

Triumph of the Church
(History of Heresies and its Refutation)

St. Alphonsus Marie de Liguori

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Translator's Preface

THE ardent wish manifested by "the Faithful for an acquaintance with the valuable writings of ST. LIGUORI, induced me to undertake the Translation of his History of Heresies, one of his greatest works. The Holy Author was induced to write this Work, to meet the numbers of infidel publications, with which Europe was deluged in the latter half of the last century. Mens minds were then totally unsettled; dazzled by the glare of a false philosophy, they turned away from the light of the Gospel. The heart of the Saint was filled with sorrow, and he laboured to avert the scourge he saw impending over the unfaithful people. He implored the Ministers of his Sovereign to put the laws in force, preventing the introduction of irreligious publications into the Kingdom of Naples, and he published this Work, among* others, to prove, as he says, that the Holy Catholic Church is the only true one the Mistress of Truth the Church, founded by Jesus Christ himself, which would last to the end of time, notwithstanding the persecutions of the infidel, and the rebellion of her own heretical children. He dedicates the Book to the Marquis Tanucci, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom, whom he praises for his zeal for Religion, and his vigorous execution of the laws against the vendors of infidel publications. He brings down the History from the days of the Apostles to his own time, concluding- with the Refutation of the Heresies of Father Berruyer.

I have added a Supplementary Chapter, giving- a succinct account of the Heretics and Fanatics of the last eighty years. It was, at first, my intention to make it more diffuse; but, then, I considered that it would be out of proportion with the remainder of the Work. This Book may be safely consulted, as a work of reference: the Author constantly quotes his authorities; and the Student of Ecclesiastical History can at once compare his statements with the sources from which he draws. In the latter portion of the Work, and especially in that portion of it, the most interesting- to us, the History of

the English Reformation, the Student may perceive some slight variations between the original text and my translation. I have collated the Work with the writings of modern Historians the English portion, especially with Hume and Lingard and wherever I have seen the statements of the Holy Author not borne out by the authority of our own Historians, I have considered it more prudent to state the facts, as they really took place; for our own writers must naturally be supposed to be better acquainted with our History, than the foreign authorities quoted by the Saint. The reader will also find the circumstances, and the names of the actors, when I considered it necessary, frequently given more in detail than in the original.

In the style, I have endeavoured, as closely as the genius of our language would allow, to keep to the original. St. Alphonsus never sought for ornament; a clear, lucid statement of facts is what he aimed at; there is nothing inflated in his writings; he wrote for the people, and that is the principal reason, I imagine, why not only his Devotional Works, but his Historical and Theological Writings, also, have been in such request: but, while he wrote for the people, we are not to imagine that he did not also please the learned. His mind was richly stored with various knowledge; he was one of the first Jurists of his day; his Theological science elicited the express approbation of the greatest Theologian of his age Benedict XIV.; he was not only a perfect master of his own beautiful language, but profoundly read in both Greek and Latin literature also, and a long life constantly employed in studies, chiefly ecclesiastical, qualified him, above any man of his time, to become an Ecclesiastical Historian, which no one should attempt unless he be a general I might almost say a universal, scholar : so much for the Historical portion of the Work.

In the Second Part, the Refutation of Heresies, the Holy Author comprises, in a small space, a vast amount of Theological information; in fact, there is no Heresy which cannot be refuted from it. Not alone are the usual Heresies, which we have daily to combat such as those opposed to the Real Presence, the Authority of the Church, the doctrine of Justification, clearly and diffusely refuted, but those abstruse heretical opinions concerning- Grace, Free Will, the Procession of the Holy Ghost, the Mystery of the Incarnation, and the two Natures of Christ, and so forth, are also clearly and copiously confuted; the intricacies of Pelagianism, Calvinism, and Jansenism, are unravelled, and the true Doctrine of the Church triumphantly vindicated. The reader will find, in general, the quotations from the Fathers in the original, but those unacquainted with Latin will eas-

ily learn their sentiments from the text. The Scripture quotations are from the Douay Version.

Every Theologian will be aware of the difficulty of giving- scholastic terms in an English dress. In the language of the Schools, the most abstract ideas, which would require a sentence to explain them in our tongue, are most appropriately expressed by a single word; all the Romance languages, daughters of the Latin, have very nearly the same facility, but our Northern tongue has not, I imagine, flexibility enough for the purpose. I have, however, endeavoured, as far as I could, to preserve the very terms of the original, knowing how easy it is to give a heterodox sense to a passage, by even the most trivial deviation from the very expression of the writer. The Theological Student will thus, I hope, find the Work a compact Manual of Polemic Theology; the Catholic who, while he firmly believes all that the Church teaches, wishes to be able to give an account of the Faith that is in him, will here find it explained and defended; while those not of the " fold," but for whom we ardently pray, that they may hear the voice of the " one Shepherd," may see, by its attentive perusal, that they inhabit a house " built upon the sand," and not the house " on the rock."

They will behold the mighty tree of Faith sprung from the grain of mustard-seed planted by our Redeemer, always flourishing always extending*, neither uprooted by the storms of persecution, nor withered by the sun of worldly prosperity. Nay more, the very persecution the Church of God has suffered, and is daily enduring, only extends it more and more; the Faithful, persecuted in " one city," fly elsewhere, bearing with them the treasure of Faith, and communicating it to those among- whom they settle, as the seeds of fertility are frequently borne on the wings of the tempest to the remote desert, which would otherwise be cursed with perpetual barrenness. The persecution of the Church in Ireland, for example, "has turned the desert into fruitfulness," in America, in Australia, in England itself, and the grey mouldering ruins of our fanes on the hill sides are compensated for by the Cathedral Churches across the ocean. The reader will see Heresy in every age, from the days of the Apostles themselves down to our own time, rising up, and vanishing after a while, but the Church of God is always the same, her Chief Pastors speaking with the same authority, and teaching the same doctrine to the trembling Neophytes in the Catacombs, and to the Cæsars on the throne of the world. Empires are broken into fragments and perish nations die away, and are only known to the historian languages spoken by millions disappear every thing that is mans work dies like man; heresies, like

the rest, have their rise, their progress, their decay, but Faith alone is eternal and unchangeable, "yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever."

Author's Preface

1. My object in writing this work is to prove that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true one among so many other Churches, and to show how carefully the Almighty guarded her, and brought her victoriously through all the persecutions of her enemies. Hence, as St. Iræneus says (Lib. 3, cap. 3, n. 2), all should depend on the Roman Church as on their fountain and head. This is the Church founded by Jesus Christ, and propagated by the Apostles; and although in the commencement persecuted and contradicted by all, as the Jews said to St. Paul in Rome : " For as concerning this sect (thus they called the Church), we know that it is gainsayed every where" (Acts, xxviii, 22); still she always remained firm, not like the other false Churches, which in the beginning numbered many followers, but perished in the end, as we shall see in the course of this history, when we speak of the Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians, and Pelagians; and if any sect still reckons many followers, as the Mahometans, Lutherans, or Calvinists, it is easy to see that they are upheld, not by the love of truth, but either by popular ignorance, or relaxation of morals. St. Augustine says that heresies are only embraced by those who had they persevered in the faith, would be lost by the irregularity of their lives (St. Aug. de Va. Rel. c. 8.)
2. Our Church, on the contrary, notwithstanding that she teaches her children a law opposed to the corrupt inclinations of human nature, not only never failed in the midst of persecutions, but even gained strength from them; as Tertullian (Apol. cap. ult.) says, the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians, and the more we are mown down the more numerous we become; and in the 20th chapter of the same work he says, the kingdom of Christ and his reign is believed and he is worshipped by all nations. Pliny the Younger confirms this in his

celebrated Letter to Trajan, in which he says that in Asia the temples of the gods were deserted, because the Christian Religion had overrun not only the cities but even the villages.

3. This, certainly, never could have taken place without the power of the Almighty, who intended to establish in the midst of idolatry, a new religion, to destroy all the superstitions of the false religion, and the ancient belief in a multitude of false gods adored by the Gentiles, by their ancestors, by the magistrates, and by the emperors themselves, who made use of all their power to protect it, and still the Christian faith was embraced by many nations who forsook a relaxed law for a hard and difficult one, forbidding them to pamper their sensual appetites. What but the power of God could accomplish this?
4. Great as the persecutions were which the Church suffered from idolatry, still greater were those she had to endure from the heretics which sprang from her own bosom, by means of wicked men, who, either through pride or ambition, or the desire of sensual license, endeavoured to rend the bowels of their parent. Heresy has been called a canker : " It spreadeth like a canker" (II. Tim. ii, 17); for as a canker infects the whole body, so heresy infects the whole soul, the mind, the heart, the intellect, and the will. It is also called a plague, for it not only infects the person contaminated with it, but those who associate with him, and the fact is, that the spread of this plague in the world has injured the Church more than idolatry, and this good mother has suffered more from her own children than from her enemies. Still she has never perished in any of the tempests which the heretics raised against her; she appeared about to perish at one time through the heresy of Arius, when the faith of the Council of Nice, through the intrigues of the wicked Bishops, Valens and Ursacius, was condemned, and, as St. Jerome says, the world groaned at finding itself Arian (1); and the Eastern Church appeared in the same danger during the time of the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches. But it is wonderful, and at the same time consoling, to read the end of all those heresies, and behold the bark of the Church, which appeared completely wrecked and sunk through the force of those persecutions, in a little while floating more gloriously and triumphantly than before.
5. St. Paul says: " There must be heresies, that they also who are reprov-

may be made manifest among you" (I. Cor. ii, 19). St. Augustine, explaining this text, says that as fire is necessary to purify silver, and separate it from the dross, so heresies are necessary to prove the good Christians among the bad, and to separate the true from the false doctrine. The pride of the heretics makes them presume that they know the true faith, and that the Catholic Church is in error, but here is the mistake : our reason is not sufficient to tell us the true faith, since the truths of Divine Faith are above reason; we should, therefore, hold by that faith which God has revealed to his Church, and which the Church teaches, which is, as the Apostle says, " the pillar and the ground of truth" (I. Tim. iii, 15).

(1) St. Hieron. Dial, adversus Lucifer.

Hence, as St. Iræneus says, "It is necessary that all should depend on the Roman Church as their head and fountain; all Churches should agree with this Church on account of her priority of principality, for there the traditions delivered by the Apostles have always been preserved" (St. Iran, lib. 3, c. 3); and by the tradition derived from the Apostles which the Church founded at Rome preserves, and the Faith preserved by the succession of the Bishops, we confound those who through blindness or an evil conscience draw false conclusions (Ibid). " Do you wish to know," says St. Augustine, " which is the true Church of Christ? Count those priests who, in a regular succession have succeeded St. Peter, who is the Rock, against which the gates of hell will not prevail" (St. Aug. in Ps. contra part Donat.) : and the holy Doctor alleges as one of the reasons which detain him in the Catholic Church, the succession of Bishops to the present time in the See of St. Peter" (Epis. fund, c. 4, n. 5); for in truth the uninterrupted succession from the Apostles and disciples is characteristic of the Catholic Church, and of no other.

6. It was the will of the Almighty that the Church in which the true faith was preserved should be one, that all the faithful might profess the one faith, but the devil, St. Cyprian says (2), invented heresies to destroy faith, and divide unity. The enemy has caused mankind to establish many different churches, so that each, following the faith of his own particular one, in opposition to that of others, the true faith might be confused, and as many false faiths formed as there are

different churches, or rather different individuals. This is especially the case in England, where we see as many religions as families, and even families themselves divided in faith, each individual following his own. St. Cyprian, then, justly says that God has disposed that the true faith should be preserved in the Roman Church alone, so that there being but one Church there should be but one faith and one doctrine for all the faithful. St. Optatus Milevitanus, writing to Parmenianus, says, also : " You cannot be ignorant that the Episcopal Chair of St. Peter was first placed in the city of Rome, in which one chair unity is observed by all" (St. Opt. I 2, cont. Parmen.)

(2) St. Cyprian de Unitate Ecclesiæ.

7. The heretics, too, boast of the unity of their Churches, but St. Augustine says that it is unity against unity. " What unity," says the Saint, " can all those churches have which are divided from the Catholic Church, which is the only true one; they are but as so many useless branches cut off from the Vine, the Catholic Church, which is always firmly rooted. This is the One Holy, True, and Catholic Church, opposing all heresies; it may be opposed, but cannot be conquered. All heresies come forth from it, like useless shoots cut off from the vine, but it still remains firmly rooted in charity, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (St. Aug. lib. 1, de Symbol ad Cath. c. 6). St. Jerome says that the very fact of the heretics forming a church apart from the Roman Church, is a proof, of itself, that they are followers of error, and disciples of the devil, described by the Apostle, as " giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils" (I. Tim. iv, 1).
8. The Lutherans and Calvinists say, just as the Donatists did before them, that the Catholic Church preserved the true faith down to a certain period some say to the third, some to the fourth, some to the fifth century but that after that the true doctrine was corrupted, and the spouse of Christ became an adulteress. This supposition, however, refutes itself; for, granting that the Roman Catholic Church was the Church first founded by Christ, it could never fail, for our Saviour himself promised that the gates of hell never should prevail against it : "I say unto you that you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt, xviii, 18). It being certain, then, that the Roman Catholic Church was the

true one, as Gerard, one of the first ministers of Luther, admits (Gerard de Eccles. cap. 11, sec. 6) it to have been for the first five hundred years, and to have preserved the Apostolic doctrine during that period, it follows that it must always have remained so, for the spouse of Christ as St. Cyprian says, could never become an adulteress.

9. The heretics, however, who, instead of learning from the Church the dogmas they should believe, wish to teach her false and perverse dogmas of their own, say that they have the Scriptures on their side, which are the fountain of truth, not considering, as a learned author (3) justly remarks, that it is not by reading, but by understanding, them, that the truth can be found. Heretics of every sort avail themselves of the Scriptures to prove their errors, but we should not interpret the Scripture according to our own private opinions, which frequently lead us astray, but according to the teaching of the Holy Church which is appointed the Mistress of true doctrine, and to whom God has manifested the true sense of the Divine books. This is the Church, as the Apostle tells us, which has been appointed the pillar and the ground of truth: ***"that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth"*** (I. Tim. iii, 15.) Hence St. Leo says that the Catholic faith despises the errors of heretics barking against the Church, who deceived by the vanity of worldly wisdom, have departed from the truth of the Gospel (St. Leo, Ser. 8, de Nat Dim.)
10. I think the History of Heresies is a most useful study, for it shows the truth of our Faith more pure and resplendent, by showing how it has never changed; and if, at all times, this is useful, it must be particularly so at present, when the most holy maxims and the principal dogmas of Religion are put in doubt : it shows, besides, the care God always took to sustain the Church in the midst of the tempests which were unceasingly raised against it, and the admirable manner in which all the enemies who attacked it were confounded. The History of Heresies is also useful to preserve in us the spirit of humility and subjection to the Church, and to make us grateful to God for giving us the grace of being born in Christian countries; and it shows how the most learned men have fallen into the most grievous errors, by not subjecting themselves

to the Church's teaching.

(3) Danes, Gen. Temp. Nat. in Epil.

11. I will now state my reasons for writing this Work; some may think this labour of mine superfluous, especially as so many learned authors have written expressly and extensively the history of various heresies, as Tertullian, St. Iræneus, St. Epiphanius, St. Augustine, St. Vincent of Lerins, Socrates, Sozomen, St. Philastrius, Theodoret, Nicephorus, and many others, both in ancient and modern times. This, however, is the very reason which prompted me to write this Work; for as so many authors have written, and so extensively, and as it is impossible for many persons either to procure so many and such expensive works, or to find time to read them, if they had them, I, therefore, judged it better to collect in a small compass the commencement and the progress of all heresies, so that in a little time, and at little expense, any one may have a sufficient knowledge of the heresies and schisms which infected the Church. I have said in a small compass, but still, not with such brevity as some others have done, who barely give an outline of the facts, and leave the reader dissatisfied, and ignorant of many of the most important circumstances. I, therefore, have studied brevity; but I wish, at the same time, that my readers may be fully informed of every notable fact connected with the rise and progress of, at all events, the principal heresies that disturbed the Church.
12. Another reason I had for publishing this Work was, that as modern authors, who have paid most attention to historical facts, have spoken of heresies only as a component part of Ecclesiastical History, as Baronius, Fleury, Noel Alexander, Tillemont, Orsi, Spondanus, Raynaldus, Graveson, and others, and so have spoken of each heresy chronologically, either in its beginning, progress, or decay, and, therefore, the reader must turn over to different parts of the works to find out the rise, progress, and disappearance of each heresy; I, on the contrary, give all at once the facts connected with each heresy in particular.
13. Besides, these writers have not given the Refutation of Heresies, and I give this in the second part of the Work; I do not mean the refutation of every heresy, but only of the principal ones, as those of Sabellius, Arius, Pelagius, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, the Monothelites, the Iconoclasts, the Greeks, and the like. I will merely speak of the

authors of other heresies of less note, and their falsity will be apparent, either from their evident weakness, or from the proofs I bring forward against the more celebrated heresies I have mentioned.

14. We ought, then, dear reader, unceasingly to thank our Lord for giving us the grace of being born and brought up in the bosom of the Catholic Church. St. Francis de Sales exclaims: ***"O good God! many and great are the benefits thou hast heaped on me, and I thank thee for them; but how shall I be ever able to thank thee for enlightening me with thy holy Faith?"*** And writing to one of his friends, he says: ***"God! the beauty of thy holy Faith appears to me so enchanting, that I am dying with love of it, and I imagine I ought to enshrine this precious gift in a heart all perfumed with devotion."*** St. Teresa never ceased to thank God for having made her a daughter of the Holy Church: her consolation at the hour of death was to cry out: ***"I die a child of the Holy Church! I die a child of the Holy Church."*** We, likewise, should never cease praising Jesus Christ for this grace bestowed on us one of the greatest conferred on us one distinguishing us from so many millions of mankind, who are born and die among infidels and heretics : ***"He has not done in like manner to every nation"*** (Psalm cxlvii, 9). With our minds filled with gratitude for so great a favour, we shall now see the triumph the Church has obtained through so many ages, over so many heresies opposed to her. I wish to remark, however, before I begin, that I have written this Work amidst the cares of my Bishoprick, so that I could not give a critical examination, many times, to the facts I state, and, in such case, I give the various opinions of different authors, without deciding myself on one side or the other. I have endeavoured, however, to collect all that could be found in the most correct and notable writers on the subject; but it is not impossible that some learned persons may be better acquainted with some facts than I am.

Chapter 1

Heresies of the First Century

1.1 Simon Magus

Simon Magus (1), the first heretic who disturbed the Church, was born in a part of Samaria called Githon or Gitthis. He was called Magus, or the Magician, because he made use of spells to deceive the multitude; and hence he acquired among his countrymen the extraordinary name of "The Great Power of God" (Acts, viii, 10). "This man is the power of God which is called great." Seeing that those on whom the Apostles Peter and John laid hands received the Holy Ghost, he offered them money to give to him the power of communicating the Holy Ghost in like manner; and on that account the detestable crime of selling holy things is called Simony. He went to Rome, and there was a statue erected to him in that city, a fact which St. Justin, in his first Apology, flings in the face of the Romans: "In your royal city," he says, "he (Simon) was esteemed a God, and a statue was erected to him in the Island of the Tyber, between the two bridges, bearing this Latin inscription SIMONI, DEO SANCTO."

(1) Baron. Annal, 35, d. 23; N. Alex. Hist. Ecclesias. t. 5, c. 11, n.-l; Hermant. His. Con. 56, 1, c. 7; Van Ranst, His. Her. n. 1.

Samuel Basnage, Petavius, Valesius, and many others, deny this fact; but Tillemont, Grotius, Fleury, and Cardinal Orsi defend it, and adduce in favour of it the authority of Tertullian, St. Irenus, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Augustine, Eusebius, and Theodoret, who even says the statue was a bronze one. Simon broached many errors, which Noel Alexander enumerates and refutes (2). The principal ones were that the world was created by angels;

that when the soul leaves the body it enters into another body, which, if true, says St. Irneus (3), it would recollect all that happened when it inhabited the former body, for memory, being a spiritual quality, it could not be separated from the soul. Another of his errors was one which has been brought to light by the heretics of our own days, that man had no free will, and, consequently, that good works are not necessary for salvation. Baronius and Fleury relate (4), that, by force of magic spells, he one day caused the devil to elevate him in the air; but St. Peter and St. Paul being present, and invoking the name of Jesus Christ, he fell down and broke both his legs. He was carried away by his friends; but his corporeal and mental sufferings preyed so much on him, that, in despair, he cast himself out of a high window; and thus perished the first heretic who ever disturbed the Church of Christ (5). Basnage, who endeavours to prove that St. Peter never was in Rome, and never filled the pontifical chair of that city, says that this is all a fabrication; but we have the testimony of St. Ambrose, St. Isidore of Pelusium, St. Augustine, St. Maximus, St. Philastrius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Severus Sulpicius, Theodoret, and many others, in our favour. We have, besides, a passage in Seutonium, which corroborates their testimony, for he says (lib. VI., cap. xii), that, while Nero assisted at the public sports, a man endeavoured to fly, but, after elevating himself for a while, he fell down, and the Emperors pavilion was sprinkled with his blood.

(2) Nat. Alex. t. 5, in fin. Dis. 24.

(3) St. Irneus, de Heresi. l. 2, c. 58.

(4) Baron. Ann. 35, n. 14, ad. 17; Fleury, His. Eccl. t. 1, l. 2, n. 23; St. Augus.; St. Joan. Chris.

(5) Baron, n. 17; Nat. Alex. t. 5, c. 11; Orsi, Istor. Eccl. l. 1, n. 20, and l. 2, n. 19; Berti. Brev. Histor. t. 1, c. 3.

1.2 Menander

Menander was a Samaritan likewise, and a disciple of Simon Magus; he made his appearance in the year of our Lord 73. He announced himself a messenger from the "Unknown Power," for the salvation of mankind. No one, according to him, could be saved, unless he was baptized in his name, and his baptism, he said, was the true resurrection, so that his disciples would enjoy immortality even in this life (6). Cardinal Orsi adds, that Menander was the first who invented the doctrine of "Eons," and that he taught that

Jesus Christ exercised human functions in appearance alone.

1.3 Cerinthus

Cerinthus was the next after Menander, but he began to broach his doctrine in the same year (7). His errors can be reduced to four heads : he denied that God was the creator of the world; he asserted that the law of Moses was necessary for salvation; he also taught that after the resurrection Jesus Christ would establish a terrestrial kingdom in Jerusalem, where the just would spend a thousand years in the enjoyment of every sensual pleasure; and, finally, he denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. The account Bernini gives of his death is singular (8). The Apostle St. John, he says, met him going into a bath, when, turning to those along with him, he said, let us hasten out of this, lest we be buried alive, and they had scarcely gone outside when the whole building fell with a sudden crash, and the unfortunate Cerinthus was overwhelmed in the ruins. One of the impious doctrines of this heretic was, that Jesus was a mere man, born as all other men are, and that, when he was baptized in the river Jordan, Christ descended on him, that is, a virtue or power, in form of a dove, or a spirit sent by God to fill him with knowledge, and communicate it to mankind; but after Jesus had fulfilled his mission, by instructing mankind and working miracles, he was deserted by Christ, who returned to heaven, and left him to darkness and death. Alas ! what impiety men fall into when they desert the light of faith, and follow their own weak imaginations.

(6) Fleury, loc. cit. n. 42; N. Alex. loc. cit. art. 2

(7) N. Alex. t. 5, c. 11, or. 5; Fleury, t. 1, L 2, n. 42; Berti, loc. cit. : Orsi, t. 1, l. 2, n. 43.

(8) Bernin. Istor. del Eresia, t. 1, c. 1; St. Iren. 1. 3, c. 4, de S.

1.4 Ebion

Ebion prided himself in being a disciple of St. Peter, and could even bear to hear St. Pauls name mentioned. He admitted the sacrament of baptism; but in the consecration of the Eucharist he used nothing but water in the chalice; he, however, consecrated the host in unleavened bread, and Eusebius says he performed this every Sunday. According to St. Jerome, the baptism

of the Ebionites was admitted by the Catholics. He endeavoured to unite the Mosaic and Christian law, and admitted no part of the New Testament, unless the Gospel of St. Matthew, and even that mutilated, as he left out two chapters, and altered the others in many places. The ancient writers say that St. John wrote his Gospel to refute the errors of Ebion. The most impious of his blasphemies was, that Jesus Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary, born as the rest of men are; that he was but a mere man, but that, on account of his great virtue, the Almighty adopted him as his Son (9).

1.5 Saturninus and Basilides

Saturninus and Basilides were disciples of Menander, whose history we have already seen; and they made some additions to the heresy of their master. Saturninus, a native of Antioch, taught, with Menander, as Fleury tells us (10), that there was one only Father, unknown to all, who created the angels, and that seven angels created the world and man. The God of the Jews, he said, was one of these rebellious angels, and it was to destroy him that Christ appeared in the form of man, though he never had a real body. He condemned matrimony and procreation as an invention of the devil. He attributed the Prophecies partly to the angels, partly to the devil, and partly to the God of the Jews. He also said, according to St. Augustine (*Heres. iii*), that the Supreme Virtue that is, the Sovereign Father having created the angels, seven of them rebelled against him, created man, and for this reason : Seeing a celestial light, they wished to retain it, but it vanished from them; and they then created man to resemble it, saying, " Let us make man to the image and likeness." Man being thus created, was like a mere worm, incapable of doing anything, till the Sovereign Virtue, pitying his image, placed in him a spark of himself, and gave him life. This is the spark which, at the dissolution of the body, flies to heaven. Those of his sect alone, he said, had this spark; all the others were deprived of it, and, consequently, were reprobate.

(9) N. Alex. loc. cit, art. 6; Fleury, loc. cit. n, 42. [N.B Fleury puts Ebion first, next Cerinthus, and lastly Menander,]

(10) Fleury, n. 19.

Basilides, according to Fleury, was a native of Alexandria, and even exceeded Saturninus in fanaticism. He said that the Father, whom he called Abrasax, produced Nous, that is, Intelligence; who produced Logos, or the Word; the Word produced Phronesis, that is, Prudence; and Prudence,

Sophia and Dunamis, that is, Wisdom and Power. These created the angels, who formed the first heaven and other angels; and these, in their turn, produced a second heaven, and so on, till there were three hundred and sixty-five heavens produced, according to the number of days in the year. The God of the Jews, he said, was the head of the second order of angels, and because he wished to rule all nations, the other princes rose up against him, and, on that account, God sent his first-born, Nous, to free mankind from the dominion of the angels who created the world. This Nous, who, according to him, was Jesus Christ, was an incorporeal virtue, who put on whatever form pleased him. Hence, when the Jews wished to crucify him, he took the form of Simon the Cyrenean, and gave his form to Simon, so that it was Simon, and not Jesus, who was crucified. Jesus, at the same time, was laughing at the folly of the Jews, and afterwards ascended invisibly to heaven. On that account, he said, we should not venerate the crucifix, otherwise we would incur the danger of being subject to the angels who created the world. He broached many other errors; but these are sufficient to show his fanaticism and impiety. Both Saturninus and Basilides fled from martyrdom, and always cloaked their faith with this maxim " Know others, but let no one know you." Cardinal Orsi says (11) they practised magic, and were addicted to every species of incontinence, but that they were careful in avoiding observation. They promulgated their doctrines before Menander, in the year 125; but, because they were disciples of his, we have mentioned them after him.

(11) Orsi, t. 2, l. 3, n. 23.

1.6 The Nicholites

The Nicholites admitted promiscuous intercourse with married and single, and, also, the use of meats offered to idols. They also said that the Father of Jesus Christ was not the creator of the world. Among the other foolish doctrines they held, was one, that darkness, uniting with the Holy Ghost, produced a matrix or womb, which brought forth four Eons; that from these four Eons sprung the evil Eon, who created the Gods, the angels, men, and seven demoniacal spirits, This heresy was of short duration; but some new Nicholites sprung up afterwards in the Milanese territory, who were condemned by Pope Nicholas II. The Nicholites called themselves disciples of Nicholas the Deacon, who, according to Noel Alexander, was esteemed a

heresiarch by St. Eusebius, St. Hilarian, and St. Jerome. However, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Theodoret, Baronius, St. Ignatius the Martyr, Orsi, St. Augustine, Fleury, and Berti, acquit him of this charge (12).

(12) Nat. Alex. t. 5, diss. 9; Baron. An. 68, n. 9; Orsi, t. 1, n. 64; Fleury, t. 1, L 2, n. 21; Berti, loc. cit.

Chapter 2

Heresies of the Second Century

2.1 Copocrates

Corpocrates was a native of Alexandria, or, as others say, of Samosata. His followers were called Gnostics that is, learned or enlightened. He said that Jesus Christ was the son of Joseph, born as other men are, and distinguished from them by his virtue alone, and that the world was created by angels. Another blasphemous doctrine of his was, that, to unite ourselves with God, we should practise all the unclean works of concupiscence; our evil propensities should be followed in everything, for this, he said, was the enemy spoken of in the Gospel (1), to which we should yield, and, by this means, we show our contempt for the laws of the wicked angels, and acquire the summit of perfection; and the soul, he said, would pass from one body to another till it had committed all sorts of unclean actions. Another of his doctrines was, that every one had two souls, for without the second, he said, the first would be subject to the rebellious angels. The followers of this hellish monster called themselves Christians, and, as a distinctive mark, they branded the lower part of the ear with a red iron. They paid the same veneration to the images of Pythagoras, Plato, and the other philosophers, as to that of Jesus Christ. Corpocrates lived in the year 160.

2.2 Valentine

Valentine, who, it was supposed, was an Egyptian, separated himself from the Church, because he was disappointed in obtaining a bishopric. He came

to Rome in 141, and abjured his errors, but soon again embraced them, and persevered in them till his death (2). He invented a fabulous genealogy of Eons or Gods; and another of his errors was, that Jesus Christ did not become incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary, but brought his body from heaven. He admitted in man a continual exercise of spirit, which, uniting with the flesh, rendered lawful every sensual pleasure; and he divided mankind into three classes the carnal, the animal, and the spiritual. His followers, he said, were the spiritualists, and, on that account, were exempt from the necessity of good works, because, having arrived at the apex of perfection, and being certain of eternal felicity, it was useless for them to suffer, or observe the law. The carnal, he said, were excluded from eternal salvation and predestined to hell (3).

(1) N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 2; Flemy, l. 3, n. 20; Berti, t. 1, c. 3; Bernin. t. 1, c. 2.

(2) Van Ranst, His. p. 20.

(3) Fleury, t. 1, l. 3, n. 2627; Bernin. t. 1, c. 5; Graveson, t. 3, . 49; N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 6.

Three sects take their origin from Valentine. The first were called Sethites : These paid such honour to Seth, that they said Jesus Christ was born of him, and some went so far as to say that Jesus Christ and Seth were one and the same person. The second sect were called Cainites : These venerated as saints all those who the Scripture tells us were damned as Cain, Core, the inhabitants of Sodom, and especially Judas Iscariot. The third were called Ophites : These said that Wisdom became a serpent, and; on that account, they adored Jesus Christ as a serpent; they trained one of these reptiles to come out of a cave when called, and creep up on the table where the bread for sacrifice was placed; they kissed him while he crept round the bread, and, considering it then sanctified by the reptile, whom they blasphemously called Christ, they broke it to the people, who received it as the Eucharist (4).

Ptolemy and Saturninus were disciples of Valentine; but their master admitted thirty Eons, and they added eight more. He also had other disciples : Heraclion, whose followers invoked over the dead certain names of principalities, and anointed them with oil and water; Marcus and Colarbasus taught that all truth was shut up in the Greek alphabet, and, on that account, they called Christ Alpha and Omega (5); and Van Ranst adds to the list the Arconticites, who rejected the sacraments Florinus, who said that God was the author of sin and Blastus (6), who insisted that Easter should be

celebrated after the Jewish fashion. The disciples of Valentine made a new Gospel, and added various books to the Canon of the Scriptures, as ” **The Parables of the Lord,**” ” **The Prophetic Sayings and the Sermons of the Apostles.**” It is needless to add that all these were according to their own doctrines.

2.3 Epiphanes

Epiphanes, the son of Carpocrates, besides defending the damnable opinions of his father, openly rejected the law of Moses, and especially the two last precepts of the Decalogue. He also rejected the Gospel, though he pretended to follow it (7).

(4) Fleury, t. 1, l. 3, n. 30; Bernin. t. 1, c. 2; Van Ranst, p. 20.

(5) Fleury, l. 3, n. 30, l. 4, n. 9 & 10.

(6) Van Ranst, p. 22. (7) Fleury, l. 3, n. 20; Bern. t. 1, c. 2.

2.4 Prodicus

Prodicus taught that it was lawful to deny the faith to avoid death; he rejected the worship of an invisible God, and adored the four elements and the sun and the moon; he condemned all prayers to God as superstitious, but he prayed to the elements and the planets to be propitious to mankind (8). This impious worship he always performed naked. Noel Alexander and Theodoret assign to this heretic the institution of the sect called Adamites; these always performed their religious exercises in their churches, or rather brothels, as St. Epiphanius calls them, naked, pretending by this to imitate the innocence of Adam, but, in reality, practising every abomination (9).

2.5 Tatian

Tatian was born in Assyria, and was a disciple of St. Justin Martyr. He was the founder of the sect called Encratites, or Continent; he taught, with Valentine, that matter was uncreated and eternal; he attributed the creation to God, but through the instrumentality of an inferior Eon, who said let there be light, not by way of command, but of supplication, and thus light was created. He denied, with Valentine, the resurrection of the dead, and human

flesh, he said was too unworthy to be united with the divinity in the person of Christ. He deprived man of free will, saying he was good and spiritual, or bad and carnal, by necessity, according as the seed of divine grace was infused or not into him; and he rejected the law of Moses, as not instituted by God, but by the Eon who created the world. Finally, he condemned matrimony, prohibited the use of flesh-meat and wine, and, because he used nothing but water in the consecration of the chalice, his disciples were called Hydroparastati, or Aquarii (10).

2.6 Severus

Severus was a disciple of Tatian; but differed from his master in some essential points, especially in admitting the law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Gospels. Julius Capianus, a disciple of Valentine, joined with Severus, and was the founder of the heresy of the Doceti, who said that Jesus had not a real, but an apparent, body. He wrote a book on continence, in which he quoted a passage of the spurious gospel used by the Egyptians, in which Jesus Christ is made to curse matrimony. In his commentaries on Genesis he says marriage was the forbidden fruit (11).

(8) Bern. loc. cit.

(9) N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 12; Gotti, Ver. Eel. t. 2, c, 27, s. 1; Bernin. loc. cit.

(10) Orsi, t. 2, l. 4, n. 11; Fleury, t, 1, l. 4, n. 8; Baron. An. 174, n.3, 4; N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 7.

(11) Fleury, loc. cit. n. 8; Orsi, loc, cit. n. 12.

2.7 Cerdonius

Cerdonius followed the doctrines of Simon, Menander, and Saturninus; besides, he taught, with Maims, the existence of two first principles, or Gods, a good and a bad one, and admitted the resurrection of the soul, but not of the body. He rejected all the Gospels, except St. Lukes, and mutilated that in several places (12)

2.8 Marcion

Marcion was a native of the city of Sinope, in the province of Pontus, and the son of a Catholic bishop. In his early days he led a life of continence and retirement; but for an act of immorality he was cut off from the Church by his own father. He then went to Rome, and endeavoured to accomplish his restoration; but not being able to succeed, he, in a fit of rage, said "I will cause an eternal division in your Church." He then united himself to Cerdonius, admitting two principles, and founding his doctrine on the sixth chapter of St. Luke, where it is said a good tree cannot bring forth bad fruits. The good principle, he said, was the author of good, and the bad one of evil; and the good principle was the father of Jesus Christ, the giver of grace, and the bad one, the creator of matter and the founder of the law. He denied the incarnation of the Son of God, saying it was repugnant to a good God to unite himself with the filthiness of flesh, and that his soul should have for a companion a body infected and corrupt by nature. He also taught the existence of two Gods one, the good God; the other, an evil one, the God of the Jews, and the creator of the world. Each of these Gods promised to send a Christ. Our Christ appeared in the reign of Tiberius, and was the good Christ; the Jewish Christ did not yet come. The Old Testament he rejected, because it was given by the bad principle, or God of the Jews. Among other errors, he said, that when Jesus descended into hell, he did not save Abel, or Henoc, or Noah, or any other of the just of the old law, because they were friends of the God of the Jews; but that he saved Cain, the Sodomites, and the Egyptians, because they were the enemies of this God (13). (12) Fleury, l. 3, n. 30; Nat. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 4; Orsi, t. 2, l. 3, n. 44. (13) Orsi, t. 2, l. 3, n. 45; N. Alex. t. 6, c. 3, ar. 5; Baron. Ann. 146, n. 9, &c.; Fleury, t. 1, l. 3, n. 34.

2.9 Apelles

Apelles, the most famous disciple of Marcion, was excommunicated by his master for committing a crime against chastity, and felt his disgrace so much that he fled to Alexandria. This heretic, among other errors, said that God created a number of angels and powers, and among the rest a power called the Lord, who created this world to resemble the world above, but not being able to bring it to perfection, he repented him of having created it (14). Van

Ranst says that he rejected the Prophecies, and said the Son of God took a body of air which, at his ascension, dissolved into air again.

2.10 Montanus

Montanus, as Cardinal Orsi tells us (15), was born in Ardraba, an obscure village of Mysia. He first led such a mortified life that he was esteemed a saint; but, possessed by the demon of ambition, his head was turned. He began to speak in an extraordinary manner, make use of unknown words, and utter prophecies in contradiction to the traditions of the Church. Some thought him possessed by a spirit of error; others looked on him as a saint and prophet. He soon acquired a number of followers, and carried his madness to the utmost excess; among others who joined him were two loose women of the names of Prisca or Priscilla and Maximilla, and, seemingly possessed by the same spirit as himself, they uttered the most extraordinary rhodomontades. Montanus said that he and his prophetesses received the plenitude of the Holy Ghost, which was only partially communicated to others, and he quoted in his favour that text of St. Paul (I. Corinthians, xiii, 9), " By part we know, and by part we prophesy ;" and they had the madness to esteem themselves greater than the apostles, since they had received the Holy Ghost promised by Jesus Christ in perfection. They also said that God wished, at first, to save the world, by means of Moses and the prophets; when he saw that these were not able to accomplish it, he himself became incarnate; but even this not sufficing, he descended in the Holy Ghost into Montanus and his prophetesses. He established nine fasting-days and three Lents in the year. Among other errors he prohibited his disciples to fly from persecution, and refused to admit sinners to repentance, and prohibited second marriages (16).

(14) Fleury, loc. cit. . 35,

(15) Orsi, t. 2, l. 4, n. 17.

(16) Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 5, c. 15.

Eusebius tells us that he died miserably, having hanged himself (17)

2.11 Cataphrigians, Artotirites, Peputians, Ascodrogites, Pattalorinchites

The heresy of Montanus shot forth different branches, as the Cataphrigians, Artotirites, Peputians, Ascodrogites, and Pattalorinchites. The Cataphrigians were called from the nation to which Montanus belonged. The Eucharistic bread they used was made of flour and blood taken from the body of an infant by puncturing it all over; if the infant died he was considered a martyr, but if he survived he was regarded as high priest. This we learn from Noel Alexander (18). The Artotirites were so called, because in the sacrifice of the Eucharist, they offered up bread and cheese. The Peputians took their name from an obscure village of Phrigia, where they held their solemn meetings; they ordained women priests and bishops, saying there was no difference between them and men. The Ascodrogites were no better than the ancient bacchanalians; they used bottles which they filled with wine near the altars, saying that these were the new bottles Jesus Christ spoke of "They shall put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." The Pattalorinchites were so called, because they wore a small stick in the mouth or nose, a sign of strict silence; they were so called, from *pattalos*, a stick, and *rinchos*, the nose (19).

2.12 Bardesanes

Bardesanes, a native of Edessa, in Syria, lived in this age also. He was celebrated in the time of Marcus Aurelius for his learning and constancy in defending the faith. He told the Philosopher Apollonius, the favourite of the Emperor, who endeavoured to pervert him, that he was ready to seal his belief with his blood. He opposed the errors of Valentine; but, being educated in his school, he was infected with some of them, especially disbelieving the resurrection of the dead. He wrote many works in refutation of the heresies of his day, especially an excellent treatise on fate, which St. Jerome, in his catalogue of ecclesiastical writers, praises highly. We may truly say, with Noel Alexander, that the fall of so great a man is to be lamented (20).

(17) Baron. An. 173, n. 20; N. Alex. t. 6, sec. 2, c. 3, ar. 8; Fleury, t. 1, l. 4, n. 5; Bernin. t. 1, c. 8; Orsi, t. 2, l. 4, n. 18.

(18) Nat. Alex. cit. ar. 8, n. 11; St. Angus. & St. Cyril. [St. Epiphanius says it is the Peputians.]

- (19) Van Ranst, *His. Heres.* p. 24; Vedia anche *Nat. Alex.* loc. cit.
 (20) *Nat. Alex.* t. 6, c. 3, ar. 9; Van Ranst, p. 24.

2.13 Theodotus the Currier, Artemon, and Theodotus Argentarius

Theodotus the Currier, so called on account of his trade, was a native of Byzantium, and he, along with Artemon, asserted like Ebion and Cerinthus, that Christ was mere man. Besides this there was another Theodotus, called Argentarius, or the Banker, who taught that Melchisadech was Christ, or even greater than Christ, on account of that verse of the Psalms "Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisadech;" and his followers were afterwards called Melchisadechites (21).

2.14 Hermogenes

Hermogenes said that matter was uncreated and eternal. Tertullian, Eusebius, and Lactantius refuted this error. He also taught that the devils would hereafter be united with matter and that the body of Jesus Christ was in the sun (22).

- (21) *N. Alex.* loc. cit. ar. 10; Fleury, f. 1, l. 4, n. 33, 34.
 (22) Fleury, loc. cit. n. 21; *N. Alex.* loc. cit. ar. 15.

Chapter 3

Heresies of the Third Century

Chapter 4

Heresies of the Fourth Century

Chapter 5

Heresies of the Fifth Century