

antagonist principles of opinion, which seem alike to have their root in the intellectual constitution of man, and which are maintained and developed by opposing sects, when the intellect is in vigorous action. Such principles are, for instance—the claims of Authority and of Reason to our assent;—the source of our knowledge in Experience or in Ideas;—the superiority of a Mystical or of a Skeptical turn of thought. Such oppositions of doctrine were found in writers of the greatest fame; and two of those, who most occupied the attention of students, Plato and Aristotle, were, on several points of this nature, very diverse from each other in their tendency. The attempt to reconcile these philosophers by Boëthius and others, we have already noticed; and the attempt was so far successful, that it left on men's minds the belief in the possibility of a great philosophical system which should be based on both these writers and have a claim to the assent of all sober speculators.

But, in the mean time, the Christian Religion had become the leading subject of men's thoughts; and divines had put forward its claims to be, not merely the guide of men's lives, and the means of reconciling them to their heavenly Master, but also to be a Philosophy in the widest sense in which the term had been used;—a consistent speculative view of man's condition and nature, and of the world in which he is placed.

These claims had been acknowledged; and, unfortunately, from the intellectual condition of the times, with no due apprehension of the necessary ministry of Observation, and Reason dealing with observation, by which alone such a system can be embodied. It was held without any regulating principle, that the philosophy which had been bequeathed to the world by the great geniuses of heathen antiquity, and the Philosophy which was deduced from, and implied by, the Revelations made by God to man, must be identical; and, therefore, that Theology is the only true philosophy. Indeed, the Neoplatonists had already arrived, by other roads, at the same conviction. John Scot Erigena, in the reign of Alfred, and consequently before the existence of the Scholastic Philosophy, properly so called, had reasserted this doctrine.² Anselm, in the eleventh century, again brought it forward;³ and Bernard de Chartres, in the thirteenth.⁴

This view was confirmed by the opinion which prevailed, concerning the nature of philosophical truth; a view supported by the theory

² Deg. iv. 351.

³ Ib. iv. 388.

⁴ Ib. iv. 418.