek for solace and repose from the other sex. But if such a person were a member of a society, whose professional habits were the same as his own, with the individual members of which he might find the same refinement and love of study as in himself, to whom he might unbend and feel at home, he would at all events be able to look at marriage with a more unprejudiced eye, and, if he did ultimately marry, wait for a congenial companion and suitable outward circumstances. There need be no vow in such communities; all that would be necessary would be that the members of the society should be unmarried, as fellows of colleges are, *so long as they continued to belong to it.*

There is another cause of difficulty with some of the clergy, besides the want of congenial society;

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and that is the insufficiency of their incomes, especially in populous and increasing places, where churches are rapidly raised without the possibility of providing any adequate provision for the clergyman to whose pastoral care and teaching the people are to be committed. Now societies of clergymen, living in one common dwelling and eating at one common table, appear best calculated to remedy this deficiency. The very existence of boarding-houses and club-houses, shows that the combination of small incomes can produce comfort for all the inmates, which none of them could enjoy without such combination.

There is another advantage attached to club-houses which might be attached to societies of clergymen, I mean that of libraries and the ordinary vehicles of ephemeral information. A society can provide for its united members a library far surpassing what any of them could obtain separately.

And when such a society existed, I know not what objection there could be to allowing any unattached clergyman to join it. He would be kept in the society which was most fit for him, out of the way of the ordinary temptations which deteriorate the characters of men without definite employment. A facility of reference to books would foster or engender a love of reading. He would be ready to render occasional assistance to his brethren; and he would be at hand to occupy any new station for which a settled pastor had not been provided, or could

not be provided. Other inmates may at some future day be found in the under masters of training and grammar schools.

These are mere hints of the probable utility of such societies. And that the obligation of celibacy *so long as persons continued members of them* would be productive of no serious injury, the example of our colleges sufficiently shows: for whatever instances of immorality may at any time have been found amongst the fellows, the same or greater might have been found in ordinary society.

I return to notice other deductions from this whole discussion.

How remarkable is it that all the errors of the ancient church on this subject have arisen, not from any following of primitive tradition, but from the exercise of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture! With regard to the celibacy of the laity there does not exist, I believe, a single trace of any endeavour on the part of ancient writers to build it upon tradition.

The exaggerated ideas which successively arose, are one and all built upon and supported by individual reasoning upon texts of Scripture. The Church indeed, in one instance<sup>1</sup> appeals to the combined authority of Scripture and tradition; on another<sup>2</sup> to tradition alone: but it is remarkable

<sup>1</sup> At the council of Gangra. See p. 151, 2.

<sup>2</sup> At the Trullan council. See p. 210.

that in both cases it is in favour of moderate doctrines, and against exaggerated ones. The whole ascetic system is professedly founded upon private interpretation of Scripture. It was supposed that the Church had grown to a power of doing what the apostles would have enforced if they could: and therefore the advocates of asceticism are confessedly advocates of institutions increasing in strictness with the increasing capabilities of Christians. From the nature of things then the Nicene doctrines and practices could not be derived from tradition. They presupposed the imperfection of the Apostolical Church.

The only doctrine we can trace from age to age, is that virginity is a voluntary thing, is a gift and grace of God, is in some respects superior to marriage, is to be honoured in those who maintain it with the ordinary Christian graces and virtues, is not to give occasion to pride or vain glory in those who have it. That doctrine we can trace *from age to age* in *all* the great writers of the Church, and that doctrine is either that which I have derived from Scripture, or in strict accordance with it.

There is one other lesson which I cannot refrain from pressing, and that is the great value of *primitive unbroken tradition*. On this particular point it is not primitive tradition that is at variance with Scripture and experience, for they are supported by it. It is the supposed improvements of a later age. If my inquiry had had no connection with the *defence* of the

early Church, I should have appealed to tradition at once in support of my view of Scripture, and the appeal would have been sustained. Tradition therefore has its value even in such a case as this. But how much more value has it in cases in which there can be no doubt of the meaning of its voice: where from the beginning, and from age to age, it has been one and uniform.

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