

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Editor: DR. PAUL CARUS,  
Assistant Editor: T. J. McCORMACK.

Associates: } E. C. HEGELER.  
                  } MARY CARUS.

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VOL. XIII. (NO. 6)

JUNE, 1899.

NO. 517

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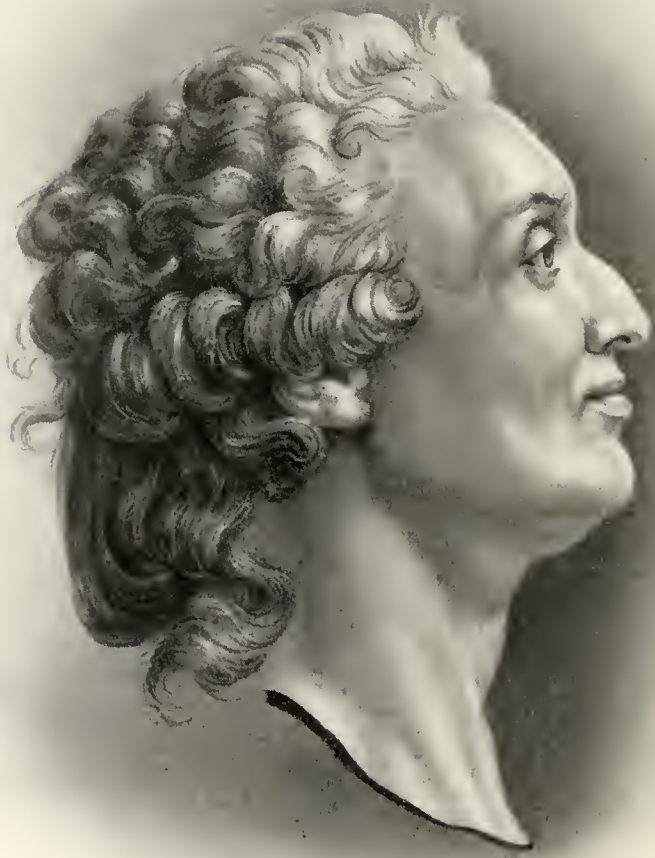
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CONDORCET.

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*Frontispiece to The Open Court.*

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## PAGANISM IN THE ROMAN CHURCH.<sup>1</sup>

BY TH. TREDE,

Pastor of the Evangelical Church at Naples.

IN silent desolation, surrounded by swamps and malaria, there rises in the plain of Pæstum the famous temple of Poseidon, the best preserved of all the extant Hellenic temples. "A tale of the ages olden,"—thus it impressed us as we saw it not long ago in the light of the evening sun. "The sun rules"—such is the expression in modern Greece for the sinking king of day, a popular expression understood only by one whose eye has seen the color-marvels of evening in the southland, which, proceeding from the throne of that monarch, deck as by magic sea and land, mountain and valley, earth and sky with a chromatic splendor that no artist can imitate—yonder the shimmering sea, the purple-surg-ing, sacred salt-tide of Homer; here proud mountains veiled in tender violet; between them the soundless plain once famous for its rose-gardens, and in the plain that temple, transfigured by the roseate, odorous haze; above us the sky, as blue as when blooming life filled these fields now desolate for centuries, as smiling as when, twenty-four hundred years ago, Hellenic faith erected the temple—thus we saw that majestic construction, and then left that region, bearing with us deep and imperishable impressions.

The temple at Pæstum is an eloquent surviving witness of struggles of world-wide significance, such as earth has not seen before or since, we mean the two centuries of conflict beginning with Constantine, in which, as is commonly said, paganism succumbed to victorious Christianity. Two hundred years! A long time, so long that we cannot possibly assume that from the start Christian-

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Prof. W. H. Carruth of the University of Kansas.

ity was facing in paganism a weak, half-dead opponent. It must be that this opponent possessed great vitality if it was only after two hundred years that he could be declared conquered by a church which was supported by the most powerful of allies, the State.

We speak of a two hundred years' conflict between Christianity and paganism. Is the expression correct? Was then this struggle a purely spiritual struggle, and did the victory consist in a conquest of the spirit of paganism by the spirit of Christianity? And was there an inner victory won, which resulted in the disappearance of the outward evidences of pagan life, as, for instance, the temples? We speak of a "fall," an "overthrow" of Hellenic-Roman paganism. Does this mean that those two hundred years destroyed the moral and religious tendencies of paganism so that mankind was transformed, first inwardly and then, as a consequence of this, outwardly?

In the temple of Pæstum we see a lifeless relic of paganism; the present article will show forth some of its living relics.

With Constantine, the first so-called "Christian" emperor, the power of the State was turned against paganism. While the pagan Roman emperors had endeavored to annihilate Christianity by annihilating the individual Christians, the Christian Roman emperors resorted to another method for accomplishing their ends. In order to exterminate paganism they directed their attack against pagan worship, which was the means, according to the Roman point of view, of preserving for all mankind the favor of the guardian gods. The government attempted to abolish this by violence in order thus to deprive paganism of the means of self-manifestation, the very condition of existence. As a matter of course acts of violence could not abolish the religious spirit and tendency of paganism, and the fact that two hundred years were required for a by no means complete outward Christianisation shows how little virtue there was in the violent measures of government.

Measures against the pagan Roman worship could not fail to strike the temples at the very first. The closing, evacuation or destruction of the temples, as well as their use for the construction of churches and other purposes, began under Constantine and his sons, but did not assume considerable headway until the end of the century of Constantine (the 4th), under Emperor Theodosius. The Church hailed him as a second Joash, of whom the Old Testament says: "And all the people of the land went to the house of Baal and brake it down; his altars and images brake they in pieces



thoroughly." (2 Kings, xi. 18.) At this time the Church began to call out the hosts of her monks for the destruction of the temples, and among the bishops there were not a few who flattered themselves that they possessed the spirit, the power and the calling of Elijah. Such a one was, for instance, Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, who thoroughly destroyed the world-famed temple of Serapis at that place and also destroyed the unapproachable, mysterious, miraculous image of the great Serapis. The Church was filled with rejoicings, for she believed that the fall of this temple was a glorious victory for Christianity. For the vanished Serapis the Church offered compensation in "king" Christ, and the heathen who were converted by such deeds now expected all that they had formerly hoped and obtained from Serapis from Christ, who assumed the guardianship of the Nile-gauge which had formerly stood in the temple of Serapis. Such was the dispensation of the Church. For the honor of Christ and the pursuit of their own salvation bands of monks, fanatical or instigated by fanatics, undertook in those days regular crusades against the temples, and in Canopus (Egypt), for instance, razed to the ground all the temples, although they made compensation by providing for the construction of Christian sanctuaries and furnishing them with relics of the saints in the place of the expelled gods, in whom the whole Church of that time recognised real powers, called "dæmons," which according to the notions of that time were subdued by the magic spell of the Church. Such a crusade was undertaken in Syria by the trooper-bishop Marcellus, attended by gladiators, soldiers, and monks, and in Gaul Bishop Martin, elevated from the camp to be a Church official, could not repress his warlike ardor and directed it against temples and "dæmons." No wonder that the Frankish rulers chose this bishop for their patron saint and took with them on their crusades as a palladium that guarded and guaranteed victory the mitre of Saint Martin. The clergy, who had charge of this palladium at home and on the way, received from the "cappa" (hat, or mitre) referred to the name "cappelani," and the receptacle which contained the palladium was called "cappella" (hat-box). This "cappa," then, served the same purpose for the Christian Frankish princes as for Æneas that palladium which he took with him from Troy (Æneid, I., 378), or as that famous "ancile" (shield) which was regarded in Rome as a direct gift of heaven, or as that famous image of Mary in Constantinople, which at the beginning of the fifth century was dedicated to public worship by Pulcheria, sister of the Emperor Theodosius II., and in critical times was

fastened as a protection to that portion of the wall which was most exposed to hostile attacks. Constantine had the very same expectation of the cross, *cæleste signum Dei*, when he substituted it for the pagan emblems that had been worshipped as divine.

While in the Orient the temples were quite thoroughly cleaned away, in the Occident, and especially in Italy, they received very different treatment. We are told of no scenes of vandalism, nor of trooper-bishops and crusades against the temples of Italy. Monasticism did not appear there until later, and this absence of fanatic mobs of monks preserved the temples from the fate that befell them in the Orient. In Italy in the course of the two centuries beginning with Constantine only a small portion of the temples were violently destroyed; on the contrary they were evacuated, closed, deprived of their revenues and consequently of their administration; many, after their pillars had been taken away for Christian purposes, fell into ruins, many were transformed into churches, many survived these two centuries to meet later one of the fates just mentioned or to be destroyed by earthquakes. Many temples, chiefly in Sicily, have defied the ravages of time until the present day. It is true, the number of theatres preserved is much greater, a fact that is easily explained. For when the temples had long been desolate in Italy the pagan theatre still flourished, together with beast-baiting and gladiatorial combats, which for instance did not cease in Rome until the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>1</sup> The temples in Naples disappeared almost utterly, but only gradually in the succeeding centuries, likewise in Tarentum (Taranto) and in Palermo. The effects of an earthquake may be seen in the temple ruins of Girgenti and Selinus in Sicily, and in Calabria more than a hundred years ago a fearful earthquake destroyed many remains of temples. It is remarkable that in two places the Greek word for temple, *Naos*, has been preserved. Capo di Nao is the name to-day among the Calabrian people for that promontory on the Gulf of Tarentum where still a single column marks the place of the temple of Hera. Near the modern Monteleone the same word calls attention to the site of a temple.

This extensive sparing of the temples in Italy fifteen hundred years ago proves on the one hand that the Christian emperors did not and could not carry out all that they decreed, and on the other hand that the people were free from Christian fanaticism. It would have been an easy matter to destroy all the temples of Italy

<sup>1</sup>The spectacle of beast-baiting was permitted as late as the sixth century, and that by the Christian emperor Justinian. Even the clergy participated at such spectacles.

in the course of fifty years, yet what could have been accomplished in a short space of time was not completed in two hundred years. When the Normans took possession of Sicily in the eleventh century they found there numerous Mohammedan sanctuaries erected by the Arabian conquerors. In Palermo there were several hundred temples and mosques. All these were destroyed in no time at all by the order of the Norman leaders; the same in Bari and elsewhere. There is not a trace of such structures left.

Now because ruins of temples were once very common things in Southern Italy it has come about in later centuries that the people in many cases regarded the ruins of secular edifices as remains of temples. Many a time the writer has strayed along the deserted strand of Baia with its many ruins, praised by Horace as the most charming corner of the earth, and always heard the people there demonstrate the ruins of the baths to be the temples of every possible Roman divinity. On the slope of Posilipo, near Naples, stands the solitary ruin of a Roman bathing villa, known to-day in the popular language as the "Castle of the Ghosts." In this title we hear an echo of the ancient belief in "dæmons" which was preserved even by the Christians for centuries, and the stronghold of the belief in the mysterious magic of the pagan Roman world is shown by other ruins on Mount Posilipo where to this day a piece of ruined wall is entitled "the School of Virgil," that is, the place where Virgil, who was regarded as a magician, taught his magic arts. In modern Sulmona, the birth-place of Ovid, popular songs speak of him to this day as a magician.

For the judgment of past and present it is important to know the connexion between the oldest churches of Southern Italy and the pagan temples.

Nearly all the oldest church structures originated in one of the three following ways: either they made use of all sorts of temple materials, and especially pillars, or they were built upon the same foundation which once bore a temple, or the temples were transformed into Christian churches. That is, pagan materials served to make the new Christian structure. This sort of church buildings may serve as a simile to characterise the spiritual reconstruction of those centuries. The Church of that time built a new spiritual structure, but of pagan materials.

In S. Clemente, on the road between Naples and Salerno, lies one of the least known and at the same time most remarkable churches of Christendom, notable because it has come down to our time almost unaltered, although it belongs without question to the

fifth century. It is a baptistery, and therefore round and provided with a variety of antique pillars. Pillars from what was once the temple of Apollo are seen in the church of S. Restituta in Naples, pillars from the temple of Poseidon in the pilasters of the cathedral in the same place. There are antique pillars in the old church of S. Costanzo on the island of Capri, which marks the place down by the sea where the ancient village of Capri stood, destroyed later by the Saracens. These are but a few of the instances from the oldest period of Southern Italian church structures. When later the Lombards settled here and had princely residences in Salerno, Capua, and Benevento, they too used antique columns in their church edifices. It was some five hundred years before the supply of columns was exhausted. Toward the last Pæstum became a rich source of supply. Thence the Norman duke Robert Guiscard brought the ancient columns for his cathedral at Salerno on which he inscribed himself "dux," "rex," and "imperator," as may be read to-day. The atrium of this cathedral still shows the stolen columns of the proud Norman. From Pæstum also the rich merchants of the once mighty Amalfi procured a supply of columns for their cathedral. Twenty splendid granite columns, which adorn the cathedral of Gerace are of Hellenic origin, taken from the ruins of ancient Locri. The Norman duke Roger, who once resided in Melito (Calabria), procured columns from the ruins of Hipponion near the modern Monteleone.

It is worth noting that the erection of such columns in churches, especially in the oldest times, was done in a very unsystematic way. They took what they found—and accordingly we see even yet pillars of very different kinds standing side by side. And a similar method was pursued by the Church of those centuries in its spiritual edifice.

Just as they gathered up columns, so they did other pagan objects which could be used in the churches for various purposes. In the cathedral at Naples we see a splendid basalt basin with beautiful reliefs showing the worship of Bacchus, snatched from some temple. It serves as a baptismal font! In the cathedral at Terracina is seen an ancient granite tub, in the cathedral at Amalfi an antique vase, in the cathedral at Syracuse a very pagan and secular mixing-vessel. It is known that in many churches in Rome there are marble episcopal chairs which once stood in the bathrooms of the public baths of Diocletian. Rome, indeed, gave a widely followed example in the gathering up of pagan material for ecclesiastical purposes. By this statement we mean not merely

bath chairs, and so forth, but we are thinking also of material for the spiritual edifice of the Church.

Numerous antique sarcophagi with their pagan reliefs constitute an odd adornment of the older churches of Southern Italy. They are found, for instance in Salerno, Capua, Amalfi, Cava (in the monastery of S. Trinita), Palermo, and in Naples and Girgenti. It is a strange sight when the eye is surprised in a Christian church by Hellenic-Roman inscriptions and finds dancing bacchantes where they should not be expected. The sarcophagus in Girgenti is famous, with its relief representing the legend of Hippolytus. When we come to examine the spiritual structure of the Church more closely we shall be still more surprised by mythological features of a different sort than by those on the sarcophagi mentioned.

Little is preserved of the chief adornment of the temples, the statues of the gods, for while in Italy no sweat was wasted over deliberate and violent destruction of the temples, during these two centuries of conflict the images of the gods were for the most part destroyed, and what is found in the museums, as at Naples, is but a remnant. For in that city images of the gods were so numerous that the proverb ran: "You are more likely to meet a god than a man in Naples." Only one of all the extant statues of the gods in Southern Italy has escaped the lot of imprisonment in a museum. It is a mutilated Ariadne which stands beside a fountain in the vicinity of Monteleone, where it is worshipped unto this day under the name of Santa Venere, just as Poseidon was worshipped in the temple at Pæstum, the divinity being identified with the statue. "Saint Venus" is appealed to by women under certain circumstances down to this day. And the harbor at that place is named after her: Porto Santa Venere.

The temples from which the statues of the gods had disappeared, when once they were changed into churches, or when new churches were built on their foundations, were straightway occupied by the ancient paganism under the guise of Christianity. The pagan rhetor Libanius, who in that period of conflict presented to the Roman emperor a defence of the endangered temples, was right: "They may close the temples against the gods, but not the hearts of men." Some instances will illustrate this.

The oldest church that was built within the walls of Naples in the sixth century (there were some churches built without the walls previous to this), stood upon the ruins of a temple of Artemis, and was dedicated to the Madonna. The latter took the place of

the former and assumed all of her former functions. In the ancient campanile of this church, built of brick, one may still see all manner of fragments of that temple. To this day in that church women ask of the Madonna precisely what was once asked of Artemis in the same place. On the slope of Posilipo, near Naples, there stands solitary on the shore a church of the Madonna on the spot where once sea-faring men could see a temple of Venus Eupleua, that is, the divinity who protected harbors and navigation. To the present hour in the eyes of the fishermen the Madonna performs the same offices as did once Dame Venus, and gifts are brought to her altar as of old, and vows performed before her image as once they were before that of Venus Eupleua. There was in Naples a temple of Antinous, the well-known favorite of the Emperor Hadrian, who placed him among the gods, after the youth had incurred death for his sake. On the place of this temple has stood from early times the church of St. John the Baptist, who also incurred death for the sake of his Master. John the Baptist, then, in the simplest and most natural fashion, displaced Antinous and assumed in the eyes of the so-called Christians the same office that Antinous had filled. In Terracina the church of S. Cesareo stands upon a temple of Augustus; in Messina St. Gregory displaced Jupiter in the same manner, and in Girgenti Zeus was likewise obliged to flee before S. Gerlando; and when Saint Benedict came to Monte Cassino in the sixth century, S. Martino, that warlike saint, chased away Apollo, who, as we all know, had pierced with his dart the serpent Python. On the highest point in modern Pozzuoli stands the cathedral of Saint Proculus on the foundation of a splendid temple of Augustus which the Apostle Paul saw when he landed there. One who travels along the magnificent mountain road toward Sorrento and enters the divinely favored plain at Meta, covered with fragrant orange groves, will find in Meta a famous church of the Madonna which offers the same miraculous cures that were once sought on the same spot in a temple of Minerva Medica. From the fifth century there has existed in a cave on the majestic promontory of Monte Gargano in Apulia the ancient sanctuary of St. Michael, who expelled from the place in the fifth century the oracular dæmons of Kalchas. We shall later hear more of this famous shrine. At Marsala (in Sicily) a church of S. Giovanni was built above the cave and magic spring of a sibyl, and there the saint still dispenses oracles, that is, has displaced the sibyl. On the summit of Monte Vergine near Naples once stood a sanctuary of the *Magna Mater* (Cybele), and when S. Guiglielmo

built his cells there as a hermit he found the remains of the sanctuary, which had been a pilgrim shrine of the pagans down to the days of the last emperors. Upon the ruins was erected a church of the Madonna which was soon equipped with a famous miraculous image (*imago prodigiosa*), and thus once more a "magna mater" reigns there, who is so highly esteemed that this shrine attracts more than fifty thousand pilgrims every year at Pentecost. In the sixth century a pagan asked the monk Isidor what difference there was between the magna mater Cybele and the Madonna.

One of the best examples is furnished us in the Madonna del Capo (of the Promontory). On the towering Licinian promontory near Croton on the Gulf of Tarentum stood formerly the temple of Hera Lucina, the religious centre for all the Hellenic colonies of that coast, a shrine of solemn pilgrimage to which came every year a brilliant-hued procession, just as in Athens to the Parthenon. Forty-eight marble columns enclosed this sanctuary, which stood in the midst of a murmuring fir grove and guarded immense treasures, which, however, even a Hannibal spared, fearing the wrath of the divinity. When this temple came into Roman possession it retained its popularity, the only change being that the name of the goddess was changed to Juno Lucina. Then Christianity entered the country, and in the fifth century the bishop of Croton changed that temple into a church. Again only a slight change was made, for the divinity whose image was displayed there was now called Mary, but in her function and influence she was all that Juno had been. Afterwards as before processions went up thither, afterwards as before vows were performed, afterwards as before women appealed in the most important concerns of life to Mary-Juno-Hera. Pythagoras, who developed his chief activity in Croton, induced the women there to lay their ornaments on the altar of Hera. In later times many Christian virgins did the same before they renounced the world and entered the cloister. That temple of the Madonna was left solitary when the Saracens devastated the coast, the sacred image was taken to Croton, but the temple itself remained in good preservation for a long time. Finally it was destroyed by a bishop of Croton, who constructed a palace for himself out of the material. This man bore the name Lucifero and lived about the year 1520. To-day it may be said of the temple :

" Only one lofty column  
Tells of its vanished splendor."

Finally an example from Sicily. On Mount Eryx in the north part of the island, illumined by sunshine or veiled in clouds, there overlooked the sacred salt tide the temple-sanctuary of Aphrodite, famous throughout antiquity among both Greeks and Romans. The temple has disappeared, but on the same height, called Monte S. Giugliano, the graciously smiling, loving Madonna is worshipped. Aphrodite kept there her sacred doves, and to this hour doves are to be seen fluttering about the mountain and the sacred spot, for no priestly conjuration has been able to remove this relic of paganism. A strange testimony this!

In this rechristening of the old gods also an example was set the church by eternal Rome, this episcopal capital which had been Christianised outwardly at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century. Pagan mothers there were in the habit of taking their sick children to the sanctuary of Romulus and imploring aid of him who had been suckled by the she-wolf on that spot. The church did not want the Christianised mothers to be deprived of any comfort, and accordingly erected a Christian sanctuary there and established in it St. Theodorus, to whom mothers appealed just as before they had done to Romulus. This transformation took place in the fourth century, and the church referred to, a round structure of brick, partly ancient material, still stands. Two centuries later eternal Rome crowned the work of rechristening by transforming the Pantheon, the temple dedicated to all the gods, into a church sacred to all the martyrs, after taking into it whole wagon-loads of holy bones.

Even in the fourth century many a man of deeper insight complained of the merely nominal Christianity of the masses who were floating with the current. These were the voices of prophets in the wilderness. There is a mournful sound in the judgment of Augustine upon his time: "Jesus is seldom sought for his own sake." It is a painful saying when Chrysostom compares the church of his time with a woman who has retained only the empty chests in which her wealth had been. While even such superior minds were by no means able to escape entirely the spell of paganism, others floated along with this tide that was submerging the church without being aware that they were dominated by paganism. We mean to include all those churchmen of the two centuries of conflict who assigned to the saints and martyrs the very same function which, according to the doctrines of the Stoics and the Neo-Platonists, belonged to heroes, dæmons, and guardian spirits. Without difficulty the outwardly Christianised pagan masses found again in the



church what they had just surrendered. The Spartans had apotheosised their Lycurgus, the Hellenes Hercules and other heroes, the Romans their emperors (including Constantine), Hadrian had deified his Antinous. The Church did the same with its martyr-heroes. The Church said: "Juno Lucina is a false divinity; Mary is the true intercessor between men and the Most High." This was the "lenitas," the mild method, of the Church, which often made pagans Christians by the wholesale but gave to Christianity a pagan form and accordingly reared a spiritual edifice that corresponded with the Church edifices of those centuries of conflict. In both pagan material was used. The protection of pagan deities which had been secured by pagan religious ceremonies made way for Christian ceremonies which ensured the guardian care of Christian divinities. The fact remained, only the name was changed.

For the better understanding of the above it must be remembered how deeply rooted in the heart of a Hellenic-Roman pagan was the need of reaching with faith and hope those deities of a lower grade, which, as intercessory divinities, were nearer to man, and furthermore what support the Hellenic-Roman religious faith had received in this direction from the philosophical doctrines of the second century. Then we must consider in this connexion the well-known fact that during the first Christian centuries new divinities and new forms of worship were constantly being introduced from the Orient and willingly received. So the Hellenic-Roman pagan world was accustomed to hear of new and powerful aiding and atoning divinities, and the yearning human heart turned with especial readiness to those divinities and forms of worship which promised atonement. Why, men asked, should they not give a trial to Christianity which blazed, a propitious planet, above the so-called Christian emperors, which promised to the longing human heart the true aiding and atoning divinities, substituted a brilliant ceremonial for the splendor of pagan worship, and received all possible aid favor and encouragement from the great ones of the age? Moreover the charitable institutions of all sorts within the Church and its membership constituted an especial attraction for the people of the poorer classes. As early as 325 A. D., indeed, complaint was made by the Council of Nicæa of the defective preparation of the catechumens. Finally I call attention to the fact that the Hellenic-Roman pagan world never hesitated to modify newly introduced divinities or to recognise in them their own heathen deities. When, for instance, the worship of Mithras, the

Persian god of light, was introduced, traces of which may still be seen in a cave on the island of Capri, the religious Roman merely saw in Mithras his own pagan deity Sol (the sun). The Phœnician Astarte was modified by the Hellenes into Aphrodite, and she in turn became among the Romans Venus. Tacitus was able to see in the Germanic gods those of his native Rome. Thus we see the reason why it was so easy for the outwardly Christianised pagans to feel at home on the Christian Olympus with its saints and its Mary, especially as the nature of the religion suffered no change. It was afterwards as before a matter of ceremonial, that is, the essence of certain performances which were believed to have an inherently magical effect. Christianity was regarded as the new dispensation, and the Christianised pagan merely exchanged one dispensation for another.

Just as the pagan divinities, with Christian names, leaving the deserted temples entered the churches, so the Hellenic-Roman religious ceremonial followed them. The construction of the Christian ceremonial during these two centuries of conflict is a parallel to the construction of the churches by means of pagan materials.

We meet in the churches the spell of the holy water, we see to-day the clouds of incense, the flowers on the altars, the candles before the images, the votive offerings or "vota," relics of all sorts, pictures and statues, the latter in such growing avalanches on Neapolitan territory that the modern churches revive the truth of that old proverb mentioned above: "In Naples one is more likely to meet a god than a man." All these things are portions of the Hellenic-Roman ceremonial, introduced during those two hundred years of so-called conflict.

At the entrance of pagan temples stood a vessel of holy water with which to sprinkle oneself, and magic spells added strength to the holy water as to-day; the aspergillum (holy water sprinkler) was very familiar to the pagans, and sprinkling men and inanimate objects with holy water was a universal pagan custom. While Justin Martyr in the second century condemned the holy water as an invention of the devil, opinion had changed by the end of the fourth century. The erudite Jerome tells, with the pagan-Christian belief in miracles common to his time, that the race-horses of a Christian, sprinkled with holy water, won over the horses of a heathen. "Thus the pagan god was conquered by Christ." (Jerome, *op.* 4, p. 80.) That Christian baptism took the place of pagan ceremonies of atonement in the eyes of Emperor Constantine and his contemporaries, and likewise in the eyes of Emperor Theodosius,

is clear from the fact that baptism was transferred to the close of life.<sup>1</sup>

Clouds of incense and the glitter of candles were prominent features in the pagan temples. Aphrodite escapes to Paphos and views with joy the place where rises her temple and where glow a hundred altars with the burning incense from Sheba and fragrant with fresh wreaths (Virgil, *Aeneid* I., 415). Jeremiah (xliv. 17) condemned the Jews who burned incense to the queen of heaven; Emperor Theodosius forbade pagan burnt offerings. The prohibited incense, rechristened with a Christian name, entered the churches, and with it lights, whether in costly lamps or in the glimmer of tapers. Of perpetual lamps (*vigil ignis*) we are told by Virgil, *Æneid* IV., 200 :

“And altars placed a hundred; vigil fires  
He hallowed there, the eternal guards of heaven.”

The temples were filled with votive gifts, just such as we find to-day in all the churches of the South, in some of them in great quantities. In *Æschylus*'s tragedy of “The Seven Against Thebes” women hasten full of anxiety into the temples, and we hear some of them exclaim before the images of the gods: “Now it is time, ye holy ones of this temple, that we appeal to your images as we embrace them.” They call out to Poseidon, then to Apollo, to Hera, and so on: “Remember the temples, remember the sacrifices, remember the rich gifts, remember the votive offerings, and hasten!” Any one acquainted with modern Naples might think *Æschylus* was our contemporary and had intended in the above passage to depict the present thought regarding votive offerings. Of the *donaria* (votive gifts), which often consisted of representations of beneficial occurrences, the Roman poet Tibullus says (*Eleg.*, I., 3): “O goddess, that thou canst give aid is shown by the number of paintings that deck thy temple.” Had Tibullus seen the contemporary churches of Southern Italy? The Roman satirist Juvenal, a contemporary of Hadrian, says that the goddess Isis furnished a living to the painters of votive pictures. Did the poet mean perhaps the Madonna at Naples?

Relics, too, the pagans had, but not quite so plentifully as the Christians. The bones of Theseus rested in Athens, whither they had been solemnly brought, and where they were regarded as pledges of his protection. The house of Romulus, the stones vomited forth by Saturn, a chip of the ship *Argo*, and so forth, were regarded as very sacred relics.

<sup>1</sup> Atoning ceremonials of magic power were numerous in the pagan world.

According to Plutarch the pagan king Numa objected to the images of the gods in the temples, but later the worship of images in the temples assumed great dimensions and moved from the temples into the churches. Emperor Theodosius forbade the heathen worship of images, but it was rechristened, and to-day goes far beyond the limits observed by paganism, and is protected by absolute. The images, as in ancient life, are identified with the "santi" whom they are intended to represent, and the number of these increases with incredible speed. When the Arabs took possession of the city of Selinunt (Modione) in Sicily they found so many statues of saints that they called the city Rahl el Asnam, "village of idols." Closely connected with the worship of images is the cultivation of processions, which to-day are as much like the corresponding performances of Hellenic-Roman worship as one twin the other, as like as the Christian legends of miracles are to the pagan. The legends of the pagans laid aside the Roman toga, clothed themselves in the Christian cassock, and became thus eligible to church membership. Finally the Church took under her patronage the festivals connected with the Church service, hoping that a saint placed in the centre of these festivals so popular with the common people would transform them into something sacred. But she was disappointed, or, more correctly, she lost all sense of the distinction between pagan and Christian festivals. We may be witnesses of Christian festivals later which would serve as examples of Pagan orgies. In ancient life the priests were managers of the festivals. The Christian priests of Southern Italy perform this office to the present day, and understand the business as well as did their pagan predecessors.

The Church spoke of victory and triumph when she saw the temples deserted, the gods banished, and herself raised to the throne, like Joseph who rose from chains and a dungeon to royal distinction. The victory of the Church was in fact her defeat, which became complete when sacrifices were admitted to the church buildings. Sacrifices were the heart and centre of the Hellenic-Roman worship, and were forbidden by the Christian emperors again and again for two hundred years, and finally on penalty of death. In the sacrifice of the mass that central feature of ancient worship found its way from the temples into the new churches, and along with it the class of sacrificing priests, to whom descended the function, the office and the wealth of the pagan priests who had been dismissed. The Christian priest, tonsured after the fashion of the pagan Isis-worship, beside him the

altar-attendant, just as he may be seen in a Pompeiian fresco,—the Christian priest offering the mass-sacrifice for the living and the dead, that was the complete defeat of the Church at the moment when she was dreaming of victory.

The Hellenic-Roman temples served not only the rites of religion; many of them had other incidental objects. When the churches were offered as compensation for the deserted temples it was expected that this compensation should be complete, for the force of custom is great, especially in the South. It is well known that the right of asylum was transferred to the churches. Temples were also storehouses for public and private treasures, and nearly every temple had an especial treasure-chamber. Millions in treasure were concealed for instance in the above-mentioned temples of Hera Lucina, Aphrodite Erycina, and in many others. The temple on the island of Delos, as is known, contained the public treasure of Athens. Private citizens often deposited great sums, and the supervisors of the temples, that is, the priests, not infrequently acted as bankers, carrying on financial operations with such capital. For centuries, in Naples, for instance, many monasteries with fine churches attached, and certain richly endowed charitable institutions were the only public banks, which understood not only financiering but bankruptcy as well. The pious bank that was connected with the foundling asylum and had millions in deposits from private persons ended in the previous century with a crash. Any one who wishes to see what a treasury really is should ask to be shown the treasure-chapel of S. Gennaro in the cathedral at Naples, where there are millions in precious stones. The church of S. Maria Nuova in Naples once had such a wealth of gifts that had been presented to a certain miraculous image that it was possible to pay for a complete reconstruction of the church from the sale of them. The proceeds were 120,000 lire. Furthermore the temples guarded public and private documents, records of all sorts, sometimes even the lists of citizens, so that the priests acted as archivists. In this direction, too, the church furnished a substitute, in the shape of the monasteries. Of old the positions with the widest outlook had been chosen for temples, and the monasteries followed this example: these sacred places became the repositories of all important public and private documents within their districts. We find such treasures, for example, in the monastery of Monte Cassino, in the monastery Trinita della Cava; one of the most important historical archives in the world is the government archive in Naples, now in the chambers of the monastery

of S. Severino. The greater part of its treasures consists of records which were deposited in monasteries. Every monastery was a Delphi in the eyes of its neighborhood.

Many temples served also as museums for the monuments of the great dead. In the Parthenon at Athens the sons of Themistocles set up a statue of their father; the statues of the heroes of Attica were to be seen at Delphi; the porches of many temples were filled with statues of victors; in the temples erected in honor of the emperors were seen their statues; even Cleopatra stood in a Roman temple. The force of ancient custom causes the churches, equally numerous in modern times, to be used in the same way. The church of S. Domenico in Naples, with its worthy and its worthless monuments, is the temple of fame of the Neapolitan aristocracy. S. Domenico in Palermo serves the same purpose. The church of S. Croce in Florence is a national temple of fame; St. Peter's in Rome, the papal. "And marble figures stand and gaze at me."

The power of custom in southern lands was cited above in explanation. The writer, who has lived uninterruptedly for more than ten years in that region, is constrained to call the power of custom, as he has observed it, astounding when he marshals before his mind's eye all the small and great things that have been preserved of ancient life and have become a part of the manners and customs of popular life, while the people themselves take not the slightest account of this origin. In this sketch we can cite only a few examples, and will refer to but a few things which show how ancient life has been preserved to the present day in even trifles. The donkeys which carry vegetables to the city are equipped with the "bissaccium" which comes from the ancient Roman times; the two-wheeled Roman carriage, the "cisium" is perpetuated in the popular "corricolo," which we see standing by the hundred in the very places where rose the ancient gates of Naples and where such carriages had had their stand for centuries. Ancient statues of horses show the forelock tied up neatly, a custom which may be observed in thousands of instances in the Campagna. Look at the bottles and jugs for wine and oil found at Pompeii, the shape of the loaves of bread; regard the recreations of large and small; note the tambourine ("tympanon") used in the popular dances; consider the beds of the South with their dreadful height and their two little and more dreadful pillows,—everywhere we find ancient Roman life preserved in such trifles. But in popular life there are details which are still older and show the specific Hellenic influence. The

numerous money-changers under the open sky, the cook-shops on the street and the kettles of boiled lentils, the door-knockers in the older quarters, the fondness for garlic, the number of hair-dressers, the custom that men make the daily purchases for the house, all features of Neapolitan daily life, are derived from Greek life. Even those intestine-vendors mentioned by Aristophanes are still to be found in Naples, offering their unappetising wares to-day in this once Hellenic city as formerly they did on the streets of Athens. Pits as receptacles for oil, such as are to-day found in Apulia, for instance, were known to the Hellenes; the modern shepherds in the Sila forest with their shawms remind us of the shepherds of Theocritus; and as of old in the cities of Greece rhapsodes recited publicly the tales of Homer's heroes, so Naples preserves her "cantastorie," i. e., her story-tellers, who entertain the listening crowd with the heroes of Tasso and Ariosto. In the popular theatre certain figures of the ancient theatre are preserved, and rural wine-stands are painted on the door-posts just as one may see them to-day preserved in one case in Pompeii.

If from these few instances we see the striking power of conservative custom in unimportant things, the same power is to be reckoned with the more surely in considering the highest and most important sphere of ancient life, religion. Here of all places the power of custom caused the old and traditional to be preserved.

In closing let us once more cast a glance upon temples and churches. The number of the latter in the South is great, but the number of temples also was always equal to the demand. One who knows the history of the two centuries before Constantine is aware to what an extent Hellenic-Roman piety devoted itself to the construction of temples and pious endowments of every sort, vows, dreams, divine revelations as well as the hope of favor and profit, being the chief motives. In innumerable instances we find the same motives in church endowments. Vows of the city and vows of princes created the principal churches in Naples, for instance, and probably every church of the South is in some respect an evidence of that pagan desire for reward which descended to the Christian Church, of "righteousness of works." The famous treasure-chapel of St. Januarius in Naples originated in a vow of the city, given in the time of a severe pestilence. By this performance they won the favor of the "santo" referred to, and expected from him an equivalent. If for S. Gennaro we substitute an ancient divinity, we have the religious life of paganism.

While we find the ancient pagan motives active in the con-

struction and decoration of churches, yet a church is a very different thing from a temple. Let us compare a modern church with the temple of Pæstum. The pagan temple stood in the midst of a sacred territory, far from the tumult of secular life, often in the midst of sacred groves, and the presence of the divinity was felt in the solemn silence. The churches of the South, on the contrary, stand in the midst of the rush of the street, shut in by secular buildings, often disturbed by mad noises, as though it were intended to deprive the worshippers of the last remnant of inspiration, of sense of the nearness of God. The temple of Pæstum shows a direct, simple and majestic dignity and a solemn sobriety. The churches of Southern Italy? The older ones all have been modernised, i. e., supplied with the empty ornaments of senseless decoration; the later ones have all the same tendency. The temple at Pæstum had a single statue of a divinity, which occupied the "cella," and only one altar, just in front of the temple, and the eyes of those gathered about the altar turned from it to the solemn and silent interior of the temple. The churches of Southern Italy are filled almost without exception with glass tabernacles in which stand gaily decked or beribboned and bekerchiefed madonnas, creations of mere handicraft which never would have been endured in a pagan temple. Inside, the churches show the disturbing features of the many side-altars and other things which were unknown in the temples. On the anniversaries of the patron saints and Madonnas one might compare the churches with royal receptions; at the same time they are concert-halls, opera-houses, where one hears opera-air and merry dance-music. In Lent they become college lecture-rooms, where the Lenten preachers, generally advertised as famous, "distinguished orators," begin their addresses with "Signori," (Gentlemen). Sometimes one is reminded of a theatre, for applause with clapping of the hands is not unheard of. Fifteen hundred years ago the display oratory which had spread itself before that time in the forum and in the halls of the rhetors, entered the Church. It is still to be found in the churches of Southern Italy, and a saint or a Madonna has to endure not one, but seven, oratorical displays (panegyrics). A Greek temple was never disturbed by panegyrics.

Finally, the churches are mercantile establishments, having, like these, their signs, displayed in some cases constantly, in others only occasionally: "Perpetual, complete, daily absolution for living and dead." Such signs were not seen about Roman and Greek temples.



The last and most important church which was constructed in Southern Italy (or in all Italy) before the union of Italy under the house of Savoy is the church of S. Francisco di Paolo in Naples, built more than seventy years ago by King Ferdinand in consequence of a successful vow. It is an exact imitation in every respect of a pagan temple, of the Pantheon at Rome. Thus in this style of architecture the Church has returned once more to paganism.