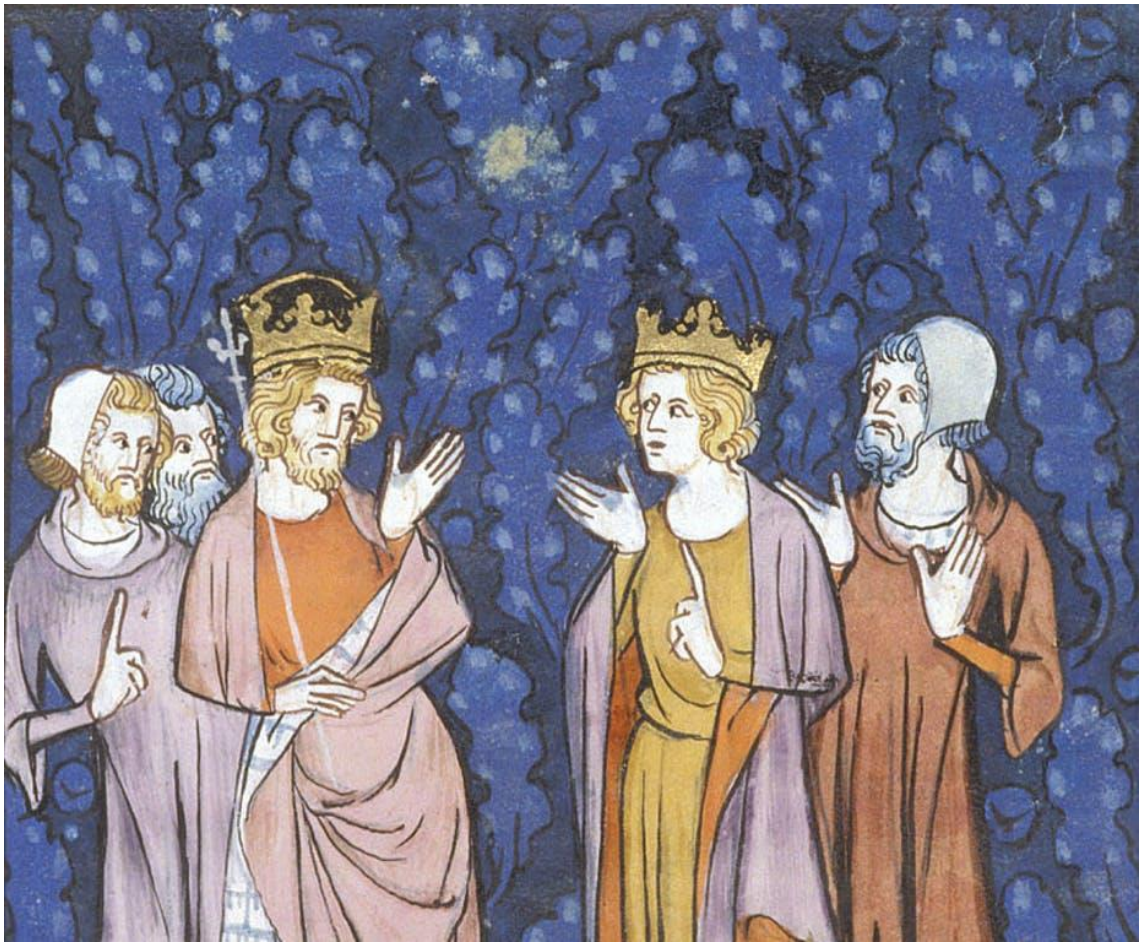
LIFE OF ALCUIN

736 - 802



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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY JANE MARY SLEE.

EDUCATION AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF ALCUIN UNTIL HIS FIRST APPEARANCE AT THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE. A.D 735-782.

ALCUIN'S RESIDENCE DURING EIGHT YEARS AT THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE. A.D. 782-790.

ALCUIN'S OPINIONS CONCERNING TITHES.

ALCUIN'S RETURN TO THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE, AND HIS PARTICIPATION IN RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS UNTIL HIS PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN FRANCE. A.D. 790-796

Alcuin's Theological Opinions.

History of the Controversy respecting Image-worship.

Decision of the Council of Frankfort upon the Doctrine of the Adoptionists and Image-worship.

Alcuin's Permanent Settlement in France, and his Participation in the Complete Suppression of the Doctrine of the Adoption.

ALCUIN AS ABBOT OF TOURS UNTIL HIS DEATH. A.D. 796-804

Concerning Charles' Endeavors to improve the National Language, and the Academy he is said to have founded.

The Friends and Pupils of Alcuin.

Alcuin as Director of the Monastic School at Tours.

Alcuin's Philosophical and Historical Works.

Concerning Alcuin's Poetical Writings.

Renewal of the Roman Empire in the West.

Dissension between Alcuin and Theodulph.

Death of Alcuin.

INTRODUCTION.

The totally different aspect presented by the West of Europe, after the destruction of the Western Roman Empire, combined with the degenerated state of Roman civilization, necessarily required a new development of the minds of those whose energy and valor had subdued the degraded descendants of cultivated antiquity. Great as were the powers of mind possessed by these hardy conquerors, the rude and warlike habits acquired in their native forests were too firmly interwoven with their very nature, to be immediately exchanged for the refinement of the country they had vanquished. The effeminate Romans accommodated themselves more readily to the manners and customs of the invaders; and hence, in a short space of time, the remembrance, and a few fragments, of former civilization alone remained—the frail memorials of departed grandeur. It was, therefore, unaided by external influence, that the faculties of the northern warriors item developed. The process was indeed, slow; so slow, that the lapse of a thousand years was requisite to enable them to profit by the arts and sciences, which, on their first approach, had been overwhelmed by the tide of barbarism. This insensibility to external influence tended essentially to the preservation of their independence. Fortunately, most fortunately, the heartless, prejudiced, enervated character of the then modern Roman, who possessed not faculties even to comprehend, far less to imitate, the glory of his ancestors, remained totally alien to the new possessors of the soil, who imbibed only the vivifying element of Christianity. The Christian religion was the main spring of all intellectual efforts, during the whole of the interval that elapsed between the loss and the recovery of ancient civilization; and literature was altogether under the conduct and control of her ministers. Few were the intellectual luminaries that shone forth in those days of darkness, very few were so brilliant as to exercise any direct influence on the present age. The venerated names, the hallowed writings of that period, ceased to retain the importance with which opinion had invested them, so soon as the progress of intellect enabled mankind to appreciate and to study those models which a gracious Providence had rescued from destruction and oblivion. Their labors, however, have not been in vain, their utility has surpassed their fame. To extend the knowledge of the merits of a celebrated man of this period, and to render a tribute to his memory, by redeeming a portion of that debt which mankind should gratefully acknowledge to one who labored so zealously and so actively for their benefit, is the object of this work.

We may venture to assert that the time of Charlemagne is more celebrated than known, and that the founder of the new Roman German empire has found more panegyrists than historians. A character like that of Charles is too dazzling to admit of our beholding, at the first glance, the surrounding objects so as to distinguish them clearly. But after accustoming ourselves to gaze longer upon it, the inquiring eye will discover other forms beaming, not undeservedly, with a ray of glory reflected from the principal figure. The more accurately we can judge of men by those who surround them, the more necessary and instructive becomes the contemplation of their characters. A prince who is a mere warrior delights only in those hardy pursuits inseparable from a soldier’s life, and

seeks his friends and confidants in the army. A ruler who is a mere politician prefers the statesman to the soldier. When, however, a prince like Charlemagne, and others who have shared, or at least deserved to share, the same epithet, combines the ardor for conquest with the love of literature, the sword and the pen will be held in equal estimation; he will attach himself most intimately to those who have won his confidence by a similar direction of mind, and have manifested the desire and the ability to promote the welfare of his subjects. One single man, even on a throne, can accomplish but little without the cooperation of kindred spirits. When, therefore, a sovereign possesses an intellect sufficiently capacious to embrace noble designs, and an eye to discern, amid the multitude, those whose energy and talents best fit them for the execution of his plans, he is justly celebrated; his memory is held in grateful honor, and his example commended to posterity. To him belongs the rare talent of availing himself of the various powers of others, and of uniting them for the attainment of one object. Not equity alone, therefore, requires, but it is indispensable to the right understanding of facts, that justice should be rendered to the individual who labored successfully for this object. The man whose life forms the subject of this work, devoted his energies to the execution of Charles' noble project of advancing his subjects towards that civilization, the light of which still lingered on the ruins of antiquity. This man was Alcuin; and who can be a more proper representative of this honorable and distinguishing characteristic of Charles' reign, than he to whom the king was indebted for the chief of his learning, his children for the whole of their mental attainments, and such of the young Franks as evinced either inclination or ability for study, for all their knowledge? He formed, to a certain extent, the center of the awakened energies of this period; not because he was the only man remarkable for literary acquirements, but because he had pursued all the paths of knowledge which at that time lay open to the human mind. Neither splendid actions nor marvelous adventures, nor any of those striking incidents that are calculated to arouse and gratify curiosity, distinguish the life of Alcuin from that of ordinary men; for his combats with the devil, and his miracles, belong to legends rather than to history. But the successful labors of the confidant and instructor of Charlemagne will prove, to the reflecting lover of history, a more effectual recommendation than the most dazzling achievements of others more renowned. If the investigation of the development of the human mind under its different manifestations, be the most important subject of history, our attention must be chiefly directed to those individuals who have prosecuted, with the greatest ardor and success, some one of the pursuits of their day. Their influence upon their own times increases in proportion as they are animated by the universal spirit of the community, comprehend and unite in themselves the various attainments of individuals, and advance them to a perfection sufficient to constitute a new era in the progress of the human mind. In times so remote, so destitute of various and complicated interests, and so deficient in contemporary records as those of Charlemagne, we must be contented to produce the king as the representative of the political and military state, and one other personage to represent the literary and religious character of the times. With this view, we have examined and exhibited the life and works of Alcuin. We shall first describe the state of Anglo-Saxon civilization at that period, in order to show more clearly Alcuin's literary attainments. We shall afterwards accompany him to a more extensive and interesting sphere of action, where, without the adventitious aid of external dignity, which his modesty always declined, he for years effected more than was accomplished by prelates adorned with the most splendid titles.

SECTION I.

EDUCATION AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF ALCUIN UNTIL HIS FIRST APPEARANCE AT THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE. AD 735-782.

THE eighth century after the birth of Christ commenced under circumstances the most unfavorable to the arts and sciences of the western world. The successful irruption of the Arabs into Spain, repelled the civilization introduced by Christianity, and confined it to the mountains of Asturias and Biscay. The constant feuds between the Lombards and the Greeks, scared the gentle muses from the north of Italy; and they found no refuge amongst the Franks, now immersed in barbarism, and distracted by internal discord, in consequence of the weakness of the Merovingian house. Germany and Scandinavia were still under the dominion of Paganism. The kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons alone offered them an asylum. The Anglo-Saxons had been converted to Christianity by the immediate influence of Rome, and were therefore in more intimate union with the papal see than any other of the western churches. The archbishop of Canterbury dying at Rome in the year 668, whither he had gone to solicit the pontifical ratification of his title, the pope Vitalianus determined to raise to the archiepiscopal throne a prelate elected by himself. He nominated Adrian, an African, who declined the proffered dignity, and recommended a monk in Rome named Theodore, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, whom, at his own request, he promised to accompany. The Anglo-Saxons made no opposition to the right thus arrogated by the pope. Theodore accepted the appointment; and at the age of sixty-six departed with his friend Adrian for England. These men were well versed in Latin and Greek literature; and, speaking those languages with equal fluency, they awakened among the Anglo-Saxons an ardent desire for learning, and drew around them a multitude of scholars, several of whom made such progress that, according to Bede, they were as well acquainted with Greek and Latin as with their mother tongue. After having held the archbishopric twenty-one years, Theodore died: his friend Adrian survived him nearly eighteen years. Their pupils diffused the knowledge they had acquired throughout England, and established schools in every monastery, for the education, not only of the clergy, but also for such of the laity as evinced any inclination for literature. The only deficiency was a competent supply of books. Theodore had brought with him Josephus, the poems of Homer, and probably several other works of inferior note: still they were inadequate to assuage the thirst for knowledge which had been excited. Many journeys to Rome were therefore undertaken, in order to augment the number of books from the collections in that city; and a library began to be the pride and ornament of monasteries. Benedict, the founder of the abbey at Weremouth, distinguished himself by repeated visits to Rome, for the sake of introducing into his own country many works then entirely unknown. From his school, issued one of the most influential scholars of the early part of the middle ages, the venerable Bede, whose learning and writings

embraced the most opposite branches of knowledge, and were held in equal estimation with those of the early fathers of the church. At that period Aldhelm and Winfrid were no less celebrated; the former for his skill in the learning of the schools and the cloister, the latter for his indefatigable zeal in preaching the faith of Christ to the heathen population of Germany. The merit of these men consists, not so much in any new discoveries in the field of literature, as in their preservation and diffusion of existing knowledge. They erected a barrier against the threatening tide of barbarism; and in the seclusion of the cloister, unruffled by the storms that agitated the world, they cherished the glorious flower of learning, until a more propitious season again called it forth into the light. The object of the monasteries being thus attained, their utility ceased; and any attempt now to restore them for the purpose of intellectual improvement, would be to retrograde instead of to advance. Amongst the schools thus established in the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons, that at York became the most famous, after Egbert had been appointed archbishop of York and director the school. Youths of the noblest families were here instructed in the rules of grammar, in the other liberal arts, and in the various branches of theology.

Alcuin was born at York about the year 735: at least some inference to that effect may be deduced from a letter written by him to the fraternity of that city, in which he observes that it had watched over the tender years of his childhood with a mother's love, had borne with his thoughtless boyhood with pious patience, and with fatherly chastisement had brought him up to man's estate. He was of noble origin; but neither the name of his parents, nor any particulars of his family, have been transmitted to posterity either by himself or others. Having in early youth been designed for the church, he was brought up in a monastery, and after a suitable preparation, entered Egbert's school. The archbishop himself, and Aelbert one of his relations, who afterwards succeeded him in that dignity, superintended the school. They divided the subjects of instruction between them, Egbert undertaking the explanation of the New Testament, and Aelbert the sciences and general literature. Alcuin enumerates the various subjects in which the latter gave instruction: Grammar, Rhetoric, Jurisprudence, Poetry, Astronomy, Physics, and the explanation of the Old Testament. It is to him, therefore, that he ascribes the greater part of the advantages received by himself and the young people of York. He applauds Aelbert's endeavors to draw around him youths of distinguished talents, and to attach them to him by his instructions and his kindness. This Alcuin himself experienced. Nothing shows more conspicuously the high estimation in which he was held by his master, than the fact, that he selected him for the companion of his expeditions to foreign countries for the purpose of transplanting to his native soil whatever he might discover of novelty and value either in books or in the pursuits of science. The age of Alcuin at that time probably exceeded twenty, and he, was qualified both by years and education to avail himself of all the advantages which such a journey offered to the lover of literature. They travelled through France into Italy, and to their ultimate destination—Rome.

He mentions neither the impression made upon his young mind by his wanderings among the Franks, nor the feelings awakened in him by the first view of the city of Rome. We may, however, suppose that the ignorance and rude manners of the Franks tended to make Rome appear to still greater advantage. For if any place in the western world could captivate a young mind ardent in the pursuit of knowledge, it was Rome—once the metropolis of the civilized world, and whose very ruins recalled to mind the magnificence of by-gone centuries, and the once flourishing state of science and of art. Even at that

time, Rome, more than any other spot in the west of Europe, was the abode of the sciences; and had already laid the foundations of a new universal dominion, which, more powerful than that destroyed by the Germans, was to be upheld not by force of arms, but by spiritual power; and which, by means of prejudice and superstition, was one day to bind the nations of the earth in inextricable chains. Alcuin's residence at Rome probably strengthened the ideas he had early conceived of the dignity of the pope, and prepared him to contribute a stone to the boldly constructed edifice of the hierarchy.

After his return, Alcuin remained at York as assistant to his master Aelbert, till the latter was appointed to the archbishop's see on the death of his relation Egbert, which took place on the 11th of November, 766. Being prevented by his office from devoting the same care as formerly to the school, Aelbert consecrated Alcuin deacon, and inducted him into the situation he himself had occupied, and committed to him the superintendance of the library attached to the school. If we compare this collection of books with the admiration and excessive encomiums of contemporaries, and consider that throughout the whole kingdom of France, its equal not only did not exist, but could not be procured, we may form some idea of the state of literature at that period, and of what Charles and Alcuin effected. "Here", says Alcuin, in a poem, wherein he celebrates the church of York, its superintendants and its saints, "here may be found monuments of the ancient fathers, works produced in Latium by the Romans themselves, and those which were transferred to them from the glorious land of Greece; truths received by the Hebrew nation from above, which Africa has with pure light extended". If the following list does not comprise all the books, we may rest assured that the principal are enumerated. Aristotle, Cicero, Pompeius (Justin's Abridgment), Pliny, Virgil, Statius, Lucan and Boethius are the only classical authors whom he specifies. In addition to these, a few ancient grammarians, some Christian poets, and the fathers of the church, in the Latin tongue, are mentioned. Even in those days, as in the times of antiquity, instruction was chiefly oral, the art of printing not having as yet given rise to the great and extensive prevalence of books. A school was therefore elevated into importance by the fame of an able teacher; and the flourishing institution at York derived this advantage from Alcuin : even foreigners resorted thither to pursue their theological studies. Liudger, a native of Friesland, of noble birth, who was afterwards canonized, repaired to York, and perhaps many others, whose names being unaccompanied by any remarkable event, have not descended to posterity. Alcuin maintained a correspondence by letter with the most distinguished among his scholars, many of whom were subsequently summoned to fill the highest offices.

Aelbert died on the 8th November, 780, and was succeeded by Eanbald, a pupil in the school at York. In order to obtain for him the archbishop's pall, Alcuin the following year travelled to Rome. At the same time, Charles, king of France, accompanied by his family, was on his way back from that city, where he had passed the winter. He was returning to his own country, meditating splendid projects for the amelioration of his people, but in considerable embarrassment as to the means of effecting his wishes. A great mind, like that possessed by Charles, could not behold the ruins of antiquity, without regretting that so highly cultivated an era should have passed away, and without wishing again to call it into existence. A fortunate chance led him to Parma, whilst Alcuin was there, who, if not personally, was at all events by reputation well known to him. After a conversation, in which the king probably communicated to him his designs for the

improvement of his people by education, and his difficulty in finding competent instructors, he requested Alcuin to become the organizer of all the institutions which he meditated establishing in France. Alcuin promised to comply with the king's wishes, if permitted by his superiors, and, in that case, to return to him after the completion of his present commission.

On his arrival at York, he easily obtained the permission required, and returned, accompanied by some of his pupils as assistants. Amongst these were Wizo surnamed Candidus, Fredegisus or Fridugisus surnamed Nathaniel, and Singulfus, all of whom we shall have occasion to mention frequently, and who deserved and enjoyed his confidence for the faithful service which they rendered him. Osulf, however, who likewise followed him, had not sufficient firmness to withstand temptation, but yielded himself up to a course of life unworthy of a scholar, and still more unworthy of an ecclesiastic. Alcuin tried every means to bring him back into the right path. He wrote three letters to him, the language of which is forcible and earnest, addressing him in terms alternately eloquent and feeling. "Why", he exclaims in one passage to his lost son, "why hast thou abandoned thy father who has educated thee from thy childhood, who has instructed thee in the liberal sciences, and led thee in the ways of virtue, and furnished thee with the doctrines of eternal life? Why hast thou joined thyself to a troop of harlots, to the revels of the drunkard, to the follies of the vain? Art thou that youth who was praised by every tongue, lovely in every eye, commended to every ear? Alas! alas! now thou art censured by every tongue, hateful to every eye, and cursed to every ear". He represents to him, in the strongest colors of those times, the torments of hell and the joys of heaven. Then he attempts to work upon his feelings of ambition, and proposes to him, as an example, his fellow-pupil, Eanbald of York. But neither the hopes nor fears of an obscure futurity, nor the sentiments of honor had the effect upon him which Alcuin desired to produce.

With these pupils, as assistants in his new and important vocation, Alcuin arrived in France in the year 782.

1.

Of the State of Civilization in the Kingdom of France.

AT the period of the conquest of Gaul by the Franks, the natives were far superior to their conquerors in intellectual cultivation. The permanent footing which the victors obtained had, however, no influence in refining their manners; and their adoption of the Christian religion contributed less to eradicate their barbarism than to increase their superstition. Instead of the new settlers acquiring a share of civilization, the natives assimilated themselves to them more than the Romans had done to other tribes of Germany, by whom they had been subdued. In times when religion forms the sole subject of mental interest, we can judge of the general state of civilization by the condition of the priests. From the moment that the Franks began to aspire to high dignities in the church, such a degeneracy of manners prevailed amongst the superior clergy, that we should scarcely credit the accounts of the ignorance and scandalous practices of many ecclesiastics, were they not recorded by Gregory himself. Intemperance in drinking,

perjury, debauchery, adultery, and the most abominable cruelties were as common among the bishops as among the rest of the Franks.

The contagion of their evil example spread among the inferior clergy; and had not some resisted the general depravity, and distinguished themselves by lives strict in proportion to the profligacy of the rest, or had not ignorance and barbarism of the times been so great that the most absurd superstitions found a ready acceptance, it would be difficult for us to conceive how a religion could continue to be held in estimation, whose ministers surpassed other men not in virtue but in vice. The lives of the clergy being subject to no inspection, they sank still lower throughout the whole Christian world during the restless and warlike times when the scepter was transferred from the enfeebled line of the Merovingian house to the more vigorous hand of the race of Charlemagne.

A system, therefore, such as Popery developed itself in its commencement, was a positive benefit to the middle ages. In the warmth with which Popery is both attacked and defended, it is but too often overlooked, that there was a time when it was beneficial to mankind, as well as a time when it degenerated through the abuse of its power, and ripened for the destruction connected with the accomplishment of its objects. Every human expedient is the result only of peculiar exigencies; and no sooner does it cease to be necessary than it loses its importance, which no means, however artfully contrived, can restore. Were the Roman hierarchy now surrounded even by an army of Jesuits, we need not dread the thunders of the Vatican. The depravity of the clergy, however, proves how necessary it was in those days to create an authority distinct from the temporal power to control their lives; and we shall see hereafter, that, in the thorough reform undertaken by Charlemagne he was induced to favor the Hierarchy from a conviction of its necessity.

Charles Martel had imposed military service on the church, as well as on the other fiefs, and left it to the choice of the ecclesiastics either to resign their temporalities, or to perform the obligations under which they held them. The greater part preferred retaining them by this disgraceful tenure, to the alternative of being deprived of their possessions. Charles Martel even rewarded many of his adherents for their services in battle, with lands and offices belonging to the church, and appointed bishops who had neither capacity for their charge, nor any conception of its dignity. Although, through the zeal of St. Boniface, some of the most unworthy were displaced in the following reign, yet these solitary instances had little effect on the whole system. To reform abuses so enormous, required all the power and vigor of a man like Charlemagne.

2.

Charlemagne.

At the time when Einhard wrote the life of Charlemagne he was unable to meet with anyone who could furnish him with information respecting the birth, childhood, and youth of his hero; and he deemed it absurd to hand down unauthenticated reports to posterity. Surprising as is this confession, it will appear less strange when we reflect, that Einhard resided at Charles's court only during the latter part of his reign; and that he did not enjoy

that intimacy with the monarch which has been recorded by history, from the tradition of his amour with the pretended daughter of the king. Probably, at that period, he had not begun to entertain the idea of writing the life of Charles, or he could certainly have found no difficulty in collecting the necessary materials; and when afterwards, in the seclusion of a cloister, he availed himself of his leisure to prosecute the work, whose classical style exhibits the most convincing proof of the impulse given by Charles's institutions to the national civilization; much, perhaps, had escaped his memory or seemed to him not sufficiently authentic to be incorporated into a description, which, while it paints such a character in the most glowing colors, should represent only the true features. This assertion of a contemporary must not, therefore, deter us from availing ourselves of the account given by Einhard, and other authors, to produce a sketch of the early education of Charles. He was brought up after the ordinary manner of the French nobility, being taught the use of arms, and the usual athletic exercises of hunting, riding, and swimming. Intellectual cultivation was considered of so little importance for the future sovereign of a warlike people, that he did not even learn to write; and, notwithstanding all the pains which he took in after life to supply the deficiency, he could never attain to a ready and skillful use of the pens. Neither was he in his youth instructed in the Latin language; he understood it, indeed, as it was then commonly spoken in Gaul, but not according to rule, and the usage of the ancient Latin authors. He endeavored, at a more advanced age, to remedy this defect also of his education; and, if we may believe his biographers, not without success. In conversation, where inaccuracies are less striking, he, perhaps, made himself understood with as much facility as he understood others; but the difficulty he experienced in expressing himself in writing, is evident from a letter which he wrote from his camp at Ens to his wife Fastrada, in 791. The rest of his letters, which are in a better and more easy style, were either composed by others to whom he communicated his ideas, or were examined and corrected by some learned friend, as were the French works of Frederick the Great.

Although his education was not calculated to develop his literary talents, it did not, at all events, stifle his nobler qualities; and it required only an external stimulus and excitement to kindle in him that ardent desire for knowledge, which he afterwards endeavored to satisfy amid the tumult of war, and when harassed by circumstances the most intricate, and business the most urgent. Deterred by the fearful example of others, he early learnt to shun excess and intemperance; and throughout his whole life, not only practiced moderation himself and introduced it into his family and household, but also issued salutary edicts against drunkenness, in order to eradicate that deeply rooted propensity of the Germans. His vigorous understanding, and his mind, naturally susceptible of all that was great and beautiful, found in the circumstances of his early youth ample materials for serious reflection and noble resolutions. We must remember how readily the young mind embraces all that is presented to it, and how deep and permanent is the impression of everything which really awakens the imagination, in order to be able properly to estimate the effect produced on the youthful Charles by his father's accession to the Merovingian throne, and his own consecration and coronation by Pope Stephen the Third.

As Charles increased in years, and especially after he had ascended the throne, he felt more and more keenly the want of education, both in himself and all who surrounded him. A monarch possessing a mind less exalted than his, would, in his situation, have

protected the ignorance which he so strenuously sought to banish, and would have despised in others that in which he himself had no participation; but his sentiments were far too noble to admit of his adopting such a course, and he endeavored rather to remove the causes to which this deficiency in civilization was to be attributed. His first step was to restore the court school, wherein the princes and sons of the nobility had formerly been educated, but which had been neglected during the tumult of the late tempestuous times. In consequence, however, of the deficiency of competent persons to establish any regular system, he was compelled to have recourse to foreigners. On his return from his first expedition across the Alps, in the year 774, he brought with him two learned Italians, the deacon Paul, author of the history of Lombardy, and Peter, A.M. of Pisa. He appointed Peter master of the court school, and himself received instruction from him in the Latin grammar: probably, he either died soon afterwards or was incompetent to his situation, as the establishment made no progress until the arrival of Alcuin.

3.

Alcuin as Instructor to the King and Royal Family.

Alcuin arrived in France in the year 782, for the purpose of undertaking the management of the court school, the instruction of the king, and the education of the princes and princesses. In the same year, the Saxon rebellion commenced such a series of important and complicated political events, that it seems inconceivable how Charles could snatch a moment from the cares of state to devote to literary objects. Two years of undisturbed tranquility among the Saxons, had induced Charles to believe that he might venture to introduce French regulations among them. Accordingly, he commenced by ordering a general levy of the Saxon troops; no sooner, however, did the Saxons see themselves collected in considerable numbers, with arms in their hands, than the general feeling of hatred produced the determination of turning them, not against the enemies of the Franks, but against the Franks themselves. The cruel severity with which Charles punished this mutiny of the soldiers, united the whole body of Saxons against him. Two sanguinary engagements, the only pitched battles fought in this tedious war, distinguished the following year (783); and though the Saxons were compelled to quit the field, from the superior discipline of their opponents, they continued, in separate parties, to make such an obstinate resistance, that Charles did not venture to lay aside his arms during the whole of the summer and winter of 784-5; and it was only by dreadful and barbarous devastation of the country, and by winning over some of the principal people by flattery and condescension, that he was at length enabled to reduce the chiefs, and afterwards the people, to submission. The repose thus obtained was not of long duration. Duke Arigis of Beneventum, confiding in the distance at which his territories were placed from those of France, in the number and strength of his fortresses, and still more in his alliance with the Greeks, who were desirous of restoring to the throne of Lombardy the son of Desiderius, who had taken refuge at Constantinople, assumed an independence which obliged the king to cross the Alps. Charles knew well how to estimate and to overcome the difficulties annexed to a campaign in lower Italy. Had he determined, as usual, upon leading the army, not till after the May-meeting, across the Alps, he would have reached Beneventum

in a season when the heat would have rendered all military operations impracticable, or have produced sickness among the troops; but so great was his authority, or the readiness of the Franks to serve him, that he commenced his march towards Italy in the autumn of 786. The Duke of Beneventum had, in his calculations, overlooked the power and abilities of his great opponent; and when, early in the spring of 787, Charles suddenly entered his dominions, he was so completely taken by surprise that he was glad to purchase the clemency of the victor by submission. Charles accepted his offers of subjection; but not till he had made a sufficient display of his power to ensure obedience. No sooner, however, had he recrossed the Alps for the purpose of chastising the duke of Bavaria for the part taken by him in this design against France, than Arigis, having entered into fresh negotiations with the Greeks, projected a scheme that might have proved dangerous to the Frank supremacy in Italy and Germany, had it been as skillfully executed as it was ably conceived. It was concerted that the Bavarians and Avars on the one side, and the Greeks with the Lombards on the other, should rise simultaneously; while it was expected that the Saxons would not fail to profit by this favorable moment to shake off the yoke of oppression. The decision and good fortune of Charles, however, hurled back upon the author the blow aimed at the Franks. The untimely death of the duke of Beneventum, and the wise measures adopted by Charles, frustrated the landing of the Greeks in Italy; and the second participation of Thassilo in this treasonable alliance was punished by the deposition of the duke, and the extinction of the dukedom of Bavaria. The Avars, who, according to the stipulations, invaded the French territories, encountered, in Charles, an irresistible opponent, and involved themselves in a war which led to their political annihilation. The Saxons, so far from venturing on any hostile movement, accompanied the king in a campaign which he undertook the following year, 789, against the Sclavonians, a people inhabiting the right bank of the Elbe. He looked upon this river as the natural eastern boundary of his kingdom, and endeavored to secure it, not only by erecting fortresses, but by reducing the Sclavonians on the opposite bank to subjection.

It was during these troublous times, that Alcuin first took up his abode at the court of France, and commenced his labors for the mental improvement of the king, the royal family, and the people. One cannot but admire, with Alcuin, the noble mind and extraordinary activity of Charles, and acknowledge the superiority of a man who, in the midst of so many distracting political cares and warlike operations, could occupy himself with literary pursuits, the value of which was at that time far from being generally acknowledged. It was only by scrupulously availing himself of every moment, that he could find time for these various employments. Even during his meals, he never failed to introduce either reading or instructive conversation. The political constitution of France was so organized that it allowed the king to pass the winter months in tranquility in the bosom of his family; and if extraordinary circumstances obliged him to keep the field during that season, as he was compelled to do from the year 784 to 785, he required his family to join him. He had therefore nearly eight winter months to spend in intercourse with Alcuin, and in literary occupations. What the subjects of study were, and how they were treated of in those times, we may best learn from Alcuin's works; and as the importance of learning to the state and church of France was first recognized by Charles, the institutions established for its propagation would naturally adopt the views which Alcuin as teacher, and Charles as learner, might entertain. In his commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes, Alcuin speaks of the division of the then known sciences. According to

him, they are divided into Ethics, Physics, and Theology, and were really taught in the order in which they are here placed. This is more clearly explained in a discourse between himself and two of his pupils, to be found in the Introduction to his grammar. The students desire to be conducted to the higher branches of learning, and to behold the seven degrees of theoretic doctrine, so often promised. The teacher points out to them, Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy, or, as it was then called, Astrology: The first three (afterwards called the Trivium) formed the Ethics of Alcuin, and the four others, or the Quadrivium, the Physics: these two parts were only preparatory studies for the highest of all, Theology. The knowledge of these sciences was to form and strengthen the mind for the understanding of the true faith, and to protect it against the erroneous doctrines of heretics.

There are still extant manuals by Alcuin, especially on the various branches of ethics, which enable us to describe his mode of treating them. As far as regards the first part of the Trivium, Grammar, he adopts the form of a conversation between two students, a Saxon and a Frank, who receive from their master information on those points which they do not comprehend. Latin was not, in those days, in the same degree as at present, a dead language: it was still spoken in several parts of the Frank kingdom, and constantly used in all public transactions, and also in the church. A grammar written at that period, must necessarily be purely practical. In our schools Latin is considered the best medium of instruction for young people; because it unites in itself the double advantage of being the best means of developing the understanding in a logical manner, and of imparting at the same time the knowledge of a foreign language. None of the modern languages, which, on account of their practical utility, the philanthropist would wish to substitute for it, can supply what the Latin affords. Whoever is well grounded in Latin, may readily acquire a knowledge of all the modern tongues; less because some of them are derived from it, than because a mind which has been strengthened by the study of the Latin grammar, only requires a little practice, in order to comprehend the peculiarities of a modern language, and to use it with facility. But in Alcuin's times, Latin was not learned so perfectly, nor with this view; and his grammar is consequently nothing more than a system of forms. (He treats of single words and their forms, without specifying how they are to be used in the construction of a sentence.) We do not find anything that is necessary to be known, omitted: still, we cannot but disapprove the inconvenient arrangement, and want of accuracy in the definitions.

The beginning of the section on prepositions, may serve as an example. To the question, "What is a preposition?" the answer is, "An indeclinable part of speech". Here, an accidental outward form is made the principal characteristic, and is so much the less accurate, as there are many other words besides prepositions which are indeclinable. Equally defective is the reply to the second question on the use of the prepositions, "They must be placed before other parts of speech, either by being compounded with, or united to them". A peculiarity like this can only be a sign, not a definition; and, besides, this explanation excludes all the prepositions that are placed after their cases. Alcuin's grammar is evidently written more for the memory than the understanding. The examples are selected from the classics, most of them from Virgil; some from Terence, Juvenal, Lucan, and Cicero.

An appendix to the grammar treats of orthography. It is no small merit in Alcuin, that he recommended by his example, and facilitated by his instructions, accuracy in the transcription of books. (But for him, many of the manuscripts of the middle ages would have been still more defective than they are.) He is, therefore, entitled to the thanks of the whole of western Europe, whose high degree of cultivation and enlightenment is derived from those works of antiquity preserved by the care and diligence of the monks. In the monastery of St. Martin of Tours, of which Alcuin afterwards became abbot, a room called The Museum was specially appropriated to the transcribers. On the walls, verses were written strictly enjoining them to avoid inserting any words not warranted by the original, but founded only on their own ideas, and cautioning them against too great rapidity in writing. They were also recommended to make the proper breaks, and to be careful of the right punctuation. For this purpose, Alcuin had written a book on orthography, of which there remains only an abstract made by a monk of Saltzburg, for the use of himself and others. It contains a short list, alphabetically arranged, principally of such words as are sounded alike but spelt differently, of synonymous and irregular verbs.

The grammar acquainted the learner simply with words; the formation of sentences was taught by Logic in the most extended sense of the term, which naturally divides itself into two parts; Rhetoric, or the art of convincing others, and Dialectic, or the art of distinguishing truth from falsehood.

The subject of Rhetoric is discussed in a dialogue between Charlemagne and Alcuin; the questions of the king serving to elicit the principles of the teacher. The treatise is entirely confined to forensic eloquence; and as the rules are taken from the Romans, so also do their principles of jurisprudence form the groundwork of this composition. It would have been an invaluable treasure, had it described to us the actual proceedings in a Frank court of justice, instead of representing the litigations which the ancient rhetoricians had partly invented, and partly taken from real life and from history. In those times, when simple cases were easily decided, and the more complicated submitted to the judgment of God, such a system of rhetoric was of no practical importance; but it was calculated to give acuteness and precision to the understanding, and accustomed the student to express himself with ease and fluency. At the conclusion of the treatise is a short discourse on the virtues. Here, also, Alcuin retains the classification of the ancient philosophers, but with an adaptation to the ideas of Christianity. This appears to me sufficiently interesting to deserve a literal quotation. “I wonder”, observes the king, “that we Christians should so often depart from virtue, though we have eternal glory promised as its recompense by Jesus Christ, who is Truth itself; whilst the heathen philosophers steadily pursued it merely on account of its intrinsic worth, and for the sake of fame”.

Alcuin.—“We must rather deplore than wonder, that most of us will not be induced to embrace virtue either by the fear of punishment or the hope of promised reward”.

Charles.—“I see it, and must, alas I acknowledge, that there are many such. I beg you, however, to inform me as briefly as possible, how we, as Christians, are to understand and regard these chief virtues”.

Alcuin.—“Does not that appear to you to be wisdom, whereby God, after the manner of human understanding, is known and feared, and his future judgment believed?”

Charles.—"I understand you; and grant that nothing is more excellent than this wisdom. I also remember that it is written in Job, Behold, the wisdom of man is the fear of God. And what is the fear of God, but the worship of God, which in the Greek is called Theosophy".

Alcuin.—"It is so : and farther, what is righteousness but the love of God, and the observance of his commandments?"

Charles.—"I perceive this also, that nothing is more perfect than this righteousness, or rather that there is no other than this".

Alcuin.—"Do you not consider that to be valor whereby a man overcomes the Evil One, and is enabled to bear with firmness the trials of the world?"

Charles.—"Nothing appears to me more glorious than such a victory".

Alcuin: —"Is not that temperance which checks desire, restrains avarice, and tranquillizes and governs all the passions of the soul?"

The king agrees to this also, and thus the whole dialogue concludes.

The treatise on the second part of Logic, or the third part of Ethics, is a continuation of the former; and therefore, also, in the form of a dialogue betwixt Alcuin and his royal pupil. The rules and examples given for the formation of syllogisms are quite in the style of Aristotle's category, on which indeed the work is founded, without any of the subtleties and absurd sophistry of the later schoolmen, who were disputants by profession, and could not calculate upon a victory on which depended their reputation and their very existence, unless they possessed sharper weapons of attack, and higher entrenchments of dialectic forms for their defence than their adversaries. The examples are taken in part from the Latin authors, particularly from the works of Virgil and Cicero.

The three subjects of the Trivium had no particular reference to the daily interests of life, affecting them only in so far as they tended to the general improvement of the mind. They were useful as the handmaidens of theology, and intended for the support of the true faith; but when an impetus has once been given to thought, it is impossible to prescribe its course. The mind now aroused to philosophical research, boldly instituted an enquiry into the dogmas of the church, testing them, not by their external authority but by their internal worth. It will be seen that during the reign of Charlemagne, the pretensions of the Church, and during that of his son and successor, the administration of public affairs, underwent a rigorous investigation. It was neither the superior justice of their cause, nor the weight of their influence, that procured for the sons of Louis the Pious the victory over their father; but the talents of men like Agobard, who considered a reform in the state necessary, and who hoped to see accomplished in their own way, by the sons who were dependent on them, those schemes which the father had neither sufficient independence of mind, nor reckless firmness of character to execute. The science of Ethics, therefore, as it was then taught, was important as a means of liberating the mind from the shackles of superstition and despotism. Had it extended throughout all classes, as Charlemagne intended, it would have given a very different aspect to the character of the middle ages; but the laity being opposed to the clergy merely as a physical force, the

latter had all the advantage of education on their side, and of course obtained the victory in every intellectual contest.

The four component parts of Physics were of a more practical kind, and applicable to the objects of ordinary life. Although Alcuin has not systematically developed his views in any work on the subject, still there exists a sufficient number of passages in his letters to Charles, to indicate his method, and the share which the king took in those scientific pursuits. Astronomy was the study that chiefly interested him. This science affords to the mind which has not yet arrived at a perfect consciousness of its own capabilities, an external object to which it may elevate itself, and from which it may obtain a standard whereby to pleasure its own power; for there is something sublime in the thought that the laws of nature, to which our material being must do homage, are subordinate to our intellectual faculties. The king studied it, also, with a view to the accurate admeasurement of time, and the formation of a fixed calendar so important for the .regulation of life both in church and state. He required Alcuin to calculate the lunar and solar year, and to explain, from astronomical observations, the cause of the over plus of ten hours and a half in each month, in consequence of which the year gained five days, six hours, and every fourth year an intercalary day. The completion of the nineteen years' cycle in the year 797, having rendered the intercalation of a day necessary, in order to avoid confusion in the calendar, Alcuin proposed counting thirty-one days in the month of November. At that time, but contrary to his will, a new method of calculation, the Alexandrian reckoning, had insinuated itself into the court school; and a dispute arose as to the period when the year should commence. Those who adopted the new method insisted that the year ought to begin at the autumnal equinox, when the light of day is becoming shorter, and the darkness of night longer; whilst Alcuin maintained that the commencement of increasing light, the winter solstice, a time which also coincided with the festival of Christmas, was a more convenient period. He ridicules his opponents with much ingenuity and bitterness. "Darkness", he says, "might be very suitable to Egyptians; but he rejoiced that he had escaped from it, with Moses, to live and to abide in the precious land of light; and that on no account would he, nor should the king either, return to Egyptian darkness".

Charles was such an attentive observer of the heavens that nothing remarkable occurred without attracting his notice, and awakening his reflection. From the month of July, 798, till the same month in the following year, the planet Mars was nowhere visible in the heavens; wherefore, the king, who had in vain sought for it in the constellation Cancer, asked Alcuin whether its disappearance was to be attributed to its own natural course, or to the power of the sun, or to a miracle. These facts sufficiently attest the interest which Charles took in astronomy, and confirm the passing remark of Einhard, that the king devoted more time and pains to astronomy than to any other science. It seems he was desirous of constructing a German almanac; at all events, the introduction of German names of the months originated with him; some he borrowed from the Anglo-Saxon, and some he invented. He called January Winter-month; February, Horning-month; March, Spring-month; April, Easter-month; May, Pleasure-month; June, Fallow-month; July, Hay-month; August, Harvest-month; September, Meadow-month; October, Wind-month; November, Autumn-month; December, Holy-month.

Astronomy, like the other branches of physics, was, in Alcuin's opinion, to be regarded as a science principally in its reference to theology. Its object was to afford to the doubting mind the most convincing evidence of the existence of a Creator, to awaken in the believer the highest veneration of the wisdom of the Almighty, and to strengthen his faith. Even arithmetic first derived its title to be considered a science from its adaptation to Theology. The numbers in the Holy Scriptures, for instance, could not escape the mystical interpretation which it was the fashion of those times to give, and which was held to be essential to the right faith; they were supposed to contain a hidden meaning, which Arithmetic would help to disclose. Alcuin's method, and the acuteness with which he traces through all its windings a theory, which, however perverted it may seem, was by no means destitute of ingenuity, will be best seen in a letter of which the following is a literal translation. It is addressed to one of his pupils named Onias or Daphnis; and explains the passage in the Song of Solomon, wherein it is said, vi. 8. "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines and virgins without number". He writes thus :—"An accurate acquaintance with numbers, teaches us that some are even, others uneven; that of the even numbers, some are perfect, others imperfect; and further, that of the imperfect numbers, some are greater, others less. All numbers are unequal that cannot be divided into two equal parts, such as 7 or 9, which, if divided, will be found to contain unequal parts. Of the equal numbers, some are perfect, others imperfect. A perfect number is one which is formed entirely of its aliquot parts, which will divide without leaving a fractional remainder, and the sum of whose parts is neither greater nor less than the whole. Take, for example, the number 6; the half of 6 is 3, the third is 2, and the sixth 1, which parts added together make 6; thus producing no fractions by division, nor over plus by the addition of the aliquot parts. The perfect Creator, therefore, who made all things very good, created the world in six days, in order to show that everything that he had formed, was perfect in its kind. On the other hand, if we divide the number 8, we shall find that the sum of its parts is less than the whole. The half of 8 is 4, the fourth is 2, the eighth 1, which parts, when added together, produce not 8 but 7; 1 + 2 + 4 = 7 not 8. On this account, when the human race after the flood replenished the earth, they originated from the number 8; for we read that 8 persons were in Noah's ark, from whom all mankind is descended; thus indicating that the second race is less perfect than the first, which had been created in the number 6. As Adam was formed on the sixth day out of the virgin earth, so also our Redeemer, the restorer of the primitive perfection was born of the Virgin Mary in the sixth age of the world, in order to proclaim by his coming the perfection of the number 6, which had been intimated at the creation of the first man. We see, moreover, the progression of numbers in certain regular series until they become infinite. The first progression of numbers is from 1 to 10, the second from 10 to 100, the third from 100 to 1000. The same rule of perfection or imperfection that applies to the first series from 1 to 10, applies also to the second from 10 to 100. For as the number 6 when divided by units is found to be perfect, so also will the number 60, when divided by tens, the 10 in this case taking the place of the unit. The division of 60 into its aliquot parts is as follows; the half of 60 is 30, like as 3 is the half of 6; the third is 20, as 2 is of 6; and 10 stands in the place of the unit; these parts, when added together, make 60 : — thus --- 10 + 20 + 30 = 60; as 1 + 2 + 3 = 6. The same rule cannot be applied to the division of 80; for of 80, the half is 40, the fourth 20; the eighth 10; the sum of which is not 80 but 70; for 10 -- 20 + 40 = 70.

"The sixty queens and eighty concubines are the members of the holy church. Of these, some devote themselves to teaching purely from love to Christ; others who seek worldly advantage, labor, indeed, in the church, but it is for the sake of temporal gain, not from a longing after the heavenly country, that they are willing thus to toil. The latter are compared in their imperfection to the number 80; but the former in their perfect holiness are denoted by the number 60. They are worthy the name of queens, because they, simply from love to the bridegroom and a desire to multiply the heirs of heaven, seek to perpetuate a blessed succession by means of baptism and instruction. The others, on the contrary, are designated by the name of concubines, because, although they also, through baptism and instruction, often produce worthy sons, yet, being actuated by the love of this world and the ambition of acquiring earthly honor, they themselves remain unhonored. With such, I beseech thee, my dearest son, avoid all fellowship; and if through the mercy of God thou shouldst hereafter become worthy to be an instructor, labor unceasingly from love to him who shed his blood for thy salvation, in order that thou may obtain in recompense, not perishable riches, but everlasting glory round the throne of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and glory for ever and ever. Amen".

All the numbers that occur in the Holy Scriptures were at that time interpreted in a similar manner; and it was only in this point of view that Alcuin would allow arithmetic to possess any scientific utility or any power to afford intellectual enjoyment. Consequently, geometry, which would admit of no such application, held a subordinate rank, so long as the value of science was calculated solely with reference to theology; while, on the other hand, music was held in high estimation. The importance of music in divine service was too great, not to secure for it a prominent place amongst the subjects of instruction in the schools at that period. To the service of God, solemnities are essential which are able to set the spirit free from the common cares and interests of life, and to attune it to the sublimest sentiments of devotion. Nothing short of a revolution, which, in the violence with which it overturns all existing institutions, brings about the opposite extreme, could have induced men to sever the connection between the arts and religion, to banish all ceremonies and to substitute a cold morality for the heart-stirring doctrines of religion. The churches robbed of their decorations became mere lecture-rooms, the pulpit was degraded into the professor's chair, whence the teacher delivered to his audience a discourse on morals. But as soon as the excitement produced by such contests has subsided, a mere address to the understanding will be found incompetent to rouse men from apathy, and the necessity of adopting some mode of external worship that shall appeal directly to the feelings will become apparent. In the absence of other means, appropriate music and singing are and ever will be the simplest, and at the same time the most effectual. What at that time was called music, was nothing more than chanting; but this defect Charlemagne endeavored to remedy to the best of his ability; for he himself had a taste for music, which he cultivated under Alcuin's instruction. The choir of his cathedral was the most celebrated in France, and was considered a model for that of all the other churches.

The system of Theology, and the interest taken by Charles and his friends in the studies appertaining to it, will find a more appropriate place for discussion, when the controversy betwixt the orthodox church and the new sect of Adoptionists passes under

review. It is probable that during his first residence at court, Alcuin communicated to the king his views on many subjects of importance both to the church and state; especially his sentiments with regard to the position of the Pope. As an Anglo-Saxon, he was imbued with the most humble and profound reverence for the holy see. In a letter to Hadrian the first, he acknowledges the Pope as the worthy successor of St. Peter, and styles him the heir of the power granted by Christ to the apostles, of binding and losing in heaven and on earth. He found the papal authority already firmly established in the French kingdom, particularly in that portion of it which was purely German; for the restoration of Christianity in those parts, where it had been formerly professed, and the introduction of it where it was utterly unknown, had been principally effected by the Anglo-Saxons.

The veneration felt by the Germans for their heathen priests was adroitly transferred by these Missionaries to the ministers of Christianity, and particularly to the sovereign pontiff, the Pope, of whom men conceived ideas magnified in proportion to the distance at which he governed. A model for the establishment of a hierarchy had been already furnished in the history of the Jewish nation, with which, through the medium of the Old Testament, the people were more conversant than with that of their own country, and which could not fail to have a considerable influence upon their political opinions. The Jewish polity afforded not merely the only rule that could be applied to public measures, and the only source from which the principles of administration could be derived; but it was a pattern which seemed so much the more worthy of imitation, as it had originated in God himself. The Carolingian family availed themselves of these opinions to promote their own advancement, and gave the theory a practical adaptation. Pepin concealed his usurpation under the authority of the Pope, and sanctified his person and the crown which he had so unjustly acquired, by causing himself and his family to be solemnly anointed first by St. Boniface, and afterwards by the Pope himself. It is recorded in the Old Testament, that the high priest Samuel nominated and anointed a king at the command of God, and that at the bidding of the same God, he deposed him in order to place another on his throne. The idea that the Pope was to be regarded as a second Samuel, who, like the former, was authorized to depose one king and consecrate another, was too convenient, not to become henceforth an important principle in all the political movements of the middle ages. Alcuin, therefore, naturally regarded the authority of the Pope as the highest upon earth, and ventured to avow his sentiments to Charlemagne himself. In the same degree as the see of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, was superior to every earthly throne, the Pope who occupied his see could not but be considered superior to every earthly power. Next in rank to the papal came the imperial dignity of the Byzantian emperors who governed the second Rome; and then followed that of royalty. Alcuin adds, however, by way of sweetening the bitter pill with a little flattery, that if King Charles theoretically held the third rank amongst the rulers of the earth, he practically by his power, his wisdom, and the splendor of his kingdom held the first. It is by no means surprising, that while opinions such as these were current in the world, the decretals of the false Isidorus should have been forged, and obtained credit. Though the grossness of the forgery is apparent on the very face of the work, the sentiments which it contained were neither new nor unheard of, but were compounded of principles already universally acknowledged, and of inferences deduced from those principles. The whole scheme of the Roman hierarchy, as it afterwards displayed itself, was devised at this period, and although retarded by subsequent unfavorable circumstances, it was

sufficiently matured to burst forth at the first call of a bold and intrepid spirit in all its imposing grandeur.

SECTION II.

ALCUIN'S RESIDENCE DURING EIGHT YEARS AT THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE. AD 782-790.

ALCUIN'S OPINIONS CONCERNING TITHES.

The sentiments of Alcuin with regard to the war in which Charlemagne was engaged with the Saxons, deserve some notice, although they had no influence on the course of events. He could not but applaud the efforts of the king to introduce the Christian religion among the Saxons; but the manner in which he strove to accomplish his wish by no means met his approval. Men of energetic character, like Charles, are usually inflexible in the prosecution of their designs, and look upon every concession to existing circumstances as a proof of weakness. The acceptance of Christianity by the Saxons, as Charles desired, involved not merely a change of their religion, but also of their civil constitution, which was founded upon it; so that the nobility, whose pre-eminence was derived solely from their priestly office, struggled less for their gods than for their rank and political existence. Alcuin was aware of the manner in which his pagan ancestors, who were descended from the same stock, and had professed the same religion as the Saxons, had been converted to Christianity. He knew that it had not been effected by external violence, but by permission. The king and his nobles willingly resigned the influence they possessed as priests, since the new religion secured to them equal influence through the medium of bishoprics and abbacies. He thought it his duty to recommend to the king a similar mode of proceeding. He counseled him to present Christianity to the Saxons under its fairest aspect, and to alleviate the burthens attached to it as much as possible at its introduction. Above all things, he warned the king against the immediate imposition of tithes. The Christian clergy were indebted for this tribute (the idea of which was borrowed from the Old Testament) to the artfulness with which they laid claim to the position of the Jewish priesthood, thereby transferring to themselves the advantages enjoyed by that body. Alcuin's reasons do honor both to his heart and to his understanding, since they prove that he was entirely free from the blind zeal of the priests. He doubts, in the first place, whether the tithe be a necessary burthen upon Christianity, as it would be difficult to find an instance wherein the Apostles exacted this tribute, or bequeathed to their successors any right so to do. If Charles, however, were determined to insist on the tithe, he entreats him at least to consider, that a tax which the established Christians reluctantly consented to pay, would naturally alienate the minds of new converts from a doctrine which they saw to be oppressive even at its announcement. In his opinion, the introduction of the tithe system would not be advisable, until Christianity bad been acknowledged by the Saxons as the means of salvation, and had become endeared to them in such a degree, that they would consider no burthen connected with it

as too heavy. He urges, therefore, the sending of such of the clergy as were more concerned for the welfare of the church than for their own advancement, and whose characters were calculated to enforce the doctrines which they taught. In conclusion, he mentions three subjects with which converts should become acquainted, previous to their baptism; first, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, with a description of the joys prepared for the good in heaven, and the torments which await the wicked in hell; then that of the Holy Trinity; and lastly, the most important doctrine, that of the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ. Charles did not follow this salutary advice; and to his obstinacy, may be attributed the long continuance of the Saxon war for years, and which he could not bring to a conclusion until he had executed some of his chief adversaries, banished others, and conciliated the rest by the grant of fiefs.

In what other political affairs, Alcuin was engaged during his first residence of eight years at the Frank Court, we are ignorant, as the portion of his extensive correspondence, which is extant, refers to a later period, but we know that his thief efforts were directed to literature, for not only the king, but his sons and daughters likewise were under his tuition. The more Charles felt the value of a learned education, the more anxious he became that his children should he carefully instructed, that he might never hear from them the reproach which he, perhaps, sometimes silently cast upon his father. Under such circumstances, however, education easily takes a wrong direction, for if it endeavor too greatly to accelerate the progress of cultivation at a time when it is neglected by the many, and appreciated only by the few, it inevitably tears asunder all sympathy between the pupil and his contemporaries. Whilst he looks upon them as Barbarians, they regard him as a Sybarite, and thus is engendered a feeling of mutual hostility which cannot but be injurious to the state. A proof of this was exhibited in the education, and consequent fantastic schemes of Otho III, king of Germany, and emperor of Rome. Charles, however, was wise enough to avoid this error by combining intellectual instruction with the national studies of the Franks. The beautiful simplicity of those times may be seen in a picture, sketched by Einhard, of the domestic life of Charlemagne. Whilst the sons perfected themselves in corporeal exercises, rode with their father to the chase, or accompanied him to battle, that they might acquire under his own eye that proficiency in the use of arms so necessary to a Frank prince, the daughters remained at home occupied in weaving or spinning. At dinner, the whole family assembled at the same table. When travelling, the king rode between his sons, and his daughters followed likewise on horseback. Both were instructed by Alcuin in all the learning of the times. A small treatise still to be found among Alcuin's works containing the substance of a conversation between himself and Charles's second son Pepin, shows the method by which he endeavored to quicken the faculties of the mind, and impart a facility of expression. For example, Pepin is asking for information respecting certain words, Alcuin explains them, not by giving their precise signification, but by circumlocution, or by rendering the sense with a poetical turn of expression. Many of the answers are sufficiently striking and acute to awaken reflection. The prince asks for instance, "What is the liberty of man?" and receives for answer, "Innocence". To Pepin's question : "What is the Moon?" Alcuin replies, "The eye of night, the dispenser of dew, the herald of tempests". These are attributes of the moon belonging either to its nature or its effects, arrayed in the mantle of poetry. At the conclusion, they exchange parts, and Alcuin proposes to his pupil problems to solve, and questions to answer, calculated to habituate the mind to quickness of apprehension, and

a facility in discovering the most comprehensive terms to express every idea. We perceive from Alcuin's letters, that at a later period, the princes Charles, Pepin, and Louis, honored and respected him as their master, and that the king's sister and daughter, Gisla, sought his instructions, both verbally and by writing.

In the year 796, Louis having made a successful campaign against the Avari, and taken numerous prisoners, Alcuin wrote to King Charles, entreating him to ransom them, which request, being seconded by the prince, was granted. Alcuin expressed his gratitude in a letter to the prince, and annexed to it a list of exhortations which deserve to be quoted as a specimen of his style, and as illustrating the position in which he stood towards his royal pupil, "Most illustrious prince", he writes, "seek to adorn thy noble rank by noble deeds, endeavor with all thy might to do the will and promote the honor of almighty God, that through his favor, which is above all price, the throne of thy kingdom may be exalted, its limits extended, and the people subdued to thy government. Be liberal to the poor, be kind to strangers, devout in the service of Christ, and hold in reverence the ministers of his church, whereby thou wilt receive the assistance of their fervent prayers. Let thy conduct be upright and chaste. Love the wife of thy youth, and suffer no other woman to share thy affections, that the blessing of God that rests upon thee may descend to a long line of thy posterity. Be formidable to thy foes, be true to thy friends, favorable to Christians, terrible to Heathens, accessible to the poor, prudent in following counsel. Listen to the counsel of the old, but employ the young to execute it. Let justice and equity prevail, and let the praise of God resound at the appointed hours throughout thy kingdom, but especially in thy presence. Such pious regard to the duties prescribed by the church, will render thee acceptable to God, and honored by man. Let feelings of humility dwell in thy heart, the words of truth on thy lips, and let thy life be a pattern of integrity, that it may please God to prosper and protect thee".

Alcuin is fond of indulging in such exhortations to young people, though nothing can be more inefficacious than a list of precepts. In communicating the doctrines of morality, they must be addressed either to the feelings, or to the understanding; a cold enumeration, therefore, of virtues that imparts no distinct ideas to the one, nor any glow to the other, must necessarily fail to produce the desired effect. Alcuin himself was a living example to the pupils who immediately surrounded him; but to his friends at a distance, he wrote these, as they seem to me, well intended rhetorical flourishes.

Two letters addressed to Charles the younger, the king's eldest son, contain similar sentiments. The first congratulates him on his coronation, an event with which we are made acquainted only by these letters, and which must have taken place in the year 800. It admonishes him to fulfill the duties of his high station, and advises him to take his father as a model for his conduct. Although Charles the younger exactly resembled his father, and was his favorite, Alcuin does not seem to have been well satisfied with him. The mind of this active prince was more disposed for the stirring business of life than for the stillness of contemplation, and was less influenced by the exhortations of his master, than the latter hoped and expected; perhaps also, like Charlemagne in his younger days, he was more attached to the society of women than accorded with Alcuin's views. At all events, he thought it necessary to ask his permission to lay before him, in a friendly correspondence, some remarks on many parts of his conduct which he considered censurable. He proposes to him as an example, his brother Louis, who not only listened

to his counsel, but followed it. None of his letters to Louis are extant; but from the passage just quoted, we may infer that he held the highest place in his estimation, and that he expected France would enjoy golden days under his administration. The submission to the will of God, which Alcuin admired so much in Louis, and his humility towards the ministers of the church, were qualities that originated less in real piety than in a want of independence of spirit. It is, therefore, a mark of narrow-minded partiality, if Alcuin wished that Louis might become the sole successor of his father, and no proof of his great political sagacity, if he considered him the most worthy. The very docility which, in his youth, Louis displayed towards Alcuin, became afterwards ruinous to the French empire. A prince must, at all times, but especially under circumstances such as those of France, at that period, be something more than a learned and a benevolent man.

It was, however, quite natural that the female part of the family of Charlemagne submitted to Alcuin's instructions with unlimited confidence, and found his system of Theology so much the more pleasing, the more scope it afforded for the exercise of the feelings, and the less it required the exertion of the understanding or of speculative reasoning. Charles's sister, Gisla, often applied to him for consolation and information; he wrote expressly for her, and one of her Christian friends, Richtrud, or Columba, a commentary on the Gospel of St. John, of which I shall hereafter speak more particularly.

It is natural to suppose that Charles's daughters enjoyed similar advantages. This supposition is indeed partly confirmed by facts. Alcuin, in a letter to the king, requests him to reply to some questions which had been proposed to Alcuin by one of the princesses. In a psalm sung during divine service, she had been struck by these words, "All men are liars". She enquires, therefore, whether this applies to infants, and dumb persons, whose lips have never uttered a word? She asks farther for the explanation of a passage in the same psalm, which is to her incomprehensible. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me". In another psalm, it seems to her, that the assurance, "The sun shall not burn thee by day, nor the moon by night", is falsely expressed; as she cannot understand how the same property could be ascribed to the moon, whose nature is cold and damp, as to the sun.

The ardor with which Charles studied the sciences, and caused his family to be instructed therein, could not fail to influence all around him. As the taste of the Court refined, a literary tone became predominant, which none but those whose minds harmonized with it, could appreciate or enjoy. It was, however, principally the immorality of the clergy that shocked the religious feelings of Charles, and their ignorance that disgusted his cultivated understanding. Whoever, therefore, now aspired to preferment, either in the church or state, was obliged to imitate the example of the king, and obtain his favor on conditions entirely different from those of former times. Thus, without any compulsory edict, reform rapidly advanced; and Alcuin hoped to see a new Athens arise in France, possessing privileges higher than the ancient, in proportion to the superiority of the wisdom of Christ to the philosophy of Plato. In the new system of civilization, Charles was, as it were, the sun, whose light illuminated, first the narrow sphere of his own family, then the more extensive circle of his immediate acquaintance, and was finally to spread over the ever-widening orbit of the whole nation. The establishment of schools was, however, requisite for the attainment of this object; and this became Charles's first

care, as soon as he had awakened a desire for improvement, and procured competent teachers.

1

Establishment of the higher and lower Schools in the Kingdom of France.

From the preceding exposition of Alcuin's opinions respecting the theory and practical adaptation of the sciences then in use, it will be readily concluded, that in the schools about to be erected, theology and philosophy would form the chief subjects of education. What the church and state require of those who devote themselves to their service, depends upon the exigencies of the times and the nature of circumstances. The government of France with regard to its finances, its military constitution and its laws, was so simply organized, that there needed not a distinct profession for each branch of public business, nor was any other knowledge required than that which was essential to common life. A vigorous arm a courageous heart, and a sound understanding, fitted a man in those days for the management of the affairs of state; so that he who today presided in a court, of justice, appeared the next day at the head of an army, or, at another time, was seen in a foreign court charged by his sovereign with a diplomatic commission. It was requisite, that he should be acquainted with Latin, as all written negotiations were carried on in that language. The ecclesiastic, however, had to pursue another course of study, yet Latin formed also the groundwork of his learning; for none but a few distinguished men made such progress in Greek and Hebrew as to be able to read the sacred writings in their original tongues. Amid the strife of contending sects and contradictory opinions, the Christian religion had been gradually erected into a solid fabric of doctrines and ceremonies. The whole of western Christendom adhered at that time to the Catholic faith, which was beginning to separate from the Greek church, and to assume the characteristics of the Roman Catholic. The doctrines of the orthodox church were contained in the works of the fathers who had either philosophically expounded the Holy Scriptures, or had opposed the heresies of their times. It was necessary that the ecclesiastic should study these also; and in order rightly to understand them, he was obliged to make himself acquainted with the sciences which have been characterized in a preceding chapter. In the establishment of new schools, regard was naturally paid to these demands of church and state; but as ordinary minds aim at no higher objects than those proposed by the state; some institutions which may be denominated Universities, enlarged the course of instruction for the benefit of those who were ambitious of knowledge.

In the latter part of the ninth century, a monk of the monastery of St. Gallen, collected the anecdotes of Charlemagne, which were current at that time, but like similar records of the great men of modern times, they are for the most part either fictitious, or the truth is so disguised, that it cannot be recognized. They have, however, an historical value, so far as they show the opinion entertained, in the time of Charles Le Gros, of the founder of the Carolingian dynasty, fallen as its power then was. The worthy monk gives, in his peculiar facetious, blunt style, much information respecting the efforts made by Charles to promote civilization; and relates the following anecdote when speaking of the

establishment of schools. Two Irishmen well skilled in all secular and ecclesiastical learning, came with some English merchants to the coast of Gaul, and offered wisdom for sale, “Does any man lack wisdom? Let him come and take it, for here it is to be sold”. The king no sooner heard of these adventurers, than he sent for them, and inquired whether they really had the article. They answered in the affirmative, and assured his majesty, that they were willing to dispose of it to every man, if the king would grant them a convenient dwelling, assign them pupils of promising abilities, and supply them with that without which human life cannot be sustained—food and clothing. Charles retained them in his palace for some time, and when the affairs of his kingdom called him into the field, he commanded one of them, named Clemens, to remain in Gaul, and placed under his tuition boys of all ranks from the highest to the lowest class. The other he sent into Italy to the monastery of St. Augustine at Pavia, in order to establish a school there. Encouraged by this favorable reception, proceeds the monk, Alcuin came to Gaul, where his endeavors were crowned with such success, “that the modern Gauls or Franks might have been compared with the ancient Romans or Greeks”.

This narrative confounds earlier with later events, and in the transition to Alcuin betrays evident marks of a tradition which is founded, indeed, upon fact; but to which additions have been made without much regard to their truth or falsehood. The Irishman, Clemens, appears to be identical with one of that name who was an eminent professor among the Franks in the middle of the eighth century; but who, by his heretical opinions, incurred the displeasure of St. Boniface, on whose accusation he was condemned by the popes. But tradition has embellished his history with those fanciful decorations which are observable in the narrations of the monk of St. Gallen, and, like everything else that regarded intellectual improvement, have a reference to Charlemagne. It appears, however, that previous to Alcuin’s arrival, no public school of importance, except the court-school existed on the Cisalpine territories; and even after his arrival, five years elapsed before any decided step was taken. It was necessary to promote to bishoprics and abbacies, men capable of seconding Charles’ designs, before he could attempt to execute them. The court-school, under Alcuin’s superintendence, furnished, as might be expected, some able scholars; others were attracted from foreign countries by the king’s liberality, or rescued from obscurity by his penetration, and removed from an inferior sphere of action to a position more worthy of their talents. He elevated St. Paulinus to the patriarchate of Aquileia; Leidrad obtained the archbishopric of Lyons, Theodulph, the bishopric of Orleans; Arno, Alcuin’s most intimate friends the archbishopric of Saltsburg; all men illustrious for the extent of their learning, and full of zeal for its diffusion. When Charles returned from Italy in the year 786, (whither he had marched to oppose the duke of Beneventum), he brought with him a number of Italians capable of instructing in singing, organ-playing, grammar, and cyphering. Having taken all these preparatory steps, the king caused circular letters to be sent to all the bishops and abbots in his kingdom, commanding the establishment of schools. In these letters, he says, that in the official reports that had been sent to him from the monasteries, he had perceived with much displeasure the imperfect and awkward manner in which thoughts in themselves correct were expressed; and could not, therefore, help doubting whether the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Christian religion were properly understood. To call their attention to how much depended upon the right or wrong use of words, he reminds them of the passage in the Gospel where it is said : “By thy words thou shalt be justified,

and by thy words thou shalt be condemned". In order, therefore, to remedy this evil so perilous to the soul, he commands that a school should be attached to every cathedral church, and every monastery, without, however, specifying more minutely what was to be taught. The kind of evil designed to be removed by this means, proves that originally the education of the clergy only was contemplated; ideas upon this point, however, soon became more enlarged, and, in pursuance of supplementary edicts, instruction was extended even to the lowest classes of the laity. The command is given in such positive terms, and obedience so forcibly inculcated by threats of the royal displeasure, that considering Charles' severity against willful disobedience, the vigilance of his government, which, by means of its emissaries, was acquainted with the condition of the most distant provinces, neglect was not likely to ensue. The chronicles of the monastery of Fontenelle afford an example of the manner in which the king's mandate was executed even where there were no competent teachers. A man named Gervold, was, at that time, abbot of this monastery; to whom the king's indignation at the ignorance of the clergy must have been so much the more formidable, as his own conscience was not quite clear in this matter. He hastened to obey the king's command in the best manner he was able. He opened a school in his monastery, in which singing, if nothing else, was taught; for, adds the chronicler, "if he had not much skill in other sciences, he was a proficient in the art of singing, and was not deficient in sweetness or power of voice". He soon after associated with himself the presbyter, Harduin, who had for some time lived as a hermit; but as an opportunity presented itself of employing his talents and acquirements for the benefit of others, he returned to the society of men, and gave instructions in writing and cyphering. This monastery of Fontenelle, may serve as a representation of all the other schools that were founded in consequence of the royal command, but did not attain to sufficient celebrity to be even incidentally mentioned in the writings of that period. Without entering into a detailed account of each separate school, a general description may suffice. They were divided into three classes : to the first belonged all wherein the seven liberal arts, and the theological sciences were taught, and which, although chiefly designed for the education of the clergy, were open nevertheless to all who were desirous of qualifying themselves for secular employments. The school belonging to the monastery of St. Martin at Tours, which Alcuin founded at a subsequent period, and raised to eminence by his personal superintendence, may be considered as a specimen of this class. In a letter to the king, Alcuin gives the following account of it :—""I, your Flaccus, in accordance with your admonitions and wishes, endeavor to administer to some in the house of St, Martin, the honey of the Holy Scriptures; others I would fain intoxicate with the pure wine of ancient wisdom; others I begin to nourish with the fruits of grammatical subtleties; many I seek to enlighten by the order of the stars. But above all things, I strive to train them up to be useful to the holy church of God, and an ornament to your kingdom; that the unmerited mercy shown to me by Almighty God, and your liberal kindness, may not be altogether fruitless".

This account states distinctly enough, that the object of the school at Tours was to give a liberal education to the officers of the church and state. All the schools of the first class had indeed the same object, but all had not the same means of attaining it as that at Tours, at the head of which was Alcuin himself seconded by the pupils who were best qualified to assist him. From what we can learn of other cathedral schools, it appears that the greatest part of them stood in the same relation to the school at Tours and the court-

school, as with us a public school stands to the Universities. The title or character of university, or, in other words, of an institution where all the sciences of that period were taught, depended upon the personal qualifications of the director, and was not conferred on any particular place. The court-school naturally maintained this character the longest, because in that institution there were never wanting men of distinguished abilities, who preferred residing where their talents would be best appreciated and rewarded; with the rest, however, it was changed with the Principal, and was transferred at different times to different monasteries. At the sixth Parisian council held in the year 829, the assembled fathers presented a petition to the emperor, Louis the Pious, in which they most urgently but humbly besought his highness to establish by royal authority public schools in the three most convenient places in the empire, after the example of his father, and not to suffer the efforts made by Charlemagne for the increase of knowledge to fail from neglect. "This", added they, "will conduce to the advantage and honor of the holy church of God, to the benefit of the state and to the everlasting glory of the emperor himself". From this passage it appears, that in the reign of Charlemagne, there were places of tuition specifically denominated public schools, which fell into decay after his death; but the utility of which, to the church and state, was so generally acknowledged, that their re-establishment was desired. They must have been something different from the monastic schools, as they, so far from having ceased in the reign of Louis the Pious, were precisely at that time most flourishing, and in the most vigorous operation; an instance of which may be found in that of Fulda. These public schools were probably the superior establishments or universities, which were under the immediate direction of the state, and not subject to any bishop or abbot. The council urges the erection of three such schools, evidently with the design of establishing one in each of the three principal divisions of the French monarchy—France, Germany and Italy. Whether, however, among the schools founded by Charlemagne, three only were characterized as public schools is unknown to us, and equally so the places where they were situated.

In order to attain the object proposed by the schools of the first class, a library was indispensable; it consisted at its commencement of only a small collection of books, which, as we shall presently see, was augmented by copies of works deposited in English libraries, and also by presents from Italy and even from Constantinople. The alliance entered into by Charles' father, Pepin, with the Byzantine court, had also influenced the literary efforts of that period, by affording an opportunity of acquiring the Greek language, with which Alcuin appears to have been but imperfectly acquainted. A native of Greece, the eunuch Eliseus, resided some time at the Frank court, for the purpose of teaching Greek to Charles' daughter, Rotrudis, who was betrothed to the emperor Constantine VI. The king probably availed himself of his assistance in learning the little, which, according to Einhard's account, he knew of that language. The discipline in these schools was severe, and the pupils were under constant superintendence, in order to restrain them from habits of idleness, from vain amusements, and frivolous occupations.

To the second class, belonged the seminaries for singing and church music; of which those established at Metz and Soissons were originally the only ones, and long continued to be the most renowned. Charles was greatly annoyed by the French mode of singing; for, besides, that their harsh guttural dialect was by no means adapted to melody, the people imagined the beauty of singing to consist in the loudness of the tone, and consequently endeavored to out-scream each other. The reproach of the Italians was not

unjust, that the French roared like wild beasts. It was only necessary for Charlemagne to have once heard the Roman church music, to cause him to desire and attempt an improvement in that of his own subjects. The national vanity of the French rendered them unwilling to admit the superiority of the Roman singing, but Charles proved that it was far better, and commanded that it should be adopted. Pope Hadrian I who willingly seconded all the king's efforts for the reformation of the church, presented him with his two best singers, Theodore and Benedict, one of whom Charles established at Metz and the other at Soissons. There, everyone who desired to teach singing in any of the other schools, or to become a chorister in a church, was now compelled to acquire the Roman method of singing; in consequence of which this art became thenceforth general on this side the Alps, and as perfect as the discordance of the French voices would permit. Instruction was also given at those institutions in organ-playing; but so long as organs could only be obtained from foreign countries, a few, and those probably the principal, churches could alone be provided with them. The first organ seen in France was sent in the year 757, as a present from the Byzantine emperor, Constantine V to king Pepin; and it was not till the year 826, that organs began to be built in France. At that time, a Venetian, named George, presented himself to Louis the Pious, and offered both to build organs, and to teach the art to others; an offer which the emperor accepted with pleasure, and ordered the artist to be provided with every requisite.

The schools in which the commonest education was given, composed the third class, and were designed for those who moved in the subordinate ranks of life. Intellectual cultivation was not to be confined merely to the clergy, or to those among the laity whose birth and wealth called them to fill eminent stations in society; but knowledge was to shed its beneficial influence upon the lowest classes. The decree made by Charles on this point, was published in the year 789, and enforces again and again upon the monasteries the duty of establishing schools, in which reading, writing, cyphering, and singing, should be taught. We see, in the instance of bishop Theodulph, of Orleans, how that command was obeyed; and there exists no reason to suppose, that it was not by degrees similarly attended to by the rest of the bishops. Theodulph caused a school to be opened in every village within his diocese, and expressly forbade the masters to accept from their pupils any other remuneration for the instruction afforded, than the voluntary presents which the parents might bestow, as a proof of their affection. This regulation was necessary, in order that the poor might not be deterred from attending the schools. Thus, was a more universal education secured to the lower orders, at the conclusion of the ninth century, than France can boast of in the nineteenth; and it is impossible to calculate what might have been the effect, had the same spirit and zeal that first called these schools into existence, protected them until they had taken sufficiently deep root to subsist without external support. For in that case, the mental superiority of one class of society would never have been so great, as to allow of their oppressing the minds of the other classes, and assuming a kind of guardianship over them. Charles himself omitted nothing that could be serviceable to these institutions, and is even said, personally, to have acquainted himself with their arrangement and management, and to have ascertained the progress of the pupils by actual visits, exciting them to diligence, and deterring them from idleness. An anecdote related by the monk of St. Gallen, is illustrative of this, and though it was, perhaps, invented at a subsequent period, it is nevertheless founded on the fact, that the king himself personally inspected the schools. According to the worthy monk's account, Charles once visited the

school erected in pursuance of his command by the Irishman, Clemens. On examining the pupils, he made the very natural discovery, that the sons of the nobility, confiding in their rank and riches, in no degree answered his expectations, whilst, on the other hand, the poor availed themselves of the opportunity afforded them of obtaining, by their own exertions, that which fortune had denied them. The king graciously commended the latter, and encouraged their zeal by promising to promote them to high offices, and honorable stations in the church and state. The idle scholars, on the contrary, he reproved sharply, assuring them, with an impressive oath, that their birth was of no value in his eyes, and that it was their talents only that would ever entitle them to receive any mark of favor from him. Sentiments like these were peculiar to Charlemagne and no doubt similar occasions occurred in which they could not fail to produce an effect.

2.

Alcuin's Return to England.

The relation in which Alcuin stood towards Charlemagne, during the time of his first residence with him, may be compared to that of Voltaire or other learned Frenchmen towards Frederick the Great. They lived at the court of the king of Prussia, without rendering themselves his subjects by accepting any appointment, and without entering into any closer connection than that of mutual good-will and reciprocal benefits. In the same way, Alcuin was simply the preceptor and counselor of Charles; and the two monasteries assigned him, are to be considered less as an office under the government, than a provision for defraying his necessary expenses. He looked upon his residence and exertions among the French as temporary, and terminating when the king's wishes were accomplished. He, therefore, avoided seeking any permanent appointment, and refused to accept any when offered. So little did he desire to break off his connection with the kingdom of Northumberland as a subject, and with the church at York as a deacon, that he longed for nothing more earnestly than to be liberated from the difficulties and literary privations consequent upon his residence at the court of Charlemagne, and to be able to return to his books and learned occupations at York. "I have never been unfaithful to the people of England", he could conscientiously reply to the accusation, that he had become a Frank and had forgotten his native country. He proved his fidelity by the use which he made of his influence with the French king to procure several advantages for the English church, and to maintain a good understanding between Charlemagne and the princes of the Saxon heptarchy, among whom Offa, king of Mercia, held the first rank. He declined, it is true, the propositions made to him by the Anglo-Saxon princes, to take up his abode at their court; but he sent some of his own pupils to supply his place. But there were duties which he owed to the kingdom of Northumberland, and the church at York; and these he remembered so soon as he saw the literary institutions established by Charles in active operation, and the king surrounded by men capable of continuing and extending the work when begun. He then asked Charles's permission to return to his own country. Charlemagne knew too well how to value a man like Alcuin, to be willing to lose him, and prized too dearly the rare happiness of possessing a true and sincere friend, not to desire his longer, and, if possible, permanent residence, and to offer everything that might

induce him to remain. But as Alcuin's conscience bore him testimony that he had not been allured to France by any prospect of worldly gain, but solely by the hope of being useful to the church and to science, the offer of high dignities and great riches made less impression upon him than the condescending request of a powerful prince. He therefore replied, "My lord king, I will not refuse thy wish if I can fulfill it without violating the commands of the church. Although I possess no small inheritance in my own country, I will willingly resign it, and in poverty serve thee, and remain with thee. Let it be thy care to obtain the permission of my king and my bishop". This seemed reasonable to Charles, as well as Alcuin's wish to revisit his native country after so long an absence. He therefore dismissed him, with letters to the king of Northumberland and the archbishop of York. In order to retain him in his service, during his journey, he invested him with the character of a public ambassador, and commissioned him to renew the good understanding between the French monarchy and Offa king of Mercia.

Offa, in consequence of the superiority of his talents, and the vigor of his operations, which were no restrained by any regard to right or wrong, had become the most powerful among the Anglo-Saxon kings; and Charles had entered into alliance with him soon after his first journey across the Alps. Since the year 788, however, this harmony had been interrupted by misunderstandings occasioned by the political affairs of Wessex, so that even the commercial intercourse between France and England had ceased. After the death of Cenulph, king of Wessex, in 786, Offa, by his interposition, had procured the throne for Britherich, in spite of the juster claims of Egbert. The deposed prince sought first in Mercia that safety which he could no longer hope to find in Wessex, until the marriage of Britherich with Offa's daughter Cadburga, rendered this retreat also dangerous. He therefore quitted England in 788, and took refuge at the court of Charles the Great, where he experienced a friendly reception, and found an opportunity of cultivating his talents, and of forming himself upon the model of a great king. The friendly treatment of Egbert, and the protection which many of his adherents found at the French court, were regarded by Offa and Britherich as expressions of hostility against them, and occasioned the interruption of the harmony which had hitherto existed between the two nations. Alcuin acquitted himself of his commission so successfully, that peace was not only re-established with Offa, but was, a few years later, confirmed by a treaty, in which Charles engaged to secure to the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims, who were desirous of making a pilgrimage to Rome, a safe and free passage through his dominions, and also to take the merchants under his especial protection.

SECTION III.

ALCUIN'S RETURN TO THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE, AND HIS PARTICIPATION IN RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS UNTIL HIS PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN FRANCE. A. D. 790-796.

SHORTLY after Alcuin's arrival in his native country, there occurred one of those revolutions, of which the annals of Northumberland present so many instances. The division of the natural strength of the kingdom, the mixed population, and the vicinity of the Scottish frontier, beyond which every rebel found safety, and frequently support, facilitated and occasioned sudden changes in the government. One king hurled another from his throne, only to give place in his turn to a third within the space of a few years. Alchred was scarcely seated on the throne, when those who had elevated him to it deserted him. He took refuge in Scotland and resigned his crown to Ethelred, against whom the thanes, Ethelwald and Heardbert, raised the standard of rebellion in 778, and compelled him to seek safety by flight. The scepter was now transferred to the hands of Alfwold, who wielded it with sufficient vigor to retain it for the space of ten years. He could not, however, eventually escape the fate of his predecessors; like them, he fell a victim to the inconstancy and treachery of the nobles of Northumberland, in the year 7881. Alchred's son, Osred, took possession of the vacant throne, which he occupied at the period of Alcuin's arrival at York, in 790. A strong party, however, was already formed against him, who were desirous of recalling Ethelred from exile, after a banishment of twelve years. Alcuin was a witness of Ethelred's success, and of the revengeful cruelty with which he punished the injuries he had formerly received, and whereby he endeavored to secure the future stability of his government. The country continued for two years in a state of distraction, when the imprisonment and execution of Osred terminated for a while these intestine commotions. These events again involved Alcuin in occupations from which he had hoped to escape at York, and rendered him the more disposed to return to the court of France, where the supreme power being lodged in the hands of an energetic ruler, repressed the aristocracy, instead of becoming their tool. A similar scene of confusion was soon repeated, which so disgusted Alcuin with his own country that he sought in France, and at length obtained in the abbey of Tours, the repose and advantages no longer to be found at York. He was, moreover, recalled to the continent by pressing letters from Charlemagne, who needed Alcuin's counsel and learning, not only for the purpose of investigating and suppressing a religious doctrine which had sprung up within his dominions, and threatened a dangerous schism, but also of opposing the pretensions of the Byzantine court, which demanded that the resolutions adopted at its instigation by the pseudo-ecumenical council at Nice, with regard to the worship of

images, should be binding upon the churches of the West as well as of the East. Both points were of too vital importance to the theory, as well as the practice of religion, and affected too nearly the peace of the kingdom, to allow Alcuin to remain indifferent. He displayed in the management of both, the greatest and most praiseworthy zeal; and happily succeeded in securing the maintenance of the orthodox doctrine, and the public tranquility. The first point was concerning a new view of the relation of Jesus to God as Father.

1.

Rise and Progress of the Doctrine of the Adoptionists.

No sooner was Christianity secured from external persecution by becoming the prevailing religion of the state, than disputes respecting doctrines and opinions rendered it dangerous to the government by which it had been embraced. No language can express, and no imagination conceive, with adequate distinctness and accuracy, that which was the subject of controversy. Hence the adjustment of one cause of contention originated a new subject of strife. The temporal power which had regulated spiritual affairs during the time of paganism, was no longer in a condition to interpose; for, with Christianity, an organized ecclesiastical body had forced its way into the political constitution, and arrogated to itself the sole right of determining points of doctrine. The temporal power, therefore, could not interfere in these controversies without appearing as a party desirous of securing the victory, and a solid foundation for its own favorite sentiments, under the pretense of an anxiety to maintain the public tranquility. In every contest of that description, it had to encounter the opposition of those who struggled for the triumph of their own opinions, regardless of existing circumstances, and even of the danger of involving in one common ruin the altar and the throne. The only means, therefore, of preserving the tranquility of the state, was to summon an ecumenical council; but if such an assembly were with much difficulty convened, and if after many fierce debates, it came to a decision, this very decision usually proved the fruitful germ of cruel persecutions, and of conflicts still fiercer and more dangerous. In subsequent times wherein different interests prevailed, and colder spirits received the dogmas of the church with indifference, or regarded them as absurd, these controversies have been considered errors of the understanding, and deplored as the lamentable result of ignorance and superstition. Such a view, however, is too partial and circumscribed to be correct. It is always gratifying to contemplate the mind in a state of activity, under whatever form it may develop itself; and the object to which intellectual power is directed, is of far less importance than the amount of the force which is employed. It is among the noblest benefits conferred by Christianity on mankind, that at a time when political freedom was groaning under the iron yoke of despotism, throughout the whole extent of the Roman empire, she opened new prospects to the mind, inspiring apathy itself with animation, and supplying men with courage and strength to support their convictions in the face of tyranny, or to die in their defence. Freedom and energy of mind forsook politics, and fled within the precincts of religion; and although the contentions concerning the Trinity and the nature of Christ have not the same practical utility as the disputes upon political rights and the best form of

government, yet they are equally important in the history of the human intellect. Convictions are errors only in the eyes of those who do not participate in them. So long as they serve to stimulate the powers of investigation, they are deserving of respect; and if in later times they appear absurd or trifling, it is because we forget the fate of all human efforts which, with the change of the objects of interest, cease to be interesting.

The mystical portion of the history of the founder of the Christian religion was a boundless field of contention, and an inexhaustible armory for the controversialists of the primitive church. The relation of Jesus to his Heavenly Father, and to the third person in the mysterious union of the Trinity, long agitated the Christian world. At length, after many furious debates, and when the passions of mankind had been exhausted in persecution, the decision of the first ecumenical council at Nice prevailed, and the divinity of Christ, as well as his identity with the Father and the Holy Spirit, became an established principle of the orthodox church. Arianism, on the ruin of which the orthodox system was founded, was speedily avenged by the startling consequences to be deduced from it. Out of the controversy upon the Trinity, arose the yet fiercer contest concerning the single, or the double nature in Christ. The orthodox doctrine of the union of the Divine Spirit with a human soul and human body, was unsatisfactory, in proportion to the incomprehensibility of the connection, and the unwillingness of mankind to resort to faith in all doubts of the understanding. It was impossible to prove the union of the two natures, without new doctrines, new sects, and new disputes. Some, in order to avoid dishonoring the Divine Spirit by any gross admixture with a material substance, supposed Christ to have had a merely apparent, not a real body; others endeavored to avoid the admission that God had permitted himself to be born of a woman in the ordinary way of human birth, by regarding Jesus merely as a perfect man who was filled, at his baptism, but not before, with the Logos or Divine Spirit. So little effect had these and similar views in removing previous convictions, that the worship of the Virgin Mary as the mother of God began to be universal. Such a practice, which was nowhere authorized in Scripture, was revolting to the mind of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople. He vented his indignation in sermons couched in the most violent language; and was led on from one position to another, till he at length asserted that the two natures of Christ were distinctly separate. He allowed that God and man were united in Christ, but maintained that all that was exalted and sublime in him was to be ascribed to the divine, whilst all that was inferior or ordinary must belong to the human nature. The elevated station of the patriarch gave considerable weight to his opinion, and his doctrine found some partisans, but a still greater number of opponents, who, after many turbulent synods, finally succeeded in depriving the heretical patriarch of his see, driving him into exile, and surrendering his adherents a prey to persecution. The council held at Chalcedon in 451, at last established, on the authority of Pope Leo, the doctrine received to the present day by both the Catholic and Protestant church,—that there existed in Christ two natures, but only one person.

This decision, instead of putting an end to the controversy, only gave it a new direction, and theology continued to nourish the flame of spiritual excitement in the Byzantine empire, and often kindled it into a frightful conflagration. The west of Europe enjoyed, in this respect, a much greater degree of tranquility. The Western monarchs had too little taste for theological inquiries, the clergy, at least the greater part of them, were too ignorant, and the people too much occupied by other interests, to admit of such commotions as those which agitated the East. Since the extinction of Arianism, the Pope

had become the champion of Western orthodoxy, the representative of the West at the Eastern councils, and the source of the true and only saving faith. The ignorant and the indolent were well content to acquiesce in this arrangement, and to pronounce, without further examination, a sentence of condemnation against all who differed from them. Before the time of Charlemagne especially, the French clergy were better qualified to use temporal weapons against the enemies of the country, than to wield the spiritual sword against the enemies of the church. Since the accession of Charles, society had undergone so great an alteration, that men of ability and intelligence were no longer wanting both for attack and defence in a religious dispute. When, therefore, even in the kingdom of France, people began to entertain views of the doctrine out of which the Arian, Nestorian, and so many other disturbances had arisen, differing from those already established, the example of former times and the actual situation of the Byzantine empire, where the flames of discord were raging at that very time, served as a warning of the consequences of a schism in religion. Charles' interference, therefore, in a dispute concerning an obscure and abstruse doctrine of religion, is to be regarded less as a proof of his piety than of his anxiety for the welfare of his subjects. His duty as a sovereign required that he should stifle at its birth a contest, in which excited passions and conflicting interests might easily overstep the limits of a theological controversy, and form the commencement of a violent and protracted struggle, which would shake the church and state to their foundations. The mode of his interference is remarkable; and his whole behavior in this affair, affords the honorable testimony, that he paid such regard to the exercise of the reason and the freedom of investigation, as to authorize an impartial examination of truth. Instead of persecuting with fire and sword those who dissented from the established doctrine, he gave them an opportunity either of proving their opinions by argument, or of submitting to a triumphant refutation. This moderation is the more commendable, as the new doctrine was first advanced in a Mahommedan country.

Whilst Spain was under the dominion of the Saracens, the Christian religion was tolerated there, as in all other Mahommedan countries; but the slight connection of the Spaniards with the rest of the Christian world, the passiveness of the temporal government with respect to the creed of its subjects, and the scoffs of the infidels which compelled an examination of many of the dogmas of Christianity, concurred in rendering them liable to deviate from the orthodox faith. Hence the defection of Archbishop Elipandus of Toledo. He had probably heard so many doubts respecting the divinity and incarnation of Christ, that his belief began to waver. He was impressed with the idea, that Christ, as man, could not stand in the same relation to God, as Christ, as God; and that what might justly be attributed to the divine nature of the Redeemer must be denied to his human capacity. Distrustful of his own powers of comprehension and elucidation, he was anxious to resort to the counsel and assistance of others, and accordingly applied to Felix, bishop of Urgel, one of the most esteemed prelates in that part of Spain which, since the year 778, had been incorporated with the kingdom of France. Felix had so distinguished himself by his learning and virtues, that Alcuin, at an earlier date, had entered into a correspondence with him. The answer of the bishop was such as to confirm his doubts. A contemporary chronicler says, "he most imprudently, thoughtlessly, and in opposition to the doctrines of the Catholic church, not only replied that Christ was the adopted son of God, but in some books written to the aforesaid bishop, endeavored most obstinately to defend the wickedness of his opinion". Elipandus was so convinced by his reasoning, that he

immediately assented to his proposition. The tenets of the new doctrine represented Christ in a double relationship as Son and God. According to his divine nature, he was a real, as man he was only an adopted son of God; and his Godhead itself was, in the former case, a true, in the latter, a merely nominal, or titular divinity.

Elipandus now endeavored to disseminate his opinions with all the zeal of a new convert, and to persecute those of a different faith with all the fury of bigotry. It was natural, that one placed in his exalted station should gain many proselytes, and thereby become more firmly persuaded of the correctness of his own views; but the number of his adversaries was by no means inconsiderable. Amongst these, Etherius, bishop of Uxama, or Osma, and the presbyter Beatus, were the most distinguished. The bishop of Toledo loaded both with such accusations, that they deemed it due to their own honor and the welfare of the church, to expose the errors of the doctrine of the Adoption. As touching the doctrine itself, they appealed in their writings to faith. The proofs which they adduce from the testimony of the apostles, the miracles of Jesus, the words of the Redeemer himself, and also from the confessions of the devils, are calculated rather to justify faith, and to expose the errors of their opponents, than to render the subject itself more clear and distinct. They maintained that faith must precede knowledge, and be, in religious matters especially, the preponderating principle, because, in every investigation, we incur the hazard of falling into the snares of destruction. To the confession of faith of the Adoptionists, they opposed the orthodox symbol of faith, and demonstrated that their deviation from it was unauthorized by the books of the Old or New Testament. In order to terrify the heretics, they exhibited the splendid array of faithful and triumphant heroes who adorned their ranks. “With us”, said they, “is David, that magnanimous hero who struck the infidel Goliath in the forehead with a little stone, and with one blow felled him to the earth : with us is Moses, who overwhelmed Pharaoh with the Egyptian host in the Red Sea, whilst he led his own people through on dry land : with us is Joshua who shut up five kings in a cave, after he had defeated Amalek : with us is father Abraham, who, with his three hundred servants, overcame and spoiled five kings : with us is the bravest of mankind, Gideon, who with the assistance of his three hundred chosen men, discomfited the Midianites as one man : with us is Samson, who, stronger than a lion and firmer than a rock, overthrew, alone and unarmed, a thousand armed men : with us are the twelve patriarchs, the sixteen prophets, the apostles, the evangelists, with us are the martyrs and ministers of the church : with us is Jesus, son of the Virgin, together with the whole church which has been ransomed by his blood, and extended throughout the world”. In consequence of the struggle respecting the new doctrines, a more exalted and divine position was assigned to the Man in Christ, whom the Adoptionists regarded as an ordinary man. In this the two prelates were very successful. The pure and immaculate conception, of course, makes a wide distinction between the incarnate God and ordinary men who are conceived and born in sin; besides, nothing is impossible with God, and the miracle consists in the fact that God remained God even as man. The doctrine of the Adoptionists is repugnant in itself; for the separation between a true and an adopted Son, destroys the Son, as effectually as the assertion that God may be partly God, and partly not God, annihilates the Godhead. Moreover, the human body of Christ typically represents the church, of which Christ is the head. On the other hand, all who secede from the orthodox church, represent the body of the devil who is Antichrist. To prove this

position, and thus overturn the doctrine of Elipandus, is the object of the second book of the work quoted above.

From this refutation, which is written with considerable spirit and animation, though deficient in acute logical reasoning, it is evident that the passions of the parties in Spain had been sufficiently enkindled to burst forth into a flame which might have proved dangerous to the state, had Elipandus possessed the power of attacking his adversaries with other weapons than those of calumny. The Saracenic government, however, paid little regard to the theological disputes of the Christians; and in the Christian kingdom of Asturias, Etherius and Beatus were careful to suppress the heresy. Still, through the medium of Bishop Felix, the contagion spread to the Spanish frontier; and in consequence of the connection of these provinces with France, it soon extended itself beyond the Pyrenees, and raged in Septimania with such violence as to awaken the attention of Charles. On this account, a provincial synod was held at Narbonne in 788, but separated without even examining, much less coming to a decision upon the new doctrines. As they continued to acquire credit and celebrity, the danger increased, and the necessity for the interference of the sovereign became imperative. A more timid prince would have interposed the strong arm of power; but Charles was too just to condemn, unheard, a man renowned for wisdom and morality; and as he possessed sufficient authority to hold the passions of the contending parties in check, he was enabled to show the deference due to learning, without hazarding the repose of the state. He therefore commanded an investigation, and summoned a synod at Ratisbon in 792, before which he cited Bishop Felix to appear, in order to justify himself and his opinions from the reproaches wherewith they had been assailed. Felix obeyed; but failing, either in learning or courage, to defend his opinions in the presence of the assembled bishops, he abjured them as heretical and deserving the condemnation pronounced upon them by the synod. From Ratisbon, he was sent to Rome, accompanied by Angilbert, in order to renounce his confession of faith in the presence of Pope Hadrian I. Here he again recanted his errors, and declared (confirming the declaration with a solemn oath) that he regarded Jesus Christ, not as the adopted, but as the real and beloved son of God. Felix then returned to Urgel; but here he encountered so many reproaches from his followers for his fickleness, that he yielded to the urgent entreaties of his friends, and, unmindful of his oath, again returned to his former doctrines.

Charles might now have punished him as a relapsed heretic, and have suppressed, by forcible means, errors which had been condemned by their very author; but it is probable that Felix justified his relapse by fresh arguments, so that the king deemed it more advisable to oppose argument by argument. This determination may have been also in some degree influenced by the situation of the Spanish frontier. A violent persecution might easily induce the Adoptionists to throw themselves into the arms of the Saracens ; and to seek under their dominion that toleration which Elipandus enjoyed, but which was denied to them by a Christian king. Charles therefore wrote to Alcuin, inviting him to return, and entreating that he would not withhold his assistance in an affair of such moment both to the church and to his kingdom. He could not have selected an abler or more zealous champion of orthodoxy than Alcuin, nor one more ready to oppose the innovations of the heretics. He had been educated in the church, all his studies had been directed to theology, and his soul clung to the orthodox doctrines. It may be proper here to exhibit his theological views, and his mode of interpreting the Bible. The best means

of accomplishing this, will be to characterize and exhibit some specimens of his exegetical works.

2.

Alcuin's Theological Opinions.

If the Christian religion be not regarded as the summit of devotional feeling, but only as the immediate revelation of God, afforded to us by the books of the New and the preparatory writings of the Old Testament, it appears as an isolated historical fact. The mode of conduct which it prescribes, becomes a law for all succeeding ages; and it is only necessary to oppose that which has been, in order to refute any deviation from it. Whatever the Holy Scriptures, according to their usual interpretation contain, and whatever the distinguished and recognized Fathers of the church have taught, is received as truth, and is sufficient to suppress every other doctrine. The struggle is not for truth as such, but for the maintenance of an historically authenticated and acknowledged truth. This position, which by a new party-name may be denominated that of a supernaturalist (in contradistinction to a rationalist) was that assumed by Alcuin in theology. In the Bible, he discerns not only the spirit, but the words of God; and perceives in the sacred writings of the Jews, the latent indication of a future salvation and mercy, which has been realized in the New Testament. In order to maintain this position, it was necessary to have recourse to mystical interpretations and dialectic subtleties; both of which peculiarities distinguish the explanatory works of Alcuin. To ordinary expressions an importance is attached which renders them extraordinary; and arguments are substituted for the simple meaning which often surprise us by their ingenuity, or please by their spiritual turn, but which, on closer inspection, are found to be devoid of foundation. We have a short commentary of Alcuin's, in the form of question and answer, on the first book of Moses or Genesis, the object of which is to point out the revelations and latent indications of a future salvation contained in the simple and sublime tradition of the Hebrews respecting the origin of the world, the state of innocence and simplicity in which our first parents lived, their elevation from this condition to that of self-consciousness and intellectual perception, and the historical description of the patriarchs. The account of the creation of the woman, for example, gives occasion to the following questions :—"Why was the woman made of the rib of the man whilst he was sleeping, instead of being formed like him out of the dust?" The answer to which is, "Evidently on account of the mystery, to indicate that Christ, out of whose side the source of our salvation flowed, for the sake of the church fell asleep on the cross".

Q. What reference to Christ has the following passage, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife?"

A. The Redeemer left his father, because he appeared to men not in the form in which he resembles the Father : he left his mother, inasmuch as he renounced the synagogue of the Jews, of whom he was born after the flesh, in order to cleave unto the church that was to be gathered together from among the heathen.

Even the most secret thoughts and designs of the Almighty are made the subjects of interrogation; and Alcuin is so little at a loss for an answer, that one might suppose he had sat in council at the creation of the world.

Amongst his explanatory works, we also find a Short Explanation of the Ten Commandments. He divides these, according to their respective characters, into two parts. The first three refer to the Holy Trinity, but the rest to the interests of man. The first commandment exhibits God the Father as the only object of our worship; the second forbids us to regard the Son of God as a created being, because every created thing is perishable; the third relates to the Holy Spirit, through whom we are promised eternal rest.

The Psalter was, at that time, one of the most im-portant and favorite books of the old Testament. The fine selection it offers of sacred songs, was so well suited to the service of the church, as to render it indispensable in divine worship. Such a strains of feeling pervades the psalms in which David breathed out his noble spirit; his repentance for former sins, his mourning were afflictions and perplexing events, his rejoicing at the help vouchsafed by the Lord, and his praise of God's greatness and glory, are expressed with such truth of nature and such poetical beauty, as cannot fail to touch every human heart. In addition to this interest, which Alcuin experienced in common with the rest of mankind, he felt the peculiar satisfaction of discerning, in these sacred songs, the latent mysteries of the Christian religion, and saw everywhere the Redeemer and his redeemed church glorified. In his exposition of some of the psalms of David, he either amplifies the idea, subjoins to the words of the psalmist some moral precepts, pious meditations, and beautiful thoughts, or discovers and explains an allegorical meanings. The latter is especially remarkable in his exposition of the Song of Degrees, or the fifteen psalms of David in full choir. These, according to his view, constitute the steps by which we mount upwards to the joys of the Lord. Humility is placed lowest as the first step; this leads us to the second step, Faith, and thence to the third, Desire after the heavenly Jerusalem. The fourth step, Confidence, and the fifth, Patience, must be surmounted before we can attain on the sixth the firmness of the eternal Jerusalem, and those who are striving after it. Here, repose from the exertions that have been made, and the delightful view of the lovely prospect is granted, On this account, the psalmist celebrates in the succeeding psalm (cxxvi.) the praise of our Redeemer, and our deliverance from the bondage of the Devil, and the chains of sin. In like manner, each of the following psalms forms one of the higher steps which conduct to the habitation of the Lord. On reaching the topmost, which is placed immediately before the entrance (Ps. cxxxiv.) we are instructed in the duty which those have to perform who are admitted; and what could this duty be, but to praise the Lord with heart and voice

In the commentary on the Song of Solomon, Alcuin not only endeavors to prove that all the expressions in the Old Testament have a reference to the future redemption of man by Jesus Christ, but also attempts to explain the mystical signification of the numbers that occur therein. As specimens of the most remarkable passages have already been given, and as opportunities will yet occur of exemplifying his peculiar style, we will merely observe, with regard to this treatise, that neither the amorous expressions, nor

unequivocal admiration of female beauty, which so strikingly characterize this portion of Scripture, prevent the commentator from discerning in them a representation of the Christian church under the figure of the bride of Christ.

Alcuin wrote a commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes for the benefit of his pupils, Onias, Candidus and Nathanael, after, as he expresses it, “they had flown from the nest of his paternal care into the open firmament of worldly occupation”; that is, after they had repaired to the court of Charlemagne, where they continued to be the objects of his unceasing anxiety, and of the hope that they would not disgrace their teacher. No book appeared to him better calculated to arm them against the allurements of worldly grandeur, by exhibiting its nothingness and vanity, and to turn their hearts to that which is eternal and unfading, than the book of Ecclesiastes. The greatest part of the commentary is copied from St. Jerome; a fact which Alcuin by no means desired to conceal, nor indeed had he any cause to be ashamed of it, for, as I have already had occasion to remark, the scarcity of books in those times, rendered an accurate. copy of a useful work as valuable as a correct edition of an ancient author is at the present day.

Alcuin concludes his exposition of the Old Testament with an interpretation of the names of all the ancestors of Christ, according to their literal, allegorical and moral sense. For example : Abraham signifies literally the father of many nations. The name, taken in an allegorical sense, may be understood to signify the father of all believers, to whom we must all cry, Abba, Father. The moral lesson to be deduced from this name is, that we should be the fathers of many virtues, and possess by inheritance, an accumulation of good works.

EXPOSITION OF ST. JOHN’S GOSPEL.

All the peculiarities which are observable in the dissertations upon the Old Testament from which we have quoted, are combined in the exposition of the Gospel of John. A work which affords more than any other, an opportunity for speculation, allegory, and the mystical interpretation of numbers. Whenever an established principle of religious doctrine is in danger of being unsettled, or violated by the explanation, the exact literal sense is contended for with dialectic acuteness. In other places, where this is not the case, a free and arbitrary construction overleaps all the limits of fair interpretation; in order to exalt the most ordinary into extraordinary circumstances, and to transfer the scenes of simple and natural life into the regions of the sublime and heavenly. The extraction of a few passages will enable the reader to judge of the manner, and thereby of the spirit of the times.

Gospel John I. 1. — “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”. This may be understood in two ways. The Father is the beginning, therefore the expression is synonymous with, in the Father. In the Father is the Son, whom the Evangelist calls the Word. We must not, however, be led into error from the answer of the Son of God, who, in the course of this Gospel, replies to the question of the Jews, “Who God himself was?”— “The beginning, I, who now talk with you”. If then the Son is the beginning who has a father, how much more must God the Father be the

beginning, since he has a Son of whom he is the father? For the Son is the Father's Son, and the Father truly the Son's Father, and God the Father; but not God of God whilst the Son is God of God. The Father is light, but not of light; the Son is also light, but light of light. So the Father is the beginning, but not of the beginning; the Son is the beginning, but a beginning of a beginning. That which was in the beginning no more terminates with time, than it commences with the beginning. The Son, therefore, as the beginning, ceases not with time, nor was he preceded by the beginning, whether we refer the passage, in the Beginning was the Word, to the beginning of creation or of time. Every created thing which had a beginning, was then the word of God, by which all things are made. The Evangelist, therefore, repeats four times was, was, was, was, in order to express that the co-eternal Word of God the Father preceded all time. The other Evangelists relate that the Son of God appeared suddenly among men; but John declares that he had been with God from eternity, for he says, "and the Word was with God". The others call him "very man" ;but John assures us that "he was very God", in the expression "and the Word was God". The others say, that "he lived among men for a time as man"; John, on the contrary, represents him as God with God from the beginning; for he says, "the same in the beginning was with God".

CONVERSION OF THE WATER INTO WINE.

The latent meaning which Alcuin discovered in this passage, and explained according to the received doctrine, he transfers by means of allegorical interpretations to passages wherein it does not exist. He considers every number to involve some mysterious meaning, and the name of every place to imply something beyond the mere appellation. When the Evangelist relates : "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana";—both the number and the place appear to the commentator to be important and mysterious. For example, the third day, indicates the third grand epoch in the development of the human race, on attaining which, they are worthy to receive the divine doctrine of Christ. The time when men lived merely in imitation of the example of the patriarchs, constituted the first epoch; that of the written law under the prophets, the second; and the third and last, the period when the Redeemer himself appeared in the flesh. "In Cana of Galilee", signifies that the marriage was celebrated in the zeal of perfected conversion, emblematically representing that those are chiefly deserving of the favor of Christ, who, in the zeal of pious enthusiasm and devotion, have by good works passed from vice to virtue, and from earthly to heavenly things. The conversion of water into wine indicates the purifying of the ancient doctrine, which had been defaced and corrupted by the Pharisees. Here, again, Alcuin's strong bias towards allegory, leads him to seize and expatiate upon the most trivial circumstances. And there were set six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins a piece. The six vessels which held the water, are the pious hearts of the saints, whose perfect life and faith, during the six ages that preceded the announcement of the Gospel, remain as a pattern to the human race. The vessels are, with propriety, of stone, because the hearts of the just are strong, having been strengthened by faith in, and love for, that stone which Daniel saw, "torn without hands from a mountain, and which became so great a mountain,

that it filled the whole Earth" (Dan. II. 34-35). Zachariah, speaking of it, says : —"Upon one stone, are seven eyes" (Zach. III.9.); that is, in Christ dwells the universality of spiritual knowledge. The apostle Peter alludes to it in the following words, "to whom ye are come as to a living stone ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house". (1. Pet. II. 4-5.) With propriety, also, were the water-pots set after the manner of the purifying of the Jews; for to the Jewish nation only was the Law given by Moses; but Christ has imparted the grace and truth of the Gospel both to heathens and to Jews. We are told that each contained "two or three firkins a piece", to intimate that the writers of the Holy Scriptures, sometimes speak only of the Father and the Son, for instance ; "You had made all things in wisdom" : for the strength and wisdom of God is Christ. Sometimes also they mention the Holy Spirit, as in that passage of the Psalms; "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth". The Word, the Lord, and the Spirit, constitute the triune Jehovah. Quite as great a difference as between water and wine, was there between the sense in which the Holy Scriptures were understood, previously to the coming of the Redeemer, and that in which he himself expounded them to the Apostles, and their disciples bequeathed as a perpetual rule. The Lord, who at the commencement of creation made all things out of nothing, could indeed have filled empty water-pots with wine, but he chose rather to make wine of water, in order, emblematically, to teach that he came into the world, not to relax or abolish, but rather to fulfill the law and the testimony of the Prophets.

INTEREST EXCITED BY ALCUIN'S WORKS.

It would be unjust to desire that our knowledge, and the degree of moral and political civilization which we have attained, should be regarded as the sole criterion of judgment, instead of using it as a mere standard of comparison between earlier times and the present. The contemptuous shrug, and the scornful smile of compassion with which we are apt to regard the efforts of past ages, may one day be bestowed upon many of our pursuits, should posterity feel equally disposed with ourselves to overlook that which is really good, and to see that only which is defective, We should look back upon the former state of intellectual culture, upon the steps whereby society has risen to its present grade of refinement, with the same respect as that with which a man of mature age regards the feelings and ideas of his youth, There seems, therefore, little cause to fear that the portions of Alcuin's works which we have noticed, will tend to diminish the merit of his laudable exertions in the opinion of the reader, especially, as notwithstanding the weakness of argument, so much talent is displayed, that even in those who had no concern in ecclesiastical affairs great interest was excited. Omitting the commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to Titus, Philemon and the Hebrews, which are composed in a manner precisely similar to those already quoted, we will adduce in proof of our observation, a letter which also exhibits the participation of Charlemagne and his courtiers in these theological investigations.

An officer in the army of Charlemagne, who probably felt particularly interested in the account of the zeal with which Peter drew his sword in the defence of Jesus, and smote off the ear of Malchus, was unable to reconcile the passage in which Jesus bids his disciples buy a sword, (Luke XXII. 36.) with another passage in the Gospel of St. Matthew, wherein he says, "all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword". (St. Mat. XXVI. 52.) He, therefore, applied to the king for an explanation. Charles was so thoroughly acquainted with Alcuin's manner, that he would not have hesitated to explain the sword as meaning, allegorically, the word of God; had it not involved the contradiction. that all they that take God's word must perish by God's word. In this dilemma he had recourse to his oracle in spiritual matters, Alcuin, and laid before him his own and the soldiers' scruples. Alcuin solved the question, by directing the king's attention to the different circumstances under which the same word is used in these two different passages. By the sword mentioned by Matthew, is to be understood revenge for injuries sustained, because whoever practices this crime brings ruin upon himself. The sword spoken of by Luke signifies, throughout, the word of God, which we must purchase with all our possessions; as it alone can enable us to resist the devices of the old serpent.

The king also desired to know what Jesus meant to imply by the words, "He that bath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip : and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one" ; and why, when the disciples replied that they had two swords, he said, "It is enough?". Alcuin interpreted the purchase of the sword to signify the renunciation of the world, he supposing that by the purse is to be understood private, by the scrip public property; and the word garment denotes sensual pleasures, which must be resigned before we can become soldiers of Christ worthy of wearing that sword. The two swords indicate body and soul; because, if we do the will of God with these, it is enough. Alcuin requested the king to communicate this explanation to the warrior; and then, for the benefit of the king, proceeded to remove a difficulty in which he had entangled himself while unravelling this knotty point. The question arose, Why does the sword, if it is the word of God, cut off the ear of his adversaries; as it is through the ear that the word of God penetrates to the secret recesses of the heart? "What", exclaims Alcuin, "what does it import but that the ear of unbelief is cut off to be healed again by the application of divine mercy, and that, by putting away the old man, we may be transformed into new creatures. On this account also the servant was named Malchus, for Malchus means, by interpretation, king, or one who is to be king (regnaturus); because we, in our old state, were the slaves of sin, but in the new state, when healed by God's mercy, shall be kings and rulers in common with Christ. In order to impress upon us that everyone who confesses Christ must never cease to forgive his enemies, he himself omitted not to heal his persecutors, even during the period of his agony".

It had already been attempted to establish the principle that the Scriptures should remain closed to the laity, in order that they might produce more magical effects in the hands of the clergy. Alcuin was far from entering into the narrow policy of desiring to base the power of the clergy on the ignorance of the people; but rejoiced that the laity had at length begun to occupy themselves with the Gospel, and wished that the king possessed many such soldiers as him, to whose questions he had replied.

Alcuin's intimate acquaintance with the sacred scriptures, and the works of the Fathers, his anxious care for the purity of doctrine, and his skill in maintaining it with the light weapons of dialectic art, or the weighty arms of learning, rendered him the fittest champion of the orthodox church against the innovations of the heretics. His aim was neither to establish any new, nor to destroy any ancient principle, but simply to uphold and confirm those which already existed, and which he recognized as true. His presence was the more desirable to Charles, as besides the controversy respecting the adoption, he was engaged in a theological dispute connected with his diplomatic relation to the Byzantine empire. This was no other than the contention regarding image-worship, which was at length decided, after having for many years excited the most violent commotions in the Christian world in the East; and after having caused the Pope to separate himself from the Byzantine empire, thereby paving the way for the restoration of the western Roman empire. The decision, however, was such as accorded neither with the religious sentiments of the western part of Christendom, nor with the political pretensions of Charlemagne. A short review of the whole subject may, therefore, be proper, before we proceed to consider this decision, which, as well as the determination upon the doctrine of the Adoptionists, resulted from the synod held at Frankfort-on-the-Maine; we shall thus be better enabled to judge of Alcuin's participation therein.

3.

History of the Controversy respecting Image-worship.

The primitive Christians derived their aversion to image-worship from the Jews; and the more they endeavored to mark the distinction between the new religion and pagan idolatry, the more confirmed became their abhorrence. The adoration of Gods, the work of men's hands, was so strictly prohibited by the Mosaic law, and so totally irreconcilable with the doctrine of Christianity, which teaches that God must be worshipped only in spirit and in truth, that the introduction of a custom derided and despised by the Christians, into the Christian church, seemed of all evils that which was least to be feared. Yet, no sooner had the religion of Jesus become predominant, than the great mass of mankind, who had been led to embrace Christianity, less from conviction than from expediency, transferred some of the customs and sentiments of paganism to the religion of the state. These abuses obtained a firm footing with the greater facility, since the chasm which had divided paganism from Christianity, was filled up by the overthrow of the former, and as the latter had no longer to encounter opposition, the vigilance of jealousy was relaxed. The feelings of the people, which require to be excited by some material impression, were readily indulged with a visible object of reverence; and it was permitted to honor the cross as the symbol of our redemption, or relics of the saints as cherished memorials of the excellence of distinguished and pious men. There was, however, but one small, almost imperceptible, step from the relics to the images of saints; and from regarding them with respect, to worshipping them with devotion. If God, as such, could not be depicted, still his incarnation afforded an opportunity both to the pencil and the chisel, of presenting him in a visible form to the worship of the faithful. His divine mother also became a subject for art and adoration. Miracles were related of the images, which magnified their

importance arid increased their number; and in a short time, all the churches and chapels in the Byzantine empire were filled with pictures of Jesus, of Mary, of saints, and of angels. Since the sixth century, believers had again bowed the knee to images, and probably even worshipped, in the ancient deities of Olympus, the heroes of the Old Testament, or the saints of the Christian church. A mere alteration of the names of many statues of pagan times, was all that was requisite to adapt them to the system of the new church. How easy was it to convert the god of poetry and music into the royal psalmist of the Old Testament, or to give to the lion-taming Hercules a scriptural allusion under the name of Samson; and by a similar alteration to secure safety and respect to the images of other Gods. Art is more indebted than religion to this evil thus introduced into the church. To it she owes the preservation of the classical designs of antiquity; and if no new works were produced, still the practice was maintained, which would have entirely ceased, had the same abhorrence of the arts of painting and sculpture prevailed in the Christian, as in the Mahommedan world. Religion, on the contrary, felt that she was acting in opposition to her precepts, and was placed in an element, which to her, was not only foreign, but adverse. It was only necessary, once boldly to avouch, and to prove this fact, in order to create a formidable party. The lower order of the people were too much attached to images, easily to suffer themselves to be deprived of them : the monks who derived a considerable revenue from the preparation and sale of these objects of adoration, were too much interested in the maintenance of that species of worship, not to offer the most violent opposition to every attempt at its abolition. The ignorant fanaticism of the people inflamed by the selfishness and superstition of the monks rushed to the protection of the images, when the Byzantine emperor Leo, the Isaurian, urged their removal. Political interests mingled in the contest, and gave it an extension and an importance which few theological controversies have attained.

The Isaurian Leo the III was indebted to his military talents for his elevation to the throne of Byzantium, already tottering from internal convulsions, and assailed by external foes. He merited, however, his good fortune by the vigor with which he defended the state from the attacks of the Arabs, and protected its internal tranquility from the plots of traitors. With his reign, therefore, a period of prosperity might have commenced to the Byzantine empire, had not his repugnance to images involved him in a quarrel with his subjects, in which he and his successors impaired the strength without increasing the glory of the state. His adversaries have endeavored to trace this repugnance from the most impure source; but it probably sprang from his intercourse with the Arabs, and his efforts to convert the Mahommedans and Jews in his dominions. Their abhorrence of the image-worship of the Christians was the great stumbling block to their conversion, nor could force compel, nor persuasion induce them to exchange their worship of the one true God for Christian idolatry. The determination of the emperor to remove this obstacle by reforming the service of the church, became the more confirmed, in proportion as he became convinced, by a comparison of the present state of Christian worship with that of the primitive church, and with the precepts of the Old and New Testament, of the justice of the reproaches cast upon Christianity. This comparison, also rendered it the more easy for those ecclesiastics who were favorable to his views to prove, by philosophical and historical reasons, the sinfulness of image-worship, and the right possessed by the sovereign of checking by his imperial authority a dangerous abuse. The difficulties, however, attending the measure, restrained the emperor from any rash or violent

proceeding. He first, though unsuccessfully, endeavored to draw over to his interests the theological academy at Constantinople, a learned institution connected with the public library. The members, consisting partly of monks, of course opposed a system which would deprive the monastic order of a lucrative branch of their profession, and destroy their chief influence with the people. Leo retired from the struggle for the moment, but only to wait for a more favorable period, which, appearing to have arrived in the year 726, he assembled a Silentium or secret council of clerical and lay officers, and required them to declare the worship of images to be unlawful, and dangerous to the salvation of the soul. In pursuance of this sentence, all the images in the churches were removed from the altars and lower parts of the building, and placed at such an elevation as to be inaccessible to the devout touch of the faithful. These half measures, however, only rendered the emperor odious without attaining their object; and two years later, he found himself compelled to command, in a second edict, what he had merely advised in the first, viz. that all images of angels, saints, and martyrs, should be entirely removed from the churches. The refusal of the patriarch Germanus to subscribe this decree, delayed its execution till the year 730, when he resigned; and Anastasius, an ecclesiastic who was more favorable to the system of the emperor, took possession of the patriarchal see. Resistance now commenced on the part of the monks, and the people whom they had instigated to rebellion. Their first attack was made upon a statue of Christ, which was placed over the gate of the palace Chalke. The captain of the body-guard mounted a ladder in open day, and endeavored with an axe to hew down the image which was in high reputation, on account of its wonder-working power. The concourse of people attracted by this outrage first used entreaties, but finding these ineffectual, they had recourse to violence. The ladder was overthrown, and the captain and his companions slain. Once freed from restraint, the passions of the people hurried them on to the commission of still greater excesses; they attacked the palace of the patriarch, and yielded only to the military force which the emperor dispatched to restore tranquility. The attachment of the troops enabled the emperor to enforce obedience to his commands; but he did it at the peril of his throne, and with the loss of a province of his empire. The defenders of the images fled with the objects of their veneration to the islands of the Archipelago. There, their fanatic zeal and hopes of assistance from heaven induced them to collect a fleet, with which they boldly appeared before Constantinople, for the purpose of hurling the enemy of Christ from his throne. But as the expected miraculous assistance was not vouchsafed, they were easily defeated and punished. Italy, however, lay at a greater distance, and possessed in Pope Gregory II a stronghold, to which the enemies of the Iconoclasts could flee. The pope renounced all connection with the Byzantine empire; and, to protect himself against the Greeks and Lombards, entered into that alliance with the French, which was afterwards productive of such important consequences. His exhortations and example, together with the writings of John of Damascus, kept alive the spirit of contention in Byzantium itself. An earthquake, which in 741, converted many of the most magnificent cities of Asia and part of Constantinople into heaps of ruins, afforded the monks an opportunity of representing this calamity as the effect of the wrath of God at the impious attacks upon the images, and of exasperating the minds of the people against the emperor, who had rendered himself still more obnoxious, by the imposition of taxes, for the purpose of rebuilding the cities which had been overthrown. Such was the situation of affairs at the time of Leo's death, which took place in 741. He bequeathed to his son, Constantine V, who had already been associated with him in the government, the empire,

and the task of executing the measures which he had begun. The Byzantine historians describe the emperor Constantine as an incarnate devil, they do not allow him one good quality; and yet, what they themselves relate of his actions, contradicts their sentence, and is indeed as convincing a proof of the consummate talent of Constantine, as of the falsehood of the calumnies propagated by his enemies. The severity and cruelty which he exercised towards a faction which was laboring for his overthrow, and either defied his authority by open rebellion, or sought to undermine it by secret intrigues, instead, of being matters of reproach to the emperor, were, in fact, the mournful consequences of the necessity in which he was placed, either of giving up his convictions, or of establishing them on the ruin of his adversaries. The implacable hatred of the monks had manifested itself at the beginning of his reign, in a way which put it out of his power to adopt milder measures. The advocates for the use of images had formed themselves into a political party, and cast their eyes on Artabasdus, brother-in-law to the new emperor, who secretly favored image-worship, or at least professed to do so in order to gain popularity, and thereby the throne. The suspicions of Constantine were indeed awakened, but he durst not make any attempt against his brother-in-law in Constantinople, and, therefore, under presence of needing his advice, ordered him to join him in an expedition against the Arabs, which he undertook immediately after his coronation. The guilty conscience of Artabasdus divined the motive of this command, and urged him to anticipate the emperor. He appeared at the head of an army, and had almost succeeded in capturing the surprised Constantine. This step rendered the breach decisive, and whilst Constantine was assembling a force in his native country, Isauria, for the purpose of repossessing himself of the throne, Artabasdus was crowned emperor at Constantinople, and immediately restored the worship of images. The patriarch Anastasius changed his sentiments, and under Artabasdus defended the images with as much vehemence as he had opposed them under Leo and Constantine. The civil war which was now breaking out was so intimately connected with the dispute regarding images, that they must stand or fall according as the one or the other party should prove victorious. On the side of Artabasdus was the advantage of a greatly superior force, on that of Constantine energy of mind and military talents, which compensated for the deficiency in the number of his troops. The unskillfulness of his adversaries afforded him an opportunity of attacking them singly : he defeated Artabasdus himself at Sardio, and his son Nicetas at Ancyra. The same month, September 743, he appeared before the walls of Constantinople; but, as his adherents within the walls durst not hazard any attempt to deliver it into his hands, he was compelled to besiege it. Artabasdus had thrown himself into the capital, and defended it with the greatest obstinacy, hoping to be relieved by Nicetas, who was endeavoring to form an army in Asia from the wreck of his party. In October, Nicetas approached with an armed force, but was driven back to Nicomedia by Constantine, and there not only defeated in a general engagement, but himself taken prisoner. The perseverance with which Artabasdus, notwithstanding this disaster, continued the defence of Constantinople only delayed his inevitable fate. Constantine took the city by storm on the second of November, and his enemy, who had vainly attempted to escape, not long after falling into his hands, he, as well as his son, was punished by the loss of sight.

Constantine, being once more in possession of the throne, endeavored to secure it by the total destruction of the opposite party. Search was made for those who had adhered to his enemy, and all were punished either with death or mutilation. The contemptible

character of the patriarch Anastasius, which rendered him a useful instrument in the hands of the emperor, saved him from receiving any other chastisement than that of insult; and he retained the highest ecclesiastical dignity in the empire. The more reason the emperor had to dread a political faction in the defenders of images, the more imperative it became upon him to maintain and propagate his own opinions. The abolition, therefore, of image-worship was not merely a matter of religious discipline, but a necessary measure for the security of his person and dynasty. The danger from which he had escaped had, however, taught him sufficient prudence to delay the execution of his design until he had restored tranquility to the distracted empire, and associated his son with him in the government. In the year 753, he ventured to hold several Silentia, in which the decrees against image-worship were renewed and rendered still more severe. Preparatory to their publication throughout the empire, he introduced them in those provinces, the governors of which were devoted to his views. The simplest means would have been to have it abolished by a resolution of a general council; but as neither Leo nor Constantine could calculate upon the majority of the bishops being favorable to their system, this method had hitherto been unattempted.

However ready an individual ecclesiastic may be, when opposed singly to the temporal power, to submit to its decisions, he assumes a very different position when the support of a numerous body invested with the right of examining and determining, raises him above the influence of fear. The spirit of opposition, which in individuals is dumb from conscious weakness, then displays itself openly and vigorously. This impediment, so justly to be feared, seemed, however, to be removed by the death of Anastasius, which left the patriarchal see vacant. The hope of obtaining the first ecclesiastical dignity in the kingdom was a bait at which Constantine felt certain the bishops would catch, and by which they would suffer themselves to be taken. As it was easy to foresee that the emperor would be guided in his choice of a patriarch, by the degree of zeal displayed in his cause, he might reasonably look for support rather than opposition from the bishops, among whom there were few who did not aspire to the patriarchate. Relying on this circumstance, Constantine summoned a council at Constantinople, in the year 754, which so well answered his expectations, that the assembly, consisting of three hundred and thirty-eight bishops, acceded to his wishes, and adopted them as a law of the church. Image-worship was rejected as an invention of the devil to allure mankind to a new species of idolatry, and the emperor represented as an Apostle, inspired by God himself to frustrate this device of Satan. In conclusion, a curse was pronounced upon all the worshippers of images, especially upon the former patriarch Germanus, and the monk John of Damascus.

The emperor had now succeeded in obtaining, in a canonical manner, the right of suppressing image-worship; and, accordingly, commanded that all images should be removed from the churches and sacred edifices, but with as little violence as possible; wishing merely to deprive them of their sanctity in the eyes of the people, and the adoration paid to them, without denying their merit and utility as works of art. But it was no easy task to put the decision of the council into execution. First, as regarded the pope, he was placed at so great a distance, and was so secure under the protection of the French, that he would not fail both to persevere in his opposition to the Iconoclasts, and, probably, widen the breach with the Byzantine court to an irreparable extent. Any attempt to reduce him to obedience by force would have been as expensive as ineffectual; no other course, therefore, remained to the emperor but that of endeavoring to withdraw from him the

protection of France, and thus compel him to resume the relation in which he formerly stood to the empire, if he would avoid becoming the prey of the Lombards.

For the accomplishment of this purpose, Constantine entered into negotiations with the French king, Pepin, whom he sought to attach still more firmly to his interests by proposing a matrimonial alliance between his son Leo and the princess Gisla, the sister of Charlemagne, who has already been introduced to the reader as the diligent pupil of Alcuin. The pope saw and warded off the threatening danger; he frustrated the union, in order to render his own connection with the French monarch still firmer; and effected his project with a facility proportioned to its tendency to promote their common interest. The controversy upon images, therefore, severed one of its fairest provinces from the Byzantine empire, placed the pope in an independent position, and laid the foundation of a princely power established in his own territories, which amply indemnified him for the loss of the revenues he had derived from Sicily, and also furnished the French king with an opportunity of obtaining a firm footing beyond the Alps.

It was not, however, in the West only that the spirit of opposition continued to rage; it still remained unsubdued in the Eastern provinces, and even in the capital itself, notwithstanding the decision of the council of Constantinople. The fanaticism of the monks considered no means as unlawful in the defence of a sacred cause, and feared no punishment which might obtain for them the crown of martyrdom. Their pious zeal irritated and wearied the patience of the emperor; and from 761, scarcely a year elapsed wherein we do not find recorded some act of violence against the images, and of cruelty towards their worshippers. But as the persecution of individuals only increased the obstinacy and fury of the rest, the emperor was compelled to subdue resistance by force. In pursuance of this design, all the bishops were deposed who refused to subscribe to the decrees of the council. In the year 768, the monasteries at Constantinople were dissolved, and the buildings either demolished or converted into barracks. The monks were compelled either to marry, or to evade the severity of the emperor by a voluntary banishment. These measures were also extended to the refractory provincial monasteries, and carried into execution by military force, for the army was devoted to their victorious sovereign, and attached to his principles. There can be no question that a commission entrusted to such rough hands was often executed with as little regard for the preservation of literature and arts, as for right and justice; but the impossibility of suppressing an exasperated faction, and at the same time keeping within the bounds of moderation and equity, and the necessity of exercising severity towards all who refused to comply with the decree for the abolition of images, which had been regularly issued by a convocation of the clergy, will sufficiently excuse the emperor in the opinion of every impartial mind.

Constantine was indebted to the energy of his character, for the satisfaction of seeing the public worship of images abolished before his death, and of receiving a guarantee for the future, in the oath taken by his subjects, that they would never again pay them adoration. This oath would have been performed, had his successor prosecuted his measures with the same energy and firmness with which he had adopted them; but Leo IV, who ascended the throne in 775, was of too feeble a character to execute such a task. Under the influence of his wife Irene, who concealed her veneration for images and monks, that she might be enabled to promote their interests the more effectually, he annulled some of the statutes of his father, and mitigated others. The apparent state of

public tranquility led him into making concessions, which contained the germ of future disturbances; and by granting the monks permission to return and hold high offices in the church, he again introduced into the state practices subversive of the existing order of things. When he discovered the images of saints secretly adored by his wife, it was too late to repair his error; for, before he had arrived at any determination on the subject, he died, September the 8th, 780. Irene, as guardian to her son, Constantine VI, who was yet a minor, was now entrusted with the reins of government; and nothing but the fear of resistance, especially on the part of the army, withheld her from immediately legalizing the introduction of images. She, however, commenced preparations for this measure by putting a stop to all persecutions, and placing no impediment in the way of erecting images in various places. At the same time she made advances to the Roman pontiff, and entered into so close an alliance with Charlemagne, that she betrothed her son, Constantine VI, to the French princess, Rotrudis. But, notwithstanding that she openly displayed her predilection for images, it was long before she ventured upon taking any decided step.

More than half a century had elapsed since the commencement of the controversy, so that the greater part of the existing generation had been educated in the prevailing opinions, and most of the bishoprics were occupied by men who owed their elevation to their hostility to image-worship. The empress, therefore, durst not attempt so important a change as the restoration of image-worship without some plausible pretext. This was immediately afforded by the patriarch Paul, who, as had been previously concerted, publicly resigned his dignity. Paul had been appointed to the patriarchal throne by Leo IV, after he had, in presence of the emperor, solemnly declared himself inimical to images. In the year 784, he suddenly abandoned the archiepiscopal palace, and betook himself to a cloister, where he professed to all those who visited him, either at the instigation of the empress, or from motives of curiosity, that remorse had driven him from a see, the acceptance of which had excluded him from communion with other churches, and deprived him of the favor of the saints; that he could only hope to obtain pardon for his sin by deep repentance; and that there was no other means of averting the curse which was hanging over the empire, than that of annulling the impious statutes against the images. A way was thus opened for the accomplishment of the project which the empress had most at heart: the execution of which devolved upon the successor of Paul, whose death occurred in that same year.

Irene took care to render the interests of the church dependent upon her will, by raising her private secretary, Tarasius, to the patriarchate. The pliant courtier testified equal readiness to comply with her wishes, by the condition which he annexed to his acceptance of the highest ecclesiastical dignity, namely, that a general council should examine anew the lawfulness or unlawfulness of image-worship. In consequence of a flattering letter of invitation, Pope Hadrian I sent two nuncios to Constantinople, and, by adopting the artifice of admitting some ecclesiastics as ambassadors from the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, the synod assumed the authority of an ecumenical council. Although the adverse party was unable to prevent the summoning of this synod, they appeared in great numbers to express their disapprobation, and were encouraged in their opposition to the court by the veteran troops of Constantine, who declared themselves ready to protect them, and to defend the principles of their revered general. When, therefore, the first session was opened in the Church of the Twelve Apostles, August 7th,

786, the soldiers, who had taken possession of the church on the preceding day, rose and excited such a tumult that the patriarch was unable to obtain a hearing, and the empress herself was compelled to request the assembly to yield to a force which it was useless to resist, and to break up the meeting. After the departure of the court party, the Iconoclasts remained in the church under the protection of the soldiers, and confirmed all the decrees against images.

The failure of this first attempt on the part of the empress, rendered her aware of the obstacles to be surmounted before she could make a second and more successful effort. Regardless of the interest of the state, she artfully contrived to disarm and disband the veterans; and, after having surrounded herself with a guard of newly levied troops, she summoned, in September 787, a council at Nice, not daring to trust the citizens of Constantinople. On this occasion she had the prudence to invite only such bishops as were favorable to her plans, or who at least showed themselves willing to change their sentiments. A detachment of the new legions was dispatched thither to be ready in case of need. Under these circumstances, there could be no doubt as to the result of the deliberations of the assembly. The resolutions of the council of Constantinople were refuted and condemned, together with all who adhered to them, and the worship of images again made an ordinance of the church, with, however, the nice distinction, that to the saints and images only prostration of the body was due, whilst the worship of the heart belonged to God alone. Thence the council removed to the capital, in order there to confirm their resolutions. In that city also, measures had been so well concerted, that everything passed off with the utmost tranquility. Amidst loud acclamations of joy, the empress, together with her son, subscribed the decree, which, as the act of an ecumenical council, was to be received as valid by the whole Christian world. It was, therefore, sent to Pope Hadrian I, in order that he might communicate it to the sovereigns of the West.

In the West of Europe, a proper position, in relation to divine worship, had hitherto been assigned to images. They served rather to ornament sacred edifices, and to deepen the solemn impression which such places are calculated to make, than to awaken or become the objects of devotion. The predilection for image-worship, which the Romans had transferred from paganism to Christianity, was unfelt by the Germans who had adored their former deities, not so much in artificial representations as in natural objects. Superstition existed nevertheless among them also, but under a different form. They worshipped the relics rather than the images of saints, and expected to receive from the former, what the Greeks hoped to obtain from the latter—assistance in the time of need, protection in the hour of danger. The decree of the Nicene council was the less likely to meet with a favorable reception among the Germans, as prostration of the body, in the Greek sense, conveyed a totally different meaning to the natives of the West, from that which it imparted to the subjects of Oriental despotism. The free-born German was accustomed to behold in his feudal sovereign, only the first among his equals, and to bow his knee to God alone; whilst the Greek would not think of denying to the saints the homage which he offered to the emperor. Neither the language nor the habits of the Western nations accorded with a practice, which, being familiar to the inhabitants of the Byzantine empire, might be adapted to religious purposes, without exciting in them any painful feelings. In addition to the aversion of the Western church to image-worship, the friendly correspondence between the Byzantine and French courts was at the same time broken off; the blame of which, indeed, rested entirely with Irene. The ambitious empress

was not disposed to suffer the reins of government to be wrested out of her hands; and the friends of image-worship, who had everything to hope from Irene, and, on the other hand, everything to fear from the dubious sentiments of the youthful Constantine, encouraged her in her purpose of retaining possession of the throne to the prejudice of her son's rights. She could not, however, but regard the projected marriage of Constantine with a daughter of Charlemagne as an impediment to her design, as it was easy to foresee that the French monarch would not permit the degradation of his son-in-law. She, therefore, annulled the contract betwixt her son and Rotrudis, and forced him to accept an Armenian maiden as a consort. At the same time, she entered into an alliance with Charles' enemies, the duke of Beneventum and Prince Adalgis of Lombardy, and endeavored to put an end to the French influence in Italy, by restoring to the Lombard kingdom its former constitution, a plan which, as has been already related, entirely failed.

Under these circumstances, it may easily be imagined that the pope found himself placed in a dilemma, on receiving the resolutions of the Nicene council for the express purpose of communicating them to Charlemagne. He was aware of the aversion felt by the French clergy to image-worship, and of the just displeasure entertained by Charles against a court which had so grievously offended him. Hadrian had, therefore, abstained from giving him any intimation respecting the council at Nice, and of the part taken by himself in their deliberations, but had endeavored to keep him in ignorance of the whole transaction. Now, however, that concealment was no longer practicable, he dispatched a copy of the Nicene resolutions to Charles in the year 792. The French monarch would, at any time, have hesitated to concede to an assembly, summoned without his knowledge or consent, and in which the West of Christendom was represented only by two nuncios from the pope, a right to impose laws on the whole Christian world; but he had now a double motive for refusing to permit a hostile court to prescribe to him the course he was to pursue. He, therefore, resolved not to submit to the resolutions of the Nicene council, but to reject them through the instrumentality of a general council, to be held in the West of Christendom. He sent a transcript of the acts to England, and requested Alcuin to refute them, and to procure their condemnation in that country; then he begged him to return to the continent, in order to be present at the council, which he proposed summoning to decide upon this matter, and upon the doctrine of the Adoptionists. Alcuin composed a treatise, in which he proved that the worship of images was inconsistent with the doctrines of Scripture, and the authority of the Fathers. This treatise determined the sentiments of the English princes and bishops : the Nicene council, though attended and sanctioned by the pope, whose authority had formerly been undisputed by the Anglo-Saxons, was pronounced to be illegal; and Alcuin was invested with full powers to impart their decision to the French monarch.

4.

Decision of the Council of Frankfort upon the Doctrine of the Adoptionists and Image-worship.

Alcuin returned to Charlemagne at the conclusion of the year 792, or the commencement of the following year, attended, as ambassador of the Anglo-Saxon church and state, by a retinue of English ecclesiastics. Their presence was necessary to give the conference, which was about to be held, the authority of a general council of Western Christendom; for the king's command could ensure the attendance of the bishops and abbots residing in all the German states, which had been Christianized and united under the French scepter. But Britain was sufficiently independent of France, to refuse, if she pleased, all participation in this assembly; and, from her insular situation, so secure, as to be under no apprehension from the resentment of a king who was destitute of a navy. That she nevertheless showed herself willing to unite with the French, is to be attributed to the influence of Alcuin.

Previous to the convocation of the council, Alcuin endeavored to convince the Adoptionists of their error. He wrote to bishop Felix, earnestly importuning him to renounce his heresy : "Venture not", he exclaims, "to enter upon a useless contest. The truths of the Gospel illuminate the whole earth. Let us only maintain and propagate the doctrines it teaches. What can we, frail mortals, amongst so many of whom love begins to grow cold, imagine better than to adhere to the principles of the Apostles and Evangelists, with all the firmness and fidelity of true faith, without inventing new names, bringing forward strange conceits, or desiring to acquire a vain reputation by some novelty in doctrine, whereby we may bring upon ourselves censure, whilst we hoped to obtain praise?". The tone of this letter was not calculated to produce a favorable result. Alcuin too hastily presupposed Felix to be in the path of error, and exalted himself above him with too much arrogance, not to provoke a quarrel. Felix consequently composed a treatise in defence of his opinions, and in opposition to Alcuin; but before he had completed and transmitted it to him, the Spanish bishops, who concurred in the new doctrine, appealed to the justice of King Charles, representing, in their letters, that their opponents were heretics, whilst they, on the other hand, only endeavored to uphold the true faith in its purity. Nothing, therefore, remained to be done, but to refer the matter to the decision of an ecclesiastical council, which was accordingly summoned by the king, in the year 794. The place appointed for the conference was Frankfort, a royal villa on the banks of the Maine. This place was then of recent origin, and owed the foundation of its future splendor to the number of bishops and abbots, and the vast concourse of lay nobility, who were attracted thither from all parts of the French kingdom.

The natural consequence of numerous and frequent convocations, and of the more than usually long residence of the court and its retinue, was to draw together a number of people, anxious to supply the demands for the commodities of life which were thus created. Artisans and merchants took up their abode there for the purposes of trade, and the place being favorable for traffic, they made a permanent settlement. The frequent mention of Frankfort, subsequently to the year 794, proves that the prosperity and importance of this town began and increased with the meetings which were held there. The number of bishops is said to have been three hundred, in which computation the abbots and clergy who accompanied them are not included. Many years had elapsed, since the West of Europe had beheld so splendid an assemblage of church dignitaries as the present council presented. It is, also, the first which was constructed on principles which formed henceforth the basis of the political and ecclesiastical privileges of the West; and therefore the form and manner of its constitution possess claims to our attention

independently of the importance of the subject of its deliberations. It consisted of the three following divisions occupied by the members according to their nation and rank. The church of Rome, which was represented by the Pope's legates, Stephen and Theophylactus, naturally took the precedence as guardian of the Apostolical traditions. Next in order, came the church of Lombardy, at the head of which stood the archbishop of Milan and the patriarch of Aquileia; the third part was formed by the Cisalpine clergy. To these three constituent parts, which were of a spiritual character, was added a fourth, consisting of Charles, as the son and protector of the holy church of God, and his chief lay nobility; for their consent was essential, in order to execute by temporal means, that which might be spiritually determined. To the king likewise, belonged the right of introducing the matters to be treated of, and of appointing the order in which they should be brought forward.

Amongst the subjects proposed for the deliberation and decision of the council, the doctrine of the Adoptionists and the worship of images came first under discussion; and as it was with these two points only that Alcuin was engaged, they merit a detailed and exclusive narrative. Alcuin was recommended to the assembly by Charles himself, and on this powerful recommendation admitted. It appears that he took with him the first book which he had written in refutation of the sentiments of Felix, and in which he had collected the testimony of the Fathers against the new doctrines. At least, it is certain that he presented it to the Abbot Benedict of Anian, who was then at Frankfort, to take it home with him, in order to fortify the clergy of Septimania against the dangerous influence of their heretical neighbours. Neither Felix, nor any of the Adoptionists, attended the conference of Frankfort; consequently there was no one to be found who possessed either the desire or the ability to oppose the testimony of the fathers, the decree of the pope, and the majority of the bishops, whose adherence to the ancient doctrine was probably the result more of convenience than conviction. The decision of the council at Frankfort was, therefore, a ratification of the sentence of condemnation which had been pronounced two years previously at Ratisbon. The resolutions of the council were communicated to the Archbishop Elipandus, and the bishops residing in those parts of Spain which were subject to the Saracens, by means of a document transmitted in the name of the king; but in consideration of the independent position of Elipandus, it was in the form less of a rigorous command than an urgent and convincing exhortation.

The principle that so numerous an assembly of the church could not err, was therein assumed; for if the Lord had promised that where two or three were gathered together in his name, he would be in the midst of them, could anyone doubt that he had been with, and enlightened the minds of a venerable assembly convened for his honor?

The Adoptionists were required to return into the bosom of the church, and to subscribe the annexed orthodox confession of faith, or to prepare themselves to be denounced as heretics, and excluded from communion with that church in which alone salvation was to be found. In this document, no notice was taken of Felix, because it seemed evident that he, as a French bishop, must acknowledge the authority of a council summoned by the king, and ratified by the pope, and submit to its decisions. We shall, however, presently see that he did neither the one nor the other, but, on the contrary, brought forward new arguments in favor of his opinions, which appeared to the king of sufficient importance to call for a fresh examination.

For the present, however, the affair seemed to have been settled in a legitimate way, to the great satisfaction both of the king and the pope. Their views differed with regard to the decision of the second point—image-worship. Regarded as a matter of religion, image-worship was an abomination to the inhabitants of Cisalpine Gaul. Considered in a political point of view, the unreasonable demand of the Byzantine court, that a council summoned by its authority should be recognized as ecumenical, and that resolutions adopted in a great measure by military constraint, should be received as general laws of the church, was a claim which wounded the pride of the French king. Willing, as Charles might be, to concede to the pope, as head of a church which inherited the Apostolical traditions, a superiority in wisdom, and authority in ecclesiastical matters; still the pope had not been represented at the council of Nice as the head of the church, but simply as an equal among equals. There, he was no more than any other archbishop of the Byzantine empire, a rank which was no longer reconcilable with his totally altered position.

In the course of the controversy upon images, the relation in which he stood to France, had procured for him so much influence with that nation, and so important a part in its constitution, that it was impossible for him to return to his former position with regard to the court of Byzantium, without causing the utmost confusion. By the reintroduction of image-worship, the cause of disunion had indeed been removed; but it was not so easy to annihilate consequences as to annul resolutions, or to restore a state of things, when once it had passed away, as statues and pictures. It was necessary, therefore, to substitute a new subject of dissension for the opposition to images, which, for the moment at least, way terminated. A declaration of independence on the part of the Western church, in no way affecting the supremacy of the pope, would prevent him from renewing his alliance with the Byzantine empire, and lead him by the natural course of events to contribute to the foundation of a Western empire, independent of the East.

Whilst Charles was endeavoring, at the expense of religion, to disengage politics from the confusion in which they were involved, he rendered the most essential service to the papal authority. The defenders of the interests of the holy see have cause to be dissatisfied with the decision of the council of Frankfort, only in so far as it rejected a doctrine which has subsequently become prevalent in the Catholic church. It may, however, afford them some consolation to know, that the assembled fathers were led astray by misunderstanding and passion. For in the manner in which Charles had the subject laid before them, it could not but meet with unanimous opposition and rejection : but it is difficult to determine whether ignorance of Greek or willful misrepresentation was the cause of the misconception. In the first place, the council summoned by Irene was not acknowledged as ecumenical. It may, indeed, appear strange, that in the official documents, Constantinople is mentioned as the place of that meeting; but this change of name is easily accounted for by the fact, that the legates of the pope were summoned originally to Constantinople; and when the council, after having commenced its deliberations in the capital, was compelled to dissolve in consequence of the tumultuous proceedings of the soldiers of Constantine, they remained, in order to accompany the

assembly to Nice, without requiring or receiving any fresh credentials. The Synod at Nice was considered by them merely as a prolongation of that at Constantinople, and the more so as on the breaking up of the assembly, the members returned to Constantinople for the purpose of procuring the signature to their resolutions. The less importance is to be attached to this discrepancy in the names, as, in the first place, it is not entirely groundless, and in the next place, the fathers assembled at Frankfort were not ignorant of the real place of meeting. But the resolutions of the Byzantine council were perverted, and brought before the council at Frankfort in a hateful form; for, regardless of the distinction made by the Greeks between worship of the heart and prostration of the body, the very principle, viz., that the same reverence was due to images as to the Holy Trinity, which had been disclaimed by the Nicene council, was represented as the decision of that body. This principle was naturally denounced as heretical.

It is impossible to avoid suspecting that the king abused his privilege of propounding the subjects of deliberation, and by a false representation endeavored to excite the passions of the assembly, and bring them over to his interests. Although nuncios from the pope were present, and could have explained to the members that they were under a mistake, it does not appear that they either did so, or had any authority so to do. The Catholic church, therefore, can more easily get over the decision of the council at Frankfort, which was the result of a false statement, than the treatise which appeared in the name of Charlemagne, justifying the rejection of image-worship. This work is best known under the title of the Carolingian Papers, and would deserve especial notice, as one of the most remarkable literary productions of that period, even were Alcuin not its supposed author. As it attacks in forcible and vehement language, and not without considerable strength of argument, an object which has become dear to the Catholic church, it could not remain free from hostile assaults.

The first printed edition appeared in the year 1549, without the name of the printer and editor, who did not venture to declare himself; but it is known that we are indebted for it to Jean de Tillet, a French bishop. It was immediately reprinted in Germany; but the scarcity of the two first editions proves how eagerly and successfully the Catholics sought to suppress them. Fortunately, the Protestants took under their protection a treatise exposed to such danger, and thus rescued it from the annihilation which threatened it. The Roman hierarchy, having thus failed in suppressing the work, endeavored, at least, to cast a suspicion upon its authenticity. Taking advantage of an external similarity, the Catholics asserted it to be the production of Karlstadt, who, in the beginning of the reformation at Wittenberg, began, and preached in favor of the destruction of images, although the contents throughout clearly refuted this statement. It is only necessary to read the Carolingian Papers, and see how exalted a position is assigned to the Pope and church of Rome, to be persuaded that so zealous a reformer as Karlstadt could not have had the remotest share in such a composition. The sentiments therein expressed, as well as the language and style, belong much more to the time of Charlemagne ; and no impartial reader will doubt its genuineness, when to these internal evidences is added the incontestable historical testimony afforded by a passage in a letter from Archbishop Hincmar to his nephew, wherein he not only mentions that he had read the Carolingian Papers, when a pupil at the court-school, but also quotes an entire chapter from them.

Almost as little doubt can exist, that Alcuin was the author of this production, as of its authenticity. Whilst in England, he had written a treatise against image-worship, which he took with him to the council at Frankfort. He was therefore better entitled than any other man to prosecute the subject, and was called upon to do so by the confidence of the king, which no one possessed or deserved in a higher degree than Alcuin. In this work, abounding in quotations, both from the Fathers and classical authors, we discern no symptom of a paucity of books, the want of which, Alcuin, some years later, felt so much in France; which also furnishes a proof, that the greater part of it was written in England. The style confirms, instead of contradicting this assumption. But the treatise may so far deserve to bear the name of Charles, as it is throughout stamped with the impress of his mind. The feeling which he entertained towards the court and pretensions of Byzantium, transfused its bitterness into the pen of Alcuin, and led him not merely to expose and systematically refute the errors of the Nicene council; but also prominently to exhibit everything that might wound the pride of the empress Irene, or render the vanity of the Greeks ridiculous. This is apparent in the criticism upon the letter of Irene, addressed to Pope Hadrian, with which the Carolingian Papers commence, and likewise in the manner in which the pope is placed in his relation to the imperial court. The principles avowed in this work are in perfect accordance with the sentiments of Alcuin, which have already been expressed, regarding the dignity and infallibility of the papal see. It is proved by the example of St. Jerome, that in all times the most learned and enlightened men had not held their own judgment in such high estimation, as to allow them to dispense with the advice of the pope. The avowal which the author makes in the name of the king is very remarkable; he declares that he had endeavored, from the commencement of his reign, to form the Cisalpine churches on the model of that of Rome, and to establish a perfect unanimity with that church, to the head of which the keys of heaven were committed. So far, the advocates for the rights of the Roman church have no reason to complain of a treatise which satisfies their most ambitious wishes. But the pope had declared himself the protector of images, and the author of the Carolingian Papers was decidedly opposed to them. In a series of chapters, he refutes, following step by step the acts of the Nicene council, the arguments drawn from the Bible in favor of image-worship. This refutation constitutes a large and important portion of the work, but requires the less minute description, as it is throughout written in the style of Alcuin, which has already been sufficiently exhibited. The Nicene council, for example, had adduced as a proof of the admissibility of image-worship, that Solomon set up the images of oxen and lions in the temple. In refutation of this, the author observes, that he himself did not condemn images when used as memorials or ornaments, but only when they were regarded as objects of sinful adoration; but as to the images in the Temple at Jerusalem, it was manifest that the Nicene council had been under the influence of a lying spirit, when it sought to support its errors by a circumstance which signified a mystery of the church. For the oxen and lions were symbolical figures of the apostles, and their successors placed by Christ in his church, who were to display towards the good and the penitent the patience of oxen, but who were to exercise towards the obdurate the fury of a lion.

In the third book, the author proceeds from the consideration of the general testimony of the Holy Scriptures, to the particular decrees of the bishops forming the council of Nice; and could with the greater facility refute them both by argument and ridicule, as they were in contradiction not only to the manners of the West of Europe, but

likewise to common sense. It was not difficult to demonstrate that the reverence paid to the statues of the emperor was no justification of that shown to the images of saints, but that the one was as objectionable as the other. If heathen customs were to be adopted in the churches, then it would soon come to pass that the houses of God would be turned into theatres, and the abode of peace be filled with the performances of gladiators. The apostle, however, enjoined us not to take the emperor and the world for our examples, but said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. XI. 1). "There-fore", exclaims he, "far be it from the Catholic religion, that the perverted customs of profligate heathenism should be imitated and adopted by Christian sobriety". To various weak points of this description, which the Nicene council had exposed to attack, by resting their arguments upon local interests, instead of general and rational principles, maxims were added which were revolting to the moral feelings. They adduced, for example, the following anecdote, as an evidence of the lawfulness of image-worship :—A certain monk had been so long and grievously tempted by the devil to sensual indulgence, that he longed to rid himself at any price of the torment; and at last, at the desire of his tormentor, sacrificed to him the worship of images, binding himself with a solemn oath never again to offer adoration to an image. No sooner did his abbot hear of this, than he cried out in a transport of rage. "It had been better for thee to have visited every brothel in the city, than to have denied to the images of the Lord, or of his Holy Mother, the adoration that is due to them". The council at Nice assented to this principle, by inserting the story in their acts, and by bringing it forward as an argument. "Is not this", exclaims Alcuin, or the author of the Carolingian Papers, "is not this an unparalleled absurdity? a ruinous evil? an insanity wilder than has ever yet been known? It had been better for him, he says, to have been guilty of an action forbidden both by the law and the Gospel, than to abstain from that which is commanded by no law, either human or divine! It had been better for him, he says, to have committed a crime, than to have avoided a crime; better to defile the Temple of God, than to despise the worship of senseless statues! Let him tell us, whether he can anywhere find that the Lord has said, 'Thou shalt not refuse to worship images'; whereas, it is known to all the world that he has commanded this, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'. Let him tell us, whether he can anywhere find that the Lord has declared, 'If thou seest an image and adorest it not, thou hast sinned'; while everyone knows that he has said, 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart'. Whoever attempts to support his assertions by such examples as this, proves that he possesses folly of no ordinary kind, but that it surpasses that of all others".

OPINIONS REGARDING IMAGE-WORSHIP.

The Greeks had carried their opinions both for and against image-worship to extremes, and consequently supported them rather by sophistry than solid argument. The author of the Carolingian Papers, on the contrary, had assumed a moderate position between the contending parties, and was thereby enabled, unfettered by partiality, to rebut all their fallacies, and expose the absurdities of their speculations. He often feels himself obliged to reiterate the declaration that he did not prohibit the possession, but the

adoration of images; that he desired not that men should turn away with disgust from the images which had been placed in churches either as decorations or memorials, but that it was the superstitious abuse of them which he condemned. Having taken this position, the decree of the Iconoclasts at the council of Constantinople, appeared to him just as reprehensible as the opposite error into which that of Nice had fallen, whilst the result of his investigation was recommended by the approbation of Western Christendom, by the assent of the understanding, and by the authority of one of the most eminent among the Popes, Gregory the Great. In pursuance, therefore, of the sentence of this pope, it was enacted as a fundamental law of the Western churches, that images should be permitted to remain outside the churches, and that it was equally unlawful to insist upon their adoration, and to consent to their destruction.

Charlemagne transmitted, by the hands of the abbot Angilbert, the acts of the Frankfort council, together with the work composed in his name, to Pope Hadrian; requiring him not merely to confirm the decisions of the said council, but also demanding, with a passionate eagerness, resulting from his personal feeling of hostility towards the Byzantine court, the formal condemnation of the Emperor Constantine, and his mother, Irene. This placed the pope in an embarrassing situation. On the one hand, he durst not be guilty of the inconsistency of condemning a council to which he himself had sent a legate, and of which he had approved; and, on the other, it was equally impossible to refute the arguments, and overcome the aversion of the French clergy as to dispute the authority of Gregory the Great. This occurrence might easily have produced a breach between the French monarch and the papal see, had Hadrian not been a man of too peaceful and estimable a character to sacrifice, to the passion of the moment, the advantages which the Roman church derived from her close alliance with France, and the respect and regard which he entertained for the king. He pursued the line of policy by which the papal power has become so enormous—that of never attempting to wrest from circumstances what they did not warrant freely, or, at least, apparently. The Carolingian Papers offered advantages to the papal see which easily induced him to forget or overlook those which they refused. The recognition of his supremacy by a general council of the West, sufficiently indemnified him for a departure from the opinions which both he and some of his predecessors had cherished, in reference to image-worship, especially, when, as in this case, the personal authority of these popes could so easily be secured, by ascribing to their views motives which coincided with the principles of the Frankfort council. For Hadrian could excuse the opposition of his predecessors to the Iconoclasts, on the ground recognized even by that council, that the destruction of images was as great a crime as their adoration; and exonerate himself on the plea of desiring to terminate the dissensions between the Eastern and Western churches. This consideration induced him once more to lay before the king some arguments in justification of image-worship; but as he at last granted that the views of Gregory were correct, the king waved his unreasonable demand of a formal declaration of hostility against the Byzantine court; and thus the clouds dispersed which had for a while obscured their amicable relation to each other.

The decree of the Frankfort council was confirmed anew by the synod held at Paris by Louis the Pious, in the year 825, on account of the controversy which had again arisen in Byzantium, respecting images. But, in process of time, this subject, as well as others of more importance to the church, lost its interest; and as the images remained in the

churches, and, as it was left to the conscience of each individual to determine in what light they were to be regarded, the worship of images, which had been so strenuously resisted by Charlemagne and his contemporaries, gradually insinuated itself into the Catholic church. The elements were in existence; and it would have afforded cause, both for surprise and regret, had they not developed themselves. In a state of civilization, such as that produced by the exertions of Charlemagne, a sensible object of adoration was requisite. It is true, that relics afforded such an object; and in that point of view retained their importance: but, besides these dark and gloomy objects, images presented themselves in a brighter and more cheerful light, and maintained the reputation which miracles had conferred upon them, by miracles. So long as the efforts of art are principally exercised upon subjects possessing a religious interest, we find, universally, rude and barbarous conceptions corresponding with religious narrow-mindedness. An interesting proof of this fact is furnished by the stiff and uniform figures which constituted the first attempts of the Greek art of sculpture, as well as by the spiritless pictures of saints and gods, which were the humble beginning of an art which has since been carried to such perfection. Art was contented to be the hand-maid of religion, until she acquired an independent position, and laid claim to an intrinsic interest, besides that derived from religious association. The sanctity and reputation of miraculous power belonging to an ancient picture, conferred on it an importance which would never have been accorded to it as a work of art. But the Jupiter of Phidias, or a Madonna of Raphael, instead of borrowing splendor from, reflected a luster upon religion. In proportion as art had freer scope, and increased in energy, religious views were expanded; and as religion, by allowing the use of images, contributed to accelerate the perfection of art, so she, in her turn, advanced the interests of religion. But this beneficial result would not have been attained, had the Frankfort council carried their principle to the extreme; and not only prohibited the worship of images, but also excluded them from sacred edifices. The plan pursued respecting images does honor to the intelligence and sagacity of the men who devised it. The animation of style, ingenuity of argument, and extent of learning, displayed in the Carolingian Papers, render them a striking monument of the high state of mental cultivation of that period, and of its intellectual superiority to the succeeding centuries. It is no slight praise to them that the Romish hierarchy disputed their authenticity, and ascribed their origin to a period eminent for intellectual energy, and which, by emancipating the mind from many of the fetters of prejudice and superstition, facilitated the progress of religious independence and enlightenment.

5.

Alcuin’s Permanent Settlement in France, and his Participation in the Complete Suppression of the Doctrine of the Adoption.

Two years elapsed between the period of the Frankfort council and Alcuin’s permanent settlement in France; during which time, he appears to have remained in his former relation to the King. At the request of Charles, he delayed his return to England, without altogether relinquishing the design, and without suffering his attention to be withdrawn from his native country, the state of which filled him with the greatest anxiety.

The Normans, those bold navigators, were then beginning to extend their voyages, and to make their unwelcome descent upon more distant shores. The skillful measures taken by Charlemagne, deterred them from repeating their fruitless attempt upon the coasts of his kingdom : but England, divided among weak princes, was a tempting and easy prey. In the year 793, they landed at Lindisfarne, devastated the country with fire and sword, profaned the sanctuary, murdered some of the monks belonging to the monastery of that place, and dragged away others into captivity. Alcuin was on the continent when this event took place. He regarded it with more anxiety, perhaps, than others of his contemporaries; for, taught by the experience of the past, he had a deeper insight into the future. A comparison between the present state of England, and the condition of Britain at the time of the invasion of the Saxon pirates, forced itself upon him; and the similarity which he fancied he discovered, afforded him little consolation. Every letter, therefore, addressed by him to his friends in England at this period, contains a warning of the threatening danger, and an exhortation to maintain internal tranquility, in order to be able better to repel an external foe. “Our ancestors”, he writes to the archbishop of York, “although heathens, acquired possession, with God’s assistance, of this country. What a reproach would it be to lose as Christians, what they gained as heathens! I allude to the scourge which has lately visited those territories, which have been inhabited by our ancestors for nearly 350 years. In the book of Gildas, the wisest of the Britons, we read, that these very Britons lost their country in consequence of the rapacity and avarice of their princes, the corruption and injustice of the judges, the carelessness and indolence of the bishops in preaching, and the licentiousness and immorality of the people. Let us take heed that these crimes prevail not in our times, that the blessing of God may preserve our country in that prosperity which his mercy has condescended to bestow”. He concludes his letter with an exhortation to keep a vigilant eye upon the morals of the people, that the mournful catastrophe might be averted which he saw but too distinctly approaching, if the disturbances which had so often convulsed the kingdom of Northumberland were not speedily terminated. In order to contribute to the extent of his ability towards the maintenance of internal tranquility, he addressed a letter to king Ethelred, and to the nobles and people of Northumberland, wherein he adduces examples from the earlier history of the country, to enforce his earnest exhortations; and endeavored, by depicting hell in the most appalling colors, to deter the king from injustice, the nobles from sedition, and the people from disobedience. At the same time he resolved to return to York, that his personal authority might add weight to his admonitions. He had already obtained the consent of Charlemagne to this journey, and received from him presents for Offa, and other Anglo-Saxon princes, when, in the year 796, Ethelred was murdered. Alcuin saw, with equal indignation and sorrow, that his deluded country was beyond the aid of exhortation or advice, which he alone could offer; and therefore abandoned the idea of returning home, and resolved to make France his permanent abode. This resolution remained unaltered, when, a few months after Ethelred’s murder, the death of Eanbald I archbishop of York, which took place on the 29th July, 796, opened to him the most certain prospect of obtaining the vacant see. There is not the slightest doubt that he would have been elected, had he accepted tilt invitation which he received as a member of the church of York. As, however, he conjectured that he was invited not to assist in the election of another, but to be raised himself to the archiepiscopal throne, and as he had no desire to purchase, at the expense of repose, high ecclesiastical dignity, he excused himself on the plea of sickness and King Charles' absence in Saxony; and merely

admonished his spiritual friends in York to regard merit and worth only, in their choice, and to beware of simony, a crime which he compared to the treachery of Judas : for whosoever betrays and sells the church, betrays and sells the Lord Jesus Christ, with whom it forms one body. Alcuin had the pleasure of seeing his former pupil, Eanbald II chosen. Had he himself been ambitious of church preferment, the highest dignity in the kingdom of France would not have been withheld from him; but his wishes were confined to a station which would afford the repose necessary to his years and constitution, enfeebled by sickness, and enable him to devote himself entirely to his favorite occupations. A residence at court was less adapted to this purpose than the tranquility of a cloister; and he therefore requested permission of Charlemagne to retire to the monastery of St. Boniface at Fulda, and to distribute its revenues, which had been assigned him, amongst his pupils.

The king did not entirely accede to this request, considering it unbecoming to suffer a man like Alcuin to live as a simple monk, under the control of an abbot. But Itherius, late abbot of the monastery of St. Martin, at Tours, dying at this identical period, the king appointed Alcuin to his office; thereby providing for him the tranquility he desired, and affording him an opportunity of extending his labors for improving the condition of the clergy and the younger part of the population. The monks of St. Martin lived in a manner which was anything but becoming their profession; and Charles knowing Alcuin's vigor of mind and exemplary conduct, expected that when the community was placed under his management, the abuses which prevailed there would cease. We shall hereafter see how far Alcuin justified these expectations. This section will conclude with a connected account of his participation in the complete suppression of the doctrine of the Adoption.

Although he had retired from the world, he had involved himself too deeply in the controversy, and considered resistance to the new doctrines too meritorious a work to desist from it. Besides, he had received a personal affront from his adversaries. Felix had composed a book in answer to the letter in which Alcuin had exhorted him to abandon his errors, and, having completed it, sent it first to Elipandus and the other adherents of his doctrine, and then, by their advice, not to Alcuin himself, but to King Charles, from whom they hoped to experience more equity and impartiality. Charles transmitted it to Alcuin, against whom it was chiefly directed, charging him at the same time to reply to it. As Alcuin, however, saw, from the tone which the Adoptionists had assumed towards him, that his arguments alone would make no impression upon them, he entreated the king to transfer the commission to more suitable persons, at the same time exhorting him to take more vigorous steps, and use his temporal power for the suppression of the heresy. "Arise"—he thus concludes his letter, "arise, thou champion of Christ, chosen by God himself, and defend the bride of thy Lord! Think how thy enemy would rejoice were thy bride dishonored! Reflect that the wrong which thou sufferest to fall upon thy son, will recoil upon thyself. How much more oughtest thou to avenge with all thy might, the injury and reproach cast upon the Son of God, thy redeemer, thy protector, the dispenser of all thy blessings! Come forth valiantly in the defence of her whom God has entrusted to thy guidance and protection, in order that temporal power may assist thee in acquiring the treasures of spiritual glory". This letter is evidently dictated by a spirit of anger, on which, perhaps the wound inflicted on his vanity had no little influence. Charles, however, did not comply with Alcuin's wish of immediately interposing with passion and violence, but had sufficient forbearance to submit the matter to another examination. For this purpose,

he required Alcuin to nominate the persons whom he desired to have as his coadjutors in the dispute with Felix. It is interesting to discover on this occasion, which, amongst Alcuin's learned friends in France, enjoyed most of his esteem. He, of course, first nominated the Pope as being the source of the true faith; then the Patriarch Paul, of Aquileia, Bishop Richbod of Treves, and Bishop Theodulph of Orleans. Charles selected from the names submitted to him, besides the Pope, the Patriarch Paul. Pope Leo, successor of Hadrian I, proclaimed his sentiments, not by a written manifesto, but through the organ of a synod of Italian clergy assembled at Rome. The doctrine of the Adoption was, as might be anticipated, again rejected, and Charles urgently required to execute a sentence which had been pronounced for the third time. In consequence of this, the king summoned in May 799, a numerous meeting of the bishops and theologians of his kingdom at Aix-la-Chapelle, and dispatched Archbishop Leidradus, of Lyons, to Urgel, to bring Bishop Felix himself by force. It was insisted upon, that he should here, in person, either prove the truth of his opinions to the satisfaction of all, or solemnly and penitentially abjure them.

Alcuin was selected by the king to oppose Felix, and to dispute with him publicly. He had prepared and brought with him his seven books against Felix, which he afterwards published, and from which we may judge of the manner in which he handled the subject in the disputation, which was held in the middle of May. The words of Scripture, taken in their strictest sense, and the decrees of the fathers, were to him sufficient arguments to refute the new doctrine. That the name Adoption, is to be found neither in the Old nor the New Testament, nor yet in the works of the Fathers, ought of itself to have convinced Felix of his error. "Could God", asked Alcuin, "produce from the flesh of a virgin, a real son or not? If he could not, he is not omnipotent; if he could and would not, then you must give a reason why he has not chosen to do so. But, if you can tell that, then the will of the Most High God is comprehensible by the human mind, and the Apostle's assertion, that God is incomprehensible, is false".

In a similar manner, he avails himself of the words of the Holy Scriptures. When, for example, it is said, that at the baptism of Christ by John, the voice of God proclaimed "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. III. 17), Alcuin asks to which person of Christ does this refer? If the voice refers to Christ as one person, then this one person to whom the words were addressed is altogether God's beloved Son, although of two natures; if it refers merely to the divine nature, then this only was baptized and not the human nature, for it was to that which had received baptism that the voice was addressed. But it was not God, but the Man in Christ that was baptized by John in Jordan; it was therefore the man in him that was called by God the Father, the Son of God, "upon who, (it is thus that Alcuin proceeds) "the Holy Spirit also descended in the form of a dove, to prove that he who was baptized, even he was the Son of God. And on this point the baptizer himself says : And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God".

In a similar strain of argument, and with consummate learning, Alcuin contended with his opponent at the synod of Aix-la-Chapelle, in the presence of Charlemagne, numerous prelates and learned men. It is to be regretted that we are not in possession of the arguments brought forward by the opposite party; but that they were weighty, and that Felix acquitted himself valiantly this time, may be inferred from the fact that the disputation lasted nearly a week. He was, however, ultimately compelled to recant his

error a second time, and abjure it with a solemn oath. The issue of a conflict in which he stood alone against a host, the advocate of an opinion contrary to the authority of the fathers, whom his adversary regarded as the sole standard of truth, and by whom he would have justified any innovation, could not be otherwise than disastrous to Felix. But as there was reason to doubt the sincerity of his recantation, and in order that he might be punished for the obstinacy with which he had defied the authority of the Pope and the council, he was not permitted to return to his bishopric, but was publicly deposed and consigned to the custody of the Bishop of Lyons, who assigned him a monastery within his diocese for his residence. Although Felix here composed and published his confession of faith, he appears in his heart to have continued attached to his old opinions until his death, which took place in the year 818. But after the disputation at Aix-la-Chapelle, he sank into insignificance, and his doctrine was suppressed in France. It seems, from Charles' conduct towards the Adoptionists, that the principle of the priests—that all things are lawful against heretics, was at that time unknown, or else that Charles was too honorable to admit or practice it. It was not until after he had allowed Bishop Felix a second time to defend a doctrine which had once been condemned by its author, and then rejected by a general council, that he punished him, and that not by the stake, but by deposition and banishment to a monastery.

The orthodox party being now victorious, could employ the enormous power of the French monarch against Felix and his adherents on the Spanish frontier, and enforce their arguments by menaces and violence; but Elipandus cared little for the decrees of the French clergy and councils against his favorite tenets. His years, and the pertinacity with which old age adheres to its opinions and prejudices, rendered Alcuin's attempts to convert him ineffectual. He wrote to him in the year 799, and transmitted the letter by the envoy whom the king had commissioned to bring Felix from Spain. He addressed him in the most affectionate terms, imputing the whole of the fault to Felix; but Elipandus was so satisfied of the truth of his opinions and the error of his opponents, that he wrote a bitter reply, the offensive vehemence of which appeared even in the style of the address. In this he calls him a new Arius, an opponent of the holy Fathers, and hopes if he should be converted, that he may have everlasting salvation, but if not, eternal damnation. The tone of this epistle convinced Alcuin that all his efforts to persuade the old man would be unavailing, but he thought it due to his injured honor and the well-being of the church, to answer it, "in order", as he says, "that the minds of any may not be led astray by the perusal of that letter; for we have heard that it has fallen into the hands of others before it reached us to whom it was addressed". This was the origin of the four books against Elipandus, in which Alcuin again refuted the assertions of the Adoptionists, by citing passages from Scripture and the works of the Fathers. That they effected the conversion of the archbishop of Toledo, is not probable; but he was silenced : and the tempest which had threatened the unity of the Western church passed away, without injury to the constitution of the church or state. We must not, however, on that account, be restrained from considering the contest in all its political importance, and from ascribing to Alcuin, as the principal and successful opponent of the new sect, a large measure of the applause due to the preserver of the tranquility of the west of Europe.

SECTION IV.

ALCUIN AS ABBOT OF TOURS, UNTIL HIS DEATH, A.D. 796-804.

ALCUIN'S determination to renounce his native country now cost him a less painful struggle, as in consequence of the change which had been effected by his co-operation, he found himself placed in entirely different circumstances from those which attended him on his first arrival in France, when he came for the purpose of striving, in conjunction with a few others, against the ignorance and barbarism of the French clergy. He could at present obtain in France, his adopted country, a double measure of that which had rendered a residence in England agreeable to him; quiet, to pursue his literary occupations, and a circle of learned and intelligent men, who either reckoned themselves among his friends or his numerous pupils. His correspondence shows him to have maintained a friendly intercourse with nearly all the eminent men inhabiting the extensive territories of the French kingdom. As the greater part of them were indebted to him for the first impulse given to their intellectual powers, and as he exercised considerable influence over the minds of the others, a brief account of them and their labors may here find an appropriate place, and the rather, as the biography of Alcuin is merely a frame in which to exhibit the picture of the literary efforts of that period. We have already sufficiently adverted to the encouragement which they received from Charlemagne; not only did his commands operate upon the ecclesiastical order, but his example affected no less powerfully the laity who surrounded him. In addition to his favorite science, Astronomy, he pursued, from motives of piety, the study of Theology, which, even in the latter years of his life, occupied so much of his attention that he undertook to correct the Latin Gospels, by comparing them with the Greek original and a Syriac translation. He was both a competent judge of the literary qualifications of the clergy, and capable of superintending the means employed to produce a reformation in that body.

I.

Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Order.

On Charles' accession to the throne, he found barbarians, hunters, soldiers, and drunkards, placed at the head of the church—he bequeathed to his successor an intelligent and influential clergy. This vast change was the effect of the persevering efforts which he made from the first year of his reign to wrest temporal weapons from the hands of the ministers of the church, to induce them to quit the camp and the chase for their own peculiar province, and to confine them to a sphere of action in which they might render

themselves of more importance than if they stood exactly on a level with the feudal nobility. The military service imposed by Charles Martel on the clergy, had been followed by the debasement of the morals and destruction of discipline of the ecclesiastical body. The first step, therefore, taken by Charlemagne, was to issue a proclamation prohibiting the ministers of the church from bearing arms, or appearing in the camp, with the exception of a few who were required to perform divine service and carry the relics of saints. But though the warlike bishops might grant that it was unlawful to shed Christian blood, they held it quite consistent with their vocation and dignity to draw the sword against heathens. Charles, however, forbad their taking any part in the war against the Pagan Saxons and Sclavonians, requiring of them no other assistance but their prayers for the success of his arms. To this prohibition was annexed another, forbidding the clergy to hunt or to range the forests with dogs and hawks. That this edict was ineffectual, appears from its republication the following year, 789, in a more severe form. Hunting was a national amusement, of which a free man would not easily suffer himself to be deprived, and therefore, to save appearances at least, Charles was obliged to connect the permission to hunt, expressly granted to some monasteries, with objects which might be regarded as consistent with the clerical profession. The clergy were permitted to kill the hart and the roe, but only so many of them as were necessary to procure leather for the binding of books. This was also an indirect method of promoting the increase and circulation of books, as the love of sport among the clergy might be gratified in proportion to the extent of their library.

The love of spectacles, and the pleasure which the ecclesiastics derived from the jests of buffoons, and dramatic representations was, to Alcuin especially, as repulsive as their passion for the chase. We are ignorant, indeed, of the nature of the theatrical and mimic performances which were then practiced; but they must have been, on the one hand, sufficiently interesting to captivate and rivet the attention of men of letters; and, on the other, must have contained something which induced Alcuin to believe that an indulgence in them was perilous to the soul; although it is very possible that he went too far, and, like many sanctimonious persons of our own day, condemned, with unreasonable and ridiculous zeal, the theatre, a thing in itself innocent. His friend and pupil Angilbert, who appears, in the publications of those times, under the name of Homerus, a man whom Charles honored with his confidence, and frequently employed in important embassies, drew upon himself the censure of Alcuin on account of his love of shows. A letter addressed to another of his pupils, Adelhard, who lived with Angilbert, proves to us his anxiety for the salvation of the soul of his friend, his efforts to wean him from that which he regarded as injurious, and his joy at having succeeded. “That which you have written to me”, he says, in the letter to Adelhard, “concerning the amendment of my Homerus, is a delight to my eyes. Although he has ever pursued an upright course, still there is no one in this world who ought not to forget the things which are behind, and press forward until he has obtained the crown of perfection. The only thing in him which grieved me, was his passion for theatrical representations, which vain shows placed his soul in no small jeopardy. I have therefore written to him on the subject, to prove to him that my affection is always on the watch. Indeed, it appears to me inexplicable, that a man so wise in other respects, should not perceive that he is acting in a manner unworthy his dignity, and in no way commendable”. It is probable, that it was at the instigation of Alcuin, that the king, in the decree against hunting, published in the year 789, also interdicted theatrical

amusements to the clergy under pain of deprivation. But mere edicts and prohibitions would have failed to eradicate a deeply rooted custom founded upon prejudice and habit, if the king had not, in the manner already described, provided for the education of competent men, and conferred appointments upon them, and, by the respect with which he treated, and the influence which he allowed them, given others an example to stimulate their imitation, and spur their ambition. He frequently required the bishops, and superior clergy throughout his realm, to preach upon a subject selected by himself, which sermons were reported to him by his emissaries. He also, by the advice of Alcuin, who maintained, not without reason, that much instruction was to be gained by philosophical queries, often proposed various questions to the clergy, to which they were obliged to give a written reply. The queries proposed, had generally a reference to literature, or afforded an opportunity of embarrassing by irony, those who were acting in a manner unbecoming their profession, and of forcing from them the confession, that their actual condition was irreconcilable with their true calling. For instance, we meet with the following passage. "We wish that they would tell us truly what they understand by the declaration that they have renounced the world, and how those who have renounced it are to be distinguished from those who still cleave to it? Does the distinction merely consist in being unarmed and unmarried?". In this way, a spirit of inquiry was constantly kept alive among the clergy; and no man ventured to aspire to any ecclesiastical office, who was conscious of not possessing the requisite qualifications. We may, therefore, conclude that by the year 796, when Alcuin resolved to settle in France, the reformation of the ecclesiastical order was completely effected, and that only here and there a priest was to be found who belonged to the old system. Charles was now enabled practically to evince the respect which he entertained for the clergy, and to yield to them that influence which was due to their profession and external power, and which they merited by their intelligence and talents. They held henceforth the rank assigned to them by the Carolingian constitution—the first in the state. The Carolingian dynasty established their throne on Christian principles, or at least on those borrowed from the sacred writings of Christianity, and transformed the French into a Christian government.

CAROLINGIAN DYNASTY.

It is true, that the Merovingians had embraced the Christian religion, and caused themselves and their court to be baptized; but they changed nothing beyond the outward form, and that with the same indifference, as, under other circumstances, they would have adopted a new uniform. The Merovingian king retained the same relation to the French as he had previously held; the Carolingians, on the contrary, presented to the Germans an entirely different aspect of regal power. From the Bible, they became acquainted with kings, who, elected by the nation and consecrated and crowned by the Almighty, derived their authority from God. Consecration by the priest placed the Carolingian kings in this position. They subscribed themselves "by the grace of God", and were accustomed to regard their authority as derived immediately from God, and to consider every other power in the state as proceeding from, and subordinate to them. Whilst, therefore, the Merovingian sovereign was satisfied at his inauguration to be borne aloft on a shield,

before the eyes of the people, amidst the acclamations of the by-standers, the Carolingian system rendered consecration by a priest an essential and important ceremony. The Christian doctrine of the sacredness of the marriage contract formed also one of the fundamental laws regarding the succession. Under the Merovingian dynasty, the son of a concubine was as eligible to succeed to the throne, as the son of a lawful wife; and it would even appear that some of that house practiced polygamy. Under the Carolingian race, all illegitimate descendants were excluded from the succession; and examples of a departure from this rule occur only in times of confusion and distress, and were the consequence of revolutionary and illegal commotions. The same principle from which this and similar proceedings arose, induced the Carolingians to exterminate every vestige of paganism from among the Germans; and to enact strict laws for the solemn observance of Sunday, and fasts; as may be found among the ordinances concerning the discipline of the church. A reformation of the clergy was, therefore, necessary in a political point of view. They were the principal support of the throne, and therefore held the second rank in the state, but it never entered into the contemplation of Charlemagne, to regard the ecclesiastical power in any other light, than as subordinate to the regal authority. The king preferred employing the bishops and abbots in political transactions, because he expected more from their superior intelligence, than from men engaged in military pursuits, and was the more willing to entrust them with an extensive jurisdiction, as he felt convinced that a faithful minister of religion would be the most impartial administrator of law and justice. Charles had adopted measures for the administration and superintendence of his extensive dominions, as wise as the limited means he then possessed would admit of; but if the most perfect constitution still leaves scope to wicked men to commit injustice; this must doubly be expected from a kingdom such as France was at that time, notwithstanding the most upright intentions and utmost precautions of the sovereign. “I have no doubt of the good intentions of our lord the king”, writes Alcuin to his intimate friend, Arno, “and am convinced that he desires to order all things by the measure of justice; but amongst his ministers there are fewer who uphold than subvert justice, fewer who promote than impede it, because there are more persons who seek their own advantage than the glory of God”. Arno proposed to Alcuin that he should advise the king to empower deputies to administer justice in the provinces, and to appoint such only as were above the suspicion of accepting a bribe. These commissioners could be selected only from among the clergy, or the highest ranks of the laity; and we find, that, influenced by Alcuin’s counsel, the king nominated certain deputies in the year 801, selecting especially such men as were possessed of sufficient wealth to despise the despicable gains obtained by bribery and corruption, and who were not deficient in acuteness and information to investigate the most complicated affairs. It might naturally be inferred, even if it were not expressly mentioned, that they consisted chiefly of archbishops, bishops, and abbots. Possessing now an influence so great, it was easy for the clergy to resign the honor of military service; and they therefore, in conjunction with the whole nation, presented a petition in the year 803 to Charlemagne at the diet at Worms, begging him to release them from the duty of feudal service. In the contract which secured to the bishops immunity for their church lands, it is expressly enacted, that for the future, only so many ecclesiastics should accompany the army as were requisite for the performance of divine service, the administration of the sacraments and preaching. At the same time, the assurance was added, that their honor was in no wise injured by this arrangement; but rather would be augmented in proportion as they fulfilled their duty towards God and the holy church.

Though much may be said against the position which was assigned to the clergy by Charlemagne, and though it cannot be denied that they were thereby placed in circumstances inconsistent with their peculiar vocation, still the exertions of the king to elevate the church which had been suffered to fall into contempt, to encircle so venerable and important an institution with external splendor, and to encourage a spirit of holiness within it, entitle him to the applause which subsequent times have bestowed upon him. Frederick the Great, the admirer and imitator of Charlemagne, caused him to be canonized; and surely his genuine piety, his endeavors to promote discipline in the church, to maintain the true faith, and to reform the ecclesiastical order, render him more worthy of a place in the calendar of saints, than many others who owed this distinction to superstition and party spirit.

2.

Concerning Charles' Endeavors to improve the National Language, and the Academy he is said to have founded.

As the clergy were the chief instruments in the restoration of literature and science, and as it was for them that learning was principally intended, it followed, as a necessary consequence, that all education partook of a theological character, and that Latin was more cultivated than the national language. The clergy, whose taste had been refined by the cultivation of classical learning, on the one hand, despised their native language as a barbarous dialect, whilst, on the other, their Christian zeal led them to shrink from it as dangerous, from its association with paganism. The peculiar bent of Alcuin's mind rendered him particularly desirous, not only that the language should be neglected, but that every trace of the heathen condition of the country should be obliterated; in which opinion, all who had been educated in his school, as well as those prelates whose views were similarly directed, concurred. Jerusalem and Rome possessed more interest in their eyes than the forests of their ancestors; and they sought to withdraw attention from them, and fix it on those cities glittering in the splendor of religion and philosophy. Hence, we find, in the writings of that period, that whenever a reference is made to history, the examples are taken from Judea, Rome, or Greece, and rarely from the records of national history, which even in those early times was strangely disguised, and associated most oddly with the deified heroes of antiquity, with the Trojan warriors and Alexander the Great. But notwithstanding the education of Charles had given his mind also a bias in that direction, and that he was compelled by the Carolingian constitution to eradicate all the remains of paganism from among the people, still his penetrating genius, unshackled by the trammels of religious zeal, saw the importance of cultivating a national literature, and the necessity of improving the national language. As Alfred the Great endeavored to substitute Latin for German among the Anglo-Saxons, and as he, in order to inspire the laity, in particular, with a taste for the sciences, himself translated some interesting works from Latin into German; so Charlemagne perceived, that to advance the national civilization, it would be necessary to introduce a foreign education, like as a husbandman grafts into his trees a branch from a superior stock to improve their quality and increase their produce. The only man in his immediate circle, who was competent to such an

undertaking, was Deacon Paul of Lombardy, son of Warnefried. His history of the Lombards proves that he was well acquainted with the songs and traditions of his country, since it is in part composed of them in the same way as the historical work of Jordanes is compiled from the Gothic poems and legends. But, after a short residence with Charlemagne, Paul, probably dissatisfied with the relation in which he stood to the monarch who had annihilated the independence of his native land and overwhelmed with ruin his benefactor King Desiderius, had withdrawn from court and retired to the monastery of Monte Casino, where he lived until the year 799. Charles appears to have met with little support from Alcuin in his schemes for the promotion of the national literature, as is evident from the fact, that amongst the numerous letters written on scientific subjects, this matter is not once touched upon. But he was not thereby deterred from putting his own hand to the work. His biographer relates, that the king caused to be written down, and learnt by heart, some old German, or, as they are called in elegant Latin, barbarous songs, which celebrated the deeds and wars of former kings. It is well known, that the Germans, like other nations, who were ignorant of the art of writing, or amongst whom it is not in general use, perpetuated the memory of their heroes, both from a sense of gratitude and to kindle emulation, by songs which were communicated orally from one to another. The songs, however, collected by Charlemagne, seem not to have extended into the remote history, or to have comprehended many tribes of the German nation, if, indeed, we may speak of the Germans in those times as one nation. They were probably limited to the race of the Franks, and to the deeds and praises of the Merovingian kings. By this collection, the king hoped to form a basis, on which to construct a grammar of the German language. He, himself, commenced the task, but did not complete it; and nothing remains of this work of the great monarch, but the German names which he bestowed on the winds and months. The extinction of this species of literature was the work of the ecclesiastics. Heathen songs were to them an abomination, and the mind of Louis was too feeble to shake off the thralldom of the priests; and, like his father, entertain, on this subject, opinions unswayed by them. Bishop Theganus boasts of Louis, that, in his later years, he would not listen to the heathenish songs which he had learned in his youth, and even forbade their being taught. It was thus, that, in subsequent times, the classical studies of the clergy became distinct from the ordinary education of the people; and if any effort were made to associate the German language with Christianity, as was attempted by Ottfried's German paraphrase of the Gospels, it proved ineffectual, from want of support from the superior clergy. Learning again retreated to the monasteries and clerical institutions, and the people sank into profound ignorance. Charlemagne's design of introducing universal civilization failed, less because he had entered upon a wrong course, than because the more educated portion of the community chose to adopt a path which separated them from those who were yet uneducated. One consequence of this was, that the clergy, from their political position, were subsequently involved in temporal pursuits, and, instead of disseminating learning amongst the people, introduced ignorance into the church. Although, from these unfavorable circumstances, the glorious attempt of Charlemagne failed to attain its object, still its singularity places it in a light the more conspicuous, and it merits, perhaps, as great, if not greater admiration, than the valor by which he conquered, and the wisdom with which he governed, such a vast extent of territory.

This detail shows, that, in his anxiety for the improvement of the German language and literature, Charlemagne stood almost alone, and that there is no foundation for the assertion which has been made, that one of the academies founded by Alcuin at the court of France, was established expressly for the study and advancement of the German language. Opinions and statements are to be met with in history, which have been originally introduced from a certain external probability, and which, caving once succeeded in obtaining admission, claim a prescriptive right to the place they have usurped, although owing it solely to misconception. To this class, belongs Charlemagne's academy. Charles, as well as his learned friends, are mentioned in the writings of that period under assumed names, from which it has been inferred, that some literary society or academy existed at the French court, in which, as in modern times, the members adopted some name according to their fancy or their partiality for this or that author. Fixed rules, and a distinct object, to attain which all the members labor in common, are necessary to constitute an academy; but no allusion is made to a society of that description, either in contemporary works, or the letters of Alcuin, who had ample opportunity of mentioning the fact, and was, of all men, least likely to omit doing so. The assumed names in no way refer to a literary society, unless a meaning be assigned to them belonging to the habits of a later period, rather than to what was customary and possible in the days of Charlemagne. It is, however, only necessary to have read Alcuin's works with attention, to discover, that, from his predilection for allegory, he often bestowed names on his friends in jest, which, from their appropriateness remained attached to them in earnest, and became affixed to their real names as surnames, as, for example, Rabanus Maurus. The signification which has been attributed to them, is proved to be erroneous by the circumstance, that not only one surname was given them, but two, and even three, which varied with the circumstances to which they referred. So King Charles is usually called David, but many times, also, Solomon. As, in those days, historical references were chiefly derived from the Old Testament, so, on the one hand, nothing could be more flattering than a comparison with him who was peculiarly the founder of the Jewish kingdom, the brave, the single-minded, devout son of Jesse; and, on the other, with his successor, famed alike for his magnificence and his intelligence, and who, in the middle ages, was honored as the type of spiritual wisdom. Alcuin himself was called Flaccus and Albinus; the former, probably for the same reason as procured the name to the Latin poet, or because he was particularly partial to Horace, whose lyric verse he imitated in the judgment of his contemporaries, not without success; the latter appellation is manifestly a mere accommodation of his Anglo-Saxon name to the euphony of the Latin tongue. Amongst others, the two brothers, Adelhard and Wala, had double surnames; the former was called Antoninus and Augustinus, the latter Arsenius and Jeremiah. Einhard, the private secretary and biographer of Charlemagne, is a striking instance of the reason why, and the way in which, these names were given. He was a mathematician, and skilled in architecture, for which reason, Alcuin calls him, after the Jewish architect, of whom mention is made in the books of Moses, Bezaleell. We may, therefore, venture to affirm that this pretended academy is a mere fiction, without in any way detracting from the renown of Charles, whose zeal in the cause of literature is proved by too many splendid examples to need the aid of such suspicious evidence.

3.

The Friends and Pupils of Alcuin.

Although there existed among the clergy and learned men of France, no society regulated by formal and fixed rules, and united for the purpose of effecting some specific purpose, still, a similarity of sentiments and education led them in one and the same direction, and gave to their efforts a character of uniformity, especially as Alcuin was their common center. His influence is everywhere perceptible; throughout the whole of that period the predominating system was that introduced by him, and favored by the principles of the Carolingian constitution; namely, that of identifying all learning with theology, and particularly of transforming philosophy into a science of Christianity. Science, like the government, was Christianized, if the purpose to which it was applied, that of establishing and defending the dogmas of the church, and protesting against everything that savored of heathenism and heresy, entitled it to that distinction.

As Alcuin advanced in years, his feelings on this subject became more acute, and at length led him so far astray, that he forbade his disciples to read those philosophical and poetical compositions of antiquity, the perusal of which had cultivated and fascinated his own youthful mind. We, therefore, feel the less surprised, on finding that he took no part in the plans of Charles for the improvement of the German language and literature, and that, from his great influence, his example had a powerful effect on others. The greater part of the distinguished ecclesiastics in France were his pupils, and the few who were not among that number, were too feeble to resist the general current, even had they adopted contrary opinions. But this was not the case, as his friends, whose education had been entirely independent of him, entertained similar views. Amongst them was St. Paulinus.

ST. PAULINUS.

He was a native of that part of the French kingdom known by the name of Austrasia, but had been brought up and educated in Italy, where he was still residing, when Charles, for the first time, crossed the Alps. He does not appear at that time to have attracted the attention of the king; but when the treasonable confederacy entered into by several of the dukes of Lombardy, with Duke Rotgaud of Friuli, at their head, compelled Charles to march a second time into Italy, in the year 776, Paulinus was amongst those on whom the king bestowed the confiscated estates, after he had forcibly suppressed the rebellion. It was, of course, the interest of the French monarch to place a portion of the lands of Lombardy and the highest ecclesiastical dignities in the hands of Franks; and it was to this circumstance, and the confidence which he had inspired, that Paulinus was indebted for his installation at that time, or soon after, as patriarch of Aquileia, whose residence was in Friuli. Alcuin valued him highly. “Since I have become acquainted with thee, dearest friend”, he writes to him, “I have ever loved thee, and my heart has formed a bond

of friendship with thy heart". He gave a proof of the estimation in which he held him, by proposing him as his coadjutor in the controversy with the Adoptionists. Paulinus engaged in the contest with so much ardor, that almost all his writings are upon the doctrine of the Trinity. He died shortly before Alcuin, who had, therefore, an opportunity of honoring him by an epitaph.

THEODULPH.

Theodulph, likewise, was at the court of France when Alcuin arrived, or, at all events, entered it at the same time with him. He appears to have been the teacher of the court school, until he obtained the abbacy of Fleury and the bishopric of Orleans. We have already noticed how zealously he here endeavored to execute the commands and wishes of the king, and by that means, naturally acquired the confidence and esteem of Charles, as well as the friendship of Alcuin. Alcuin mentioned him, as well as Paulinus, amongst the most learned men of the kingdom, whose support he desired in his contention with the heretics. The good understanding which subsisted between them, was so much interrupted by an event which will be noticed hereafter, that it was not restored at the time of Alcuin's death, which occurred not long after, and was possibly accelerated by the grief which it occasioned him. Theodulph survived not only Alcuin, but Charles also. At the commencement of his reign, Louis the Pious evinced towards him the same respect as his predecessor had done; but Louis, as is well known, by degrees neglected the experienced, and tried counselors of his father, and thereby excited the indignation of the wisest and most distinguished persons, which could not be otherwise than dangerous to him. Theodulph was amongst the number of the discontented, and fell a victim to the court intrigues, which must inevitably exist under so weak a prince as Louis. He was impeached on the charge of having participated in the rebellion of King Bernhard of Italy, and deprived of his dignities and benefices; notwithstanding that he protested against these proceedings, and maintained that he could be judged and condemned by the Pope alone, from whose hands he had received the pall. After an imprisonment of four years in a monastery at Angers, he was liberated and reinstated in his dignity. But the anguish of a long and unmerited captivity, seems to have impaired his strength to such a degree, that he was unable to reach Orleans, but expired on his way to that city, on the 18th September, 821. Theodulph was particularly eminent as a poet, and, compared with his contemporaries, whose poetical compositions were nothing more than prose thoughts and expressions forced into elegiac rhyme, teeming with errors in prosody, he deserved the proud appellation of Pindar. His poems are on moral and theological subjects, and some of them have the honor of retaining their place in the psalmody of the church, even to our own times.

ST. BENEDICT AND LEIDRAD.

St. Benedict of Anian, was one of Alcuin's most intimate and devoted friends. His noble birth opened to him a splendid secular career, which he pursued with some success and distinction in the early part of his life, under Pepin and Charlemagne. He, however, speedily became so much disgusted with the life of a courtier and the tumult of business, that he retired, in the year 774, to the monastery of St. Seine. When a man like Benedict, weary of the world, has sought refuge from its cares and anxieties in the tranquility of a cloister, he must be greatly mortified at discovering that the same jarring interests which had distracted him without, prevail within the sacred walls; and the desire would naturally suggest itself, of reforming the monastic life, which he found so little in accordance with his feelings. The failure of his attempts to produce an amendment in the community of which he had become a member, determined him to withdraw from it, and embrace the life of a hermit. He constructed a cell on the banks of the river Anian; but was not allowed to remain long in this solitude, for the fame of his sanctity, speedily collected around him so great a number of people who sought his instructions and shared his principles, that he was compelled to convert his hermitage into a monastery, over which he presided as abbot, and whence the improved Benedictine rules soon extended to many other communities. Benedict, therefore, contributed not a little towards the reformation of the clergy, and was, on that account, highly esteemed both by Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. He lived in the most friendly intercourse with Alcuin, whom, as we are informed by Alcuin's anonymous biographer, he frequently visited, to ask his counsel for the salvation both of himself and his community. As the place of his abode was in the immediate vicinity of the source of the heretical doctrine of the Adoption, and consequently exposed his flock more than any other to its influence, he also labored diligently to oppose it, in which, as has been already related, he had the benefit of Alcuin's assistance. Auricular confession having fallen almost into disuse amongst the laity of Septimania; Alcuin, probably at the request of Benedict, addressed an epistle to the monks and priests of that province, in which he proved the necessity of auricular confession, both by texts from the Bible and from the nature of the thing itself. The editor of Alcuin's works considers these arguments sufficiently solid and convincing, to reclaim the Protestants of the present day from their heretical opinions respecting confession. How much less likely were they to fail in their effect, at the period when they were propounded!

Leidrad, who still remains to be mentioned in the number of Alcuin's friends, exchanged, like Benedict, a secular for a monastic life. Charles employed him upon embassies to various provinces, in all of which he acquitted himself with such success, that when the arch-bishopric of Lyons became vacant, the king considered him the person best qualified to restore order in the diocese, which, from bad management, had fallen into great confusion; and also to organize it entirely according to the new system. Leidrad justified the expectations of the king; he caused the decayed churches and monasteries to be rebuilt, re-established divine worship in a manner both splendid and imposing, and provided for the education of ecclesiastics of ability by founding schools and libraries. His multifarious occupations (for, in addition to his duties as a prelate, he was actively engaged in politics) left him too little leisure to admit of his bequeathing to posterity many written evidences of his sentiments; but they may be ascertained with tolerable accuracy from the opinions of his pupil and favorite Agobard, who, in the subsequent reign, was eminent for his enlightened understanding and political talents. Agobard speaks in terms of the highest commendation of the theological learning and orthodoxy of his master.

After the death of Charlemagne, Leidrad resigned the archiepiscopal throne to Agobard, and retired to the monastery of St. Medardus at Soissons, where he resided until his death, the date of which is unknown.

If these men, whose education had been entirely independent of Alcuin, as well as many others whose names and merits are less familiar to us, adopted the same views as himself respecting those subjects which chiefly engaged his attention, such was much more likely to be the case with those whose minds had been formed under his immediate influence. Amongst his pupils who accompanied him from England, and settled with him in France, Wizo, Fredegis, and Sigulf were the most eminent. Wizo, who was surnamed Candidus, has not, indeed, rendered himself remarkable, either by his writings, or by occupying an exalted station in the church; but he was, therefore, the more active in disseminating instruction, and augmenting the number of books in France. On Alcuin's retirement from court, he was succeeded by Wizo, who, it appears, in the year 796, undertook, at the head of a deputation formed of Alcuin's pupils, a journey to England for the purpose of supplying France with some books in which she was still deficient, by transcribing works in the library at York. Alcuin's letters testify the confidence reposed in him by his master, and the estimation in which he was held by Charlemagne.

FREDEGIS.

Fredegis, who is designated in the writings of Alcuin, by the name of Nathanael, was for a while the associate of his fellow-pupil Wizo. They entered the court of Charlemagne together, on which occasion, as we have already noticed, Alcuin dedicated to them his commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes, hoping, by a lively picture of the vanity and transitory nature of all human affairs, to fortify their minds, when placed in a situation where they might be easily tempted to forget his precepts. Fredegis appears, on many occasions, to have formed part of the king's retinue, and was, in all probability, frequently employed in a diplomatic capacity. Alcuin, therefore, committed a great error when he recommended him as his successor in the abbey of St. Martin; for Fredegis, who more frequently resided at court than in his monastery, and who was invested with the dignity of Chancellor by Louis the Pious, suffered the discipline, which Alcuin had established at the cost of so much labor, to fall into utter decay. His mode of handling philosophy and theology is quite in the style of Alcuin. In his treatise upon Nothing and Darkness, he endeavors to prove that they are not negative properties, but material substances. The Bible is the source from which he draws his arguments. He affirms that Nothing must be something material, because out of it, according to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, God created the world; and that, although the truth of this proposition may not be evident, it is to him not less certain than many other declarations which appear incomprehensible, without being so in reality. In the same way, he will rather insist upon Darkness being a substance, than interpret the texts of Scripture in any but a literal sense. It will be found almost universally that men, whose minds are of too contracted a nature to embrace any peculiar and individual opinions, adhere with remarkable pertinacity to the system of their masters, and will urge it to extremes, and even to absurdity, rather than surrender it, though they have only outwardly adopted it without having made it internally

their own. Fredegis affords an evidence of this obstinate attachment to ideas once imbibed. Having taken offence at a treatise written by the enlightened and unprejudiced Agobard, he entered the lists of controversy with him, and displayed, in the contest, that his theological views perfectly coincided with his philosophical notions. But a veteran combatant, like Agobard, speedily vanquished an adversary, unskillful and awkward in the use of weapons to which he was unaccustomed. Fredegis, affirmed, in opposition to him, that the commentators on the Scriptures were no more guilty of grammatical errors than their authors; that the Holy Spirit inspired not only the sense and substance of what the prophets and apostles wrote, but the very words and expressions which they were to adopt; they therefore stood in the same relation to the Holy Spirit, as Balaam's ass did to the angel, who spoke by the animal. He made other similar assertions with which we are acquainted only through Agobard's refutation, in which he demonstrates, not merely their actual absurdity, but the still more absurd consequences to which they led.

SIGULF.

Sigulf, surnamed Vetulus, was Alcuin's most faithful ally in the court-school, and also in that which he subsequently established in the monastery of St. Martin. When Alcuin resigned his benefices, he, with the consent of the king, bestowed the abbey of Ferriere on Sigulf, who superintended it with dignity, encouraging and promoting learning. The conscientious discharge of his duties left him no opportunity of distinguishing himself, either by a participation in affairs of state, or by literary compositions. We are indebted to him only for an account of Alcuin's life and labors, which a monk of the monastery of Ferriere, with whose name we are unacquainted, committed to writing from Sigulf's narration.

The sphere of influence widens around an instructor, in proportion to the length of time in which he labors in his vocation. Immediately on Alcuin's arrival in France, a host of young men resorted to him, the most distinguished of whom continued to enjoy his esteem and affection, and are therefore entitled to some mention in the present work. To none of those who had been his pupils at the court-school was Alcuin so firmly attached, and in none did he repose such unlimited confidence as in Arno, whose surname, Aquila, denoted the qualities which Alcuin esteemed, and valued in him, namely, the sublimity of his genius, which bore him as on eagle's wings above the common interests of life. He says of him in a letter, "there was no prelate in France in whom he reposed more confidence, whose eternal salvation he more earnestly desired, or the consolation of whose discourse he more longed to enjoy, both by conversation and epistolary correspondence". So sincere an attachment presupposes a correspondent degree of merit in the object, and we may, therefore, conclude, without knowing the particulars, that Arno, as archbishop of Salzburg, promoted the objects of Charlemagne to the utmost of his power, and that he acted in entire conformity with Alcuin's views. He founded a library at Salzburg in which he placed a careful and accurate copy of the works of his master, Alcuin.

ANGILBERT, ADELHARD, BERNARIUS, WALA.

Angilbert, called also Homerus, was likewise indebted to Alcuin for his education; and although he, in the early part of his life, pursued a secular career, and that with considerable success, still he constantly maintained an intercourse with his former master, and devoted himself to those studies which endeared his memory to him. Charlemagne, on sending his son, Prince Pepin, to take possession of the kingdom of Italy, which had been assigned him, committed him to the care of Angilbert, who, for some time, conducted, as prime minister, the affairs of the state. At the expiration, however, of a few years, he returned to France, in order to undertake the office of private secretary or chaplain to Charlemagne himself. During his residence at court, he gained the affections of Charles' daughter, Bertha, to whom he appears to have been privately married. At all events, they had two sons, the historian Nithard and Harnid, who succeeded their father in his possessions, and attained to considerable eminence in the subsequent reign. It was, probably, in consequence of the discovery of this union, that Angilbert was induced to embrace the monastic life. In the year 790, he resigned his temporal dignities, and retired to the monastery of St. Richarius at Centula, over which he presided as abbot, until the year 814, when he died. None of his writings have reached us with the exception of a few poems.

Adelhard, with his two brothers, Bernarius and Wala, were also among the number of those who had been brought up at the court-school under Alcuin's superintendence; and their sisters, Theodrada and Gundrada, were likewise his pupils. They were connected with the reigning family, being the children of Bernhard, brother of Pepin. The highest dignities in the church were open to them; in fact, as collateral branches of the royal house, nothing remained to them but to seek protection in the church from the suspicious jealousy of the reigning monarch. In this respect, the French court at that period, resembled pretty much those of Turkey and Persia, only with this difference, that in France the younger branches of the royal family were buried in the obscurity of a cloister, whilst in Turkey they are murdered, and in Persia, deprived of sight. The natural inclination of Adelhard, the eldest of the brothers, had already induced him to select the church as his profession; and in order to qualify himself by study for his spiritual calling, he had spent his early youth in Italy, particularly at Monte Casino, then the most renowned seat of learning in that kingdom. On his return to France, he became acquainted with Alcuin, under whose instructions he completed his education. Adelhard was installed abbot of Corbie, in which capacity he had ample opportunity of co-operating in the reformation of the clergy, and of contributing his part to the dissemination of learning. That he was diligent in the performance of these duties, may be inferred from the confidence reposed in him by Charlemagne, who entrusted to his management, state affairs of considerable importance. In the year 796, he became prime minister to King Pepin in Italy, in the room of Angilbert, and to use the expression of Hincmar, frequently appeared at the court of Charlemagne, the chief amongst the principal councilors of the king. The generous confidence which Charles reposed in his relatives was withdrawn by his pusillanimous suc-cessor, whose timid jealousy prompted him to treat them with injustice. Without any reason assigned by contemporary writers, and probably merely in consequence of calumnious reports, Adelhard was banished to the island of Hero

or Hermoutier. A monastery in the island of Lerin was appointed for the residence of Bernarius; and Wala, who had not yet taken holy orders, was compelled to become a monk. Even their sisters were detained for some time in captivity. In the year 821, Adelhard regained his liberty, and was reinstated in his dignity. He was of too gentle a nature to avenge the wrongs he had sustained, otherwise than by exerting himself zealously in the general assemblies of the state to promote the welfare of the church and state, which the emperor neglected, less from evil design than from weakness of understanding, and partiality to his favorites. Adelhard died in the year 826, previously to the breaking out of the civil war in France. He was succeeded by Wala, who, unlike his meek-spirited brother, rendered himself conspicuous, as one of the most violent opponents of the emperor, and avenged himself on the cruel tyrant who had driven him from the world, by hurling against his enemy the spiritual weapons with which he had armed him. Little remains to us of the writings of Adelhard. Of his most considerable work, "On the Order and Management of the Royal Household, and the whole French Monarchy, under Pepin and Charlemagne", we have merely an abstract made by Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, for the benefit of King Carloman. This abstract has superseded the original work for, at a time when books were all in manuscript, brevity was a great recommendation.

RICULF, ARCHBISHOP OF METZ.

Riculf, archbishop of Metz, designated in Alcuin's works by the name of Flavius Damotas, still remains to be mentioned amongst his pupils. Of him but little is known; he presided at a council held at Metz in the year 813, rendered remarkable by the wisdom of their deliberations, and the prudence of their determinations. Amongst other topics, the continual extension of education was particularly urged; and it was declared to be incumbent on the clergy, not merely to afford parents an opportunity of procuring instruction for their children, but also to see that they availed themselves of the opportunity. Riculf's name is likewise associated with the false Decretals ascribed to Archbishop Isidorus; for Hincmar of Rheims accuses the archbishop of Metz of being the first who conveyed this unlucky production across the Pyrenees, and circulated it in his diocese. In consequence of this accusation, Riculf has been suspected of being himself the author of the Decretals of Isidorus. But it is impossible to believe, that a prelate educated in Alcuin's school, and elevated by Charlemagne to the primacy of Germany, would, had he wished to impose upon the world, have fabricated so clumsy a deception as to be instantly detected; nor is it conceivable, that so accomplished a scholar, as there is every reason to suppose Riculf to have been, would have put into the mouth of a Roman bishop of the first and second centuries, which may be considered as belonging to the most flourishing period of Roman literature, when Seneca, Tacitus, and Pliny wrote, words and phrases which owed their origin to the barbarism of the French. Neither can any plausible reason be assigned, which could have induced Riculf to represent the archiepiscopal dignity, as so dependent upon the See of Rome, as it is pronounced to be in the Decretals of Isidorus. This collection is manifestly the production of one not very well acquainted with the classical language of antiquity; it is equally evident that it was

written by an inferior member of the church, who, in order to avenge himself upon one archbishop, sought to mortify all. Suspicion rests with the greatest probability upon Benedict, an ecclesiastic of Metz, the individual who collected the capitulars of the French kings, and published them, in the order in which they now stand. This imposition, however, would probably not have been attended by any important consequences, had not, on the one hand, the elements of which it was constituted practically existed, so as to render it easy to transfer them to an earlier period; and, on the other, had not the bishops, and the rest of the clergy, found it to their advantage to make themselves independent of the archbishops and laity, by submitting to an authority so remote as that of the Holy Father at Rome.

RICHBOD, ARCHBISHOP OF TREVES.

Richbod, archbishop of Treves, surnamed Macarius, also deserves a place in this brief sketch of the most distinguished men who enjoyed the advantage of Alcuin's instruction. Alcuin's selection of him, in preference to all his other pupils, to aid him, in conjunction with the men already mentioned, in the controversy with the Adoptionists, affords a flattering testimony of his learning and talents. The treatise which Richbod wrote against Felix, at the request of Alcuin, no longer exists; but his master speaks of it in terms of approbation, both with regard to the style and the matter, and considers it as alone sufficient to confute the heretics. There is no doubt that the industry with which he promoted the designs of Charlemagne, acquired the confidence and commendation of Alcuin.

We omit the mention of other eminent men, as Einhard, Agobard, and others, whose minds were formed during this period, but whose energies were not displayed till some years subsequently; because, although they were indebted for their intellectual cultivation to the institutions founded by the exertions of Charlemagne, and conducted by Alcuin, still they were not personally instructed by him. It is evident that Einhard became a pupil at the court-school, subsequently to Alcuin's resignation of the directorship; and although he never ceased to interest himself in the institution, and although young Einhard's proficiency in mathematics may have excited his attention and applause, as it is plain it did; still, his connection with him was too remote to require a particular description. We, therefore, immediately proceed to the consideration of the school established by Alcuin, in the monastery at Tours, and the men who there received their education.

4.

Alcuin as Director of the Monastic School at Tours.

The first object which engaged Alcuin's attention after he had undertaken the superintendence of the abbey at Tours, was the establishment of a school. To one who, like Alcuin, has spent his whole life in imparting instruction, and in whose very letters the tone of the pedagogue is perceptible, teaching becomes a necessary mental exercise. The school was the element which he sought, as eagerly as the fish pants for the water in which alone it moves with alacrity and pleasure. It is probable that he had at first many difficulties to encounter, from the rude and unpolished habits of his community, who had hitherto been more occupied in tilling the ground, than in cultivating their minds. Useful as the monastic orders had been in the early stages of society, especially in Germany, in clearing the forests, planting the plains with corn, and the hills with vines; yet now, something more, particularly in France, was required of a spiritual fraternity. It must have cost Alcuin no little trouble to wrest the implements of agriculture from the hands of the monks, in order to substitute the pen, and to make them comprehend, that transcribing books was more profitable than dressing vines, inasmuch as the former occupation was more ennobling to the mind than the latter. He succeeded, however, in overcoming every obstacle; and as the monastery soon became one of the most celebrated for its internal arrangement, so Alcuin's personal qualifications speedily obtained such extensive reputation for the school which he had established there, that numbers resorted thither for instruction. Next to the court-school, it was the first in the kingdom, and would not have been surpassed by that, had Alcuin been able to overcome the irritability of old age; and had he not been so pedantic as to exclude from his system of education the heathen poets and philosophers. We have already laid before the reader, part of the letter in which Alcuin describes to Charlemagne his exertions in the school; to which he adds, that he did not possess the books necessary for the attainment of his object, and that nothing excited in his mind such a longing after his native country as this deficiency in books. He therefore subjoins to this complaint, a request that he may be allowed to send by royal authority some of his pupils to England, in order, as he expresses it, that these invaluable fruits of wisdom may be transplanted into France, and flourish in the garden of Tours as luxuriantly as at York. "It is not unknown to your wisdom", he proceeds, "that in every page of the sacred Scriptures we are admonished to learn wisdom, for there is nothing which tends more to the attainment of a happy life, nothing more delightful in practice, nothing more efficacious in resisting vice, nothing more commendable in an exalted station, and, according to the declarations of philosophy, nothing more requisite in governing a people, than the ornament of wisdom, the praise of learning, and the influence of education. Hence, the wise Solomon exclaims :

Wisdom is better than rubies; and all things that may be desired, are not to be compared to it. She it is who exalteth the humble and abaseth the proud. By her kings reign. Blessed are they who keep her ways and watch daily at her gates.' (Prov. VIII. 11, 15, 32, 34).

Exhort then, my lord king, the youth in the palace of your highness, to learn with all diligence and to strive daily to acquire wisdom, that they may make such progress in the bloom of their youth as will bring honor upon their old age, and finally, by wisdom, obtain eternal blessedness. I also, according to the measure of my poor ability, will not cease to scatter in this soil the seed of wisdom amongst your servants, remembering the exhortation :

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether this or that shall prosper, or whether they both shall prosper, which were still better". (Eccles. II. 6)".

It would naturally be concluded that Charlemagne granted this request, even did Alcuin's letters not inform us, that Wizo undertook a journey to York about this time, at the head of a commission, in consequence, we may reasonably suppose, of the desire expressed by Alcuin. The copies which were made at York by the commissioners, were multiplied at Tours, and dispersed among the principal libraries in the kingdom. Libraries had increased in number since they had become in France, as in England, the chief ornaments of a monastery, and an introduction to the favor of Charlemagne. It has been already mentioned how earnestly Alcuin recommended accuracy and care in transcribing, and how successfully we may judge from the manuscripts of that period, which are remarkable for neatness and elegance of execution. The smaller Roman letters began now to be adopted instead of the pointed Merovingian characters; the large letters, also, again came into use, for besides the monogram and coins of Charlemagne, whole manuscripts are to be found written in this character. From the scarcity and costliness of writing materials, rich monasteries only were able to furnish extensive libraries; for since the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, and the interruption of the commercial intercourse with that country, paper, which had formerly been one of the articles of import, ceased to be used, and parchment became its only substitute. It is, doubtless, to this circumstance, that the loss of many valuable works is to be ascribed. In an old parchment volume, how often may the writing have been effaced, in order to afford space for the insertion of a subject possessing greater novelty and interest, although, perhaps, it was only a miserable legend, that usurped the place of a master-work of antiquity? Under such circumstances, it was to be expected that the royal library, or that connected with the court-school, having more resources at command than any other, should be the richest, and less frequently under the necessity of destroying an ancient work, in order to insert in its place a modern composition. At all events, the efforts of this period to collect good copies of the best works, are so much more commendable, as, in the following century, the general interest in this subject ceased, and only a few persevered in augmenting the rare treasure. Louis the Pious received, amongst other presents from Michael the Stammerer, emperor of Byzantium, a work of Dionysius the Areopagite, which, at the command of Charles the Bald, was translated into Latin by John Erigena, and became the source of many of the enthusiastic and mystical ideas of the middle ages. The Abbot Lupus, of Ferriere, who in his letters cannot sufficiently express his admiration and envy of the splendid efforts which had formerly been made for the advancement of learning, informs us that he himself sent for the works of Sallust, Cicero's treatise upon Oratory, and the Institutes of Quintilian, from Italy, because throughout the kingdom of France, he could find only detached portions, and no perfect copy of these books.

Whilst Alcuin was actively engaged in augmenting the number of books and increasing their circulation, he was at the same time diligent in cultivating the minds of men, so as to enable them to value and profit by reading. Some of the most eminent scholars of the succeeding century, were educated in the school of St. Martin, amongst which number may be reckoned Rabanus, surnamed Maurus. A letter of Alcuin's is still

extant, addressed to him, as it would appear, after his return to Fulda, in which he desires that he would keep his promise, and write a book in praise of the Holy Cross (De Laudibus S. Crucis). Rabanus became first Abbot of Fulda ; and when Alcuin's school at Tours lost both its reputation and usefulness, under the careless management of the Abbot Fredegis, that at Fulda rose, through the ability of Rabanus, to so high a degree of celebrity, as to be regarded as one of the first in the kingdom. He rigorously pursued Alcuin's method of instruction, in obedience, at once, to the commands of his sovereign and the conviction of his own understanding. His talents were speedily acknowledged, and magnificently rewarded, being raised by Louis, the German, in the year 847, to the archbishopric of Metz. The strictness with which he endeavored to enforce Alcuin's principles, in this more extensive sphere of action, is evident from the circumstance, that before he had enjoyed his new dignity a year, he was called upon to suppress and chastise a mutiny among his own people. The severity with which he attempted to restore the discipline of the church, which had fallen into decay under the administration of his predecessor Otgar, was, in all probability, the cause of this rebellion, since no other is assigned. His participation in the learned controversies of those times, and his writings, do not belong to our present subject.

When Rabanus was summoned from the abbey of Fulda, to assume the archiepiscopal see of Metz, he transferred the direction of the monastery, and the management of the school, to Hatto, who had formerly been his fellow-pupil at Tours, and subsequently his assistant at Fulda. As a disciple of Alcuin, Hatto, therefore, continued the same system. Another distinguished scholar of this period, Samuel, who first became a teacher at Fulda, afterwards abbot of the monastery of Lorsch, and finally, in the year 838, was elevated to the bishopric of Worms, is likewise to be noticed amongst Alcuin's pupils at Tours. Haimon, also, who in the year 840, was appointed bishop of Halberstadt, which dignity he retained until 853, received his education in the monastery of St. Martin.

Adelbert, who, under the name of Magus, is mentioned with much commendation by Alcuin in his letters, and Aldrich, were likewise brought up at Tours. Adelbert distinguished himself while abbot of Ferriere, by conducting, on Alcuin's system, the school which had been founded by his predecessor Sigulf, and by maintaining the discipline which he had introduced. Upon his early death, which took place in 822, his fellow-pupil, Aldrich, occupied his place. Aldrich had rendered himself acceptable at the court of Louis the Pious, by his orthodoxy and learning, and was, therefore, not permitted to remain long in a subordinate station, but was elevated by Louis, in the year 828, to the vacant archiepiscopal see of Sens. He remained, from a sense of gratitude, firmly attached to the imperial party, during those years of confusion and distress, when Louis was exposed both to the hostile attempts of his sons, and the treachery of his friends and relatives. He was one of those who labored most zealously to abolish the measures adopted by the rebels, and to effect the complete restoration of Louis. Almalarius still remains to be noticed amongst Alcuin's pupils at Tours. Two cotemporary scholars and ecclesiastics bore this name, both of whom rendered it illustrious the one by the high dignity to which he attained, as archbishop of Treves, and the performance of the duties annexed to his station; the other, by his writings. They were, probably, both pupils of Alcuin, and, therefore, of both, brief mention may be made. Archbishop Amalarius, surnamed by some, Fortunatus, possessed in a high degree the

confidence of Charlemagne, who entrusted to him, in the year 811, the important charge of regulating the churches in Transalbingia, that part of Saxony which had striven the longest against the dominion of the Franks, and the introduction of Christianity. On this occasion, Amalarius consecrated the church in Hamburg, and executed the whole of his commission with so much success, that the emperor, a few years afterwards, employed him on a no less important mission. In the year 813, he was sent as ambassador to Constantinople, in order to arrange the treaty of peace, which had been concluded with the Emperor Michael I, who had at last, consented to recognize the imperial title of Charles, and also to settle some differences respecting the boundaries of their dominions. These occupations left him but little time for literary composition; and there is no doubt that the works published under his name, and which have been ascribed to him, are the productions of another cotemporary, Amalarius, surnamed Symphosius, who enjoyed considerable reputation in the theological world, and became involved in several literary disputes. His writings refer, principally, to the liturgy and discipline of the church. At the command of Louis the Pious, and by the aid of the imperial library, he compiled "Rules for Canons", which were as universally adopted in France as St. Benedict's "Rules for Monks". His works on the liturgy are no less important, their object being to render divine service uniform throughout Western Christendom, to bring it into accordance with the Roman church, as the most perfect model, and thereby complete the work which Charlemagne had commenced. As his system was directed against the mode of worship which had been introduced into many churches, he could not fail to meet with opposition. But, notwithstanding the resistance of a man like Agobard, and an ecclesiastic of great renown in Lyons, the deacon Florus, the Roman form of worship eventually prevailed, and thereby extended and confirmed still farther, the authority of the Pope. The manner in which Amalarius interprets the Bible, and attributes to the festivals and rites of the church, a mystical signification, betrays him to have been a disciple of Alcuin.

5.

Alcuin's Philosophical and Historical Works.

There were many claims on Alcuin's diligence, in addition to his superintendence of the monastery and direction of the school. His extensive correspondence, of which we possess but a small portion, embraced, in its wide range, the whole kingdom of France, and every topic of interest belonging to that period. At one time he was called upon to reply to the scientific and political enquiries of King Charles, at another, to maintain an intercourse with his friends and pupils, animating their zeal by the fervor of his style, and guiding their judgment by the wisdom of his remarks. In this way he continued, even at Tours, to be the instructor and counselor of all the educated portion of society throughout France. We have already had occasion to adduce an instance of the ardor with which many of the lay nobility pursued the course which Charles had adopted. The example of a sovereign must necessarily exert an influence on all around him; in truth, the tone which prevails at court, is that by which the majority of those who frequent it regulate their course of action and mode of thinking. We find, therefore, persons holding the highest offices of the state in the Carolingian empire, manifesting for the sciences a regard

previously unknown. Amongst this number was Wido, who was for some time margrave of Brittany. The town of Tours was situated within this district, and frequent intercourse with Alcuin inspired Wido with so much reverence for his opinion, that he requested him to write a book by which he might judge of his actions and regulate his conduct. Alcuin composed for this purpose, his treatise on the Virtues and Vices, that it might, as he says, serve the margrave as a mirror wherein he could discover at a glance, what he ought to do and what to leave undone. A subject so entirely practical could not be treated according to the strict rules of philosophy. The author commences with Wisdom, and the three chief Christian virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, and then proceeds to enumerate, without any precise order, the different virtues and vices. He characterizes each, and endeavors by a striking description of the individual peculiarities of each virtue and vice, and by interspersing texts from the Bible, to allure the mind to the former, and render the latter odious. Each description forms the subject of a separate section, and is, as it were, a short sermon. The chapter upon Humility may serve as a specimen of the mode in which the author treats of the virtues.

"We may learn how great a virtue is humility, from the words of the Lord, who, in order to reprove the pride of the Pharisees, said, Whosoever exalts himself shall be abased, and whosoever humbles himself shall be exalted. The path of humility conducts to heaven, for the high and lofty One is to be approached, not with pride, but with humility. This we learn from the words, God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. (James, IV. 6). It is also said in the Psalms, The Lord is high and regards the lowly, but knows the proud afar off. (Ps. CXXXVIII. 6). He regards the lowly in order to exalt them, and knows the proud in order to humble them. Let us learn humility, by which we may draw nigh unto God; he himself says in his Gospel, Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Matt. XI. 29). Through pride, the angels, that wondrous creation, fell from heaven; through humility, frail human nature is raised to heaven. A humble deportment is honorable among men; for Solomon says, Where pride is, there is also shame; but wisdom is with the lowly.' (Prov. XI. 2). Even so says the Lord, by the prophet, But I look to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word. (Isa. LXVI. 2). Whosoever is not humble and gentle, in him the grace of the Holy Spirit cannot dwell. Even God humbled himself for our salvation, that all men might be ashamed of pride. The lower the heart is sunk in humility, the higher is its reward above; for whosoever is lowly here, shall be raised with power and glory there. The first step in humility, is to listen with patience to the word of God, to keep it in faithful remembrance, and obey it with cheerfulness; for truth departs from those minds which are devoid of humility. The more humbly a man thinks of himself, the greater does he become in the sight of God; and, on the other hand, the more dazzling the proud man is to his fellow beings, the more abominable he is in the eyes of the Lord. To perform good works without humility, is to carry dust in the wind. How can a man of dust and ashes be proud, when all that he appears to have heaped up by fasting and alms-giving, is scattered abroad by the blast of pride? Cease then, Oh man I to glory in thy virtues, since in this matter thou wilt be judged not by thyself, but by another, before whom thou must humble thy heart, if thou wouldst be exalted by him in the day of retribution. Descend from thy high estate that thou may reach one much higher ; humble thyself that thou may attain greater glory, and not be deprived of that whereof thou boast. Whosoever is little in his own eyes is great before God; and

whosoever abhors himself, is well pleasing unto the Lord. Be therefore little in your own sight, that you might be great in the eyes of God. Your worth will be the more esteemed by God, the less it has been esteemed by you. When in the enjoyment of the highest honors, maintain the greatest humility. The brightest gem in the crown of honor, is humility".

In a similar manner, the author treats of individual vices. As a specimen, we will select his dissertation upon anger; not because it is the most beautiful, but because it is the shortest. "Anger is one of the eight principal vices. When no longer under the control of reason, it is converted into fury; in which case, a man is no longer master of himself, but is hurried into the commission of actions the most unbecoming, When this passion has once taken possession of the heart, prudence is banished, and the mind becomes incapable of judging impartially, of reflecting wisely, or of deliberating maturely; but executes everything rashly. Anger is the root whence spring tumults, quarrels, and contentions, clamors, discontent, arrogance, calumnies, blood-shedding, murder, revenge and implacability. It is to be overcome by patience and forbearance, and by the exercise of the reason which God has implanted in man; also, by remembering, what injustice and sufferings Christ endured for us, and calling to mind the Lord's prayer, wherein it is said, Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"

CAPACITIES OF THE SOUL.

This treatise, which, from the nature of its contents, deserves to be denominated moral, rather than philosophical, continued to be held in high estimation in the following century, and single chapters of it formed the material of elaborate sermons. It would, probably, have assumed a different form, had the author not purposely adapted it to the object for which it was designed, and the character and education of the man to whom it was to serve as a manual. In fact, we find that his work "Upon the Nature of the Soul'", is of a totally different character. And although it is dedicated to a woman, Adelhard's sister, Gundrada, or, as she is otherwise called, Eulalia, still she was accustomed to Alcuin's theological speculations, and was as eager in the pursuit of knowledge, and as capable of comprehending abstruse doctrines, as Gisla and Richtrude. An acquaintance with the then prevailing opinions respecting the science of psychology is so important, and so interesting, that we the more willingly present the render with the substance and general tenor of this elegantly written treatise. According to Alcuin, the soul is of a threefold nature, consisting of Desire, Passion, and Reason. Desire and Passion are properties possessed by man in common with the brutes; but Reason is peculiar to him, and is that which elevates him above other animals. The virtues belonging to Reason, are the four cardinal virtues; which, in this treatise, as well as at the conclusion of that upon Rhetoric, are made to harmonies with the doctrines of Christianity. These virtues are to control Desire and Passion. In order to distinguish between the good and the bad, we must ascertain whether Desire is so entirely under the dominion and guidance of Reason, that it seeks those things only which are profitable and reasonable; and Passion or Anger is excited by, and exercised only against that which is evil; or whether Reason is too feeble to restrain these two propensities. The Soul is an image of God, and remains

so, as long as it continues good, and even in souls debased by sin, this image cannot be totally effaced. In order to preserve this pure image, we must love God and our neighbor; and then we shall not transgress against ourselves, and our bodies. The Soul possesses three faculties, Understanding, Will, and Memory, by which, however, it is no more divided, so as to lose its unity, than the Godhead by the Trinity, for these faculties are merely relative. Independently of these, it possesses, likewise, the power of imagination, both in reference to the objects which we behold, for the first time, as well as to those which we have formerly seen, or of which we have only heard. But, however many imaginations or thoughts may pass through the soul, they are always consecutive or simultaneous. Herein consists a wide distinction between human nature and the perfect essence of the Deity, whose infinite mind comprehends all things at the same time, which constitutes his omnipresence. The superior origin of the human soul is also evinced by its constant restlessness and activity, which cease not even when the corporeal senses and powers, exhausted by toil, sink into repose. Even this indicates its immortality, which would have been quite perfect, had the soul continued as pure as when it first came from God's creating hand; but it may lose a portion of its immortality by sin. For as the soul is the life of the body, so God is the life of the soul; when the soul departs from the body, the body dies; in like manner, when God departs from the soul, or when it departs from him, its better part is destroyed. It retains its imperishable nature, but loses its capacity for the enjoyment of eternal bliss. All these properties being combined, the soul may be defined as a spiritual reasonable essence, which is perpetually in motion, and never ceasing to exist; which is equally capable of good and evil, and consequently perfectly free to choose between the two; to the free will, therefore, of the soul, is to be ascribed every action, whether ennobling or degrading. It may further be defined as an essence, which has been created and united to the body, in order to regulate its passions, and is therefore invisible, incorporeal, without weight or color, and pervading every particle of the body. In the beginning, it was stamped with the image of God; and though it may depart from its creator, and thereby forfeit everlasting bliss, still its immortality remains, together with a consciousness of its worth. The soul is variously denominated according to its various capacities, but admits of no distinction of parts or separation. "As the animating principle, the general term, Soul, is applied to it; when it rises to contemplation, it is designated the Mind; when its sensibilities are awakened, Feeling; when it approves or disapproves, Taste, or Judgment; when it draws conclusions, Reason; when it discriminates, Understanding; when it consents, Will; when it recollects, Memory". As virtues are the beauties, so vices are the deformities of the soul. As it is impossible to arrive at any certainty respecting its origin, we must be content to derive it from God. The treatise concludes with two poems, one in Elegiac, the other in Adonic verse. Alcuin states, that he made choice in these verses of the number six, being the most perfect, in order to signify his desire that she might continue to advance towards perfection. Should she meet with any subject which she did not comprehend, she is directed to have recourse to King Charles (at whose court Gundrada must then have been residing), that wise king, the nobility of whose mind could never be sufficiently admired. "Thou have no need", he continues, "to enquire of us concerning the causes of things, or the hidden principles of natural phenomena, whilst thou hast daily an opportunity of applying to the enlightened wisdom of the king, and beholding his honored countenance. Neither is it requisite for thee to travel the long and wearisome road from Ethiopia to Jerusalem, in order to hear

the wise Solomon discourse upon the nature of things. Behold, he is near to thee, whom the Queen of Sheba visited, regardless of distance and of difficulty".

Many more letters of Alcuin, in which moral and philosophical subjects are discussed, might here be adduced, were these examples and analytical investigations not sufficient to elucidate his method of reasoning on theories of this description. With the general extension of education, history assumed a much more attractive form. It was natural to anticipate, that men, who, like Einhard and Nithard, had grown up under the influence of an improved taste, had lived at court, had been engaged in politics, and themselves taken an active part in the scenes which they portray, should write very differently from a monk who had rarely emerged from the walls of his cloister. And, although the form of a chronicle, as being the most usual and convenient, was generally preserved, yet the style in the chronicles of this, and the succeeding period, is much purer, and the descriptions more copious, and in better taste. Alcuin, however, appears to have been least adapted for an historian. His florid, and sometimes bombastic style, would have harmonized as little with the simplicity of historical writing, as his tendency to moralize, and to bend the occurrences of life to suit sonic favorite theory, would have been compatible with the truth, or at least with the accuracy of history. In his hands, historical description would have become a vehicle for moral reflections, as may be perceived by his letters, in which passing events are announced in a declamatory tone, and painted in the most glowing colors for the purpose of exhortation or admonition. A life of Charlemagne, of which no traces now remain, was formerly mentioned amongst Alcuin's historical writings, in the hope that the work might yet be found. This expectation and hope originated in a note affixed by Einhard to his life of Charlemagne, wherein it is stated, that a more particular account of the actions of Charles might be found in the biographical work of Alcuin. If such a work really existed, its loss could not be sufficiently deplored; for, in a character like that of Charlemagne, everything is important, and it is impossible to learn too many particulars respecting the period, which partly produced, and partly completed, a mighty revolution in the West of Christendom. It seems, however, probable, that Alcuin's biography of Charles would have been nothing more than a panegyric. If it is at all times difficult to write the history of an eminent personage of our own times, whether it be attempted by an enemy or an admirer, so as to avoid undue censure or applause, it was a task doubly difficult to Alcuin; as he could not yet review the whole of the life of Charles, and was, besides, too closely connected with, and too firmly attached to him, to form a fair and impartial judgment of his character. The supposition appears to have arisen, from confounding it with Einhard's biographical work; from which passages are cited under Alcuin's name.

The historical writings of Alcuin, which are still extant, are of a description perfectly analogous to his style and sentiments. They consist of the lives of the saints; consequently of men, who, by their zeal for the propagation of Christianity, or by their sanctity, had acquired great renown, and the privilege of being exhibited as an example to others. In writing their lives, the author's object was not so much to present an historical record of their actions and sentiments, as to display the profitable use to which they applied their talents, so that he might thereby stimulate the piety of the living generation; he looked not merely at that which they had accomplished, but likewise at that which they might yet accomplish. These biographical sketches may be denominated sermons to which the life of the saint serves as a text. A well written life of the founder, or of some

celebrated inmate of a monastery, was considered as its greatest ornament; it may, therefore, naturally be supposed that Alcuin, the most accomplished and eminent author of that day, would not fail to procure this desirable possession, for the abbey over which he presided. He revised a Life of St. Martin, which already existed; and, as it was intended to be read on the anniversary of the saint's death, he added the usual reflections. He was quickly assailed from all quarters with entreaties, that he would confer the same benefit upon other monasteries, as upon his own. At the request of the Abbot Rado, he re-wrote the Life of St. Vedastus, to which he appended an exhortation to imitate the virtues of this saint. Angilbert, abbot of Centula, likewise begged a similar favor. At his desire, Alcuin compiled from an ancient and somewhat barbarous work, the Life of St. Richarius, which he wrote with more taste, and in a style better adapted to the times. Charlemagne was so much interested in it, that he gave the author to understand, he wished it to be written, as if it were destined for himself. Nothing affords a more convincing proof of Alcuin's literary reputation, than that a man like Angilbert, who certainly possessed considerable skill as an historical writer, should have considered a work of Alcuin's as the greatest boast of his monastery; and that Charlemagne should have taken so lively an interest in all his compositions, that he looked forward to their appearance with an eagerness which is scarcely equaled, by that with which the public of the present day hail the literary productions of the most fashionable author. Alcuin wrote, for the benefit of Archbishop Beornrad, the life of his countryman and relation, St. Willibrod, not, as in the former case, from an ancient record, but from memory and tradition. He composed it both in a prose and poetical form, designing the former for public reading on the anniversary of the saint, and the latter for the private use of the archbishop.

6.

Concerning Alcuin's Poetical Writings.

When a language has reached a certain degree of refinement, and has displayed both its aptness for prosaic compositions, and its capacity for embodying the conceptions of poetry, those who have attained only a moderate proficiency therein, easily fall into the error of mistaking a poetic form for poetry. The most common-place ideas and the most ordinary sentiments conceal their poverty under the pomp of metre, and parade with measured steps through the regions of poetry; while, in fact, it is only necessary to strip them of their garb, in order to expose the ass under the lion's skin, and the daw in borrowed plumes. When once the attention is diverted from the sounds which fill the ear, and fixes itself upon the actual meaning of the sentiments contained, we are astonished at their puerility and absurdity. This criticism applies with equal force to the mass of verses with which Germany is inundated at the present day, and to the poetical attempts of the Carolingian period. The elegant language of Rome, offered its classic forms to adorn the most paltry ideas; and all the poets of antiquity, who were known at that time, especially the harmonious Virgil, were plundered to clothe the poetical productions of the eighth century. There is scarcely one writer belonging to that period who does not attempt versification; even the scribes seldom concluded their tasks without annexing to them a few verses. This species of verse-making was accomplished with the greater facility, as

accuracy in prosody was then as little attended to, as correctness in rhyming in our day. Alcuin attempted various kinds of poetry, but without avoiding the prevailing faults of the age. It is very rarely, amid the multitude of cold conceits, affected play upon words and high-sounding expressions, devoid of sentiment, that we meet with a passage, which if it does possess intrinsic beauty, is not spoiled by the repulsive form in which it is clothed. They are usually prosaic thoughts, disguised in the garb of poetry; which, unused to the restraint of meter, are expressed with awkwardness, and make a ridiculous or pitiable appearance in a sphere, which is in no way adapted to them.

Alcuin's poems consist of inscriptions, epitaphs, epistles, riddles, fables, moral and religious reflections, and historical narrations. The measure is generally hexameter, varied occasionally with the pentameter ; some of his verses are sapphics, and some written in rhyme, in a less constrained form. The play upon versification, of which the monkish poetry of later times has furnished a number of examples, is to be found even in his poems. One of the most common, is to conclude the pentameter with the first half of the corresponding hexameter. The analysis of a poem of some length, with the addition of a few specimens, will be sufficient to enable the reader to judge of the poetical efforts of this period. We select the reflections suggested to the poet by the unhappy fate of the monastery of Lindisfarne, which called forth the considerations "Upon the Mutability of all Human Affairs". The subject is, in itself, fertile, and capable of awaking an infinite variety of ideas. A melancholy disposition would regard this mutability with dismay, and seek refuge from the confusion of the earth, in the eternity and harmony of the spiritual world; whilst, on the other hand, a bolder spirit would discern, in the perpetual change and apparent disorder, an ever creating power, which destroys the forms of today, only to produce on the morrow, a new and fairer creation. Alcuin was incapable of contemplating it in the latter point of view; his consolation and his hope are derived from another world. He commences, therefore, by ascribing all the imperfection of our present condition to the sin of the first man, and dates from this period, the course of fate; which, like an evil spirit, perpetually interposes betwixt us and our fairest hopes and joys.

How transient all that bears created form

Revolving seasons endless changes show;

Fair shines today, tomorrow howls the storm;

One smile of Fortune cannot shield from woe.

Soon do we see our sweetest joys decay,

Blighted by fate, inconstant as the main ;

The gloom of night succeeds the brightest day,

The buds of spring lie strewed on winter's plain.

The starry roof is gemmed with holy light,

Evanishing when rain-fraught vapours roll;

The blaze of noon fades instant from the sight,

When southern storms convulse the trembling pole.

The loftiest rocks most tempt the lightning’s flash,

The highest branches most attract the flame ;

More swift, more frequent, Fate’s o'erwhelming crash

Descends on those most consecrate to Fame'.

To prove the truth of this assertion, the poet hurries the imagination of the reader through the whole circuit of history. The overthrow of powerful empires, the decline of flourishing cities, and the rapid decay of institutions, which the mighty spirits who framed them, supposed they had founded for eternity, are enumerated with the dryness of arithmetical precision, rather than depicted with the vivid colors of poetic imagery. The poet endeavors to escape from the conflagration of cities, temples, castles, and villages, which have buried whole generations under their ruins, and from the endless confusion, consequent upon such horrors, by recurring to some general principle to which he can firmly adhere. This principle he discovers in religion.

WHAT, though I mark vice flourishing on high,

Thy judgments, Lord l I seek not to explore;

Far other life’s reserved beyond the sky,

Where peace resides, and battles cease to roar.

As gold by fire refined, more brightly beams,

So shine the just, by Satan’s arts assailed;

Hence soars the soul, in purer, holier dreams,

To realms of glory, from our vision veiled.

Life appears to him, to be merely a state of probation, which becomes severe in proportion to the ardor of our desire to merit the love of God, but to which the splendor of the reward will likewise be proportioned. Having exhibited the vicissitudes to which both Nature and Art are subject, he proceeds to show that mankind are not exempt from change.

WHO sought the stag, roused by the bugle's tone,

See, age-oppressed, on slothful couch reclined ;

Who erst in Syrian purple proudly shone,

Now shrinks, in tatters, from the wintry wind.

The lapse of years hath dimmed the eagle glance

Which marked each mote, gay glittering in the sun;

The hand which waved the sword, and poised the lance,

Enfeebled, faintly lifts the bread it won.

The voice which, louder than the trumpet's call,

Was wont of yore, to chase each coward fear,

Hoarse, faltering, inarticulate to all,

Dies, in dull murmurs, on the listening ear.

The poet proceeds, from these considerations to the exhortation, which derives from them additional force, not to fix the heart upon temporal blessings, but to look forward to that infinite reward, and those enduring joys in a future world, which will more than compensate for all the losses and sufferings of this present life. With this he concludes the first part of the poem, to which it only forms the introduction, composed for the purpose of consoling the monks of Lindisfarne, for the outrage which had been practiced against themselves and their monastery. This consolation is offered in a succession of prosaic thoughts, which would have read much better in plain prose.

The longest of Alcuin's poetical compositions, is an epic poem on The Archbishops and Saints of the Church at Yorks. It is in no degree superior to the ordinary metrical histories of the middle ages; all that Alcuin effected, was to versify the passages relating to York, which he found in Bede's History of the Anglo-Saxon Church, and to give, in addition, the history of those dignitaries who had filled the archiepiscopal throne subsequently to Bede's time. As Alcuin's poetical productions are distinguished by no remarkable peculiarities, many, especially minor poems, have been unjustly imputed to him. Amongst the poems ascribed to him, is one on the meeting of Charlemagne and Pope

Leo III, which is too remarkable to leave unnoticed amid those which neither increase nor diminish his fame. This poem is evidently the production of one acquainted with Virgil, and possessing no mean talent for poetry, but is composed in a style much more suited to the ardor of a youthful imagination, than to the sober gravity of a man of Alcuin's years. A merely superficial knowledge of Alcuin's mode of writing, and the bent of his mind at this period, is sufficient to convince us, that religious, not secular affairs, would have occupied the most prominent place in any work of his; and that instead of an animated description of a hunting party, we should have had a thanksgiving for the miracle which restored both eyes and tongue to the misused pontiff. The poem, whoever may have been its author, is one of the best of that period, and affords a proof how successful had been the efforts made by Charlemagne to improve the education of the rising generation. This poem refers to an event which was attended by the most important political consequences; and as Alcuin contributed to produce them, we feel it incumbent upon us, after having recorded his literary labors during his superintendence of the abbey of St. Martin, to give some account of the event itself, and of the manner in which Alcuin was instrumental in accomplishing it.

7 .

Renewal of the Roman Empire in the West.

In Alcuin's system of government, the first plate amongst earthly potentates was accorded to the spiritual; the second, to the secular power; and amongst secular governors, the imperial took precedence of the regal dignity. These opinions, which Alcuin communicated to Charlemagne by writing, and doubtless inculcated still more forcibly by conversation, fell not upon unfruitful soil. They took deep root in the aspiring mind of Charles, and every mortification to which his pride was subjected by his intercourse with the Byzantine emperors in Constantinople, tended to inflame his desire of obtaining the highest secular dignity. The extent of his kingdom rendered it worthy the title of an empire, and with regard to his personal pretensions, Alcuin had already declared that no one could compete in power and wisdom with his royal friend. The desire of individual aggrandizement entertained by Charles, was strengthened by political considerations. Hitherto the French king had been merely the protector of the Roman Church, without claiming any authority over the Pope or the Roman territories. In strict justice, therefore, the Byzantine emperors were still masters of Rome, and the title of Patrician, which Charles bore, was an appellation bestowed upon a class of persons, possessing peculiar political privileges in the Byzantine empire. But this ambiguous and uncertain position could no longer be maintained with safety, now that the Pope had placed himself at the head of the French clergy. A decisive step was necessary, in order to sever Rome and the Papal see forever from the Byzantine empire, and assign the Pope a place in the French system of government. What step could Charles take which would prove more decisive than that of assuming the position of the ancient Imperators, and thus place himself upon a level with the emperors of Eastern Rome? But a semblance of right was necessary, both to the accomplishment of this design, and to secure the public recognition of his title; and as an instance had already occurred, in which the Papal sanction and consecration had

pronounced a race to be worthy of the throne, and invested them with a more sacred majesty, from no one could this right be so properly derived as from the Pope, who was regarded in the West as the head of the church, and who, as standing next in authority to the Almighty, was supposed to be best acquainted with the divine counsels. The idea of re-establishing the Western Roman empire, was not, therefore, as has been generally represented, the result of momentary excitement, but the gradual effect of circumstances, which Charles' ambition only seized upon to realize his wishes. Hadrian I, however, could have no inducement to concur in such a project, even had Charles intimated his wishes to him, a supposition, which, however probable, is not supported by proof; but, on the contrary, it must have been much more to his advantage, beloved as he was by the Romans, to have been as independent of the French as of the Byzantine government. Hadrian died in December, 795. He had been, in every respect, an estimable pontiff, and with the exception of their transient disagreement on the subject of image-worship, had lived with Charlemagne, not merely on peaceable, but on amicable terms. Charles respected his learning and piety, and, from a feeling of personal regard, bestowed upon him those tokens of friendship, which his successors have since, in imitation of his example, rendered the Pope as his due. But whilst the Pope was considered the head of the church, and revered by those who were placed at a distance, as a being of a superior order, he was often made a tool in the hands of the factions, by whom he was immediately surrounded. The tumultuary proceedings unavoidably connected with the nomination of a new chief, in every elective government, also accompanied the election of a Pope, because considerable advantages accrued to a Roman family from having one of its members seated on the Papal throne. Thus was the little bark of St. Peter often tossed by the tempest of passion, and not infrequently on the point of being wrecked. No sooner had Hadrian expired, than Leo III, was raised to the pontificate, with a celerity which excites the suspicion, that his elevation was the work of a faction. To obtain the recognition and protection of the French king, was of supreme importance to the new Pope, who therefore, with a degree of submissiveness which could arise only from his feeling of insecurity, dispatched an embassy to Charles to announce his elevation, and to solicit a continuance of the friendship which had been displayed towards his predecessor. Leo appears to have applied to Alcuin also, as the king's principal adviser in spiritual matters. Charles conceived that he had no right to interfere in the election of a Pope; he regarded Leo as the lawful successor of St. Peter, and under this impression, composed a congratulatory epistle, which he transmitted to Rome with appropriate presents, by the Abbot Angilbert. In this letter, he professes a desire to maintain with the new pontiff, the amicable relation which had subsisted between himself and Hadrian. "And as I", writes the king, "was united in the bonds of friendship to your predecessor, so do I desire to renew with you inviolably, this bond of faith and love. Be it my care to defend the holy church against heathens and infidels from without, and to maintain the Catholic faith with in; be it yours, most holy Father, to assist us with your prayers".

After having secured himself in this quarter, Leo seems to have promoted his own friends, and to have discarded those men who had possessed the highest authority under his predecessor. It was, therefore, natural that they, feeling themselves aggrieved, should unite to oppose him in order to regain, under a pontiff, elected by themselves, the influence which they had lost. Two of Hadrian's relations, Campulus and Paschalis, placed themselves at the head of the hostile faction, and commenced their proceedings by

circulating injurious reports, respecting the character and conduct of the Pope, hoping thereby to excuse the deed of violence which they meditated; for the conspirators aimed at nothing less than the deposition or destruction of Leo. On the 25th of April, 799, a solemn procession was to take place; the Pope rode from his palace to the church, where the people and clergy were assembled, ready to join in the sacred ceremony. On his way thither, he was suddenly seized upon by a party of armed men, and being abandoned by his defenseless followers, the assailants pulled him from his horse, threw him on the ground in the street, and attempted to put out his eyes, and cut out his tongue. But as they could not effectually accomplish their barbarous design, they dragged him into a neighboring church, where they left him weltering in his blood, in the belief that they had deprived him of sight; and quitted the spot before a party came to his assistance, who conveyed him in safety to Spoleto, and placed him under the protection of the French governor of that place. The story that the Pope miraculously recovered his sight after having been deprived of it by the malice of his enemies, is no modern invention, but was generally believed at the time when it was said to have occurred, and accounted for in various ways, by men of sense. The Pope himself was so firmly persuaded that he was indebted to a miracle for the restoration of the faculty of vision, that he ventured to assert the fact to Charlemagne; indeed, nothing could so effectually justify him, and confound his enemies, as the visible interposition of heaven in favor of the innocent, persecuted and calumniated pontiff. Charles, notwithstanding, had some doubts of the truth of this narration, and asked the opinion of Alcuin. But he was too thoroughly a priest to return any other than an ambiguous and equivocal answer to the enquiry. “Every Christian”, he said, “must rejoice in the divine protection which had been extended to his Holiness, and praise God’s holy name, who had frustrated the designs of the wicked”. From its commencement, Alcuin took the greatest interest in this affair of the Pope. In the outrage which had been committed against Leo, he saw not the individual, but the church which he represented insulted; and therefore urged the king in the strongest, and most impressive terms to fulfill his duty as the defender of the church, and suffer no other object to claim his attention, while the church remained unavenged, and until she was restored to her former splendor. He recommends him to conclude a peace with the Saxons against whom he was, at that time, carrying on a war, and to delay the introduction of tithes amongst that obstinate people, that they might be more accessible to salutary council. The king could not consent to relinquish the campaign which he had determined upon, but he commanded the Duke of Spoleto to cause the Pope to he conveyed to the camp at Paderborn. Here he was received both by Charles and the assembled host with the respect due to the head of the church. But the affair assumed a different aspect when Leo’s enemies, in order to transfer the displeasure of the king from themselves to the Pope, appealed to Charles, and justified their conduct by accusing Leo of various evil practices. They denounced him as guilty of adultery and perjury, and as one who disgraced his high station, and deserved punishment rather than protection. They proposed, therefore, that Leo should quietly resign the holy see, and conceal himself and his shame from the eyes of the world in the privacy of a cloister. These charges could not have been entirely devoid of foundation, or they would have injured, rather than benefited the cause of the accusers. Indeed, it appears, that upon a closer investigation, many circumstances transpired, by no means to the credit of his Holiness. Alcuin, probably on account of his infirm health, did not quit his monastery at Tours, but his intimate friend, Arno, was at court, and with him he maintained a constant correspondence upon this interesting subject. He likewise

tendered his advice to the king, both through the medium of Arno, and by letters addressed immediately to his sovereign. Arno, in a letter written to his former instructor, deplores the iniquities of the Pope, which letter Alcuin burnt, to prevent its falling into the hands of any officious person, and thereby become the cause of scandal. This letter could not have contained a report of the accusations brought against Leo by his enemies, for they were universally known, but must have communicated the actual result of a more strict examination. That this examination was not favorable to the pope, is evident from the anxiety with which Alcuin sought to guard against a scandalous exposure. Less interested for the Pope than for the church, Alcuin conceived that the papal dignity was not to suffer from the crimes of which the Pope as a man might be guilty, and that there should be a distinction between the office and the person of the pontiff. His eagerness to gain the king over to his opinions, increased in proportion to his fears that Charles would adopt some measure injurious to the church. He urged Archbishop Arno, who, to a certain extent, may be regarded as his representative at court, to exert his utmost endeavors to prevent any infringement of the rights of the Pope, and any violation of the authority of the holy see, and the purity of the Catholic faith; "that", as he expresses it, "the shepherd of the flock may not be delivered up a prey to the wolves". In his apprehension, the future condition of the church depended on the decision of this intricate subject, and she must stand or fall with her lord and heads. That which he most dreaded, and consequently sought most earnestly to prevent, was, that the Pope should be summoned before a tribunal of justice. It must, therefore, have been the intention of Charles to submit the charges alleged against the Pope, and his defence, to a judicial inquiry, and to decide the question according to law. This mode of proceeding, was vehemently opposed by Alcuin. He appealed to the canonical decrees of Pope Sylvester, which ordained, that a Pope could be subjected to trial only on the accusation of seventy-two witnesses, and those witnesses of such well-known and unimpeachable characters, as to give weight to their testimony against so exalted a personage; nay, more, it was doubtful whether the Pope, even in this case, would be compelled to submit to the sentence, for, according to other canonical decrees, the Apostolic see was itself a supreme tribunal, and not amenable to any other. It would have been most agreeable to Alcuin, had the king conducted the Pope back in triumph, as being beyond the power of sin, and severely punished his enemies. How far he relaxed, in reference to the Pope, from the strictness of his moral principles, is evinced by an expression which he uses in one of his letters. "Were I in his place, I would reply, He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at him". This and much more than this, Alcuin says he had communicated to the king by letter. Were we in possession of the correspondence that passed upon this subject, we should, no doubt, discover that the affair was terminated with the understanding that the Pope should crown the king of France emperor of Rome. That the elevation of Charles was concerted with the Pope at Paderborn, is so manifest, from the circumstances of the case, that we need no additional evidence, but we are not destitute of historical proofs which will hereafter be produced. Charles owed his elevation less to the gratitude of the Pope, or to his foresight of the advantages which would thereby accrue to the holy see, than to the consummate skill with which he availed himself of the critical situation of the Pope, to realize his long-cherished wish of obtaining the power, the title, and the privileges of an emperor. In order to feel convinced, that nothing but the most urgent motives could have induced the Pope to accede to Charles' demand, it is only necessary to reflect, that the measure which was contemplated, must inevitably alter his position with regard to the French monarch, but

whether to his advantage or disadvantage, the future only could determine; whilst, on the other hand, it would infallibly involve him in hostilities with the Byzantine empire, and deprive him of his influence over the Eastern church. The desperate situation of the Pope extorted from him a consent which, under other circumstances, he would certainly have refused. He purchased the protection of the French monarch, and his reinstatement in the holy see, at the price of subjecting the city of Rome to the dominion of Charles, and renouncing for ever all connection with the Byzantine empire. After the conclusion of this treaty between the king and the Pope, which doubtless had not been effected without the influence and interference of Alcuin, Charles dismissed his Holiness, who returned to Rome under a military escort, accompanied by two archbishops, four bishops, and three counts, who were commissioned to reinstate him provisionally in his dignity, and to afford him their protection. The enemies of the Pope were imprisoned, in order to await their sentence from Charles, who intended himself to proceed to Rome.

That the king should undertake a journey to Rome at a time when his presence was urgently required in France, both on account of the war with the Saxons, and the hostile attempts of the Normans, in order to settle an affair which he could have concluded quite as satisfactorily by deputy, cannot but awaken the suspicion that he had some object in view beyond that of reinstating the Pope, and chastising the leaders of a Roman faction. The king made all his arrangements for a longer absence. In the summer of 800, he inspected the coasts of his kingdom, for the purpose of providing against the predatory inroads of the Normans. Whilst on this journey, he paid a visit to Alcuin at Tours. According to the chronicles of that period, the object of this visit of the king was to pay his devotions at the tomb of St. Martin; but we may reasonably conjecture, that it was rather to confer with Alcuin, respecting the important change which was pending, and to which Alcuin himself had greatly contributed. His stay was protracted in consequence of the illness of his wife Luitgarde, who accompanied him. She expired June 6th, and was interred at Tours. The king remained at the monastery of St. Martin, until after the death and interment of his wife. Alcuin sought to console the afflicted mourner for the loss which he had sustained, by addressing to him letters of condolence; but Charles found the most effectual consolation in the constant occupation which his meditated journey into Italy supplied. He travelled through Orleans and Paris to Aix-la-Chapelle, and thence to Metz, where he summoned the general assembly of the empire, to meet in August, and where an expedition across the Alps in the ensuing winter, was determined upon. Charles was accompanied by a retinue of ecclesiastics, to assist him with their advice. Nothing would have been more agreeable to Charles, than to have had Alcuin among the number. He renewed his invitation to him from Metz, begging him to exchange for a time the smoky roofs of Tours for the golden palaces of Rome, but Alcuin excused himself on the plea of illness. The king also desired to have Alcuin's opinion upon the manner in which the enemies of the pope should be punished. It is evident, that he was convinced of Leo's guilt, and considered the motives which his adversaries had urged in justification of their violence, so little deserving of chastisement, that he applied to Alcuin for advice, how to extricate himself from the affair with credit. Alcuin's reply was ambiguous—Charles'own wisdom could best decide what was due to all parties, and would enable him to establish that pious spiritual shepherd, who had been snatched by the interposition of God from the hands of his enemies, so firmly on his throne, that he would henceforth be able to serve God without molestation.

With regard to the Pope, the king acted entirely in conformity with Alcuin's views. On arriving at Ancona, he commissioned his son Pepin to lead the army against Beneventum, and himself proceeded with a considerable retinue to Rome, where he arrived on the 24th of November, and was received with extraordinary honors. On the seventh day after his arrival, a convocation of the dignified resident Clergy and chief lay nobility, was held in the church of St. Peter, for the purpose of deciding upon the accusations which had been made against the Pope. In what capacity, and by what right Charles interfered in this examination, has become a matter of factious dispute. Einhard's report is considered too imperfect, and that of Anastasius too suspicious, to determine with precision the part played by Charlemagne upon this occasion. Each party has therefore given a different representation, according to their peculiar religious or political views. In reality, the whole proceeding appears to have been a mere form, and the report of Anastasius to be correct, since it contains nothing which is in contradiction to Einhard's account, or which does not coincide with the sentiments of Alcuin, which have already been adduced. The assembled ecclesiastics refused to investigate the charges made against the Pope. "We venture not", they declared, "to judge the apostolic see which is placed over all the churches of God. We are all subject to its jurisdiction, but it can be judged by none. Whatever the Pope himself judges to be right, in that will we obey him, according to the ordinances of the church". Upon this, the Pope ascended the pulpit, with the Gospels in his hand, and in an audible voice pronounced an exculpatory oath, protesting at the same time, that he did so not by compulsion, but of his own free will, and mentioning expressly that his example was not binding on his successors in the holy see; as he himself had adopted this mode of proceeding, solely for the purpose of removing unfavorable suspicions from the minds of the assembly. The congregation then sang a hymn in praise of God, the apostles and saints, and separated, convinced that Leo III was a legitimate Pope. The trial of the Pope's enemies was also a mere formality. For the sake of appearances, they were condemned to death; but on the petition of Leo, the sentence was mitigated, and they were only banished from Rome and Italy.

By the time this investigation was concluded and other affairs arranged, Christmas arrived; and on Christmas day, which at that period was also celebrated as the first day of the year, Charles attended divine service in the church of St. Peter, habited in the dress of a Roman patrician. The king had seated himself opposite to the altar; when the Pope suddenly approached him, and placed upon his head a splendid crown, amidst the joyful salutations of the Roman people, who exclaimed; "Long life and victory to Charles, the divinely crowned Augustus, the peace-bringing emperor of the Romans!" After this salutation, the Pope, according to an ancient usage, worshipped him, by pressing one hand upon his lips, whilst with the other he touched the garment of the object of adoration; and Charles exchanged the title of Patrician, for that of emperor and Augustus.

Such is the account given by contemporary writers of this important transaction, which they represent as the result of the excitement of the moment, unconnected with any preconcerted measures. At any rate, there can be no doubt that Charles desired it should be so regarded. He professed to have been taken by surprise, and declared, that had he been aware of the intentions of the Pope, he would not have gone to the church on

this solemn festival. It is evident from this expression, which Charles unquestionably used, that he did not wish to appear as the author of the distinction which had been conferred upon him. In this he may have been actuated by two motives : the first suggested by the consideration, whether the French would be satisfied with this elevation of their king, which conferred upon him privileges which might be oppressive to them. Should they be discontented, they might refuse to recognize a political change which originated solely in Charles' ambition, and withhold their support from an empire as being a form of government alien to their state system. But the affair would assume a different aspect, if Charles were nominated emperor by the pope without his concurrence, and even against his will. The transaction would then appear in the light of a divine ordinance, to which Charles, however unwillingly, must submit; and the nations across the Alps were too much accustomed to revere the decrees of the Pope as the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, not to regard the renewal of the Western Roman empire as an act of the Pope, and therefore of God. This was a sufficient reason to induce Charles to conceal as much as possible his participation in the event. By this means, he also prevented the possibility of the Pope's attributing his elevation to compulsion, and thus in a great measure deprived the Greeks of an opportunity of stigmatizing him as an usurper. The Pope and the people of Rome would appear in the eyes of the Greeks, as the only culprits who had renounced their allegiance to their lawful sovereign, and elected a new governor. It is worthy of observation, that after Charles returned from Rome, he caused every vassal who had sworn fealty to him as king, to renew his oath to him as emperor. We are not to infer from this circumstance, that Charles conceived himself to have entered into any new relation with his vassals; but only that he was desirous of procuring, by this means, a recognition of his imperial title. For, supposing that his new title had involved him in a war with the Byzantine emperors, his feudal vassals might have refused to aid him, on the plea, that this was a dispute which in no way concerned the French kingdom; and bade him seek soldiers amongst the Romans, of whom he was the emperor. But by exacting this oath, Charles converted the affair into a French national concern, and thus gained the right to demand that the French should protect him, their king and his successors, in the new dignity.

Although Charles had reasons for concealing as much as possible his participation in the renewal of the Western Roman empire, and although he so far succeeded as to induce historians to represent, and posterity to regard, the transaction in the light which he desired; still Alcuin accidentally furnishes an evidence, that both the king and his confidants knew perfectly well what was about to take place in Rome. Alcuin had caused a beautiful and unusually correct copy of the Scriptures to be made, which he entrusted to Fredegis, one of his pupils, in order that he might present it on Christmas Day, with a congratulatory epistle to the king, to whom, as he expresses it, he owed as many thanks and praises, for the benefits conferred by him upon himself and his pupils, as there were syllables in the book; and on whom he hoped God would bestow as many blessings as the writing contained letters. That this was no ordinary Christmas, or New Year's gift, is evident from the letter addressed to Charles himself, wherein Alcuin expressly says, that he intended it as a congratulatory offering, "to the splendor of his imperial power". Alcuin knew as well as Charles himself, that he was to be proclaimed and crowned emperor of Rome on Christmas day. A proof no less convincing than that already adduced, is furnished by the fact, that immediately after his coronation, even the very day on which

it took place, Charles presented to the Pope, and the church of St. Peter, gifts of such a nature as must have required preparation, as well as the affair itself, for which the new emperor embellished the Roman church with imperial liberality.

When we reflect upon the vast influence which the renewal of the Western Roman empire, has had upon the constitutions of modern Europe, we must regard this transaction as the most important of Charles' life. It is necessary, therefore, that we should acquire a just conception of the real nature of the imperial dignity at that period. Although Charles believed himself to be emperor in the full sense of the ancient Roman emperors, yet each time that a dignity is revived, after long interruptions, and under different circumstances, it deviates from its original form and object. The office of Dictator, when resumed by Sylla and Caesar, after its long disuse by the Roman republic, was totally different from that which had been exercised by Cincinnatus and other men in former times; it was merely a constitutional name for an usurped and tyrannical autocracy. In like manner, there arose, in the beginning of the ninth century, an imperial power, entirely distinct from that which had been destroyed in the latter part of the fifth century; possessing nothing in common with it but the name. The new imperial dignity, according to the views entertained both by Alcuin and Charlemagne, was the highest secular power on earth; consequently it was not like the regal power, divisible, but could only be represented by one individual. With the exception of the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons, and the small independent province, situated among the mountains in the north west of Spain, all the nations of Germany were under the dominion of the king of France, who assumed as emperor, no new position with regard to them. But when the French monarchy became again divided into several kingdoms, then the peculiar nature of the imperial dignity manifested itself. It formed the source whence others derived their power; and the center of an ideal unity, which, in reality, had no existence. The emperor, to draw a comparison from the mode of government adopted in the time of the Roman emperors,—the emperor was, in a certain sense, the Augustus, and the kings his Caesars. He was the highest point in the scale of the political powers of the middle ages. If we now consider the relation in which the Pope stood to the emperor, we shall perceive that he was indebted for the advantages which accrued to himself and his successors from the renewal of the empire, less to any arrangement which was immediately made, than to the circumstances which arose from time to time, and of which he skillfully and successfully availed himself. From the mere defender of the church, Charles had become the sovereign of Rome, and consequently the Pope was no more than the first archbishop in his empire. Had the emperor fixed his residence at Rome, the Pope would have occupied a situation at court, precisely similar to that held by the Patriarch of Constantinople at the court of Byzantium. On this account, Charles has been censured for not having made Rome the capital of his empire, but we have only to consider in what relation he stood to the French, in order to retort the charge of want of sagacity upon his accusers. It was to the French that Charles must look for his chief support; and his power over them depended upon an influence which would cease to operate at a distance, and which his presence alone could render effective. In Rome he would have lost this influence, and probably experienced a disappointment similar to that of Otho III who, some years later, dazzled by the idea of restoring the ancient Roman empire in its splendor, abandoned Germany, the center of his power, in order to fix his residence at Rome. But the repeated treachery of the Romans, and the dislike of his German subjects to this system of government, so thoroughly

convinced him of the impracticability of his design, that he would indubitably have renounced it, had he not been snatched away by a premature death.

Charles was restrained, by many weighty considerations, from making a conquered country like Italy the capital of his empire. It is true, that the Popes thereby acquired a greater degree of freedom; but when the imperial dignity was first assumed, it was never supposed, for a moment, that the Pope had the power, either to confer or withhold it. The coronation of Charles, by Leo III procured immediately for his successors no more influence over the imperial crown, than the papal consent to the elevation of Pepin invested them with a control over the French regal authority. During his stay at Rome, Charles caused his eldest son, who bore the same name as himself, to be anointed and crowned as his successor in the empire. But when he had the misfortune of losing this promising prince, as well as his second son Pepin, he nominated, without consulting the Pope, his only remaining son, Louis, his successor in the French monarchy and also in the imperial dignity, and made him place the crown upon his own head. Louis adopted a similar course in nominating his eldest son, Lothaire, emperor ; and he again, on the elevation of his son, Louis II; the popes, however, were sufficiently cunning to seize, upon each occasion, a favorable opportunity to crown these emperors a second time, as though they thereby received, for the first time, a legitimate consecration and authority. But the situation of things was changed, when, upon the death of Louis II. who died without issue, the kings amongst whom the French monarchy was then divided, contested their right to the imperial dignity. A third power was necessary to settle this dispute, and such a power was the Papal, from which, according to historical tradition, the restoration of the imperial dignity had originally proceeded. Hence it came to pass, in the ninth and tenth centuries, when the imperial dignity was claimed by German, French, Burgundian and Italian princes, that the pontifical coronation was considered decisive; and when, from the time of Otho I, the imperial dignity was confined exclusively to the German kings, the principle was already recognized, that the imperial crown could be conferred only by the hands of the Pope, with this indispensable condition, that the emperor must repair to Rome, and receive the crown in the church of St. Peter, or some other principal church in the city, from the Pope himself or his delegate. Thus was formed that relation between the emperor and the Pope, as it existed in the latter part of the middle ages. Each appeared as the highest point of a graduated political scale, and, as it were, shared between them the elements which constitute human nature. As man, from his peculiar constitution, not only appertains to the earth, and clings to its interests, but is, at the same time, capable of higher views, and believes himself to be destined to a future and nobler state of existence; so the emperor and the Pope availed themselves of this double capacity, the former claiming his obedience as a creature of earth, that order might be preserved in secular affairs, the latter assuming a power over his spiritual nature, in order to direct him in the way to heaven, and prepare him for it. In the same degree as the blessedness of an eternal existence surpasses in importance the interests of this life, was the Pope regarded as superior to every secular potentate, especially as the latter could derive their power from God, only through the medium of the former, as the vicegerent of Christ. As the husband-man, from inspecting the seed, can discover the form of the tree, which is hereafter to spring from it, so had Alcuin, whilst the Papal power was yet in its infancy, indicated its future splendor by the position which he had assigned it, and to which he had contributed his mite. In recording the various transactions in which Alcuin was engaged,

we could, with the less propriety, omit an event which, in its origin and consequences, tended mainly to establish this peculiar position of the Pope, as there can be no doubt, that he was more deeply implicated in it, than can be proved by historical evidence. As Charles himself chose to conceal, under a specious pretense, his share in a transaction, which, both in itself and its effects, was the most important of his reign, so we have nothing but isolated expressions, and detached incidents, from which we can infer the extent to which his intimate friend and counselor participated in it.

Alcuin was prevented by bodily infirmity, from being present at the solemn ceremony, which had conferred such a distinction on his royal friend; and therefore awaited the return of Charles with the greater impatience, that he might repeat to him, personally, those congratulations which he had already offered by writing. He extols the happiness of the people to whom God had given so pious and wise a monarch; and, in the example of Charles, beholds a confirmation of the truth of the Platonic sentiment, that it is well for a kingdom, when philosophers, that is the lovers of wisdom, hold the reins of government, or when the king values and seeks that wisdom to which nothing in this world can be compared. He expresses his desire for the king's return, with all the ardor of passion, and in a style indicating rather the enthusiasm and fervor of youth than the prudence and coldness of advanced and decrepit age. He writes thus :—"With a heart filled with anxiety, and an ear which devoured every word that fell from the lips of those who arrived, have I daily waited for some tidings of my lord, and dearest friend, David, to learn when he will return home, when he will come back to his native land. At length the welcome sound of a gathering multitude rung in my longing ear. Soon, soon will he arrive; already has he, whom thou, Alcuin, hast so ardently desired to behold, already has he crossed the Alps!--Many times have I exclaimed with impatient voice : 0 Lord, wherefore hast thou not given unto me the wings of an eagle? Wherefore hast thou not granted unto me to be transported, like the prophet Habakkuk, for one day, or even for a single hour, that I might embrace, and kiss the feet of my dearest friend, that I might behold the brightness of his eyes, and hear a word of affection from his lips, who is dearer and more precious to me than all that is precious in the world beside? Or wherefore, envious fever dost thou hold me captive, at so unseasonable a time and permittest me not to move, even with my usual activity; that I might be able, at least, slowly to accomplish that which cannot happen so speedily as I desire".

On his return from Italy, Charles again visited Tours; and we may conclude, that his conversation with Alcuin turned upon the new position, in which his elevation had placed him with regard to the Greeks. The supposition that in matters of importance, Charles sought, and frequently pursued the advice of Alcuin, is confirmed by so many circumstances, that we are justified in believing, this conference to have had some reference to the subsequent negotiations with the Greeks; although his letters are silent upon the subject, both because his opinion was given in a personal interview, and because the affair demanded secrecy. The French chroniclers, therefore, in recording this portion of history, as well as in their account of the imperial coronation, content themselves with a bare statement of facts, without entering into the circumstances which produced them. The emperor believed he had merely revived an ancient, not created a new political constitution, and therefore applied to Alcuin, who was well acquainted both with ecclesiastical and secular history, to supply him with the necessary historical information respecting it. The division of the Roman world into two empires, had not originally

destroyed its unity. In restoring the Western empire, Charles seemed to have assumed the precise relation to the East, in which the former Western emperors had stood, and it was, therefore, only requisite to obtain the recognition of the Byzantine government. The Empress Irene was at that time sole monarch, having set aside her son Constantine, who, as a descendant of an Iconoclast, was a thorn in the eyes of the monks and the worshippers of images. She was a widow, and Charles' hand was also at liberty, his wife Luitgarde having died, as has been already related, in the year in which he undertook his journey to Rome, for the purpose of receiving the imperial crown. The amorous disposition of Charles, which his somewhat advanced age had not abated, would not suffer him to remain long without a wife or mistress; and Alcuin, both in a religious and moral view, must have preferred that he should choose the former rather than the latter. Fate itself seemed to have paved the way for a union between the new Western emperor and the empress of the East. The idea of thus restoring the Roman empire in its full extent and splendor, was too alluring to the aspiring mind of Charles not to be grasped. Irene first dispatched an embassy to Charles for the purpose, according to the French annalists, of arranging the complicated interests of the French and Greeks in Istria, Dalmatia, and Lower Italy. In the same year, Charles sent Archbishop Jesse and Count Helingaud to Constantinople. The Greeks aver, that the ambassadors were commissioned to offer the hand of Charles to the empress, in order, by this alliance, to re-unite the West and East under one government; and that she would have accepted the offer, had she not been prevented by the intrigues of her prime minister, the eunuch Aetius. The French ambassadors were consequently eye-witnesses of a revolution, of which Aetius was the author, and to which he had been instigated principally by his dread of losing, through the French alliance, the influence which he possessed. Irene was deposed, and her minister of the finances, Nicephorus, ascended the throne. Thus was frustrated this project, which, in any case, would have been impracticable, and to the formation of which, Alcuin had doubtless lent his aid. It affords an additional evidence, how entirely Charles and his counselor, misled by historical recollections, mistook the peculiar nature of their situation, and proves the dangers and mischief arising from men of vigorous minds, wishing to shape the course of events according to their own pre-conceived ideas. It was not until the year 811, that the Byzantine emperor condescended to acknowledge Charlemagne as emperor, and to address him as his colleague.

8.

Dissension between Alcuin and Theodulph.

The visit of Charlemagne to Tours, on his return from Rome, was the last which he paid previously to Alcuin's death; and they appear never to have seen each other after the emperor's departure. Charles, indeed, frequently desired Alcuin's presence at his court, but he constantly excused himself, alleging his declining health, and the necessity of preparing to appear, with tranquility and a good conscience, before the judgment seat of Him who is no respecter of persons, and in whose presence all the fresh honors which Charles could bestow upon him would avail him nothing. In another letter, he declared his resolution never more to quit his retirement, and henceforward to assist the emperor

only with his prayers. He, however, maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with him; for he was frequently applied to, both by monasteries and individual ecclesiastics, who desired any favor of the emperor, to present their petition at court, and to exert his powerful intercession in their behalf; in addition to which, he had occasion to write, in reply to questions proposed to him by Charles, and also to offer him his advice, though unsolicited. We have an epistle of the latter description, written shortly before his death, in which he submits to the consideration of the emperor, whether it would not be better to terminate the dispute with the duke of Beneventum in some other way than by having recourse to violence. In offering this advice, Alcuin had no fear of involving himself in foreign affairs, for he considered everything that concerned the emperor or his kingdom, so little foreign to himself, that he thought it his duty to bestow more care upon them than upon his own life. Charles would willingly have pursued this advice respecting a war which cost him more than it was worth, had not the duke of Beneventum himself, encouraged by his alliance with the Eastern empire, rejected every condition which he considered disadvantageous to himself. The war with Beneventum, was therefore continued, until the general peace concluded by Charles with the Byzantine emperor in the year 811.

Although Charles acknowledged, and rewarded the services which Alcuin had rendered to himself and his family, and returned the affection which the instructor entertained for his royal pupil, he was far from feeling a blind partiality towards him. Rendered independent, by the natural vigor of his understanding of favorites and friends, he hesitated not, whenever their interests came in competition with the claims of justice, to espouse the cause of the latter. An interesting proof of this noble impartiality, is afforded by his conduct respecting the misunderstanding which had arisen between Alcuin and Theodulph; it exemplifies the character, both of Charles and Alcuin, but is much more honorable to the pupil than the master. An ecclesiastic in the diocese of Orleans, who was subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop, had been sentenced by bishop Theodulph to be imprisoned for some misdemeanor. He escaped from confinement, and sought protection in the sanctuary of St. Martin, at Tours. Theodulph succeeded in procuring a warrant from the emperor, to demand the restitution of the fugitive, or, in case of refusal, to take him by force from the asylum. The bishop dispatched a party of armed men to Tours, who, on producing the imperial mandate, were accompanied by the bishop of Tours himself to the monastery. Without any previous explanation with the fraternity or the abbot, they rushed into the church. The monks hastened to defend the sanctity and privileges of their monastery, whilst others excited and exhorted the town's people, and especially the poor, who lived on the bounty of the monastery, to protect the relics of the saint from the sacrilegious violence of the enemy. The infuriated populace would have torn the emissaries of the bishop in pieces, had not the monks themselves rescued them from their hands, and conveyed them within the building. The whole affair happened without Alcuin's previous knowledge; but after it had occurred, he did not disapprove it, and undertook, with great zeal, to defend his monastery and the sanctuary of St. Martin. Fearing that the transaction might be represented to the emperor in an unfavorable light, he gave to his pupils, Wizo and Fredegis, who were then residing at court, a simple statement of the facts in writing, for the purpose of enabling them to contradict the exaggerated reports which might reach the ears of the emperor. He also adduced many arguments in justification of the proceeding from the ecclesiastical code, the sacred

Scriptures and history. “I beseech you, my dearest sons”, he says in this letter, “throw yourselves at the feet of my lord David, the justest and noblest of emperors, and demand, if the bishop should appear, to debate this matter with him, whether it is proper that a man who has been accused of a fault, should be dragged by force from the sanctuary, to the punishment from which he had escaped? Whether it is just, that he who has appealed to Caesar, should not be brought before Caesar? Whether it is proper, that one who repents of his error, should be deprived of all that he possesses, even of his personal liberty ; and whether the word of the Lord is to be regarded, when he says mercy rejoiceth against judgment. (Jam. ii. 13.) If you submit all this to the consideration of my lord the Christian emperor, whom no advantage can allure from the paths of truth and justice, I know that he will not annul the resolutions and decrees of the holy fathers”. Charles sent Count Teotbert to Tours as his delegate, for the purpose of investigating the affair; but he conducted himself with so much severity, and acted so arbitrarily towards the people who had excited the disturbance, as greatly displeased Alcuin. The fraternity received a mandate to surrender the fugitive ecclesiastic, who had been the cause of the tumult, to his bishop. Alcuin refused to obey, under the pretext that the runaway priest had appealed to the emperor, as the Apostle Paul had done in a similar case, and could, therefore, be judged only by the emperor : he evaded compliance, and wrote to Charles. The emperor now made Alcuin and the whole fraternity or congregation of St. Martin feel his displeasure. “One day earlier”, he writes, “than your letter reached us, we received a communication from Theodulph, in which he complains of the injuries sustained by his people, or rather by himself, and of the contempt shown to our mandate, subscribed with our name, in which we commanded the restitution of the ecclesiastic who had escaped from his prison, and lay concealed in the church of St. Martin. And in issuing this order, we do not conceive, as you do, that we have committed any injustice. We have caused both your letter, and that of Theodulph, to be again read to us; and yours appears much more violent and intemperate than his, and to be destitute of the sweetness of Christian charity. It seems to us to be nothing less than a vindication of the culprit, and an impeachment of the bishop, since it declares, under a specious form of words, that the accused not only may, but ought to be permitted to make an accusation; whereas, it is decreed by the laws, both of God and man, that no criminal can bring a charge against another man. And yet you have taken him under your protection, and persist in harboring him, under the pretense, that he who has already been publicly accused and condemned by his own people has a right to, and an opportunity of making a complaint on the plea of appealing to the emperor. You lay much stress upon the example of the Apostle Paul, who, when accused by his own nation to the governor of Judea, but before he had been tried, was sent to Caesar to be judged by him. But this example is not applicable to the present instance. For the Apostle Paul was merely accused by the Jews— not tried; and since he had appealed to Caesar, they were compelled to bring him before the emperor. But this iniquitous and notorious priest has not only been accused, but convicted and sentenced to prison; from which prison he has escaped, and in an unlawful manner entered the church, which he should not have dared to approach until he had repented of his sins; but where he continues to live, without having, according to report, abandoned his evil practices. This man has now, as you say, after the example of the Apostle Paul, appealed unto Caesar, but he shall never, like Paul, appear before Caesar; for we command that he shall be delivered up to him before whom he has been accused, and by whom he has been condemned and imprisoned, and from whose imprisonment he has escaped. By him he

shall be brought into our presence : he may speak the truth or not. It is derogatory to our authority, that our first order should be countermanded for the sake of such a man as this. But we also wonder greatly, that you alone should have ventured to resist our commands and authority, since both ancient usages and law, have determined that the ordinances of kings must be obeyed, and that no one may presume to despise their commands and decrees. And we cannot sufficiently marvel, that you should listen to the request of a wicked man, rather than to our orders. It is, moreover, plain, that with this man, a disposition to rebellion, and a disregard of Christian charity has been introduced among you. For you, who call yourselves the fraternity of this monastery, and the servants of God, (would to God you served him more worthily!) you yourselves know how often your own conduct has been evil spoken of by many, and not without reason. For sometimes you have represented yourselves to be monks, sometimes canons, and sometimes neither. Anxious for your welfare, and wishing to obliterate the memory of your past misdeeds, we appointed you a skillful teacher and superintendent; we summoned him from a distant land, that he might instruct you by precept and exhortation, and that the example of a pious man might teach you to live holy lives. But, alas! we have been grievously disappointed; the devil has found in you, an instrument to sow discord amongst those whom it least becomes, even amongst the teachers and doctors of the church. You, whose duty it is to correct and reject sinners, incite others to the sins of hatred and anger. But, with God's help, they will not approve of your evil designs. You, however, who have despised our commands, you monks or canons, by whichever name you call yourselves, know that you are arraigned before our tribunal, which our messenger will announce to you. And should you even attempt, by sending a letter here, to excuse your former resistance, you shall, nevertheless, appear and make due reparation for your past fault".

Although Charles, in this letter, mentioned Alcuin with indulgence and approbation, and vented his whole displeasure upon the monks, still its general tenor and style must have been mortifying to him. It is certain that he had taken infinite pains in instructing his community, and if we may trust the accounts of others and his own earlier reports to Charlemagne, not without considerable success. The vexation, therefore, of finding all his labors in reforming his monastery, represented as fruitless, must have outweighed the pleasure which he would derive from the personal commendation bestowed by the emperor. He considered Charles, in this affair, as partial, as prejudiced in favor of Theodulph, and as unjust towards himself and the fraternity over which he presided; but in this unpleasant transaction, he acted, not from the dictates of duty and justice, but from the impulse of a petty jealousy. Whilst, in a letter to Charlemagne, he defended the character and conduct of his monks against the calumnies of their enemies, he neglected to obey the imperial mandate, but dismissed the fugitive to one of his friends. He probably exculpated himself on the plea that the culprit had escaped, and contrived that the whole affair should sink into oblivion.

9.

Death of Alcuin.

The event just recorded, occurred in the year 803. The indignation which Alcuin felt at the injustice which he considered himself to have sustained, the vehemence with which he contended for the privileges of his monastery, and his grief at the reproaches of Charles, could not fail to have an injurious effect upon his already enfeebled constitution. He was attacked by an illness which terminated his life on the 19th May, 804. It is always an evidence of the importance of a man in his own day, when extraordinary natural phenomena are related as having been connected with his death, and when the day of his decease is recorded in the public annals. Both is the case with Alcuin. It is said, that on the night in which he died, so bright a light was seen to shine over the church of St. Martin, that it appeared as if the church were in flames. Heaven seemed, as it were, to have opened to receive the departing spirit of the pious man. It was, also, generally reported and believed, that a hermit in Italy had seen, at the same hour, a celestial choir of saints, in the midst of whom, Alcuin, adorned with a splendid garment (Dalmatica), made his triumphant entry into heaven. We cannot, therefore, wonder that multitudes flocked around the inanimate body, in order, that by touching or beholding it, they might be healed of their diseases, and that many went away cured. His soul having been deposited in heaven, his body could be interred with the greater satisfaction. His funeral was performed with the utmost solemnity in the church of St. Martin, and an epitaph written by himself, and engraved on a copper-plate, points out his resting place to posterity.

HERE, gentle traveller! pause awhile to rest,

And note the sounds which issue from the tomb:

A heart like thine once throbbed within this breast,

Then learn from mine, thy destiny, thy doom.

What now thou art, I was—well known to fame.

What now I am, thou soon shalt be.

Decay Hath left no vestige of each futile aim,

Save dust and ashes to the worms a prey.

Then haste to guard thy soul’s eternal weal,

Nor heed the frail integument that dies.

Why purchase realms? Behold, vain man! and feel
The narrow bounds in which wealth, glory, lies.

Why pant to deck thee in the purple robe
Which, low in dust, the hungry worm invades?
That form shall sink, though born to rule the globe,
As, 'neath the foul Simoon, the flowret fades.

Some kind return, Oh! gentle reader! deign
To these sad strains. Breathe out, “God rest his soul”
And may this tomb no impious hand profane,
Ere the last trumpet’s peal through heaven shall roll.

Then burst the sepulcher; and spring to light
The mighty judge, his countless myriads hail!
Wisdom’s fond lover, he erst Alcuin hight,
Now craves thy silent prayer, at vespers pale.

Under these verses, the monks inscribed the following words. “Here rest the blessed remains of Abbot Alcuin. He died in peace, fourteen days before the calends of June. All ye, who read this, pray for him, that the Lord may grant him everlasting rest”.

A man who devoted his whole life to religion, and whose conduct was so holy and pious as Alcuin’s, would, of course, enjoy amongst his superstitious cotemporaries, the reputation of working miracles. There are not wanting legends respecting his miraculous powers of foreseeing future events, and, by his blessing, restoring the use of their limbs to the lame, and sight to the blind. He was also called to sustain sundry conflicts with the Evil Spirit, which his biographer records as an especial proof of his sanctity. But posterity has accorded him the nobler praise, of having directed his energies to the diffusion of knowledge, and of having contributed to maintain and encourage the church, in the form in which she alone, at that time, could have been beneficial.


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