order.@@1 The challenge was taken up, among others, by the famous orientalist Friedrich von Hammer-Purgstall, who in 1818 published his *Mysterium Baphometis revelatum,@@2* an attempt to prove that the Templars followed the doctrines and rites of the Gnostic Ophites, the argument being fortified with reproductions of obscene represen­tations of supposed Gnostic ceremonies and of mystic symbols said to have been found in the Templars’ buildings. Wilcke, while rejecting Hammer’s main conclusions as unproved, argued in favour of the existence of a secret doctrine based, not on Gnosticism, but on the unitarianism of Islam, of which Baphomet (Mahomet) was the symbol.@@3 On the other hand, Wilhelm Havemann *(Geschichte des Ausganges des Tempelherrenordens,* Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1846) decided in favour of the innocence of the order. This view was also taken by a succession of German scholars, in England by C. G. Addison, and in France by a whole series of conspicuous writers: *e.g.* Mignet, Guizot, Renan, Lavocat. Others, like Boutaric,@@4 while rejecting the charge of heresy, accepted the evi­dence for the *spuitιo* and the indecent kisses, explaining the former as a formula of forgotten meaning and the latter as a sign of *fraternité!* Michelet, who in his history of France had expressed himself favourably to the order, announced his conversion to the opposite opinion in the prefaces to his edition of the *Procès.* This view was reinforced by the work in which Loiseleur endeavoured to prove that the order had secretly rejected Christianity in favour of an heretical religion based on Gnostic dualism as taught by the Cathari;@@5 it was crowned with the high authority of Ranke in the great *Weltgeschichte* (8 Theil, 1887, p. 621 ff.); it has been adopted in the later *Weltgeschichte of* Weber (8 Theil, 1887, p. 521 ff.). The greatest impulse to this view was, however, given by the brilliant contributions of Hans Prutz. The first of these, the *Geheimlehτe,* in the main an expansion of Loiseleur’s argument, at once raised up a host of critics; and, as a result of five years’ study' of the archives at Rome and elsewhere, Konrad Schott­müller published in 1887 his *Untergang des Templerordens,* in which he claimed to have crushed Prutz’s conclusions under the weight of a mass of new evidence. The work was, however, uncritical and full of conspicuous errors, and Prutz had little difficulty in turning many of its author’s arguments against himself. This was done in the *Entwicklung und Untergang des Tempelherrenordens* (1888), in which, however, Prutz modifies his earlier views so far as to withdraw his contention that the Templars had a “ formally developed secret doctrine," while maintaining that the custom of denying Christ and spitting on the cross was often, and in some provinces universally, practised at the reception of the brethren, “ as a coarse test of obedience, of which the original sense had partly been forgotten, partly heretically interpreted under the influence of later heresies.”@@6 This view was maintained by Mr T. A. Archer in the 9th ed. of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* It was criticized and rejected by Döllinger in the last of his university lectures (19th Nov. 1889), and by Karl Wenck in several articles in the *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen;* and it was further attacked by J. Gmelin *(Schuld oder Unschuld,* 2 Bd. 1893), whose work, in spite of its somewhat ponderous polemic, is valuable as a mine of learn­ing and by reason of the sources (notably the tables of the evidence taken at the trials) which it publishes. H. C. Lea, in his *History of the Inquisition* (1888, vol. iii.), had already come independently' to the conclusion that the Templars were innocent. Lastly appeared the fascinatingly interesting and closely reasoned book of Professor H. Finke (1907) which, based partly on a mass of new material drawn from the Aragonese archives, had for its object to supple­ment the work of Gmelin and to establish the innocence of the order on an incontrovertible basis.

In the opinion of the present writer, the defenders of the order have proved their case. Even the late Mr Archer, who took the contrary view, was inclined to restrict it to the Templars in France. “ The opinion that the monstrous charges brought against the Templars were faise,” he wrote *(Ency. Brit.,* 9th ed. xiii. 164), "and that the confessions were only extracted by torture is supported by the general results of the investigation (in almost every country outside France), as we have them collected in Raynouard, Labbe, and Du Puy. In Castile, where the king flung them into prison, they were acquitted at the council at Salamanca. In Aragon, where they held out for a time in their fortresses against the royal power, the council of Tarragona proclaimed in their favour (4th November 1312). In Portugal the commissioners reported that there were no grounds for accusation. At Mainz the council pronounced the order blameless. At Treves, at Messina, and at Bologna, in Romagna and in Cyprus, they were either acquitted or no evidence was forthcoming against them. At the council of Ravenna *the* question as to whether torture should be used was answered in the negative except by two Dominicans; all the Templars were absolved—even those who had confessed through fear of torture being, pronounced innocent (18th June 1310). Six Templars were examined at Florence, and their evidence is for its length the most remarkable of all that is still extant. Roughly speaking, they confess with the most elaborate detail to every charge,—even the most loathsome; and the perusal of their evi­dence induces a constant suspicion that their answers were practi­cally dictated to them in the process of the examination or invented by the witnesses themselves.@@7 In England, where perhaps torture was not used, out of eighty Templars examined only four confessed to the charge of denying Christ, and of these four two were apos­tate knights. But some English Templars would only guarantee the purity of their own country. That in England as elsewhere the charges were held to be not absolutely proved seems evident from the form of confession to be used before absolution, in which the Templars.acknowledge themselves to be defamed in the matter of certain articles that they cannot purge themselves. In England nearly all the worst evidence comes at second or third hand or through the depositions of Franciscans and Dominicans,” *i.e.* the rivals and enemies of the order. But what is the nature of the evidence “ too strong to be explained away ” on which Mr Archer bases his opinion that certain of the charges were proved "at least in France ”? The modem practice of the English courts tends to discount altogether. the value as evidence of confessions, even freely made. What is the value of these confessions of the Templars which lie before us in the Tables published by Gmelin? The pro­cedure of the Inquisition left no alternative to those accused on “ vehement suspicion ”. of heresy, but confession or death under lingering torture; to withdraw a confession meant instant death by fire. The Templars, for the most part simple and illiterate men, were suddenly arrested, cast separately into dark dungeons, loaded with chains, starved, terrorized, and tortured. They were told the charges to which their leaders had confessed, or were said to have confessed: to repeat the monotonous formula admitting the *spuitio super crucem* and the like was to obtain their freedom at the cost of a comparatively mild penance. The wonder is not that so many confessed, but that so many persisted in their denial. The evidence, in short, is, from the modern point of view, wholly worthless, as even some contemporaries suspected it to be.

A word must be added as to the significance of the work of the Templars and of the manner of their fall in the history of the world. Two great things the order had done for Euro­pean civilization: in the East and in Spain it had successfully checked the advance of Islam; it had deepened and given a religious sanction to the idea of the chivalrous man, the *homo legalis,* and so opened up, to a class of people who for centuries to come were to exercise enormous influence, spheres of activity the beneficent effects of which are still recognizable in the world.@@8 On the other hand, the destruction of the Templars had three consequences fateful for Christian civilization: (1) It facilitated the conquests of the Turks by preventing the Templars from playing in Cyprus the part which the Knights of St John played in Malta.@@9 (2) It partly set a precedent for, partly confirmed, the cruel criminal procedure of France, which lasted to the Revolution. (3) It set the seal of the highest authority on the

@@@1 F. J. Μ. Raynouard, *Monuments historiques, relatifs à la con­damnation des chevaliers du Temple,* &c. (Paris, 1813).

@@@2 In vol. vi. of *Fundgruben des Orients* (Vienna, 1818). In reply to his critics Hammer published in 1855 his “ Die Schuld der Templer” *(K. Akad. zu Wien Denkschrift.,* vi.), in which he repro­duced drawings of two remarkable caskets, sculptured with Gnostic pictures, from the former collection of the duc de Blacas, said to have been found on the sites of Temples. To the present writer the evidence that any of these objects had been connected with the Templars seemed singularly unconvincing even before he had seen the trenchant criticisms of Wilcke (ii. 290, ed. 1862, Beilage 22) and Loiseleur *(Doctrine secrète,* 4me partie, p. 97 seq.). If such objects existed, why were none brought up as evidence against the Templars at their trial ?

@@@3 Wilhelm Ferdinand Wilcke, *Geschichte des Tempelherrenordens* (3 vols. Leipzig, 1826 ff., 2nd ed., enlarged and revised 1860).

@@@4 Edgard Boutaric, *La France sous Philippe le Bel* (Paris, 1861), pp. 140 seq.

@@@5 J. Loiseleur, *La Doctrine secrète des Templiers* (Orleans, 1872).

@@@6 Prutz points out, with much truth, that the failure of the Crusades had weakened men’s absolute belief in Christianity, at least as represented by the medieval Church *(Kulturgeschichte der Kreuzzüge,* p. 268 ff.). Walther von der Vogelweide had merely accused the archangels of neglecting their duty (Pfeiffer’s ed. 1880, p. 288); a Templar minstrel complained that God Himself had fallen asleep! (Prutz, *Tempelherrenorden,* 126.)

@@@7 See the evidence in full, ap. Loiseleur, pp. 172-212.

@@@8 G. Schnürer, quoted in Finke, i. 1.

@@@9 In his essay on the Templars *(The Spanish Story of the Armada and other Essays,* 1892) Froude says that the order lacked "the only support that never fails—some legitimate place among the useful agencies of the time.” Was there no use for them against the advancing tide of Turkish conquest in the East? Or in. Spain against the Moorish powers? If not, why did the Hospitallers survive? Froude’s contribution is but a popular lecture, however, and, for all its beauty of style, characteristically careless *(e.g.* such mistakes as Hugh *von* Peyraud, Esquin *von* Florian).