

**INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH ON THE SOCIETY OF THE  
MIDDLE AGES**

By

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The Christian religion had its birth in a time in which the ethical system, on which the Roman dominion was built up, was decaying and had no more control on men's minds. "The old religions were dead, and the principles upon which human society had been constructed were dead also." <sup>1</sup> The action of the new religion was from the very beginning unusual. It evoked, "to a degree before unexampled in the world, an enthusiastic devotion to its corporate welfare, analogous to that which the patriot bears to his country." <sup>2</sup> It set to build up a new order on the ruins of the old institutions. Under persecution it exhibited a phase altogether new in the world: that of the deep and pure affection which bound the believers together, an affection before which barriers of class, nationality, and race went down.

We must not fail to notice that the new force was in no way the product of reason; nay more, the intellectual classes were either hostile, or contemptuous to it. "That the greatest religious change in the history of mankind should have taken place under the eyes of a brilliant galaxy of philosophers and historians who were profoundly conscious of the decomposition around them; that all these writers should have utterly failed to predict the issue of the movement they were observing, and that during the space of three centuries, they should have treated as simply

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(1) Froude. (2) Lecky.

contemptible, an agency which all men must now admit to have been, for good or for evil, the most powerful moral lever that has ever been applied to the affairs of men, are facts well worthy of meditation in every period of religious transition."

From the very outset the Christian religion possessed characteristics which rendered it an evolutionary force of the first magnitude, and made it the actual vital centre of the progress of organic development which is unfolding itself in the new civilisation. The first one is "the extraordinary strength of the ultra rational sanction it provided," and the second is the "nature of the ethical system associated with it."

When the lawyer asked Christ about the great commandment in the law he answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind----and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." <sup>1</sup> What is worthy of notice is the exaltation of man's obligations to love his neighbor, and the fact that it is placed on the same level with his obligations to love the Creator.

Again, with reference to the last judgement, Christ taught that the performance or non-performance of social duties separates the doomed from the blessed: in as much as they have ministered unto the needy and helped those in trouble. The Gospel, which is Love, is divided into two parts, Theology and Sociology. Its ethical system centres in the altruistic idea. The affection that the members bear to each other, the spirit of tolerance for weakness and inequality, the tendency to break down barriers of every kind, and the feeling of actual brotherhood, are the chief features of the early Christian societies. This is what led Lecky

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(1) Matt. XXII.

to say that the Christian religion is a proclamation of the universal brotherhood of man.

It was this same altruistic ideal that filled the lower classes of the Roman population with distrust and hatred to the new religion. They recognised in it a force fundamentally antagonistic to the force which held society together, and accused the Christians of 'undermining the religious constitution of the empire.' They regarded them as a public danger, and treated them accordingly. Here we notice that it was this same ideal, which differentiated Christianity from all other faiths, and was a powerful cause of its spread and influence, that was regarded as a danger to the universal social order of the ancient world, and caused the new religion to receive a harsh treatment at the hands of the Roman state.

The most outstanding features of our times are the development of the altruistic ideal shown in the growth of benevolent institutions, the appeals made to the world in case of injury, outrage, or wrong, and the extinction of slavery. Benjamin Kidd goes further and says that the "causes of the Revolution attributed to the decay, misrule, and corruption of the ruling class should be regarded by history as incidental. Its calmer verdict must be that it was in the hearts of these classes and not in the streets that the cause of the people was won. The great body of humanitarian feelings which had been slowly accumulating so long had done its work, it had snapped the foundations of the old system."

The progress of the movement by which the working classes have obtained a share of political power, and through which they are laying the foundations of a more equitable state, has been attributed to the spread of education, the growth of intelligence, the influence of the press, the progress of industrialism, and the economic tendencies in general.

But its roots are the humanitarian feeling and softening of character that have progressed among the power holding-class<sup>1</sup>.

These are the results that we have arrived at in our modern civilisation. Their development has been slow throughout all the Middle Ages, and did not begin to be felt till after the Reformation, when the shackles that had restricted the mind within narrow bounds assigned to it by the Church, were rent in sunder. As a matter of fact the history of the Middle Ages is but the history of the Church, which, becoming omnipotent, especially when that period was drawing to its close, demanded the complete subordination of reason to its dictates, and the extinction of every form of independent judgement, and claimed supremacy in all things temporal and spiritual. In discussing the influence of the Church on the society of the Middle Ages, a brief review of the organisation of the Church, its struggles for supremacy, and its influence on the surrounding nations is essential.

Previous to the barbarian invasion, the imperial nationality had begun to be supported by Christianity. The emperors had opposed this new and vigorous power as disloyal and revolutionary. They had in fact tried to root it out. But the unity of the empire and ease of communication through it had favored the spread of the new faith. Persecution scattered its seeds and made it a firm organisation. Constantine recognised Christianity as a lawful religion in 313 A.D.; and embraced it himself. Its adoption as the state religion gave it a great political force, and it repaid its patron with the submission and aid of its converts.

This alliance was inevitable. In the Old Testament, the unity of the nation stands based upon religion. Israel is the chosen people, owes

(1) Kidd.

Jehovah worship, and sets forth to conquer his enemies by His help. Religion was amongst the Romans a part of the political constitution, a matter of national feeling and not of personal devotion to a spiritual power. The intertwining of religion with politics in both cases had been harmonious. But such a perfect unity in the Roman Empire was not possible, for Christianity had already rulers of its own; and since the ecclesiastical organisation could not be identical with the civic, it necessarily became its counterpart. Thus the Church was called to the seat of power and was compelled to frame her government after the pattern of the secular administration, seeking the interposition of the sovereign where her own machinery was defective. Then a hierarchy of patriarchs, metropolitans and bishops sprang into existence. Though chiefly spiritual, their jurisdiction was recognised and enforced by the laws of the state. Their provinces and dioceses corresponded to the administrative divisions of the empire. The earthly head of the Church, never enjoying before but an honorary supremacy, became virtually the emperor himself, and the strength of the Church waxed greater.

In the barrenness of literature and the impotence of art, it was the Church that people sought after and adhered to; especially in the fifth century, when men, watching with despair the approach of the irresistible foe, flocked to the shrine of a religion which even this foe revered. "But" continues Bryce, "that which we are above all concerned to remark, that this Church system, demanding a more rigid uniformity in doctrine and organisation, making more and more vital the notion of a visible body of worshippers united by participation in the same sacrament, maintained and propagated afresh the feeling of a single Roman

people throughout the world. Christianity as well as civilization became conterminous with the Roman Empire. To be a Roman was to be a Christian, and this idea soon passed to be into the converse. To be a Christian was to be a Roman."

After the invasion <sup>of the barbarians</sup>, the provinces forgot their original unity. In the breaking up of the old society, noticeable from the sixth to the eighth century, ignorance held sway. Language and manners changed through the incoming of the Teutonic settlers. Men's thoughts and interests were narrowed. The Roman and Germanic organizations dissolved into chaos as the new order was shaping itself. During all these changes the sway and civilization of the old empire might have perished had it not been for two enduring witnesses Rome had left---her Church and her law.

"The barbarians had at first associated Christianity with the Romans from whom they learned it: the Romans had used it as their bulwark against oppression." As the empire and the kingdom<sup>s</sup> formed by the invaders began to dissolve the Church clung to her faith and discipline, "the common bond of all Christian men." That unity had Rome as its center. Able and zealous pontiffs extended her influence, chief amongst whom was Gregory the Great. Thus the Church retained her character and customs, and had a powerful claim over men's souls, a power stronger and more lasting than that which she had lost over their bodies. Only second to this influence was that of the permanence of the old law.

In 748, owing to his conflict with the emperor, and threatened by the Lombards, Pope Gregory III appealed to Charles Martel, the Frankish ruler, for help, offering him on behalf of the people the office of "consul and patrician." From this dates the connection of the old imperial seat with Germanic power. The Pope broke the ties that bound

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him to his legitimate sovereign and headed<sup>a</sup> political movement. Death overcame Charles before he could obey the call, but his son Pepin took his place and twice rescued Rome from Aistulf the Lombard. Aistulf was easily overcome; and Pepin was rewarded with the title of "Patrician" in 756 A.D. In 797 Irene was deposed for blotting out the eyes of her son, Constantine VI, and in 800 Pope Leo III crowned Charles the Great Pepin's son, as the "peace giving Emperor." With the crowning of Charles the union of the Romans and the Teutons was sealed and the civilisation of the South embraced the fresh energy of the North, and the Roman Empire was restored in the West by Charles. Otherwise it would never have been restored, for then two agents were struggling for mastery---the one was the anarchy caused by the ignorance of the invaders, the other, the yearning of the better minds for the unity of the Old Roman Empire and the devotion to the "Visible Catholic Church." The first force was, in secular affairs, the stronger; but the latter, stimulated by Charles, won by his coronation an enduring victory. Bryce records three theories that have been advocated by three parties regarding the coronation of Charles: the Swabian Emperors claimed the crown as the prize of conquest, and maintained that the citizens and bishops of Rome had no rights as against themselves; 2. the patriotic Romans declared that only by the voice of their senate and people could an emperor be lawfully created, he being their chief magistrate; 3, the Popes argued that as God's earthly vicars it was their right and must always continue to be their right. Of the three the last tended to prevail, although it did not claim any more than the other two to contain the whole truth.

In 802, in a great assembly held at Aachen, the Emperor revised the laws of his subjects and deduced the whole cycle of social and moral



duty from the obligation of obedience to the visible head of the Christian state.

The width of Charles' conquests, his connection with the Roman Church, his personal character and the vacancy of the throne of Constantinople, all these account for the restoration of the Empire by Charles. But we must seek deeper to find the causes of its revival under Otto. The Middle Ages can hardly be called political, feudalism being their only great secular institution. Yet the human mind formulated general conceptions regarding the relation of men towards one another. These had been partly inherited from "the imperial scheme of law and government that had preceded, and partly evolved from the principles of that metaphysical theology which was ripening into scholasticism. Now the two great ideas which expiring antiquity bequeathed to the ages that followed were those of a world-monarchy and a world-religion."

Before the Hellenization of the East, differences of race were held to be irremovable barriers. Consequently religion was regarded as a local and national matter, every tribe worshipping certain deities and regarding others as gentiles and foes. But this feeling of diversity was smitten on its political side by the <sup>unity</sup> commonness of language and law under the sway of Rome, and Christianity banished it from the soul, substituting for it the belief in one God, before whom all are equal. <sup>1</sup>  
(Acts XVII=26; Gal. III:28; Eph. 11:11; IV:3-6; Col. III:11 )

It is on religion that the inmost and deepest life of a nation rests. Because divinity was divided humanity had been divided likewise; the doctrine of God now enforced the unity of man, who had been

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(1) Bryce.

created in His image. The first lesson of Christianity was love, a love that was to join in one body those whom suspicion, prejudice, and pride of race had hitherto kept apart. There was thus ~~thus~~ formed by the new religion a community of the faithful, a Holy Empire designed to gather all men into its bosom." Thus the analogy of the two movements---the sway of the Caesars and Christianity---made them appear parts of one great world-movement towards unity, and made the name of Roman and Christian convertible.

Those who believed in the permanency of the Roman Empire came to believe in the eternity of the Church, which was founded by the living Son of God, and guided by the Holy Spirit, and in its unity with the Empire. Thus the language of the civil government became that of the sacred writings and of worship.

Of the two unities---the political and religious society---that which was entrusted to the keeping of the Church survived the storms of the fifth century. One of the reasons given by Bryce for its firmness is its striving to save the religious fellowship by strengthening the ecclesiastical organisation, and by drawing together every bond of outward union while countries and cities were being severed from each other by the eruption of strange tribes. Another reason was the "tendency to see everything in the concrete, to turn the parable into a fact, and the symbol into the essential ceremony, the tendency which interposed the Virgin Mother and the saints between the worshipper and the spiritual Deity, and could satisfy its devotional feelings only by visible images even of these, which expressed the strivings of the soul after purity by the search for the Holy Crail, which sent myriads of Crusaders to win the Sepulchre of Him whom they found it hard to serve in their own spirit

and approach by their own prayers. And therefore it was that the whole fabric of Mediaeval Christianity rested upon the idea of the Visible Church." And since nations were not yet organized, the Visible Church was regarded as the "Church Universal," and though the Christians were widely scattered, the "Church held together by one hope, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. IV:4-6)

The prop of the Visible Church was the priesthood with whom lingered the remnants of learning and thought in Europe. But what we are chiefly interested in now is that it was through them that the one universal, temporal state was preserved, for they were persuaded that its maintenance was <sup>for</sup> to their own welfare as well as <sup>for that of</sup> to Christianity. By their teaching especially those of Alcuin of York, the adviser of Charles, the two powers were confounded: bishops were princes, and kings "summoned ecclesiastical councils and appointed ecclesiastical officers."

Then the papacy set to unite into one the political and religious powers, for she argued that the two must run on parallel and similar lines. Thus Rome, in 476, ceased ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> be the political mistress of the world and became spiritually mistress of the Christians of the universe. The cause of this change is to be found with the clergy whose purpose was at the beginning to imitate and rival, not to supplant the temporal power. This explains the maintenance of the power of the East Roman Princes <sup>in the West</sup> till 800 A.D., and the transference of the crown to Charles by the Pope as the first Western ruler able to fulfil its duties.

After the coronation of Otto the Great, when the "Holy Roman Empire" struck its roots firmly into the ground, certain duties and rights were attached to the imperial office. "It is under the emblem of the soul and the body that the relation of the papal and imperial powers is pre-

sented to us throughout the Middle Ages. The Pope, as God's vicar in matters spiritual, is to lead men to eternal life; the emperor, as vicar in matters temporal, must so control them in their dealings with one another that they may be able to pursue undisturbed the spiritual life." The Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire were the same thing. As divine and eternal, its head was the Pope; as human and temporal, the Emperor. But as Christianity held its sway and the Church became worldly, the Pope declared himself the only representative of God, and intermediated between Him and the Emperor. Thus we see that the connection of the Empire with religion was the most important factor in the shaping of the Middle Ages.

By the middle of the eleventh century when the Dark Ages were well over, the state was saved from utter annihilation. The Church had outlived the outrages of the tenth century, but she had her hands full, for the baron, who stopped short short of nothing, was a power to be reckoned with. The Empire helped the Papacy towards reformation, but could not affect the Church organisation. As always had been the case in the Middle Ages, a new monastic movement brought about the needed reform in the Church.

In 910, a new monastery was founded by Duke William the Pious of Aquitaine at Cluny, in French Burgundy. A Burgundian noble, Berno by name, was appointed as its head. Absolute munity from all external ecclesiastical jurisdiction save that of the Papal See was secured for it. The monastic reformation was started by Odo, its second abbot (927-947). All monasteries established on the Cluniac line were a part of the great convent at Cluny. The abbot at Cluny, being their head, used to delegate to the different branches priors for local self-government,

who were responsible to him. The unity of purpose, doctrine and policy was procured by chapters that met at Cluny, to which delegates were sent from all the dependent communities. Under their organisation the Church was to be separated from the state and disciplined by the Pope who was to the Church what the abbot of Cluny was to his priories. No ecclesiastic had rights of his own that were not derived from the Chair of St. Peter.

Study and learning flourished under the influence of the reformed clergy, and became universal. Monasteries and cathedrals became the centres of ardent study of the different branches of philosophy and science. The influence of Cluny was felt everywhere throughout Europe, and carried everything before it.

The reformers won over the Emperor Henry IV to their cause, and the able monarch purified the papacy and put it in the hands of men of the new school. The Cluniacs, though favored by the Emperor, continued to follow their conviction that "lay interference with the spiritual power lay at the very root of the worst disorders of the time." The papacy absorbed the doctrines of Cluny, and it was a matter of no small importance that the greatest temporal power was on its side.

At Rome the new thoughts gained supremacy, and the man destined to "present the papal idea with all the authority of genius," had arisen. Gregory VI died in 1048, and Hildebrand, his chaplain, went to Cluny where he spent one year. "While the reformers were seeking the help of the emperors over the Alps, Hildebrand found a champion for his purpose in Duke Godfrey and his wife. During the period of Pope Nicholas II (1058-1061), Hildebrand won for the Church her freedom, and before long he aimed at domination." In his pontificate three events were settled which

strengthened the papacy, namely:- the settlement of the papal election, the establishment of a close alliance between the papacy and the Normans of South Italy, and the subjection of Lombardy to the papal authority.<sup>1</sup>

On the twenty ninth of June, 1073, Hildebrand sat in the Chair of St. Peter, assuming the name of Gregory VII. He was one of the ablest men of the Middle Ages. His power over men's minds led the fanatical Peter Damiani to call him "his holy satan." "Thy will," he said, "has ever been a command to me---evil but lawful. Would that I had always served God and St. Peter as faithfully as I have served thee." Being "convinced of the truth of the Clunian doctrines" he spent all his energy to realize them, until even Cluny was alarmed. His greatest ambition was to restore civilization and order by establishing the supremacy of the papacy over the Church, and the Church over the world. "Human pride," he wrote, "has created the power of kings, God's mercy has created the power of bishops. The pope is the master of emperors. He is rendered holy by the merits of his predecessor St. Peter. The Roman Church has never erred, and Holy Scripture proves that it never can err. To resist it is to resist God." Though he fully realized the stiffness of his task, he was never discouraged. "I would that you knew," he wrote to the abbot of Cluny, "the anguish that assails my soul. The Church of the East has gone astray from the Catholic faith. If I look to the west, the north, or the south, I find ~~that~~ few bishops whose appointments and whose lives are in accordance with the laws of the Church, or who govern God's people through love and not through worldly ambition. Among princes I know not one who sets the honor of God before his own, or justice before his gain.

(1) Tout.

If I did not hope that I could be of use to the Church, I would not remain at Rome a day."

The Cluniacs had long considered the Lay Investiture as one of the most glaring offensive designs against the spiritual power. After the synod held at Rome by Hildebrand in 1075, in which he prohibited simony and the marriage of the clergy, it was strictly forbidden. "If any one," declared the synod, "henceforth receive from the hands of any lay person <sup>a</sup> ~~or~~ bishopric or abbey, let him not be considered as abbot or bishop, and let the favor of St. Peter and the gate of the Church be forbidden to him. If an emperor, a king, a duke, a count or any other lay person presume to give investiture of any ecclesiastical dignity let him be excommunicated. This set on foot the Investiture Contest and the struggle of the papacy and the empire for the two next centuries. Before the declaration of the decree Henry IV was on friendly terms with the Pope. He confessed that he had not been fulfilling his duties towards the Church and promised to amend his behaviour in the future. But as the giving up of the investiture involved the changing of his system of government, he summoned a German council to Worms, in which he accused the Pope of incredible crimes. Henry himself wrote to the Pope: "Henry, king not by usurpation but by God's grace, to Hildebrand, henceforth no Pope but false monk--Christ has called us to our kingdom while he has never called thee to the priesthood.. condemned by our bishops and by ourselves, come down from the place that thou hast usurped. Let the See of St. Peter be held by another who will not seek to cover violence under the cloak of religion, and who will teach the wholesome doctrine of St. Peter. I, Henry, King by the Grace of God, with all of my bishops say unto thee---'come down, come down.'"

In Feb. 1076, Gregory held a great synod in the Vatican in which

Roland, a clerk from Parma, delivered the King's message to the Pope before the council. Henry was excommunicated and deposed. "Blessed Peter," declared Gregory, "thou and the mother of God and all the saints are witness that the Roman Church has called upon me to govern it in my own despite. As its representative I have received from God the power to bind and to loose in Heaven and Earth. For the honor and the security of thy Church, in the name of God Almighty, I prohibit Henry the King, son of Henry the Emperor, who has risen with unheard of pride against the Church from ruling Germany and Italy. I release all Christians from the oaths of fealty they may have taken to him, and I order that no one shall obey him."

On the twenty first of Jan. 1077, Henry, leaving his wife and followers at Reggio, climbed the snowy road to Canossa, Countess Mathilda's stronghold, where the Countess and Hugh of Cluny and many others were with the Pope. Gregory refused to receive him and demanded his unconditional submission. "If he truly be penitent," said he, "let him surrender his crown and insignia of royalty into our hands and confess himself unworthy of the name and honor of king." For three days Henry waited outside in the snow barefooted and in the garb of penitent. On the fourth he was admitted into the presence of the Pope and with the cry, "Holy father, spare me!" he threw himself at the Pope's feet.

On the twenty third of Sept. 1122, the final Concordat of Worms put an end to the Investiture Contest. It strove to give "Caesar what was Caesar's and God what was God's." And since that time the investiture question was never raised again.

The conflict between the Papacy and the Empire resulted in the supremacy of the former, because the Papacy became a force that was able



to repel the strongest amongst the potentates of Europe. The conflict took place in the era of the Crusades. As we have seen the Emperor was to head the Church militant in the religious wars, but the excommunication of Henry IV nipped his plans in the bud, and left the Pope to organize and direct the movement. Later on the Holy See, could turn the great order of Chivalry and the two orders of <sup>medicant</sup> friars, which originated in the religious feelings that evoked the Crusades, against those who resisted ecclesiastic <sup>al</sup> claims. Nay more, a century and a half later, the Pope preached a crusade against the Emperor himself.

Towards the end of his life, Innocent III held a general council in the basilica of St. John Lateran. Enthroned over more than 400 bishops with a vast gathering of heads of orders and secular dignitaries, the Pope declared the law to the world. "Two things we have specially to heart," wrote he in summoning the assembly, "the deliverance of the Holy Land and the reform of the Church Universal." Amongst other things the 70 <sup>canons drawn up</sup> strove to elevate the morals and the learning of the clergy, to check their worldliness and covetousness, and to restrain them from abusing the authority of the Church through excess of zeal or more corrupt motives. It invited bishops to set up free schools to teach poor scholars grammar and theology. It forbade trial by battle and trial by ordeal. It forbade superstitious practices and the worship of spurious or unauthorized relics. The whole series of canons sought to regulate and ameliorate the influence of the Church on society.<sup>1</sup>

The epithet "Holy" was added to the "Roman Empire" by Frederick I. His motives in employing it are not very clear. Some conjecture that it referred to Daniel's prophecy, or to the fact that the Empire was

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(1) Tout.

contemporary with Christianity. However, the sacredness of the person of the sovereign was common, and furthermore the revived Roman Empire was the "Visible Church" seen on its secular side, and the name "Holy Empire" was the counterpart of the "Holy Catholic Church." Some go further and say that Frederick used it to assert his divine institution and religious duties. But in 1250, the claims of the Roman Empire to rule the world expired with Frederick II, and the Papacy triumphed at last.

We should not fail to notice the influence of the Bible on the Empire or the Papacy in confirming their supremacy. The Empire drew its arguments from the accounts of the <sup>Old</sup> Testament in which the King stood in intimate relation to the national religion. The authority and eternity of Rome were established from the New Testament. Every instance that suited their purpose was cited, such as "the sanction which Christ had given to Roman dominion by pacifying the world through Augustus," "Christ's birth at the time of taxing," "His paying tribute to Caesar," "His saying to Pilate, 'thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above.'" The Prophecies and the allegorical interpretations of Scripture furnished them with <sup>a</sup> great many arguments. They believed that the fourth beast of Daniel's vision was the Roman Empire, and that it was symbolised by the iron legs and feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image. The Mediaeval writers had a single <sup>clear</sup> way of interpreting the Scripture. "No analogy was too faint, no allegory too fanciful to be drawn out of a single text. Melchizedek is both priest and king, therefore, the Pope has regal as well as ecclesiastical authority. The two swords of which Christ said, 'it is enough,' are the spiritual powers, and the grant of the spiritual to Peter involves the supremacy of the Papacy."

Two illustrations cited by Bryce in his "The Holy Roman Empire" to show the influence of the theory of the Mediaeval Empire on the Mediaeval art are the following: 1. The famous mosaic of the Lateran triclinium, constructed about 800 A.D. by Pope Leo III. It represents in the centre Christ surrounded by the apostles, whom He is sending forth to preach the Gospel. Below and to the right, Christ is depicted again sitting. On His right hand kneels Pope Sylvester, on His left the Emperor Constantine; to the one He gives the keys of heaven and hell, to the other a banner surmounted by a cross. On the left side we see the Apostle Peter seated, before him kneel Pope Leo III and Charles the Emperor. Peter, grasping the keys, gives to Leo the pallium of an archbishop, to Charles the banner of the Christian army.

The order and nature of the ideas symbolised are sufficiently clear. Firstly comes the revelation of the Gospel, and the divine commission to gather all men into its folds; secondly the institution of the two powers by which the Christian people is to be respectively taught and governed; and thirdly we are shown the permanent vicar of God, the Apostle who keeps the keys of heaven and hell reestablishing these same powers on a new and permanent basis.

The second is a fresco in the chapter house of the Dominican convent of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, usually known as the Capellone degli Spagnuoli, probably executed between A.D. 1340 and 1350. In it is represented the whole scheme of man's life here and hereafter---the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. In front are seated the Pope and Emperor: on their right and left in a descending row, minor spiritual and temporal officials. Behind them appears the Duomo of Florence as an

emblem of the Visible Church, while at their feet is a flock of sheep (the faithful) attacked by ravening wolves (heretics and schismatics) whom a pack of spotted dogs (the Dominicans, spotted because of their black-and-white raiment) combat and chase away. From this a path winds round and up a height to a great gate where the Apostle sits on guard to admit true believers. Above all is the Saviour enthroned amid saints and angels.

Here the Church militant is the perfect counterpart of the Church triumphant. Devotion to His person must on earth be rendered to those two lieutenants whom He has chosen to govern in His name.<sup>1</sup>

Turbulent as were the times of the struggle between the Papacy and the Empire, they were the period of the development of the most essential features of the Mediaeval civilization. They were "the age of Feudalism, of the Crusades, of Chivalry, of Scholasticism, and the early Universities, of Monasticism in its noblest types, of Mediaeval art in its highest aspects, and of National Monarchy in its earliest form." In such a brief exposition of our vast subject, one feels constrained to leave out many events, and discuss briefly the most outstanding features of the period, that exerted a most potent influence on the ~~subject~~ <sup>Society</sup>. The religious revivals that enriched the Middle Ages with what was fairest in the light of those times were the results of the triumph of Hildebrand and his successors. "From the Hildebrandine revival sprang the Crusades, and the combination of the military and religious ideals of the Latin World in the pursuit of a holy war for the recovery of Christ's sepulchre." Constantine had built churches on the traditional ~~scenes~~ scenes in Jerusalem, and he himself is said to have visited the Holy Land. During

(1) Bryce.

his time a pilgrim from Bordeaux journeyed by land to Jerusalem, and by the end of the fourth century this practice was immensely increased. However, it was not until the year 1000 that the spirit of piety seized upon all classes. Pilgrims from all the ranks of society flocked to Palestine. About 1092, Peter the Hermit of Amiens, took the pilgrim's staff. In Jerusalem his soul was so stirred by what he saw of the condition of the Christian natives and pilgrims that he bound himself to enlist the Pope's sympathy and the princes of Europe to the help of his oppressed brethren.

In Nov. 18, 1095, a council was held by Urban II at Clermont, in Auvergne. Its chief work was the proclamation of the First Crusade. This shows the nature of the papal power and "the universal monarchy of the Church" as it took place when the chief kings of Europe were in open enmity with the Pope. The success of the movement was due to the small chieftains and the enthusiasm of the common people, who were the real prop of the Church.

At the close of the council Urban himself preached to the assembled multitude rousing them to take the cross and hasten to serve the Church. It was declared that---"whoever shall have set out for Jerusalem not for the sake of honor or gain, but to free the Church of God, may reckon his journey as a penance." Their better feelings were touched, and at last as the Pope's voice died away, up rose the cry from the numerous host, "Deus Vult! Deus Vult!"

It is worthy of notice that the <sup>third</sup> ~~First~~ Crusade was due to the great kings of Europe, especially to Frederick Barbarossa. This unity of feeling was due to the chivalrous and martial ideals which were steadily taking hold of Europe. Pope Nicholas strove hard to organise a Crusade

after the fall of Acre, but to no avail as the power of the papacy had been so debased. The Pope's debased their spiritual office for the furtherance of their political aims, they lost the substance which they possessed, but the shadow of what they clutched at." As a matter of fact, Innocent III represents "the culmination of the papal power of the Middle Ages."

The Crusades and their results played an important role in the moulding of modern Europe. They were a chief factor in centralising authority in the hands of royal officers. Many of the petty potentates, who had kept Europe in a state of turmoil, in whose hands the kings had been mere puppets, were carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment to lay aside their petty feuds and jealousies, to take up the cross and embark upon a war of extermination with <sup>those</sup> ~~what~~ they called infidels. Their long absence from home left the hands of royal magnates free to consolidate their rule: their countries enjoyed a long period of rest during which the arts of peace flourished, and the middle classes were given an opportunity to establish their power on a solid basis. Hardships, disease, and battles wrought havoc in their ranks, and thinned down their number almost to the vanishing point. Debt reduced those who survived the ravages of the weather and the sword to penury. Those costly wars struck at the very root of the political institutions of the Middle Ages. The high pedestal upon which the flower of Chivalry was enthroned crumbled to dust. The Age of Knighthood received a mortal blow when the returning remnants of the once splendid and exalted order, finding their castles, either in a crumbling state, or in the hands of wealthy bourgeois, were forced by adverse circumstances to become highwaymen and brigands. Great was the fall of Knighthood. Feudalism had had its day and ceased

to be. There it stood a mere shadow of its former self, lean, haggard, and tottering to its grave. It required but a few decades to seal its doom.

"Probably few ages of the world's history have witnessed a greater amelioration in the condition of social life than took place in Western Europe during the period of the Crusades. The tenth and eleventh centuries were acquiescent under a regime of almost hopeless anarchy. The fourteenth was through the widespread existence of social discontent pregnant with promise for the future. Politically the Crusades were fatal to the power of the feudal nobility, but this loss of power was in the end to turn out to the good both of the order as a part and of society as a whole. The misdirected activity which found its vent in the waste bickerings of feudal despotism and anarchy was through the Crusades turned into a well ordered channel. On the one hand, those turbulent spirits, who made all progress at home impossible, were drawn away to a distant and harmless enterprise; on the other hand a high and noble ideal was substituted for the base and petty motives of personal aggrandisement. The lust of warfare was sated by the Crusades whilst at the same time it was purified by the inspiration of religious enthusiasm. This in itself would have contributed not a little to the general improvement of morals and manners. It was further supplimented by the growth of luxury and culture consequent on the commercial and intellectual expansion which resulted from the Crusades. These influences, combined with the growth of royal authority, transformed the feudal nobility from the curse of the West into a settled and orderly member of the body politique.

"Such a change was of the utmost importance to the inferior orders

of society and the consequent amelioration of manners could not but make its influence more and more widely felt as time went on. The people of the towns were the first to reap the benefits. The displacement of feudal anarchy by settled order under a strong central authority, enabled the townsfolk to profit to the full from the growth of commerce. With increased wealth came larger notions of liberty, and the power to assert them. Thus it is to these centuries that in every country of the West we can trace under diverse circumstances the revival of an organized and vigorous civic life.

"But over and above the softening consequent on the general improvement of manners, there are some respects in which the Crusades were directly beneficial to the peasant class. It was not that those who took the cross became free, for, numerous as these may have been, those who survived to return were but relatively few. More important were the better social order and the milder rule of the new time. To the peasants it must have been an additional boon that through the transfer of property <sup>Man's hand came</sup> ~~may come~~ under the rule of ecclesiastics who, if harsh task masters, were still preferable to the turbulent nobles they displaced. Yet, again the growth of larger ideas was favorable to freedom, and at least made the future hopeful. But so far as the mass of population is concerned perhaps the most that can be said is---that the widening of the bounds of human knowledge through the Crusades helped to make a better order possible."

One of the most enduring effects of the Crusades was their influence on the commercial interests of Europe. This result was not confined to any one country in particular. Indeed Italy, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland and even Denmark and Norway shared in the manifold advantages



derived from intercourse with the almost inexhaustible stores of the East. One would not be exaggerating if he remarked that the gigantic discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the logical outcome of the mercantile spirit that had fostered the Crusades. Modern Europe owed the first beginnings of the maritime law to them. Banking and exchange owed their origin to, or at least were given a mighty impetus by the same holy wars. The importation of spices, perfumes, and various industries such as dyeing, glass blowing, silk-weaving, etc., etc., profited much by dealing with the East.

With the rapid expansion of commerce the standard of comfort was raised. The western mind lost its local and narrow prejudices, and gained broader views of life. Men's sympathies were widened, not only with their enemies but with each other. National insulation was practically impossible when the whole of western Europe was placed in a state of compact union, in defence of a common cause. National barriers of pride and prejudice disappeared before the overmastering motive which the Crusades inspired in the hearts of all who came under its spell.

"The Crusades were the first united effort of western Christendom. They raised men above the ignoble sphere of petty ambitions to seek after an ideal that was neither sordid nor selfish. They called forth all that was most heroic in human nature and filled the world with the inspiration of noble thoughts and noble deeds."

The Crusades were the crowning glory of the political achievements of the Middle Ages. They indicated the highest water mark in the influence of the Church on society.

It is a recognised fact that Christianity exerted a great influence on the thought and conduct of men. As the Greek culture and intellectual

activity were adopted and modified by the Romans, likewise, the Roman civilisation was modified by the new and active power which spread with great rapidity. The Greek thinkers centred their solution of the problem of the individual and society in the intellectual nature of man, hence the limitation of their ideals; Christianity on the other hand, found its solution in the moral nature which is universal. Thus a "new basis of life was found and a new solution of the fundamental education as well as ethical problem was secured."

Stoicism had had its day and now came to a stand still before the influence of Christianity. It exalted virtue, it is true, but it obtained it through reason, while Christianity obtained it through the emotional nature which is possible to all. "It appealed," writes Monroe, "to emotions that were universal, to that which was noble, to the affection for an ideal human character that in itself is an expression of the divine, to sympathy for fellowmen, to fear of eternal retribution and to the entire gamut of human feelings."

For a long period the Church forbade the clergy to study pagan literature. This attitude of the Church, the moral ideal which it brought, and the prevalent belief in the nearness of the second advent of Christ, and consequently the regarding of learning and culture as of small importance, in other words asceticism, resulted in the neglect of learning and the deep ignorance that held sway during what is called the Dark Ages. A great conflict arose between classical learning and the Christian faith. A quotation from Basil upon the education of children sums up the attitude of the Greek Christians towards learning. "Are we then," wrote he, "to give up literature? I do not say that; but I do say that we must not kill souls...in fact, the choice lies between two alternatives:

a liberal education which you may get by sending your children to the public schools, or the salvation of their souls which you secure by sending them to the monks. Which is going to gain the day, science or the soul? If you can unite both advantages do so by all means; but if not, chose the most precious."

St. Jerome, 331-423, however, could not condemn the old literature. He believed that if it was to be permitted it should be rather to judge than to follow it. He it was who introduced monasticism, which played an important role in the Middle Ages <sup>in</sup> to the West.

In 305 Anthony fled to the desert and made his abode on the shores of the Red Sea, where he subjected himself to physical penance. From this date monasticism came into prominence and spread from Egypt to the remotest parts of the West. It comprised all sorts of men and orders from the anchorite of the desert to the followers of Loyola.

The ascetic idea found its support in the teachings of Christ in commanding his followers not to care for the morrow, in giving one's goods to the poor, in leaving one's parents and family and renouncing the world to devote one's self to the service of God. With the conversion of the Empire in the fourth century, "Christianity was identified with society; the customs and manners of the world were the customs and manners of Christendom; the Christians were no longer a marked off or a distinctive people." <sup>1</sup> The clergy and more particularly the monks became a separate class, following their own code of morality and abstaining from intimate intercourse with society. Persecution and the belief in the second coming of Christ led many to take the oath and swell the number of monasteries. Their ideal was summed up in the ideas of "Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience, or more technically Conversion, Stability, and Obedience."

(1) Monroe.

Thus they negated the three great views of social life: the family, industrial society, and the rejection of the oversight of the bishop as was the case in the western monasteries and emphasised the moral virtues that are so prominent in the Church and religion. "It introduced new factors into social development; for example, obedience presented as great a contrast as can be imagined to the strong individualism of the barbarian and the arrogance of the Roman."

The rules of the monastery, seventy three, in number, related to the general duties of abbots and monks. From the Benedictine Rule, which introduced manual labor into the code, came most of the social benefits of monasticism, "for in the broadest sense of the term monasticism was an education." The monks furnished models to the farmer, introduced new processes in wood, metal, and cloth; gave new thoughts to architects; stimulated trade; improved public health and life by draining swamps, etc.; and offered hospitality to the needy and help to the sick and distressed. They moreover fostered study and learning, for on the whole the sole educational institutions from the seventh to the thirteenth century were monasteries. The famous monasteries were those noted for their learning. We must not fail to notice the meagreness of the learning of the time. The Scriptures alone were commended to the greatest number, while other branches of science were disapproved for several centuries as being contrary to the idea of asceticism in as much as they gratified human desires. Knowledge of belief was a distinct sin. "Hence the very basis of all progress, the spirit of inquiry and the desire for truth or the corrective of its effect upon emotional states or religious feelings, was a matter of fact, was wanting to these ~~days~~ ages."

The value of any statement was determined not by inquiry but by its

relation to religious beliefs, and until the eighth century, through the Emperor Charles the Great, <sup>him</sup> Alcuin that the monasteries raised the grade of education, and those not intended for monastic life. "The monastery of <sup>him</sup> ~~Novalesse~~, "was the richest in France, its possessions were almost <sup>him</sup> ~~in~~ extent, and it was offered as a reproach to Alcuin that he <sup>him</sup> ~~had~~ 20000 slaves. This monastery Alcuin <sup>him</sup> made the centre of learning in France as well as the centre of influence in the Church. To him <sup>him</sup> ~~flowed~~ the youth desirous of learning, and from the monastery went out an ever increasing stream of influence in the world of his pupils and disciples found in numerous monasteries throughout the land." Alcuin's great service was <sup>him</sup> ~~to~~ demonstrate that intellectual training was quite as essential to the welfare of society as efforts at purely religious and moral betterment."

It is to the monasteries that we are indebted for the preservation of what was preserved of learning, especially the Seven Liberal Arts. Each monastery had its own library without which it was believed to be like a castle without an armory. The library of Novalesse, in Italy, was said to have possessed 6500 volumes when it was destroyed by the Saracens. Together with the libraries, the scriptorium was an indispensable feature of a monastery; and during the turbulent period of the barbarian invasion these became the safety vault of learning, where the monks toiled in writing manuscripts and reproducing them, thus passing the knowledge of the past ages to coming generations.

Another important feature due to the influence of the Church, though indirectly, was Chivalry. Its origin may be traced to the institutions of the Teutons influenced by the Roman society and the Christian Church "which directed their energies into particular channels and discovered to them

in many of the teachings of Christianity a bond of sympathy between the Church and the worthier traits of character of the barbarians." The ceremony of knighthood was practically a religious one. The knights swore to "defend the Church, to attack the wicked, to respect the priesthood, to protect women and the poor, to preserve the country in tranquility, and to shed his blood in behalf of his brethren." The emphasizing of service and obedience had the greatest influence that Christianity could shed upon the barbaric Teutons. "The influence that Christianity had on society and the individual are summed up by Cornish: 'Chivalry taught the world the duty of noble service willingly rendered. It upheld courage and enterprise in obedience to rule, it consecrated military prowess to the service of the Church, glorified the virtues of liberality, good faith, unselfishness, and courtesy, and above all, courtesy to women. Against these may be set the vices of pride, love of bloodshed, contempt of inferiors, and loose manners. Chivalry was an imperfect discipline, but it was a discipline, and one fit for the times.' "

The leading features of the intellectual life of the early half of the Middle Ages was one of unquestioned belief in all the doctrines sanctioned by the Church. Doubt or inquiry was sinful. By the eleventh century, the Crusade movements stimulated research by bringing the West into close contact with the beliefs of the East. To support faith by reason, to uphold the religious life by the development of intellectual power, and to silence all doubt through argument, was the task of the schoolmen. Scholasticism is usually defined as "the union of the Christian beliefs and the Aristotelian logic." All "legitimate knowledge had to be sanctioned by religion or the Church."

But most of the discussions of the schoolmen were void of reality.

"How many angels can stand on the point of a needle? Can God make two hills without the intervening valley? What happens when a mouse eats the consecrated host? " However these questions showed deep inquiries as to the relation "of the finite to the infinite, the attributes of the infinite, and the nature of reality."

In writing this thesis, I have endeavored to review the vast field of the history of the important period of transition from the old to the modern with an unprejudiced eye. No doubt the roots of the modern times are struck into the fertile soil of the Middle Ages---the period of the Ascendency of the Church, of Knighthood, of Chivalry, of the Crusades, of Scholasticism, and of the beginnings of Universities. The subject is vast and the space allowed is short; hence the brief and cursory review of the all important events. That the Church has failed in the past, and is not accomplishing all that its great Founder expects of her, is unfortunately too true. That she has been deflected from the true line of policy by worldly considerations no man can deny. We only hope that the time is fast approaching when the precepts of the Master shall direct men's' dealings with one another and solve once for all ~~all~~ the social and political problems over which philosophers, statesmen, and great thinkers are raking their brains.

*Fiad A. Kheir Allah.*