

The daily round, the common task,
 Will furnish all we need to ask,
 Room to deny ourselves, a road
 To bring us daily nearer God.

And of such noble lives we can truly say :

“Such souls
 Vanish like lightning, but they leave behind
 A voice that, in the distance far away,
 Wakens the slumbering ages.”

W. B. RUSSELL-CALEY.

ART. V.—DEVELOPMENT IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURIES.

CHURCH history is always interesting, especially that of primitive times. The third century was a time of transition, and there are six or seven points on which it is worth while to collect together the evidence of competent scholars and historians. First, I may be permitted to reproduce statements from the illustrious Bishop Lightfoot. They are on two points: 1. *The Development of Episcopal Prerogatives.* 2. *The Growth of the Idea of the Sacrifice in the Communion.* Throughout this paper I shall use the language of others rather than my own, as I do not wish to be involved in controversy, or to make inferences, but merely to exhibit historical facts.

1. *The Development of Episcopal Prerogatives.*

On this point Bishop Lightfoot writes as follows: ¹ “If with Ignatius the bishop is the centre of Christian unity, if with Irenæus he is the depository of apostolical tradition, with Cyprian he is the *absolute vicegerent of Christ* in things spiritual. In mere strength of language, indeed, it would be difficult to surpass Ignatius, who lived about a century and a half earlier. With the single exception of the sacerdotal view of the ministry which had grown up meanwhile, Cyprian puts forward no assumption which this father had not advanced either literally or substantially long before. This one exception, however, is all-important, for it raised the sanctions of the episcopate to a higher level, and put new force into old titles of respect. Theoretically, therefore, it may be said that Cyprian took his stand on the combination of the ecclesiastical authority as asserted by Ignatius, with the sacerdotal claims which had been developed in the century just past. But the real influence which he exercised in the elevation of the

¹ Epistle to the Philippians, “Christian Ministry.”

episcopate consisted, not in the novelty of his theoretical views, but in his practical energy and success. The absolute supremacy of the bishop had remained hitherto a lofty title, or at least a vague, ill-defined assumption; it became through his exertions a substantial and patent and world-wide fact. The first prelate whose force of character vibrated through the whole of Christendom, he was driven not less by the circumstances of his position than by his own temperament and conviction to throw all his energy into this scale. And the permanent result was much vaster than he could have anticipated beforehand or realized after the fact. Forced into the episcopate against his will, he raised it to a position of absolute independence, from which it has never since been deposed."

And again: "The greatness of Cyprian's influence on the episcopate is indeed due to this fact, that with him the statement of the principle precedes and necessitates the practical measures. Of the sharpness and distinctness of his sacerdotal views it will be time to speak presently, but of his conception of the episcopal office generally thus much may be said here, that he regards the bishop as exclusively the representative of God to the congregation, and hardly, if at all, as the representative of the congregation before God. The bishop is the indispensable channel of Divine grace, the indispensable bond of Christian brotherhood. The episcopate is not so much the roof as the foundation-stone of the ecclesiastical edifice; not so much the legitimate development as the primary condition of a Church. The bishop is appointed directly by God, is responsible directly to God, is inspired directly from God. This last point deserves especial notice. Though in words he frequently defers to the established use of consulting the presbyters and even the laity in the appointment of officers and in other matters affecting the well-being of the community, yet he only makes the concession to nullify it immediately. He pleads a direct official inspiration which enables him to dispense with ecclesiastical custom and to act on his own responsibility. Though the presbyters may still have retained the shadow of a controlling power over the acts of the bishop, though the courtesy of language by which they were recognised as fellow-presbyters was not laid aside, yet for all practical ends the independent supremacy of the episcopate was completely established by the principles and measures of Cyprian."

2. *The Growth of the Idea of the Sacrifice in the Communion.*

Tracing the change from the silence of the New Testament on particular sacerdotalism and speaking of the era of Cyprian, Bishop Lightfoot says: "Hitherto the sacerdotal view of the

Christian ministry has not been held apart from a distinct recognition of the sacerdotal functions of the whole Christian body. The minister is thus regarded as a priest because he is the mouth-piece, the representative of the priestly race. Such appears to be the conception of Tertullian, who speaks of the clergy as separate from the laity only because the Church, in the exercise of her prerogative, has for convenience entrusted to them the performance of certain sacerdotal functions belonging properly to the whole congregation, and of Origen, who, giving a moral and spiritual interpretation to the sacerdotal office, considers the priesthood of the clergy to differ from the priesthood of the laity only in degree, in so far as the former devote their time and their thoughts more entirely to God than the latter. So long as this important aspect is kept in view, so long as the priesthood of the ministry is regarded as springing from the priesthood of the whole body, the teaching of the Apostle has not been directly violated. But, still, it was not a safe nomenclature which assigned the terms sacerdos, ἱερεύς, and the like, to the ministry as a *special* designation. The appearance of this phenomenon marks the period of transition from the universal sacerdotalism of the New Testament to the particular sacerdotalism of a later age.

“If Tertullian and Origen are still hovering on the border, Cyprian has boldly transferred himself into the new domain. It is not only that he uses the terms sacerdos, sacerdotium, sacerdotialis, of the ministry with a frequency hitherto without parallel, but he treats all the passages in the Old Testament which refer to the privileges, the sanctions, the duties, and the responsibilities of the Aaronic priesthood, as applying to the officers of the Christian Church. His opponents are profane and sacrilegious; they have passed sentence of death on themselves by disobeying the command of the Lord in Deuteronomy to ‘hear the priest’; they have forgotten the injunction of Solomon to honour and reverence God’s priests; they have despised the example of St. Paul, who regretted that he ‘did not know it was the high priest’; they have been guilty of the sin of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. These passages are urged again and again. They are urged, moreover, not by parity of reasoning, not by analogy of circumstance, but as absolute and immediate and unquestionable. As Cyprian crowned the edifice of episcopal power, so also was he the first to put forward without relief or disguise these sacerdotal assumptions; and so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them that nothing was left to his successors but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language.”

3. I pass now to other points. And here I quote the historian Schaff. First, as to *Clerical Celibacy*.

“The first step in the direction of clerical celibacy was the prohibition of second marriage to the clergy, on the ground that Paul’s direction concerning “the husband of *one* wife” is a restriction rather than a command. In the Western Church, in the early part of the third century, there were many clergymen who had been married a second or even a third time, and this practice was defended on the ground that Paul allowed re-marriage, after the death of one party, as lawful without any restriction or censure. This fact appears from the protest of the Montanistic Tertullian, who makes it a serious objection to the Catholics that they allow bigamists to preside, to baptize, and to celebrate the Communion. Hippolytus, who had equally rigoristic views on discipline, reproaches about the same time the Roman bishop Callistus with admitting to sacerdotal and episcopal office those who were married a second and even a third time, and permitting the clergy to marry, after having been ordained. But the rigorous practice prevailed and was legalized in the Eastern Church. The (so-called) “Apostolic Constitutions” expressly forbid bishops, priests and deacons to marry a second time . . . and extend the prohibition of second marriage even to cantors, readers and porters . . . The “Apostolic Canons” give similar regulations, and declare that the husband of a second wife . . . was ineligible to the priesthood.

“(b) The second step was the prohibition of marriage and conjugal intercourse *after* ordination. This implies the incompatibility of the priesthood with the duties and privileges of marriage. Before the Council of Elvira in Spain (306) no distinction was made in the Latin Church between marriages before and after ordination. But that rigoristic Council forbade nuptial intercourse to priests of all ranks upon pain of excommunication. The Council of Arles (314) passed a similar canon. And so did the Council of Ancyra (314), which, however, allows deacons to marry as deacons in case they stipulated for it before taking orders. This exception was subsequently removed by the 27th ‘Apostolic Canon,’ which allows only the lectors and cantors to contract marriage.

“The Œcumenical Council of Nicæa (325), led by the vigorous protest of Paphutius, a venerable bishop and confessor of the Upper Thebaid, left the continuance or discontinuance of the married relation to the free choice of every clergyman, and passed no law in favour of celibacy.

“The Greek Church substantially retained the position of the fourth century, and gradually adopted the principle and practice of limiting the law of celibacy to bishops (who are usually taken from monasteries), and making a single marriage the rule for the lower clergy, the marriage to take place *before*

ordination, and not to be repeated. Justinian excluded married men from the episcopate, and the Trullan Synod in 692 legalized the existing practice. In Russia (probably since 1274) the single marriage of the lower clergy was made obligatory. This is an error in the opposite direction. Marriage as well as celibacy should be left free to each man's conscience.

"(c) The Latin Church took the third and last step—the absolute prohibition of clerical marriage, including even the lower orders. . . . Sacerdotal marriage was first prohibited by Pope Siricius (A.D. 385), then by Innocent I. (402), Leo I. (440), Gregory I. (590), and by provincial synods of Carthage (390 and 401), Toledo (400), Orleans (538), Orange (441), Arles (443 or 452), Agdé (506), Gerunda (517). The great teachers of the Nicene and post-Nicene age—Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom—by their extravagant laudations of the superior sanctity of virginity, gave this legislation the weight of their authority. St. Jerome . . . took the lead in this ascetic crusade against marriage, and held up to the clergy as the ideal aim of the saint, 'to cut down the wood of marriage by the axe of virginity.' He was willing to praise marriage, but only as the nursery of virgins.

"Thus, celibacy was gradually enforced in the West under the combined influence of the sacerdotal and hierarchical interests, to the advantage of the hierarchy, but to the injury of morality."

4. I pass to a fourth point—the *Change in the Theory of Church Worship*.

"In the Nicene age,¹ the Church laid aside her lowly servant form, and put on a splendid imperial garb. She exchanged the primitive simplicity of her cultus for a richly-coloured multiplicity. . . . In place of the pagan temple and altar arose everywhere the stately church, and the chapel in honour of Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of martyrs and saints. The kindred ideas of priesthood, sacrifice, and altar became more fully developed and more firmly fixed as the outward hierarchy grew. The Mass, or daily repetition of the atoning sacrifice of Christ by the hand of the priest, became the mysterious centre of the whole system of worship. The number of Church festivals was increased; processions and pilgrimages, and a multitude of significant and superstitious customs and ceremonies were introduced. The public worship of God assumed, if we may so speak, a dramatic theatrical character, which made it attractive and imposing to the mass of the people, who were as yet incapable, for the most part, of

¹ Schaff's "History of the Christian Church."

worshipping God in spirit and in truth. It was addressed rather to the eye and to the ear, to feeling and imagination than to intelligence and will. In short, we already find in the Nicene age almost all the essential features of the sacerdotal, mysterious, ceremonial, symbolical cultus of the Greek and Roman Churches of the present day.

“Not a few pagan habits and ceremonies, concealed under new names, crept into the Church. . . . In the Christian martyr worship and saint worship, which now spread with giant strides over the whole Christian world, we cannot possibly mistake the succession of the pagan worship of gods and heroes with its noisy popular festivities. Augustine puts into the mouth of a heathen the question: ‘Wherefore must we forsake gods which the Christians themselves worship with us?’ He deplores the frequent revels and amusements at the tombs of the martyrs, though he thinks that allowance should be made for these weaknesses out of regard to the ancient custom. Leo the Great speaks of Christians in Rome who first worshipped the rising sun, doing homage to the pagan Apollo, before repairing to the basilica of St. Peter. Theodoret defends the Christian practices at the graves of the martyrs by pointing to the pagan libations, propitiations, gods and demigods. Since Hercules, Æsculapius, Bacchus, the Dioscuri, and many other objects of pagan worship were mere deified men, the Christians, he thinks, cannot be blamed for honouring these martyrs—not making them gods, but venerating them as witnesses and servants of the only true God. Chrysostom mourns over the theatrical customs, such as loud clapping in applause, which the Christians at Antioch and Constantinople brought with them into the Church. In the Christmas festival, which from the fourth century spread from Rome over the entire Church, the holy commemoration of the birth of the Redeemer is associated . . . with the wanton merriments of the pagan Saturnalia.”

5. Next, *the Change from Respect to the Blessed Virgin Mary to Mariolatry.*

“She modestly stands back throughout from the Gospel history,¹ and in the Acts and the Epistles she is barely mentioned once, and then simply as the ‘mother of Jesus.’ Even her birth and her death are unknown. Her glory fades in holy humility before the higher glory of her Son. In truth, there are plain indications that the Lord, with prophetic reference to the future apotheosis of His mother according to the flesh, from the first gave warning against it. At the wedding in Cana He administered to her, though leniently and respectfully,

¹ Schaff's "History of the Christian Church."

a rebuke for premature zeal, mingled perhaps with maternal vanity. On a subsequent occasion he puts her on a level with other female disciples, and made the carnal consanguinity subordinate to the spiritual kinship of the doing of the will of God. The well-meant, and in itself quite innocent, benediction of an unknown woman upon His mother He did not indeed censure; but He corrected it with a benediction upon all who hear the Word of God and keep it, and thus forestalled the deification of Mary by confining the ascription within the bounds of moderation.

"In striking contrast with this healthful and sober representation of Mary in the canonical Gospels are the numerous apocryphal Gospels of the third and fourth centuries, which decorated the life of Mary with fantastic fables and wonders of every kind, and thus furnished a pseudo-historical foundation for an unscriptural Mariology and Mariolatry. The Catholic Church, it is true, condemned this apocryphal literature so early as the decrees of Gelasius; yet many of the fabulous elements of it—such as the names of the parents of Mary, Joachim (instead of Eli, Luke iii. 23) and Anna, the birth of Mary in a cave, her education in the temple, and her mock marriage with the aged Joseph—passed into the Catholic tradition.

"The development of the orthodox Catholic Mariology and Mariolatry originated as early as the second century in an allegorical interpretation of the history of the Fall, and in the assumption of an antithetic relation of Eve and Mary, according to which the mother of Christ occupies the same position in the history of redemption as the wife of Adam in the history of sin and death. This idea, so fruitful of many errors, is ingenious, but unscriptural, and an apocryphal substitute for the true Pauline doctrine of an antitypical parallel between the first and second Adam. It tends to substitute Mary for Christ. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian are the first who present Mary as a counterpart of Eve, as a 'mother of all living' in the higher spiritual sense, and teach that she became through her obedience the mediate or instrumental cause of the blessings of redemption to the human race, as Eve, by her disobedience, was the fountain of sin and death. . . .

"Augustine went a step farther. In an incidental remark against Pelagius, he agreed with him in excepting Mary 'propter honorem Domini' from actual (but not from original) sin. This exception he is willing to make from the universal sinfulness of the race, but no other. He taught the sinless birth and life of Mary, but not her immaculate conception. . . .

"Notwithstanding this exalted representation of Mary, there appear no clear traces of a proper worship of Mary, as distinct

from the worship of saints in general, until the Nestorian controversy of 430. This dispute formed an important turning-point, not only in Christology, but in Mariology also. The leading interest in it was, without doubt, the connection of the Virgin with the mystery of the incarnation. The perfect union of the Divine and human natures seemed to demand that Mary might be called in *some* sense the *mother of God*—*Θεοτόκος*, *Deipara*; for that which was born of her was not merely the man Jesus, but the God-man, Jesus Christ. The Church, however, did, of course, not intend by that to assert that she was the mother of the uncreated Divine essence—for this would be palpably absurd and blasphemous—nor that she herself was Divine, but only that she was the human point of entrance, or the mysterious channel for the Divine eternal Logos. . . . Thenceforth the *Θεοτόκος* was a test of orthodox Christianity, and the rejection of it amounted to the beginning and end of all heresy. The overthrow of Nestorianism was at the same time the victory of Mary-worship. . . . (The popular usage could not be confined by the subtle theological distinction.) The opponents of Nestorius, especially Proclus, his successor in Constantinople (*d.* 447), and Cyril of Alexandria (*d.* 444), could scarcely find predicates enough to express the transcendent glory of the mother of God. She was the crown of virginity, the indestructible temple of God, the dwelling-place of the Holy Trinity, the paradise of the Second Adam, the bridge from God to man, the loom of the incarnation, the sceptre of orthodoxy; through her the Trinity is glorified and adored, the devils and demons are put to flight, the nations converted, and the fallen creature raised to heaven. . . . From this Mariology follows Mariolatry. If Mary is in the *strict* sense of the word the mother of God, it seems to follow as a logical consequence that she herself is Divine, and therefore an object of Divine worship. This was not indeed the meaning and purpose of the ancient Church, as, in fact, it never asserted that Mary was the mother of the essential eternal divinity of the Logos. She was, and continues to be, a created being, a human mother, even according to the Roman and Greek doctrine; but according to the once-prevailing conception of her peculiar relation to deity, a certain degree of Divine homage to Mary, and some invocation of her powerful intercession with God, seemed unavoidable, and soon became a universal practice.

“The first instance of the formal *invocation* of Mary occurs in the prayers of Ephraim Syrus (*d.* 379), addressed to Mary and the saints, and attributed by the tradition of the Syrian Church, though perhaps in part incorrectly, to that author. The first more certain example appears in Gregory Nazianzen

(d. 389), who, in his eulogy on Cyprian, relates of Justina that she besought the Virgin Mary to protect her threatened virginity. . . . But, on the other hand, the numerous writings of Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, and Augustine furnish no example of an invocation of Mary. Epiphanius even condemned the worship of Mary, and calls the practice of making offerings to her by the Collyridian women blasphemous and dangerous to the soul. The entire silence of history respecting the worship of the Virgin down to the end of the fourth century proves clearly that it was foreign to the original spirit of Christianity, and belongs to the many innovations of the post-Nicene age.

“In the beginning of the fifth century, however, the worship of saints appears in full bloom, and then Mary, by reason of her singular relation to the Lord, was soon placed at the head, as the most blessed queen of the heavenly host.”

6. *The Worship of Martyrs and Saints.*

“In the first three centuries, the veneration of the martyrs in general restricted itself to the thankful remembrance of their virtues, and the celebration of the day of their death as the day of their heavenly birth. . . .

“But in the Nicene age it advanced to a formal invocation of the saints as our patrons (*patroni*) and intercessors (*intercessores, mediatores*) before the throne of grace, and degenerated into a form of refined polytheism and idolatry. The saints came into the place of the demigods (*Penates and Lares*), the patrons of the domestic hearth and of the country. As once temples and altars to the heroes, so now churches and chapels came to be built over the graves of the martyrs, and consecrated to their names (or, more precisely, to God through them). People laid in them, as they used to do in the Temple of Æsculapius, the sick, that they might be healed, and hung in them, as in the temples of the gods, sacred gifts of silver and gold. Their graves were, as Chrysostom says, more splendidly adorned and more frequently visited than the palaces of kings. Banquets were held there in their honour, which recall the heathen sacrificial feasts for the welfare of the masses. Their relics were preserved with scrupulous care, and believed to possess miraculous virtues. Earlier it was the custom to pray for the martyrs (as if they were not yet perfect), and to thank God for their fellowship and their pious example; now such intercessions for them were considered unbecoming, and their intercession was invoked for the living.”

7. *The Worship of Relics.*

“Pious fondness for relics, if it is confined within proper limits, is very natural and innocent, and appears even in the Puritans of New England, where the rock in Plymouth, the

landing-place of the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620, has the attraction of a place of pilgrimage. . . . But towards the middle of the fourth century the veneration of relics, simultaneously with the worship of the saints, assumed a decidedly superstitious and idolatrous character. The earthly remains of the martyrs were discovered commonly by visions and revelations, often not till centuries after their death, then borne in solemn processions to the churches and chapels erected to their memory, and deposited under the altar; and this event was annually celebrated by a festival. . . . The relics were from time to time displayed to the veneration of the believing multitude, carried about in processions, preserved in gold and silver boxes, worn on the neck as amulets against disease and danger of every kind, and considered as possessing miraculous virtue, or, more strictly, as instruments through which the saints in heaven, in virtue of their connection with Christ, wrought miracles of healing, and even of raising the dead. Their number soon reached the incredible, even from one and the same original: there were, for example, countless splinters of the pretended cross of Christ from Jerusalem, while the cross itself is said to have remained, by a continued miracle, whole and undiminished! Veneration of the cross and crucifix knew no bounds, but can by no means be taken as a true measure of the worship of the crucified; on the contrary, with the great mass the outward form came into the place of the spiritual intent, and the wooden and silver Christ was very often a poor substitute for the living Christ in the heart."

Such were some of the chief developments in the third and fourth centuries.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.



ART. VI.—THE MOSAICS AT ST. PAUL'S.

WE have it on record, by Sir Christopher Wren's son, in his "Parentalia," or notes on his father's life and works, that when the structure of his great Cathedral of St. Paul was finished, he sent for four artists from Italy to continue the completion of the design, by filling with mosaics the interior of the dome and the spaces which he had left in the roofs of choir, nave, transepts and aisles, consisting of brick vaulting, covered temporarily with plaster. But the Building Committee, which had been at work from first to last for more than thirty-seven years, and some of the older members of which had of course passed away, were tired of collecting money, and were not at all sure about the idea of mosaics.