

Chapter XLVII: Ecclesiastical Discord.--Part I.

Theological History Of The Doctrine Of The Incarnation.--The Human And Divine Nature Of Christ.--Enmity Of The Patriarchs Of Alexandria And Constantinople.--St. Cyril And Nestorius.--Third General Council Of Ephesus.--Heresy Of Eutyches.--Fourth General Council Of Chalcedon.--Civil And Ecclesiastical Discord.--Intolerance Of Justinian.--The Three Chapters.--The Monothelite Controversy.--State Of The Oriental Sects:--I. The Nestorians.--II. The Jacobites.--III. The Maronites.--IV. The Armenians.--V. The Copts And Abyssinians.

After the extinction of paganism, the Christians in peace and piety might have enjoyed their solitary triumph. But the principle of discord was alive in their bosom, and they were more solicitous to explore the nature, than to practice the laws, of their founder. I have already observed, that the disputes of the Trinity were succeeded by those of the Incarnation; alike scandalous to the church, alike pernicious to the state, still more minute in their origin, still more durable in their effects.

It is my design to comprise in the present chapter a religious war of two hundred and fifty years, to represent the ecclesiastical and political schism of the Oriental sects, and to introduce their clamorous or sanguinary contests, by a modest inquiry into the doctrines of the

primitive church. [1]

[Footnote 1: By what means shall I authenticate this previous inquiry, which I have studied to circumscribe and compress?--If I persist in supporting each fact or reflection by its proper and special evidence, every line would demand a string of testimonies, and every note would swell to a critical dissertation. But the numberless passages of antiquity which I have seen with my own eyes, are compiled, digested and illustrated by Petavius and Le Clerc, by Beausobre and Mosheim. I shall be content to fortify my narrative by the names and characters of these respectable guides; and in the contemplation of a minute or remote object, I am not ashamed to borrow the aid of the strongest glasses: 1. The Dogmata Theologica of Petavius are a work of incredible labor and compass; the volumes which relate solely to the Incarnation (two folios, vth and vith, of 837 pages) are divided into xvi. books--the first of history, the remainder of controversy and doctrine. The Jesuit's learning is copious and correct; his Latinity is pure, his method clear, his argument profound and well connected; but he is the slave of the fathers, the scourge of heretics, and the enemy of truth and candor, as often as they are inimical to the Catholic cause. 2. The Arminian Le Clerc, who has composed in a quarto volume (Amsterdam, 1716) the ecclesiastical history of the two first centuries, was free both in his temper and situation; his sense is clear, but his thoughts are narrow; he reduces the reason or folly of ages to the standard of his private judgment, and his impartiality is sometimes quickened, and sometimes tainted by his opposition to the fathers. See the heretics (Cerinthians,

lxxx. Ebionites, ciii. Carpocratians, cxx. Valentiniins, cxxi. Basilidians, cxxiii. Marcionites, cxli., &c.) under their proper dates.

3. The *Histoire Critique du Manicheisme* (Amsterdam, 1734, 1739, in two vols. in 4to., with a posthumous dissertation sur les Nazarenes, Lausanne, 1745) of M. de Beausobre is a treasure of ancient philosophy and theology. The learned historian spins with incomparable art the systematic thread of opinion, and transforms himself by turns into the person of a saint, a sage, or a heretic. Yet his refinement is sometimes excessive; he betrays an amiable partiality in favor of the weaker side, and, while he guards against calumny, he does not allow sufficient scope for superstition and fanaticism. A copious table of contents will direct the reader to any point that he wishes to examine.

4. Less profound than Petavius, less independent than Le Clerc, less ingenious than Beausobre, the historian Mosheim is full, rational, correct, and moderate. In his learned work, *De Rebus Christianis ante Constantinum* (Helmstadt 1753, in 4to.,) see the Nazarenes and Ebionites, p. 172--179, 328--332. The Gnostics in general, p. 179, &c. Cerinthus, p. 196--202. Basilides, p. 352--361. Carpocrates, p. 363--367. Valentinus, p. 371--389 Marcion, p. 404--410. The Manichaeans, p. 829-837, &c.]

I. A laudable regard for the honor of the first proselyte has countenanced the belief, the hope, the wish, that the Ebionites, or at least the Nazarenes, were distinguished only by their obstinate perseverance in the practice of the Mosaic rites.

Their churches have disappeared, their books are obliterated: their

obscure freedom might allow a latitude of faith, and the softness of their infant creed would be variously moulded by the zeal or prudence of three hundred years. Yet the most charitable criticism must refuse these sectaries any knowledge of the pure and proper divinity of Christ. Educated in the school of Jewish prophecy and prejudice, they had never been taught to elevate their hopes above a human and temporal Messiah. [2] If they had courage to hail their king when he appeared in a plebeian garb, their grosser apprehensions were incapable of discerning their God, who had studiously disguised his celestial character under the name and person of a mortal. [3] The familiar companions of Jesus of Nazareth conversed with their friend and countryman, who, in all the actions of rational and animal life, appeared of the same species with themselves. His progress from infancy to youth and manhood was marked by a regular increase in stature and wisdom; and after a painful agony of mind and body, he expired on the cross. He lived and died for the service of mankind: but the life and death of Socrates had likewise been devoted to the cause of religion and justice; and although the stoic or the hero may disdain the humble virtues of Jesus, the tears which he shed over his friend and country may be esteemed the purest evidence of his humanity. The miracles of the gospel could not astonish a people who held with intrepid faith the more splendid prodigies of the Mosaic law. The prophets of ancient days had cured diseases, raised the dead, divided the sea, stopped the sun, and ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot. And the metaphorical style of the Hebrews might ascribe to a saint and martyr the adoptive title of Son of God.

[Footnote 2: Jew Tryphon, (Justin. Dialog. p. 207) in the name of his countrymen, and the modern Jews, the few who divert their thoughts from money to religion, still hold the same language, and allege the literal sense of the prophets. \* Note: See on this passage Bp. Kaye, Justin Martyr, p. 25.--M. Note: Most of the modern writers, who have closely examined this subject, and who will not be suspected of any theological bias, Rosenmuller on Isaiah ix. 5, and on Psalm xlv. 7, and Bertholdt, *Christologia Judaeorum*, c. xx., rightly ascribe much higher notions of the Messiah to the Jews. In fact, the dispute seems to rest on the notion that there was a definite and authorized notion of the Messiah, among the Jews, whereas it was probably so vague, as to admit every shade of difference, from the vulgar expectation of a mere temporal king, to the philosophic notion of an emanation from the Deity.--M.]

[Footnote 3: Chrysostom (Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, tom. v. c. 9, p. 183) and Athanasius (Petav. *Dogmat. Theolog.* tom. v. l. i. c. 2, p. 3) are obliged to confess that the Divinity of Christ is rarely mentioned by himself or his apostles.]

Yet in the insufficient creed of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, a distinction is faintly noticed between the heretics, who confounded the generation of Christ in the common order of nature, and the less guilty schismatics, who revered the virginity of his mother, and excluded the aid of an earthly father. The incredulity of the former was countenanced by the visible circumstances of his birth, the legal marriage of the reputed parents, Joseph and Mary, and his lineal claim to the kingdom of

David and the inheritance of Judah. But the secret and authentic history has been recorded in several copies of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, [4] which these sectaries long preserved in the original Hebrew, [5] as the sole evidence of their faith. The natural suspicions of the husband, conscious of his own chastity, were dispelled by the assurance (in a dream) that his wife was pregnant of the Holy Ghost: and as this distant and domestic prodigy could not fall under the personal observation of the historian, he must have listened to the same voice which dictated to Isaiah the future conception of a virgin. The son of a virgin, generated by the ineffable operation of the Holy Spirit, was a creature without example or resemblance, superior in every attribute of mind and body to the children of Adam. Since the introduction of the Greek or Chaldean philosophy, [6] the Jews [7] were persuaded of the preexistence, transmigration, and immortality of souls; and providence was justified by a supposition, that they were confined in their earthly prisons to expiate the stains which they had contracted in a former state. [8] But the degrees of purity and corruption are almost immeasurable. It might be fairly presumed, that the most sublime and virtuous of human spirits was infused into the offspring of Mary and the Holy Ghost; [9] that his abasement was the result of his voluntary choice; and that the object of his mission was, to purify, not his own, but the sins of the world. On his return to his native skies, he received the immense reward of his obedience; the everlasting kingdom of the Messiah, which had been darkly foretold by the prophets, under the carnal images of peace, of conquest, and of dominion. Omnipotence could enlarge the human faculties of Christ to the extend of is celestial

office. In the language of antiquity, the title of God has not been severely confined to the first parent, and his incomparable minister, his only-begotten son, might claim, without presumption, the religious, though secondary, worship of a subject of a subject world.

[Footnote 4: The two first chapters of St. Matthew did not exist in the Ebionite copies, (Epiphan. Haeres. xxx. 13;) and the miraculous conception is one of the last articles which Dr. Priestley has curtailed from his scanty creed. \* Note: The distinct allusion to the facts related in the two first chapters of the Gospel, in a work evidently written about the end of the reign of Nero, the *Ascensio Isaiae*, edited by Archbishop Lawrence, seems convincing evidence that they are integral parts of the authentic Christian history.--M.]

[Footnote 5: It is probable enough that the first of the Gospels for the use of the Jewish converts was composed in the Hebrew or Syriac idiom: the fact is attested by a chain of fathers--Papias, Irenaeus, Origen, Jerom, &c. It is devoutly believed by the Catholics, and admitted by Casaubon, Grotius, and Isaac Vossius, among the Protestant critics. But this Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew is most unaccountably lost; and we may accuse the diligence or fidelity of the primitive churches, who have preferred the unauthorized version of some nameless Greek. Erasmus and his followers, who respect our Greek text as the original Gospel, deprive themselves of the evidence which declares it to be the work of an apostle. See Simon, *Hist. Critique*, &c., tom. iii. c. 5--9, p. 47--101, and the *Prolegomena* of Mill and Wetstein to the New Testament.

\* Note: Surely the extinction of the Judaeo-Christian community related from Mosheim by Gibbon himself (c. xv.) accounts both simply and naturally for the loss of a composition, which had become of no use--nor does it follow that the Greek Gospel of St. Matthew is unauthorized.--M.]

[Footnote 6: The metaphysics of the soul are disengaged by Cicero (Tusculan. 1. i.) and Maximus of Tyre (Dissertat. xvi.) from the intricacies of dialogue, which sometimes amuse, and often perplex, the readers of the Phaedrus, the Phaedon, and the Laws of Plato.]

[Footnote 7: The disciples of Jesus were persuaded that a man might have sinned before he was born, (John, ix. 2,) and the Pharisees held the transmigration of virtuous souls, (Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. ii. c. 7;) and a modern Rabbi is modestly assured, that Hermes, Pythagoras, Plato, &c., derived their metaphysics from his illustrious countrymen.]

[Footnote 8: Four different opinions have been entertained concerning the origin of human souls: 1. That they are eternal and divine. 2. That they were created in a separate state of existence, before their union with the body. 3. That they have been propagated from the original stock of Adam, who contained in himself the mental as well as the corporeal seed of his posterity. 4. That each soul is occasionally created and embodied in the moment of conception.--The last of these sentiments appears to have prevailed among the moderns; and our spiritual history is grown less sublime, without becoming more intelligible.]



[Footnote 9: It was one of the fifteen heresies imputed to Origen, and denied by his apologist, (Photius, Bibliothec. cod. cxvii. p. 296.) Some of the Rabbis attribute one and the same soul to the persons of Adam, David, and the Messiah.]

II. The seeds of the faith, which had slowly arisen in the rocky and ungrateful soil of Judea, were transplanted, in full maturity, to the happier climes of the Gentiles; and the strangers of Rome or Asia, who never beheld the manhood, were the more readily disposed to embrace the divinity, of Christ. The polytheist and the philosopher, the Greek and the Barbarian, were alike accustomed to conceive a long succession, an infinite chain of angels or daemons, or deities, or aeons, or emanations, issuing from the throne of light. Nor could it seem strange or incredible, that the first of these aeons, the Logos, or Word of God, of the same substance with the Father, should descend upon earth, to deliver the human race from vice and error, and to conduct them in the paths of life and immortality. But the prevailing doctrine of the eternity and inherent pravity of matter infected the primitive churches of the East. Many among the Gentile proselytes refused to believe that a celestial spirit, an undivided portion of the first essence, had been personally united with a mass of impure and contaminated flesh; and, in their zeal for the divinity, they piously abjured the humanity, of Christ. While his blood was still recent on Mount Calvary, [10] the Docetes, a numerous and learned sect of Asiatics, invented the phantastic system, which was afterwards propagated by the Marcionites,

the Manichaeans, and the various names of the Gnostic heresy. [11] They denied the truth and authenticity of the Gospels, as far as they relate the conception of Mary, the birth of Christ, and the thirty years that preceded the exercise of his ministry. He first appeared on the banks of the Jordan in the form of perfect manhood; but it was a form only, and not a substance; a human figure created by the hand of Omnipotence to imitate the faculties and actions of a man, and to impose a perpetual illusion on the senses of his friends and enemies. Articulate sounds vibrated on the ears of the disciples; but the image which was impressed on their optic nerve eluded the more stubborn evidence of the touch; and they enjoyed the spiritual, not the corporeal, presence of the Son of God. The rage of the Jews was idly wasted against an impassive phantom; and the mystic scenes of the passion and death, the resurrection and ascension, of Christ were represented on the theatre of Jerusalem for the benefit of mankind. If it were urged, that such ideal mimicry, such incessant deception, was unworthy of the God of truth, the Docetes agreed with too many of their orthodox brethren in the justification of pious falsehood. In the system of the Gnostics, the Jehovah of Israel, the Creator of this lower world, was a rebellious, or at least an ignorant, spirit. The Son of God descended upon earth to abolish his temple and his law; and, for the accomplishment of this salutary end, he dexterously transferred to his own person the hope and prediction of a temporal Messiah.

[Footnote 10: *Apostolis adhuc in seculo superstibus, apud Judaeam Christi sanguine recente, Phantasma domini corpus asserebatur. Hieronym,*

advers. Lucifer. c. 8. The epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, and even the Gospel according to St. John, are levelled against the growing error of the Docetes, who had obtained too much credit in the world, (1 John, iv. 1--5.)]

[Footnote 11: About the year 200 of the Christian aera, Irenaeus and Hippolytus efuted the thirty-two sects, which had multiplied to fourscore in the time of Epiphanius, (Phot. Biblioth. cod. cxx. cxxi. cxxii.) The five books of Irenaeus exist only in barbarous Latin; but the original might perhaps be found in some monastery of Greece.]

One of the most subtile disputants of the Manichaeian school has pressed the danger and indecency of supposing, that the God of the Christians, in the state of a human foetus, emerged at the end of nine months from a female womb. The pious horror of his antagonists provoked them to disclaim all sensual circumstances of conception and delivery; to maintain that the divinity passed through Mary like a sunbeam through a plate of glass; and to assert, that the seal of her virginity remained unbroken even at the moment when she became the mother of Christ. But the rashness of these concessions has encouraged a milder sentiment of those of the Docetes, who taught, not that Christ was a phantom, but that he was clothed with an impassible and incorruptible body. Such, indeed, in the more orthodox system, he has acquired since his resurrection, and such he must have always possessed, if it were capable of pervading, without resistance or injury, the density of intermediate matter. Devoid of its most essential properties, it might be exempt

from the attributes and infirmities of the flesh. A foetus that could increase from an invisible point to its full maturity; a child that could attain the stature of perfect manhood without deriving any nourishment from the ordinary sources, might continue to exist without repairing a daily waste by a daily supply of external matter. Jesus might share the repasts of his disciples without being subject to the calls of thirst or hunger; and his virgin purity was never sullied by the involuntary stains of sensual concupiscence. Of a body thus singularly constituted, a question would arise, by what means, and of what materials, it was originally framed; and our sounder theology is startled by an answer which was not peculiar to the Gnostics, that both the form and the substance proceeded from the divine essence. The idea of pure and absolute spirit is a refinement of modern philosophy: the incorporeal essence, ascribed by the ancients to human souls, celestial beings, and even the Deity himself, does not exclude the notion of extended space; and their imagination was satisfied with a subtile nature of air, or fire, or aether, incomparably more perfect than the grossness of the material world. If we define the place, we must describe the figure, of the Deity. Our experience, perhaps our vanity, represents the powers of reason and virtue under a human form. The Anthropomorphites, who swarmed among the monks of Egypt and the Catholics of Africa, could produce the express declaration of Scripture, that man was made after the image of his Creator. [12] The venerable Serapion, one of the saints of the Nitrian deserts, relinquished, with many a tear, his darling prejudice; and bewailed, like an infant, his unlucky conversion, which had stolen away his God, and left his mind

without any visible object of faith or devotion. [13]

[Footnote 12: The pilgrim Cassian, who visited Egypt in the beginning of the vth century, observes and laments the reign of anthropomorphism among the monks, who were not conscious that they embraced the system of Epicurus, (Cicero, de Nat. Deorum, i. 18, 34.) Ab universo propemodum genere monachorum, qui per totam provinciam Egyptum morabantur, pro simplicitatis errore susceptum est, ut e contrariis memoratum pontificem (Theophilus) velut haeresi gravissima depravatum, pars maxima seniorum ab universo fraternitatis corpore decerneret detestandum, (Cassian, Collation. x. 2.) As long as St. Augustin remained a Manichaeon, he was scandalized by the anthropomorphism of the vulgar Catholics.]

[Footnote 13: Ita est in oratione senex mente confusus, eo quod illam imaginem Deitatis, quam proponere sibi in oratione consueverat, aboleri de suo corde sentiret, ut in amarissimos fletus, crebrosque singultus repente prorumpens, in terram prostratus, cum ejulatu validissimo proclamaret; "Heu me miserum! tulerunt a me Deum meum, et quem nunc tenere non habeo, vel quem adorem, aut interpallam an nescio." Cassian, Collat. x. 2.]

III. Such were the fleeting shadows of the Docetes. A more substantial, though less simple, hypothesis, was contrived by Cerinthus of Asia, [14] who dared to oppose the last of the apostles. Placed on the confines of the Jewish and Gentile world, he labored to reconcile the Gnostic with the Ebionite, by confessing in the same Messiah the supernatural union

of a man and a God; and this mystic doctrine was adopted with many fanciful improvements by Carpocrates, Basilides, and Valentine, [15] the heretics of the Egyptian school. In their eyes, Jesus of Nazareth was a mere mortal, the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary: but he was the best and wisest of the human race, selected as the worthy instrument to restore upon earth the worship of the true and supreme Deity. When he was baptized in the Jordan, the Christ, the first of the aeons, the Son of God himself, descended on Jesus in the form of a dove, to inhabit his mind, and direct his actions during the allotted period of his ministry. When the Messiah was delivered into the hands of the Jews, the Christ, an immortal and impassible being, forsook his earthly tabernacle, flew back to the pleroma or world of spirits, and left the solitary Jesus to suffer, to complain, and to expire. But the justice and generosity of such a desertion are strongly questionable; and the fate of an innocent martyr, at first impelled, and at length abandoned, by his divine companion, might provoke the pity and indignation of the profane. Their murmurs were variously silenced by the sectaries who espoused and modified the double system of Cerinthus. It was alleged, that when Jesus was nailed to the cross, he was endowed with a miraculous apathy of mind and body, which rendered him insensible of his apparent sufferings. It was affirmed, that these momentary, though real, pangs would be abundantly repaid by the temporal reign of a thousand years reserved for the Messiah in his kingdom of the new Jerusalem. It was insinuated, that if he suffered, he deserved to suffer; that human nature is never absolutely perfect; and that the cross and passion might serve to expiate the venial transgressions of the son of Joseph, before his

mysterious union with the Son of God. [16]

[Footnote 14: St. John and Cerinthus (A.D. 80. Cleric. Hist. Eccles. p. 493) accidentally met in the public bath of Ephesus; but the apostle fled from the heretic, lest the building should tumble on their heads. This foolish story, reprobated by Dr. Middleton, (Miscellaneous Works, vol. ii.,) is related, however, by Irenaeus, (iii. 3,) on the evidence of Polycarp, and was probably suited to the time and residence of Cerinthus. The obsolete, yet probably the true, reading of 1 John, iv. 3 alludes to the double nature of that primitive heretic. \* Note: Griesbach asserts that all the Greek Mss., all the translators, and all the Greek fathers, support the common reading.--Nov. Test. in loc.--M]

[Footnote 15: The Valentinians embraced a complex, and almost incoherent, system. 1. Both Christ and Jesus were aeons, though of different degrees; the one acting as the rational soul, the other as the divine spirit of the Savior. 2. At the time of the passion, they both retired, and left only a sensitive soul and a human body. 3. Even that body was aethereal, and perhaps apparent.--Such are the laborious conclusions of Mosheim. But I much doubt whether the Latin translator understood Irenaeus, and whether Irenaeus and the Valetinians understood themselves.]

[Footnote 16: The heretics abused the passionate exclamation of "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Rousseau, who has drawn an eloquent, but indecent, parallel between Christ and Socrates, forgets that not

a word of impatience or despair escaped from the mouth of the dying philosopher. In the Messiah, such sentiments could be only apparent; and such ill-sounding words were properly explained as the application of a psalm and prophecy.]

IV. All those who believe the immateriality of the soul, a specious and noble tenet, must confess, from their present experience, the incomprehensible union of mind and matter. A similar union is not inconsistent with a much higher, or even with the highest, degree of mental faculties; and the incarnation of an aeon or archangel, the most perfect of created spirits, does not involve any positive contradiction or absurdity. In the age of religious freedom, which was determined by the council of Nice, the dignity of Christ was measured by private judgment according to the indefinite rule of Scripture, or reason, or tradition. But when his pure and proper divinity had been established on the ruins of Arianism, the faith of the Catholics trembled on the edge of a precipice where it was impossible to recede, dangerous to stand, dreadful to fall and the manifold inconveniences of their creed were aggravated by the sublime character of their theology. They hesitated to pronounce; that God himself, the second person of an equal and consubstantial trinity, was manifested in the flesh; [17] that a being who pervades the universe, had been confined in the womb of Mary; that his eternal duration had been marked by the days, and months, and years of human existence; that the Almighty had been scourged and crucified; that his impassible essence had felt pain and anguish; that his



omniscience was not exempt from ignorance; and that the source of life and immortality expired on Mount Calvary. These alarming consequences were affirmed with unblushing simplicity by Apollinaris, [18] bishop of Laodicea, and one of the luminaries of the church. The son of a learned grammarian, he was skilled in all the sciences of Greece; eloquence, erudition, and philosophy, conspicuous in the volumes of Apollinaris, were humbly devoted to the service of religion. The worthy friend of Athanasius, the worthy antagonist of Julian, he bravely wrestled with the Arians and Polytheists, and though he affected the rigor of geometrical demonstration, his commentaries revealed the literal and allegorical sense of the Scriptures. A mystery, which had long floated in the looseness of popular belief, was defined by his perverse diligence in a technical form; and he first proclaimed the memorable words, "One incarnate nature of Christ," which are still reechoed with hostile clamors in the churches of Asia, Egypt, and Aethiopia. He taught that the Godhead was united or mingled with the body of a man; and that the Logos, the eternal wisdom, supplied in the flesh the place and office of a human soul. Yet as the profound doctor had been terrified at his own rashness, Apollinaris was heard to mutter some faint accents of excuse and explanation. He acquiesced in the old distinction of the Greek philosophers between the rational and sensitive soul of man; that he might reserve the Logos for intellectual functions, and employ the subordinate human principle in the meaner actions of animal life.

With the moderate Docetes, he revered Mary as the spiritual, rather than as the carnal, mother of Christ, whose body either came from heaven,

impassible and incorruptible, or was absorbed, and as it were transformed, into the essence of the Deity. The system of Apollinaris was strenuously encountered by the Asiatic and Syrian divines whose schools are honored by the names of Basil, Gregory and Chrysostom, and tainted by those of Diodorus, Theodore, and Nestorius. But the person of the aged bishop of Laedicea, his character and dignity, remained inviolate; and his rivals, since we may not suspect them of the weakness of toleration, were astonished, perhaps, by the novelty of the argument, and diffident of the final sentence of the Catholic church. Her judgment at length inclined in their favor; the heresy of Apollinaris was condemned, and the separate congregations of his disciples were proscribed by the Imperial laws. But his principles were secretly entertained in the monasteries of Egypt, and his enemies felt the hatred of Theophilus and Cyril, the successive patriarchs of Alexandria.

[Footnote 17: This strong expression might be justified by the language of St. Paul, (1 Tim. iii. 16;) but we are deceived by our modern Bibles. The word which was altered to God at Constantinople in the beginning of the fifth century: the true reading, which is visible in the Latin and Syriac versions, still exists in the reasoning of the Greek, as well as of the Latin fathers; and this fraud, with that of the three witnesses of St. John, is admirably detected by Sir Isaac Newton. (See his two letters translated by M. de Missy, in the Journal Britannique, tom. xv. p. 148--190, 351--390.) I have weighed the arguments, and may yield to the authority of the first of philosophers, who was deeply skilled in critical and theological studies. Note: It should be Griesbach in loc. The weight of authority is so much against the common reading in

both these points, that they are no longer urged by prudent controversialists. Would Gibbon's deference for the first of philosophers have extended to all his theological conclusions?--M.]

[Footnote 18: For Apollinaris and his sect, see Socrates, l. ii. c. 46, l. iii. c. 16 Sazomen, l. v. c. 18, l. vi. c. 25, 27. Theodoret, l. v. 3, 10, 11. Tillemont, *Memoires Ecclesiastiques*, tom. vii. p. 602--638. Not. p. 789--794, in 4to. Venise, 1732. The contemporary saint always mentions the bishop of Laodicea as a friend and brother. The style of the more recent historians is harsh and hostile: yet Philostorgius compares him (l. viii. c. 11-15) to Basil and Gregory.]

V. The grovelling Ebionite, and the fantastic Docetes, were rejected and forgotten: the recent zeal against the errors of Apollinaris reduced the Catholics to a seeming agreement with the double nature of Cerinthus. But instead of a temporary and occasional alliance, they established, and we still embrace, the substantial, indissoluble, and everlasting union of a perfect God with a perfect man, of the second person of the trinity with a reasonable soul and human flesh. In the beginning of the fifth century, the unity of the two natures was the prevailing doctrine of the church. On all sides, it was confessed, that the mode of their coexistence could neither be represented by our ideas, nor expressed by our language. Yet a secret and incurable discord was cherished, between those who were most apprehensive of confounding, and those who were most fearful of separating, the divinity, and the humanity, of Christ. Impelled by religious frenzy, they fled with adverse haste from

the error which they mutually deemed most destructive of truth and salvation. On either hand they were anxious to guard, they were jealous to defend, the union and the distinction of the two natures, and to invent such forms of speech, such symbols of doctrine, as were least susceptible of doubt or ambiguity. The poverty of ideas and language tempted them to ransack art and nature for every possible comparison, and each comparison misled their fancy in the explanation of an incomparable mystery. In the polemic microscope, an atom is enlarged to a monster, and each party was skilful to exaggerate the absurd or impious conclusions that might be extorted from the principles of their adversaries. To escape from each other, they wandered through many a dark and devious thicket, till they were astonished by the horrid phantoms of Cerinthus and Apollinaris, who guarded the opposite issues of the theological labyrinth. As soon as they beheld the twilight of sense and heresy, they started, measured back their steps, and were again involved in the gloom of impenetrable orthodoxy. To purge themselves from the guilt or reproach of damnable error, they disavowed their consequences, explained their principles, excused their indiscretions, and unanimously pronounced the sounds of concord and faith. Yet a latent and almost invisible spark still lurked among the embers of controversy: by the breath of prejudice and passion, it was quickly kindled to a mighty flame, and the verbal disputes [19] of the Oriental sects have shaken the pillars of the church and state.

[Footnote 19: I appeal to the confession of two Oriental prelates, Gregory Abulpharagius the Jacobite primate of the East, and Elias the

Nestorian metropolitan of Damascus, (see Asseman, Bibliothec. Oriental. tom. ii. p. 291, tom. iii. p. 514, &c.) that the Melchites, Jacobites, Nestorians, &c., agree in the doctrine, and differ only in the expression. Our most learned and rational divines--Basnage, Le Clerc, Beausobre, La Croze, Mosheim, Jablonski--are inclined to favor this charitable judgment; but the zeal of Petavius is loud and angry, and the moderation of Dupin is conveyed in a whisper.]

The name of Cyril of Alexandria is famous in controversial story, and the title of saint is a mark that his opinions and his party have finally prevailed. In the house of his uncle, the archbishop Theophilus, he imbibed the orthodox lessons of zeal and dominion, and five years of his youth were profitably spent in the adjacent monasteries of Nitria. Under the tuition of the abbot Serapion, he applied himself to ecclesiastical studies, with such indefatigable ardor, that in the course of one sleepless night, he has perused the four Gospels, the Catholic Epistles, and the Epistle to the Romans. Origen he detested; but the writings of Clemens and Dionysius, of Athanasius and Basil, were continually in his hands: by the theory and practice of dispute, his faith was confirmed and his wit was sharpened; he extended round his cell the cobwebs of scholastic theology, and meditated the works of allegory and metaphysics, whose remains, in seven verbose folios, now peaceably slumber by the side of their rivals. [20] Cyril prayed and fasted in the desert, but his thoughts (it is the reproach of a friend) [21] were still fixed on the world; and the call of Theophilus, who summoned him to the tumult of cities and synods, was too readily obeyed

by the aspiring hermit. With the approbation of his uncle, he assumed the office, and acquired the fame, of a popular preacher. His comely person adorned the pulpit; the harmony of his voice resounded in the cathedral; his friends were stationed to lead or second the applause of the congregation; [22] and the hasty notes of the scribes preserved his discourses, which in their effect, though not in their composition, might be compared with those of the Athenian orators. The death of Theophilus expanded and realized the hopes of his nephew. The clergy of Alexandria was divided; the soldiers and their general supported the claims of the archdeacon; but a resistless multitude, with voices and with hands, asserted the cause of their favorite; and after a period of thirty-nine years, Cyril was seated on the throne of Athanasius. [23]

[Footnote 20: La Croze (*Hist. du Christianisme des Indes*, tom. i. p. 24) avows his contempt for the genius and writings of Cyril. *De tous les ouvrages des anciens, il y en a peu qu'on lise avec moins d'utilite*: and Dupin, (*Bibliothèque Ecclesiastique*, tom. iv. p. 42--52,) in words of respect, teaches us to despise them.]

[Footnote 21: Of Isidore of Pelusium, (l. i. epist. 25, p. 8.) As the letter is not of the most creditable sort, Tillemont, less sincere than the Bollandists, affects a doubt whether this Cyril is the nephew of Theophilus, (*Mem. Eccles.* tom. xiv. p. 268.)]

[Footnote 22: A grammarian is named by Socrates (l. vii. c. 13).]

[Footnote 23: See the youth and promotion of Cyril, in Socrates, (l. vii. c. 7) and Renaudot, (Hist. Patriarchs. Alexandrin. p. 106, 108.)

The Abbe Renaudot drew his materials from the Arabic history of Severus, bishop of Hermopolis Magma, or Ashmunein, in the xth century, who can never be trusted, unless our assent is extorted by the internal evidence of facts.]