

Regional divisions developed around three positions on this question. The incarnate Christ could be

- two separate persons, one divine and one human (as the **Nestorian churches**, stretching eastward across Asia, believed);
- one person, with only a divine nature (as the **Monophysites**, from Ethiopia and Egypt to Syria and Armenia, believed); or
- one person, but with both a divine nature and a human nature (as the Greek- and Latin-speaking churches believed).

Each of these positions has continued to find adherents, from the fifth century to the present day.

DIFFERENTIATION

Despite the many controversial issues of the early centuries—Christianity's relationship to Jewish scripture and law, the divine versus human nature of Jesus, the trinitarian understanding of God—the majority of Christians had remained members of a single 'catholic' (universal) church. Gradually, though, the divisions became more serious, and they involved growing numbers of Christians.

Alexandrian versus Antiochene Christology

The split that produced the Nestorian churches was the result in part of political rivalry and in part of a doctrinal dispute between theologians in Alexandria in Egypt and others in Antioch in Syria. The Alexandrians, such as Cyril (d. 444), understood Christ in terms reminiscent of the prologue to *John*: the eternal *logos* or Word was incarnated in the human person of Jesus, and therefore experienced all the changes that he did: birth, the gaining of wisdom, suffering, death.

By contrast, the Antiochenes, such as Theodore of Mopsuestia (in what is today southern Turkey; c. 350–428), argued that the *logos* was an entity distinct from the human Jesus, over whom it exercised a controlling influence. These differences came to a head when the theologians tried to define the status of Mary, the mother of Jesus. For the Alexandrians, Mary was the *theotokos* (in Greek, 'bearer of God'). But for the Antiochenes, she was the *christotokos* ('bearer of Christ'): the mother of the man Jesus but not of the eternal son of God. What was at stake here was not merely doctrine; the allegiance of popular devotion was at stake if one sided with Antioch against the Alexandrian *theotokos* concept.

Nestorianism

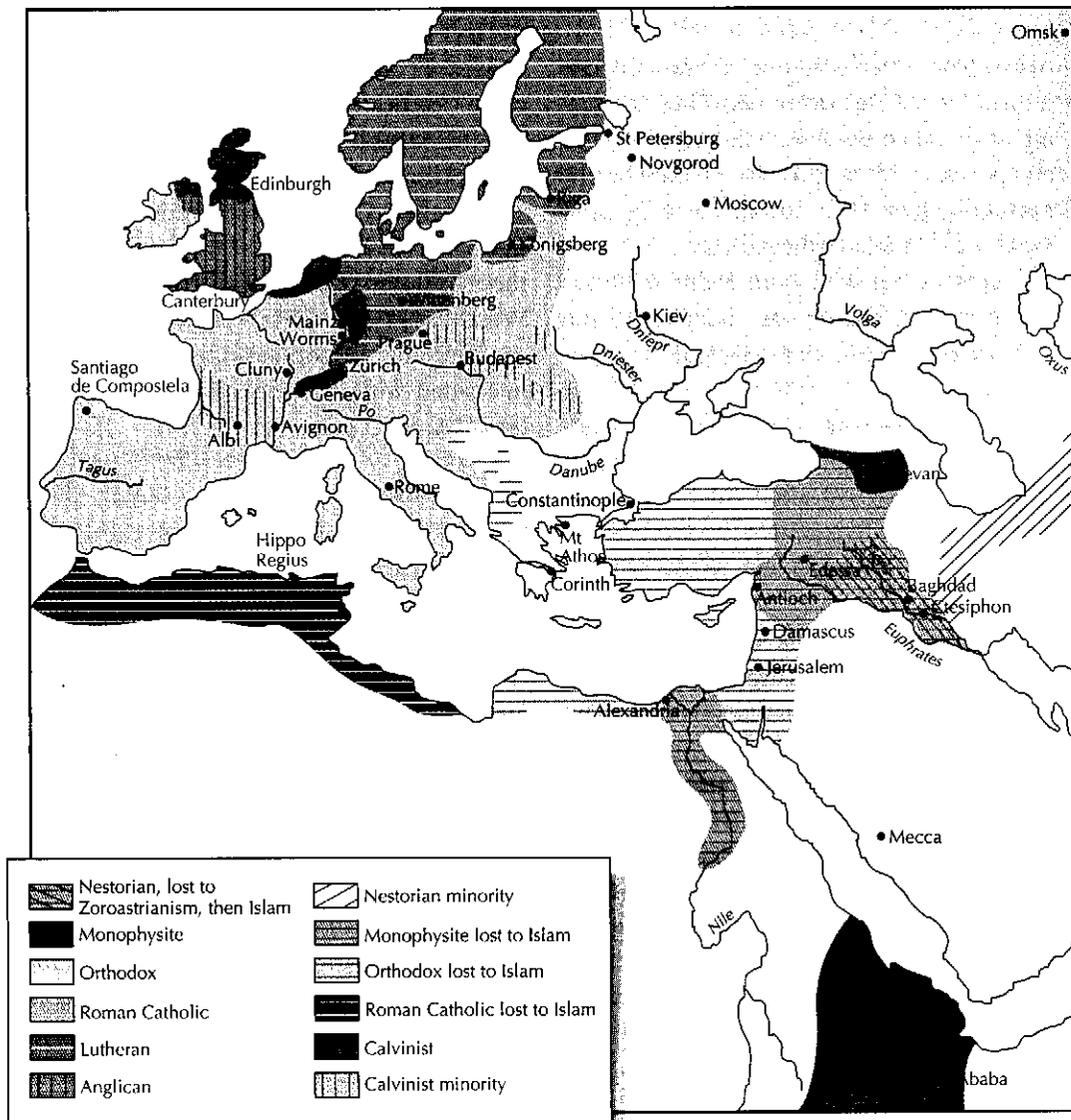
Politically, the rivalry was between Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria, and Nestorius (d. 451), patriarch of Constantinople. (Although Nestorianism was named after him, he was more a sponsor than an author of the Antiochene position.) Soon after his appointment in 428, Nestorius caused a furor by supporting the Antiochenes who rejected the view of Mary as the mother of God. Within three years, at the Council of Ephesus in 431, he was deposed; in 435 the emperor Theodosius II, who had appointed him bishop, condemned his writings; and the following year Nestorius was banished to a monastery in southern Egypt.

Despite the victory of the Alexandrians, Nestorian Christianity persisted in the east, eventually spreading from its centre in northeastern Syria (today in southeastern Turkey) across central Asia as far as western China and the southwestern coast of India.

The Monophysites

After the Council of Ephesus in 431, the doctrinal pendulum swung towards the position of Cyril of Alexandria. A key figure in this development was Eutyches, who headed a large monastery near Constantinople and had influential connections at the court of Theodosius II. Eutyches taught that

Map 4.1 Christianity: Major Spheres of Influence



with the union of the divine and the human in Jesus the human was fully absorbed into or replaced by the divine. Thus Christ had only one *physis* (Greek, 'nature')—hence the term 'monophysite'.

In 448 Eutyches was summoned by the pro-Antiochene patriarch to a synod (gathering) of bishops in Constantinople, where he was condemned and deposed for not acknowledging two

natures in Christ. By the following year, however, that patriarch had been replaced by a supporter of the Alexandrian position, who convoked what has been called the 'Robber Synod' to reverse the previous year's actions and condemn Eutyches' opponents instead. Then in 450 Theodosius II died. With the loss of imperial favour, Eutyches was expelled from his monastery, and when the new

Christianity in Egypt, Ethiopia, and Armenia

The indigenous Christians of Egypt, the Copts, believe that their faith was taken to Egypt by the gospel writer Mark, and that their ancestors were pioneers, with Anthony, in the development of monasticism. After the Islamic conquest in the seventh century, Egyptians who remained Christian were a minority, but a significant one. The Copts have retained a sense of cultural pride as 'original' Egyptians.

By the fourth century, Coptic Christian influence had extended to Ethiopia. A few centuries later, Ethiopia gave asylum to Muslim emigrants, but it was not subjugated by Islam. It remained Christian, recognizing the authority of the Coptic patriarch in Cairo and maintaining a window on the world through its own priests and monks in Jerusalem. The Ethiopian church has remained essentially Coptic, though it has been formally independent of Cairo since the mid-twentieth century.

In Armenia as in Egypt, legend traces the introduction of Christianity to the missionary activity of the apostles, in this case Thaddeus and Bartholomew. Armenian Christians maintain that their king Tiridates III, who was baptized by Gregory the Illuminator around 301, was the first ruler anywhere to establish Christianity as a state religion.

regime convoked a council at nearby Chalcedon in 451, it repudiated both Eutyches' views and the actions of the Robber Synod, while reconfirming the rejection of Nestorianism in the opposite direction.

The formula produced at Chalcedon steered a middle course between the Nestorians, who compromised the eternal deity of Jesus, and the Monophysites, who compromised his humanity, asserting that the incarnate Christ was one person

The Major Branches of Christianity

Nestorians (about 200,000)

- 'Assyrians' of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey
- Nestorian Malabar Christians in India

Monophysites (about 30 million)

- Copts in Egypt
- Ethiopians
- Jacobites or Syrian Orthodox
- Jacobite Malabar Christians in India
- Armenians

Orthodox (at least 150 million)

- Greek
- Bulgarian, Serbian, and Romanian
- Russian and Ukrainian

Catholics (about 900 million)

- Roman Catholics
- Eastern 'Uniate' churches (some Anglicans)

Protestants (about 400 million)

Sixteenth-century divisions

- Lutherans
- Anglicans
- Reformed (Presbyterian) churches
- Anabaptists
- Unitarians

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century divisions

- Congregationalists
- Baptists
- Quakers
- Methodists

Nineteenth-century divisions

- Disciples
- Seventh-Day Adventists
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Christian Scientists
- Mormons

with both a divine and a human nature. It was acceptable to both the Greek Church in Constantinople and the Latin Church in Rome. But it did not sit well with everyone. During the reign of Justinian (r. 527–65), Christians in three Eastern regions separated themselves from Constantinople. These were the Coptic Christians of Egypt and Ethiopia, the Jacobites of Syria, and the Armenians. All these branches survive to the present day.

Jacobites (Syrian Orthodox)

In Syria, where Antiochene theology and Nestorianism had been strong, Monophysite teachings were promoted in the sixth century through the vigorous activity of a missionary named Jacob, who was nicknamed Baradae ('ragged') because he disguised himself as a beggar to avoid arrest. From Constantinople to Egypt to the frontier of the Persian Empire, Jacob established congregations and organized a hierarchy. The surviving Syrian Orthodox Church, which is Monophysite, calls itself Jacobite in acknowledgement of his influence.

Like the Nestorians, Syrian Monophysites spread their teaching to the Malabar Coast of southwestern India, where it has survived. A Jacobite reform offshoot of 1836, influenced by British missionaries, called itself Mar Thoma (St Thomas) Church because legend says that the apostle Thomas took Christianity to India.

The Greek Orthodox Tradition

The councils of Nicaea in 325, Constantinople in 381, Ephesus in 431, and Chalcedon in 451 are called 'ecumenical', from a Greek word meaning 'world-wide', because they were accepted by both the Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic branches of Christianity as part of their respective official histories. Partly because of its location, the fourth and last of them, the Council of Chalcedon, was composed almost entirely of Eastern bishops, but in response to the Monophysite challenge it arrived at a formula that was acceptable to Rome as well as Constantinople. Its declaration reads, in part:

... our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in godhead and perfect in manhood; truly God and at the same time truly man of a reasonable soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father according to his godhead, and consubstantial with us according to his manhood, in all things like unto us apart from sin; begotten before all worlds (ages), of the Father according to his godhead, and also in these latter days, on account of us and our salvation, of the virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to his manhood.

This position, that the incarnate Christ was one person with both a divine and a human nature, still left plenty of room for debate. Chalcedon did not attempt to arrive at a final resolution—only to establish the acceptable limits of debate.

And the debate was certainly not over. In the early seventh century, there was what amounted to a rerun of the Monophysite controversy. In an attempt to win back the Monophysite Christians to the east, it was proposed that Christ had two natures, divine and human, but only one mode of activity (*energia*) or will (*thelema*); hence the name Monothelite for this view. But this effort was repudiated before the end of the century, and by then much of the Monophysite world was converting to Islam in any case. The main portion of the empire in the eastern Mediterranean remained orthodox within the terms of Chalcedon's doctrinal formulation. The Greek-speaking Byzantine (or Eastern Roman) Empire was a comparatively stable and prosperous region in the seventh and eighth centuries, and therefore far more conducive to intellectual life than its Latin-speaking Western counterpart, which was still struggling after the barbarian invasions. Byzantium lasted more than a thousand years after Constantine. Even the slow but steady spread of the Turks, who took control of Constantinople in 1453, did not mean the end of the Greek Church. Formally tolerated under Islam, though now forbidden to proselytize, the Byzantine Church

became a self-governing religious community under the Ottoman Turks, with the patriarch as its civil ruler. Greece gained its independence from Turkey in a rebellion that began in 1821, but Constantinople (renamed Istanbul by its new rulers) has remained Turkish.

Characteristic of Byzantium and also of the other Orthodox traditions is a close association of religion with the ruling regime and the national language. Historians refer to the involvement of the emperors in the affairs of the Church as 'caesaropapism', and Orthodox Christianity displayed a number of other features that could be described as imperial.

Theology

Representative of the eastern Mediterranean's cultural sophistication in that age was the Greek theologian John of Damascus (c. 675–c. 749), who for a time followed in his father's footsteps as the representative of the Christians to the Muslim caliph. His major work, *Pege gnoseos* ('Fountain of Wisdom'), is a comprehensive treatise on theological topics.

Medieval Byzantine theology included a rich vein of devotional practice and **mysticism**. Simeon (949–1022), who headed a monastery in Constantinople, wrote of the profundities of the spiritual life. A pervasive theme in his work is God's closeness to the faithful:

I know that the Immovable comes down;
I know that the Invisible appears to me;
I know that he who is far outside the
whole creation

Takes me into himself and hides me in his
arms.

...

I know that I shall not die, for I am within
the Life,

I have the whole of Life springing up as a
fountain within me.

He is my heart, he is in heaven

(McManners 1990: 147–8).

By the fourteenth century a group calling themselves the Hesychasts (from a Greek word meaning 'inner stillness') had developed a devotional practice centred on repetition of a mantra-like formula known as the Jesus Prayer: 'Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' When their practical spiritual discipline was challenged by Barlaam the Calabrian, a philosopher who held that one could know God directly only in the next life, another great Byzantine theologian came to their defence. Gregory Palamas distinguished between God's essence and his energies, agreeing with Barlaam that God transcends this realm, but arguing that God's energies come through to humans like the radiance of the transfigured Christ described in *Mark 9* and *Matthew 17*. Palamas held divine transcendence and divine contact with humans in balance: 'He is being and not being; he is everywhere and nowhere; he has many names and cannot be named; he is both in perpetual movement and immovable; he is absolutely everything and nothing of that which is' (Meyendorff 1964: 209).

Christianizing the Slavs

Eastern Orthodoxy is the name used to refer to the form of Christianity that was carried from Byzantium to various peoples in eastern Europe. In the ninth century, Orthodox missionaries to the Slavic peoples made significant headway. Language played an important part in their success, for they used local vernaculars rather than Greek, and this encouraged the development of independent local churches with a strong sense of national identity based on language.

This missionary effort was pioneered by two brothers, Cyril (826–69) and Methodius (c. 815–85). In 862 they travelled to Moravia (the region of today's Czech Republic), where they preached in the vernacular and produced translations of the Bible and the liturgy into Slavonic. When, after Cyril's time, a new alphabet (based on the Greek) was created for Slavic languages such as Bulgarian, Serbian, Ukrainian, and Russian, it was named Cyrillic in his honour. Romania, which was originally

colonized by Rome as the province of Dacia, was Christian from the fourth century and adopted the Latin alphabet, but its church was eventually brought into the Eastern Orthodox orbit during a period of Bulgarian rule.

Other parts of eastern Europe were converted by Roman Catholic missionaries, who instituted a Latin liturgy and more centralized Church control. Thus the languages of the mainly Catholic peoples such as the Croats, Slovenes, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Lithuanians, and Hungarians use the Latin alphabet. The early centre of Russian Orthodoxy was Kiev, in Ukraine, whose pagan ruler Vladimir apparently converted in order to marry the sister of the Byzantine emperor and thereby form an advantageous alliance. Whatever his motives, he became a vigorous promoter of Christianity, though it seems the methods he used among his subjects may have been more coercive than persuasive. It was only after Kiev fell to Mongol invaders in 1237 that Moscow replaced it as the centre of Russian religion and politics. Russian ecclesiastical and diplomatic interests coincided in the nineteenth century when, as part of its effort to establish a presence in the Holy Land, Moscow established churches and convents while strengthening diplomatic ties with the Turkish Empire. Likewise, Russian political expansion in Siberia was aided by missionaries to the indigenous peoples of the region. From 1917 to 1989 the communist state was hostile to religion of any kind. But Christianity survived, often transmitted from grandmother to grandchild. After 1989, the Russian Orthodox Church slowly reasserted its traditional role as the church favoured by the state, while Catholics and Protestants were allowed more freedom. Since the late 1990s, however, the state has been less than welcoming to foreign missionaries. A 2006 law brought the bank accounts of foreign-backed organizations under scrutiny, in effect cutting off most outside support for missionary work in Russia. In protest against the Catholic Church's 'expansionism', the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexy II refused to meet with Pope Benedict XVI during his

2007 trip to Russia. Protestants find their religious life even more restricted in the former Soviet republics of Belarus and Uzbekistan.

Secular Yugoslavia disintegrated in the 1990s into religio-ethnic strife among Catholic Croats, Muslim Bosnians and Albanians, and Orthodox Serbs. Today the leadership of the Serbian Orthodox Church continues to espouse Serbian nationalist policies, while the civil government wants good relations with its neighbours and closer integration with the European Union. To appease the influential Orthodox clergy, the Serbian government has introduced religious instruction in the school system, by Orthodox priests or others they approve. In 2006 a law was passed to return the properties of all religious communities previously nationalized under the Nazi or Communist regimes. The Jewish community alone has requested the denationalization of more than 500 properties confiscated during the Nazi period. So far, however, only the Orthodox Church has regained possession of its properties.

Constantinople and Rome

After the Council of Chalcedon, Greek and Latin Christianity grew further and further apart. The underlying reasons probably had more to do with politics and cultural differences, but once again a theological formulation provided a rallying point. At issue was a single word, *filioque* (Latin, 'and from the son'). Did the Holy Spirit 'proceed' from God the father, as the Greek Church had it in the Nicene Creed, or from the father and the son, as the Latin Church came to maintain? Photius, the patriarch of Constantinople, in 867 denounced both the intrusion of Latin missionaries into Bulgaria, which he took to be Greek territory, and the insertion of *filioque* into the creed. For the next two decades, one party in Constantinople repudiated the term and condemned the **pope**, while its opponents supported the term and condemned Photius.

Behind the theological niceties lay the basic issue of authority, for Rome had added *filioque* to the

creed without the consent of a universal Church council. In so doing, it had staked its claim to be the centre of authority against the Greek view of Rome as just one among five equally important patriarchates, and the Roman notion of papal authority against the Greek understanding of authority as vested in councils of bishops. The final break between Rome and Constantinople is conventionally dated to 1054, though it was in the making before then and attempts were made after that date to heal it.

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church venerated icons, refused to include *filioque* in the creed, permitted its clergy to marry, used languages other than Latin in Bible readings and the liturgy, and—most important—refused to recognize the supremacy of the Roman pontiff.

Eastern-rite Catholic Churches

Rome's efforts to recruit new adherents among Eastern Orthodox Christians led to the formation of new churches that, even though they were aligned with Rome rather than Constantinople, retained important elements of the Eastern tradition, from the use of local languages (rather than Latin) to immersion baptism. Significantly, they also continued to have married priests, although their higher ecclesiastical officers were generally drawn from the celibate clergy. Since most of the Eastern Catholic churches had Orthodox roots, most of them continue to have Orthodox counterparts today. The exception is the Maronite Church of Lebanon. Named after its fifth-century founder Maron, it has always been part of the Roman Catholic rather than the Orthodox world.

The Latin Tradition

The Papacy

The Church centred in Rome thought of itself as 'catholic', that is, universal. Its interaction with political regimes in the Latin world (the western

Mediterranean and northern Europe) produced the synthesis of religion, culture, and governmental and social structure often referred to as Christendom (the 'domain' of Christianity).

The bishop of Rome had unchallenged ecclesiastical authority in the Latin-speaking West of the empire (as did his Orthodox counterpart in the East). His office was particularly important in part because Rome was the capital of the empire, and in part because of the city's connection with St Peter—the 'rock' on which Jesus was supposed (in *Matthew* 16: 18) to have said he would build his church. Rome was believed to have been the site of Peter's martyrdom, and its bishops traced their institutional lineage to him. By the third century the bishops of Rome, who were called popes (from *papa*, 'father'), were claiming theological primacy as the successors of Peter, and their practical influence in matters of government increased dramatically after the fifth century, when government in the western part of the empire collapsed under the pressure of Germanic invasions. In those chaotic times, the Church was the principal source of organization and continuity. Culturally and religiously, Latin Christianity conquered the populations that were the military victors over Rome.

Augustine

In Constantine's century, Latin-speaking Christians in the western Mediterranean generally shared the doctrines approved by the councils held in the Greek-speaking East. But in the course of time the Latin theologians went their own way. The dominant issue in the East was the nature of divinity in God and Christ, while in the West it was human sinfulness and the possibility of divine redemption.

A landmark figure in this development was Aurelius Augustine (354–430), who was born in what is now Algeria. In his dramatic and passionate life, several currents flow together. He had a pagan father, and studied classical philosophy and rhetoric as well as Neoplatonism, the mystical interpretation of Plato's philosophy. His mother, Monica,

had attempted to raise him as a sincere Christian, but he sowed his wild oats in his student years, even having a child with his common-law companion. Between the ages of twenty and thirty he was a Manichaean, but after a vivid conversion experience he returned to the Christian faith in a far more sophisticated form than the one in which he had been raised. He became a priest and a prolific theological writer, and as bishop of Hippo, in North Africa, campaigned actively against heresy.

The questions that had preoccupied Augustine while he was a Manichaean—the struggle between good and evil, spirit and matter, the tension between the spiritual and the carnal—remained in his Christian writing. His ideas shaped medieval Christianity's view of the human self and personality as dependent on God, and his sense of guilt concerning the body's appetites was reflected in the medieval Church's central concern with liberation from sin.

Augustine's best-known work is probably his *Confessions*. Relating his own spiritual struggles, the tension between his conscience and his will, he tells how he came to the Christian faith, and explains how it is in principle possible for anyone to follow the same path to faith in the goodness of God.

It is characteristic of Augustine, after reasoning his way through to a logical conclusion, to

show that this conclusion accords with a text from the Bible. This approach set the pattern for much medieval Christian philosophy. In keeping with its role as the 'handmaid of theology', it attempted to show revelation, authority, and faith to be reasonable, and to spell out their consequences.

A famous theological dispute arose between Augustine and a British monk named Pelagius, who encountered Augustine's views in Rome and disagreed. The theological question at issue in the 'faith versus works' debate was how salvation is achieved. Augustine followed Paul in insisting that the only way to salvation was through faith in the grace of God. Pelagius, however, took Jesus' words 'Be therefore perfect as your heavenly father is perfect' to mean that humans could achieve such perfection through their own moral efforts, their 'works'. Pelagius did not actually deny the grace of God, but his critics, including Augustine, charged that he did not give adequate recognition to the role that divine grace plays in overcoming human frailty.

Perhaps Augustine's most influential work was *The City of God*: a monumental theology of history, from biblical to Roman civilization. His thesis is that culture and institutions, even those of the Roman Empire itself, are of no enduring value in the sight of God. The earthly city, with all its

Augustine's Conversion

The quotation at the end of this extract comes from Paul's letter to the Romans:

I was greatly disturbed in spirit, angry at myself with a turbulent indignation because I had not entered thy will and covenant, O my God, while all my bones cried out to me to enter. . . . It was I who willed and I who was also unwilling. In either case, it was I. . . . Suddenly I heard the voice of a boy or a girl—I know not which—coming from the neighbouring house, chanting over and over again, 'Pick it up, read it.' . . . In silence I read the paragraph on which my eyes first fell: 'Not in revelling and drunkenness, not in lust and wantonness, not in quarrels and rivalries. Rather, arm yourselves with the Lord, Jesus Christ; spend no more thought on nature and nature's appetites' (Outler 1955: 170–6).

Pope Gregory I

A remarkable leader, Pope Gregory I 'the Great' (r. 590–604) performed ecclesiastical and imperial administrative duties simultaneously. His reputation was such that the collecting and editing of a repertory of ancient musical melodies, which took place after his death, in the seventh and eighth centuries, was attributed to him. It included over 600 compositions for various parts of the **mass**. Gregorian chant was not the only such collection, but it was the most influential religious source for the later development of European music. The term 'Gregorian' applied to the calendar, however, denotes another Gregory a thousand years later. In 1582, an adjustment under Pope Gregory XIII set the calendar of western Europe ten days ahead of the Julian calendar, which continued to be used by the Orthodox churches.

sins, is part of the divine plan; its kings are divine representatives and rule by divine mandate. But humans must in the end flee the earthly for the heavenly city, to join the community to whom God has promised salvation. The Church both symbolizes this city of God and is the means of reaching it. Christian political theory is based on Augustine in that it sees the Church as transcending the state.

Medieval Christianity

The Middle Ages are generally considered to stretch from the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, around 500, to the beginning of the Renaissance, around 1500. It was during this period that many Christian doctrines and practices became established.

The Monastic Life

Monastic communities developed a highly structured religious discipline in the medieval period. There were all-male communities of monks and all-female communities of nuns. Members of a community were required to make solemn vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, to stay within the physical precincts of the community, and to follow the community's 'rule' (its code of discipline or body of regulations).

Monks played an important part in both the Greek and Latin traditions. Technically, since monasticism had begun as an alternative to established

religion, monks were laymen rather than priests, but a demanding schedule of prayer and worship was central to their practice. A distinction was drawn between 'religious' (or 'regular') clergy, who followed a monastic rule, and 'secular' clergy, who worked in the world and in the Greek Church (unlike the Roman) were permitted to marry. (Members of ecclesiastical hierarchy were always celibate, however.) An important centre of Byzantine spirituality is Mount Athos, a peninsula in northern Greece that projects into the Aegean Sea. It is dotted by twenty monasteries founded at different times over the last thousand years. The entire peninsula is a preserve of male monks, and no woman is permitted to set foot there.

Monastic Discipline

The Rule of St Benedict is fundamental to monastic discipline. Benedict (c. 480–550) came from Nursia, east of Assisi in Italy. In about 529, he moved with a small band of monks to Monte Cassino, a summit overlooking the route between Rome and Naples. The instructions that he put in place covered every aspect of communal religious life, from spiritual discipline to economic self-sufficiency. Benedict's sister, Scholastica, established a convent for women nearby, and other self-governing monasteries based on Benedict's rule were founded across western Europe.

Daily living in the Middle Ages took a great deal of work, for those inside religious communities no

From the Rule of St Benedict

The regulations that Benedict established in the first half of the sixth century became the model for many other religious communities.

XXIII. *Of excommunication for faults.* If a brother be found contumacious or disobedient, proud or a grumbler, or in any way acting contrary to the holy Rule and despising the orders of his seniors, let him, according to the Lord's commandment, be privately admonished once and twice by his seniors. If he do not then amend, let him be publicly rebuked before all. But if even then he do not correct himself, let him be subjected to excommunication, if he understands the gravity of this penalty. If, however, he is incorrigible, let him undergo corporal chastisement.

XXXIV. *Of the extent of excommunication.* The extent of the excommunication or discipline is to be regulated according to the gravity of the fault; and this is to be decided by the abbot's discretion. If a brother be found guilty of a lighter fault, he shall be excluded from the common table; he shall also intone neither psalm nor antiphon in the oratory, or read a lesson, until he has atoned. He shall take his meals alone, after those of the brethren; if, for example, the brothers have their meal at the sixth hour, he shall have his at the ninth. . . .

XXXIII. *Whether the monks should have anything of their own.* More than any thing else is this vice of property to be cut off root and branch from the monastery. Let no one presume to give or receive anything without the leave of the abbot, or to retain anything as his own. He should have nothing at all: neither a book, nor tablets, nor a pen—nothing at all. For indeed it is not allowed to the monks to have bodies or wills in their own power. But for all things necessary they must look to the Father of the monastery; nor is it allowable to have anything which the abbot has not given or permitted. All things shall be common to all, as it is written: 'Let not any man presume or call anything his own' [Acts 4: 32] (Bettenson 1967: 118, 120).

less than for those outside. Monasteries and convents had to support themselves, often through the sale of the products of their own fields and vineyards; thus physical labour was an integral part of any community's rule.

Monks and nuns were also required to attend prayer services at specified hours throughout the day, and most were expected to engage in serious study of the scriptures. In fact, the medieval monasteries played a crucial role as cultural custodians, for their scholars and libraries together preserved much ancient learning that might have otherwise been lost.

By the tenth century, however, many monasteries were attracting criticism for their worldliness.

Some were effectively under the control of the local feudal authorities on whose support they depended; large donations of land and other bequests had made some of them wealthy; and the manual tasks that had once been an integral part of monastic discipline were increasingly performed by servants or serfs.

Cluniac Fathers

Founded in 910 by William the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine, the monastery at Cluny, north of Lyon in France, became the centre of a movement to reform monasticism by bringing its institutions under the control of religious rather than secular authorities. Over the next two and a half centuries,

the Cluniac order established a network of more than 300 satellite houses across Europe. Like the Church itself in Constantine's day, the order served as a stabilizing influence at a time of political fragmentation and turbulence.

Cistercians

Within a century of its founding, however, Cluny itself was growing rich. Robert of Molesmes responded in 1098 by founding an austere new order at Cîteaux, north of Cluny near Dijon. The Cistercians (from the Latin for Cîteaux) wore simple undyed wool habits, ate no meat, and worshipped in sparsely decorated churches. Within a century there were 500 Cistercian abbeys. Though the Cistercians had refused lavish endowments, rising land values in the more marginal areas where they established themselves eventually made their order wealthy too.

One group of Cistercians in particular became known for their rule of silence. The Cistercians of the Strict Observance, or Trappists, were founded in the 1600s by Armand de Rancé, abbot of the monastery of La Trappe in Normandy. The best known Trappist in the twentieth century was the mystic Thomas Merton (1915–68), who became interested in Asian spirituality, especially Zen Buddhism, and was active in social protest in the 1960s.

Other Cistercians helped to found spiritual orders of knights such as the Knights Templar, the Knights of St John, and the twelfth-century Teutonic order. Their members made pilgrimages to the Holy Land and took as their biblical model the Maccabees, the Jewish patriots of the second century BCE.

Carthusians

Also influenced by Robert was a German named Bruno, who turned to the religious life in his mid-forties and followed Robert's spiritual direction before founding his own order in 1084. The Carthusian order (named after its base at La Grande Chartreuse, near Grenoble in France), it

too demanded a vow of silence and considerable austerity from its members. Like the Benedictine abbey of Fécamp, near the English Channel, the Chartreuse abbey supported itself in part by making and selling a famous liqueur, in this instance the brilliant green one that gave its name to the colour chartreuse.

Mendicant Orders

The monastic response to the secular world had been to withdraw from it—even if that withdrawal turned out to be more a matter of theory than of practice. With the growth of towns and cities in Europe, however, came a significant new problem: urban poverty. To respond to the needs of the urban poor, a new type of religious order emerged. Instead of turning their backs on the world and withdrawing to monasteries, members of the new **mendicant** orders dedicated themselves to pastoral work, serving the people.

There were mendicant orders for women and laypeople as well as men. Their members—called **friars**, from the Latin *frater* ('brother')—either worked or begged for their living, and were not bound to one convent. In England, the chief mendicant orders were identified by the colour of the mantle worn over the habit or religious uniform.

Franciscans

Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) grew up as the privileged son of a wealthy cloth merchant in central Italy, but a serious illness in his twenties led him to rethink his life. On a pilgrimage to Rome, he was so moved by the beggars outside St Peter's Basilica that he exchanged clothes with one of them and spent the day begging for alms. When he returned to Assisi, he dedicated his life to serving the poor. Gradually attracting a small group of like-minded companions, he established a rule of life emphasizing poverty, which received papal approval in 1209. Within a few years, Clara of Assisi had formed a Franciscan women's order known as the Poor Clares. An offshoot of the Franciscans called the Capuchins drew up their own rule in

The Prayer of St Francis

Although this prayer is not found in the writings of St Francis of Assisi, it has been attributed to him by Franciscan oral tradition.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O divine master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

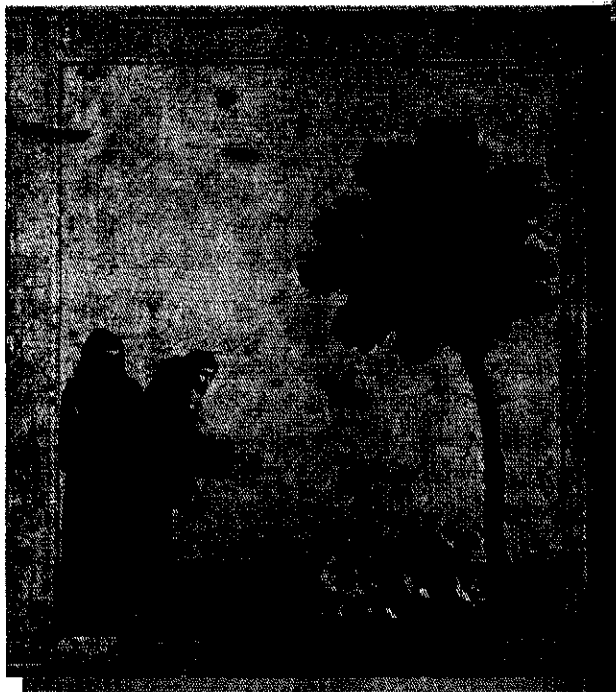
1529 and are still known today for their soup kitchens, which offer free meals in impoverished neighbourhoods.

In 1224 Francis experienced a vision of an angel from whom he received the 'stigmata': wounds in his own body replicating those suffered by Christ on the cross. Proclaimed a saint in 1228—just two years after his death—he quickly became a beloved figure and the subject of many legends, among them several that emphasized his love of the natural world. In one of the most famous tales, he preaches to a flock of birds, telling them how fortunate they are to be provided for by God.

Dominicans

In 1216–17 a priest from northern Spain named Dominic Guzmán received a papal mandate to establish a preaching order dedicated to combatting the 'Albigensian heresy'. (Named for the city of Albi in southwestern France, Albigensianism was a dualistic doctrine, not unlike Manichaeism, centred on a view of existence as a struggle between light and darkness, and was highly critical of Roman Catholicism.) Dominicans such as

Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) rapidly established their influence as itinerant preachers of doctrine in university towns such as Paris.



St Francis preaching to the birds; a detail from the predella of an altarpiece (c. 1295) depicting the stigmatization by the early Renaissance master Giotto di Bondone (Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource NY).

Carmelites

The Carmelites, or hermits of Mount Carmel, were organized in Palestine in 1154, during the Crusades, and given a rule by the patriarch of Jerusalem. As the numbers of crusaders in the Holy Land declined, the Carmelites established themselves in Europe and England, where they were termed 'White Friars'.

Celibacy

The insistence that priests be celibate became stronger in the Middle Ages and much stronger in Latin Catholicism than in Greek Orthodoxy. Rationales for priestly celibacy included the spiritual benefit of surmounting worldly desires and the practical benefit of freedom from the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood. In addition, since it made a hereditary priesthood impossible, celibacy worked against the tendency for institutional influence to become concentrated in particular families.

Popes and Princes

From the ninth century onward, popes and princes competed for supremacy. When Charlemagne, king of the Franks, was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III in 800, the Franks considered it an endorsement of their German-based kingdom as heir to the political mantle of Rome (though Voltaire, in the eighteenth century, remarked that this 'Holy Roman Empire' was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire.) Later in the ninth century, when Charlemagne's dynasty was faltering and the popes were strong, the Church argued that the coronation illustrated the Church's role as king-maker.

In the tenth century, however, ecclesiastical appointments could be bought and sold; princes could confer the offices of abbots and bishops on their own nominees; and even the bishopric of Rome was increasingly under the influence of princes. In 1046 the German (Holy Roman) emperor Henry III marched into Italy, deposed three

rival claimants to the papacy, and imposed his own candidate.

Finally, in 1059, Pope Nicholas II took advantage of a fluid political situation to decree that the selection of popes should be decided by an assembly of cardinals (senior clergy of important churches in Rome). And in 1075, Pope Gregory VII not only issued a decree that threatened excommunication (expulsion from the Church) for any prince who invested anyone with an ecclesiastical office, but declared that the pope could depose emperors.

The dispute continued over the next two centuries, but gradually a rationale for defining the relative spheres of popes and princes was developed. Based on the distinction between temporal and spiritual power drawn by Pope Gelasius in 494, the theory of 'two swords' held that the pope is given both the sword of spiritual power and the sword of temporal power but delegates the temporal to a secular ruler, who is therefore accountable to him. In intellectual arguments in the 1050s, the two sides were making relatively simple claims of possession and scriptural precedent; by 1300 they were disputing political philosophy.

Institutionally as well, the Church grew to resemble the secular states with which it competed. It depended on tax revenues, which it was often unable to collect. It was also subject to coups both from within the Church and from outside. In 1303 Pope Boniface VIII was arrested in his family villa, and in 1309 the French-born Pope Clement decided to move the papal court from Rome to Avignon, in southern France, where it remained until 1377. This period is sometimes referred to as the 'Babylonian captivity' of the papacy.

Just after the return to Rome, the Church was once again plunged into turmoil when a disputed papal election produced two claimants to the papal office. This split in the Church, known as the Great Schism, continued for more than a generation. And although it was resolved in theory in 1414, when the council of bishops meeting at

Constance in southern Germany ruled that the papacy was accountable to assemblies such as itself, this ruling was observed only in the breach until more than a century later. Real power during the fifteenth century was largely in the hands of national rulers in different parts of Europe, and the popes themselves increasingly behaved like Renaissance princes.

The Crusades

The Crusades were a series of military campaigns spanning two centuries, in which Latin Christians from western Europe attempted to recover Jerusalem from Muslim control. Part of the impetus for this effort was a long tradition of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, often undertaken as a penance or in fulfillment of a vow, on the part of western European Christians who were also hoping to acquire sacred relics that could be brought back and placed in churches where they could be venerated by the faithful.

In the course of Islam's expansion across the Middle East, the Arab Muslims had captured Jerusalem in 637. The few local people who remained Christian were formally tolerated, in accordance with Islam's policy regarding its fellow Abrahamic religions, and Christians from outside the Islamic world were still free to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem. In the eleventh century, however, Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem were interrupted by several events. These included the burning of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by the mad caliph al-Hakim in 1010 and the capture of Jerusalem in 1071 by the Seljuq Turks, who as recent converts to Islam were less accommodating than the Arabs had been. The Byzantine emperors felt threatened and appealed for Western help.

In 1095, in an eloquent address in Claermont, France, Pope Urban II declared it God's will that Western Christians go to the aid of the Eastern Christians and liberate the holy places of Palestine. Thousands of French, Norman, and Flemish knights responded by 'taking the cross' in a public

act signifying their commitment to the cause. The crusaders won some bloody victories, capturing Antioch and Jerusalem (1099) and even Edessa in northeastern Syria.

To hold on to their conquests, small crusader states were organized along the Syro-Palestinian coast. Among those states was the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, which the crusaders held for nearly a century. They were driven out, however, by Salah al-Din (Saladin) in 1187.

In response to the crusaders' losses, beginning with the fall of Edessa in 1144, further expeditions set out from Europe, but these later crusades were often unfocussed, distracted by objectives short of Jerusalem. The second crusade, for instance, was diverted in 1148 to the unsuccessful siege of Damascus, a city that had been at peace with the kingdom of Jerusalem. On the third crusade, Richard I ('Lion-hearted') of England took Cyprus from the Byzantines in 1192. Troops of the fourth crusade in 1204, bound for Egypt, went instead to Constantinople, plundered the city, and placed a ruler from Flanders on the throne. The Byzantines recaptured the city in 1261, but relations between Western and Eastern Christians did not recover.

In 1228, the Holy Roman emperor Frederick II negotiated the return to the crusaders of Jerusalem, where he had himself crowned king even though he was under an excommunication order. In 1244, however, Jerusalem was once more lost to the Muslims. The Crusades brought out the best and the worst in the people involved: valour and devotion, but also violence and greed. Too often, a religious project turned into a worldly adventure in which many men found scope for their ambitions as warriors. And the people of Venice, in particular, profited from the opportunity to open trade with the East, as well as the looting of Constantinople in 1204; among the spoils the crusaders brought back to their city were four life-sized bronze horse sculptures that have adorned the basilica of San Marco ever since.

Pope Innocent III condemned the crusaders' attacks on fellow Christians. Yet their successes

strengthened papal as well as national authority in Europe. They fired the enthusiasm of many people, inspiring chronicles, poetry, and heroic stories, and they broadened Europe's geographical and intellectual horizons, perhaps even preparing the way for later voyages of exploration. But the Latin states in the Holy Land failed militarily, and the attacks on the Byzantines only deepened the divisions between Eastern and Western Christians. Since the colonial era, Muslims have regarded the crusaders as precursors of Western infiltration and intrusion into the territory of the Middle East.

Sainthood

Over the centuries the Church developed criteria for sainthood (including the performance of attested miracles), a canonical list of saints, and a rigorous procedure for screening new nominees for the title. The first person to become a saint by papal decree was a German bishop, in 993.

The saints, collectively, came to be regarded as a kind of heavenly senate or honour society. They were thought to possess merit or virtue, a personal credit in the economy of blessedness, that could be drawn on by believers who wanted them to intercede with God on his or her behalf. By praying to a saint or making a pilgrimage to his or her shrine, one might win release from punishment in the next existence and from guilt in this one. In short, the saints could be powerful allies in the quest for spiritual benefit.

Particular saints are honoured on particular days. Their profile was so high in Latin Christianity that in the sixteenth century Spanish and Portuguese explorers of the New World named islands and features of the coastline for the saints on whose days they arrived at these places.

Certain saints came to be associated with specific conditions or occupations. St Christopher for example, who was said to have carried the child Jesus across a dangerous river, is one of several patron saints of travellers, and St Cecilia became the

patron of musicians because she sang a song to God on her deathbed.

Particular saints also came to be associated with particular symbols. Visitors to Venice, for instance, learn that the lion symbolizes the gospel author St Mark. Similarly, a bishop portrayed carrying a beehive is likely St Ambrose, the fifth-century bishop of Milan, whose name connotes nectar; reportedly, Ambrose's mother dreamed that as a boy he swallowed a bee, which made him sweet of speech. But the beehive is also associated with the twelfth-century St Bernard of Clairvaux, who was called the 'honey-mouthed teacher'. Keys represent the apostle Peter, to whom (in a famous passage in *Matthew 16*) Jesus promises the keys to earth and heaven; but there are at least nine other saints who have also been represented with keys. And the orb appears not only with God but also with Dominic, the twelfth-century founder of the Dominican order whose mission it was to bring light to the world.

In some places the traditions of particular saints include elements of pre-Christian customs and symbolism. The eighth-century English Church historian Bede reports correspondence from Gregory the Great a hundred years before him:

On the day of the dedication or the festivals of the holy martyrs, whose relics are deposited there, let them make themselves huts from the branches of trees around the churches which have been converted out of shrines, and let them celebrate the solemnity with religious feasts. Do not let them sacrifice animals to the devil, but let them slaughter animals for their own food to the praise of God (*Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 30; Colgrave 1969: 109).

St Ursula was depicted as sailing the Rhine in the fashion of the earlier Teutonic moon goddess Urschel. And St Christopher, 'Christ-bearer', was said to have felt he was bearing the weight of the



St Christopher carrying the Christ child; a woodcut by an unknown artist from a 1423 edition of the *Golden Legend*, a collection of hagiographies compiled around 1260.

universe when he carried the child Jesus on his shoulder, recalling Hercules and Atlas, who bore the weight of the world in classical mythology.

A saint named Josaphat was venerated for his good works in India, but scholars now believe that his name was derived from the Buddhist title Bodhisattva and that the Josaphat legend was based on the story of the Buddha in his days as a Bodhisattva, before his enlightenment. And in southern France the discovery of what was thought to be the headstone marking the grave of a martyred saint inspired calls for the canonization of 'Saint Decimil'—until someone realized that the tombstone was actually a milestone marking an old Roman road.

In 1969 Pope Paul VI eliminated from the roster of saints several whose historical existence had been found questionable, among them St

Christopher. Their status in the Anglican Church, which separated from Rome in the sixteenth century, remained unchanged, however.

The Figure of Mary

Pre-eminent among the Christian saints was Mary, the mother of Jesus. Although she is largely in the background in the gospel accounts of Jesus' public ministry, her role as the virgin mother and her presence at the crucifixion (in *John* 19) made her the object of intense popular devotion, both as the principal feminine point of access to the Trinity and as a model of sorrow-enduring love in her own right. Among the events in her life commemorated first in the Greek east and eventually throughout the Christian world were the annunciation of her pregnancy, her ritual purification following the birth of Jesus, and her death, celebrated in the Orthodox east as the feast of the Dormition ('falling asleep'—that is, death) and in the West as the feast of the Assumption (referring to her 'assumption' into heaven).

At the same time, she became the object of intense theological speculation, not only during the fifth-century Nestorian controversy over her status as *theotokos* ('bearer of God'), but in debates over matters such as her bodily assumption into heaven and the doctrine of the **Immaculate Conception**, according to which she herself was born without the 'stain' of original sin.

A widespread custom among Roman Catholics is the use of the **rosary**, a string of fifty-eight beads and a small **crucifix** (a cross bearing the image of the suffering Christ) to keep track of the sequence of prayers. The rosary has five sequences of ten beads, separated by single beads of a different colour or size. (The English word 'bead' comes from the same origin as the German *beten*, 'to pray'.) The person using the rosary will say one 'Our Father' (also known as the Lord's Prayer) and ten 'Hail Marys'. The Hail Mary is a brief prayer whose first phrase is found in the first chapter of Luke's gospel:

Mariology

The status of Mary has tended to be more exalted among Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic thinkers than among Protestants. Although Martin Luther seems at times to have affirmed the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, his reasons may have had less to do with Mary herself than with the implications of those doctrines for the status for Christ. John Calvin praised her as 'holy virgin' but had reservations about her title as 'mother of God'.

By contrast, the Roman Catholic Church placed more emphasis than ever on Mary after the Reformation. In 1854, Pope Pius IX defined as **dogma**—authoritative, indisputable truth—the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Nearly a century later, in 1950, Pope Pius XII did the same for the Assumption: the doctrine according to which Mary was taken up bodily to heaven upon her death. The Second Vatican Council (1962–5) did not add to her titles, as some had wished, although Pope Paul VI proclaimed her Mother of the Church in 1964. John Paul II also spoke in traditional terms of Marian piety. Catholic devotion to Mary is somewhat more restrained today than it was in the past, but Pope Benedict XVI is a strong advocate of Marian devotion.

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

In Latin Europe, artistic depictions of Mary developed a set of conventions all their own. Although some of these conventions can be traced to the cult of the pre-Christian goddess Isis, Mary's role is not limited to that of the devoted young mother. She is also the mature woman who grieves at the martyrdom of her adult son; she is the model of purity and incorruptibility, of devotion and fidelity, of sorrow and compassion. Many statues and paintings of the Virgin Mary present her alone, as a model of selflessness to which all—male as well as female—might aspire.

Many devout Catholics have reported experiencing visions of Mary. Among the most famous was Bernadette Soubirous, a young girl from Lourdes in southwestern France who in 1858 claimed to have seen Mary on sixteen occasions and to have received from her the command to build a church. Lourdes has been an

important place of pilgrimage and faith healing ever since.

Evil, Devil, and Angels

Does the devil exist? Today, many Christians who are quite ready to think of God in personal terms are reluctant to suppose that a comparable being exists as his adversary. In 1999 Pope John Paul II advised the faithful to think of hell not as a place but as a condition of spiritual estrangement. Things were different in the Middle Ages. Not only did God have an angelic host, but the devil—Satan, or the Antichrist—commanded a corresponding host of demons.

Belief in evil spirits or demons is nearly universal in traditional religions. Some theorists associate this belief with the fear of threatening forces, including ferocious animals, in the natural world. Others attribute it to the fear that angry ghosts of the dead may return to settle old scores, or to berate the living for ignoring them.

Likewise widespread among societies is the belief in good or protective spirits. In the biblical tradition, the term 'angel' meant 'messenger',

usually a male herald. Over time, however, angels in Christianity were increasingly represented as winged and haloed feminine creatures. But the belief remained into modern times that every person is watched over by a guardian angel.

Medieval theologians devoted considerable speculation to angels. Several authors, influenced by Neoplatonic descriptions of the cosmos as consisting of nine emanating spheres, ranked angels in a nine-level hierarchy. Angels were thought to be created, not eternal, and to have will, but not emotion. They know God more fully than humans do but still not completely.

The notion of the devil, a single adversary leading the host of demonic powers, may be as old as monotheism itself. The Greek *diabolos* ('slanderer') matches the name Satan ('accuser' or 'adversary') in Hebrew. He was also called Ba'al-zabul ('mighty lord') corrupted to Ba'al-zabub ('lord of the flies').

A view common since early Christian writers is that the devil started as an angel but that through pride he tried to take over God's role and so fell from grace. This is the implication of the name Lucifer ('bearer of light'): a star that has fallen from heaven. Biblical tradition speaks of humankind (personified as Adam) as having fallen from the paradise of Eden through an act of selfishness, and Christian theology made selfishness central to its notion of innate, or 'original', sin. The notion that the devil had fallen from heaven in a parallel fashion offered plenty of opportunity for moral admonition.

Once fallen, Lucifer presides over the realm of hell, which is the destiny of the wicked after their earthly life. The medieval imagination mapped this realm in often grotesque detail. The torments suffered by the wicked ranged from extreme cold, far from the divine light, to boiling in cauldrons. Whatever morbid pleasure some people may have derived from imagining their own tormentors in similar cauldrons could well have been offset by the fear that they themselves might face punishment for wicked thoughts, if not wicked deeds.

The medieval Christian world seems to have been obsessed with the reality that death comes to us all. Death was unpredictable but always close at hand, especially after more than a third of the population of western Europe was wiped out by plague, the Black Death, in the late 1340s. At the same time it was considered the consequence of sinfulness and marked the beginning of the eternal punishment the sinner could expect to face in the hereafter. Among the rituals that served to remind Christians of the human condition was a 'dance of death' in which the participants dressed as skeletons.

Sin, Heresy, and the Inquisition

To the modern mind, the Latin Christianity of the Middle Ages seems obsessed with sin. Humans were considered subjectively or 'originally' sinful owing to their pride and self-will, but specific actions were also objectified as sins. Medieval theologians believed that such sins contributed to the individual's mortality. Referring to the first New Testament letter of John (1 John 5: 16), they drew a distinction between minor 'venial' sins, which could be forgiven, and 'mortal' sins, which were so serious as to deprive the soul of God's grace; to be classified as 'mortal', a sin had to concern a 'grave matter' and be committed both knowingly and willfully. Even mortal sins could be forgiven, however, as long as the sinner confessed to a priest, who could prescribe penance and offer absolution.

For moral edification, the Church also warned the faithful against seven 'deadly sins': pride, covetousness or avarice, lust or lechery, envy, gluttony, anger or wrath, and sloth. A list of seven was established as early as the beginning of the seventh century by Pope Gregory I, although his seventh sin was despair rather than sloth.

There were also seven virtues. Augustine, at the end of the fourth century, was among those who combined four virtues central to Greek philosophy—wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice—with the three primary New Testament

virtues of faith, hope, and love, best known from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (13: 13). (By the late 1800s, 'charity' had been added to that list, but it was originally understood to be included in 'love'.)

Another virtue, not identified as such but useful for survival, was conformity. In the Middle Ages, European society was dominated by the Church, and those who were not baptized into the faith, notably Jews and Muslims, lacked the rights and privileges of the mainstream society. There had also occasionally been Christians—whether dissenting intellectuals or ill-informed peasants—whose differences from the mainstream marked them as heretics. During the eleventh century, increasing numbers of heretics were burned at the stake, though as a rule such sentences were carried out by secular rather than religious authorities. 'Heretic' groups such as the Waldensians of northwestern Italy and the Albigensians or Cathars of southwestern France tended to seek refuge in regions where such authority was less strict.

Church councils in the twelfth century prescribed penalties for heresy, including expulsion from the Church, imprisonment, and confiscation of property. Such penalties were part of the internal legal system that the Latin Church was developing, known as canon law, which covered Church institutions, the conduct of clergy and laity, and adherence to doctrine. Canon law was in place by 1184, when Pope Lucius III instructed bishops to carry out 'episcopal inquisitions' in their dioceses: to investigate allegations of heretical activity, examine the suspects, and turn over any resisters to the secular authorities for punishment.

These measures intensified in the early thirteenth century, with the organization of the Dominican order, initially to combat the Albigensians. In 1233 Pope Gregory IX established a tribunal at Toulouse, which went so far as to remove from Christian cemeteries the remains of persons posthumously charged with heresy.

The Inquisition in Toulouse established a trial procedure that lasted for centuries. Those accused

of heresy, even by anonymous informers, were presumed guilty unless they could prove their innocence. Those who confessed were assigned penances and penalties, but those who maintained their innocence were returned to prison to 'discover' their heresy. In 1252 Pope Innocent IV ruled that torture could be used and that heretics handed over to the secular authorities should be executed within five days. The Inquisition was at its most brutal in Spain, where the grand inquisitor Tomás de Torquemada ordered more than two thousand executions and aided the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims from Spain in 1492—the same year that Columbus sailed to America.

Peasant superstition contributed to the medieval tendency to identify certain individuals as witches, practitioners of malevolent magic. Witches were thought to be the devil's agents on earth and to have intimate sexual relations with him. The *Malleus Maleficarum* ('Hammer of Witches'), a handbook for Christian witch-hunting, was published in 1486 by two German Dominicans, Heinrich Kraemer and Johann Sprenger, who two years previously had been authorized by Pope Innocent VIII to eradicate witchcraft from Germany.

Society's efforts to hunt down, prosecute, and execute such individuals by burning demonstrate how devastating the fear of non-conforming behaviour can be. Very often, personal grudges led to accusations of witchcraft. In records of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century witchcraft trials in England, the most frequent charge was that the alleged witch, usually a neighbour, often an old woman, had caused some misfortune to befall the accuser. Widows and women with knowledge of herbal cures were particularly likely to attract accusations of witchcraft. It is also possible that the symptoms of 'demonic possession' suffered by some accusers may have been physiological; records of the witchcraft trials of 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts, have suggested to some modern researchers that the accusers were accidentally poisoned by ergot—a grain fungus that produces a hallucinogen similar to LSD. People who ingest ergot-infected grain

often die, but those who survive report strange experiences and wild visions.

Scholastic Philosophy

The dominant expression of thought in western Europe in the Middle Ages is known as scholasticism, a word that means different things to different people. Institutionally, it is described as the work of the clergy in the 'schools', that is, the medieval universities. In emerging universities like those in Paris, Bologna, and Oxford, theology was a central part of the curriculum. The clerical base of scholarship a thousand years ago is reflected in the academic hoods and gowns, similar to monks' robes, that are still common today.

Intellectual definitions of the movement, on the other hand, characterize scholasticism in terms of its assumptions and goals. Faith and reason, for scholastics, are mutually confirming; philosophy is termed the 'handmaid' of theology. The idea that theology is 'faith seeking understanding' can be seen in the early fifth century in Augustine, and in early sixth-century Italy in the government administrator Boethius, who urged his readers: 'As far as you are able, [to] join faith to reason.' He was perhaps the last important layman for a thousand years in Christian philosophy, for in 529 the emperor Justinian closed the Platonic academy in Athens and in that very same year Benedict founded his abbey at Monte Cassino. The centre of gravity shifted to the clergy as custodians of faith and learning.

John Scotus Erigena, who was born in Ireland around 810 and taught in Paris, expanded on Augustine's distinction between authority and reason. For Erigena, scripture is the source of authority, but it is the duty of reason to examine and expound it.

Early scholastic teaching was based on the *lectio*, the reading of scripture. At this early stage the scholastics were seeking to distill and summarize scripture and arrive at a rational grasp of its meaning. As time went on, however, scholastic teaching

developed a dialectical structure in which a proposition of doctrine was stated and then objections to it were raised and systematically dealt with.

Anselm

Anselm (c. 1033–1109), a native of the Italian Alps who became archbishop of Canterbury in England, moved away from the principle of scriptural authority, asserting that faith itself has a kind of rationality. One of the formulations for which he is famous is the statement 'I believe so that I may understand.'

The most tantalizing of the medieval proofs for the existence of God is Anselm's '**ontological argument**'. Unlike later proofs that infer God's existence from inspection of the universe, Anselm's reasoning finds it implied in the very idea of God. Characterizing God as 'a being greater than which nothing can be conceived', Anselm argues in the second chapter of his *Proslogion* that such a being must exist not only in the mind but in reality, since if it did not exist, some other being that did exist would be greater. In the next two chapters of the same treatise, Anselm pursues the argument in a second and more substantial form: a being that cannot be conceived not to exist is greater than one that can. Philosophers understand this proposition to mean that all other being is contingent, whereas God's being is necessary.

Readers who may see this line of argumentation as implying existence by definition are not far off the mark. Even in Anselm's own time, there were people, such as the French monk Gaunilon, who held that the idea of perfection did not necessarily imply existence. But it was not until the eighteenth-century Enlightenment that the German philosopher Immanuel Kant made clear the objection that existence is not a description or 'predicate'. As Kant put it, the idea of a perfect being does not of itself cause a perfect being to exist any more than the thought of money actually puts coins into one's pocket.

Nonetheless, Anselm's thinking has resonated for centuries in Christian theology because it

expresses the uniqueness and majesty of God's being, which exists not in the way that objects do in the universe, but as the ground and basis of existence of the universe itself. Indeed, some thinkers refused to speak of God as existing, since to do so would amount to diminishing God. The strategy of denying descriptions of the divine in order to move beyond their limitations is known as the *via negativa* or 'negative way' in theology. We have already seen it in Gregory Palamas; it was also used by late medieval Latin mystics.

However much philosophers have been intrigued by the ontological argument, Anselm's main influence on theology lies in his contribution to Christian **atonement** theory. For the Church fathers in the centuries before Anselm, God entered the world to overcome the sin and death that hold humankind in bondage. In their classical atonement theory, it was by becoming incarnate and suffering that God rescued humanity from the power of the demonic.

What propels Anselm's thought in his work *Cur Deus homo* ('Why God Became Human') is more a juridical notion of punishment than an incarnational theology. In his view, to satisfy divine justice, sin must be compensated for; but since those guilty of sin are ordinary humans who cannot fulfill this obligation, Jesus appears to make the payment. Indeed, Jesus' self-sacrifice is the highest human gift to God. For Anselm and his medieval Latin successors, God set the terms and conditions, and he did send his son to help meet them, but Christ's human nature was sufficient to fulfill the obligation. Anselm's view of the atonement contributed to the medieval Latin interpretation of the **Eucharist**—the **sacrament** in which believers consume consecrated bread and wine in commemoration of the Last Supper—as the re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice.

As scholastic thinking developed, so did the philosophical resources at its disposal. The tradition on which early scholastics relied came through Augustine and Boethius. Based on the thought of the Greek philosopher Plato, it was

dominated by consideration of abstract ideas. It was in the twelfth century that Latin Christianity discovered the thought of Plato's contemporary Aristotle, which gave more scope for practical considerations and examination of the material world. What people thought of as 'reason' came to consist of more than logic; it became more empirical, taking in the observation of phenomena. Aristotle's thought reached western Europe first through Arabic translations used by Muslims and Jews in medieval Spain, and then in Greek by way of the Byzantines. The first major Latin theologian to take up Aristotle was Albertus Magnus, who taught in Germany in the thirteenth century.

Thomas Aquinas

The greatest of the Aristotelian scholastics was Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–74), a Dominican from Aquino (near Naples) who taught in Paris. Foremost among his works is his *Summa Theologiae* ('Summation of Theology'). In it and other writings Thomas sharpened the distinction between reason and faith. He believed a number of Christian faith assertions, including the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation of God in Christ, to lie beyond reason, in the realm of faith, but that did not mean that they were contrary to reason. Other Christian affirmations, however, such as the existence of God, he did believe to be provable by reason.

Thomas identified five 'ways' of proving God's existence. Most of these describe some feature of the extant world and argue that without a God such a world could not exist.

The first three of Thomas's ways overlap as variations on what philosophers call the '**cosmological argument**' for God's existence. First, change or motion in the universe is evidence that there must be a Prime Mover to sustain the process. Second, the pattern of cause and effect points to God as a First Cause. Third, things have the possibility of existing or not existing, being generated or corrupted, but unless there was a time when there

was nothing at all, there must have been some being that existed out of necessity, and that is God.

The fourth of Thomas's 'ways' argues that there are gradations of goodness, truth, and nobility in what we experience, and that therefore there must be a being that is supremely good, supremely true, and supremely noble; in a sense, this is also a type of cosmological argument. Finally, the fifth 'way' consists in the idea that the plan observable in the universe is evidence of a divine planner; this is an example of the '**teleological argument**' (from Greek *telos*, 'end' or 'purpose'). Thomas was convinced that an understanding of God as creator made it possible to maintain a foothold in a doctrine of biblical authority while exploring the characteristics of the secular world. The tension between these two concerns proved controversial, however. Three years after Thomas's death, the archbishop of Paris formally condemned a list of propositions reminiscent of Thomas's thinking. But the comprehensiveness of Thomas's system proved attractive to later generations. In 1567, at the time of the Catholic Reformation, Pope Pius V declared him 'Doctor of the Church'. And in 1879, in an effort to counteract modern thinking, Pope Leo XIII made Thomism the official theology of the Roman Catholic Church.

Medieval Mystics

The fourteenth-century reaction to Thomas's views included further discussion of the limits of reason in matters of faith. But there was another development afoot that rendered those limits to some extent irrelevant. The late Middle Ages saw a remarkable flowering of mysticism.

To describe something as 'mystical' is not simply to say that it involves mystery. Mysticism is a specific tradition that emphasizes the certainty of profound personal experience. Typically, the mystic is certain of God, not because of some logical proof but because he or she has experienced a moment of vivid, intense awareness. At such a moment one may experience ecstasy (from Greek,

'standing outside oneself'), or displacement from one's ordinary mode of awareness. One characteristic of that experience is a sense of union with the divine through a temporary dissolving or bridging of the gulf that normally separates the human person from God.

The mystic then descends from the heights to more mundane awareness. Accounts of mystic experience are inevitably written from memory, after the moment of ecstasy has passed. A number of medieval Christian mystics nevertheless described in vivid detail what they had experienced.

Medieval mysticism was part of a long tradition of cultivation of the interior life. In Christianity, that life is usually termed spirituality. It complements the ethical life where virtue is practised in one's relationship with others. In spirituality, the heart or conscience opens itself to the divine through prayer and contemplation. For many Christians, spirituality is the essence of religious experience, and credit for it is given to the action of the Holy Spirit on the individual self or soul.

Christian spirituality had roots in the Jewish tradition of contemplation of the mystery of God's presence with his people. It was cultivated by the 'desert' fathers—and mothers—whose ascetic practice was the foundation of medieval monasticism, and was central to the monastic life.

In the Greek world, mysticism was especially influenced by Gregory of Nyssa, who in the fourth century likened the knowledge of God to the soul's groping towards the light, with the desire of love, in a dark night of unattainability and unknowing. In sixth-century Syria, another writer, a convert who had heard the apostle Paul preach in Athens and called himself Dionysius, spoke of a divine reality beyond all names, including such formulations as the Trinity. This Pseudo-Dionysius, whose ideas show the influence of Neoplatonism, negated all forms, proposing a spiritual ascent to the nameless One.

In medieval Europe, the most formidable systematizer of mystical thought was the German Dominican Johannes ('Meister') Eckhart

(c. 1260–1327), who combined the ideas of Gregory and Pseudo-Dionysius with Augustine's psychology of the self. For Eckhart, human beings are created in the image of God, but our divine nature is obscured because our life is finite and creaturely. However, the mind of the spiritual person permits an actualization of the divine nature that the human soul contains. The individual mystic becomes aware of the divinity of his or her being. Eckhart's mysticism is unitive, seeking to dissolve distinctions between self and God.

In the fourteenth century, the Flemish mystic Jan van Ruysbroeck took up the problem of differentiation and related it to the persons of the Trinity. God as Father, he said, is the One. But the other parts of the Trinity are related to the movement of creation in the cosmos and a movement of awareness in the self.

Whereas Eckhart and Ruysbroeck sought to identify the self with the image of God, others saw God in all the nearness of humanity. The French Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux likened the awareness of God to the awareness of one's beloved. Unity of the spirit with God, he said, is a concurrence of wills, not a union of essences. Like the ecstasy of love, this union is fleeting, but no less intensely experienced:

To lose yourself so that you are as though you were not, to be unaware of yourself and emptied of yourself, to be, as it were, brought to nothing—this pertains to heavenly exchanges, not to human affection (O'Brien 1964: 122).

Bonaventure (1221–74), an Italian Franciscan who taught at Paris in the thirteenth century, wrote a text entitled *Journey of the Mind to God*. In it meditation on the humanity of Christ becomes the point of experiential contact with the divine. Later, in the writings of St John of the Cross, a sixteenth-century Spanish Carmelite, the soul seeks to purify itself. John speaks of the 'dark night of the soul' when it is purged of its attachments

and rises to God in a union described in the language of a pure flame.

Female Mystics

A striking feature of late medieval mysticism was the scope it afforded for women. Though women were forbidden to participate fully in clerical activities, and were limited to supporting roles even in female religious orders, there was no limit to the experiential depth and profundity they could attain in their devotion.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) was a Benedictine abbess who had a creative life in writing and music but was also involved in politics and diplomacy. Clergy and feudal nobility sought the counsel of 'the Sybil of the Rhine', as she was called. When she became abbess in 1141, she had a vision of tongues of flame from the heavens settling on her, and over the next ten years she wrote a book of visions entitled *Scivias* ('Know the ways [of God]').

Catherine of Siena (1347–80 or 1333–80) in Italy was a member of a Dominican lay order. She was actively involved in the religious politics of the day, but her *Dialogue* records her mystical visions.

Julian of Norwich (c. 1342–c. 1413) was an English mystic who experienced visions one day during a five-hour state of ecstasy, and one vision the next day; after two decades of reflection she wrote a description and analysis of her visions in her *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*. To her, evil was a distortion introduced by the human will, serving to reveal by contrast all the more clearly the divine love of God.

Living in the period of transition between the late medieval and early modern, Teresa of Ávila (1515–82), a Spanish Carmelite in the same spiritual milieu as St John of the Cross, decided at the age of forty to seek spiritual perfection. Within two years she experienced her first mystical ecstasy, and over the next fifteen years, while actively working to establish religious houses, she deepened her devotional practice until in 1572 she reached the state of 'spiritual marriage'. The

Two Female Mystics

Hildegard of Bingen

From Scivias (Know the ways [of God]), written between 1141 and 1151, Book II, section 2.6:

On the Trinity: Just as the flame contains three essences in the one fire, so too, there is one God in three persons. How is this so? The flame consists of shining brightness, purple vigour and fiery glow. It has shining brightness so that it may give light; purple vigour so that it may flourish; and a fiery glow so that it may burn.

In the shining brightness, observe the Father who, in his fatherly devotion, reveals his brightness to the faithful. In the purple vigour contained within it (whereby this same flame manifests its power), understand the Son who, from the Virgin, assumed a body in which Godhead demonstrated its miracles. And in the fiery glow, perceive the Holy Spirit which pours glowingly into the minds of believers.

But where there is neither shining brightness, nor purple vigour, nor fiery glow, there no flame is seen. So too, where neither the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Spirit is honoured, there God is not worthily revered.

And so, just as these three essences are discerned in the one flame, so too, three Persons are to be understood in the unity of Godhead (Bowie and Davies 1990: 53, 75).

Teresa of Ávila

From Chapter 18 of her autobiography:

Previously, . . . the senses were permitted to give some indication of the great joy they feel. But now the soul enjoys incomparably more, and yet has still less power to show it. For there is no power left in the body—and the soul possesses none—by which this joy can be communicated. At such a time anything of the sort would be a great embarrassment, a torment and a disturbance of its repose. If there is really a union of all the faculties, I say, then the soul cannot make it known, even if it wants to—while actually in union I mean. If it can, it is not in union.

How what is called union takes place and what it is, I cannot tell. It is explained in mystical theology, but I cannot use the proper terms; I cannot understand what mind is, or how it differs from soul or spirit. They all seem one to me, though the soul sometimes leaps out of itself like a burning fire that has become one whole flame and increases with great force. The flame leaps very high above the fire. Nevertheless it is not a different thing, but the same flame which is in the fire (Cohen 1957: 122–3).

writings she produced during this period are noteworthy because they treat the life of prayer comprehensively, describing its steps and intermediate stages between 'discursive' prayer (i.e., prayer mentioning specific needs) and ecstasy.

A woman who was not a mystic in the sense of the foregoing but nonetheless a person of intense

spiritual visions was Joan of Arc (1412–31), who led a military expedition in 1429 to relieve the French forces under siege by the British at Orléans, south of Paris. Captured the following year, she was charged and convicted of witchcraft and heresy, and burnt at the stake in 1431. On a review of her trial in 1456 she was posthumously

declared innocent, and in 1920 she was declared a saint.

The Protestant Reformation

The World after 1450

In the fifteenth century, Christianity was essentially a European phenomenon. Apart from the ancient Eastern churches of Ethiopia and southern India and some remnant minorities in the eastern Mediterranean, Asia and northern Africa had long since turned to Islam. The fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 sealed the victory of the Muslims over Byzantine Christians after seven centuries of rivalry.

But the balance of civilizations in the world changed after 1450. A generation after the fall of Constantinople, Christendom's horizons were vastly broadened when the Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Diaz sailed around southern Africa in 1488, outflanking the Turks who had controlled the overland routes to Asia. Another Portuguese,

Vasco da Gama arrived on the shores of India in 1498. From the sixteenth century onward, European colonial powers established a presence in the ports of India, Southeast Asia, and China. In the same years Spanish navigators reached the New World, taking Christianity with them. Ironically, just as European Christianity was poised for this global expansion, it was fragmented by a crisis of institutional and spiritual authority: the challenge of Protestantism.

Luther

By the early sixteenth century, pressure for change in the Latin Church had been building for decades. Princes north of the Alps were challenging the power of the papacy in Rome. The period of cultural rebirth known as Renaissance was well underway, as was the revival of classical learning central to humanism, exemplified in the Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536). Condemning complicated scholastic theology, Erasmus urged a return to the simple morality of Jesus

From Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*

The Dutch classical scholar and humanist Desiderius Erasmus wrote The Praise of Folly in 1509 after a visit to Rome, while staying in England with his friend Sir Thomas More, whose social critique Utopia ('Nowhere') was published seven years later.

[Some questions have] been discussed threadbare. There are others more worthy of great and enlightened theologians (as they call themselves) which can really rouse them to action if they come their way. What was the exact moment of divine generation? Are there several filiations in Christ? Is it a possible proposition that God the Father could hate his Son? Could God have taken on the form of a woman, a devil, a donkey, a gourd, or a flintstone? If so, how could a gourd have preached sermons, performed miracles, and been nailed to the cross? And what would Peter have consecrated if he had consecrated when the body of Christ still hung on the cross? Furthermore at that same time could Christ have been called a man? Shall we be permitted to eat and drink after the resurrection? We're taking due precaution against hunger and thirst while there's time. There are any amount of quibbles even more refined than these, about concepts, relations, instants, formalities, quiddities, and eccities, which no one could possibly perceive unless like Lynceus he could see through blackest darkness things which don't exist (Radice 1986: 126–7).