

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH AND THE YOUNG

THE Christian Church entered, in respect to the training of the young, as in much else, upon an inheritance from ancient Israel. The Divine law of parental responsibility for the religious training of children runs through the whole of the Old Testament. In the history we read that God, in the beginning, said that Abraham would "command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (Genesis xviii. 19). There are frequent injunctions in the legislative part of the Pentateuch to the same effect. The pious Israelites are commanded in Deuteronomy, especially in the great song of Moses, to teach the truths of their history and of revelation unto the "generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you" (Deut. xxix. 22). And so in later psalm and prophecy the God of all the families of the earth desires and expects to be kept in mind in the families of His chosen Israel. In all ancient nations the father's power over his children was nearly absolute, but under the Divine

law the father was commanded to train his son, and his daughter, and the servants of his household in the knowledge of the truth of God.

The Christian Church finds few special injunctions on the subject in the New Testament, because the writers assume that the Old Testament is in the hands of the people. In the Old Testament, morality is the condition of religion. We have, therefore, in the first days of the Christian Church to contemplate the state of society in which all Christian fathers, like the Philippian jailor, sought to take their children with them into the kingdom of heaven. Timothy was only one of many who learned at their mothers' knees the truth of the Scriptures of God. Such injunctions as we find are in the direction of reminding parents that their power over their children was limited by the law of God. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged," is the Apostle's considerate precept when he is writing to the Christians of Colosse (Col. iii. 21). Parents are not to do what they will with their children, but are bound to nurture them in "the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4). The same considerate religious duty is directly taught as regards slaves in many passages, for the Christian Church continues the precepts of the teaching of the Fourth Commandment, that the religious man's piety must pervade, and bless, and guide all his household. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven" (Col. iv. 1).

We may contrast with the Christian home, in which the father and mother brought up their children in the knowledge of Old Testament Scripture and of the gospel of Christ, and perhaps of the catechisms used by the Jews for proselytes, such heathen homes as were occupied by the ordinary subjects of the empire. If we enter a Roman home we find the father enthroned amid the household gods, like Jupiter on Olympus, with absolute power of life and death and slavery, so that he could do almost what he would with his children. If, however, he wished to train them in such religion as a Roman knew, there was no small difficulty. A learned historian¹ says that the whole Pagan theology may be divided into three parts, viz. the Fabulous, of which the tragedies of the poets contain the exposition; the Natural (physical), invented by philosophers to explain or explain away the fabulous; and the Political, *i.e.* the Ritualistic teachings which, given under the laws, are religiously preserved in every city and in every state. Of this last it is said that, while the rites are prescribed in city and country, in obedience to the national voice, it ought to have no respect either from poets or philosophers (Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* iv. 1). There was no sacred Book to which the Roman could refer his child for such theology as might be a basis for practical religion. Neither the Roman nor the Greek had anything corresponding to what we mean, and what Israel meant, by a sacred religious book which was a standard of conduct.

¹ Eusebius.

The Chinese have such books; ancient Egypt probably had them; the Persians certainly had; but the ancient heathenism of Europe was a religion without a book. It needs a violent effort for a native of Christendom to transport himself into a society thus blank in respect to sacred literature, for what would the Roman parent teach a child? There was less than no ethical teaching of virtue and morals in the legends of Olympus.¹ There was nothing which the unsophisticated young nature could appreciate in the philosophical explanations of those ancient fables, and if the Roman taught any lessons to his child, those lessons must have been in the main independent of the legendary lore of poets and historians. There remained, indeed, the third section—the ritual, or official observances. This was under the control of government, and was made a matter of compulsion. The Roman citizen was bound to do some honour to the festival observances of the heathen temples. And perhaps, amid the multitude of deities that crowded the Pantheon, it was possible for a virtuous man to enjoin upon his child the selection of some potentate who would befriend the right and oppose the wrong. Perhaps it might be suggested that he should pay his devotions at the shrine of some abstract virtue, for abstract virtues had their shrines and altars in those days. While, however, this was possible, it is easy to see how hard was the task

¹ "Abstain from all heathen gods" to show that the gods, if they help men, will help them to do evil like as they themselves do. (*Apost. Const.* i. 6). The *Clem. Hom.* v. 18, "sets forth the amours of all the more noted

laid upon the anxious parent who sought to train his boy or his girl in the paths of sobriety and virtue. The laws of society, pride of country, affection for those whose name he bore, some promptings of the good spirit within him, perhaps some such book as Cicero on Common Duties or on the Gods, might combine to make the Roman boy a virtuous youth. Perhaps there would be also in some homes such associations with certain household gods as to favour a virtuous life, but anything like the power of family religion as known in Israel and in Christian households was entirely impossible. Any sense of brotherhood with other men, except such as comes from a common country or a common kindred, could not dawn upon the mind of a boy whose household gods were only the gods of the household, and not only did not rule the universe, but probably ruled no other household upon the earth.¹ It needs no words to prove that the Christian Church effected a very grave revolution in the social system of the empire by the establishment of family religion. The mere fact that every family was bowing the knee to Him of whom all families are named, in the faith of the one Saviour who brought the eternal hope to all, and whose own life was a model of pious boyhood as well as of beneficent manhood, must have raised the Christians infinitely above the low standing of the heathen homes around them.² The grandeur of the

¹ Some of the *Penates* may have been gods of general repute, but not always so; and the *Lares* were the family ancestors.

² "Instead of an indivisible and regular system, which occupies the whole extent of the believing mind, the mythology

hope for each member, for all other families, and for the whole world, naturally drew the enthusiasm and chivalrous devotion of the young. When days of martyrdom came, and fathers, sometimes mothers too, suffered for the faith, a tender pathos was added to those wide Christian hopes. We do not wonder as we read that the great critic of after days, Origen of Alexandria, when he heard of his father's martyrdom, resolved to rush out and carry on the household testimony to Christ with the sacrifice of his life, and was only prevented by the mother's homely wisdom (putting his clothes out of his reach) from the rash act which would have robbed the Church of so much later usefulness. We have many instances in history, as well as precepts in the early Fathers, showing how potent was family religion. The story of Gregory of Nyssa¹ tells how his sister was taught the easy portions of Scripture most suitable to her age, and how she in turn taught them to her younger brother Peter, afterwards a bishop.² No

of the Greeks was composed of a thousand loose and flexible parts, and the servant of the gods was at liberty to define the degree and measure of his religious faith" (Gibbon, c. xxiii.). This verdict is confirmed by such an elaborate survey of "Religion in Greek literature" as Professor Lewis Campbell has recorded. How little it all came to may be seen, as regards Rome, in Professor Sellar's splendid essays. See *Roman Poets of the Augustan Age* when the generous critic is summing up the

results of his study of pure-minded Virgil.

¹ Or Nyssa.

² The influence of family life is seen in the career of many of the greatest of the Christian fathers. The devotion of Monica, the mother of Augustine, is well known; her son has made her name immortal. Gregory of Nyssa and his brother Basil owed a similar debt, which they proudly acknowledged, to their grandmother Maorina, their mother Emmelia, and their splendid

wonder that Gregory afterwards set up schools all over Armenia to teach the children of his diocese to read the Bible.

In all this the Christian Church acted according to the eternal law of Nature, which is the law of God, consecrating the father's and the mother's influence to lead the children up to the highest truth and the purest virtue. The children were no longer passive receivers at their parents' hands of what those parents might be able to convey; but the parents studied the Scriptures with them and thought out the system of Christian duty, so as to be able to bring up their children in the faith and love of Jesus Christ as St. Paul had commanded. Very often it was through the lips of children that the particular praise of the Saviour was sung. When St. Jerome was asked by Laeta how to act in regard to her father Albinus, who was a Pagan and a Pontiff, he said, "Let your little child, whenever she sees her grandfather, throw herself on his breast, hang on his neck, and sing him a 'Hallelujah' in spite of himself." The old man, it is needless to say, was won by the simple teachings of the child.

We have thus endeavoured to do justice to the position of the Christian Church, which relied, in the

sister, the second Macrina. Gregory Nazianzen owed much to his father's Christian home; his affectionate tributes to his father and mother and sister and brother one by one are among the treasures of Christian eloquence. Pope Gregory I., the Great, had

his saintly mother Sylvia and two sisters to form his character. Chrysostom's mother, Anthusa, trained her son with such devotedness that Libanius, the great professor, a heathen, said, "Good heavens, what women these Christians have!"

main, upon family influence for the training of the young. But it must not be forgotten that there was an express injunction of the Redeemer that His Apostle was to feed His lambs as well as tend His sheep; and when we ask ourselves how far the Church in her services, especially in her sermons, endeavoured to obey this Divine command, we have sorrowfully to reply that the early ages seem to have been almost as remiss as the Church of the present time. The best defence of the Church, doubtless, is that she sought to train the parents to do their duty by their children, and that in baptism—for infant baptism from the third century at least has been the rule of the Church—she entered into covenant with the parent, authorising him, so to speak, with her sanction as well as by the law of nature, to be the teacher of his child. But, on the other hand, it ought to be remembered now, better than it seems to have been remembered then, that there is a reciprocal obligation on the Church not to hand over to the parent all this duty which Christ laid upon her. It is almost impossible to trace any line of Church influence upon children except in connection with the sacraments of the Christian faith. Baptism being mainly administered to adults in the early days, what training was preparatory for baptism was usually a training not of children but of mature men and women. Such training there undoubtedly was from the very beginning. As we have seen, the Jews had a catechism for proselytes. Christianity adopted the method. There was no one Order set apart for teaching with a view to baptism, but

sometimes one, and sometimes another, of the officials of the congregation was teacher. Justin Martyr, about A.D. 150, distinctly says that those admitted to the Church by baptism had been previously prepared privately; and that they at their baptism professed to believe and promised to live accordingly. The Clementines say that candidates for baptism were prepared for several days; in one place it is said for three months. In the subsequent times, as we have seen, elaborate arrangements were made in the Church service, whereby catechumens, that is, those under training for baptism, were set in a separate place of the building, and had a certain portion of the service specially adapted to them. When Christianity had spread sufficiently to become the religion of many households, the younger members of each family would naturally take their place among the catechumens. Though they had been previously baptized, they were now candidates for full membership of the Church. Keeping in mind, then, that this is not a provision for children, but for converts and for the young, let us ask how the young were trained in this, their catechumenate? The prayers in the Church were after the sermon; the catechumens were allowed to hear the word read and preached, and to take part in certain of the prayers. The prayers, however, were in two divisions. At the first, catechumens, penitents, and unbaptized persons might be present. Subsequent prayers and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper were for the "faithful" or communicants only. Even the prayers to which catechumens were admitted were not open to all,

for the lowest grade of candidates for baptism or membership was called *hearers*, and, before any prayers were used or the Creed was said, a Deacon called out, "Let none of the hearers, let none of the unbelievers remain." A higher step was that of *competentes* (candidates), who had given in their names as formal applicants. The prayers for catechumens were specially appropriate. They also asked God for themselves that they might have grace to spend their lives in quietness and without sin, and to attain to the Christian end of life. The whole people were enjoined to pray for them, that they might have a new heart and a right spirit, and be fitted to partake of the holy mysteries through Christ, our hope, who died for them. And then the Deacon said to them, "Catechumens, depart in peace."¹

This applies only to the public service. We have to take into connection with it that before men were counted fit to be hearers they were instructed, and that they were not admitted even to that grade in the congregation till they had promised to live a good life. Catechumens were subjected to private ethical instruction before being allowed to participate either in the Homiletic or the Eucharistic portion of the public worship; and before they received any right of entry to the congregation they were formally introduced. The imposition of hands was the solemn form of so

¹ See Bingham's *Antiquities*, book xiv. chap. v., sect. 1-3. catechumens is not accepted by all, but the above is generally believed.

introducing them.¹ It is quite probable that this preliminary private instruction was communicated to them in necessary cases by the Deacons of the Church. If not at first, yet certainly before long, Deacons were expected to prepare males, and Deaconesses to prepare females,² to make proper answers before they were admitted to the Church. When hands were laid upon the catechumens they were said to be made Christians.

The regulation by which catechumens were confined to certain portions of the service, and in the church itself were separated from others, was applied to all without distinction of rank. Constantine himself was in no higher grade till shortly before his death. I suppose he never heard the Lord's Prayer in a church until the end of his life. Eusebius says of Constantine's prayers in the Church of Heliopolis, a little before his death, that it was "the same church in which he had been admitted to imposition of hands and prayer." The imposition of hands was all the public mark of acceptance which the great Emperor received from the Church. The fact that he was so long, technically speaking, "under instruction" shows that even at that early time their idea of sins after baptism being specially heinous led men to postpone their baptism, as in certain places still, and so prolonged the time in which they were regarded as in pupilage. If we had any assurance that during that time the Church was actively engaged in instructing them, we might suppose that she was indeed fulfilling

¹ See Tertullian, *De Corona Militis*, chap. iii.

² See *Didaskalia* for this in the third century. *Ante*, p. 138.

Christ's orders and feeding His lambs. But, in practical fact it appears that a large class of catechumens were distinguished from the faithful, not by being under special instruction, but by being absent from the more solemn part of the public service.

There were monastery schools and Episcopal schools from an early period, but I do not find that they had vogue until long after the second century, a date to which some refer them. The Alexandrian school was different. Augustine and Jerome had schools attached to monasteries. Indeed the irruption of the Vandals and commotions within the empire led to the abolition, or discontinuance, of the imperial schools, to which we shall advert immediately, and from that time all depended on the Church. Municipal schools were supplanted by monastic and Episcopal schools in the fifth and sixth centuries. In many countries the ruin of the cities put an end to municipal efforts for education: This may be said to begin with the fourth century.

Is this, then, all which the Church did to show her care for the young? That cannot be said. We read scattered notices showing that the young were taught to read and repeat the Scriptures; we know that it is the glory of the Christian Church that the ministers of religion are the instructors of youth, in this resembling Israel, where the priest's lips kept knowledge, and in this too contrasted with the heathen, whose priests had no function of instruction. We know also that from a very early time special means were used to educate all those who proposed to hold any office in the Church.

The singers in the choir, as well as the readers of Scripture, were examined as to their previous education before being admitted. Parents dedicated those children from their infancy who were expected to discharge solemn functions, and many, probably from being precocious or thoroughly trained at first, seem to have been admitted as readers or choir singers at a very early age. There is one case of a subsequent bishop being admitted as a reader at the age of seven. The Vandals are said to have killed many "infant readers" in Africa, and this strange phrase may possibly show us that there was a certain number of the children of the Church taught as early to read as amongst ourselves in these later times. Charity schools were also set up in connection with monasteries after the sixth Council of Constantinople. (See Mullinger, *Schools of Charles the Great*, chap. i.)

And doubtless they extended the blessings of education to a very considerable extent; but when we read that all boys before being baptized must learn the Creed, we are not to suppose that they learned it by reading in every case. Many monks learned the psalter by the ear, and could not read it. This would still more naturally be found in the case of children.

Leaving the vague and unsatisfactory provisions of the Church for training the young in her ordinary Sunday services, we may glance at the service of the Church to the young in schools for more general and higher education. This will enable us to answer the question, How far the Church, as the great educator, did really educate the parents in Christendom? At the

Christian era, schools for ordinary education were not unknown in the Roman empire. It is said that in the time of Julius Cæsar there were not less than twenty public schools, mainly for the study of rhetoric, and as these taught men to debate all subjects, arguing on each side with equal readiness and dangerous facility, the Roman censors forbade them, "seeing it is necessary to make known to those who keep and who frequent those schools that they are displeasing to us." But, nevertheless, such schools were multiplied, mostly by way of private adventure. Julius Cæsar did not live to carry out his purpose of endowment, and endowment was the work of Vespasian and of the emperors who succeeded him. Constantine gave great privileges to public teachers, and Julian, with his usual practical wisdom, ordained that postulants for the honour of teaching must submit to previous examination.¹ The first cen-

¹ Julian, however, prohibited (A. D. 363) Christians from being employed as teachers of grammar and rhetoric, his object being to prevent the young of Christian families from acquiring a liberal education. They would not attend Pagan schools, and this edict prevented their finding any others. It is said that his ultimate object was to make Christians inferior in dialectic—the goal of all the highest education in those days. He seems also to have forbidden Christians to be doctors or professors of liberal arts (see Gibbon, c. xxiii. p. 164, Milman's edition); but this re-

quires some qualification, because Gregory Nazianzen's brother, Cesarius—a Christian—was a great physician attached to the court of Julian, with whom he had discussions on Christianity in presence of many. He afterwards became a civil governor. This may have been to escape from the law laying an embargo on Christian physicians. Still it was as a Christian physician he made his fame. The consequence of Julian's sweeping measure was that heathen literature was neglected from that time onward! (For this see Mullinger, *Schools of Charles the Great*, chap. i.)

turies of Christian history were those in which absolute freedom was given to every qualified man to teach and maintain himself by the fees of his pupils, there being at the same time a public system by which many teachers received endowment from the State. Gratian in A.D. 376 was following up an ancient policy when he required public instructors to be appointed in all the chief cities of Gaul, and fixed their salaries. This wide, general system of education had been inherited by Rome from Greece when the Greeks taught their masters the laws of culture. The university of Athens was still for many Christian centuries the centre of the world's learning.¹

The original purpose of those great schools was to promote heathen culture, and it is no wonder that Christian parents were perplexed when they had to decide whether to send their sons to them. Tertullian, Basil, Augustine, Jerome—all men who knew the world—regarded study of heathen authors as ancillary to the study of Scripture, and on that account allowed it, but with precautions. Schools naturally took different views of the amount of heathen learning that was allowable. Antioch had a special reputation for classical culture. As the Church grew stronger and the imperial power weaker, classical culture fell more into the background. A modern satirist says in substance what the stricter Christian said in early

¹ The schools of Athens were suppressed by Justinian in A.D. 529. It is said that in the same year Benedict of Nursia composed

his *Benedictine Rule* for monasteries. Justinian's *Code* was issued in A.D. 528, and again in A.D. 534.

times, and he illustrates what must have been their difficulty :—

What text-books read their children at the schools?
 Derive they Latin from a hymanal source?
 Or from the works of rigid anchorites?
 Not so! That hog of Epicurus styed,
 The sensuous Horace, issues them along
 To rancid Ovid. He prepares the way
 For loose Catullus, whose voluptuous strain
 Is soon dismissed for coarser Juvenal.

W. E. AYTON, *Firmilian*.

Greek authors might have been found, but Greek was little known in those days. Neither Leo the Great nor Gregory the Great knew the Greek language. It is curious to find a Pope asking for a translation of the Greek decrees of a Council as Leo, "the first great Italian theologian," asked for a translation of the Articles of Chalcedon. Yet in addition to the great fathers named above, Lactantius, Ambrose, both the Hilaries, and many more were trained in Pagan culture at school. Even though it may be truly said that there was "no profane literature from the fourth to the eighth century, it revived under Charlemagne" (Guizot, ii. 99), yet through that period the great heathen authors were known, and the fantastic *Marriage of Philology and Mercury* (science) by Martianus Capella, fifth century, was a favourite text-book.

Because of the difficulty of obtaining an ordinary education without imbibing heathenism along with it, the Christian Church set herself to provide what we

should now call secondary or higher schools for those who sought to advance in her service. The famous catechetical school of Alexandria dates from the second century, and when it was begun was a direct protest against the ordinary system of Hellenic Roman schools.¹ It was mainly for those who aspired to the holy ministry, but there were always some laymen alongside of the future priests on the forms of the catechetical school. Other similar but not so famous schools were set up in centres of population under ecclesiastical influence. At Beyrout, Antioch, Rome itself, and Constantinople they were found. Scripture was almost the sole study in those Christian schools, though Origen introduced Pagan philosophy. In the school of Edessa we are told that the youths were taught to read notes, to sing psalms, and to commit Scripture to memory. This was nearly what Charlemagne prescribed six hundred years later. It was in this way that Julian was trained before he was admitted to be a "Reader" in Nicomedia. Such schools served a most important purpose for a time, but exaggerated notions of the almost magical result of the ordination of the priesthood came to prevail, and those led to the belief that special education was not greatly needed by the clergy. Even when we

¹ "By the middle of the second century, philosophy was an intellectual game, personal morality a matter of convention and prudence, and rhetoric an artifice" (Laurie on *Medieval Education and Universities*, p. 13). I have

been much indebted throughout this chapter to the works of my friend and colleague, Professor Laurie. He has devoted the labour of a lifetime to tracing the history and developing the principles of education.

allow everything that can be claimed for such schools as those we have named, it is obvious that the great majority of the clergy could not receive training in them. Those who were thoroughly educated seem to have usually risen in the Church. A young man educated for the priesthood went for general education to Alexandria, or Constantinople, or Cesarea, and then, under the tutelage of some bishop, or perhaps in connection with some society of monks, acquired what might be called the more special qualifications for his offices.¹ More and more those Christian schools became schools of future priests.

The monasteries in like manner devoted their educational powers not to the ordinary community but in the main to candidates for the ministry. Before the sixth century, as was noticed before (page 34, note), monks were not considered the same as the clergy. Thus it was that even when education was given in monasteries it did not reach or directly affect the clergy. It is curious to read that in the fifth century clergy were scarce. In Rome, for example, there were eighty churches and seventy-seven priests. The influence of education in the monastery did not therefore pass in any important measure out upon the people. It was really a forward step in civilisation when the monks, educated men for the most part, became priests and supplied parochial cures. With this identification of monks and priests came the approximation of monks and people, and education became more general and of wider compass in itself.

¹ In Gregory of Nazianzus we see the process and its full result.

When priests and bishops became monks, they not only made a fresh progress in religious life (Guizot), but they made fresh progress in social life. And the results were good. All over France, and Spain, and North Africa we find through the Middle Ages monastery schools in which the monks were trained both in what we should call polite learning and in the more sacred studies specially needed for their profession.

The Council of Toledo in the eighth century ordained that no one should have any ecclesiastical grade who could not say the whole Psalms and the usual canticles and hymns. In Italy, England, and the East, also in Rome, were many schools; one in the Pope's palace. In all those schools, learning was more and more confined to the clergy, and by some of them cultivated to a very high degree, but by others, on the contrary, almost totally neglected. The political circumstances of Europe were too turbulent to allow of the communication of secular learning to the ordinary community.¹

Benedict of Nursia, A.D. 480, was the "author of the Mediæval Christian School." He was probably never ordained, and, as Gregory the Great says, was "learnedly ignorant and wisely untaught," but his wisdom (Bene-

¹ "How can I write six-foot hexameters when I am surrounded by seven-foot barbarians?" said Sidonius Apollinaris (born in Lyons A.D. 430) when the Goths were round him. He thought

that men in their youth should take their fill of the classics, but as they grew older should turn their minds to things eternal. He was called the last gentleman-bishop of the Roman age.

dictine Rule) founded a system which spread over Europe. Like himself, his system was distinctly human. He promoted study and made the novices copy MSS. The "second Benedict" (of Aniane), in the eighth century, revised and extended the Nursian Rules, and made monasteries schools of study.¹

What we call the Dark Ages were therefore indebted—largely indebted—to monasteries and monks for whatever education they possessed. A great advance was due to Charlemagne, who says that he had had letters written to him, even by abbots, which were right

¹ One is tempted to turn aside and try to trace the varied fortunes of classical learning under the monastic rules of education. Cassian, probably a native of Marseilles, a disciple of Chrysostom, came back from Egypt in 404, founded the monastery of St. Victor, and grew increasingly distrustful of classical literature as his years advanced. His severe rules prevailed in monasteries till Benedict humanised them. It is said that he founded monastic discipline, but Martin of Tours the monastery. Cassian lived at Lerins, and the monastery of St. Honorat, south of Cannes, long preserved the best features of Cassian's system. Cassian wished to teach boys to read that they might study the Bible; to write that they might multiply copies of the sacred books; to learn arithmetic that they might be able to calculate the return of Easter and

the dates of the festivals. Alcuin, acting for Charlemagne, discouraged the classics and insisted upon "sacred learning." Rabanus Maurus (776-856), who followed Alcuin, had more comprehensive ideas, is called "the first teacher of Germany," and defended classical learning by saying that such men as Lactantius took much gold with them out of the classics, as the Israelites took spoil when they left Egypt. The Scottish (Irish) monks were students of classical literature. Columban, who did not quite acknowledge the Pope, acknowledged the claims of the classics. The monasteries which are monuments of his Apostolic course, Luxeuil, St. Gall, and Bobbio, were homes of literature. In the ninth century Lupus Servatus, a scholar, a soldier, and a friend of the accomplished Charles the Bald, is said to quote or refer to every classical author known in his time.

in meaning but uncultured in phrase.¹ And he directed the clergy under him to establish and superintend schools for education. In the boys' schools there were to be psalms, notes, singing, counting, and grammar; and the higher education was to advance to the canonical books and Catholic tractates and the sayings of the Holy Fathers. It is not too much to say that Charlemagne and Louis, who followed him, revolutionised the social system of Europe. Schools of all kinds sprang up on all sides—Presbyteral, Episcopal, Monastic, and Palatine—that is, those under the fostering care of a priest, a bishop, a monastery, and a monarch respectively. Charlemagne, who had taught himself or been taught, but with indifferent success, to write² after he ascended the throne, and who attended a household school in his palace, fretted that he could do so little to secure the prevalence of education or to get the benefit of the services of highly educated men. Alcuin, his Minister of Education—whom he brought from York—did much to advance his objects, but the practical wisdom of Alcuin allowed greater force to obstacles than the autocratic mind of Charlemagne was willing to allow. Charles, arrogant in virtue of his success in life, thought he could command gifts and graces to come at his call. Once the Emperor cried, "Oh, that I

¹ It appears that at the Reformation many monks only signed their recantation of Popery by deputy in St. Andrews, and a Proclamation regarding the use of the Prayer-book of Edward VI.

implies that some clerics could not read (Cunningham's *Church History of Scotland*, i. 506).

² "Parum successit labor prae-posterus ac sero inchoatus" (*Life of Charles*, quoted by Mullinger).

had a dozen like Augustine and Jerome"; and Alcuin said, "Sire, the Creator of heaven and earth had only those two; do you expect a dozen?"¹ Alfred, who sought to extend the blessings of education in England, and who is himself the father of English literature, says that he knew no priest south of the Thames who understood the meaning of the Latin prayers which he used; and it is said that not one priest in a dozen (some say in a thousand) in Spain could at that time write a simple letter in the Latin tongue. A Church whose teachers were so ignorant could be doing little in the way of instruction for its members; but, notwithstanding, an atmosphere of Christian truth doubtless pervaded the whole social system. Yet education was not thought to be compatible with the highest manliness. The rude Scotch baron might be said to cry—

Thanks to St. Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line,

and this doubtless expressed the ordinary opinion of his order and age—an opinion probably not confined to that age or country. One would like to know what the ordinary child's view of religion was in those times—say in the twelfth to the fifteenth century. The enthusiasm which led to the Crusades must have been

¹ It is interesting to see the English Church, to the founding of which Gregory the Great, in his letters to Augustine and others, gave such unwearied care, sending back Alcuin to guide the great monarch of Central Europe

in education. The schools of Gregory became the schools of Charlemagne, with their limitations as well as their high purpose. Gregory was against the classics; Alcuin's educational measures reproduced the early narrowness.

based upon some knowledge of what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for men, but that such enthusiasm should be expended upon the merely political attempt to eject the Saracens from Jerusalem shows how mechanical and external the view of religion was. The church services were in an unknown tongue. Many of the priests, being themselves unable to read, could not possibly explain the Scriptures to their people; and the soul of the boy whose acquaintance one fain would make must have been filled with legendary versions of Christian history and superstitious explanations of Christian ordinances. The confession of sin to the priest, and the doing of penance for acknowledged wrong, were undoubtedly a great safeguard of morals; but only low, perhaps debased, views of the most sacred things could possibly prevail in the minds of ordinary children. So one naturally feels, and doubtless with truth; yet when we read of Anselm and the monastery of Bec, where the children had their little Parliament and their discussion of sacred things, and remember that those children were in many cases taken from the families around the walls, it is obvious that there must have been a spirit constantly breathed into the minds of young and old which intelligently inquired into the religion of Christ. Monks like those whom Columba sent forth, friars like those whom St. Francis trained, priests like those whom Anselm ruled, could not live a selfish or an unfruitful life. It was not book learning, of which those men had enough, that they conveyed to their neighbours and the con-

gregations; it was the impress of personal character; and the influence of their own holy aspirations must have preserved a witness for truth even in the rudest times. The very dread which, as we saw in last chapter, a pope's anathema could inspire, the dread of losing the ordinances and comfort of the Christian religion, shows that religion had still a mighty hold upon the minds and consciences of men. Religion, after all, is of the heart more than of the intellect; and when one reads in the annals of the kingdom of Northumbria how princesses and noble men and women counted the cloisters higher station than the hall or the throne, and sweetened the whole atmosphere of the times in which they lived by a holy life, one is less inclined to dwell upon the ignorance of their age than upon its beautiful faith.¹ In answer, therefore, to the question what the Church had done for the young previous to the Protestant Reformation, I think we have to say that she had inspired profound reverence and had suggested simple faith. The times were rude and bad, but no man dared to despise the peaceful pursuits of the ministers of Christ. No man dared, although the peril was mainly a spiritual one. It is not necessary to believe that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion. To believe it is to oppose the New Testament; but nevertheless we must not forget that if the Church had failed to remove the ignorance of the world, its devotion she had most certainly and effectively cherished.

¹ See Montalembert's *Monks of the West*, vol. v., for many instances.