

there is the burning bush. We are often uneasy about the Church, and, taking things as they appear to be, we have a right to be. But then again, let us lift up our heads and take courage, for the elements of indestructibility are in it.

J. BOYCE.

ARTICLE V.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INVISIBLE CHURCH
UPON THE VISIBLE CHURCH IN THE FORMULA-
TION OF HER CREED.¹

Brethren of the Alumni Association :

The cursory reader of history, for whom it is merely a chronicle of events in their outward relations, may amuse his leisure hours as with a book of stories, finding in the recital of the deeds of heroes, and in the growth, the decline and fall of empires, an interest akin to that awakened by the novel. But the true student of history knows that the story of the past read simply as the narrative of events is not history. The problem which presents itself to him is not merely, What are the facts? but, What are the inner relations of the facts ? He recognises it as his task to trace effects to their causes, and to read the character and importance of the causes in their effects. He knows that not always that which is obtrusive and on the surface, but often what is obscure and easily escapes attention, because of its apparent insignificance, is the really efficient and determining factor. On the pages of the contemporaneous chronicler he must study a picture which from the nature of the case is more or less defective in perspective. He finds there related, in minutest detail it may be, what was suited to appeal to the imagination or to the passions

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of the times, while he is left, more often than otherwise, to discover in mere hints and incidental statements the true explanation of the course of events,, and therefore the true history of the period which he investigates. Or if he commit himself to the guidance of those who have made a critical study of the sources, and have left on record the product of their labors, he finds them differing often in their interpretations, so that their books prove to be only imperfect and partial presentations of the subject, in the cross-lights of which he must seek to discover the truth hidden from the gaze of each and all. It is for this reason that history in all its departments presents one of the most difficult subjects of human investigation. But most difficult of all, as I conceive, is the history of the Church. For while, in secular history, there is this obscure factor often so controlling in its influence upon the movement of events, it is still a natural element, and traceable to ordinary human motives ; but in the history of the Church there is another factor in addition, far more obscure and difficult to deal with, inasmuch as it is due to a life superhuman in its origin, and at the same time a life which resides not in the entire visible body, but in the bosoms of individuals known with certainty only to God, constituting the invisible or true Church of God. From the very nature of the case, the influence thus exerted cannot be studied directly, but only indirectly. We can never know, beyond all question, that any particular actions of any given individuals are the fruit of the indwelling Spirit, but we are left to detect in the cumulative results of many minor influences those tendencies and movements which can be explained only by the presence of this divine life.

In view of the inherent difficulty of the subject, it is not without hesitation that I undertake this evening the discussion of a topic connected with ecclesiastical history. I do so only because the pressure of my recent duties as teacher in this department in a sister institution has left me no alternative between the use of material accumulated in pursuance of those duties and the declinature of your invitation to fill the office of lecturer on this occasion.

I ask your attention to the consideration of

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INVISIBLE UPON THE VISIBLE CHURCH
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HER CREED IN DOGMATIC FORM.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are in themselves complete and adequate to the end for which the revelation they contain was given. They teach us fully and finally what we are to believe concerning God. They give us all the information we need for our highest interests concerning man's origin and his first-estate. They explain his condition of sin and misery, and discover in all their fulness and completeness the means and methods of his recovery, in its inception, progress, and consummation. As nothing may be taken from them, so may nothing be added to them.

But although the truth is thus revealed in the very words of God, so that all the doctrines which relate to the salvation of the soul are in the Scriptures in their entirety, and, as there given, adapted to become the basis of a living faith, yet they are not set forth in their scientific form and relations.

Now, it was inevitable that the time should come when the process must begin of giving to the teachings of the Bible systematic shape in explicit creeds. As man is, in every other sphere, a philosopher, such must he become, sooner or later, in his interpretation of the oracles of God ; and as God's truth in nature is capable of being so systematised as to satisfy that ruling passion, if I may so speak, of the intellect for order and logical arrangement, so is God's truth as revealed in the word. And to the visible Church, intrusted from the beginning with the oracles themselves, was the important office committed of presiding over the formulation of the truth in scientific statements. But the Church neither as a whole nor in any of her individual members was inspired as were the holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. What safeguard was there, then, against the final adoption of those errors which were sure to be developed, should the spirit of speculation be left to its natural tendencies in the process of dogmatic explication ? We shall find that safeguard, I believe, in the witness of the invisible Church. Every member of that body, in all the ages, has been

the subject of the Holy Spirit's almighty working. The hearts of all have been renewed by his agency and their eyes opened to apprehend the truth as contained in the word of God. This truth has been so wrought into the gracious experiences of this chosen people, who in the "darkest days have never entirely perished from the earth, as to make their collective influence, sooner or later, an efficient check upon those tendencies of speculation. If we turn to the history of the Church, we shall find abundant evidence of the fact that, in all the centuries, the experience of God's people has opposed its postulates to dogmatic error, and has thus been a negative guide to the Church in the formulation of her creed. Although the conflict in which they have earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints presents many different aspects, and their witness is sometimes obscured and rendered uncertain by the form in which the issue is presented, yet their voice has never been hushed ; and although ages may have passed before the final result has been reached, yet it has always been the same result—the triumph of the truth.

You will recall the fact that the first great problem which presented itself for solution in the early Church was that concerning the Trinity. The form in which it challenged attention was in the question : How shall the teachings of the Scriptures in respect to the unity of the Godhead and the divinity of the Son be reconciled with each other ?

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord, thy God is ONE God," is the declaration alike of him whose voice was heard above the thunders of Sinai, and of the Son who came to reveal the Father. And yet of the Son himself it is said : "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

Now since philosophy knew no numerical identity of essence consistent with plurality of persons, she must either be dumb in the presence of the problem she had raised, or find some explanation of the divinity of the Son which would not imply a personality distinct from that of the Father.

The first solution of the problem given was that the Son of God is not a divine person, but only a divine energy manifested in and through the man, Jesus of Nazareth.

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But although such a solution might satisfy human philosophy, it could not satisfy the Christian heart, for the simple reason that the faith begotten of the Spirit in every child of God is no mere assent to a formula, but it is trust in a divine person. From first to last it lays hold upon that divine person as revealed in the word of God, illumined by the Holy Spirit; and more, it is the divine person who is at once the Son of God and the Son of man, he whose name was called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins. Therefore no statement which represented the divine in Jesus as a mere impersonal energy of God could harmonise with the experience of God's people. That statement could, in consequence, find no permanent place in their creed, nor in that of the Church, which was the outward manifestation of their life. Another formula must be found which should distinctly recognise the divine personality of the Son.

Then philosophy proposed a second solution, still maintaining, however, as a fundamental postulate, that, as there is one God, there can be only one divine person. It was this : The divine person, acting in a certain capacity, and under certain circumstances, is called the Father; acting in another capacity, and under other circumstances, he is called the Son, so that the Son is only the Father manifesting himself in another character, and under another mode.

But the faith of the true Christian lays hold upon the Father no less than upon the Son, and postulates his distinct personality no less than that of the Son. In the light of the truth applied by the Spirit, it recognises him as reconciled in the Son, as accepting the believer through the Son, as adopting him as his child, and as joint-heir with Jesus Christ, who is the Son. And, therefore, no statement which denied to the Father a personality distinct from that of the Son could meet the needs of the Christian heart. It, too, must yield at length before the persistent practical protest of the people of God, and was finally rejected as not only inadequate, but false.

It is not necessary that I should pursue this line of illustration further, through all that period of controversy, until at length speculation was compelled to adjust itself to the postulates of the

experience of the faithful on every point, and the invisible Church triumphed in the adoption, on the part of the visible Church, of that doctrine of the Trinity which we profess to-day, that “ in the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding ; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.”

The history of the controversy concerning the person of Christ—the relations of the divine and human in him—also reveals to us this regulative influence of the Christian consciousness upon speculation, and we find the invisible Church triumphing again, albeit after a conflict and a series of protests extending over centuries, in the incorporation in the creed of a statement harmonious with the truth in all its aspects, to wit : “ That two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion, which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.”

As we pursue our investigation in search of the evidence of the influence of the invisible Church in preventing the final adoption of error in the formulated creed, we discover a fact no little perplexing, namely, the sudden arrest of progress when the point is reached at which we should expect the full development of the doctrines of grace.

We find, it is true, a noble beginning made by Augustine, who, in opposition to the errors of Pelagius, sets forth, in its final, form, the doctrine of man’s inability and the consequent absolute necessity of divine grace in order to the inception and growth of the new life in the soul—a doctrine which, from that day to this, has found its ample justification in the experience of the saints. But just here the movement ceases. There are hints, it is true, in the writings of Augustine, and in those of other fathers, which look to the explicit statement of the doctrine of justification by faith, which alone explains the method by which

the soul is brought within the sphere of the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, but there are hints and no more. Nor is this a mere temporary pause in the process of scientific formulation. For one thousand years the work stands arrested practically where Augustine left it.

This phenomenon, so strange, at first sight, loses its abnormal aspect, however, as our study of the facts reveals to us the insidious growth of error, not in formulated dogma, but error no less efficient for evil, because operative only in practice at first, and, for ages afterwards, so undefined and ambiguous in its character as to elude the full force of the protest of the true saints of God in the Church.

As we look back from our standing point we see what the real nature of that error was, and in the light of that knowledge we discover the cause of this sudden arrest of progress of the creed to its completion.

It is a familiar fact, that long before the time of Augustine the original constitution of the Church had been perverted and changed from the Presbyterian to the Prelatical form ; and that, connected with the elevation of some of the bishops above their fellow bishops or presbyters, the entire body of the so-called clergy had come to be regarded as a class distinct from and superior to the people. It was no longer a ministry, the efflorescence of the universal priesthood of believers, but became henceforth a proper priesthood, superseding that only God-ordained priesthood upon the earth. From this time did this priesthood of man's invention arrogate to itself, more and more, the right to stand between believers and God, and to constitute the only channel through which grace could be communicated to them. The sacraments which it administered were the only means of salvation, since through them alone was grace given. Faith no longer brought the soul into direct relations with the Son of God, but it brought men to the Church, that is, to the priest, to receive the sacraments. In baptism, administered by those holy hands, the habit of grace, or spiritual life, was infused; confirmation gave increase of that life; by the eucharist it was renewed and strengthened ; and by penance recruited from the effects of sin. Thus by priestly manipu-

iation was an inherent righteousness, so-called, communicated, fostered, and developed ; and it was this righteousness which was supposed to secure the favor of God. Christ's righteousness was, it is true, the remote cause of the believer's justification, but only as the merits of that righteousness secured the operation of this scheme, by which the Church, through her priesthood, rendered men inherently holy, and made the fruits of the life conferred meritorious. It was the merit of this inherent righteousness which became, in each individual case, the immediate ground—the formal cause—of justification. This is the Romish scheme, in its full development, but which, in all its essential features, became operative two hundred years before the time of Augustine, and the influence of which was more or less widely felt in that early period of the Church. Need I say that it was, in effect, a method of justification by works ? It matters not that the new life supposed to be begotten and nurtured in the soul was implanted and sustained by grace, it was still the merit of the fruits borne by that life which rendered a man acceptable in the sight of God. Christ's righteousness, and the merit of it, became, in no sense, the individual possession of the soul. What place was there, then, for the doctrine of justification by faith, which appropriates the righteousness of Christ and rests upon the merits of that alone for acceptance with God ? There was none. It was excluded by the law of works.

Now, this subtle system of salvation by works, under the name of salvation by grace, being thus built into the very structure of the Church and of her worship, could not, from the nature of the case, but prevent the formulation of the doctrine of justification by faith as an article of her creed. What Augustine had taught concerning the absolute need of grace might be harmonised with the sacerdotal system of salvation ; nay, might be and was regarded as demonstrating the urgent necessity of grace conferred "*ex opere operato*," and, therefore, no hindrance lay in the way of its incorporation with the creed ; but far otherwise was it with justification by faith.

It naturally suggests itself to us here to inquire, Why was the doctrine of justification by works, thus shown to lie implicitly in

the theory and practice of the Church, not explicitly stated and adopted as part of her creed ? It is a most significant fact that it was not, and the explanation of it recalls us to the consideration of the efficiency of the invisible Church within and upon the visible body. You will recollect that we found that this influence was felt in the Trinitarian controversy, not as a positive, but as a negative influence, as a restraint upon the final adoption of error in dogmatic form. There, error presented in distinct statements appeared, over and over again, before the tribunal of Christian consciousness, and, as such, was as often condemned ; but, in every instance, the error lay largely in defect and inadequacy of conception. Always there was truth emphasised, although exaggerated in some aspect of it, so as to exclude other truths. Now, it was these elements of truth, too exclusively contemplated though they were, which in each case gave such plausibility to the conception as to secure its being entertained temporarily at least by those whose experience subsequently condemned it. Thus, these conceptions were, one after another, enunciated, though they were finally abandoned, before the protest of the people of God, as inadequate. Not so, however, with the postulates, which underlay this sacerdotal method of justification and salvation which I have described. Those postulates could not be expressed in dogmatic statement without revealing fundamental error in the whole and in every part. But the true Israel of God was still within this visible Church, still clinging to her with reverence and devotion as the Bride of the Lord, and the presence of the members of this invisible communion of saints constituted, under the providence of God, an efficient check upon the Church's final and complete apostasy in the distinct enunciation and formal adoption of the error logically involved in her practice and worship. Thus, while the energies of the invisible Church were apparently paralysed, they were really operative in the exertion of a powerful restraining influence.

But we must not suppose that this divine life in the elect people of God was without more positive manifestation of its existence and efficiency. For, although the practical perversion of the truth by the Church with which they still remained in communion re-

acted upon those who were the subjects of divine grace, and in turn hindered them from giving legitimate expression in explicit form to the great doctrine of justification by faith, yet there are abundant indications that they did not acquiesce in the error, veiled and hidden though it was.

Allow me to point you, in the first place, to the dissatisfaction manifested at so early a period, and growing greater so constantly down to the Reformation itself, with the practical results, in the lives of multitudes, of that scheme of so-called grace and salvation.

I need not pause here to prove to this audience the fact, nor to explain it, that a system of work-righteousness always does, and always must, bear the fruits of Antinomianism and ungodliness. So it was here. From the time that the Church began to dispense her sacramental grace as the basis of an inherent righteousness, did those who acquiesced in it begin to find encouragement to sin that grace might abound. It was man's method of salvation by grace which is no more grace, and it bore its appropriate fruit in legitimating sin and making men tenfold more the children of the devil than they were before.

Now, those who had really experienced the grace of God in their hearts, although they did not recognise the root of the evil, knew that these fruits were not such as they ought to be, and they lifted up the voice of protest, which was never hushed during that dreary thousand years and more—a persistent protest, which gathered volume till it forced a hearing, against the tolerance of ungodliness in the Church and by the Church. Being a protest against the fruits of a system of justification by works, it was indirectly opposition to the unannounced doctrine which legitimated it.

It is as affording evidence of this deep seated dissatisfaction on the part of God's true people within the Church, that the Montanist, the Novatian, and the Donatist schisms are of interest to us. The wild extravagances of these sectaries should not blind us to the fact, that each of the movements, in each instance, begun with, and was based upon, the earnest conviction of the necessity for reform in the discipline of the Church. Nor must we suppose that those alone who ran into such fanatical excesses,

and have been branded in the records of the times with the stigma of schism, were concerned in that protest. He has read history to little purpose who has not learned that when great principles lay strong hold upon the feelings of large masses of men, there will always be those who carry those principles to extremes, and run into fanaticism and error; and that these extremists and their perversion of the movement are likely to find place in the chronicles of the period, while no record is left of the fact that thousands were involved, who yet refused to go beyond the bounds of moderation.

In these several movements, then, we have evidence that the invisible communion as a whole was deeply stirred in view of the fact that the visible Church was not an institute of holiness, but the opposite. Nor must we be misled as to the true nature of the issue involved. It might appear to superficial observation that those who made this protest against slackness of discipline were essentially legalists, while the Church was contending for the principle that persons whose lives were defective might still sustain a saving relation to Christ ; that man is not the judge, but God alone. Such a view is, however, altogether misleading. What lay behind these movements and gave them vitality and vigor was the conviction on the part of true believers that such personal righteousness as gives proof that its seat is in the heart is the alone evidence that the soul is resting on Christ by faith ; and that the Church was putting Christ and his righteousness in the background, thus preventing access to the true fountain of grace. It was this which sustained the cry in the centuries which followed for reform of the Church in head and members, and ever added emphasis to it. Although it seemed to be the expression of the spirit of legalism, it was really the utterance given to the witness of God's Spirit in the experience of the elect against the system of justification by works which had made legitimate a righteousness of mere outward forms and ceremonies, and had thus hushed conscience and given free rein to "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

In the light of this truth alone can we understand the history

of all that dark period, and of the struggle which went forward through the century of Reforming Councils down to the Reformation itself.

But, again, this practical perversion of truth on the part of the visible Church made it impossible that she should meet the deepest spiritual needs of the invisible community of saints within her. The dissatisfaction due to this fact manifested itself in a series of significant movements which again constitute so many practical protests against the fundamental error which she fostered.

You will call to mind the fact that, essentially connected with the system by which grace was supposed to be infused, and the existence of an inherent righteousness secured as the basis of acceptance with God, was the elevation of the clergy into a priesthood, and the practical denial of the priesthood of all believers. Thus were the saints cut off from direct access to the Father through the great High Priest of their profession, and communion with the Church substituted for it. But such communion could not satisfy the longing of the truly pious heart for fellowship with God. And hence the disposition which manifested itself so early, on the part of men of devout spirit, to get away from the hindering influence of the priesthood of the Church, and to find in solitary places, in caves of the earth, and in the trackless forests, opportunity for uninterrupted communion with heaven. Underneath the extravagance and fanaticism of the Stylites and other hermits lay this urgent need of the renewed soul. And here again the fanatical manifestation in the actions of a comparative few reveals what was working in the bosoms of thousands besides, too sober in spirit for such excesses. "Monasticism itself, historically connected as it is, in its beginnings, with these, anchorites of the desert, is a witness, in its early history, to the existence of the same desire to be free from all hindrance to direct fellowship with the Father of spirits. And although, at a later period, the Church, with the wisdom of the children of this world, adopted that institution and made it her minister and ally, we must not forget that, even after all the changes which ages had wrought, it was not without a struggle that it yielded to

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this transformation, and that, in the time which followed, the monasteries were the refuge of many devout spirits who sought within their walls opportunity for meditation and nearer approach to heaven. And those who fled to these monasteries left behind them multitudes burdened with the same consciousness of needs unmet and of aspirations unsatisfied. This was all, when understood aright, a most touching and pathetic protest against the priestly incantation, the sacramental grace, and the plan of justification by works which the Church had substituted for the direct approach of the soul by faith to the fountain of Christ's blood and to a Father reconciled in him.

It was this same longing, for the satisfaction of which the Church had nothing to offer, which manifested itself in the constantly recurring tendency to mysticism in the Middle Ages. If God's own appointed way of approach to him was closed, the soul would find some other method of knowing him and drawing near into his presence. While among these mystics there were many wild and self-deceived fanatics, there were also many who could, in all sincerity, adopt the cry of the Psalmist as their own, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. xlii. 1, 2.) "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is" (Ps. lxiii. 1). "I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land" (Ps. cxliii. 6). As we peer out into the darkness and hear these plaintive voices echoing through the gloom, we may be tempted to ask, "How long, O Lord, holy and true?" Ah, my soul, possess thyself in patience! God's good time shall come. The protest shall be heard, interpreted, and heeded.

Again, I call your attention to the significant demand, made over and over again, for the word of God in the vernacular, and the persistent efforts, in different centuries and in widely separated countries, to place the Scriptures in the hands of the people. It was only another form of the protest against the practical nullification, on the part of the Church, of the priesthood of

believers, and indirectly against her method of justification by inherent righteousness and works.

I shall not enter here upon the disputed question of the origin of the Waldenses. It matters not, for the purpose in hand, though it be admitted that the history of this devoted people cannot be traced beyond the twelfth century. It is well known that at that time, and ever afterwards, the burden of the demand they made for the Holy Scriptures in the hands of all, and in the language understood by all. What did it mean but that the Church's method of salvation had been tried and found wanting? What did it mean but that, when God's children asked for bread, she gave them a stone? It signified the presence of a determination, which even blood could not drown, to reassume the functions of the priesthood of the saints, and, rejecting Rome's mediation, to find Christ the object of their faith in the Scriptures which testified of him. It was for this that they contended in the face of untold cruelties. For this did they die, those "slaughtered saints of God, . . . whose bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold." I need only mention Wiclif and his efforts to give the word of God to the people in the fourteenth century, and the self-denying labors of his followers, the slandered Lollards, to the same end, up to the Reformation period in England; nor need I do more than call the names of John Hus and Jerome of Prague, who in the fifteenth century, sealed at the stake their devotion to the same cause. These all were, in effect, giving voice to the one cry, "The Church's system of grace is no grace. She hides from us Christ, the only Saviour of sinners. Give us Christ in his word, that our faith may take hold of his righteousness. In that alone can we find peace and reconciliation with God." And by the Waldenses, and these Reformers before the Reformation, was united with that which has just been described the other form of protest also which had been gathering force and weight, as the centuries came and went, against the fruits of ungodliness fostered by the Church's scheme of sacramental grace and work-righteousness.

It may be thought that all these protests of the invisible Church against error had been ineffectual in the past, but they

were not. It is the old story of half-hidden forces working obscurely and with tendencies misunderstood. At length the day of their manifestation was approaching. Rome felt that it was coming, and that she could no longer be indifferent. And now she, who had so long since surrendered the sword of the Spirit, moved by the instinct of self-preservation, seized the axe of persecution and sought to drown these protests in blood. It was her only resource. In that process by which she had gradually been transformed from the Church of God into the mystic Babylon, she had built into her very structure justification by works. It had become her life, and it was at this life that these reformers were really striking. She knew that she must be rid of them or perish from the earth.

But now, at last, the day was come when that protest, in all its forms, was to be interpreted so that all could understand its true character and significance ; and then the victory which had been hanging in the balance for ages was won. The energies of the invisible Church, apparently paralysed in the grasp of the Leviathan, awoke to new vigor, and the long arrested development of the creed was resumed.

I need not recount to you the story of the protracted struggle of the monk in his cell at Erfurt; nor how, at last, there dawned upon him the true meaning of that scripture, "The just shall live by faith," and he found peace and joy in the consciousness that the righteousness of Christ was his. Joy was it indeed to that burdened heart, and joy—to the world ! Nor need I tell you, for you know it well, how, out of a glad experience, he began to publish that truth, so old, and yet so new to him, so new to others ; nor need I dwell upon the circumstances which led to his bold denunciation of the barter of indulgences for money, and the startling discovery that that Church, which till then he had revered and loved, was fatally wedded to another gospel which was no gospel.

As we survey the wonderful results of the movement instituted by this single man, they may well appear to be effects without an adequate cause, until we recognise the fact that Luther simply interpreted the consciousness of God's people to them-

selves. He gave distinct and intelligible enunciation to that truth which, present implicitly in their experience, had inspired all those protests in the past. He showed them what the true nature of that error was against which they had so long been contending, and the invisible Church arose in the might which a clear comprehension of the truth had given her, and gave voice to her witness for that truth in tones of thunder which shook Christendom from centre to circumference.

And now was revealed clearly the fact that Rome was past reformation ; that she had no place for those who counted all other righteousness as filthy rags, but “ the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ;” and the great body of the faithful came out of her to constitute a new visible communion, a fitting outward manifestation of the communion of saints. If any true believers remained within her borders—and doubtless some unenlightened in the fulness of the gospel did remain—they were in her, as they were in the world, but not of her; though called by her name, they were not her children. They were a remnant—the captive Israel of God—sitting mournfully by the rivers of Babylon, with harps hanged upon the willows, who might well have answered those who mocked them with idle mummery and required of them a song, “ How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land ?” (Ps. exxxvii.)

If we turn now to the various branches of the true Church, we witness an unexampled activity in the development of the creed in respect to the doctrines of grace, so long obscured by the sacramental system dispensed by Rome. As that so-called Church, rid at last of the restraining influence of the invisible Church, had, in the decrees of the Council of Trent, given explicit statement to her errors, thus making complete and final her apostasy from the truth, so was that truth enunciated in counter-statements by God’s people, henceforth a witness against the error. The invisible Church once more exerts her efficiency, and the creed proceeds to its completion as an adequate statement of the doctrines revealed in Scripture.

I know that there are facts which show that all the people of God do not even yet see eye to eye, after the lapse of the centur-

ries which have passed since the Reformation period. There are still differences which need to be adjusted, and more than one branch of the true Church of God (which show that they are such by the fruits of the Spirit borne by those who devoutly adhere to them) still acquiesces in formulae, which, properly understood, imply semi-Pelagian error.

But although Calvinist and Arminian have not yet attained to absolute agreement in the statement of all the doctrines of grace, that fact only proves that there are difficult speculative problems involved in those doctrines which both have not solved with equal success. The Arminian has not yet risen to that point of vision whence he may see that the Calvinist's statement of the doctrine of inability does not exclude free agency, and thus make insincere and meaningless the gospel call which comes to every man alike. He makes a protest against what he conceives to be the obscuration of one of the most precious of the truths revealed in the word of God.

Once the doctrine of inability in all its relations rightly apprehended, semi-Pelagianism shall be banished in word, as absent ever in fact, from the true Church of God, in all her members. And with that exclusion must come the recognition of the truth of the doctrine of God's electing grace logically involved in it.

But already is it true, as implied in what has just been said, that the difference is rather in word than in reality. Need I cite the familiar fact that Arminians and Calvinists are at one upon their knees ? They offer petitions perfectly harmonious at the throne of grace. They sing the same songs. The great distinctive doctrines which we preach find as hearty acceptance in Arminian pulpits as in our own, when stripped of that terminology which has been misunderstood. No ! there is no Pelagianism in any genuine Christian experience. There is no Pelagianism in the invisible Church ; and, blessed be God, the invisible Church is not known by the name of John Calvin or of Martin Luther or of John Wesley, but by that name which is above every name, the name of Jesus Christ. And because his Spirit is in that Church, we shall all at length see eye to eye, and speak the same things, and join at last, with perfectly harmoni-

ous voices in that glad acclaim : “ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake” (Ps. cxv. 1).

ARTICLE VI.

HARBINGERS OF THE REFORMATION.

[by Dr. John Bailey Adger]

We meet in the twelfth century and thereafter with a variety of sects passing under the general name of the Cathari, some of Eastern origin, as the Bogomiles and Euchites ; and others of Eastern origin, but dwelling in the West, as the Paulicians and the Pasagii (or *passengers*, that is, *pilgrims*) ; still others of Western origin, as well as residence, as the *Apostolicals* of Cologne and of Perigueux in France, the Petrobrussians, the Henricians, the followers of Arnold of Brescia, and of Peter Waldo. All those differing in many respects from one another, are to be viewed as the offspring of a reaction in the Church against, what Neander calls the *churchly theocratic system* (Neander, IV., p. 605). Some of them, as the Petrobrussians, Henricians, and Apostolicals, show a remarkable affinity of spirit and of principles. Yet we are not, says Neander, to ascribe to them a common external descent. They were rather the offspring of certain ideas and tendencies, diffusing themselves abroad as through an atmosphere and breaking forth to view in one point and another without being traceable to any single point. They were all harbingers of the Reformation, which was steadily becoming a necessity for the Church. The Church had been secularized ; Jewish and Christian elements had been confused together in its forms and doctrines. And the Christian consciousness must be expected to rouse up against this foreign matter (Vol. IV., p. 592) to repel it. At the head of this movement of reform the Popes had set themselves, ever since 1049, when Leo IX. became Pope. Gregory VII. had stirred up the people against the corrupt clergy.