

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE III.

PARALLEL BETWEEN THE PHILOSOPHICAL RELATIONS OF
EARLY AND MODERN CHRISTIANITY.

By Rev. Edward A. Washburn, Newburyport, Mass.

No study can offer a richer field to the philosophic thinker, than that of the laws which control the differing ages and phases of opinion. It would seem at first sight a task almost impossible, in the very nature of the intellect as well as the variety of phenomena; far easier for the naturalist to read the history of the earth's formation in the rocky strata, and classify the manifold forms of organic life; or for the astronomer to reduce the immensity of space to a "mécaniqué celeste," than to discover such unity in the domain of spirit. Yet it is by no means so. The mind of man, fertile as are the sources of knowledge, and ever ready as it is to push its inquiries into newer fields, is after all, compassed by a horizon wide, yet clearly marked. And not only do these limits of possible knowledge bring us always back to the same sphere; but the innate affinities of intellect, the likeness of culture, and more than all the deep inward causes, which produce the spiritual movements of every age, produce also a likeness of result. Nor is it often that men enter as individuals into this or that channel of isolated speculation; the master-mind of society is rather the *επιστήμη*, the accumulated wave of general tendencies. Hence then is seen a law of reproduction in human thought. Age on age passes through kindred processes; and in the mind, as in nature, there are certain archetypal forms, which are the conditions and the objects of its striving. We may observe this law in every variety of phenomena. Literature imposes the same necessity of epic, lyric, idyllic, dramatic expression on the genius of the poet; art seeks in vain to do more than reproduce the orders of Greece, and that of the middle age, the offspring of a supernatural religion. Philosophy in the mind of India, of Athens, and the modern world repeats the primary problems. Plato and Kant state the ground-law of pure reason in opposition to empiricism; Hume and Berkeley arrive at like conclusions with the Greek sophists; Paley lays down, as the principle of a Christian ethics, that which Cicero explodes as revolting even to a heathen conscience; the propositions of Spinoza are read in almost parallel passages of Abelard; and the system of Schelling is but a more scientific fulfil-

ment of that ideal Pantheism which envelops as a mysterious cloud the primitive dreamland of Eastern contemplation. The efforts of man in the world of ideas are like the results of his discovery on the broad ocean, which can only at the last circumnavigate the narrow globe, and bring him in a returning circle to the point whence he set forth.

But in nothing is this law of reproduction more visible than in the sphere of theology. Theology is philosophy, seeking scientific unity with a historical revelation; and as its truths are highest of all, so has every age its questions, which master and penetrate its leading intellect. The controversy of Arius marks the early period; the problem of freewill and decrees, that of Augustine; the dispute between Nominalism and Realism underlies profound views of original sin and redemption, which employed the scholastic mind; the mighty principle of justification sways the theology of the Reformation. Ideas, which in one day are of vital interest, are quite forgotten in the next. A theological proposition, in the time of Luther an *experimentum crucis* in too literal a sense, is now a piece of antiquated divinity; and men wonder that any should have gone to the stake for so abstract a matter. To come nearer home, our New England contests of old and new school, of physical and moral ability and the like, are beginning to be merged in far broader questions, which have arisen on the theological horizon; in the contest, for life or death, between a gigantic naturalism and a Christian supernaturalism; or, on yet another side, between the claims of private judgment and Catholic authority. Yet, amidst these differences, we ever behold the law of reproduction; the old questions are repeated in new form, and the reigning tendencies of belief and heresy cast in the same mould. Calvin reproduces Augustine; and Socinus develops the germ of Arius. The tenets of the school of Arminius are anticipated in the Greek fathers. Modern Oxford speaks in the cognate dialect of Cyprian and Vincentius. Early New England theology moved in the same cycle of metaphysical thought as the scholastic; and the later contests with a growing and now full-grown Unitarianism have been fought, inch by inch, on almost every portion of the ancient battle ground, whose record will form, when a philosophic historian is found, a chapter of rich phenomena unsurpassed in Christian Annals. It is facts like these which make the study of doctrinal history of so vast importance, not more than, but equally with, dogmatic theology itself. The doctrinal expressions of every age are more or less always polennic, and reflect a particular phase of thought. But, in the

systematic study of opinions, the scholar takes each successive point of view; he sees pass before him the varied eras of faith, of struggle, and from his philosophic centre, can calculate their real and apparent distance; he perceives in this or that doctrine the necessary reaction of one extreme upon another; he knows, that in his own, as in other ages, prevailing errors have their little hour, and vanish; and he thus becomes, in his comprehensive largeness of vision, not a polemic of his time, but the Christian sage of all times, who, amid the fluctuating forms of belief, recognizes the "*quod semper, ubique et ab omnibus,*" the unchanged and unchangeable truth of revelation.

We have dwelt thus long on the introduction to our subject, because we deem it of the utmost importance to grasp fully the principle; and we now proceed to apply it to one of the most striking analogies in the history of doctrine; a parallel between the philosophical relations of Christian belief and unbelief in our own age, and that of primitive Christianity in its earliest era of scientific development. Perhaps two periods could not be chosen, to the superficial observer so apparently diverse in every regard: — the one, an age when science was comparatively in its state of degeneracy, and Christianity as yet in its rudest germ of intellectual culture; the other, an age, distinguished by the noblest genius in every sphere; the age of Kant, of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel; the age of exegetical criticism, of historical research, of most searching theological inquiry; the age, when all questions seem to be opened, all forms of truth and error striving on the broad battle ground; when a Newman would turn the overflowing waters again into the narrow channel of Romanism, a Schleiermacher, a Coleridge breathe into philosophy the living soul of faith, a Strauss swallow up the whole fabric of revelation, as a transient phenomenon in a world-embracing naturalism. Yet, singular as it may seem, it is a fact that is apparent to a deeper insight, that there may be traced not merely a general, but a minute and most curious similitude. It will be shown, hereafter, what is the secret of this real likeness and seeming unlikeness, and what the causes which have produced the same conflicts of opinion; but here we proceed at once to an examination of the phenomena themselves; nor do we doubt, that the subject will be found of the deepest interest, the further we penetrate into its details.

In the development of Christianity there was, of necessity, a first age, when it appeared only in the form of a living faith. It was its time of fresh, spontaneous activity; it had not as yet reached self-conscious intelligence; it knew nothing of the speculative contests,

which afterwards divided the church ; its battles were almost wholly external, against Pagan persecution, or internal, against immorality and sin. The reflex of this period is given us in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, whose theology, if we may speak at all of them as theologians, is wholly in the concrete. But it followed, equally of necessity, that another period must dawn upon the church. When the preliminary work of external upbuilding was ended, or far advanced ; when Christianity had leisure to retire from the field of battle, and began to reflect more upon its own truth, to mingle more with the mind of the time, it could be no longer only a religion of the life, but must become one of developed thought. If our readers would study the principle of this transition-process, we refer them to the first chapter of Kliefoth's Introduction to Dogmatic History, where it is shown with surprising power and beauty. The whole is a masterwork of philosophical analysis. And here, next to the study of the Fathers and the latter Platonists, we must acknowledge our deep indebtedness to modern German writers, on the history of philosophy and doctrine, for our ideas of early Christianity ; the master minds who have studied not its ages only, but its spirit, and gained thus the key to unlock secrets hidden from the Mosheims and the Milners. The second era, then, was that of scientific Christianity. Its enemies must be now the Pagan philosopher and the subtle heretic ; it must pass at once into the broad domain of theology, and exhibit the truth of revelation in the shape of doctrine, which at the same time should approve its unity with all other truth, and its claim as the authoritative oracle of a yet higher, supernatural wisdom. Hence it was that this first era of scientific Christianity was one of peculiar and varied phenomena. While it implanted in the mind of the world the seeds of belief, and laid the basis of its supremacy over human reason, it had of necessity its crude beginnings ; it was compelled to meet with and adjust, in itself and in heathenism without, the mingled mass of intellectual tendencies and systems. The Jew, tied to the dead body of a ritual formalism ; the philosopher, proud of his abstract and aristocratic position, contemptuous of a new religion ; the better minds, hungering and thirsting after truth, yet finding it nowhere, and by their culture unable to apprehend at once the nature of revelation ; the sceptical or the fanciful minds, wandering in mocking doubt, or accepting anything that pleased the speculative understanding, rather than appealed to the deep wants of the sinful heart ; all were to be influenced by, and in turn to influence, the Christian faith. With them, as the one religion, it was to contend ; with some

in open hostility, with others as pretended friends, but insidious foes, who, under the mask of philosophy, would corrupt its simplicity; and yet others it was to receive as its own, even in the earnest and deep study of its truths. It was, indeed, an age of wonderful fermentation of thought. There was no longer, it is true, the philosophic grandeur of former days; the brilliant lights of Plato and Aristotle had faded from the firmament. Yet was it, as it appears to us, a time of greater importance to Christianity, than had it arisen amid the splendors of the academy; because, in the very decay of faith, it appeared the herald of a new truth, and became the centre, around which all intellects grouped themselves as friends or enemies. The mind of antiquity was afloat on a sea of unbelief. The bonds of old religion and philosophic dogmatism were shorn away; and on every side was the utmost freedom of opinion. It was a chaos before the new creation. Manichæism, already spreading in its germinal form, from the East, the cradle of theosophy; eclecticism and mysticism in the garb of neo-Platonism mingling with the faded systems of stoic Pantheism, and the "sty of Epicurus;" with these, blended in strange confusion, old idolatry struggling to retain its hold, and the most monstrous forms of popular magic, combine to show the picture of that unparalleled age. Christianity was to mould these discordant elements into a new unity. It was unavoidable, therefore, that in the contact of its truth with error, there should be produced, before such unity could appear, various forms of partial development; and these, mutually related to each other, as well as to the Christian faith, either as opposites, or in greater and less degrees of harmony. If, now, we put ourselves into the attitude of that time, and seek to construct in imagination its natural processes of thought, we shall find certain well defined modes, wherein it would, by an inward necessity, express itself; and by these we determine, what, in a word most apt, has been called the genetic development of doctrine. On one side would be found an unphilosophical empiricism, arising from the want of any true appreciation of the nature and need of scientific truth in religion, manifesting itself in adherence to the received tradition, in jealousy of all else as destructive of it; and this tendency would have its exponent both in heathen superstition and in Christian belief. On another side would be seen a philosophical spirit, which would demand of the new faith a scientific ground. This would appear, first, in heathenism, as utter hostility to revelation, regarding it as a fresh fanaticism, wholly incapable of rational construction. Again, the same aim would call forth a deeper view, and seek from

partial perception of Christian ideas to receive this religion into a comprehensive philosophic system, while rejecting it as a divine, supernatural revelation. This scientific aim would next show itself in Christianity, in the endeavor of its deeper minds to arrive at a philosophic basis of faith; in some, with too great a tendency to lose sight in idealizing theories of the literal fact, but in the profoundest thinkers, as they grasped more the true principle of connection, in an attempt clearly to define the middle ground between a bare empiricism and an absorbing idealism. Yet a further form, in which the mind of such an age would develop itself, is that of mysticism. Mysticism may be called the philosophy of forlorn hope; the surrender of the intellect, seeking a higher than empirical knowledge, but wanting a true scientific basis to its own subjective impulses of thought and feeling, or to some plausible system, which has in it an element satisfying to the individual craving. Such a tendency would naturally appear in that chaotic state of ideas. Among heathen minds it would exhibit itself in a speculative idealism, irrational and confused — or, in the grosser shapes of sensuous imagination; and on the Christian side, in the substitution of a fanciful religion for the simple faith and life of the Gospel, or of vague spiritual notions for objective truths.

Such are the chief forms in which the mind of the time would embody itself, and such are actually the systems which we find to have been the outgrowths of its history. Our limits will allow only a rapid sketch. We find the first form of empiricism, not only in the efforts of heathen priest and people to breathe a new life into the decaying superstition, as the ivy puts forth its greenness among ruins; but equally in some of the philosophic writers of that day, whose culture, while it raised them above the mass, was shallow and superficial. Such was Celsus, who, if we may judge by the remains in Origen, had not the least insight into the truths of revelation, but was capable only of a petty, carping criticism. In Christianity this empiricism found its natural representatives in the Latin fathers, since the Latin mind was more practical than speculative; and in most of the early apologists and champions of the faith. This character is seen in their prevalent view of heathen philosophy, deriving it from evil spirits, or referring its truths to some objective, fragmentary Hebrew tradition; and again, of revelation, which they confined within the sphere of an authoritative letter, or an outward church system. Such a class of minds was natural, and necessary as a counterpoise against the tendencies of idealism; yet we cannot recognize in theirs more than an imperfect and narrow position. Had

Christianity remained fixed where they placed it, it would have been no theology. We turn, then, to the representatives of the philosophic thought of that age. In all the reigning systems of heathenism, save the neo-Platonic, we have the extreme of denial. Stoicism, in its Pantheistic metaphysics, found no place for revelation; in its ethics asserted a self-sufficient virtue for the self-renouncing morality of Christ; it wrapped itself in its mantle as of old, and met the new faith with "What will this babbler say?" sensuous Epicureanism had no perception of spiritual Christian truth; scepticism, as in a frivolous Lucian, mocked at all earnest belief, and blasphemed against the deepest moral sentiments of the heart. All, from various points, converged in the rejection of Christianity. But it is, when we turn to a nobler school, that we find the first manifestations of a deeper thought. The neo-Platonism of that day was an attempt, amid the ruins of faith and reason, to upbuild an eclecticism; and accordingly, while its teachers would not accept revelation as authoritative, they sought to weave its doctrines into their system, in a word, to embrace it as an element in a comprehensive whole. This is clear to any who has examined their remains, especially with Proclus, in our view the most symmetrical expositor of the school. In his writings there is contained a distinct approximation to the doctrine of the Trinity, as well as fragments of ideas concerning the creation of the world, the truth of a Mediator, such as could only have been derived from revelation, and are utterly different from the conceptions of the heathen mind.¹ But a far more important writer, in this connection, who seems to occupy just the middle point between an anti-Christian philosophy and a Christian belief, is a yet earlier mind, the prototype of Alexandrian eclecticism, Philo Judæus. It appears to us that, even among our learned historians, his due place of eminence has not been awarded him. We might draw a striking analogy between this intellect, combining comprehensive reason with lofty imagination, and the philosophic genius that seems the peculiar character of modern Germany. Of course we do not call him Christian, for it is from the position of Jewish supernaturalism that he reasons; nor do we call him a true philosophic believer, for he deserts the solid ground of history. But we have in him a mighty intellect, struggling to grasp the inner ideas of revelation, and unfold them in their unity with all other truths; yet, in the attempt to rise above historical fact, losing sight of any objective reality, and merging it at last in a comprehensive but baseless idealism. One word will sum up their results.

¹ V. Procli Comment. in Theolog. Plotin. Lib. I. chap. 3d et al.

They indicate an approach towards Christianity, a preparation for its reception by the better heathen intellect, yet an utter failure in the apprehension of it as a special, supernatural religion. Had philosophy gone no further, Christianity would have taken its place in the rank of speculative systems, and its author been honored, as he was in the palace of Alexander Severus, with a niche and a statue by the side of Plato and Socrates.

We must pass, then, to the proper domain of Christian belief, to find the first glimpse of that unity for which the ancient mind was striving. It would be folly to expect in that age an integral system; we must be content to discover ideas and tendencies. The harbinger of this Christian philosophy was Justin Martyr; yet, while in his writings we find noble suggestions, especially in his idea of the *λόγος σαρκατικός*, (v. Apolog. II,) which shows a perception of the unity of all philosophic truth, with him Christianity was rather a fuller revelation of doctrines, already known in part by the ancient mind, than of a central, supernatural fact of redemption. It is, when we turn from his cruder reasonings to the works of Clement and Origen, that we find the richest development. Filled with the spirit of Christian faith, while nursed in the atmosphere of Greek genius, their writings are a mine of precious metal, as yet in the ore, but piercing the soil everywhere with broad veins, and its very sands heavy and shining with grains of golden wisdom. Origen is the greater and more systematic of the two. We have nothing to say here of his errors. The fallacy of critics, in judging their remains, has resulted from looking at them in the mass, and so pronouncing them a farrago of follies and fancies. All the works of that age are, what Clement called his, *Stromata*, materials for a doctrinal edifice rather than the edifice itself. It is not their views on particular doctrines, that claim our attention; it is only their fundamental ground as to the relation of Christianity to reason; and it is by our recognition of this their central aim, that we must judge of the influence of those great men. Clement, and yet more Origen in his work *περὶ ἀρχαῶν*, laid down this position, new to that age, that the Divine Revelation was the distinct source of all truths which concerned redemption; that, while the speculative reason might range freely beyond the circle of these truths, within this it must bow in faith, and from this centre build up a Christian philosophy and ethics. It was thus a position, opposed on one side to the empiricism of the mere letter, on the other to the idealism, which destroyed it. This was their work; thus they laid the corner stone of a legitimate Chris-

tian science, and this result they handed down to the ages after them. The rubbish and dross of Origen were cast aside; the gold was refined into a later and better wisdom.

But we must pass rapidly to the last form of intellectual effort, that of mysticism. It was, as we might suspect, from the school of neo-Platonism, it was developed on the heathen side. An eclecticism at first, attempting, but failing to combine the heterogeneous elements of Eastern and Western thought, it took refuge at last in subjective notions and fancies. Porphyry believed in special illuminations, and Jamblichus merged the pure Greek intellect in the wildness of Oriental theosophy. It passed on one side into a kind of philosophic self-isolation, an arrogant assumption of intuitive knowledge; and on another, by that necessity which often compels the intellectual mystic to fly from what is subjective, it degenerated into fanaticism. Out of the sublimated mysteries of latter Platonism came those, who pretended by the discipline of thought to have risen above the sphere of man, and to hold communion with the supernatural. The most remarkable of these phenomena is seen in Apollonius of Tyana. In this man, ancient philosophy descended from its abstract region into contact with the realism of Christianity, and dared to cope with the Son of God in the assumption of wonder-working powers. But we cannot linger here; we pass to the Christian and semi-Christian forms of mysticism. In its simplest shape, as the result of pious feeling, we trace it among several of the Latin fathers; again, in others, in a more speculative dress, mingled with an undefined, imaginative philosophy. But the strangest type of this, is found, at a somewhat later and vanishing period, in Synesius. One can hardly read his mysterious hymns, without the feeling of wonder that such a mind could ever have belonged to a bishop of the church. What would be thought now, should a learned diocesan reproduce the ideas of Schelling's *Welt-seele*, in the most transcendental lyric verse! Christian truth, in these poems, glides like a spectral shadow into the region of philosophic fancy, and dissolves in its own rare atmosphere.

But we must hasten to a view of other forms of semi-Christian mysticism. From the religion of simple faith and worship, was produced the most extraordinary theosophy the world has ever seen. Minds not content with the letter, yet guided by no true principles of philosophy, sought speculative nourishment in the then prevalent Oriental systems; and from this unnatural union sprang Gnosticism. It is one of the most singular contrasts to turn from a page of Paul or James to these fantastic records, and think that such were in any sense Chris-

tian sects. As we read of them in Irenæus, it seems more than Cimmerian darkness; and the reader of Neander must thank him for having first thrown a ray of philosophic light into it. We cannot, of course, enter into the differences of Gnostic theory, but grasp only the central points, from which to know their common relation to Christianity. Their essential principle was that of a higher Gnosis, above the natural sense of Revelation. Assuming that it was meant to be a system of speculative knowledge, and thus finding in its common truths too narrow a sphere; aiming, in the Oriental spirit, at a theory of God, the soul, and the world, they mingled with the received doctrines the most heterogeneous elements, the most intricate problems, which perplex the mind of man, and out of this "rudis indigestaque moles," sought to weave a great scheme of the universe. The letter of Scripture was interpreted by purely fanciful hermeneutics: its ideas transformed into the most stupendous conceptions. This world was only a scene in the grand drama of eternity; creation the first link in a chain of degradations, a passage of spirit from the bosom of pure being into impure matter; the existence of man in time and body intrinsically evil; Christ, the Divine Æon, descending into this gross sphere to deliver the soul from its enthrallment to the malignant power; and redemption the attainment of intellectual and spiritual freedom above the bonds of material sense. The pagan was in the lowest class of sense, an enslaved man; the Jew and vulgar Christian were a step above him, but possessed only a hulk of truth; the Gnostic enjoyed the intuition of truth itself, and was animated with a principle of divine holiness. In a word, Christianity with these men was not a revelation, to be philosophically developed from its own centre, and complete in its natural meaning; but only, as the inscriptions of an Egyptian obelisk, a key or picture-alphabet of a higher science; and the fruit of such confusion of ideas could only be mysticism.

These, then, in a sketch of necessity rapid, were the forms in which the ancient mind manifested itself. It were needless, and irrelevant to our design to more than note the general features. We have said enough to exhibit the process of action and reaction between Christianity and human reason; and would only reaffirm that these are not to be held as arbitrary or disjointed parts, but the necessary phenomena of that age.

From this analysis of early Christianity we turn to the parallel we have affirmed, and show in the features of the present, amid all differences, the essential counterpart. It may be said in general, that there has never been a time, since the primitive, when such an utter

chaos of opinion has existed under the common name of Christianity. There have been, indeed, all along the periods of our religion, the boldest speculations, and ceaseless contests of faith with error: and it is a fact, worthy of note, that in the writings of Erigena, of Abelard, and many others both of the Platonic and Aristotelian eras of theology, may be found as monstrous forms of abstract falsehood as in these latter days of philosophic Pantheism. But all these wore the outward garb of the one revealed faith; they created no distinct classes of Christian, semi-Christian, and un-Christian, but were rather the speculations of individual minds. Now we behold the fact of a philosophic Christendom, severed into sects, standing at all points of the scale, and forming, as at first, peculiar schools of reasoners. This explains the truth already stated, that the difference of the two eras is more apparent than real. Christian theology seems now in the widest sense passing through an age of development, the image and likeness of the primitive. Its issues are as complete and unlimited. It is a period of theories, each of which opposes others on first principles; a time, when there is as vast a variety of error, as alarming a scepticism, as unsettled a philosophic striving, as earnest an aim after belief; when many are walking in twilight, and praying, "Would God it were morning." Our spiritual state may be well described in the Roman poet's picture of the primeval world of dissevered atoms:

" Nulla quies est
 Reddita corporibus primis per inane profundum;
 Sed magis, assiduo varioque exercita motu,
 Partem intervallis magnis conflictata resultat,
 Pars etiam brevibus spatiis nexantur ab ictu;
 Et quaecumque, magis condensa conciliatur,
 Exiguus intervallis convectata resultat."

Lucretius, Lib. II. 94 — 100.

We will consider, then, the leading tendencies of this age, in regard to scientific Christianity. And first, as before, we have our modern empirics; a class which is as numerous now and influential, notwithstanding our religion has shown in its triumphant progress that it has everything to hope and nothing at last to fear from the results of reason. "There must be in all ages metaphysicians," says Coleridge, "men to whom the heaven-descended *γνώθη σεαυτόν* is a law of intellectual striving;" and in all ages, we may add, there must be those to whom there is no such conscious necessity, and who therefore oppose such strivings. With minds of this class theology is no science, but a dogmatic statement of facts; a concordance of Scripture texts is

their *summa theologiæ*; or it may be a routine of worn out discussions concerning a set of particular doctrines, a partisan attachment to the *magister sententiarum* of some narrow school; or, in another shape, it may be a *catena patrum*, a blind resting on the church as an *ecclesia docens*, with no requirement save implicit faith, not because the universal reason and conscience of the Christian past speak to the individual reason and conscience, but because a council has settled truth forever. In our day this empiricism is marked by its indiscriminate opposition to the sciences, which are the sources of its fear. It is seen in the prevalent jealousies of natural philosophy, as if there were really doubt that Revelation could find its reconciliation; and so we must decree in synod that there has not been any creation anterior to the present system, must put down astronomy with its nebular theories, as that sage Aristotelian, who refused to look through a telescope for fear of shaking his settled opinions. It is seen in the dread of exegetical criticism, branding without difference all from Paulus and Strauss to Tholuck and Olshausen; and equally in a blind dislike of the philosophical and theological inquiries of the age, unwilling to sift good from evil, not recognizing that these are in every period the deep necessities of its thought. It is seen in the various minds, that are seeking to regenerate discordant Christendom by the repetition of some magic formulas of Protestant theology, which once had power; and again, in such as a Newman and a Ward, who, weary of ultra-Protestantism, chose ultra-Romanism, and Pygmalion-like, would warm the stone statue of a mediæval Christianity into new life. On the other side, we have a neological empiricism, as hollow and groundless. It was, indeed, the want of a true Christian philosophy, underlying the formulas of doctrinal faith, which first led such as Semler to attack the record. A belief in the dead letter produced a criticism of the dead letter. This neology confined itself to the mole-eyed work of undermining the outer wall; it searched the canon, doubted the authenticity and genuineness of the sacred books, and on purely hermeneutical grounds would anatomize not only the body, but the soul of Christianity. It is this empiric neology, which prevailed in Germany, until now that Strauss has placed an unchristian exegesis on the basis of a philosophic Christology. It is this, which entered among us with Unitarian error; which, unable to grasp the grand, living truths of Incarnation and Redemption, quarrelled about this and that text, set aside the introduction of John's Gospel as a neo-Platonic corruption, and called all its sublimest mysteries Orientalisms. So far as it is a philosophy at all, it is one of pure negations; it rests on

the assertion of a few vague notions of natural theology, with but a bald recognition of distinct Christian doctrine. This empiricism, however, is fast passing away, as its spirit of unbelief has developed into bolder and more decided forms.

We turn, then, to the higher ground of philosophy, and consider, first, the forms of un-Christian and semi-Christian error. The attitude of utter denial, seen in the early schools of heathen false wisdom, has had its counterpart in the English and French deism of the century just past. And, as at first this opposition sprang from the want of the least affinity with Christianity in a material Pantheism, a sensual Epicureanism, and a mocking scepticism, so in the like coarse and revolting principles of a D'Holbach, a Helvetius and a Hume was the entire negation of a divine religion in its spirit and truth. But that grosser unbelief is vanished. Idealism has taken the place of materialism. Here, then, as we have observed in early time, the phenomenon of a philosophy seeking to recognize the truths of revelation, yet in reality subverting its ground-work of supernatural faith, we may behold the same results in the systems of modern idealism, under the twofold aspect of naturalism and of Pantheism. We come now to the phenomena, which are more fully the outgrowths of the age, and present our parallel in its most striking light. There has always been a certain direct opposition of belief and unbelief; but it is only causes, lying deeply in the mind and circumstances of these two periods, which can produce the similitude of which we speak. While in the domain of pure science, the fruits of idealism are nobler, and thus the infidelity issuing from it, is of a more spiritual character; and while, again, it were proof of most obtuse empiricism to blend present with past deism in the same condemnation, it is yet true that the denial of a special and supernatural revelation is as complete on one side as the other.

We shall consider the first form of naturalism, or subjective idealism, in this view. The philosophy of Kant, powerful as it was against the dogmatic scepticism of Hume, and the dogmatic sensualism of Condillac and Helvetius, was itself only a scepticism on a profounder base. It denied the possibility of demonstrating or surely knowing objective truth; it brought all truths within the limits of pure reason, while it gave to the conclusions of that reason only subjective validity. And thus its necessary result was a rejection of the supernatural ground of Christianity; it sought to explain its doctrines by mere philosophic conceptions, its miracles on natural principles; nor could it see, as even a profounder unbelief has seen, the demand in reason itself for

an objective, supernatural reality. The critical philosophy was thus pushed to the very verge of utter denial. If the reader will find one of the fullest statements of this system of naturalism, let him turn to the volume of Tennemann's History of Philosophy, (the complete, untranslated work,) which treats of Christ and primitive Christianity. In this, revelation appears as a pure phenomenon of its age. Prophets and inspired messengers are only representatives of Jewish and Christian ideas; Christ is a teacher of a Kantian ethics in a concrete shape; and all religion is the mere affirmation of reason and moral sentiment; a self-development of consciousness, a self-culture of holiness. We have seen and see this system in our country, coalescing with a development of modern Unitarianism, leading it out from the materialism of Priestley into an ideal shape, and at length in its finished results overturning all faith in the outward and miraculous, pronouncing Judaism and Christianity only transient forms, rejecting on subjective grounds the authority of Christ and His apostles, applying this "foregone conclusion" as a critical dictum to the interpretation of the record, and resting at last on the basis of natural reason and conscience as the oracles of absolute truth and goodness.

But we must pass to the yet higher developments of philosophy; we refer to the stupendous systems of modern natural-supernaturalism. Since the rise of that idealism, which was rather, as Kant called it, a *Kritik* than a system, there has been felt the need of a profounder metaphysics and theology. In proportion as men investigated the truths of revelation, they recognized in its supernatural character somewhat which could not be merged into a mere naturalism. In the Absolute Philosophy of Schelling, further developed by Hegel, was given for those who, with no true Christian principles, yet sought to grasp the supernatural which they could not explain away, the basis of a new and comprehensive system. As a philosophy, it attempts to pass the bounds of a Kantian subjectivity; it looks on nature as a living organism, on God as not a pure idea, but a Being, developing Himself in the forms of outward creation, in the consciousness of man, and again in human history, as the unfolding of Divine law through ages and events. Such a system, then, as applied to revelation, must lead to different views from those of naturalism. Instead of excluding the divine, it includes it in a more comprehensive whole; instead of reasoning away the facts of supernaturalism, it affirms them as instances of the perpetual outflow of a higher power into nature; instead of denying a manifested God, it views Him as ever revealing Himself to the race; it seeks even, as Baur has done in his great

work, to supply the philosophic truth lying at the basis of a Trinity; instead of regarding the incarnation as an absurdity, it sees in it the law of universal humanity, the identical oneness of God and man. In a word, it has grasped the ideas of Christianity, and given them a place in its system, but in so doing robbed them of all which makes them Christian. All that is special is merged in the absolute. All historic facts are the mythologic dress of general truths. Such is the outline of this system, grand in its features, vast in its errors as well as truths. We have then here, as we have said, the peculiar phenomenon of the first and this latest age; an unbelief, totally different from the philosophy which directly rejects revelation, and yet as essentially and entirely destructive of it. It matters not, whether it be by a higher or lower method; whether through the subterranean road of a grovelling atheism, or the aery path of pantheistic speculation, we arrive at last at the same "*profundum inane*," at the annihilation of all those personal and living ideas of God, of redeemed humanity, of immortality, which only a supernatural revelation can supply.

But we must turn briefly to the position which a true Christian philosophy occupies in our age. It has been seen that in the primitive day the aim of the Alexandrian fathers was to rear a Christian science from the starting-point of revelation, as a historical and divine truth, yet to exhibit its harmony with all other truth. The solution of the same problem, in connection with the present state of advanced science in every sphere, is the labor of this era. It is true, nor do we mean to deny, that there has been a legitimate Christian philosophy in each successive century; but we mean that since that earliest period the question of the fundamental relation of Christianity to reason has never stood forth in so distinct an attitude. It was then a necessary striving; it is with us from the circumstances, which in common phrase, have resolved all things into their original elements, as necessary a demand for reconstruction. To learn what are the results of the age in this domain, we must turn, then, to Germany. While we acknowledge the labors of the learned in all branches of Christian knowledge, we must say, unhesitatingly, that in the proper sphere of a scientific theology, there has appeared in no other country a work, destined to have a marked influence on the great speculative conflict now waging in the bosom of Christendom for the very foundations of revealed truth. England has her divines, but they have been so busied with the old questions of theology, with local polemics, and of late with the Anglo-Catholic movement, which is shaking the

unstable equilibrium of her reformation, that she has brought forth only here and there a thinker who has dived to the depth of modern science. France has borrowed her ideas from Germany, and as yet little more than its rationalism. Our country has had no profound metaphysician since Edwards. It is the land which originated the most stupendous form of unbelief that must produce the Christian philosophy of the age. There is, then, to classify the leading tendencies, one class among those who hold the principles of the absolute philosophy who seek, as we have already recognized in the Alexandrian Philo, to find a middle ground between an absorbing idealism and a historic revelation. Such, so far as we can gather from the outlines of his lectures, appears the position of Schelling at present. It is his purpose to show that his system, instead of merging the special and supernatural, gives the true method by which to rise from the ideas of reason to supernaturalism. But, though there are many professed Hegelians who occupy a similar position, we confess, that to our own view there is an impossibility in the very ground of the absolute philosophy of such reconciliation. A system which does not set forth from the fixed centre of historic supernaturalism, must end in its denial, or in a vague theosophy. The truth of Christianity can never be evolved from the abstract idea of the absolute. We find here, therefore, not a right result, but only an indication of the aim of the time. It is to another class of theologians that we look, as those who have begun to construct revealed science in its true basis. The principle, which was first philosophically grasped by Schleiermacher, is the corner stone of a Christian system. In mentioning this great name, we by no means claim for him the praise of a complete theology, but find in him many grave errors, and only the massive fragments of an unfinished edifice. Yet it is a shallow criticism, which sees in him only a Sabellian heresy, and forgets his service to the cause of revelation. His work was, in an age of rationalism on one side and pietism on the other, to fix the fundamental idea of a revealed truth in its relation to reason. And while others, like Twisten, and Müller have purified his truth of its errors and carried it to its completeness, the Christian philosophy of Germany and the age stands rooted in his central principle. Revelation, in his view, is in itself a distinct, supernatural reality, having its subjective basis in the consciousness, recognizing Christ as a Redeemer fitted to its spiritual want, its objective basis in the historic fact of redemption. The same idea is the ground-work of the "Aids to Reflection," a work whose value in spite of its partial statement of the doctrines of

original sin, atonement, baptism, is that it grasps the essence of revealed truth, and upbuilds it on a living foundation. Christianity is one central sun, around which all other truths revolve; and a true theology, while it does not deny the legitimacy of the reason in its own domain, from this starting point of the moral consciousness and the revealed fact answering thereto, enters into its domain, and creates a proper Christian metaphysics and ethics. Here, accordingly, on one hand, is overthrown the principle as well as the result of that rationalism, which, beginning with an intellectual abstraction, merges in absolute ideas the essential meaning of revelation as a redemptive fact; and on the other, by a right method the divine truth is developed in its harmony with all truths, not in the way of an unphilosophical dogmatism. But we cannot dwell longer here than to show a distinct aim and direction. It may be asked, if such a principle has not been affirmed by many sages before; and to this we answer, it is doubtless a truth implied in all Christian theology; the praise of our age is to have brought it out in its essential meaning, its complete form. No theology is ever in advance of the philosophy of its time, but is founded upon it. Metaphysical rationalism has never before sought with such dialectic skill to prove the impossibility of revelation in the very groundwork of reason. Theology has been hitherto occupied rather with particular doctrines; has built up systems on an assumed dogmatic basis; now it has been compelled to investigate its deeper, fundamental relation to pure science, and the result has been a true adjustment of the claims of philosophy without infringement on supernatural religion. We have thus far traced a remarkable analogy in the features of the primitive and present eras, and we have space for no more than the briefest sketch of the rest. Mysticism was spoken of as the outgrowth of that early mind, and as then on the side of heathenism, it sprang from a philosophy which, wanting a true basis, surrendered itself to individual notions, or mingled with the poetic pantheism of the East, so do we have its antitype. It is found in that class of mock-transcendentalists among us, who arrogate to themselves the title *κατ' ἑξῆς* of the spiritual thinkers of New England, but whose philosophy is indeed only the weakest dilution of that German mind, which it imitates. It wears sometimes the form of subjective idealism, sometimes of pantheism, but is in truth only a confused mingling of these in an unscientific mysticism. It claims for itself direct intuitions of the absolute, and its self-colloquizing is communion with the divine; it scorns the idea of revelation, a Mediator, a written word, a formula of worship, and from its sub-

line heights looks down on the gross souls bound in the fetters of Christian belief. All cant is ridiculous; but the cant of our modern philosophic sentimentalism is the absurdest, because most pretentious of all. Nothing can exceed the folly which has infested its votaries. It is a philosophy which spurns logic, and which logic spurns; a philosophy of notions and words, whose chief strength lies in a peculiar dialect, drawn from the sacred books of its sages, and preserved as the convenient substitute for well defined thought. Nor should we forget to mention in this connection, as an instance of the parallel we have exhibited, its tendency to fanaticism. One of its strongest features is, that it has allied itself to the crude jugglery of animal magnetism, has recognised it as perhaps a new communion of the soul with higher powers of nature. Apollonius of Tyana has re-appeared in the followers of Mesmer and the Poughkeepsie sect. While Christian miracles are denied, the miracles of modern clairvoyance are asserted; and it is even gravely suggested that a key may be found in them to the wonder-working cures and prophetic vision of Jesus of Nazareth. So true is that keen criticism of Pascal:—"Incredulæ, la plus credulæ. Ils croient les miracles de Vespasien, pour ne pas croire ceux de Jésus."—*Pensées*. But we must hasten to the consideration of this mystical tendency on the side of Christian belief. Here it is we must name the Pietism of Germany, which, from the early day of Spener, has attracted to itself many hearts, taking refuge from the coldness of rationalism in the warmth of devotional feeling. Much of our evangelical religion has this character. It is the form in which an earnest Christian consciousness expresses itself, but it wants a philosophic clearness and depth; it rests the doctrines of revelation too much on emotions, which are not intelligibly grasped; it differs from a right Christian philosophy in this, that it does not by a scientific analysis of the spiritual consciousness lay the basis of objective and universal truth, but asserts only its own subjective states of devout thought and feeling, its own individual convictions of sin and longings after redemption. But it is in what we may call a semi-Christian form, we find the last type of modern mysticism. Primitive religion brought forth Gnosticism; our age has its Gnosticism, as fantastic, as stupendous, the outgrowth of like causes, and the counterpart of the past in its general features. We refer to the theosophy which holds so marked an attitude among the chaotic elements of the time; which, erroneous as it is, has drawn to itself many intellects of a high order, and created a school—the system of Swedenborg. The principle of the

modern as of the ancient Gnosticism is the assertion of a higher Gnosis, vouchsafed to the wise above the multitude of believers; its method is the same, an endeavor to find in common Christianity a symbolic form, beneath which is hidden a more spiritual truth, a husk containing a purer kernel of wisdom, a revelation given in the germ by Christ, and now fully developed by a second Emmanuel. It is, in short, a theology of the imagination, which takes the ideas of Scripture, and rears on them a superstructure of its own; carries the miracles to a second power; turns the written word into a cipher, of which the initiated have the key; a vast, symmetrical mysticism, unfolding many noble views in religion and ethics, interwoven throughout with fancies and falsehoods, itself built essentially on a fancy and a falsehood. The mind of many, tired of a bare naturalism, yearning for supernatural truth, yet by the very force of reaction borne to the extreme of indiscriminating faith; not content, therefore, with simple Christianity, quarrelling, like Sir Thomas Browne, because it has not mysteries enough, ready to accept the "*Credo, quia impossibile,*" plunges into this bottomless sea of Swedenborgianism, and finds there ample room to float at pleasure. The same despairing spirit, which leads the man of devotion, but more sensuous imagination into the attractive worship of Rome, as a refuge from ultra-Protestantism, guides him of more intellectual, abstract temperament into the church of the New Jerusalem.

We might at greater length pass on from feature to feature, but our limits compel us to omit several, perhaps as important views. Two of these we name as characteristic tendencies of our own and the early ages; the syncretism, which is so prevalent in this time of opinions; and, again, the false and formal Catholicism, which has carried so many into the Roman church to realize the dream of unity in a mere mechanism of faith and worship. But, as these are rather popular than scientific tendencies, we only mention them. Let the reader follow out, if he will, this line of comparison, and it will offer him one of the most curious and fruitful studies of philosophic antiquarianism. It is enough for us, if we have laid down a sufficient induction for the conclusions we would draw.

The knowledge of causes is that which the philosopher seeks, not the mere aggregate of facts; and it is to these we turn. It were empiricism of the grossest kind to suppose that such phenomena could exist, without a deep and peculiar reason. Nor will it be said, by any who has true insight, that they can be solved by the general theory of a philosophic striving, more or less alike in every age.

An analogy so remarkable, so varied, can only come from circumstances and inward principles, pertaining to these two eras, as to no others; and it is, when we study these, we find the light which reveals this extraordinary page of Christian history. We have, then, already seen that in its appearing our religion must have existed as a spontaneous faith, and equally that it must have had its after-time of scientific expansion. Yet, in the attainment of doctrinal form, it must have passed through a long process of inward and outward struggle, must have grappled with the ideas of the age, and stood as a revealed truth in the midst of erroneous and of partially true systems. The varied phenomena of that period were the necessary results of conflict, the necessary conditions of a future unity. But we must not suppose that such a contest could wholly cease, even after Christianity assumed a more definite form of truth. It is rather the design of God, while the foundations of the faith are eternal, to allow His religion to have its natural career, in connection with the free activity of human intellect. Nor, while we have and may have in the creed and worship of Christianity, the settled groundwork of practical religion, may we expect to attain a perfect, changeless system of Christian science, until the advancing knowledge of man has reached its fullest harmony with the truths of revelation. It may be said indeed that, allowing a necessary progression in Christian science, it is a real progression, not a retrogression, or a ceaseless oscillation we should look for; and that, after eighteen centuries it is somewhat discouraging to behold the world still in the state of primitive chaos. And, viewed in itself, it is so; viewed in regard to the self-will of men, it is most lamentable; yet it is a fact, capable of an explanation that supplies hope and assurance. It has not been a retrogression, but as has been said of social progress, "an advancement in a spiral line." If, then, we examine philosophically the state of the age succeeding that of the Reformation, we shall find special causes which produced this chaotic condition of things. In the will of God, and the free development of history, the church passed through centuries of decay; and while we cannot agree with those who look on the middle age as without light or life, while it had its mighty minds, and eras of thought, it was an age of cramped energies, of narrow and distorted growth. Philosophy followed as a slave, bound at the chariot wheel of Aristotle. The Bible was not a lost, yet it was a sealed book. An iron dogmatism was riveted upon the mind of Europe. It was of necessity that a change, should it come, must rise, not by degrees, but in the sudden untamed activity

of a whirlwind. The intellect of Christendom, roused into reflection, like the pent stream, which at the farthest point of pressure, bursts the rock, and makes its own wild outlet, broke the barriers of a Romish system; and in proportion to its former slavery was the excess of its new freedom. Religion felt the impulse, and partook in its influences; while a Luther and a Melancthon thought to go no further than the position of a scriptural Christianity, the movement swept over and beyond them. Natural science passed into the wide field of discovery, and as it laid down results hitherto unknown, they were not found in harmony with the received dogma. The study of language opened the books of Hebrew and Greek learning; and the criticism exercised on all ancient records, was severely dealt on the sacred volume. Metaphysical philosophy entered on the free career of speculative error and truth. All those revenged themselves on Christianity for their long bondage; and there arose among men of science that fearful era which has so long prevailed. Christian dogmatism, in turn, strong in its inner fortress of authority, would not at first come forth to meet its enemies in the open plain, but dealt out its indiscriminate and haughty defiance. In the closing half of the past century, this movement seemed to have reached its zenith. There appeared no longer a settled religion left in the world. As in the first it stood, grappling with all enemies, laboring for a foothold; and as then all varieties of error manifested themselves, and truth was seen only in an imperfect form, so was it again.

The eighteenth century saw revelation and science in direct hostility. Metaphysics boldly asserted the baselessness of a supernatural faith. Ethics severed morality from belief and worship. Natural science laughed to scorn the cosmogony of Moses, the miracles of the Old and New Testaments. Criticism found interpolations and falsehoods in the text. Neology tore it in pieces as a tissue of myths. History cast aside Judaism, and hurled the works of the Fathers with contempt among the rubbish of tradition. It is lamentable, indeed, to look back on the annals of that past epoch, when a material philosophy of unbelief was succeeded by a spiritual philosophy of unbelief, when an unchristian literature and science reigned over Europe: but we can only take refuge in a Christian optimism, and believe that, as it sprang from natural and necessary causes, it will yet come out in a right channel. It could not be expected that such a state of things should subside at once; for more than forty days had the deluge of error been swelling to its height; it must be more than forty days before dry land could be seen, and then it was a waste left by

the waters, an overturning of all landmarks, a needful rebuilding of each habitable home. There was demanded a gradual reconstruction of Christian science. It could only be, as in deeper insight, in more patient labor, falsehood should be met with truth; as a better natural science should find its facts harmonious with a rightly interpreted Scripture; as a better criticism should find a pure and settled text; as a better metaphysics should discover the way of union with historic revelation, that there should be restored the identity of reason and faith. Such was, and is yet to a great extent the chaotic state of Christendom; such its phenomena, and such their causes. Never, since the birth of our religion, has been seen so stupendous a conflict as has been waged between the truth of God and human error; no other age, except the primitive, whatever its importance in philosophic or religious culture, can compare with this in which we live, in the grandeur of its efforts, the variety of its issues, the momentous problems which hang on its results. Nor have we yet reached its conclusion. The battle is not yet over: nay, we are to expect the mightiest attempts of error in proportion to the advances of truth. But, while the chaotic condition of Christendom yet remains, it is evident from what has been said that the whole character of the strife is changed. It is not now, as in the past, an utter hostility of science to Christianity. The materialism and sensualism of the eighteenth century are gone; and on every hand is felt the demand, not of destruction, but of reconstruction. Pantheism itself, as well as Christian belief, is aiming in its own way at this. It is the tendency which underlies the grand movements of the age, intellectual, social, religious. The question on which the mightiest results depend, which must be felt by all deep minds as the most momentous of all, is, what shall be the character of this coming era of reünion? The inquiry is one which has its different answer, according to the different attitude of each in regard to both science and revelation. On one side the transcendental unbeliever expects the time when Christianity shall be acknowledged the transient phenomenon of a less advanced period; a millennium of pure reason in science, in art, in society, in worship. On the other, the timid religionist sees only the signs of despair; and, between the two, are found many who remain in utter doubt, hardly knowing whether to fear or hope the more for the cause of truth. But we turn to this question in calm confidence. It appears almost blasphemy, to him who believes in the power of Christian truth and the promise of its Author, to be troubled with misgiving. That lofty sentence of the apostle should be our motto: "We can de

nothing against the truth, but for the truth." And yet more, to him who feels the necessity of a harmony between revelation and science, and has rightly studied the history of these successive strivings after it, it is a hope, founded not only on faith, but on a faith, which is "the substance of that hoped for." In this very analogy that we have drawn, do we read the assurance of triumph. It was necessary that primitive Christianity should pass through its fearful conflicts, before its victory, yet that victory came. Poor and imperfect, as viewed in the broader light of modern science, that early philosophy appears; yet when we compare its results with the character of the time before it, when we remember that before even that imperfect Christianity, a more imperfect heathenism and scepticism passed away; when we remember the constellation of genius and learning which shone upon the fourth century, we may see in it a sure advancement. And in like manner, when we regard the equally necessary causes which led to our struggles, and on every hand the omens of the present, we may expect similar results. Such is our view of the present attitude of Pantheism. As the early speculations of a Proclus, a Philo, only formed a partial step in the process which produced a true philosophy, so we look upon the overshadowing system of Hegel as a transient effort to grasp those supernatural truths, which will themselves reveal its emptiness, and mould a higher and more satisfying system. Yet it will be asked, what special ground of hope is given here, if, according to this very analogy, we may only look for a partial and short-lived success, for an after age of worse confusion? Our answer is given in the difference, as well as in the likeness, of the two eras. The contest of this time, though like, is deeper, and the result will be deeper. The first witnessed an incipient struggle; the last has witnessed the meeting of philosophy and revelation on the final ground of battle, and the victory, when it comes, will be proportioned to the grandeur of its causes and its issues. Compared with the Pantheism of modern Germany, the most stupendous system of error the mind can create, heathen unbelief was puerile; compared with the boldness of neology, the attacks of a Celsus and a Porphyry were harmless; compared with the results of a Clemens and an Origen, the Christian philosophy of a Schleiermacher, a Twisten, a Müller, an Ullmann, are an immeasurable progress. And on every hand we may see the signs of this new unity. Geology and astronomy are taking Christian ground; criticism is producing her learned men of thoroughly believing mind; history is recognizing the place and influence of revelation; metaphysics and

ethics are striving after the harmony of reason and conscience with faith ; and in the most important domain of all, scientific theology, we have already traced the striking phenomena of our age. Out of the bosom of Protestantism is proceeding a new and living Christian philosophy ; and whatever the fears of many, there has never been a period, when in every part of Christendom has been such a vigorous awaking of both speculative intellect and devotional feeling, in the direction of belief. Even Romanism has passed, with a Möhler, into the ground of scientific inquiry, and his position and method are utterly different from those of a former dogmatism. Our trust is in that progressive development through which not the reason of man only, but of God, is leading His Church. Christianity cannot die. Her triumphs are sure. Unbelief will pass, as it has passed away. We may lament the evils of the present ; we may look for no immediate conclusions, but we must not, cannot fear the end. We must view these movements as the inundations of a mighty Nile, which, although they do not leave untouched the dwellings planted on the level of the shore, prophesy fair harvests blooming on soil fertilized by the waters ; and we must wisely learn, before the next overflow, to rear our houses on firm piles above the highest mark of the rising element. This is our hope, and this our labor. In such a retrospect of the past, and such cheering omens for the future, we may look forward to a better era than any already reached ; an era that shall achieve what the primitive and succeeding times have only “ known in part and prophesied in part ;” an era when a nobler constellation of genius than that of a Clemens, an Athanasius, an Augustine shall gild the firmament of the church ; when, after her most gigantic conflicts, she shall win a lasting triumph, and to the centuries of a discovered Christendom shall succeed the age of faith and living worship.