PRESENT DAY PRIMERS

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

J. VERNON BARTLET, M.A.

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A SKETCH OF THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES

BY

J. VERNON BARTLET, M.A.

Late Scholar of Exeter College, Oxford, and Lecturer on Church History in Mansfield College

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PREFACE

In face of the number of books dealing with Early Christianity it would seem needful to justify the addition of yet another, especially as one of the 'Present Day Primers.' But few can doubt the need of restating the old topics in terms of recent research. The main difficulty here has been to hit the happy mean between commonplace and technicality. All classes of serious readers, short of the specialist, have been considered; and it is hoped that each will find enough on his own level to make him indulgent towards what may be above or below his present standard.

To stimulate further study, while indicating the lines on which it should proceed, has been a primary aim, causing the inclusion of so full a Bibliography and Chronological Table, as well as numerous footnotes. These may serve to commend the work to theological students, possibly also to ministers, in search of a *vade mecum*; but they need in nowise hamper the general reader.

Where possible, the Christians have been allowed to speak their own thoughts in their own words. The value of such quotation is enhanced by the fact that brief sketches are most liable to reflect the historian's own views, rather than those of the age he describes. The present writer feels this, but has been on his guard to the very degree in which he has aimed at laying bare the *religious* soul of the history, instead of lingering upon the bare framework of facts and dates. The latter can easily be found elsewhere; not so the fortunes of the Gospel as such.

Finally, attention is drawn to the method of treating each generation apart. This gives fair play to the individuality of an age, and brings out the connexion between the various aspects of its life: while it also enables us to see the development from age to age, going on, as it were, under our very eyes.

VERNON BARTLET.

LITERATURE

At the end of each chapter of this book is a special bibliography relating to the period included in the chapter. The books referred to below will be found useful for the study of the whole period dealt with.

Heavy type marks works fit for beginners; an asterisk, those for special students; the other books in the list are useful to both classes.

1. Ancient Authorities.

Gwatkin's **Selections from Early Christian Writers** (Macmillan, 1893):

Eusebius (to 313); Greek, edited by Bright; English, Bohn, or with full notes in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Library;*

Socrates (306–439); similar edition and translations.

2. Modern Works.

(*a*) Sketches:

Beside Outlines in the *Bible Class Primer* (T. & T. Clark) and *Theological Educator* (Hodder) Series;

Islay Burns, **First Three Centuries** (Nelson);

Fisher, **History of the Church**, Period I.–III. (Hodder);

Smith's *Student's Eccl. History*, Pt. I. (to 1000 A.D.);

Plummer, in *Epochs of Ch. Hist.* Series (to 313);

Foakes-Jackson, **The Christian Church to A.D. 337** (Simpkin);

Backhouse and Tylor, **Early Church History to 337**;

* Gieseler, *Compendium*, esp. Vol. I. (the original texts quoted in full notes).

(*b*) More detailed works:

Robertson, **History of Christian Church**, Vol. I. (1875, small ed.).

Milman, *History of Christianity* (Ancient), 3 vols.

Neander, *Church History*, Vol. I.–II. (Bohn).

* Moeller, *History of Christian Church*, Vol. I. (1–600; Sonnenschein, 1892).

(*c*) For reference:

* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chs. xv., xvi., xx., xxi.

Pressensé, *Early Years of Christianity*, 4 vols. (Hodder).

Kurtz, *Church History*, Vol. I. (Hodder).

Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vols. I.–VI. (new ed.).

TABLE OF CHIEF EVENTS

NERO (54–68)	61–63	Paul prisoner in Rome: third group of Epistles.
	~64	Fire of Rome: persecution of Christians (*e.g.* Peter?).
	66	Revolt of Jews; Christians retire to Pella.
	?67–8	Paul's Pastoral Epistles: Martyrdom of Paul.
VESPASIAN (69)	~70	Ruin of Jerusalem and its Temple. John in Asia Minor (Ephesus) with Andrew and others.
TITUS (79)		Epistle of 'Barnabas' to Alexandrines (? before 79).
DOMITIAN (81)	95	Martyrdom of Flavius Clemens and others.
	~96	(late) Letter of Roman to Corinthian Church ('by Clement').
	c. 97	Euarestus succeeds Clement as Roman 'Bishop.'[1]
TRAJAN (98)	c. 98–9	John dies: our *Teaching of Twelve Apostles* as a whole (?).
	107	Martyrdom of Bp. Symeon, son of Clopas, at Jerusalem.
	112	Trajan's Rescript to Pliny regulating Persecution.
	~	Martyrdom at Rome of Ignatius, Bp. of Antioch (?115).
HADRIAN (117)	117	Gnostics begin to flourish: *contrà* Papias *fl.*
	124	Rescript to Fundanus further limits Persecution.
	c. 125	*Apology* of Quadratus: Basilides the Gnostic *fl.*
	132–5	Revolt of Jews: Ælia Capitolina replaces Jerusalem; its Church henceforth Gentile. Hyginus succeeds Telesphorus. (? Gospel of Peter.)
ANTONINUS PIUS (138)	~ 138–40	Valentinus, Cerdon and Marcion, leading Gnostics *Homily of Clement.*
		Pius succeeds Hyginus: *Shepherd* of Hermas (?)
		Aristides of Athens presents *Apology.*
	~ c. 140–60	*Ep. to Diognetus* (?): Justin Martyr, *fl.* (Apologies): *Gospel of Peter* (?) and other apocryphal works. Celsus' *True Word* (? after 150). Anicetus (c. 154) welcomes Polycarp at Rome; Polycarp martyred at Smyrna (c. 155). Montanus moving in Phrygia, so leading to first informal church Synods. Hegesippus on his travels.
M. AURELIUS (161)	~ 161–5	Martyrdom of Justin (c. 164): *Octavius* of Min. Felix (?)
	165–75	Soter succeeds Anicetus (c. 165): Dionysius of Corinth *fl.* Tatian, now heretical, returns to Syria. Paschal Controversy in Asia. Avircius travelling.
		Eleutherus Bp. of Rome (c. 173): Hegesippus publishes his History: *Pseudo-Clementines* (?)
	177	Persecution in S. Gaul and elsewhere: *Apology* of Athenagoras, etc.: Montanism perplexing the West.
COMMODUS (180)	180	*Address to Autolycus* by Theophilus Bp. of Antioch.
		Pantænus Head of Catechetical School: Origen born (185).
	~	Irenæus Bp. of Lyons finishes work *Against Heresies.* Clement succeeds Pantænus.
SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS (193)	c. 190	Victor Bp. of Rome peremptory on Paschal question. Monarchians at Rome.
	~ 197–8	Zephyrinus succeeds Victor. Tertullian's *Apology.*
	c. 200	The *Muratorian Canon:* Tertullian turns Montanist: Bardesanes, Syrian divine, *fl.*
	202	Persecutions in N. Africa, *e.g.*, Perpetua and Felicitas.
CARACALLA (211)	203	Origen succeeds Clement as Head of School.
	~ 213–16	Origen at Rome: in hiding at Cæsarea.
ELAGABAL (218)	216	Callistus elected Bp.; Hippolytus in opposition.
ALEX. SEVERUS (222)	c. 229–31	Origen ordained presbyter and excommunicated; founds fresh School at Cæsarea. The Emperor interested in Christianity as in all religions.

[1] We adopt Bp. Lightfoot's revised reckoning throughout.

Maximinus Thrax (235)	235	First *systematic* persecution *planned*: Bp. Pontianus and Hippolytus (?) die as exiles in Sardinia; Anteros now Bishop.
	236	Fabian succeeds: Neo-Platonism taking shape (Plotinus).
Gordian (238)	238	Mani appears as reformer of Parseeism (d. 272–6)
Philippus Arabs (244)	244	Beryllus of Bostra converted by Origen from Monarchianism, which is now very strong (*e.g.* Noetus, Sabellius).
	247–8	Origen's reply to Celsus: Dionysius, Bp. of Alexandria; Cyprian, Bp. of Carthage.
Decius (249)		
Gallus (251)	250–1	First systematic persecution *carried* out: causes disciplinary problems, *e.g.* at Carthage and Rome: Cornelius and Novatian.
Valerian (253)	254	Origen dies at Tyre: Stephen of Rome at variance with Cyprian as to Baptism.
Gallienus (260)	257–8	Persecution returns: Cyprian martyred: Firmilian *fl.*
Claudius (268)	259	Edicts of persecution revoked: long peace ensues: Dionysius Bp. of Rome.
Aurelian (270)	268	Paul of Samosata deposed by Synod at Antioch.
Tacitus (275)		Origen's pupils to the front: traditional usages and legends taking fixed shape.
Diocletian Maximian (284[6])	c. 290	The Antiochene School (Dorotheus, Lucian) emerges. The Christian Rhetors, Arnobius and Lactantius, *fl.* in Africa: Pamphilus and Methodius take sides as to Origen. Neo-Platonism aggressive.
Galerius (305–311)	303	Final persecution begins: rise of Monasticism in Egypt.
	306	Synod of Elvira in Spain: the Meletian Schism.
Constantine (306)	311	Donatist schism begins.
	312–313	Toleration declared by Edicts of Milan.
Licinius (312–324)	318	Arian controversy breaks out at Alexandria.
	323	Constantine sole Emperor: Eusebius' History all but complete.
	325	Council of Nicæa: New Rome (Constantinople) founded (326).
	335	Athanasius exiled: Arius dies (336).
Constantius Constans (d. 350)	337–60	Athanasius returns, but his struggle, especially with the Court party, lasts till his death (373): various synods in East and West, especially touching Semi-Arianism.
Julian	361	Pagan reaction under Julian.
Valens	363–80	After many phases of the struggle and various attempts at compromise, the New Nicene party arises, led by the Great Cappadocians, who also foster Monasticism.
Valentinian (d. 375)	380	Edicts against Heresies and Paganism.
	381	Nicene Victory at Council of Constantinople.
	385	Campaign against Paganism goes on at Rome. Jerome leaves Rome for Bethlehem. Ambrose potent at Milan.
Theodosius (379–95)	386–95	Augustine converted, and becomes Bp. of Hippo.
Arcadius (d. 408)	395	Alaric the Goth invades Greece.
	398	Chrysostom Patriarch of Constantinople.
Honorius	402	The Western Court removed from Rome to Ravenna.
	405	The Vandals enter Spain: Innocent I. extends papal claims.
	407	Exile and death of Chrysostom.
	410	Sack of Rome by Alaric: the Pelagian controversy.
Honorius (d. 423)	428	Heresy of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople.
	430	Siege of Hippo by Vandals: Augustine's death.
Theodosius II. (d. 450)	431	Council of Ephesus condemns Nestorius (and Pelagius).
	440	Leo I., 'The First Pope.'

CONTENTS

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY: BEFORE 70 A.D.

The Idea of Church History: Leading Principles. Seed and Soil: Jew, Greek, Roman; Popular Religion of the Day. Method of Study. Close of the Apostolic Age: *Hebrews*, *Colossians*; Peter and Paul.

HISTORY is the biography of mankind. But true biography traces not only a series of situations, but also the gradual unfolding of manhood. So with history, in which we see man 'writ large.'

Looking then at **Church History** in this light, we perceive at once that the Christian society enjoys a unique position. For while the ideal of civilized society is at best vague, that of the Church is definite. From the outset its type or ideal has been given in the Person of its Founder, 'the Son of Man' while Son of God. Church History, accordingly, represents the varying efforts of men influenced by Christ to embody that ideal in thought, feeling, and practice. And our present aim must be to trace the manner and degree in which the Ancient Church, living under the conditions of the Roman Empire, attained to that which must ever be the Church's aim and standard, 'the mind of Christ.' It stood nearer in time to the Christ than do we. We shall have to see whether, or in what respects, it stood nearer to Him in spirit.

From the Parables of the Kingdom, in which its

Founder illustrated certain features of His society both in its own nature and in its relations to human society, we are able to derive two or three **guiding principles**. For in the first simple beginnings the final issues of the complex process are already involved. Here, then, the central idea, the 'Kingdom of God,' appears under the figure of the harvest-field. And we get, first and foremost, *the Evangelic Seed*, the mind of Christ, or His religion in its native purity and simplicity; next, in close connexion therewith, the *soil* of human nature, found in various states of receptiveness and promise. So in the Parable of the Sower the truth emerges, that the actual harvest is the result not only of the seed planted, but also of the special state of the soil. In other words, the Church, at any given stage, must be interpreted in the light not so much of the original Gospel itself as of that part of the Gospel which the men of that day were able to apprehend. For historical Christianity is like a plant whose essential nature indeed depends upon forces inherent in the seed, but whose actual fashion at any given time depends also upon the environment in which it grows.

Other parables serve to fill in the picture. Thus the prophecy of a development of the Kingdom out of all proportion to its primal form, is contained in the Parable of the Mustard Seed. The grievous fact that the growth of the Kingdom will be hampered by the co-existence in Christendom of real and counterfeit 'sons of the Kingdom,' is set forth in the Wheat and Tares. While, finally, the deepest reason for large and calm hopefulness seems to underlie the Parable of the Seed growing by resources latent in the soil itself, so that the Sower can rely upon a God-given increase (Mark iv. 26 ff.). For if God is, in some real sense, present in the very earth that produces spontaneously; how much more in the human heart, as the Source of all its higher aspira-

tions, when and wherever found (Acts xvii. 23 ff., esp. vv. 27, 28).

We must now look more closely at both **Seed and Soil**, the Gospel and the Roman world. The secret of the Gospel lies in the Person of Christ, as unfolded in His life and death. He, then, in a deep sense is the Seed of the Church. As was He in character and spirit, such must be His society, the members of 'the Kingdom.' If any man, or body of men, 'have not the Spirit of Christ,' he and they are 'none of His.' In this connexion, then, it is the test of Evangelic faith, that it so unite the soul experimentally with Christ, the Son in whom the Father is at the same time known, as to secure a life common to member and Head.

Turning now to **the Soil**, we find it to be at bottom threefold. While the unity of the Roman Empire secured a certain surface resemblance throughout, there were three distinct types of subsoil —Jewish, Greek, Roman. And these may be said to have told on the growth of the seed very much in the order named. The spirit of Judaism largely modified the way in which the Gospel possessed men up to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., and even up to the ruin of Jerusalem itself in A.D. 135. But before that date the subtle Greek mind was already leaving its mark on the current forms of Christian belief. And though from the end of the second century we can trace a certain practical Roman stamp on the Church in the West, side by side with the Greek features in its theology; it is only with Augustine, at the end of the fourth century, that the Latin temper fully asserts itself. Henceforth we can distinguish that marked Latin type of Christianity, which is the parent of Mediæval and in part of Modern Christendom.

The existence of Judaizing tendencies in the early Church is too well known from the New Testament

itself to need any proof. But it is easier to overlook the fact that *the Judaism of 'the Dispersion,'* which was of a more liberal type than that found in Palestine, formed the bridge whereby the Gospel gained readier access to the Græco-Roman mind at large. Indeed, dispersed Jews had already done not a little to accustom the minds not only of those Gentiles who attended their synagogues, but also of society at large, to the ideas of one august and spiritual God, and of His Law on its moral rather than ceremonial side. Thus the great elements of the Hebrew faith were already stimulating the consciences of many; while hearts here and there were learning to cherish some sort of Messianic expectation.

As for the *Greek*, the bent of his mind was 'to seek after wisdom.' And in that quest two things had come to pass. Among not a few a regard for justice and purity, or a longing to rise superior to the thraldom of the senses, had been awakened; causing dissatisfaction with the mere laws of society in each State and with its religion, which more and more appeared in the light of a drag upon true goodness. Of this tendency Stoicism,[1] in spite of its defects, was the chief but by no means sole instance. On the other hand, Greek thought as a whole was feeling its own limits as regards the highest themes of thought; and a sort of hopeless scepticism, born of fruitless efforts to attain to firm principle, giving unity to things and worth to life, had crept over the spirits of thoughtful men. It is this which finds expression in Pilate's cynical, rather than 'jesting' query, 'What is truth?' If then we add that the nobler outlets for purpose and energy had been closed to the Greek by the loss of his old civic freedom at the hands of Rome; and that for the Roman himself the Imperial system, as

[1] For Stoicism in relation to Christianity, see Lightfoot's essay 'Paul and Seneca,' in his *Philippians*, or in his *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age.*

contrasted with the older Republic, meant a certain spiritual servitude; we can realize that as regards its higher life the world was then a world of baffled ideals.

The **popular religions**, too, were losing real hold upon belief. On them also the Empire, with its superficial cosmopolitanism, pressed heavily. Each region had had its own local deities. And their worship was bound up, in local sentiment, with the fortunes of the state or the city. When the latter was swallowed up by Rome, the former suffered a fatal shock. Again, the intermingling of religious beliefs within the unity of the Empire, though it promoted a certain religiosity, whose charm lay in novelty, served to sap the roots of real religious conviction and sincerity—quite apart from the sensuality inherent in many of the cults, especially those of Eastern origin. The result was that the most living religious idea of the age was that latent in the sentiment felt for the Empire itself, as the embodiment of the providential order of things. And the cult of Rome, with its visible head in the Emperor, more and more tended to be the real religion. This worship of the World-Power will meet us again as the rival of Christianity, as, for instance, in the Book of Revelation. Meantime it is enough to note that it afforded little satisfaction to *individual* needs. Yet there was abroad a vague longing for forgiveness of sin and for a Healer, a God who could pity and save; while among the humbler folk especially, the yearning for sympathy led the obscure, the lonely, the stranger, and even the slave, to draw together into associations, 'to keep one another warm' during life, and at least to secure decent burial for fellow-members after death. Such clubs, as well as those of a higher grade, had generally a religious side, and met in the name of a patron deity.

Such then, amid abounding corruption and sensu-

ality,[1] fostered rather than otherwise by current religious usages, were the main elements of hope to be discerned in the sub-soil of an age which itself felt both helpless and hopeless. The unity of mankind was being realized as never before; the sentiment of religion was stronger, deeper, more personal than when the separate States had enjoyed political prosperity, together with formal religious rites; and finally philosophy itself, while sometimes sceptical, was at bottom sick of negations, desirous of discovering a path of life, and in temper markedly religious.

Our **Scope and Method** may now be set forth more fully. Starting where the Acts of the Apostles end, we have to trace the progress of the Gospel through four centuries of mingling light and shade, during which, in becoming naturalized as it were, it both causes and undergoes momentous changes. If the subject of the Acts be 'the history of the Kingdom of God, with more special reference to the relaxation of the terms of admission, the ingathering of the Gentiles, and the transference of the centre of gravity in Christendom from Jerusalem elsewhere,' our theme is at bottom the same. The 'Kingdom of God,' which is 'righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,' must be made visible amid all the complexities and accretions attending its growth in each epoch and locality. These latter will be found to modify the 'terms of admission;' while 'the ingathering of the Gentiles' may seem to threaten, time and again, to overlay with old prejudices the very essence of the Gospel. Finally, 'the transference of the centre of gravity' will prove of prime import throughout.

In order to secure something like a continuous

[1] Cf., after every due allowance, the contemporary witness of Seneca, in his treatise *On Anger*, where he says:—'The world is filled with crimes and vices. Things are too far gone to be healed by any treatment.'

picture, the *successive generations* will be presented, each in its entirety. Movements will emerge in relation to leading men; while, from time to time, change will be noted under one or other of the following heads: (i.) Christian Life and Piety; (ii.) Organization; (iii.) Forms of Worship; (iv.) Theology. Lest, however, this method should fail to show clearly by what stages certain cardinal ideas or usages take final shape, a concluding chapter will gather up the main results as concisely as possible. In all this the internal life of the Church will be our main theme, the external history proper being treated in a preliminary chapter dealing with the Church and the Roman State.

First, then, let us link our narrative on to the Acts, by reviewing the last decade of **the Apostolic Age**. Abruptly as the Book of Acts seems to end, it is yet clear that its plan is fulfilled. For by 60 A.D. the Gospel, starting from Jerusalem, has already found a footing not only among outcast Israelites like the Samaritans, and among proselytes who, like Cornelius, were partially one with privileged Israel, but even in Rome itself, the very heart of the non-Jewish world. Thus, in earnest at least, its universal destiny was already apparent when the the Apostle of the Gentiles began his Roman captivity. But this fact was not so manifest to the Apostolic age as it is to ourselves. The swaddling-clothes of Jewish prepossession still clung to Christians in various ways, threatening to hamper the Church's proper development.

These dangers are brought home to us by the *Epistle to the Hebrews* (c. 66 A.D.). The problem with which the writer has to grapple, is the return of Judaic ideals of religion among Jews who had trusted in Jesus as Messiah, but were now beginning to fall back on the 'shadows' of the Mosaic ritual. For the pressure from their unbelieving brethren was telling

on hearts already sick of delay that sapped their ardent hope of a speedy Second Advent. But whilst our author vindicates right nobly the sole efficacy of the salvation in Jesus, the true High Priest of faith, and points out the grave dangers of apostasy in the face of light; even he himself is yet involved in the Jewish notion of the imminent return of Christ in judgment. In this he was a true child of his age. Even the apostles had a lingering bias in favour of a 'Kingdom of Heaven' practically Jewish in scope and in the mode of its establishment on earth. Acts i. 6 is only one of several proofs, how slight was the impression made on the Church for many a day, by Christ's parables implying a gradual development of the Gospel seed in the familiar soil of the world's life. No doubt there was some true basis for their feeling (as far as the anti-Christian Jewish polity and Temple-worship were concerned), in the events of 70 A.D., which was an occasion for the coming of the Kingdom in enhanced power. But this does not satisfy the whole case; specially the fact of eager expectation long after 70 A.D. And, as we shall see when we come to Montanism, this special form of the Christian Hope so persisted, as strongly to colour much of early Christianity; and even served to foster certain reactionary tendencies that, along with much right feeling, contained a serious menace to the progressive work of Christianity.

But though we here learn, even in the case of an inspired author, that the Christian must follow in the footsteps of his Master's reserve as to 'times and seasons which the Father has set within His own authority' (Acts i. 6; Mark xiii. 32); when we turn to the ideal of the Christian fraternity and its nobly simple worship, we are awed at the spiritual insight vouchsafed to one himself so recently emancipated from the sensuous ritual which could not 'cleanse the conscience' and 'made nothing perfect.' For what

says he to his readers? That Christian 'sacrifices' are quite other than those of Judaism, being in fact heartfelt 'praise to God' through Jesus Christ, and 'beneficence and comradeship' in the use of one's goods among the brethren (Heb. xiii. 15, 16). Indeed, nothing marked the first generations of 'the disciples' more than their sense of *brotherhood* in Christ, taken seriously and not merely as a pleasing idea. 'For if we are fellow-partakers in that which is imperishable, how much more in the things which are perishable'—such was their spirit.

Nor were the Gentiles behind the Hebrews in this respect; witness the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, though these show also the strength of the natural self-hood and ambition which had to be transfigured by the love of Christ.[1] *Colossians* moreover gives us a vivid glimpse into the action of certain weeds of thought and practice in the Græcized soil of Asia Minor, springing up again and affecting the very vitality of the Gospel. What has been called 'the Colossian heresy'—though Paul never so applies the term 'heresy,' reserving it rather for the spirit of self-will and party—was complex in nature. It combined several Judaic features of a practical or ritual character, with certain Gnostic or speculative features, arising from the blending of Greek and Oriental thought in a prejudice against the material, regarded as seat and source of evil. In the joint outcome we find a marked ascetic temper in practice, associated with a tendency to interpose a long series of mediating spiritual or angelic existences between the soul, imprisoned in a body of corruption, and the ethereal spirituality of God. The age was one of Syncretism; it tended to fuse elements of thought, hitherto distinct, into a sort of amalgam of belief. So it had been

[1] Phil. ii. 1 ff., iv. 2; Col. iii. 12 ff.; compare the metaphor of the body and members in 1 Cor. xii. 12 ff., and the supreme place of love in the Christian character, *id.* xiii.

among the Essenes, living in retired communities on the Dead Sea, possibly also in Asia. Be this as it may, Paul found the remedy for each and all of the Colossian errors in a fuller appreciation of Christ—His Gospel, His Person, and His work. This is the very essence of the Evangelic spirit, to face with calm confidence the ideals of aberrant modes of thought, and to show the real religious sufficiency of Christ on His own merits; by proving that what these vaguely feel after is secured to the full in His Gospel, without one-sidedness or an exclusive spirit.[1]

But what of **Peter and Paul**, the central figures of the Acts? That they both suffered martyrdom in Rome itself—Peter by crucifixion, Paul, as a Roman citizen, by the sword—there is strong reason to believe. But further we can hardly go. Tradition assigns both their deaths to the reign of Nero (d. June, 68 A.D.), mentioning Peter's end before that of Paul. And, on the whole, probability is in favour of this view. Both the mode of Peter's death (especially if he was crucified head downwards) and his place of burial (the quarter where were Nero's Vatican Gardens) suggest the Neronian outburst of 64 A.D.; while Paul most likely suffered about 67–68 A.D. To the subject of the Persecutions we now turn.

[1] For full details, see Lightfoot's *Colossians*, pp. 73–113.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH AND THE EMPIRE: EXTENSION AND PERSECUTION.

The Gospel as Leaven: its centres of influence. Christianity seen from outside: Persecution as a duty to Society: two ideals in conflict. The various stages in the Persecutions: Christian Apologies: the final struggle: victory, and its issues. Martyrdoms: their spirit and value for us.

CHRISTIANITY spread as a sort of **holy contagion**. Its path can be traced along the main lines of commerce: though the degree in which it developed in a centre of population depended upon certain existing local conditions, such as acquaintance with the principles of Judaism. Once planted in a town, it tended to spread insensibly to the adjacent district and strike fresh roots. But its rate of progression must not be thought of as everywhere uniform. Already by the close of the Acts we find the Gospel touching the Roman Empire at Antioch, Cyprus, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Rome, and, to judge from the case of Apollos, at Alexandria likewise. We cannot trace the history of its development at and from all these centres alike. For some of them the evidence is clear; for others it is only inferential. It was perhaps in certain parts of Asia Minor, particularly the province of Asia, 'the spiritual centre of Christianity' during the century after 70 A.D., that the new religion most leavened the population. Thus Pliny, speaking of the northern sea-board province of Bithynia-Pontus, refers in 112 A.D. to the 'large numbers' of the Christians 'of every age and rank and from both sexes.' 'For,' says he, 'the contagion of

this superstition has permeated not only towns, but also villages and country'; so that temples are deserted, rites unobserved, victims unbought. Apart from the places already named, progress during the second century was most marked in the following areas.

In the East, Edessa, the capital of a small Græcized native kingdom beyond the Euphrates, N.E. from Antioch, had about 200 A.D. a Christian king; and there are vaguer traces of extension elsewhere to the east and south-east of Syria. From Alexandria in particular the Gospel spread both through Egypt and further west to Cyrene. In the West itself, the two great areas added were Proconsular Africa, with Carthage as capital, and South Gaul, with Lyons as centre. The latter district had an old connexion with Asia Minor, and probably owed the Gospel in part at least to this intercourse. Of Spanish Christians we hear first about the end of the century; while as to the most distant provinces, like Britain, we have no positive evidence, though from the presence of the legions we may infer some Roman, but hardly native, Christians. It would be along the lines already laid down that growth went on during the third century, right up to the time when Constantine's edicts of toleration gave the Church a new status in the Roman Empire.

During the greater part of this period the Christians in most places must have been, **in the eyes of their neighbours**, a mere despicable minority of fanatics; while the project of Christianizing the Empire dawned but gradually upon the minds of this minority itself. The Church had to outgrow a certain narrowness of vision, the heritage of Judæa and Jewish associations, before she could realize the largeness of God's thoughts towards mankind in His Gospel. Now this has a very important bearing on the subject of Persecution, in that much of the inten-

sity of feeling called forth against the early Christians was due to a certain aloofness and pessimism in their attitude towards existing society. Imagine the possibilities of misunderstanding, to say no more, likely to arise among Roman citizens as they caught stray utterances about 'the Last Day' being 'at hand;' or about a universal conflagration from which 'the Christians' alone were to come forth unscathed. Can we be surprised that they attributed to those who used such speech, a 'hatred of human kind'—an impression which found confirmation in Christian indifference to the political and social interests of their fellows.

All this had an inner explanation, innocent in motive, and often noble in the self-denial which 'plucked out the right eye' that might allure the soul to tainted pleasures. For the framework of society was to the Christian thoroughly idolatrous. Usages involving the recognition of some false deity or of the Emperor in the character of divine, met him on every hand; while that which was impure, in suggestion at least, was constantly confronting him in social intercourse. Hence to minimize public contact with society, was the only way to keep a good conscience and at the same time avoid dangerous comment. But all this must have seemed very suspicious to those who had not the key to such action. At best it was 'atheism' and 'contemptible indolence'; at the worst it meant treason against society or deeds of darkness. To enlarge on these points would be easy. But it is enough to suggest how persecution might thus seem a duty to outsiders, even where their trade was not, as with Demetrius and many another, touched by such nonconformity.

For conformity in religion was the law of the Empire. Not indeed conformity in thought, but in observance. For religion was not a matter of conviction, but of expediency. The State's interests

demanded it, both lest the gods should smite the State with ill,[1] and still more lest men should cease to cherish deferential sentiments towards the Empire and its head the Emperor. Men who so cut themselves adrift from care for the 'public weal' were, it was argued, capable of any crime or treason. Such was the spirit bred from the old Roman religion, which in form had changed so much. Once it had led to the law that no new religion should be tolerated unless licensed by the State. This rule had become largely a dead letter. Yet its principle remained in force. Any religion alien to the genius of the Empire or a menace to good government—any in fact that would not fit into its niche in the existing order—was condemned beforehand as sacrilege or treason. And such Christianity seemed to be. The tendencies of human nature no doubt co-operated and often set persecution in motion. But the cause behind all, making the State not the protector, but the nominal pursuer, in even such cases, was the feeling just described.

Putting aside all traditions which obscure the matter, we may recognize several fairly marked stages in the life-and-death conflict, in which the Church was the real aggressor. For its ideal was a challenge to the existing Empire, which had not as yet recognized in Christianity the proper religious complement to its own political ideal of unity. And how little the persecutions were the outcome of mere caprice or ferocity appears from the fact that, apart from Nero, the severest persecutors were the best Emperors; whereas the morally bad Emperors were those who, as least concerned for the Empire, might be swayed to leniency.

The first stage is that under **Nero**. Already Chris-

[1] Tertullian in his *Apology* refers to this feeling, when he remarks, 'If the Tiber rises too high, if the Nile does not rise, if prodigies occur, . . . the cry is, "The Christians to the lions."'

tians had suffered petty persecution at the hands of neighbours; but hitherto the State seems to have taken no action. Henceforth all is changed, though the occasion was personal to Nero. Tacitus tells us that a fire had laid a large part of Rome in ashes, and rumour was busy with the name of Nero. He, to divert suspicion, caused the arrest of 'those called by the people *Christians*, and hated on the ground of their outrageous crimes.' The first adherents of this 'pernicious superstition' who were arrested made no secret of their connexion; and, as a result, 'an immense multitude' were involved, not so much on the charge of firing the city, as on the basis of their reputed 'hatred of human kind.' Many were executed with every refinement of torture and mockery in the Emperor's Vatican Gardens, until the people became sick of it. But matters did not end here. Attention was now seriously directed to the Christians; and the defence of society against dangerous people, whose power over human minds seemed nothing short of 'magical,' could not abruptly cease with the crisis of 64 A.D. Rather there are positive grounds for believing that it gave place to a permanent police measure, analogous to those against other dangerous classes. Nero's biographer states that 'Christians were visited with punishment—a class of persons addicted to a novel and pernicious superstition.' The habit established in Rome under Cæsar's eye, would rule the action of provincial governors, whenever the Christians were brought under their notice. No special edict was here necessary, but only an application of the common law as already in practice. Certain crimes were supposed to cohere with the very name 'Christian,' and these involved outlawry.

This policy could only be enhanced by the experiences of the Jewish war in 70 A.D., in so far as Christianity was still regarded as a form of Judaism. So

that the **Flavian dynasty** (70–96 A.D.) would simply carry out the Neronian usage. At what exact point, if any, the presumption of radical treason to the existing order was suffered to condemn the Christian, apart from any effort to prove specific crime, is doubtful. Enough to note that the question tended more and more to become one of the Name itself, where the test was sacrifice to the gods of Rome or the *genius* of the Emperor. Where this was refused, death was the necessary result. Under a *Domitian* (81–96), who had a mania for being recognized as 'our God and Lord,' and was very jealous of rivals among the nobility during his later years, there may have been special occasions for putting the standing measures into action. But in any case the Name, when brought home, meant death, wherever the hatred or interest of any led them to inform against a man as a Christian. This is the usage implied by Pliny's action in 112 A.D. in Bithynia; where he first acts on the basis of use and wont, and only refers to **Trajan** for advice as to whether any qualifications are allowable, seeing that the accused are so many and of such various classes. It is implied too in Cæsar's reply, where he simply lays down the *limitation* that a formal accuser is necessary in every case; that popular outcry is not enough. But henceforth it is to be no part of Pliny's duty to *search* for Christians.

Here then we have the basis of the imperial policy during the second century, whatever may have been the exact degree in which its actual working was affected at a given time by the temper, whether of Cæsar himself, or of the local governors in seasons of popular excitement. Thus **Hadrian** (117–138 A.D.), in his rescript or reply to the Proconsul of Asia, about 124 A.D., hedges round prosecution for the Name with yet further restrictions, tending to enhance the responsibility of the accuser. Indeed, he went so far in his studied vagueness as to what was necessary to

secure conviction, that 'the rescript was a sarcasm,' intelligible only in the light of his quaint character. This prepares us somewhat to hear from Eusebius that about the same time a certain Quadratus ventured to address an *Apology* to Hadrian at Athens, because 'certain wicked men were trying to molest our people.' In such a step he was soon followed by Aristides, whose work has recently been brought to light. This latter fell probably under the early years of **Antoninus Pius** (138–161): and strives to demonstrate the excellence of the faith and life of the Christians, while criticizing the religion both of the Jews and of the worshippers of false gods. Such Apologies teach us that occasionally the law was being put into force, at least locally. Sometimes this occurred at the suggestion either of the Jews or of the mob, whenever specially excited, as appears vividly in the martyrdom of the aged Polycarp at Smyrna (c. 155).

But if Hadrian tended to blunt the edge of Trajan's policy, **Marcus Aurelius** leant to the other extreme. For under him, in the martyrdoms at Lyons (c. 177), so touchingly described in the extant letter to a sister Church in Asia, we find active measures taken by the governor to incriminate Christians; while the apologists imply that informers were encouraged by a share in the property confiscated. The governors, we must remember, took their cue from the spirit of an Emperor, as well as from his personal instructions to each. Philosophy, too, was allying itself closely with popular religion; and the revival of each would stimulate jealousy of Christianity and foster accusations, such as Justin Martyr forebodes will be his lot. In reply, the **Apologies** of this epoch become more elaborate, as in Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Minucius Felix; and great care is taken to refute scandals current about Christian life and worship, especially as regards the Lord's Supper. The influence of the dissolute *Commodus*, behind whom stood

his mistress Marcia, a woman with leanings towards the Christians, was so far favourable to the Christians that some were recalled from the mines in Sardinia. But with **Septimius Severus** (193–211) the old rigour returned, and about 202 A.D., in consequence of his stricter orders to the local governors against proselytism, Christians both at Alexandria and in N. Africa suffered for the Name. Very significant was the peace enjoyed by the Church for a generation and more after his death. The new Emperors shared as little in the Roman traditions as they did in Roman blood, being both Oriental and 'syncretist' in temper.

With **Decius** (249–251), however, we again get a Roman who is bent on defending the imperial system against the solvent influence of what was now something like a rival 'empire within the Empire.' He put in force, therefore, the first edicts proper, organizing repressive measures against the Christians. It was the heads of the Church that were primarily aimed at; and his method was a graduated system of terrorism. Many of all sorts were arrested, and not a few fell away under the unwonted trial; so raising in an acute form the problem of the treatment of the lapsed. After him, *Valerian* (253–260) returns to the charge, striking first at the Church's property and places of worship, including cemeteries, and then at the clergy and Christians of rank—in a word, the natural leaders. His death ushered in a forty years' peace, during which numbers grew but virtue declined. Hence, when the last epoch of persecution, organized on a huge scale, began under **Diocletian** and *Maximian* in Feb., 303, large numbers lapsed.

This was the last effort of the Pagan Empire to rise and with one supreme convulsion hurl from its throat the hand of the new power that now threatened to choke out its old life. The offices of trust and power, even about the court, were rapidly falling into Christian hands: while philosophic thought, especially Neo-

Platonism, already bitterly resented the supplanter, and strove to galvanize Pagan religion into new life and resistance. But each and all in vain. After sad vicissitudes, during the decade in which rivals were contending for the purple, the light of toleration dawned with the joint edict of **Constantine** and *Licinius* (313), and brightened into the settled day with the sole rule of the former in 324.

How soon the lesson of suffering for conscience's sake was forgotten, and *toleration* withdrawn, first from vanquished Paganism, and then from sections of the Christian Church itself, is a sad story. Nor does it by any means exhaust the ills that flowed, together with large opportunities, from the fateful alliance between the Roman Empire and the Church.

Before closing this chapter, however, a few words must be said as to individual **martyrdoms**, as illustrative of Christian life and spirit. No martyr left a deeper impress on the Church than did Ignatius of Antioch (c. 115). This is due in part to the fact that he was the author of letters which breathe, in striking language, his fervid zeal for the martyr death. Thus, in begging the Roman Church not to stand between him and his chosen end, he says; 'Give me to the wild beasts, that so I may be given to God. I am the wheat of God and am ground by their teeth, that I may be made pure bread for a sacrificial offering.' We cannot wonder that this particular epistle became 'a sort of martyr's manual,' and coloured the diction of many a later martyrology. Perhaps the calm dignity of Polycarp, who neither sought nor shunned his martyrdom (c. 155), may strike us as more truly Christlike than this passionate enthusiasm for an heroic end. But the difference of temper and maturity between the men was natural. Spiritual knight-errancy ran in the blood of Ignatius. But with others it later became strained and artificial; and in certain circles, especially in Phrygia and North Africa, there

was a tendency towards heroics and defiance, not to say the hysterical. Enthusiasm for the martyr's crown and future joys carried with it a certain self-absorption and oblivion of human duties, to family, the brethren, and the unbelieving world. This was the shadow created by the very vividness of the light of the martyr-ideal. Often, however, it was the love of the brethren that involved Christians in death; both by protest against what seemed unjust condemnations, and by anxiety to minister to confessors in prison, a feature which caught the eye of even the pagan satirist Lucian (c. 165–170).

To attempt anything like praise of their constancy would be sheer impertinence on the part of any who have not shared their experiences of unutterable agony, but ineffable and triumphant joy. Much less does it become us to dwell upon crudities and defects in the spirit of some at least, which yet must be patent to all who study the details of their martyrdoms with serious intent. The broad fact stands out impressively, apart from all abatements, that these men and women endured to die—often by deaths the bare thought of which appals; rather than purchase an easy freedom at the price of disloyalty to the Name of Him who had redeemed them unto the Father by His own agony of the cross. Call it what we may, this is heroism; it is the essence of victory over the world of sense; it is a supreme phase of faith. Compared with this, we may justly feel the temper of current religion to be often unreal and pusillanimous. But let us at least never forget the equal if calmer glory of the latter days, visible on the mission fields, where, both in conditions and spirit, Christian heroism is still one with that of early days.

[Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, Pt. ii. (A.D. 64–170.)]

CHAPTER III.

THE SECOND GENERATION, OR SUB-APOSTOLIC AGE (70–100 A.D.)

The chasm opened by 70 A.D. The Church at large still tinged with Judaism: Christian Legalism. The Sub-Apostolic Literature, esp. *Barnabas*. Brotherly Love: the atmosphere of Church Institutions. Development of the Ministry. Church rites: the Lord's Supper and Baptism. The type of Christian life: its weakness and strength. St. John: his spirit. A silent Social Revolution going on.

We have already noticed the familiar fact that Judaic Christianity in the apostolic age often threatened to hinder the development of the Gospel in all its native breadth and depth. But the sub-apostolic age was cut off from its predecessor by a great chasm, which Judaism, as a national or 'particularizing' influence within the Church, was unable to overleap. This was none other than the **Destruction of the Temple** and its worship, the most fatal feature in the crushing blow inflicted by the capture of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Its real effect both on Jewish sentiment and on the full observance of the Jewish religion cannot be measured by us to-day, except by means of the most strenuous reflection. But this much is evident at the first blush: Jehovah's chosen dwelling-place was laid waste by the Gentiles. This could only mean that its custodians had incurred His grave displeasure and had in some sense been rejected. And the iron of this consciousness entered, together with a deep resentment against the Gentiles, into the soul of Judaism. In those 'Schools of the Law' which sprang up, first at Jamnia, then at Tiberias and elsewhere in Galilee, the religion, instead of expanding,

went on narrowing and hardening; becoming in form more and more a thing of the letter, and in spirit less and less able to beat with the pulse of the world's larger life and aspirations.[1]

On the other hand, **Jewish Christians**, of the type addressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, now saw their way clear to throw in their lot frankly with the Church at large. In so doing, however, they exposed themselves to the special hatred of their countrymen; who, viewing them as apostates, cursed them in their public worship, and visited them with social persecution up to the point possible under Roman rule. As for those who at heart had ever been more Jews than Christians, they tended to drift further apart from their Gentile brethren and harden into schismatic communities; some, though not all, refusing to recognize as brethren any who failed to observe the Mosaic Law. The two types of *Ebionites* (*lit.* 'the Poor,' such as the original Palestinian Christians were, cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 1) or Judaizing Christians here referred to, can be traced for several centuries. At first the main bone of contention between them and others was, as in Paul's day, the Mosaic Law. But from the latter half of the second century, their views as to Christ's Person increasingly absorbed the attention of Churchmen. Here, too, there were two types among them; the one rejecting, the other accepting, the virgin-birth. But the distinctive titles of 'Ebionites' and 'Nazarenes,' for the stricter and milder sort respectively, are only labels used by Epiphanius late in the fourth century. Ebionism is a striking instance that sheer conservatism, no less than Gnostic rashness, has its own dangers.

Meantime **the Church at large**, while losing its

[1] For Judaism after 70 A.D. and up to 135 A.D., consult Morrison, *The Jews under Roman Rule* ('Story of the Nations' series), or Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. I. vol. ii. § 21

original centre, was at once freed from the danger of being dwarfed in its growth by the swaddling-clothes of Judaism, now so rudely stripped away. It was free, that is, to recognize the Gospel in its distinctive newness, in contrast with much that marked the old religion. Yet we may not assume that Christians therefore ceased altogether to be affected by its inner spirit. Nay, we have evidence to the contrary in the very tone and points of emphasis characteristic of the sub-apostolic age. Nor must we forget the fact that oral instruction or 'catechism' was the normal mode in which converts gained their conception of the Gospel. The Gospels, which cast so warm and personal a glow upon faith to-day, though composed within this period (Matthew and Mark before A.D. 70, Luke about 75–80, John some twenty years later), were not as yet universally current. Already, however, there were in local use other and less complete Gospel writings, collections of Christ's precepts, as well as small groups of Gospel parables and incidents, such as those referred to in Luke's Preface (i. 1–4). These, and the traditional 'catechism' in each locality, go far to explain the type of this age. There is a distinct tendency to assimilate the 'law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' to the Law of Moses, by setting it forth as a body of definite precepts, which likewise were often negative in form. The precepts, as such, were right enough, and show in their high ideal of purity and brotherliness the influence of Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. But their defect lies in the comparative absence of that very element which makes that sermon Evangelic or Christian, rather than legal or Judaic. It is the religious motive that makes the difference; and this turns upon the thought of God animating either ideal.

In Judaism it was the **Divine code** that filled the soul's eye; and the call was for self-discipline which should merit favour and reward at the hands of the

Divine Lawgiver of Israel. In Christ's sermon, as elsewhere, the foreground is filled with the thought of the Father; who, in virtue of personal relations to each man, can become the model for man's spirit and attitude toward his fellow-men. Thus 'love, which is fulfilling of the law,' comes to shape all thoughts, words, and deeds. 'Ye therefore shall be perfect'—tried by the test of love or mercy (Luke vi. 36)—'as your Father, the Heavenly Father, is perfect': such is at once the standard and motive of the law of Christ. Here the motive is adequate to the needs of our nature; and the practical issue, where piety is real, must ever be a higher type of conduct than that bred of the legal attitude. Add to this a joyous sense of freedom, in place of irksome restraint, making the Evangelic yoke 'easy' to the man whose heart is won by God's grace in Christ. This 'perfect law, the law of liberty,' as James calls it, is of the nature of a principle, not of a mere code which throws man back upon himself and the 'wages' to be earned by his moral toil. But the Gentile was even less conscious than the Jew of the 'weakness' of the Law, as law: for he had even less sounded the depths which Paul knew so well and so bitterly. Hence the fact that the second generation of Christ's disciples should have failed to appreciate this ideal in all its purity need cause no surprise: the question here is not one of their zeal, but of their insight; while in neither respect can even our own age claim to have already attained.

We are now, perhaps, in a position to estimate aright some specimens of **sub-apostolic literature**. And first of all the *Two Ways*, a popular manual of instruction for those aspiring to membership in a Christian community.[1] The 'Way of Life' is

[1] The *Two Ways*, as known to us, is probably only the Christian form of an original Jewish manual of the same picturesque name. This edition may be placed anywhere between 50–75 A.D., and is known to us through the enlarged form recently brought to light in the *Teaching of the Apostles* (chs. i–v. [vi.?]).

summed up in the two commandments: 'First, thou shalt love God who made thee; secondly, thy neighbour as thyself: whatsoever things thou wouldest not have done to thyself, do not thou to another'—half of the Golden Rule, which in this form occurs elsewhere on Jewish soil. These maxims are then expanded into a number of special applications, *e.g.* the duty of sharing one's goods with poorer brethren. Then follows the 'Way of Death,' set forth as the opposite of the Way of Life.

The substance of the *Two Ways* is found embedded in the so-called **Epistle of Barnabas**, which has recently been assigned with good reason to c. 75–80 A.D.[1] In any case the following extract fits in well enough with this period.

'Let us flee from all vanity, let us utterly hate the works of the Evil Way. Do not, slinking in, stand apart by yourselves, as if ye were already justified; but assemble yourselves together and consult as to the common welfare. . . . Let us become spiritual, let us become a temple perfect unto God. As far as in us lies, let us exercise ourselves in the fear of God; let us strive to keep His precepts, that we may rejoice in His ordinances. The Lord judgeth the world without respect of persons: each man shall receive according to his deeds. . . . Let us give heed, lest haply we be found, as the Scripture saith, "many called but few chosen." For to this end the Lord endured to deliver His flesh unto corruption, that by remission of sins we might be cleansed; which cleansing is through His blood of sprinkling' (iv. 10—v. 1).

The tone of the passage may be taken as typical of the average Christian piety of the second generation, as is also the closing appeal.

'It is good, therefore, to learn the ordinances of the Lord, as many as have been written above (*i.e.* the bulk of the *Two Ways*), and to walk in them. For he that doeth these things shall be glorified in the kingdom of God: whereas he that chooseth their opposites shall perish together with his works. For this cause is resurrection, for this recompense. I entreat

[1] For details as to *Barnabas*, as for most of the great names in the sequel, see Neander (ii. 405 ff.).

those of you who are in higher station, keep amongst you those to whom ye may do good. Fail not; the Day is at hand, in which everything shall be destroyed together with the evil one. "The Lord is at hand and His reward." Again and again I entreat you: be good lawgivers one to another; continue faithful counsellors to yourselves; take away from you all hypocrisy.'

A large part of the 'wisdom' which 'Barnabas' had set before his readers was of the nature of *allegorical spiritualizing*[1] of the Old Testament, with a view to show that it belonged throughout not to the old carnal Israel, but to the new spiritual People. But the underlying piety is, as has been said, that common to the age as a whole. Salvation appears something lying beyond the 'Day of the Lord;' a reward for a walk of patient obedience and good works, on the path of which they had been set by the remission of sins or cleansing by the blood of Christ. The idea of Regeneration emerges indeed from time to time, in association with baptism or 'sealing.' So also, hope, righteousness, love, which are called 'three ordinances (*dogmas*) of the Lord,' viz. 'Hope of life, the beginning and end of our faith; Righteousness, the beginning and end of judgment; joyful and exultant Love, the witness of righteous works' (i. 6)—a rather strange use of familiar terms. But neither Faith nor Regeneration is brought into organic relation with the Christian walk, as its secret or vital germ. The undue preoccupation with the future aspects of Salvation, overshadows its reality as a present fact in the believer's experience, and so keeps certain important elements in the Gospel from coming into the light of reflection. Thus the references to redemption by the death of Christ lack living insight, and are little more than echoes of a tradition whose secret has been lost. In a word, the **Gospel is thrown out of perspective**

[1] Like that of Philo as to method, and derived ultimately, like Philo's, from Greek philosophic sources rather than from Jewish thought.

and proportion, with distinct loss to its Evangelic or properly Christian quality.

Yet there is a certain fine spirituality of tone about our author, when he speaks of 'the New Law of our Lord Jesus Christ' (in contrast with the external ritual of Judaism) as no 'yoke of constraint' but heart-service. Listen to what he says of the **New Temple**, the Christian people in whom God dwells.

'Give heed that the temple of the Lord may be built gloriously. How? By receiving the remission of our sins and hoping on the Name we became new, created afresh from the beginning. Wherefore God dwelleth truly in our habitation, within us. How? The word of His faith, the calling of His promise, the wisdom of the ordinances, the commandments of the teaching; He Himself prophesying in us, Himself dwelling in us, opening for us who were in bondage unto death the door of the temple, which is the mouth (*i.e.* the confession prior to baptism; cf. Rom. x. 10), and giving us repentance, leadeth us to the incorruptible temple. . . . This is the spiritual temple that is being built to the Lord' (xvi. 8–10).

Here the mind recalls the way in which Peter speaks of those who 'are built up a spiritual house' (ii. 5). Yet the hidden depths of the heart are not laid bare as in the Pauline Epistles. But the practically dutiful attitude towards God, the deep sense of indebtedness to Christ—and Christ crucified—for a knowledge of forgiveness and of the walk that pleases the Father—this marks the latter age hardly less than the former, and issues in a similar type of life.

If one legend is writ large on the face of apostolic and sub-apostolic life, it is the word **Philadelphia**, or brotherly love. Its sway is at once the proof and measure of the hold which the twin truths of Fatherliness in God and of the value of the human person as related to Him, had really gained upon Christians, be their theoretic insight never so meagre. It involved nothing short of a spiritual revolution in ideals. Sympathy now took the first place; service to one another and to all in need became the essence of worship. A system of kindly Duties, to be rendered

as unto Christ, replaced the Code of Rights, whether that of the State or that of the Law of Nature. The opposite spirit ceased to be regarded as a venial matter, or even the just mark of conscious superiority.

Hence, if we are to interpret early **Christian institutions** aright, we must see them steadily in the light of this all-pervading atmosphere. Thus co-operation in the divine life is a prime duty; while self-isolation, and still more the 'heresy' of party spirit, are condemned as a breach of *philadelphia*. All the feeling of the true Jew for his 'neighbour,' his brother Jew, lived afresh in ennobled form, when the 'brethren dearly beloved' in Christ might be of any race or social status, if only they were of 'the household of faith.' The sum total of all such, scattered in little colonies throughout the Empire, constituted the *Church* or general Assembly of God, answering to the old commonwealth of Israel in its dispersion; while to the synagogues in which this ideal unity took shape and being, corresponded the separate local congregations, many of which were actually offshoots from the synagogue. The bond binding all into a unity in either case, was essentially a spiritual one; consisting, among the Christians, of common trust in the Heavenly Father and in His Christ, a common love, and a common hope.

Where a group of congregations owed their foundation to the labours of one 'apostle' or divinely endowed missionary,[1] they came naturally under his parental oversight and occasional visitation, much as happens to-day in the foreign mission-field. But as this exceptional class of persons passed away, the communities were thrown back entirely upon their own resources, under the leadership of local officers,

[1] Not necessarily one of the Twelve, as we see from the *Teaching of the Apostles*, ch. xi. See also the general terms of 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11; cf. Rom. xvi. 7, as well as Acts xiv. 14; 1 Thess. ii. 6.

such as the 'bishops and deacons' mentioned in the *Teaching of the Apostles* (xv. 1). These in turn seem to have been chosen representatives of the congregation; being in fact the duly recognized organs for the exercise of functions originally performed, in some instances at least, by the voluntary devotion of the maturer members of a community (1 Cor. xvi. 15 f.; cf. 1 Thess. v. 12 ff.). The **ministry** formed no special caste. Certain functions of ministry arose in the Church life; functions are best performed when specialized in the hands of those who show aptitude (see 1 Cor. xii. 28); hence special ministers of the functions ideally inherent in all. So Bishop Lightfoot:

'The Levitical priesthood, like the Mosaic Law, had served its temporary purpose. The period of childhood had passed, and the Church of God was now arrived at mature age. The Covenant people resumed their sacerdotal functions.' Hence while 'fixed rules and definite officers' become necessary as means—the end being the orderly development of the given community—yet these were of the nature of 'aids and expedients.' . . . The 'functions and privileges of the Christian people are never regarded as transferred or even delegated to those officers, . . . the sacerdotal title is never once conferred upon them. The only priests under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood.' [1]

If we may trust the suggestion conveyed by the parallelism of 'younger' folk with 'elders' in 1 Pet. v. 1, 5, we gather that the seniors of the community, as such, had the general 'shepherding' or 'oversight' of the whole flock.[2] This fits in with the regard attaching to age not only among the Jews, but in antiquity at large. The duty, however, of all the 'seniors' was the special care of a representative committee of official 'elders' or 'presbyters,' similar to that found in each

[1] See Lightfoot's essay in *The Christian Ministry*. This essay and Dr. Sanday's papers in the *Expositor* (Jan. and Feb., 1887) are presupposed in what follows.

[2] See in this light 1 Tim. v. 1, 2; cf. Tit. ii. 2, 6; 1 Clem. i. 3; Polycarp iv. 1, 2; v. 1, 3; 2 Clem. xix. 1.

Jewish community. Such would be the 'elders' of Ephesus summoned to meet Paul at Miletus, whose functions are described as those of 'oversight' or 'shepherding' (Acts xx. 17–28: cf. Titus i. 5–9; 1 Tim. v. 17), by which the care of morals or *discipline* is essentially meant. At first 'preaching' proper (='prophesying' or 'teaching'), as distinct from 'putting in mind' of moral duties, had no special connexion with the 'elders' or officers. It was a matter of 'spiritual gift' to be freely exercised by any for the good of all 'in meeting' (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 5, 24), provided confusion was avoided (33)—a point to which the presiding 'elders' probably attended. As time went on, men of special gift would gain fixed recognition as 'prophets' and 'teachers' (Acts xiii. 1, 1 Cor. xii. 28; *The Teaching*, xi. xiii.), whether they were also officers or not. But the tendency would be for the two classes of function, the 'spiritual' and the practical, to coincide in individuals (cf. 1 Tim. v. 17; *Teaching*, xv.). General oversight, too, would doubtless include management of the abounding charity of the brethren, to which every early record bears witness. And as the apostles, in the Jerusalem community, had found it necessary to delegate the work of distribution to 'the seven'; so division of labour meant elsewhere that of the officers some acted as 'overseers,' others as 'deacons' (Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1–10; *Teaching*, xv. 1). Deacons seem often to have been younger men, though perhaps ranking with their superior colleagues as 'elders' or 'presbyters.'[1]

These details serve to bring out the evangelic spirit of primitive organization. We are reminded of the spirit of Christ's own maxim, that while the essence of worldly government is 'lordship' and 'authority,' it is otherwise with 'the Kingdom.' In it the 'servant'

[1] So apparently in 1 Clem. xlii. 4, 5: *Teaching*, xv. 1, where the difference seems one only of seniority within a single official college (for further detail see *Contemporary Review*, March, 1894).

is the type of office (Mark x. 42–44; Matt. xxiii. 8–12), and the assembled brethren form the true court of appeal (Matt. xviii. 17; cf. 2 Cor. ii. 6).

But such principles were hard to preserve; and their prevalence was due in large part to that most fraternal of institutions, the primitive **Lord's Supper.** Of this the *Agapé*, or Loving Feast, was for long an integral part—a point that has recently been made much clearer by the discovery of the *Teaching* (x. 1). Here we read: 'After ye have been *filled*, give thanks ('make Eucharist') as follows.' This fits in with 1 Cor. xi. 20 ff., as well as with all we know of 'breaking of bread' in the Acts. The 'Eucharist' was probably the solemn climax of the Lord's Supper, when, after Christ's example, bread was broken with special thanksgiving in view of the redemption achieved by Him. The first evidence we have of the separation of the prior *Agapé* or social stage, dates from 112 A.D., and relates only to Bithynia. In the Ignatian Epistles the union is still presupposed.[1] Its deep religious meaning lay in the fact that all classes, including the otherwise despised slave, sat down together at the table of the one Lord, and deepened, by practically recognizing, their oneness as brethren in Christ. The feast itself was provided by the gifts, generally in kind, of the richer brethren. Like all alms, they were in their very nature a sacrifice unto the Lord (Heb. xiii. 15 f.), at first offered in pure gratitude, but ere long with a certain regard also to 'wages' in the future life. In the 'Eucharistic' prayers, the bread and cup were regarded both as samples of the Creator's bounty, and as symbolizing the 'spiritual food and drink' of eternal life brought nigh in Jesus Christ (*Teaching*, ix. x.). Such gatherings were originally of frequent, if not daily, occurrence; and were not always held in a single place, but often in

[1] Pliny, *Ep. to Trajan*, 96: Ignat., *ad Smyrn.*, 8, on both of which consult Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, i. 400 f.

various houses, as was convenient (Acts ii. 46). Here come in the meetings 'in the house' mentioned in Pauline Epistles. But as this might play into the hands of coteries, we find the ideal strongly emphasized by Ignatius (c. 115?) that there should be but one such meeting, *i.e.* that at which the chief pastor was present. Unity required this, and it won its way to general use; though semi-private 'love-feasts' were also allowed in the Church's life for centuries later.[1]

Only Christians whose confession of faith was 'sealed' in **Baptism** were allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper; and these, only provided they were free from known sin, especially that of enmity one with another. Otherwise the 'sacrifice' of thanksgiving would be defiled (*Teaching*, xiv. 1, 2; see Matt. v. 23 f.)—a beautiful idea, after Christ's own mind. As to the mode of baptism, we get most light from *The Teaching*, ch. vii. Originally, indeed, baptism followed immediately on faith in Christ, unto whose Name as Lord, in all its simplicity, confession seems to have been.[2] But towards the end of the second generation we get certain changes. The very rudimentary 'good news' of facts touching Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4, 11) through whom 'forgiveness of sins' was preached, expanded gradually to meet the needs of untutored Gentiles, whose notions of a holy life would be very vague. Hence we get instruction in the 'Two Ways' prior to baptism, which takes place in the Triune Name, usually in running water. In case of necessity, however, other water (as *e.g.* warm) may be used; and even threefold sprinkling of the head may replace immersion. For the legal has not yet replaced the evangelic spirit. Fasting on the eve of so solemn an act is enjoined on both baptizer and baptized, in keeping with Jewish habits.

[1] Bigg's *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, 103 ff., contains interesting details.

[2] See Acts viii. 16, x. 48, xix. 5, xxii. 16; cf. 1 Cor. i. 10–13; Rom. vi. 3; see Hatch, *Hibbert Lecture*, pp. 294, 314.

We must not, however, jump to the conclusion that **the ideal of the sub-apostolic age** was perfect, much less that it was always attained. Its ideal was no doubt simpler and more thoroughgoing than that of later ages, largely because its sense of brotherhood in Christ was more vivid and real. But it had temptations to a grossness of vice, where vice there was, which would shock Christian sentiment to-day, were it made the subject of reiterated warnings, as it was then, and with only too good reason. Further, its conscience, though vigorous and in deadly earnest, was in most cases not of a very refined or sensitive order. If it had great momentum, it had yet to be applied in ways which to the modern Christian have from youth been matters of instinct. In a word, Christians then showed a strength and weakness of the same type as that met with on the modern mission-field.[1] We must not idealize them. Taken as they really were, they may well rebuke and stir us up. For of us 'more shall be required.'

Some idea of the **moral dangers** besetting these Christians, men of like nature with ourselves, may be gained from the messages to the Churches in *Revelation* (ii.–iii.). The Jews were showing themselves bitterly hostile, and probably were the main authors of the petty persecution which tried the 'patience' of the Christians. But such open hostility is less dangerous to character or 'works' than the insidious contagion of Greek society. Some were seeming to countenance 'idolatry' by partaking in feasts connected with pagan worship; others were losing their moral purity, partly at least under the influence of a false 'gnostic' theory, the opposite of that implied in Colossians. There contempt of the body, as matter to be ignored by the spirit, had led to asceticism; here it gave excuse for licence. Did such theorists boast that they 'knew

[1] See an interesting chapter (xvii.) in Sibree's *Madagascar* (Trübner, 1880).

the deep things'? John retorts, 'Yes, the deep things of Satan.' For throughout it is practice that is the test. 'I know thy works,' is the burden—works, however, which must be full of the savour of 'first love' and heartfelt zeal. Lukewarmness is the sin of sins. And this, we are shown, is clearly connected with a worldly prosperity too comfortable to feel the call to watch. Deadness may be present while yet there is a 'name to live.' Yet in every Church but one the core is sound. Evil workers are hated, and charlatan 'apostles'—a danger apparent also in *The Teaching*—are tried and exposed. But, for a time at least, the sacred name of 'prophet' may cover the unworthy. On the whole, then, we feel that the age is one of severe testing and conflict, and calls for moral backbone, if faith is to remain Christian, that is to say, really devoted and morally pure. To enter into the joy of their Lord, Christians must 'overcome.'

We have already seen the solidarity of their congregational life. Did local autonomy hinder the growth of an equal **sense of unity** as regards the Church at large? Most emphatically not. Listen to one of the Eucharistic prayers of *The Teaching:* 'As this broken bread, once scattered (as grain) upon the mountains, has been gathered together and become one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom.' Note the idea of unity, which is on the pattern of the old Israel, 'in dispersion' yet one in heart. Scattered, it is true, but one in nature; hence a destiny of complete union. The sentiment is absolutely universal, though there is no 'Catholic' organization, save in the form of church secretaries, like Clement at Rome, keeping their churches in touch with sister churches. A piece of this Clement's handiwork which we possess will itself illustrate this. Strife had arisen in the church at Corinth. Officers duly appointed had been deposed for no alleged fault. The movement could in some

sense be regarded as 'the young against the elder folk' (iii. 3). To remonstrate against such irregularities as tending to discredit the Christian name, the Roman Church addressed itself as to a sister Church, through its epistolary representative Clement (c. 96 A.D.). The tone is, 'if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it,' Church with Church ; and the appeal is to Christian reason—to the principle of order visible in Nature and human history, as opposed to jealousy and emulation—not to external authority.

And what is true of inter-congregational relations applies also to the individuals composing churches. The maxim in *The Teaching* is, 'let every one that cometh in the Name of the Lord be received' (see 2 John 5–10); though experience of abuse has already led to the rider, 'Prove him.' The *bona-fide* wayfarer will not stay more than two or three days, while he who would settle must show readiness to work; otherwise he is a 'Christmonger.' These dangers led gradually to the use of Christian passports, as it were, the issuing of which may have been one of the first duties of men like Clement.

But what of **John** himself, the last survivor of the Twelve? In the main we must be content with a few general points that are fairly made out. The prospect of the siege of Jerusalem (c. 66–70) caused the Jerusalem Church to retire to Pella beyond the Jordan. Either then or somewhat later, John probably took up his residence at Ephesus, whence his influence was felt throughout the Churches of 'Asia.' Tradition puts his death c. 98–99 A.D. Of the details of his life we know little or nothing, not even of his exile in Patmos. But glimpses are gained of a prevalent impression that the beloved disciple would live to see the Lord's return; of the attached circle, probably of Ephesian elders, who set their seal to his Gospel (John xxi. 23, 24); as well as of his patriarchal status among those whom he addresses as his 'little

children' (1 John ii. 1). His motto, 'Love one another,' long remained in the hearts of his disciples. And that this love was no cheap sentiment, but an energetic purpose of self-sacrifice, is illustrated by a striking story told of him by Clement of Alexandria.

John, already an old man, commends a promising youth to the care of a local bishop, who, after training him, places on him 'the seal of the Lord' in baptism, and in reliance on this safeguard relaxes his watch. The youth falls into wild company, and finally takes to the hills as captain of a brigand band. After some time the Apostle again visits the place, and asks after 'his deposit.' When he learns that 'he is dead to God,' he upbraids the guardian, calls for a horse, and heedless of years makes for the hills; where, after a touching interview with the wanderer, he assures him in Christ's name of the hope of forgiveness, promising even to stand surety in his stead, as Christ did for us. At length, broken down, yet restored to hope, the young man is won over and duly restored to the Church, 'a great example of true repentance and a mighty proof of regeneration.'

One other point may be noted as characteristic of John's attitude towards the Old Covenant, whose institutions were fast melting away. He loved to brood on the new covenant as realizing the inner meaning of the old; whereas Paul dwelt on the abrogation by the new of the 'weak and beggarly elements' inherent in the old. The difference was at bottom one of emphasis, the outcome of distinct tempers and experiences. But it seems to explain the slowness with which the outer forms of Judaism fell away, like layers of husk, as the living bud of the Gospel burst in John's mind into ever fuller bloom. Well were it, had the Church taken this lesson to heart. As it is, men hardly heed the fact—painful and incredible as it seemed to the Jewish mind—that a system of Divine revelation was once declared antiquated, because inadequate to

the fulness of the Divine truths that were its life. And so they have not always faith to possess their souls in patience whilst changes, much less radical, pass over the way in which theology builds upon the One Foundation, Christ, as His mind becomes better known.

It remains simply to enumerate several features in the silent but mighty **social revolution** then in process under the impulse of the new idea of *human worth* to the Father's eye, which effaced distinctions of age, sex, culture, condition. Child, wife, barbarian, slave—all such names once involved disabilities that seem to us to-day as incredible as inhumane. These, in principle, were at once cancelled in the Christian family, household, and social circle, in that all were treated as equally children of God. In practice, however, especially as regards slavery, the full effect could only take place in a state of society where Christians had something like a free hand. But this was far from being the case as yet. Indeed it was not even dreamt of. Their outlook was of quite another order. Upon earth all was dark and dreary; the only citizenship to be hoped for was that in the heavenly Jerusalem. On this their eyes were riveted. 'Come grace, and pass this world away,' was still the burden of their prayer (*Teaching*, x. 6). For the 'world' the only lot foreseen was destruction. The *how* and *when* were matters left vague by their Master. Their fervent desires, however, hastened to fill in a perspective of their own, which gave to Christian piety for many a day a peculiar 'other-worldly' cast, and fostered an aloofness of spirit, helpful indeed to their own purity amid abounding corruptions, but not without danger to the growth of the kingdom of God among men.

[Though not sufficiently distinguishing one generation from another, the following may be consulted: Neander, vol. i. (Life and Worship); Schmidt, *Social Results of Early Christianity* (Isbister). Prime source: *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (R.T.S. *Christian Classics*, vii.). Compare *Moeller*, pp. 62–93; Slater, *The Faith and Life of the Early Church*, chs. vii. ff.].

CHAPTER IV.

THIRD GENERATION: THE LATER APOSTOLIC FATHERS. (100–135.)

The Church's centre of gravity fast changing: Gnosis in the sub-apostolic age. The Apostolic Fathers, their type of Doctrine (Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp): Papias and the two types of Christian. Developed Gnosis, its problems, spirit, and schools: its inner meaning: the Apologists. Piety of the age tinged with Legalism, yet pure and brotherly. Its social aspect: Development of the Episcopate. The Sacraments. Celibacy. A Caution.

We have already seen that the year 70, while it deprived the Church of a definite centre in Jerusalem, also freed it from the worst dangers of a Judaized Gospel, like that found among the Ebionites, who stand in history a monument of the risks of a dogged adherence to the Past which refuses to see God's finger in the Present also. During the last decades of the first century the **spiritual centre of gravity** began to re-form about John at Ephesus. And by the end of our new epoch, which closes with the quenching of Jewish national ideals by the erection of the pagan Ælia Capitolina on the site of the Holy City, the direct influence of Judaism upon Christianity may be said to cease. The first half of this age, however, yet shows a certain subtle tendency to 'Sabbatize' or conform Christian conduct to Jewish models, noticed by Ignatius as an 'evil leaven' in the province of Asia, where Jewish traditions were deep-rooted.

But the tide had really turned. Danger now came from another quarter, that of **Greek intellect**, which not only tended to depreciate even the relative value of Old Testament institutions, but persisted in the attempt to force the Gospel into the largely alien

moulds of its native thought. This it did in the main in good faith, but with no adequate sense of the 'newness' of the Gospel, which needed 'new wine-skins,' which neither Jew nor Greek possessed ready-made. The new spirit had to fashion for itself from within a new body of conceptions and usages; nor is the task ever done, for the animating life is ever expanding by growth. Thus the Gnostics' attempt was premature; and they were strongheaded in the violence used to force the simplicity of the Gospel into the grotesque garb of their imaginations. Signs of such '*Gnosis*,' or superior insight in things spiritual, met us in the Colossian Church. It also left its mark on the history of John in Asia, where he was opposed to the Judæo-Gnostic Cerinthus; who standing midway, as it were, between Ebionite and fully Gnostic views, distinguished Jesus the carpenter's son from Christ the Heavenly Being, who descended at the Baptism and withdrew before the Passion.[1]

This of course made the personality of Christ not a real but only a 'seeming' (*docetic*) unity. Further traces of **Docetism** re-emerge in the Ignatian Epistles (c. 115), and explain the writer's insistence upon the 'flesh' or body of Jesus, as equally necessary with the 'spirit' to the reality of His incarnate Person and work. Evidently the Cross was a special scandal in the eyes of certain who found its suffering unworthy of the Son of God. They were inclined to question whether it was more than a phantom event, falling back upon the obscurity of the Old Testament on the point, and saying, 'Unless I find it in the charters, I do not believe it as part of the Gospel.' In reply Ignatius brushes aside their Old Testament

[1] This seems to be the error aimed at in 1 John iv. 2, 3, cf. John xx. 31. It is also the view underlying the newly recovered fragment of the *Gospel of Peter* (c. 125–165). For the way in which Gnosis at first blended with Judaism, as in Cerinthus, see Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 106 ff.

excuse, and flies direct to the well-known facts themselves, exclaiming: 'But as for me, my charter is Jesus Christ; the inviolable charter is His cross and His death and His resurrection, and faith through Him' (*Philad.* 8).

That such controversies were causing the **written records of the Gospel** to be valued as never before, appears from an earlier passage, in which Ignatius refers to himself as 'having taken refuge with the Gospel as the flesh of Christ'—the guarantee of His reality—'and with the Apostles as the presbytery of the Church'—the final witnesses of the Gospel. And it may be added that the chief value of the 'Apostolic Fathers' lies in the fact that they serve as personal links between the Apostolic age and that of the Apologists, when the effort to grasp the large bearings of the Gospel begins afresh. Where it is a question of simple guarantors for the common substance of apostolic faith, there is strength in the very limitations of a Clement, an Ignatius, a Polycarp, who veil but lightly the teaching they had received, whether Petrine, Pauline or Johannean.

The title '**Apostolic Fathers**'[1] is an elastic one, covering not only those who can be shown to have been disciples in some sense of apostles, but also those who have been widely credited with that pre-eminence. Omitting the Epistle of 'Barnabas' already described (of whose author we know nothing), we assign to the former class Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, whose genuine writings are all epistolary. To the latter class belong writings more varied in form. We have a primitive book of 'catechism' and Church regulations, the *Teaching of the Apostles;* a very ancient Homily, commonly cited as *ii Clement;*

[1] The flavour of early Christian piety cannot fully be felt in the few brief extracts here possible. Accordingly, the excellent *Selections* (translated) by Prof. Gwatkin, of Cambridge, might here be referred to with advantage.

the *Shepherd* of Hermas, an early prototype of the *Pilgrim's Progress*; and finally an anonymous epistle, addressed to a cultured pagan, Diognetus, and setting forth the truth about Christianity and the Christians. Broadly speaking, they do not imply much reflexion. They owe their being to some practical occasion, and are spontaneous and unstudied. Their authors are not great writers, but strenuous characters. Their style is loose and their tone hortatory. But they have a noble simplicity which disarms criticism, and often a religious glow which becomes contagious.

Each, too, has the ring of reality and individuality. **Clement's Epistle** (A.D. 96), with its serene and dignified temper, its Roman love of order, has already come before us. Two or three points characteristic also of the later generation may be added. He has caught, yet without fully making them his own, most of the varied aspects under which the New Testament sets forth Christ's salvation. There is thus a certain 'all round' impression produced by the epistle as a whole; though the elements, which are reflected in detail, have not been reduced to organic unity by the action of a profound experimental insight. He simply utters in childlike fashion what he has learnt from apostolic writings, under the influence of the strong tradition that still lived in the several Churches.

Thus he makes no difficulty of saying that 'by reason of faith *and hospitality*' both Abraham and Rahab found favour with God (10; 12)—thus putting 'faith' on a level with a special virtue or 'work' like hospitality; which to Paul would have seemed like putting on the same level the root and a handful of its fruit. He does better when he says elsewhere that Abraham 'wrought righteousness and truth *by* faith' (31). But he errs, where he errs, not through fixed falsity of view, but through not having a real grip upon any distinct theory. To belong to God as His new people through the grace in Christ, this meant all,

including justification. And Christ had revealed the New Law, by obedience to which God was to be pleased and resurrection secured as reward.

But as to the **exact nature of the work of Christ**, or the relation of faith and works, Clement and his contemporaries were quite vague. Clear thought as to the *how* of Christ's Salvation is lacking: but there is full and grateful assurance as to the fact itself. 'Let us,' says he (7, 4), 'fix our eyes on the blood of Christ and recognize how precious it is unto His Father; because being shed for our salvation it proffered to the whole world the grace of repentance.' Here, in keeping with the context, the idea is that Christ's blood is 'precious' just because it secures the godly repentance involved in salvation. 'Grace' is fully realized by the heart, if not by the head; as when he says (32) that, 'being called by His will in Christ Jesus, we are not justified by ourselves or by our own wisdom or understanding or piety or works which we wrought in holiness of heart, but by faith, whereby the Almighty God justified all men from the beginning.' All this is surely paralleled by what we find on the mission field to-day, for instance in China. Piety in emotion and experience precedes, often by a long period, theological reflexion.

When we pass to the martyr **Ignatius**, who on his way to Rome pours forth fervid words of counsel to the Asiatic congregations with whom he has been brought into passing contact, we find John's influence now the prime factor. Salvation is the 'true life,' consisting in a Divine fellowship with God and Christ. Thus he calls himself 'Theophorus,' one indwelt of God. This colours all his thoughts, and gives them a glow which marks him out among his fellows. The bond between Christ and the Christian is Faith, whose issue is Love. He would have men

'perfect in faith and love toward Jesus Christ: for these are the beginning and end of life—faith the beginning, love the

end—and the two being found in unity are God; while all things else needful to true nobility duly follow' (*To Eph.* 14.).

His theology is the immediate response of a fervent nature to the story of the Saviour's life and death, seen through the teaching of St. John. We may perhaps catch its key-note in a later passage, where he promises to discuss 'the dispensation touching the *new man* Jesus Christ, which consisteth in faith and love towards Him, in His passion and resurrection.' But that he had no rounded dogmatic system is clear from the qualification he adds, 'especially if the Lord should reveal aught to me.' Here we get the temper of Ignatius—one of intense personal trust and devotion, whose absorbing object is the 'perfect man,' who is also Son of God. The incarnation had changed everything. 'Henceforth every sorcery and every spell was dissolved, the ignorance of wickedness vanished away, the ancient kingdom was pulled down, when God appeared in the likeness of man unto *newness* of everlasting *life*'; for 'the abolishing of death was taken in hand.' Thus Christ is, in a word, 'our veritable Life.'

But here the **enthusiastic and realistic tendency** of his Syrian mind calls for mention. As he had failed to grasp the deep spiritual sense in which Paul uses the term 'flesh,' so he is apt to dwell somewhat crudely upon the idea of 'eternal life' as mere 'incorruption.' And this in turn he connects, in magical rather than spiritual fashion, with the Breaking of the Bread, 'the medicine of immortality, the antidote that we should not die but live for ever in Jesus Christ' (*To Eph.* 17; 20). But perhaps we must not take his words too strictly here or in other rhetorical passages, where he is concerned to counteract the ultra-spiritualism (Docetism) which would ignore the historical side of the Gospel. He has been taught the central significance of Christ's death, and duly echoes it as a 'mystery whereby we attained unto be-

lief'; but does not see into the heart of it as a spiritual fact, which is to mould the believer's own experience. The New Testament mysticism of death with Christ and a coincident quickening of 'the new man,' has not yet opened up its meaning to his thought.

As a final sample of his style, take the following:—

'Ye are stones of a temple, which were afore prepared for a building of God the Father, being hoisted up to the heights through the engine of Jesus Christ, to wit the cross, and using for a rope the Holy Spirit; while your faith is your windlass, and love is the way that leadeth up to God. . . . Pray without ceasing for the rest of mankind (for there is in them a hope of repentance) that they may find God. Permit them, then, at least to take lessons from your works' (*To Ephes.* ix. 10).

It must not be thought, however, that Ignatius was quite typical of his age. Its piety is rather reflected in his correspondent, **Polycarp**, whose great historical significance lies in the fact that his eighty-six summers (c. 69–155) bridge over a period of rapid and manifold change in the religious atmosphere both within and without the Church, and not least in Asia Minor. The intimate pupil of John, he was the master in apostolic traditions of Irenæus, who did so much to shape the 'Catholic Church' in the West during the last quarter of the second century. The very lack of originality in his mind made him an excellent link in a chain of witnesses.

His Epistle to the Philippians (c. 115) is purely hortatory, and consists in the main of echoes from our Gospels and Epistles, from Clement, and from Ignatius. He felt rooted and settled in what he had received from early youth; and looked askance at the speculations of those who felt bound to adjust the Gospel to the rest of what then passed for knowledge. Thus it was as the Elder, the disciple of Apostles, that he made his mark on the Church's imagination. His own thought rarely rises above the common level; so that his epistle may be taken as typical of the piety of his age.

Its drift is as follows:—

Ye did well in helping Ignatius and his fellows on the way to Rome. Inasmuch as 'it is by grace ye are saved, not of works, but by the will of God through Jesus Christ,' 'gird up your loins to serve God in fear and in truth,' by the power of faith in Christ's resurrection and future judgeship. I cannot indeed teach you in righteousness as did the blessed Paul in his letter to you speaking of the Faith, 'which is the mother of us all, whose attendant is Hope, and whose forerunner is Love—love towards God and Christ and one's neighbour. For if any cultivate these, he hath fulfilled the precept of righteousness: for he that hath love is far from all sin.'

He then enjoins various specific duties, and adds,

Take care to avoid false brethren, specially such as deny the reality of Christ's humanity and 'the testimony of the cross,' or 'pervert the oracles of the Lord to their own lusts and say that there is neither resurrection nor judgment.' Cling to 'the word delivered unto us from the first,' fasting and praying God to keep us from temptation. 'Hold firmly to our Hope and to the Earnest of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ, who took up our sins in His own body upon the tree. Let us imitate His endurance. For He gave this example to us in His own person, and we believed this.' Copy also the endurance of martyrs like Ignatius, Paul, and others, 'assured that they are in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom they also suffered. For they loved not the present world' in comparison with their Redeemer. Stand fast therefore in these things, firm, yet loving, gentle, despising none. Be beneficent, for *charity rescues from death*. See to it that the Name of the Lord suffer not in men's esteem. I am much grieved about your presbyter Valens and his wife. God grant them repentance, and do ye deal gently with them.

The strength of Polycarp was thus not largeness of outlook, but the simple dignity of his character and personal piety, so nobly shown in his martyrdom.

Much light is shed upon the conditions amid which Polycarp was bred, in a passage from the '**Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord**,' by his younger contemporary, **Papias** of Hierapolis (Euseb., iii. 39). The very title of his work suggests that the real 'Canon' or Standard to him and his fellows was that of the Lord's Sayings themselves, whether written or oral. He promises to set down, along with interpretations of the written records, everything gathered

from the Elders, preferring the precepts emanating from the Lord to the unauthorized talk and precepts of men. Thus, whenever he met a disciple of the Fathers ('Elders'), he used to inquire—

> 'What Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the Lord's Disciples (once) said; also what Aristion and the Elder John, the disciples of the Lord, (now) say. For I did not think that I could get so much profit from the contents of books, as from the utterances of a living and abiding voice.'

Here we get evidence both of the strength of oral tradition (so far keeping written Gospels in the background), and of the **two schools** within the Church —the one content, like Polycarp and Papias, to hand on what they heard from the Fathers, as it were, of the Church; the other eager to get by reflexion to the bottom of the Gospel message. Postponing then for awhile further study of the former class, we turn aside to consider the latter, as seen in the various types of Gnostics.

Their first efforts in the Apostolic age have already been dealt with. But soon after Ignatius' day the **Gnostics** tried yet bolder flights. Not that they were idle fellows, diverting themselves with speculation for its own sake. Far from it. They were started on their theories by the painful fact of evil face to face with a perfect Being; and the problem became more acute, once that Being was revealed as the God and Father of the gracious Lord Jesus Christ. Some resisting power there must be at the very creation; and this could be none other than Matter in its own nature. This phase of thought, which so realizes the conflict between the spiritual and material orders as to trace them in some sense to separate sources, is known as Dualism. It asked, How can the Infinite Good have any contact with the inherently finite and evil, God with matter? Obviously, only indirectly, through the medium of emanations or angelic existences,

styled 'æons,' becoming less refined and spiritual as they drew nearer to the material end of the scale.

Apart from the half-metaphorical imagery in which they clothed this idea, there is here nothing ridiculous; but rather **a thought profound**, and in its motive reverent. When to this we add the twin thoughts stamped on the Gospel, Redemption and the Person of Redeemer, we have the impulses which explain Christian Gnosis in all its strange developments. Various magical practices and much charlatanry mingled themselves with Gnosis, especially with the Samaritan and Syrian types, where Oriental elements prevailed over those strictly Greek. But the historian must interpret schools of thought through their essential ideals not through their abuses, theoretical or practical, though these latter were often lamentable enough. And Gnosis in the hands of an Alexandrine like Basilides was, apart from misunderstandings by more orthodox opponents, no despicable thing.

True, it tended to overlook **the genius of the Gospel**, which lays all its stress, not on the metaphysical, but on the moral source of evil in self-will and self-love; and so its effect was to rob the Gospel of its power among the simple as well as among the learned. This, however, was not the aim of the Gnostics, any more than it was the aim of orthodox speculation later on. The fact is that Gnosis was the pioneer of the Church's theology, that is, of the setting of the spiritual facts of revelation in terms of the best thought of an age; and it made all a pioneer's blunders, both in temper and in results. Would that the Catholic Church had thereby learned to keep closer to the path of experimental religion in the emphasis of its teaching and the conditions required of its members!

The **Samaritan type** of Gnosis runs back to the bastard form of Messianic ideal to which *Simon Magus* appealed, when by magic and an air of mystery

he passed as the 'Great Power of God' (Acts viii. 10). As the Acts suggest, Simon regarded the Gospel simply as a fresh source of magic influence, to be added to the medley of elements, Jewish and Syro-Phœnician, which made up his system. Thus both in his hands and in those of his disciple *Menander*, this 'wisdom' was simply a rival to the Gospel; and it merits notice here only as a witness to the widespread, if often debased, instinct for a Redemption from the world-powers which enslave the soul and lead to death. Nor need we trace the more or less refined forms assumed by the 'Simonians' of the second century under the influence of Christian Gnosis.

Intermediate between the above and Greek Gnosis proper, come the **Syrian** types, among which are found blending in wild confusion the varied fancies of the East—Babylonian astrology, Syro-Phœnician cosmogony, the wide-spread Serpent myths, Persian notions of Light and Darkness, Angelologies—and these anon grouped around some early Biblical name or story. Hence sects like the *Ophites* or *Naassenes*, *Cainites*, *Sethites*, *Peratæ*, etc. These owe little but their impulse to the Christian Gospel of Redemption.

And the same applies in the main to the special systems of men like *Saturninus* in Antioch, who modified Menander's views in a more Christian sense, and *Carpocrates* in Alexandria, who, a pagan Greek at heart, seems to have taught communistic antinomianism. Most of these flourished during the early decades of the second century. But their Oriental imagery and general extravagance overlaid what grains of suggestive thought were in them; so that they had no real future. It was otherwise with the distinctly **Hellenic** systems like those of Basilides and Valentinus, who influenced this and the next generation not a little.

Basilides, who called himself a disciple of one Glaucias, alleged to have been an interpreter of Peter,

was the first and greatest of the Alexandrine type of Gnostic. Alexandria was the intellectual mart where East and West exchanged ideas. It was here that Judaism had felt the touch of Greek thought and expanded in *Philo's* hands (d. 40 A.D.) into a profound religious philosophy, the reconciliation of Moses and Plato. Philo's harmonizing efforts fell in with the spirit of the age; as we may see from men like Plutarch, who strove to find the unities underlying the multiform philosophies and religions. Into this tradition Basilides entered with a truly eclectic spirit, in which there are traces of earlier Gnosis, Greek philosophy, Christian tradition, and above all the Scriptures.[1] In his 'true though disguised Christian faith,' he seeks to modify certain Gnostic features prominent in his contemporary Valentinus; such as the sharp opposition of 'matter and spirit, creation and redemption, the Jewish and the Christian age, the earthly and the heavenly elements in the Person of our Lord.'

Basilides' own speculations were too able, too much off the 'broad highway of vulgar Gnosticism,' to take real root. He left a great name, but few real disciples. With **Valentinus** it was otherwise. He left a large school, not only in the East, but also in the West, whither he migrated about 140 A.D., the time when other Gnostics were reaching Rome. But already in Egypt and Cyprus this Gnostic of Gnostics had left his mark in those wedded Æons[2]—Reason and Truth and the rest—that were but 'the Ideas of Plato seen through the fog' of Oriental fantasy. As in Basilides, so in him, God is finally separated from those attributes into which Philo had analysed His being. Thus He becomes the Eternal Silence; while the drama of the Fall and Tribulation

[1] Dr. Hort's article in *Dict. of Christ. Biography.*

[2] 'Æon' was a technical Gnostic term, denoting a prime actor in creation, whether physical or spiritual.

of the Æon 'Wisdom' constitutes the story of the Cosmos, until Redemption is achieved through the Æon Christ, and the path is opened up to the 'Fulness' (*pleroma*) of the primal Abyss. A main idea involved in his system was that of 'correspondences' between the Heavenly and Mundane spheres, so that the history of the one reappeared in the other.

We have now seen enough to enable us to form some estimate of the **inner meaning of Gnosis.** Starting from the laudable and apostolic desire to add unto faith knowledge, typically Greek minds failed to observe the essentially religious or moral nature of Christian 'knowledge' of God, man, and their mutual relations as implied and illustrated in the Redeemer, the God-man. Thus they snatched prematurely at a 'wisdom' that was often purely speculative rather than religious, the outcome and food of the intellect, not the ripened insight of the conscience. Thus 'they became vain in their reasonings.' Ignorance rather than Sin became the centre of their thoughts as to Redemption, which thus turned on 'enlightenment' to be gained by rites of Initiation, whether magical or framed on the type of the ancient *Mysteries*. Every element in the manifold culture of the age was used as a medium for interpreting the riddles of the Gospel. But meantime the vital secret escaped notice: 'the Cross was made of none effect': the central point from which the system yielded its lessons remained unoccupied by the self-surrender of faith. The original attempt to appreciate the Gospel from every point of vantage was right, nay inevitable; but to force it into harmony with cultured prejudices was to ruin all. And yet this was what many of the Gnostics actually came to do. In them Christian *theology was sowing its wild oats* for the first, but by no means for the last time, by neglecting to build securely upon the Christ of history and of religious experience.

When we compare the Apostolic Fathers with the

Gnostics, we perceive **two types of mind** within the pale of Gentile Christianity; the one unduly swayed by a tendency too much akin to the Judaic temper, the other by a theosophic bias due to Greek or Oriental antecedents. Each in its own way fell short of true insight into the mind of Christ, as set forth in His history and in apostolic testimony. And this, partly at least, because the body of New Testament writings, as distinct from oral tradition, had not as yet begun to tell in full force. A breach was imminent between those of less and those of more reflective habits. Was Greek culture to be a directly anti-Christian influence? Or was it to be naturalized within the Church? If the latter, would it entail loss as well as gain? The *Apologists* are the concrete answer to these queries; and at first at least the new attitude seemed an unmixed gain. The ear of thoughtful men, too sober to give heed to the Gnostics, began to be gained for the Gospel. Whether meantime the Gospel was becoming in any sense another Gospel, and if so, in what respects, it was as yet too soon to say.

Before proceeding, however, to study these problems in our next chapter, we must try to describe the **piety** of this age, and then fill in the forms of its Worship and Organization. Broadly speaking, this generation shows fewer traces of the 'Enthusiastic' temper hitherto so prevalent among Christians; in whom the Spirit's working had been a matter of uncontrollable feeling or impulse 'blowing as it listed,' rather than of a steady communication of light and love to the conscience. We saw indeed that there was already in the second generation a tendency to fall back upon moral precepts of the type current in certain Jewish circles, as in the case of the *Two Ways*, rather than to build directly upon the principles of the Gospel itself as drawn forth by a Peter or a Paul. In the third generation this causes the Gospel to harden, on its practical side, into a new Law or revealed code of

conduct, easily separable from the regenerative aspect of the Gospel as the revelation of God and of His grace.

Such **Moralism** came easy to men of Greek, no less than to those of Jewish training. In fact, it tends to reappear everywhere and at all times, in the eighteenth century no less than within the first. For the Christ-like or truly filial type of piety is a plant of too Divine an order to flourish in the soil of humanity, except the rays of that 'Sun of Righteousness,' the Christ of the Gospels, play immediately upon its upturned face. But tradition soon ceased to be a medium clear enough to admit of this; and insight into that Life, amid its historic conditions, became more and more a lost art.

These remarks, while true of the Apostolic Fathers as a body, apply specially to the *Homily of Clement* (c. 140) and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, a series of visions setting forth in symbols, such as that of a Tower in process of building, the state and destiny of the Church as found in Rome. As to the latter book the case is very clear, as it recognizes works of supererogation (*Sim.* v. 3. 3), the sure sign of a legal rather than an evangelic piety. But as it may be thought that a 'prophet' like Hermas speaks only for himself, we will cite the Sermon in preference. Its burden is:

'This age and the future are two enemies: the one speaketh of adultery and defilement and avarice and deceit, but the other biddeth farewell to these. . . . Let us deem it preferable to hate things present, as being mean and ephemeral and corruptible, and to love things future, as being good and incorruptible.' To this end we must 'keep the seal' of baptism pure, especially from sins of the flesh (6–8). He that is chaste shall save himself. If repentance be needed, cultivate almsgiving. For 'fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving than both (cf. Tobit xii. 8). Now love covereth a multitude of sins, but prayer out of a good conscience rescueth from death. Blessed is every man that is found full of these, for almsgiving lifteth off the burden of sin' (16). Keep the eye fixed on 'the judgment to come.' 'We are contending in the lists of a living God.' Be patient. 'For if God were to pay the wages of the righteous speedily, then straightway our conduct would be a matter of commerce, not of godliness' (20).

In all this, what we have to note is the *emphasis* which falls on the doing of the precepts of the true **Lawgiver**, who is also Judge, in that thus only will it be well with one in the future world. There is but little sense of 'eternal life' as a present experience. But this granted, we cannot but admire much that stamps their practical life. The passion for *purity*, though it tended more and more to run into an asceticism alien to Christ, is unmistakable, and as a protest against the actual state of ancient society did high service. Again, the *brotherly love* that lay at the root of almsgiving—apt as this was to become mercenary in motive—stands out in equally strong relief.

Take the following thoughts from *Polycarp*, as containing the essence of that **Christian social life** which goes so far to explain the Christian Ministry. The seniors or heads of households, as representing the whole community, are those specially addressed; and he says :—

> The love of money is the beginning of all troubles. Let us then teach *ourselves*, first of all, to walk in the precept of the Lord. Next your *wives* also, that they love their own husbands, and train the children in the fear of the Lord. The order of *widows* should be sober-minded in the faith, constant in prayer for all, free from all calumny, avarice, and all evil; conscious that they are God's altar, and that all sacrifices are closely inspected by Him. Similarly *deacons* should be blameless, as deacons of God and Christ rather than of men; not calumniators, not avaricious, temperate in all, tender-hearted, careful, after the type of the Lord who became "deacon of all." The *junior* men too must be blameless in all, caring more than all for chastity, submitting themselves to the elders and deacons as to God and Christ. *Virgins* are to walk in a pure conscience. And the *elders* too must be tender-hearted, turning back the stray sheep, tending all the sick, not neglecting a widow or orphan or a poor man; abstaining from all anger, favouritism, unjust judgment, avarice; not quick to believe aught against any, not hasty in judgment, knowing that we all are debtors of sin.

Here, then, we have a vivid glimpse at the third generation. It shows no sharp line as yet between 'clergy' and 'laity'—a fact of some importance.

Another thing, too, is noticeable. The body of widows is called 'God's altar,' which sanctifies the gift and makes it a perfected 'sacrifice'; inasmuch as the Church's self-devotion to God's service takes the form of alms bestowed upon these, the class wherein Christ in the person of His members most suffers (Matt. xxv. 35 ff.).

This is the only **altar and sacrifice** known to primitive Christianity, the special form of that habitual self-sacrifice spoken of in Heb. xiii. 15, 16. The term 'altar' is indeed applied (in vv. 10–12) in an ideal sense, suggested by the contrast with Jewish sacrifices, to the cross of Christ; the spiritual results of which are enjoyed at the Memorial Supper, when men 'feed on Him in their hearts by faith.' It is relative to this order of thought that the directly inspired 'prophets and teachers' of *The Teaching* are styled 'the high priests' of a community where they may happen to be ministering. For it is they who offer the dedicatory prayer over the gifts, which then are devoted to both the Eucharistic meal and the relief of the needy. Failing the presence of these, the functions devolved on the local, elected and ordained, officers, 'the bishops and deacons' (ch. 15). Among the bishops the offering of this prayer or 'liturgy' would naturally fall to one at a time; and here, too, some regard would be had to 'gift' or talent.

This form of 'oversight' was probably at first performed only temporarily by any one 'overseer' or **bishop**, and possibly in a certain rotation. Speaking of traditional predecessors of Polycarp in the presidency of the Smyrnæan Church, Dr. Lightfoot[1] remarks that 'the repetition of the same name (Ariston) might suggest the inference that there was an alternation in the presidency of the college of presbyters' or bishops. Such presidency would no doubt turn in part on the leading of public worship.

[1] *Ignatius and Polycarp*, i. 463.

But perhaps not altogether so. For it has recently been argued (Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, 365 ff.) that the function of managing the intercourse with sister Churches—including the provision of hospitality to brethren from a distance—such as we see assigned to 'Clement' by Hermas, must have belonged to some presbyter who was overseer of this special duty. Here proved skill would tell, and the tried 'overseer' tend to become permanent. The process was doubtless gradual, turning upon the personal qualities and repute of a given man in a given Church.

Thus we can understand how Smyrna had, in Polycarp, a bishop 'first among his peers,' uniting in his own person the habitual exercise of both the functions just named; while at Philippi the older system of co-equal presbyters still obtained, as indeed seems also to have been the case to some extent at Rome. Perhaps this process was stimulated here and there by the memory of the unique position of influence held by James, as the Lord's brother, in the Jerusalem Church. But be this as it may, it is clear that once the single bishop emerged into supremacy, all would feel his value as focus of union in Church life at a time when centrifugal tendencies, doctrinal and practical, were showing themselves, and not least in the province of Asia. And a moral or actual ascendency ever passes insensibly into theoretic authority. Yet the memory of the essential identity of 'bishop' and 'presbyter' lived on, not only in Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria, but for centuries later.

Thus the **monarchical bishop** is coming to the front in the early decades of the second century, but he is as yet simply pastor of a local church. Such a bishop seems to stand in no direct relation to apostolic delegates like Timothy, Titus, Artemas or Tychicus (Titus iii. 12), whose function was temporary, as is that of the modern missionary who supervises

the early stages of self-government in native churches. So, too, there is at first no idea of a special 'grace' transmitted by 'apostolic succession' to the bishops of a Church, but only of precedents that rebuke the factious spirit (*i Clem.* 42, 44). Rather the thought by which Ignatius magnifies the ministry is that of the bishop as a type of the Father—the deacons, of Jesus Christ, the Father's minister—and the presbyters as the Council of God, the college of Apostles. The normal area of his oversight is the church in a single town. And though branch churches, owing their being to his church, seem to have been in their infancy affiliated to the parent body, receiving often as their president one of the bishop's own colleagues; there is no sign that this was meant to be a permanent arrangement, or that the daughter should not one day become adult and as autonomous as any of the original sister churches.

We have already seen that **teaching** was originally regarded as a matter of 'gift,' entitling or rather laying its possessor under obligation to edify the Church, whether by itinerant or local ministrations. Regular ordination conferred no such powers on bishops, though they had a special right to 'exhort' in matters of conduct (cf. *ii Clem.* 17, 5), and came also, at the time and in the places represented by *The Teaching* (15), to lead the Eucharistic devotions of the brethren. But in the end teaching proper fell more and more into their hands, as 'inspired' teachers became rarer or had their claims more jealously scrutinized.

Can we say anything about the **Eucharistic prayers** of this period? To imagine them originally 'liturgic' in our sense, would be to forget the 'enthusiastic' nature of 'the gifts of the Spirit.' But when they began to pass into the hands of officials instead of 'prophets,' they no doubt assumed a more or less fixed form, probably on the lines of Jewish prayers, traces of which Lightfoot discerns in the

liturgical language of Clement. Yet even some fifty years later, Justin's words about 'the president' sending up Eucharistic prayers 'according to his ability,' seem to point to forms of prayer more or less flexible. That is to say, a large element of spontaneity survived in public worship during the third and well into the fourth generation at least.

The same holds good of **the Sacraments** of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Here we can start with Pliny's Epistle (c. 112), which gives us the ideas he gleaned from certain who had been, but were no longer, Christians. They told him that

'they had been wont to assemble on a stated day (Sunday) before dawn and sing a hymn to Christ[1] as to a god, and bind themselves in solemn covenant' to purity of life: 'after which it was their custom to separate and reassemble later on for a frank and innocent meal; but that they had desisted from this' after Pliny's edict against clubs.

Here we must allow for the account as coming through a pagan reporter. But as it stands, it seems to imply that these Christians *weekly renewed the pledge* (*sacramentum*) of solemn obligation to a holy life, once for all taken in baptism.[2]

The edict had evidently caused the cessation of **the Agapé**; but the bearing of the passage upon the Eucharistic stage of the Lord's Supper, also observed originally in the evening, is uncertain. The subsequent history of the Agapé is obscure, and probably varied in various Churches. The above is only one example of how it might fall into abeyance. Others would be the abuses to which it was liable, as we see from 1 Cor. xi. 20 ff., and the misunderstandings current about it among the heathen. Yet it long survived both in the public worship of the churches and in the form of 'receptions' for the needy in private houses.'

[1] See 1 Tim. iii. 16 (R.V.) for a probable type.
[2] See also Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, i. 51, for other views.

The honour put upon chastity is a well-known feature of the early Church. So also is the undue regard for **celibacy** which sprang up during the second century. This tended to throw a certain slur on the ideal of marriage, and finally became a special badge of the clergy, as well as the prime element in the perverted piety of Monasticism. The way in which the germs of this feeling are referred to in our period is instructive. Its tendency to beget a self-applause which sins against the simplicity and humility of the evangelic spirit, is already rebuked by Clement (38, 2), when he says :—

'He that is lowly in mind, let him not bear testimony to himself, but leave that to his neighbour. He that is pure in the flesh, let him be so and boast not, knowing that it is Another who bestoweth upon him his continence.'

Similarly Ignatius (*To Polyc.* 5), who adds, 'if he boast, he is lost, and if his vow be known beyond the bishop (as witness of it), he is polluted.' In the same passage we get the first hint of any religious sanction given to Christian marriages, when he advises that they should take place with the cognizance of the bishop.[1]

Here we must leave the Church life of c. 100–135, years marked on the whole by a strong effort at consolidation around the bishop as rallying-point of unity. Our last word is one of caution to the reader, not to assume a uniformity alien to the spirit of the Gospel in early times and not found even within the limited area for which we have such partial evidence as the Apostolic Fathers afford. And the warning applies more or less to the whole of the first three centuries.

[Authorities, in the main, as for ch. iii. ; also the *Apostolic Fathers* (Lightfoot's smaller edition if possible). Plummer, and Purves, *Testimony of Justin Martyr to Early Christianity*, ch. vi. (Nisbet). Bunsen's *Hippolytus and his Age* (1852–4) moves on lines largely parallel with our own (up to c. 250)—very suggestive, if used with care.]

[1] For the piety reflected in the Roman Catacombs, see Islay Burns, ch. iii.

CHAPTER V.

FOURTH GENERATION: THE AGE OF CULTURED CHRISTIANS.

(135–175.)

Rome the great Load-stone. The Culture of the age and the Gospel: Allegorism and the Mysteries. Marcion's Reaction against Judaized Christianity and towards St. Paul: his idea of a N. T. *Canon;* his merits and defects in comparison with 'Catholicism.' Gnosis in the air: examples: *Ep. to Diognetus*, its piety. The Apologists: their general doctrine, its merits and defects. Montanism, its significance. Avircius and the nascent Catholic idea. Actual state of the Churches, in life, worship, polity. Asceticism and Sacramentarianism. The Church on its trial.

ROME was the capital, spiritually no less than politically, of the Empire. All roads led thither, as they did later for the pilgrim under the Holy Roman Empire. Hence, though the Gospel was provincial in its origin and tarried long in its second Asiatic home, ere the close of this period it has already found its centre of gravity in the capital.

Even at the date of Polycarp's visit during the episcopate of Anicetus (c. 153), we find at Rome an assemblage of typical Christians such as presaged the future. Thus there were probably men like Hegesippus, a Hebrew of Palestine and the earliest Church historian, who made a special point of tracing the succession of bishops in the chief churches; Justin Martyr, the typical Greek Apologist of the Gospel against Jew and Gentile alike; the Gnostic Valentinus, and the 'reforming' Marcion; to whom may be added a lady disciple of Carpocrates Marcellina by name, who taught a sort of Christian

eclecticism, with Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle high in honour. Finally, as pioneer of the new order of Catholicism destined to emerge in the next generation into clear relief, we get Polycarp's pupil Irenæus, who seems to have stayed on in Rome after his master left. We must now try to grasp what these mingling figures signify.

First of all, we need to recollect that the age was one of **high culture.** In the persons of the Antonines, Pius and Marcus Aurelius, philosophy wore the purple and patronized its lesser professors. True, it lacked as a rule both freshness and depth. It was often of the 'lecture-room' or 'arm-chair' type. It was in fact too much mixed up with rhetoric, and tended to be showy rather than solid. Yet there had been and were philosophers in whom, as in Epictetus and M. Aurelius, culture had not displaced earnestness. A vivid impression of the quest after religious truth undertaken by such—though the issue was not always the same—may be got from the autobiographical sketch which contains the germ of Justin's Apology for Christianity, in the Dialogue held by him with Trypho the Jew (see below, page 75).

Often the quest ended very differently from this, whether in a general *scepticism* like that of a Lucian, or in the *Stoicism* which made its peace with popular mythology and pagan rites, and was specially affronted that a 'barbarous' faith like the Christian was 'obstinate' enough to repudiate both it and them. Hence the hatred of the Cynic Crescens, and the scornful references of a Celsus, and even of a M. Aurelius; while the support given to libels on the Christians by the latter's tutor, Fronto, can but be put down to ignorance. Where, however, Greek culture did not keep men aloof from the Gospel, but only caused them to embrace it in a distorted guise, we get again the already familiar features of *Gnosis*. As Origen observes, 'When men, not slaves and

mechanics only, but also many from the cultured classes in Greece, saw something venerable in Christianity, sects necessarily arose; not at all from love of strife and contradiction, but because many men of culture strove to apprehend the Christian truths' (*Against Celsus*, iii. 12).

In the religious culture of the period two things bulked largely, **Allegorism and the Mysteries**, twin forms in which Symbolism, the habit of tracing occult cosmical or moral truths in the facts of Nature or history, tended to run riot. *Allegory* had already been reduced to a fine art by the Stoics, and also by the Jewish religious philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, who had used it to extract edification out of every detail of the Pentateuch. Thus when Abraham is described as migrating from Chaldæa to Canaan, we are to perceive that wisdom leaves the prejudices and crude ideas of its natural state, to find a home among the realities of abstract thought. This method was applied by Christians first of all to the Old Testament, to remove all that might jar upon a Christian conscience, and to make every part yield prophecies of Christ and His Church. But once the Gospels became widely known, they too became matter for similar handling.

Thus before long Christianity was transformed into the 'metaphysics of wonderland.' In fact **a new mythology** of a nobler order grew up. Christianity to many became a theosophy instead of a religion; a system of thought as to the universal process involved in Redemption rather than a life thrilled by a Divine motive power, fulfilling itself in a walk after the pattern of the Captain of Salvation. Yet it was often more than a system of thought to the Gnostic. It was also a system of practice, not so much of a moral as of a ritual kind; that of the 'initiation' into full communion in things Divine, familiar to the Greek Mysteries. How strong these influences were, is

manifest from the fact that they left marked traces even on Judaic Christianity, which as a rule stood at the other religious pole.

It is now time to refer to a remarkable **reaction against the Judaic element** in current Christianity, which is associated with the name of *Marcion;* who, though commonly reckoned a Gnostic, is separated from them not only by his central doctrine —an exaggerated Paulinism—but also by his practical rather than speculative interest. As far back as the first century, Greeks, devoid of a sense for Hebrew history seen from the inside, had been exercised at the obvious features of contrast between the Old Testament and the Gospel, in relation to both the nationalism and the ritual (*e.g.* animal sacrifices and circumcision) inherent in the former. But in the absence of the true key of a Divine Education of the race through cruder forms of conception into those more worthy of the spiritual relations between God and man, both 'Barnabas' and afterwards Justin Martyr were content to pick every lock by the simple, if arbitrary, method of allegory. Marcion, however, a native of Sinopé in Pontus, resident in Rome from c. 140, had too clear an eye for hard facts to resort to this plan. And he felt the contrasts so strongly that he was driven to the desperate device of postulating, in the spirit of certain Gnostics proper, two distinct Authors for the contrasted Covenants of Law and Grace, of Works and Faith.

It was 'faith' in Paul's sense, not knowledge, that Marcion extolled; and his aim was to restore insight into the essence of the saving work of Christ as understood by St. Luke and St. Paul. Accordingly he was absolutely the first whom we know to have conceived the idea of a New Testament **Canon**, replacing the Old, and fixing the veritable type of the Gospel message. His 'Canon' consisted of ten Pauline Epistles (without the Pastorals) and a peculiar

recension of St. Luke's Gospel, lacking the story of the Nativity. Along with these, his followers seem to have read his own book of '*Contrasts*' between the Old Testament and the Gospel.

Need for this he saw in the state of the Church at large, sunk in a new Judaism or Legalism (already referred to, and very evident in the contemporary *Shepherd of Hermas*), which meant blindness to the really Pauline sense of 'grace' and justification by faith. Thus he regarded himself not as an innovator, but as a reformer. On the other hand, the Churches, soon to take shape in the fixed mould of 'the Catholic Church,' regarded him as the worst of heritics, the 'wolf' of Pontus. But in so doing they only showed how far they were from Paul. For though Marcion's was an exaggerated Paulinism, his 'antinomianism' was as much more truly evangelic than the current notion of the Gospel, as was Wesley's than eighteenth-century Moderatism. This will appear even from a comparison with Justin Martyr.

But of course we can take neither type at its own estimate. The dangers of a new semi-philosophic legalism were all the more insidious that they escaped general notice. On the other hand, there was evil latent in Marcion's serious departure from his great master in making the Law—'the servile tutor to conduct us to Christ'—a creation, not of the patient Father who had to stand long in the background till man became adult, but of a semi-independent Power. Still, the 'Demiurge' was to Marcion rather a subordinate Power like the Devil [1] than one in any sense the rival to the Good God, as Manes later taught. The personalized form in which he clothed the Legal Principle came from the spirit of his age. What con-

[1] Whose power the Church was only too prone to magnify, specially in its system of Exorcism directed against demoniacal possession (cf. Origen, *Against Celsus*, vii. 67).

tinued to give his school its character was its religious spirit, the value it put upon 'faith' in the sense of filial trust. Thus a certain Apelles (Euseb., v. 13) refused to speculate as to the inner nature of the One God—much to the scorn of a 'Catholic' disputant—declaring that 'those who set their hope on the Crucified One would be saved, if only they were found in good works.'

Finally, if the Church was often un-Pauline in its thought, it was also so in its temper. For even the aged Polycarp, instead of sorrowing for Marcion as an erring brother to be entreated, called him to his face 'the first-born of Satan.' This evil spirit was perpetuated even to the hour of common martyrdom, at which the 'orthodox' refused to recognize their Marcionite fellows.

Nearly three centuries later Augustine also 'rediscovered' Paul. But having been himself a Manichæan at one time, he was saved from the crudities into which Marcion fell. Meantime Marcion came in for the cross-fire of both Gnostics and anti-Gnostics —who were often no less 'gnostic' in temper that their conclusions were sounder—and his reputation has suffered accordingly.

How innocently the **Gnostic leaven** might develop itself in Christian minds may be seen from two examples, chosen from writings esteemed orthodox. It was easy for a man touched by Plato's theory of Ideas to so dwell on Paul's thought of the Church (pre-existing in the mind of God), as to come to attribute to it a sort of ghostly pre-existence, as if only waiting to take temporal shape in men of flesh and blood. Now this is just what was done by the author of the *Homily* passing under Clement's name, as well as by Hermas. But this was also full half-way towards the Valentinian notion of 'Ecclesia' or the Church, as one of the Æons or emanations. Again, we have just seen Marcion's crude anti-Judaism. But

the beautiful *Letter to Diognetus*, of about the same age and ranked among the 'Apostolic Fathers,' pushes its scorn of the 'beggarly elements' of Jewish ritual to such a point, that 'one step further would have carried the writer into Gnostic or Marcionite dualism' (*Lightfoot*).

And yet in some respects this work is **the gem of early post-apostolic literature.** Its themes are, the vanity of heathen idolatry, and no less of Jewish sacrifices, rites, and customs; in contrast therewith the life of Christians based on a religion not of man but of God; also the change made by the revelation in the Son, whose late appearance was due not to God's wish but to the need that man should feel his own inability, and so embrace grace from the heart. All these arise out of Diognetus' questions touching the 'new type' of religion. It echoes with Pauline thoughts and phrases; and its picture of the Christians, 'the soul of the world,' is charming and spiritual in a large and genial sense. To its author Christianity is still a life before and after aught else; it is verified not so much in the intellect as in the loyal will. 'Dost thou not see them thrown to wild beasts that they may deny the Lord, and yet not o'ercome? These look not like the works of a man; they are the power of God; they are the proofs of His Presence.'

In this Epistle high culture is doubtless implied, but it is in its proper place, adorning not hampering the free movements of personal trust. And so we pass now to study **the Apologists,** the strong pulse of whose words has been quickened by the urgent danger of those for whom they plead. Of Quadratus, the first on the list, we know but little.[1] But of *Aristides*, a philosopher of Athens, we can say that he has much

[1] See Eusebius, iv. 3, who also mentions Aristides in the same breath; but the newly discovered Syriac version of his Apology suggests rather the early years of Antoninus Pius.

affinity with the unknown writer to Diognetus. In him the Christian life appears in much the same terms; so with his theological attitude, and especially as to Christ. In his natural theology, however, and in his attack on Polytheism, he marks the transition to the more philosophic type seen in Justin.

'I, O king, by the Providence of God came into the world; and having contemplated the heavens and the earth and the sea, the sun and the moon and the rest, I marvelled at their ordered arrangement. And seeing the world and all therein, that it moves by necessity, I understood that the moving and ordering hand is God's. For everything that causes motion is mightier than that which is moved.'

After this preface on the high nature of God, which he elaborates in a manner significant of the changes yet to pass over the spirit of Christianity, Aristides proceeds to his real task, that of describing the religions of men, according as they are either worshippers of false gods, Jews, or Christians. His indictment of idolatry in all its forms is very scathing; toward Judaism he is less severe than *Diognetus*, recognizing its kinship with Christianity, especially in the philanthropy of its ethics. His own theology centres in the Sovereign God, the holy walk, the future Kingdom, all as revealed and brought nigh by the Incarnation, which is thus described in the Syriac [1]:—

'It is said that God came down from heaven, and from a Hebrew virgin took and clad Himself with flesh, and in a daughter of man there dwelt the Son of God. This is taught in that Gospel which a little while ago was spoken among them as being preached. . . . This Jesus, then, was born of the race of the Hebrews; and He had twelve disciples, in order that a wonderful dispensation of His might be fulfilled. He was pierced by the Jews, and died and was buried; and they say that after three days He rose and ascended to heaven. And then these twelve disciples went forth into the known parts of

[1] Ch. ii. Here as throughout there is considerable variation from the Greek form in which the Apology has reached us. Our last clause is from the Greek, ch. xv.

the world and taught concerning His Majesty with all humility. Hence those who to this day serve the righteousness of their Proclamation are called Christians, in that they reckon their descent from Jesus Christ.'

Aristides then goes on to paint in vivid colours this Evangelic righteousness of life,[1] in terms similar to those of the Apostolic Fathers.

In Aristides we have found traces of Greek culture in what we have called his natural theology. In **Justin Martyr** we are not left to surmise. He has given us his own autobiography, that of a man in search of *the true philosophy*—wisdom as to God and a virtuous life—in which light he is led to embrace the Gospel foreshadowed by Prophets and revealed in Jesus Christ. Born c. 100 A.D. on the site of the ancient Shechem, and probably of Roman parents, he early sought the secret of life among the philosophers. First he betook himself to the Stoics, whose moral earnestness promised most. But time went on, and yet he knew no more of God. So he turned next to a Peripatetic or Aristotelian, who, however, soon showed unseemly interest in his fee, 'that their intercourse might not be unprofitable.' Leaving him as 'no philosopher at all,' Justin consulted a learned Pythagorean, who at once informed him that ere he aspired to such high themes he must go through a course of harmony, astronomy, and geometry, to 'wean his soul from the things of sense,' and so prepare for the vision of the Beauteous and Good. Impatient at such delays, where his soul was athirst, he attached himself finally to a wise Platonist, and under the influence of his high idealism 'made progress.' 'The perception of things immaterial quite overpowered me, and the contemplation of ideas furnished my mind with wings;' so that the next flight seemed to promise the very vision of God, the

[1] For a good account of this as given in the Syriac, see *The newly-recovered Apology of Aristides*, by Helen B. Harris, ch. iv.

Supreme Good. In this mood he was found wandering near the sea, by an old man, who so impressed upon him the need of a Divine revelation as to lead him to the study of the Hebrew Scriptures. 'Straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets and of those men who are friends of Christ possessed me. And whilst revolving his words in my mind, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. Thus, and for this reason, I am a philosopher.' So said Justin in his Dialogue with a Jew, whom he desired to win to 'the words of the Saviour,' which 'inspire with awe' those aforetime far from virtue, and 'afford sweetest rest to those who make a diligent practice of them.' And in keeping therewith he wore to the end the special cloak marking the itinerant philosopher. In his journeys he came to Rome and settled there, encouraging men to come to his lodgings to consult him on 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' Here, too, he seems to have sealed his confession with his blood [1] (c. 165).

The conversion of Justin's disciple **Tatian**, a native of Mesopotamia, was very similar; only he makes more definite mention of the vanity and immorality of pagan religious rites, wherein he once sought satisfaction. He, too, found the prophets awaken in him faith, by the very 'unpretentious cast of their language, their unartificial characters, their foreknowledge, the excellent quality of their precepts, and the declaration of a Sole Sovereign of the universe.' Thus they 'put an end to the slavery that is in the world' by giving us not so much 'what we had not already received, but what we were prevented by the reign of error from possessing.'

It is **characteristic** of these men and of **the Apologists** in general, that Christ's revelation did not seem so much new truth, as the full and final

[1] He had, when a Platonist, been impressed by seeing simpler folk do the same. For further details, see Backhouse, ch. vi.: for his *Apologetic* arguments, Gieseler, § 48.

bringing out of truths latent in the God-given reason of man but neutralized by the 'error' of the devil—the beclouded state to which moral weakness has reduced humanity at large. Christ re-publishes the Law of God's true will, and so brings out the traces of the long invisible ink inscribed on the 'tablets that are hearts of flesh.' This view of the case came short of the fulness of the truth in at least two respects. (1) It failed to grasp the *vital connexion between the Person and the Teaching*, in virtue of which Christ was more than the perfect Lawgiver, being in fact the Quickener, the Saviour, the sanctifying Ensample of the soul. In perception of the newness of 'Grace,' Marcion was their superior. The element of Grace on the one side, of personal devotion on the other, which had laid hold of Marcion so strongly, was but feebly realized by a philosophic Justin, who longed above all for a true and certain law of life having the Divine sanction. Accordingly it failed also to perceive (2) the deeper and newer truths which were enshrined in Christ's Person and in His attitude to the men whom He regarded as brethren. A new idea of the *value of human personality* dawned when Christ placed man in direct relation to the Heavenly Father and His love. As God became a new being to man, so man became a new being to himself and to his fellow. This underlies the new instinct for souls, the redemptive spirit, which has more or less been present in the bosom of Christianity as compared with the ancient world.

But if these men thus failed to see all the meaning and power of that Life in which the Word had become fully incarnate, it was partly because their mind was full of the fact of that **Word's** partial **presence** in all good men, a Socrates as well as an Abraham. To a Justin such men, in different ages and with differing degrees of light, had been true to the Word or Reason of God shining, as St. John says, amid the darkness;

and so had been already in a sense 'friends of Christ.' This noble and profoundly Christian truth, enshrined for ever in the Prologue of John's Gospel, must be set off against the Apologists' defects in other directions. They saw in it the means whereby the Father drew men to faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Would that they had kept this more before them in connexion with Scripture teaching as to the Holy Spirit, God as graciously present with or in the human soul, stimulating the holy desire and inclining the heart to the ways of God. Then they would have escaped the taint of that 'Moralism' which we have already noticed as a falling back upon legal notions.

These Greek Apologists had no steady theory of *the Person of Christ:* but they emphasized that idea of the Logos or Rational Principle of revelation both in Nature and in man, which was to play so large a part in the Church's doctrine, forming a useful bridge whereby the Greek mind could come within reach of a Gospel which at first was to it mere 'folly.' The need for some reconciliation of things so different in original form as the Hebrew 'Gospel' and Greek culture, is seen in the case of a man like Celsus, who was no mere scoffer, but one apt to find Christian ideas 'barbarous,' just because alien to Greek modes of thought. His *True Account* of Christianity, a very able work, was probably written not very long after 150 A.D.

There was indeed a danger in all this. It tended to change the essence of faith from direct personal trust to an intellectual exercise—a change facilitated by the characteristic Greek temper, to which it was second nature to regard perfection of the intellect, 'the speculative life,' as the chief end of man. It was, in fact, the old Gnostic danger reappearing within churchly circles, a phenomenon which we shall see again and again. But as a stage in the progress whereby the vital evangelic experience leavens the

whole lump of human thought, this was inevitable; and we have often to be content with a thing as *relatively good*, *i.e.* on its way to take its due place in the whole, where it shall be good and nothing but good. When we know Justin[1] we already know all the Greek Apologists; such as Athenagoras, who presented his *Embassy on behalf of Christians* to the Emperor, c. 177; and Theophilus of Antioch, who addressed three books of argument and explanation to a certain Autolycus.

But how, it may be asked, did Christians at large take the change in attitude passing over men like the Apologists? That the bulk tended to acquiesce in it and esteem the better elements in the Græco-Roman civilization more highly than their predecessors had done, is clear from the fact that 'Catholicism' (see ch. vi.) took form in the next generation. But that there was, too, a conservative sentiment among the Churches which often tended to beget strong reaction, is also proved by the movement called **Montanism**, which arose soon after 150 A.D. Its exact nature has been much disputed; and there is need to distinguish carefully the aspects of doctrine and discipline. Yet there was a certain link between these in its notion of the Comforter or Paraclete (John xiv.-xvi.). Though holding to tradition in other respects, the Montanists believed that in their leader Montanus, a Phrygian convert (possibly from the ecstatic cult of Cybele characteristic of the region), resided a revelation of the Paraclete, which was not a dulled echo from the day of Pentecost, but the climax of the experiences then inaugurated. In fact, he marked the arrival of

[1] On individual points of doctrine the reader is referred to a most readable work, *The Testimony of Justin Martyr to Early Christianity*, by G. T. Purves (Nisbet). Justin taught human freedom as implied in responsibility, and made Predestination rest on fore-knowledge. His emphasis on ignorance as the root of sin makes his view of the Atonement very inadequate.

the Church's adult epoch. Thus the standard of holiness required of the Church, to make her a Bride worthy the near Advent of her Lord, was not merely higher than the 'secularized' type now becoming common, but more rigorous even than it had been at any stage of her earlier training.

In the attempt to realize this ideal of '**the Church of the Spirit,**' and by the claim to regulate Church discipline, the Montanists came into collision with the regular officers, and especially the bishop now installed in each Church. Thus the crucial question affecting our estimate of the movement is this: Which party was the truer to the temper and genius of primitive Christianity? Who had originally counted for most among the first believers, the men who enjoyed the 'gifts of the Spirit,' or those who were recognized as administrative officers? On this all turns ultimately. It is true that the bishops' plea was that the Montanist type of 'prophecy' was ecstatic and so far new, *i.e.* not in continuity with the type of prophets still lingering here and there in the churches. And certainly the Phrygian prophets were of a particularly ecstatic order. But, on the other hand, the older prophets who survived under a changed church order were not fair samples of the 'enthusiasm' of earlier days. And further, the charge of innovation was rather a double-edged weapon. For '**the Church of the Bishops**' was itself a new thing, called into being in the main by the centrifugal tendencies which had developed as time went on. Accordingly the degree to which the bishop, now in possession of the 'teaching' function which had originally turned not on office but on recognized 'gift,' was prepared to tolerate by his side an 'inspired' teaching function in essence superior to his own, was no true index of early usage, but only of current sentiment.

Here was the crux, the place of spiritual spon-

taneity as a reformatory agency within the Church. True, the form in which the issue arose was so crude, that we cannot really regret that the ideal had for the time to give way to the practicable, as judged by the conscience of the Church at large, when the 'Church-according-to-the-Phrygians' was crushed by the sheer weight of the 'Catholic Church.' Yet we must confess that 'something that was good perished, or at least was driven inwards, with the fall of Montanism,' and 'broke out again—never more, we will hope, to be extinguished—at the Reformation.'[1]

There was justice then in the Montanists' claim to conservatism. But they were, as Ramsay remarks, 'unconscious that in human society conservatism is an impossibility. The life of the Church lay in the idea of unity and intercommunication: the Catholic Church was truer to this essential idea, and in order to maintain it was ready to sacrifice some of the older forms.' This feeling appears in the epitaph composed by a certain *Avircius Marcellus*, a Roman settler in Phrygia and Bishop of Hierapolis, who wished to leave his ideal of the Church clear on his last resting-place (c. 190–200).

'Abercius (Avircius) by name, I am a disciple of the pure Shepherd . . . for He taught me faithful writings. He also sent me to royal Rome to behold it and to see the golden-robed, golden-slippered Queen [the Roman Church]. And there I saw a people bearing the splendid Seal [of Baptism]. And I saw the plain of Syria and all the cities, even Nisibis, crossing over the Euphrates. And everywhere I had associates. With Paul [= his writings] I followed, while everywhere Faith led the way, and set before me for food the Fish [= the Greek initials for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour"] from the Fountain [*i.e.*

[1] Dr. Sanday, *Expositor*, Feb., 1887, p. 110; who also lays just emphasis on the underlying dignity of the movement which 'won over so powerful a champion as Tertullian.' For further details see Backhouse, p. 56. We must distinguish, however, the Montanism of Montanus, and that later and saner form which it assumed especially in the West; see p. 99.

Baptism, which qualified for the Lord's Supper], mighty and stainless (whom a pure Virgin [? the Church] grasped), and gave this to friends always to eat, having good wine and giving the mixed Cup [*i.e.* water and wine] with bread.'

The writer of this studiously veiled confession is obviously impressed with the **unity of the Church** in every place, an idea to which the Montanists were not indifferent, but which they wished to realize in a provincial way—Phrygia being a sort of new Holy Land for the Saints of the Last Days. This would seem absurd to a well-travelled man upon whom the world-wide mission of the Church was dawning, and who realized the machinery through which its unity was being organized.

Let us now try to imagine the **state of the Churches** Avircius might have seen (c. 160). The *moral ideal*, and in large measure practice too, strongly recalls earlier days. No doubt there was a certain tendency in cities like Rome to worldliness. But the average type was still high, as regards both holiness and large-hearted love. As to *Christian rites*, the picture in Justin (*Apol.* 61 ff.) is in the main still very simple. Baptism is the rite of self-dedication and of initiation into the society of those whose sins are forgiven, and whose law is that of Christ; it is often called Illumination, a term also in use in pagan Mysteries. The new member then joins in the prayers of 'the brethren' for themselves, for the one just 'illuminated,' and for the Church at large, that all may be found worthy. Then follows the kiss of peace, the token of that unity symbolized and cemented in the Eucharistic feast, which is of the type already noticed in *The Teaching*. Portions are conveyed by the deacons to those absent. The new feature in Justin is a certain mysticism, which reminds one of the tone of the Greek Mysteries. But as yet the thought is vague, and must be interpreted in the light of his general system, which was idealistic rather

than realistic in temper. But 'the bird is on the the wing,' and ere long we shall be in another region of thought and feeling.

The **weekly service** is described as follows :—

'On the day which is called "the day of the Sun," there is an assembly of all who live in cities or country to one place, and the Memoirs of the Apostles (Gospels) and the writings of the Prophets [1] are read as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has ceased, the president gives verbal instruction and invites to the imitation of these good things. Then we rise altogether and send up prayers.'

The Eucharist takes place, and afterwards they who have means make free-will offerings, which are deposited with the president for the relief of the needy of all sorts. The Sunday is chosen because, as the first day, it recalls both God's 'Let there be light,' and the light of Christ's Resurrection.

All this implies, as to **Polity**, that the Christians in each city or country district still form, as in the age of Ignatius, a single community with its own president. The development of such an officer out of an original body of presbyters or bishops has already been traced. Here we observe his close relation to the central act of the Church's self-devotion in 'the Eucharist,' followed by the further dedication of substance in alms, the president acting as almoner. In addition, however, we must note that the 'teaching' function is now passing more into the hands of this chief officer, who is already regarded as the central organ of the Gospel tradition resident in the Churches.

It was this common type of belief, whose essence was the reality of the Incarnation as basis of the new Divine ideal of human life, that formed the

[1] Here we see Christian Scriptures coming in to take a place by the side of the Old Testament in public worship. A signal proof of the unique value set on *our* Four Gospels, though at the same time of the free way in which they were treated, is supplied by the Fourfold Gospel Harmony (*Diatessaron*) of Tatian, c. 170. See in general Sanday's *Bampton Lectures*, ch. i.

one recognizable bond in a unity which was purely spiritual. 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism,' these in the Apostolic sense still afforded a **vital unity.** For as yet no Christian community claimed, through its president, authority over a sister church. The case of 'daughter' Churches, already described, stands by itself. And though the Montanistic crisis called forth, for the first time on record, little local conferences of bishops and others, these do not seem to have become habitual before the end of this century; and even then they were purely voluntary associations, registering local public opinion, especially on matters of custom and discipline. Thus the collective Church possessed no definite organization involving the subordination of local autonomy. It consisted of a commonwealth of Christian colonies, each responsible directly to the Heavenly King, and each with bishop or president as its sole earthly representative to that King, as Christ was of the Church universal to the Father (Ignatius' idea). Indeed, the analogy between the earthly local ministry and the service of heaven seems to have appealed strongly to the Christian mind. A document[1] probably dating from our period, works this out elaborately in terms of the Book of Revelation, with its Elders who offer up incense which is the prayers of the saints. These correspond to the presbyters in union with their leader, the bishop.

The one supremacy recognized is that of conspicuous *service*, in word or deed. Of such beneficence *Dionysius*, Bishop of Corinth (c. 170), gives a pleasing picture in a letter to the Roman Church (Euseb., iv. 23).

[1] The oldest part of the *Ecclesiastical Canons*, assigned by Harnack to c. 140–180. Here provision is made for a very small Church, with some dozen members, asking a sister Church to send 'three chosen men' to help them in testing who of their own number is best qualified to become bishop. The functions of other classes of persons, such as Readers and Widows, as well as Deacons, are also set forth.

'From the first it has been your practice to do good to all the brethren and to send sustenance to many Churches, even to those in every city. Thus ye relieve the want of the needy, and minister to the brethren condemned to the mines.' This same bishop himself gained a high repute by his fraternal letters of counsel to churches in Athens, Nicomedia in Bithynia, Pontus and Crete.

In the last instance we find him warning a brother bishop against laying too heavy an **ascetic yoke** upon believers. Evidence of such a tendency, akin to certain philosophic maxims of the day, and leading to a regard for celibacy which cast at least a slur upon the ideal of marriage, meets us in various quarters. Visible even in Ignatius' day, it makes itself sensibly felt not only in Gnostic circles (together with the other extreme, equally due to a contempt for matter), and among 'other-worldly' Montanists, but also in Apologists like Justin and Athenagoras. In particular Justin's disciple, Tatian, became at least half a Gnostic under this very impulse. Here in the main the 'heretics' showed the Church the way, in which after some doubt she ran so eagerly.

This fact cannot fail to throw a strange light also on another, viz., that it is among these Gnostics who stood on the borderland between Christian and foreign influences, that we first find distinct traces of a tendency to regard the Sacraments in a way more akin to the Romanist theory than to that of the New Testament. It goes far beyond any rhetorical language of earlier writers. Ignatius indeed echoes Johannine words in a mystical sense; but there is nothing of the magical underlying even his most picturesque references, as when he styles one element 'the bread of immortality.' To Justin, as we have seen, the Eucharist is a mystic means of grace, whereby the Divine Word or Reason (Logos), the abiding sustainer of immortality within the soul, operates with special

efficacy upon believers. Still, that non-Christian associations of the realistic or physical order, proper to the Greek Mysteries, were beginning to play upon Christian imaginations, appears even in Justin; for he goes on to refer to the Mysteries of Mithras as having borrowed this rite at the instigation of 'the wicked dæmons.' And it is much the same with the 'initiation' by baptism.

But what in Justin is only an analogy, dangerous just because thought is as yet indefinite, has already done its work in the Gnostics, who were more under pagan influences. Thus a certain Marcus has clearly the notion of a change in the elements themselves, when he secures by a trick the transmutation of the water into the colour of wine.[1]

When, then, we find that rather later, the first clear language of the kind appears in 'orthodox' writers, we are led to ask very seriously whether a like atmosphere has not produced like changes in the minds of men both without and within the Apostolic Churches. Certain it is, that while the Montanist struggle meant that the Church was painfully eliminating from her system certain elements in her past which had outlived their proper day, and now threatened to re-emerge in cruder forms than ever; the Gnostic paroxysms which passed through her whole frame indicated strong recurrent efforts, whose full meaning lay in the future, to assimilate Greek culture without abjuring the Gospel of Christ.

Such was **the Church's trial.** That she came forth from it in part victorious, is surely a truth involved in her continued vitality. To say that she emerged scatheless, with no seeds of morbid or febrile symptoms in her system, would be to shut one's eyes

[1] Cf. Hatch, *Hibb. Lect.*, p. 308, as also 305 ff. for the subject in general. A similar realism also underlies the sacramental references of the *Pistis-Sophia* ('Faith-Wisdom'), a typical Gnostic work.

to features in her chequered history which cannot be resolved simply into the moral infirmity of human nature, but belong rather to a mingled heritage. And this can be traced to the degree to which the ancient culture, in its temper as in certain of its conceptions, entered unchanged into her very life-blood. For as the event showed, her life lost something of the religious tone distinctive of the Gospel, which it has since the Reformation been all too slowly recovering.

[Besides any of the shorter histories, use Plummer (by aid of Index), Backhouse, or Cruttwell's *Literary History of Early Christianity* (fuller).]

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIFTH GENERATION: THE EARLY CATHOLIC FATHERS.

(175–215 A.D.)

The 'Catholicism' of Irenæus; of Hegesippus; the Roman Creed. Irenæus, his Ideals. The Alexandrine type; the Catechetical School; 'the true Gnostic.' Clement and the Two Lives: his idea of Man, etc. Tertullian the African Father, his genius: Tradition and the N.T. Canon. Ecclesiasticism. Latin Apologies. Old and New Schools.

ALREADY it may have occurred to the reader to ask: But what is the exact meaning to be put upon this word 'Catholic,' which has already more than once appeared in our narrative? To answer this query is the prime task at present before us. In trying, then, to describe the birth of **the Old Catholic Church**, one cannot do better than take the typical churchman of his time, Irenæus, first of Asia, and then of South Gaul. We will let him introduce himself, by quoting a letter addressed by him to a friend of his youth, Florinus by name, who had fallen into error on that burning topic of the age, the Problem of Evil in relation to Divine Sovereignty, and was, in consequence, deposed from the Roman presbytery (Euseb. v. 15, 20).

'These doctrines,' says Irenæus, 'are not in harmony with the Church . . . these doctrines the Elders before us, who also were disciples of the apostles, did not hand down to thee. . . . To all this [Polycarp's teaching] I used to listen at the time with attention by God's mercy upon me, writing it down, not on paper, but in my heart; and by God's grace I constantly ruminate thereon faithfully.'

Here we get the genuine Irenæus, the man who never consciously suffered any element of apostolic

tradition, as it reached him through the most authentic channels (especially Polycarp and others of the Asiatic School of John), to fade out of his thoughts. Herein lies his great value. True, in a period when fresh habits of thought were subtly permeating all Christian minds as they strove to interpret to themselves the Apostolic Gospel, Irenæus could not altogether escape putting some glosses of his own on points that invited fresh theory to meet fresh circumstances. Still, on the whole, he is a strong link in the chain of essential 'orthodoxy,' to use an idea which was now beginning to make itself felt. For under the stimulus of Gnostic variety in Christian theory, the need and value of something like a definitely recognizable nucleus of Apostolic doctrine were evident. The doctrine in question dealt in the main with the Christian *facts*, but aimed also at preserving a unity of type amid local varieties, analogous to the large unity in piety and moral ideal among those not definitely Gnostics.

Solicitude for such a **norm**, or type **of faith** first appears soon after 150 A.D., in *Hegesippus*, a writer of Jewish descent, whose *Memoirs* may be called a sort of sequel to the Acts of the Apostles, compiled according to its author's prevailing interests. These were unity of doctrine and the continuity of its official custodians, the bishops, in each city. Thus he writes:—

'I abode with the Corinthians many days, during which we were mutually refreshed by the correct doctrine. And when I reached Rome, I made a list of the "succession" up to Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. Now Anicetus was succeeded by Soter, and he in turn by Eleutherus. But in each "succession" and in each city, things are as the Law and the Prophets and the Lord proclaim' (Euseb., iv. 22).

The type of 'correctness' here in question may be inferred from the **Confession of the Roman Church** traceable to this period. It was the outgrowth of the triune Baptismal formula, on the lines

of the 'Apostles' Creed,' but simpler even than this.[1] Beyond what we can read into it by way of tacit safeguard against Gnostic views, it is historical and religious rather than philosophical in temper. But it gave a definite foothold for a more speculative treatment of doctrine, such as we see in the writers of this age whenever they paraphrase it on the lines already started by the Greek Apologists.

Just about the time when Hegesippus was in Rome, testing its apostolic tradition, **Irenæus**, a young man not yet thirty, may have come thither with Polycarp, of whose visit (c. 153–4) he later gives a vivid glimpse, saying: 'And when the blessed Polycarp was at Rome in the time of Anicetus, although they differed a little on certain other points also, this did not interfere with their concord,' and each kept to his local tradition as to Easter usages. 'This being so, they held communion with one another; and in the assembly Anicetus conceded to Polycarp the Eucharistic prayer, obviously as a token of respect.' Thus, as this early Hooker remarks, 'The disagreement as to the (Easter) Fast confirms the concord as to faith.' Irenæus himself emerges into clearer light in 177, as a presbyter of the Church at Lyons in South Gaul—long linked to Asia Minor—and as the successor of its aged bishop Pothinus, who was among the martyrs of that year. But again the mist closes around the details of his life. We know, indeed, that he delivered, probably at Rome (since he had Hippolytus for a hearer), lectures on Gnostic systems, specially the Valentinian, which was prevalent in the region of which he was the leading bishop. These remain in substance in his work *Against Heresies*. But we cannot fix the date of such a visit, any more than the date of his death early in the third century.

From his writings we can infer something of his attitude, whereby he helped to stereotype the genius

[1] See it *e.g.* in Islay Burns, *First Three Chr. Cent.*, p. 71

of orthodoxy and founded the Church's polemic method, the latter probably on lines laid down by Justin. Both by temper and by training due to Rome no less than to 'Asia,' he tended to conceive the Gospel in its conservative rather than its progressive aspect; as a deposit uniform from first to last, rather than as a pregnant germ of vital truth, destined to expand with the growth of the human spirit and so adjust itself afresh to ever larger environments of thought—the aspect to which the Alexandrines were better able to do full justice. His leading notion is the 'Rule of Faith,' uniform and resting on the concordant witness of the universal Episcopate concentrated in certain great nerve-centres of apostolic tradition. Here Rome holds the central place: while the united Christendom so guaranteed constitutes the Holy Catholic Church.

This ideal, in contrast to the discordant traditions of the Gnostic Schools and Churches, so possesses his mind that he once at least goes a step further, and seems to attribute to the Episcopate a sort of special grace. His aim is yet further to guarantee a pure tradition attested by responsible officers, standing in unbroken touch with those of an earlier type in all the great centres of Apostolic activity. Such a personal 'pious opinion,' isolated as it is in this age, has no historic value. But the underlying idea, which he shares with his contemporaries, is of great weight as setting a limit to Gnostic vagaries and giving a **criterion** for the discrimination of a New Testament Canon, from among the mass of Christian literature more or less vaguely in use in different Churches. But to this topic we shall return again. Meantime we note that Irenæus, in the place which he assigns to Roman tradition, as well as in 'his predominantly legal[1] and practical conception of the Christian cove-

[1] Irenæus emphasizes indeed the love of God as the key to Redemption. But as to the *how* he leans more to the 'moralism'

nant,' bears the stamp less of Asia than of Rome. This he shares not only with the more masterful Bishop Victor of Rome (c. 188–198), but also with the African jurist Tertullian, who had come under the same potent spell of an apostolic Rome.

Before, however, dealing with the latter, the first of the Latin Fathers, we must turn back to study the less rigid type of Catholicism which was taking shape concurrently in **Alexandria.**[1] Here, as before in the Judaism of Philo, religious faith felt the influence of ancient thought in its highest and richest forms. But whereas from the fusion the Gnostics proper had once sprung, sacrificing the Evangelic history to the exigencies of raw speculation; now the history was respected and allowed to mould the 'Gnosis' or theory into a certain harmony with itself. But in both cases the intellectual activity was great, and its exercise was marked by a large and genial freedom.

Of the origin of **the local Church,** traditionally traced back to Mark the Evangelist, we know next to nothing. But when we first get a real glimpse at it in Clement, towards the end of the second century, we find it preserving certain primitive features in its usages. 'Traces of a written liturgy are scanty and vague. The Eucharist was not yet disjoined from the Agapé. Infant baptism was not yet the rule. Discipline was not so severe as elsewhere. The bishop was not yet sharply distinguished from the presbyter, nor the presbyter and deacon from the lay-brother. The fidelity with which the Alexandrines adhered to the ancient democratic model, may be due in part to the social standing and intelligence of the congregation.' But already 'the lowering of the average tone of piety and morals among the laity threw into

of the Apologists than to any Pauline Justification by a faith that identifies the soul with Christ in a spiritual union of life.

[1] For Alexandrine Christianity and all that went to shape its special genius, see Bigg's *Christian Platonists of Alexandria.*

stronger relief the virtues of the clergy, and enabled them, with a good show of justice and necessity, to claim exclusive possession of powers which had originally been shared by all male members of the Church.' The most unique feature, however, of the Christian society in this great university town was the close connexion between the Church and the lecture-room. Instruction in the outlines of the Gospel continued in most Churches to be of a practical or strictly religious order, similar in shape to that of the Sunday-school or confirmation-class. But at Alexandria it had come by this time to amount to a liberal education in the Christian view of life and of the world.

From the middle of the century this had taken organized form as **the Catechetical School**, held in the house of the recognized teacher, who had no necessary connexion with any of the regular church offices. It was a sort of Christian seminary by the side of a secular university, not limiting its students to either sex or to those training for the regular ministry. The work done varied with the pupil's capacity. Some learnt simply the facts of the creed with a minimum of comment; others were taught 'dialectically,' *i.e.* by means of preparatory scientific studies leading up to philosophy. Here the Greek authors were not only controverted when in error, but appreciated in so far as they showed foregleams of the Word, the Light of men which had become incarnate in Christ. Philosophy culminated in ethics, whose essential ideas were cleared from confusions, conventional or academic, and set in the system of Christian theology, the final form of all wisdom.

Where the methods and, in part, the actual ideals of this Christian Academy were so much akin to those of the better class both of philosophers and Gnostics, it was natural that the type to be produced by this perfect philosophy, of which the Word was the Teacher, was often spoken of as **the true**

Gnostic, or man of insight. This is how Clement, the second great master of the School, loved to speak of the perfect or fully enlightened Christian. But to him enlightenment always involved conscience quite as much as intellect. Light came through life, rather than conversely. In other words, the whole undivided man was the recipient of the truth. Obedience and love were to be second nature to his 'Gnostic.' It is here that he differs from the Gnostic proper, who often idolized pure intellect. Again, he also recognizes *two distinct types of Christian*, answering so far to the more legal or more evangelic way in which faith affects a man—in the one case as external to his inmost being, and acting only by fear or some inferior motive; in the other, appealing to the soul that is now akin, by its intrinsic worth and beauty. But unlike certain Gnostics who made the line between the 'psychic or crude believer, and the 'spiritual' Gnostic, a matter of nature—so that one had to be born a Gnostic soul to become one—Clement taught a progress from the one type of life to the other, and made this depend above all upon goodness and love.

Of *Pantænus*, the converted Stoic philosopher and real Founder of the School, we know but little. But the fact that he was also famed as a missionary to some part of the Farther East, assures us that his love of truth did not mean less love of souls. He was succeeded by his pupil T. Flavius **Clemens** (c. 188), an Athenian, who after wanderings in various lands in search of truth for the soul, found rest with Pantænus. After the persecution of 202, which drove him into exile, his young pupil Origen, then only in his eighteenth year, took up his work in an heroic spirit which marked him then, as throughout his life. But it was Clement who more than any other gave the School its tone. And in his own way, for all the wide sweep and free outlook of his faith, he is no less im-

pressive than Irenæus as witness to the strength of that living tradition which had taken shape in much the same Rule of Faith (or nucleus of truths held apostolic) in all the great Christian centres.

He starts in his theorizings with this—the marrow of the Oracles of God—as something given, and touching which the business of reflexion is not so much to establish it as to draw out its deep inner meaning for life, which when seen is its own best evidence. Scripture is to him the supreme **revelation of the Word.** None the less Greek philosophy, as seen in its noblest names, has been to the Gentile what the Mosaic Law was to the Jew, 'the humble tutor to bring us to Christ.' For God, through the the Word spoken of in John i. 1 ff., is engaged upon a universal plan of education for the human race, the key-stone of which is Christ, the Light Incarnate. It is, therefore, not philosophy as such, the 'feeling after' the truth 'if haply they may find it,' which has led any to unbelief; it is self-love and lightness of spirit which rob men of the peace which is the true end of this noble quest. But in Christ 'the true philosophy' has been brought nigh even to the humblest.

Doubtless such a view would tend in many hands to degenerate into mere salvation by intellect. But such was not the case with Clement, who *blended the moral and the intellectual* elements in the birth and growth of the spiritual man. His was a capacious soul, able withal to harmonize what many would rend asunder. Thus, thanks to allegorism while the true historic key was as yet lacking, he was able through a deep moral experience to maintain the essential identity of Justice and Goodness, Law and Gospel, as two methods by which God's fatherly love deals with man as he is able to bear it. The end in view is ever one, even conformity to His image in the holy love which is at once salvation and bliss.

This doctrine of '**the Two Lives**,' as it has been

called, contains the Alexandrine solution of a problem pressing in the second century as also in the first, when apostolic souls bewailed that many were 'children' in faith when they should have been 'men.' The higher Christian life, with its single-eyed love of God, in contrast to the poor average life of many who yet are no hypocrites, has ever been breaking forth. The passion for perfection has, indeed, amid man's frailty and lack of self-knowledge, been apt to swerve from the divinely human type of the Son of Man, and frame for itself at various times various one-sided ideals, monastic and otherwise. But after all, the original passion has been of God, and is ever forming for itself in the heart of His people a nobler ideal, to answer more closely amid ever-changing conditions, to its Divine prototype, the Christ of God.

Into Clement's idea of the true man of God went several elements, some differing not a little from those that have reached us mainly through Augustine. Besides the reasoned form in which (as a result of more than fifty years of tentative theories) the biblical idea of creation, as God's own absolute act, took shape, we get the idea that each man comes from God's hand in His 'image,' with an essence akin to the Divine, but needing to be moulded by loving obedience into the 'likeness' of the Son of God. The idea of Original Sin is not found in him, as it is in Western theologians like Tertullian and Augustine. To him the *Freedom of the Will* is the key to moral evil in so emphatic a form, that Greek theology has after him but a feeble sense of the part played by Divine grace in setting the will truly free, as Paul had known it. In keeping with all this, he takes no account of infant baptism, and treats the Eucharist, 'Priesthood,' and the Church, in a mystic way, more akin to Protestant than to 'Catholic' sentiment. Finally, he and the Alexandrines in general stand at the opposite pole from both Irenæus and the typically Latin Tertullian, as to

Resurrection and the Future State, spiritualizing what they left all too sensuous.

Thus we are led to examine the great African Father, in whose massive yet impetuous nature as many elements struggled for expression as did later in Luther; nor did they result any more in a real unity. **Tertullian**, 'anti-Gnostic' as he was on that practical side which made him at heart a Roman lawyer, was at the same time a man of philosophic (Stoic) training, a fact which comes out, spite of himself, in much of his theology. Born c. 155 at Carthage, with the strong passionate nature of his race, his conversion in mid life was an intense reality which coloured all his subsequent thought, making him exclaim: 'Christians are not born; they are made.' He was thorough-going, and demanded the same of all. Thus he shrank not from addressing a bold *Apology* (c. 197) for his brethren to the powers that then were. And later, when his own instincts towards a strict rule of life, which he judged not without reason to be a mark of primitive Christianity, were reinforced soon after 200 by the rigorist spirit of Montanism already described, he was constrained to issue protest after protest against what he deemed the laxity of the 'Catholics,' as earlier of the 'heretics.' But even more than other Montanists he is credited with essential orthodoxy, and from his own quarter ceases not, like Clement, to witness to the Rule of of Faith in that 'Catholic' Church with whose spirit he is by no means at one.

In two respects his native *Carthage*, which was destined to contribute more to Christian theory in the West than even Rome herself, *determined his attitude.* Its Church had no direct claim to an apostolic origin; hence Rome bulked largely in his thought as chief seat of the apostolic tradition by which unorthodoxy of all kinds was to be ruled out of court. Again, the society in Carthage was such as to make the tendency

to compromise with worldly customs, especially in case of mixed marriages, a special danger to the Gospel in Tertullian's eyes; so that, as life went on, he more and more fell out of sympathy with the discipline of the nascent Catholic Church, and in the end became the father of Churches whose protest reached the point of separation from the 'unspiritual' majority.

Of his actual life little is known. Converted soon after 190, he became a presbyter of his Church, and after an immense **literary activity** whereby he created ecclesiastical Latin, he died at an advanced age (c. 230), a disappointed and isolated man. On the other hand, by his writings[1] he remained a great power, not only by those written in defence of the Catholic Church, but also by those moral or practical works which, once their Montanist taint was forgotten, were found acceptable to the growingly ascetic temper of the clergy. The logic of experience made him belie in his later years the rigid Latin conception of the Church as the visible organization of federated bishops, and feel his way towards a more Puritan idea of the Church, one, too, more in keeping with Alexandrine than with Roman theology. But, indeed, Tertullian is the symbol of vigour rather than consistency. He saw vividly, felt strongly, and expressed himself with a certain rhetorical exaggeration of tone. His **realistic tendency** made him liable to a certain materialism in things spiritual, which comes out in his language not only as to the sacraments, but even as to God and the soul. This was probably due in part also to his training in Stoic modes of thought; just as there is a legalism in his conception of salvation which betrays the Roman lawyer. None the less he from time to time struck off some of the finest of Christian aphorisms,

[1] For his writings, apologetic, anti-Gnostic, dogmatic, and ascetic, see the histories (*e.g.* Neander), but especially Cruttwell, vol. ii.

as when he speaks of the soul as 'by nature Christian' in instinct, and of the blood of the martyrs as 'the seed of the Church'; or exclaims, 'It is no part of religion to compel religion, which should be adopted freely, not by force.'

Ill-balanced as he often was, his burning earnestness and loyalty to Christ have proved a valuable tonic in the blood of an oft too complacent Church. And not a few points in his *Montanism* have been justified at least as much as those to which he opposed them. Thus the war between the natural and the supernatural elements in the Christian's experience is a real one, though the true ideal is not the sheer suppression of the former, but its spiritualization. Again, the abiding presence of the Spirit in believers, qualifying them for highest service, is a greater and more progressive truth than that of ministerial orders.

Having thus briefly passed in survey the leading churchmen of the age, we are free to deal with two or three features of the Old Catholicism for which in different ways they stand. The problem of all others forced to the front by Gnostics and Montanists alike, was the *test of Christian truth*. The 'Catholic' answer, painfully hammered out by controversy, was twofold, viz. **Apostolic Tradition** and the **Canon of the New Testament Scriptures.** The order in which each side of the case emerged into clear consciousness is obscure; but their mutual relations may be put as follows. All appeal to Christ,[1] but Christ's mind reaches men through the teaching of His Apostles, whether written or oral. No doubt 'the written word abides;' but which writings attributed to Apostles are authentic? Internal evidence, upon

[1] Cf. the Canon (*i.e.* 'measuring rod' or 'rule') of Hegesippus already quoted, 'the Law, the Prophets, and *the Lord*.' The Old Testament was the original Canon of Scripture to Christians as to Jews, together with 'the Canon of the Lord's words,' not at first associated with any fixed set of writings.

which so much stress is laid by modern historical students, was hardly then available; and, besides, its decisions are slow, and do not always carry general conviction. Some shorter yet surer method was needed amid divergent opinions. What could it be but the consensus of the mass of the Churches as to their traditions? These found voice in the bishops or official representatives, with the gratifying result that the oldest Churches were found to agree in the main. This meant that their tradition went back to the time before those divergences arose which made Gnostic and other traditions neutralize one another. But what said the tradition? (1) That certain writings, like our four Gospels and a large body of Pauline Epistles, had actually come down in the great Churches under the apostolic names with which they were now connected. So the Scillitan martyrs in N. Africa (c. 180), in reply to the Proconsul's query, say: 'We have books and letters of Paul, a righteous man.' Textual criticism also points to this period as that in which national versions of the Bible, like the old Latin and the Syriac—the bases of which probably reach back to the former generation—were coming into use. (2) That this group of writings agreed in essence with the Rule of Faith or living doctrinal tradition, preserved in connexion with the Baptismal Confession in the Churches of apostolic foundation.

Thus it was the *coincidence* of these *two* lines of apostolic witness that marked out Christian truth as such. The continuous history of these Churches not only gave them a title to speak for the apostolic origin of certain writings, already beginning to stand out from among the other sacred literature of the Church and by constant reading in public worship to gain a status alongside the Old Testament Canon; but it also created a fair presumption that their doctrinal tradition, too, was sound, and would form the best starting-point for the study of the New Canon. And the presump-

tion was in turn verified by the harmony which such study came to reveal. To this it may be added that, while Montanism hastened the Church's steps in reaching the conception of a limited Canon of apostolic writings to which there could be no addition, the agreement of Montanist and Catholic alike as to our four Gospels as *the* Gospels, is of great value; as is also the common use of the Fourth Gospel by men so diverse in views as were Gnostics and Montanists.[1]

One of the most precious records of antiquity is the **fragmentary list** of the N.T. Canon at this epoch, as recognized in the West, probably at Rome. This Canon, recovered by Muratori, has as nucleus (around which cluster secondary writings still held in high honour) our Four Gospels, Acts, and thirteen Pauline Epistles, as well as two or three Johannine Epistles, Jude, John's Apocalypse and that of Peter (recently recovered in part), 'which,' however, 'some of our body will not have read in Church' (*i.e.* in public worship). This latter item and the book of 'Wisdom written by Solomon's friends in his honour,' are additions to our Canon. There is, too, a margin of uncertainty as to details due to the obscure and fragmentary form in which this ancient document survives (see Gwatkin's *Selections*).

One **drawback** in this process of fixing a N.T. Canon by aid of an apostolic tradition resident in the bishops (who were more and more forming the backbone of a world-wide federation called the 'Catholic Church,' with one Rule of Faith and similar usages), was the *dying out* of the *sense* of living *inspiration* among believers as such, which Tertullian so valued, but against which his friends

[1] The fact that c. 170 Tatian compiled a harmony of *our* four Gospels, the *Diatessaron*, tells its own tale. For further detail on the idea and scope of the N.T. Canon at this period, see Sanday's *Bampton Lectures* (1893), ch. i.

the Montanists had created a new prejudice. On the other hand, *speculation* had been stimulated by an anti-Gnostic polemic, which in turn begot a new taste for subtle metaphysics within the Church itself. This appears in the guise of *interpretation* of the Rule of Faith, not only in frank philosophers like Clement, but also in men like Irenæus and Tertullian, who hardly realized how much they shared the speculative habit of mind which they deprecated in the Gnostics. And it was just in this unconsciousness of theirs that danger for the future of the Gospel really lurked. For if not they, then their successors were sure to identify their own views with the Creed itself, and insist on assent to all alike as of the essence of saving faith—so changing the centre of gravity from the conscience and heart to the passive intellect.

Coincidently, also, a similar process of *re-interpreting* the *Sacraments* in terms of the Greek Mysteries was silently going on, whose issue will appear even in the next generation in sacerdotal conceptions of which we have so far only vague or rhetorical hints. Originally a 'mystery' had meant a truth once hidden but now revealed in the Gospel, so that about Christian 'mysteries' the Apologists could be quite frank. But non-Christian analogies won the day, and a veil of secrecy was drawn around certain 'rites,' whose nature must not be divulged even to catechumens until the very hour of 'initiation' arrived. *Clergy* and *laity*, too, were more and more becoming distinct in kind and not only in function; while discipline was ever accommodating itself to the newer type of Church member. The net result of all this was that the primitive downrightness and simplicity was giving place to something more refined indeed, but less devoted, less ethical—in a word, more theological, but less religious. Ecclesiasticism was creeping over the societies of Christian brethren, as will appear more clearly in the next generation.

Meantime we cannot do better than close the present chapter with some notice of the **Latin Apologies** of the age, which mirror more conservative aspects. Up to the time of *Victor*, even the Western Churches, with Rome at their head, had been prevailingly Greek. They present us with little or no Latin literature, so far as we can judge. Victor himself, a Roman in temper as well as in race, who took the high and mighty line towards other Churches in the Easter (Quartodeciman) controversy, seems to have written in Latin; but we have no certain traces of his works. And in any case it was Tertullian's *Apology* that set the model decisively. But it is by no means clear that he had not himself a model before him, in a most spirited Dialogue which has some literary relation to Tertullian's work, just as one or other has to the Ciceronian dialogues. This is the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, which Lightfoot is inclined to put back even to the earlier generation. At any rate, we may use it to illustrate certain traits of Christianity in the later years of the second century.

The *Octavius* contains the discussion between two legal friends as to the respective fitness of the pagan and Christian faiths to satisfy a man of taste and sobriety. It has much in common with the more philosophic cast of Greek Apologies. Yet it is full of the strong common sense which marked the Latin mind. Its ultimate appeal is to the fruits of faith: and while it has certain affinities to the Epistle to Diognetus, it contains much less positive Christian teaching. Its scene is laid on the sea beach at Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, and Minucius professes to report the formal discussion between the Christian Octavius and his pagan friend Cæcilius on the merits of their respective religions. In the end, the latter gratefully confesses himself vanquished by the truth, especially as regards Providence and real knowledge of God, which he had before held to be beyond man's

reach, and he desires further instruction. Not only had his agnostic arguments been silenced, but his 'man of the world' plea for conformity to the old religion, as certain because ancient and as useful to Roman prosperity, was met very much in the spirit of Bacon's remark, that 'Antiquity is the childhood of the race; we are the true ancients.' But Octavius is at his best when he refutes the dark picture of Christianity drawn by Cæcilius, and shows its good fruits in the regeneration of human character, its purity of worship, and its sublime beliefs.

'We,' he says, 'call one another brethren, as being men born of one Divine Parent, partners in faith, fellow-heirs in hope.' And again, 'When I, a man, dwell at large, shall I shut up the might of so great Majesty within one little tenement? Were He not better dedicated in our mind, consecrate in our inmost heart of hearts? Shall I offer to God victims which He has produced for my use, that I should fling back to Him His own gift? That were ingratitude, seeing that the pleasing victim is a good spirit, a pure mind, a sincere judgment. Hence let a man cherish innocence, and he supplicates the Lord; practise justice, and he offers libation to God; let him abstain from deceits, and he propitiates God; snatch a man from danger, and he slays the richest victim. These are our sacrifices, these the rites of God; thus with us a man is religious in proportion as he is righteous' (ch. 32).

With this antique type of piety we may compare Christian life and worship as set forth in Tertullian's *Apology* (ch. 39), with the chaste joy of the Feast (*Agapé*) of brethren who have 'recognized in God one Father, and drunk of one Spirit of Holiness.'

On the whole, then, while we may rightly think of the Old Catholic Church as already in process of taking fixed shape, we are not justified in assuming anything like uniformity of sentiment or usage as ruling in all Catholic circles. Thus, far removed in thought as well as in space from his contemporary Tertullian, stands another churchman, Bardesanes, the Syrian scholar, hymn-writer, and theologian, who

'in passing over to the new faith could not shake off the ancient glamour of the stars, or abjure the Semitic love of clothing thoughts in mythological forms' (Hort). Of him, Eusebius, a fourth-century Father, says, that he indeed 'fancied himself to have come over to the more correct opinion, but yet did not entirely wash off the filth of the old heresy.' There were, then, those who were of the old School, and those of the new; and before a complete understanding was reached on all sides, there was yet to be no little searching of hearts.

[As for ch. v., with addition of Bigg's *Bampton Lect.* and Kaye's *Tertullian* (1845).]

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIXTH GENERATION: HIPPOLYTUS AND ORIGEN.

(215–250 A.D.)

Hippolytus and his age; doctrine and discipline of Callistus; a crisis in the Church. Origen: his theological standpoint: his life and work: special features of his thought: Sacraments and Clergy; Literary Criticism. Abiding Influence.

We have said that Catholicism as a definite system of doctrine and discipline was only struggling to birth towards the end of the second century. Of this fact **Hippolytus** is a most impressive witness. Since the recovery of his great work, the *Refutation of all Heresies*, about the middle of the present century, we are able to watch the process at one of its most acute crises and in no less typical a centre than Rome itself. The story, too, gains dramatic interest as coming to us through one of the prime actors.

As far back as c. 190, the statesmanlike Victor had through the good offices of Marcia (who, though the mistress of Commodus, had a certain sympathy with the Christians) obtained the recall of many then pining in the Sardinian mines. Along with them, though not (so Hippolytus assures us) by Victor's goodwill, returned *Callistus*, who owed his exile to brawling in a Jewish synagogue. Allowing, as we well may, for a certain animus in his rival's account of this man's career, we yet cannot escape the impression that he was marked by cleverness rather than by character. His financial gifts seem to have won him the post of archdeacon under Victor's successor, Zephyrinus; and, as was often the case, this led to his being elected bishop in 216. But though the choice of the majority, he was most distasteful to a

strong minority concerned for purity both of discipline and doctrine. Possibly they were heirs to the traditions of the Greek element, once so powerful in the Roman Church. At any rate their champion, Hippolytus, was Greek in training as in name, and enjoyed a very high repute as a theologian.

The exact position occupied by Hippolytus (c. 165–235) is hard to make out, and has caused much discussion. He himself claims the rank of a bishop, and he is so called by some later writers: yet the earliest known authority styles him 'presbyter.' Again, there is at first doubt as to his episcopal see: but in time he becomes best known as Bishop of Portus, already the successful rival of Ostia as the harbour of Rome. An outpost as it were of the capital, it yet would need, for its large population afloat, a special shepherd; who, while bishop as regards his flock, might continue to rank as a presbyter of the Roman Church. Possibly even, 'Hippolytus Presbyter' once meant 'Hippolytus the Venerable.' Such is substantially Lightfoot's view as to the standing of Hippolytus at the time when he refused to recognize Callistus as true Bishop of Rome, rather than the mere head of a lax school, even though this included the bulk of the Church. A considerable body of opinion, however, regards him 'as a second, or secessionist Bishop of Rome,' separating from Callistus about 217–221, and perhaps even remaining at the head of a rival congregation during the episcopates of Urbanus (221–230) and Pontianus, until he and Pontianus were together exiled to Sardinia by the civil power in 235. In that case exile led to a reconciliation, both resigning and enabling the two parties to unite in the election of Anteros, and so the schism ended.[1] What, then, in his eyes made

[1] See Lightfoot, *Clement*, ii. 427 ff.; the other view (that of Döllinger) has been clearly stated by Sanday (*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. viii. 328 ff.), whose inferences may be read in connexion with the later Novatian schism.

Callistus' election null and void? In a word, false views as to doctrine and discipline.

As to **doctrine**, Callistus had not been content to follow the long-standing tradition of Roman bishops, and abstain from theological speculation. Gnosticism in its older or dualistic forms was no longer a power. But its spirit lived afresh in the *Monarchians*, *i.e.* those who finding the terms Father, Son, Spirit, Christ, and Jesus, cropping up almost as synonyms in naïve religious use, took in hand the task of rationalizing such a usage. This they did summarily, and with little regard to the historical aspects of the problem, resolving the distinctions involved into mere modes or phases in the life of the one personal God. Into all the varieties assumed by this type of thought, making the Father Himself suffer on the Cross in the form of the Christ (*Patripassianism*), or again reducing the Divine element in the Christ to the Father's 'power' resident in the man Jesus (*Dynamistin*)—the pantheistic and humanitarian extremes—we cannot here go. Suffice it to say, that while the former type had appealed to the 'unlettered' Zephyrinus, Callistus inclined to the latter, and even promulgated a formula of this order. This deeply offended Hippolytus, who had applied his profounder mind to the appreciation of the Logos-doctrine of the Prologue of St. John, as may be seen from the Confession with which his great work closes. But Callistus retorted that Hippolytus believed in two Gods.

Behind the speculative issue lay, however, the burning question of **discipline**. Here in temper at least, if not in details touching sins of the flesh, Callistus was the real innovator. When he bluntly said, in defence of his leniency, that in the Church, as in the ark, there must mingle clean and unclean, he was departing from the primitive spirit. True, the old traditions were rigorous, but he now went to the extreme of accommodation to human frailties; and

the decreasing part played by the congregation as a whole in re-admission to its membership, made the change all the more perilous. 'Numbers rather than quality' was a bad principle on which to build the ideal of a Catholic or Universal Church. For if 'the salt lose its savour,' its true function in the world is sacrificed, and the future is wronged by the attempt to take the short cut. No doubt each side had part of the truth in view, but the tone of many of the 'lapsed' and of their friends not many years after, tends to confirm the impression that Callistus was most in the wrong. His leniency has not behind it the weight of a saintly life, like Cyprian's on the latter occasion. Of Hippolytus, however, as seen in his other works, 'most benevolent' as well as most devoted, we cannot say more than that he has won the admiration of the late Baron Bunsen, who made him the focus of his picture of ancient Christian piety in its more reflective mood.

Hippolytus' chief work was, on its re-discovery, assigned to **Origen**; a sign that the two men have much in common. This is true both of their wide culture and of the contributions made by them to the doctrines of the Godhead and the Person of Christ. But there were also characteristic differences, running back to their respective teachers, Irenæus and Clement. Thus, while the former was so strenuous a Millennarian as even to write on the subject against a fellow-presbyter *Caius*, the latter elaborated the boldest theory as to God's counsels for the human race known to all theology. But this same Origen was also the first to work out a complete system of theology, or a philosophy of the universe and of man from a Christian standpoint; and that to such purpose as to divide most theologians for centuries to come into Origenists and anti-Origenists. Hence we must try to sketch the man and his work.

As a man he has been called the most interesting,

the most learned, and in some respects the *greatest of patristic writers*. His only rival is Augustine, who was himself directly or indirectly his debtor also; the fact being that the one was to Greek theology what the other has been to Latin; and as a man is drawn by affinity to the one or the other type of piety, so he must needs estimate either theologian. By proclaiming the reconciliation of science and faith in his ideal of Christian insight or *gnosis* (in which faith is made perfect), Origen undoubtedly did more than any other to win the old world to Christianity. Whether in the process the Gospel underwent a real change in spirit as well as in form, is a moot point. But Origen, at least, felt sure of his own loyalty to Christ throughout, and in his noble life he has good witness.

Born c. 185 in Alexandria, the child of the first Christian home known to us, he early made his father's heart glad by his promise in lessons human and divine. When the year 202 brought martyrdom to Leonides, the son was saved from the same fate only by his mother's device of hiding his clothes to keep him at home. But he at once showed a man's maturity, not only in the decision with which he held aloof from Paulus, a Gnostic teacher and domestic chaplain, as it were, to the lady who gave shelter to him and his, but also in his taking up public teaching with such success as to win the notice of Bishop Demetrius, who actually made him **Clement's successor** at the early age of eighteen. Born on Egyptian soil, he shared the profound and mystical temper of the race at its best—disciplined and steadied, however, by a Greek training. As time went on, he added yet further to his wide culture, in order to grapple fully and frankly with the difficulties of all who resorted to his class-room. Thus he assimilated the nascent Neo-Platonism, and claimed its sublimest thoughts for Christ. Similarly, to meet the Jews on their own ground, he acquired that knowledge of

Hebrew which enabled him later to lay the foundations of biblical criticism by his enormous labour upon the *Hexapla*, or six-fold comparison of the Greek texts of the Old Testament alongside of the Hebrew. His pupils were of all sorts, and in every degree of nearness to the kingdom of God. But the quality of those really shaped by him was shown by the fire of persecution by which several were tried, while Origen himself ministered to them even to the end. In purity of purpose he would take no salary or gift, preferring to subsist on about sixpence a day, derived from the sale of part of his library. His habits were those of the ascetic scholar, not by way of merit, but to keep him, body and soul, in training for labours abundant.

As an antidote against the strain of such labours, he was sent by friends *to visit Rome*. But his impressions of the Roman clergy, their worldly policy and ambitions, were as unfavourable as those of Tertullian, or of Jerome some two centuries later. He returned even less in love with the hierarchical principle than before. For to him the Christian religion was a system of Divine truth, able to win to itself man's conscience and reason; to them it was a Divine polity imposed by authority. Returning to his work (c. 210), he was able to perfect *his system of teaching* by deputing part of it to his pupil Heraclas. His first task was always to empty students of crudities and prejudices, as well as of conceit, by a searching method of questions on the Socratic model. Then he placed their feet on the first rounds of the ladder of positive knowledge, leading through nature and the moral order—theory going hand in hand with example and practice—up to the unifying sphere of theology, where all things were seen in the light of eternity and, so to say, in God.

Here comes out the peculiar blending in his spirit of perfect open-mindedness towards all truth as of God, with implicit reverence for Revelation as contained in Scripture and formulated in outline in the Rule

of Faith. These two types of truth could not but agree, for God was, in different senses, the Author of nature and of grace, of philosophical and of Scriptural truth. And he believed that God would not permanently confuse the earnest and humble seeker by putting beyond his reach the discovery of that harmony, the passion for which he traced to the Divine Word or Reason resident, even where dormant, in the depths of man's spirit. *This was Origen's deepest faith*, and he could admit no view of human nature, even as fallen, which would so belie the goodness of God as to represent man as atheist by nature. In all men there was a Divine element, even prior to fertilization 'from above' into true spiritual life, in virtue of which St. Paul could say, 'We also are His offspring.' It was this which Latin theology went far to ignore, speaking as if God had, as it were, delegated the creation even of reasonable souls to human parentage and the law of heredity. Tertullian's language touching the soul as material and as 'propagated' by natural descent, had here paved the way. But Origen's view of man's inmost reason as related to the Word of God, so that its native need and instinct is to recognize the Divine or mystic order in nature as in grace, is a noble contrast to all this. And we cannot wonder if, unaware of the full extent to which heredity conditions the awakening of this dormant faculty in man, he should have assumed a degree of freedom in men which facts do not warrant. Yet it would be more correct to say that Origen, while recognizing the facts, was able to discount them somewhat (so far as they might have led him to a franker doctrine of 'prevenient grace'), by assuming that the degree of bondage in which each finds himself is but the exact result of some abuse of free will in a prior state.[1] Here we feel that

[1] The theory is an index of the intensity with which Origen felt the evil, both in external nature and in the moral world. For his great 'theodicy,' see Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, 204 ff.

he is 'going beyond what is written' in spirit as well as in letter; and must on the whole confess that he did not always hit the happy mean in his doctrine of man, any more than did Augustine. In sober truth, one of the most valuable results of Church history is that it teaches us not to be partisans, Origenist or Augustinian, but to look for truth as combining the positive aspects of contrasted but really complementary schools of thought.

Thus years glided by, till a new reign of terror (215) drove him into temporary exile at Cæsarea, the chief Christian centre in Palestine. Here began **his ecclesiastical trials.** For the bishop, seconded by Origen's old fellow-pupil Alexander of Jerusalem, asked him to preach, layman as he was, in public worship. Calculating caution in such matters was not in his line, and he consented. Probably, too, this was in keeping with Palestinian usage; but its effect on his own bishop, who was apparently strengthening ecclesiastical rules at Alexandria, was marked. He denounced the act, and recalled Origen to his old work. And now Origen's activity reached its zenith. He was aided and encouraged by a wealthy friend, Ambrosius, whom he had won from Valentinian *gnosis* to his own nobler type. Not only was the *Hexapla* set on foot, but other works too many to name were dictated to the amanuenses supplied by his patron. His fame, too, brought him requests for personal interviews, now with a governor of Arabia, now with the queen-mother Mammæa at Antioch. Meantime his relations to his bishop could hardly have been free from friction, which about 230 came to the burning point when, on his way to check certain heresies in Greece, he suffered himself to be ordained presbyter by his old friends at Cæsarea. This act probably overstepped the bounds of inter-episcopal usages: and Demetrius had a strong case when he put an end to Origen's 'moral episcopate' at Alexandria, by getting

successive Alexandrine councils (the latter of bishops only) first to banish, and then degrade from his rank, this irregular presbyter. In this he was supported by Rome in particular. Still the Churches of Syria as a whole stood by Origen, who, however, bowed before the storm and withdrew to Cæsarea.

Here he formed a no less brilliant school, while his old pupil Heraclas filled his place in Alexandria. Thus Origen's life falls into two epochs; the life at Alexandria—culminating in his *First Principles*, the first and freshest of dogmatic text-books—and the life at Cæsarea (230–250), broken only by interventions where his dogmatic genius was needed (as in the case of Beryllus at Bostra, east of Jordan, and by outbursts of persecution. During that under Maximin in 235, his address *To Martyrs* sustained the courage of his friend Ambrosius, then in prison; while under Decius in 250 Origen himself was so tortured that, as a result, he died prematurely at Tyre in 253, in his sixty-ninth year. In literary productiveness this latter epoch stands first, as it not only saw his great apologetic *Reply to Celsus* (the acutest second-century critic of Christianity), but also gave final form to his *Hexapla* and exegetical works, his spoken homilies belonging entirely to this date. If we add his voluminous correspondence and practical treatises, like that *On Prayer*, we shall appreciate the sense in which later ages understood his name Adamantius, 'the Indefatigable.'

Probably the experience of life served to mellow his spirit, and the lingering literalism seen in his earlier austerities melted more and more into the freedom of the spirit. At any rate he drew many of the finest spirits both to his person and to the truth he unfolded with such ardour and boldness, wherever he believed that neither Scripture nor the interpretative consciousness of the Church had closed a question. And even within these limits *his insight was always fresh and personal.* Herein he differs from

both Irenæus and Tertullian, with the latter of whom he has, however, many points of contact. They made more of the external authority than of the intrinsic power of the truth self-attesting in the awakened conscience. But Origen is more patient and conciliatory, which means also that his faith is deeper rooted. Thus, in answering Celsus he appeals to the real power of the Gospel, wherein Christ speaks direct to the heart of a man. Whatever other proofs he may employ, he is aware that all depends on this; for the Gospel is not a science, it is the true religion, meeting the imperative needs of souls which, apart from God, the living God, could not even exist.

Springing from this idea of the essential relation of 'the Father of spirits' and mankind at large, is his recognition of *three forms* in which the True Light or Word works in human history: (1) the natural law among the Gentiles; (2) the Mosaic law of the Jews; (3) the Gospel which takes effect in the Christian Church, though in two degrees or lives, according as faith does or does not issue in spiritual insight or wisdom. These are the historical forms of true religion, the last being final or absolute. Yet underlying all is **the Eternal Gospel**, not made explicit in any historic form, on account of the nature of human speech and our sense-bound mind, but for the mystic sense hinted at, whilst yet veiled, in each in varying degrees. Those who have experienced this Gospel in their lives constitute the spiritual or veritable Church, which is by no means co-extensive with the visible Church, but is at once larger and smaller and includes also those above as well as those on earth. This is the saving Ark, the Church outside which is no salvation. Here Origen's contrast to the Latin idea of the Church as a legal polity, as seen in our next chapter, comes fully out.

Into the bearing of this central idea upon the future life and the final restitution which, in a guarded form

Origen was the first to teach, we cannot here go. But his views on the *sacraments* and clergy may be noted in passing. In his later years at least, he held that Infant Baptism was an apostolic usage; but it is hard to fix him down to a steady doctrine of baptism, especially in view of his mystic or figurative habit of speech. As to the Eucharist, he too reflects the growing sense of awe and mystery, but his Platonic idealism inclines him, like Clement, to view the elements as an allegory, in the spirit of John vi. 'The Bread is the word of righteousness, but the Wine is the word of the knowledge of Christ'; so that the communion in the Lord's Supper differs only in degree from that possible at all times. The sacrifice is the believer himself, though on the basis of Christ's one perfect sacrifice and present mediation. Accordingly, while going beyond Clement, in that under the influence of Mosaic analogies he regards the *clergy* as vicars of God rather than as ministers of the congregation, he yet so makes validity of ministry depend on moral and spiritual worth (like Wiclif in later days), that the line between it and the general priesthood of believers is one of church order, not of power or grace. Thus *absolution* is a declaration resting on due knowledge of conditions of penitence. Origen in his later years even extended the area within which this held good, to cover mortal sins after baptism, obdurate impenitence being in this life the one fatal exception. In this he was departing from the more rigorous spirit of earlier days, and approaching that of the great Latin Father whose activity coincides roughly with the very close of Origen's career.

In one conspicuous case we find the great biblical scholar so far wrong as to make us feel the need of always examining his results with special reference to the bias of current methods. Suggestiveness and sublimity were his forte; literary criticism, on the contrary, requires nice judgment and a readiness to

postpone the question of seeming edification to that of historicity. Now to an eagerly constructive temper like Origen's, this was often irksome. Hence he was decisively worsted in a correspondence with Julius Africanus of Emmaus, an elder contemporary (c. 175–245), as to the authority of the History of Susanna, which had come down to Origen as part of the O.T. Canon. Julius urged the signs of its Greek origin, and the fact that it was not in the Jews' Canon. Origen's reply, though ingenious, is comparatively forced. The case is typical of the need of combining with the spiritual insight of an Origen the calm, scientific spirit of the man who, like Julius, could write a careful 'Chronology' or comparison of sacred and general history, with a view to show the antiquity into which the Gospel could trace its roots, or even 'Miscellanies' that reveal a wide field of study.[1] Something of this spirit is found in the next generation in the Antiochene School of exegesis, which arose to rival Origen's Alexandrine successors. But, meantime, it is important to notice how the Gospel was laying hold of men of types as different as the Platonist Origen and Julius the Aristotelian from Libya.

Origen changed the status of Christianity both for its friends and foes. This he did by his works, but no less by the men he shaped as **his disciples.** Of the Alexandrines we find the successive bishops, Heraclas and Dionysius the Great, hearty Origenists; and we may add the name of Athanasius. Of those trained at Cæsarea, the best known was Gregory Thaumaturgus of Cæsarea in Pontus, who wrote an elegant panegyric on his master. In the next century we have the 'three great Cappadocians,' Basil and the two Gregories, whose zeal for orthodoxy was equalled only by their regard for Origen.

[In general as for ch. vi.; Bunsen is here specially full.]

[1] Julius was the first to explain the two genealogies of the Saviour, by assuming both a natural and a legal reckoning.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEVENTH PERIOD: CYPRIAN AND THE BISHOPS' CHURCH.

(250–300 A.D.)

Cyprian: the problem of the Lapsed: his new theory: presbyteral opposition: the Bishop as Christ's Vicegerent. The Roman See, and the Re-baptism of Heretics. Cyprian's Theology: his idea of 'Grace'; Sacerdotalism rampant. A noble end: his temper. Dionysius of Alexandria: his temper, and doctrine of Trinity. East and West. Other typical men: the Antiochene School. Manichæism. Christian literature of the age. The case of Paul of Antioch.

As Origen stands for the Greek type of piety, so **Cyprian** for the Latin. If the former makes God and His image in man the central theme, the latter lets his thought rest rather on Church and churchly usages as the media of salvation. To the one the arch-foe is heresy, to the other schism; and these distinctions are prophetic of the future in East and West. Each had his way more or less marked out by a bold pioneer. As Origen followed Clement, so Cyprian styled Tertullian his master; yet each contributed something very distinctive to the final result. Sharing in the limitations of the Latin mind, the legal and prosaic side of the practical temper, Cyprian has appealed steadily to the mass of the Western Church in so far as its mind has remained unleavened by the spirit typical of either the Greek or Hebrew. If Augustine's sway has been more general, it is just because he had elements proper to Origen also, as well as a deep experimental note of his own.

Thascius Cyprianus was born c. 200, and being a man of good family enjoyed a liberal education, especially in law and rhetoric. Converted about 246, he at once put both his pen and his purse at the service of his Lord: and so great was the regard which he inspired, that within less than three years of his baptism he was chosen by the laity and the majority of the clergy Bishop of Carthage. Cyprian yielded as to 'God's decree;' but five presbyters demurred to this prentice bishop. And so was sown the seed of future troubles, soon to germinate under the influence of the Decian persecution (249).

This trial, coming upon a Church relaxed by more than a generation of peace, led to the lapse of great numbers who either sacrificed or bought false certificates to that effect (*libellatici*). Cyprian, who as bishop was at once most aimed at and most necessary to the flock, withdrew to a safe place, whence he directed his scattered sheep. His action was by his foes contrasted with the martyr end of Fabian of Rome, and put down to cowardice—a view belied by his later history. As soon as there was a lull in the storm, the surviving 'confessors' stretched their traditional prerogative of recommending certain of the Lapsed to the Church for restoration; and proceeded, using the name of certain actual martyrs, even to grant 'certificates of peace' or absolution without due inquiry and in the mass. Cyprian, on the other hand, like his master Tertullian, was at first inclined to a stern policy towards the lapsed, and to refuse communion up to the eve of death. But the number of those jeopardised in his view by being 'outside the Church,' and unfit in their demoralized condition to face a return of the storm, overbore the traditional scruple in his mind.

The power of Confessors, within due limits, to initiate restoration was undoubted. But then, must not this belong still more to the clergy, and especially

the bishop, who was God's inspired vicegerent? Thus his mind began to feel its way to a new theory, namely, that the Church as such, which meant the bishop, was able to judge the lapsed in such sense that its award was the same as that of God. But due guarantees of penitence must be required, and these a Council of bishops alone could settle. Meantime, he wrote to the confessors admitting their right to recommend, but not to grant peace off-hand. When the Council was held in 251 he had come to see the necessity of a milder policy, especially in view of the actual situation at Carthage; and it was settled that penitent *libellatici* might be restored, others only after a long penance, proportionate, however, to the pressure under which they had lapsed. Clergy could never again minister.

The situation referred to was the presence of a powerful opposition, whose ringleaders were the presbyter Novatus, his deacon Felicissimus, and the other dissentient presbyters who now embraced the cause of the Confessors. *Novatus* seems to have been a man of no principle, to judge from the fact that, when he went to Rome a little later, he took up the Rigorist view of the lapsed apparently for no better reason than to strengthen the opposition—conscientious on the part of its learned and austere leader Novatian—to the 'mild' policy of Cyprian's ally, the newly elected bishop Cornelius. Meanwhile, Felicissimus got five deposed bishops to ordain the presbyter Fortunatus as rival bishop to Cyprian. But the schism came to nothing.

Into the further history of the subject we need not go. Enough to observe that Cyprian's practical wisdom and tact, combined with his high character, brought him out with a prestige only heightened by the low type of some of his opponents. And this gave such an impetus to his theory of the Episcopate, as made sentiment largely supersede the need of convic-

tion in many minds. Not that a certain kind of loose reasoning, which suffices where temperament and a sense of expediency are already enlisted, was not forthcoming. To be sure, all rested on a practically novel assumption;[1] to wit, that the *clergy* were a *priesthood* in a sense analogous to that of the Old Covenant, and so called to make atonement for the sins of others. As will be seen later, Cyprian's mind, as regards the forms in which he conceived salvation, was more moulded by the Old Covenant than by the New. But whether the original suggestion in this case came from Aaronic analogies rather than from a mind shaped under pagan sacrificial institutions, may well be doubted. But at any rate he tends to regard his sacerdotal bishop 'as exclusively the representative of God to the congregation, and hardly, if at all, as the representative of the congregation before God,'—the older view, relative to the 'sacrifices of praise,' not of atonement with which no earthly minister has to do.

To Ignatius the bishop had been the centre of Christian unity in each locality; to Irenæus he was the depositary of apostolic tradition; but 'with Cyprian he is the **absolute Vicegerent of Christ** in things spiritual.' As such he 'is appointed directly by God, is inspired directly from God,' and that although the people's witness and consent are still insisted on. This direct official inspiration is a more arbitrary form of Montanism against which all Church history cries out. And yet Cyprian was quite sincere. True, Scripture knows nothing of direct Divine episcopal appointment. But to his absolute mind the welfare of the Church, which for him exists only so far as it inheres in the episcopate, seems to postulate this: and so it *must* be. The people, as a people, are nowhere. His low view as to the congregation demands a

[1] For ample proof, see Lightfoot's conclusive paragraphs in his essay on *The Christian Ministry* (see p. 37 note).

high theory as to its representative. The episcopate is the primary condition of a Church; its foundation, not its coping-stone. Expediency or legitimate development are no fit basis for a benevolent autocracy, such as he feels that the Church needs, and that he himself possesses. The unity of the Church demands it, therefore it is so. Never was a theory in reality more subjective in its origin; never one less historical. In one respect only has it still history on its side. Its bishop is municipal or communal rather than diocesan.[1] But the germs of the diocese were already latent in the larger churches. And once they developed the same masterful Cyprianic spirit, would go on to find a needs-be, and so a Divine sanction, first for metropolitans, and then for the mediæval papacy —all at some stage relatively 'necessary to unity,' all as unprimitive as the Cyprianic bishop, and therefore not of the essence of the Church's unity.

But Cyprian had little of the seer about him, good and noble as he was. And so, though he used metaphors about **the Roman bishop** as Peter's successor to the primacy amid the one undivided apostolic college of the episcopate (cf. *Ep.* 48, 2), he was far from seeing how the drift of his teaching as to unity would be stronger than any safeguards which his theory might have in his own mind. Still, whether logical or not, his own healthy loyalty to the traditional autonomy of local Churches, like the North African, was shown not only in word but also in deed. For just as he set episcopal autocracy over against the aristocracy of the presbyteral office and the irregular but traditional aristocracy of moral weight, seen in the confessors; so he set it as limit to the claims of spiritual headship on the part of Rome. All bishops, said he, are in idea equal, although greater respect may be due to the voice of Peter's successor in Rome,

[1] For the exact meaning of this contrast, see Dr. Sanday (*Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. viii. 331 ff.).

'first among his peers.' The final authority belongs only to the episcopate as a whole. Thus he answered Stephen's attempt in 254 to coerce other Churches into the Roman usage in not re-baptizing heretics, provided the Catholic forms had been duly observed. Backed up by his African colleagues, and also by the bishops of Asia Minor with Firmilian at their head, he was able to defy even Roman excommunication—a fact which Romanists would gladly forget. To be sure, Stephen's view as to re-baptism was confirmed at the Council of Arles (314), so making God's family wider in a way than the Cyprianic Church. Yet the stand of Cyprian and others against Roman claims served to retard the final surrender for many a day, and left its mark deep on the traditions of the African Church.

It is now time to speak of the other side of Cyprian's thought, that touching **Salvation and the means of Grace.** His theology lacks depth, as it lacks sympathy with the inner workings of the human spirit. Here the lawyer in him appears: so too in the literalism and special pleading which mar his adroit handling of Scripture. His chief work, *On the Unity of the Church*, which entered into the very blood of of Western Christianity, so identifies unity of Christian life with uniformity of episcopal organization as to make of the latter a sacrament or divine guarantee of grace, to the ignoring of the conditions necessary to the development of a personality superior to the Judaic or the military type. The same concern with secondary features rather than with the springs of evangelic life, appears in the titles of treatises like *On the Dress of Virgins*, *Works and Alms*, *Jealousy and Envy*, *Patience*. This was only natural where the new legalism, seen already in the Apologists, so strongly coloured his conception of salvation. As with its institutions, so with the Gospel itself; Cyprian sees the New Testament through the Old, rather than all

through Christ. All unconscious, he brings back the 'old wine skins,' and the result is *a rejuvenescent Judaism*. Not that evangelic forms of speech are lacking; but the key to them has long been lost, and their meaning is overlaid by other and more obvious ideas of the legal order. Thus he says (*Ep.* 52):—

'*Almsgiving* doth save from death; not indeed from that death which once for all the blood of Christ extinguished, and from which baptism and the Saviour's grace have delivered us, but from that which creeps over us afterwards through our sins.' And again, 'One has need of righteousness to win the favour of the Divine Judge; one must obey His precepts and behests, that *our deserts* may obtain their reward.'

There is an element of truth in sayings like these, the truth seen in passages like Matt. vii. 15 ff., where hypocrisy and self-deception are met by the test of fruitage. But the difference between the idea of 'fruit' and that of 'deserts' is in spirit immeasurable, all, in fact, that makes Gospel differ from Law, as Paul knew so well. Only between St. Paul and Cyprian no slight gulf was already fixed.

Not that Cyprian and others were not alive to the fact of Grace, in the saving sense of God's undeserved mercy in sending the Saviour. But as to the *how* of the salvation, the inner meaning of faith as trust which unites the inner man to Christ, in whom he dies and rises again, is as 'one spirit' with Him, and bears fruit unto God in virtue of a common indwelling life—all this lay beyond Cyprian's ken. His efforts to grasp its deeply ethical spirit often ended in the merely legal; while in his hands mystic community of spirit degenerated in much of his sacramental language into the semi-physical. The crudity into which this betrayed him may be seen from a case in which the ethical element evaporates entirely, and the sheer pagan 'mystery' reigns supreme. A child too young to understand or resist had been forced to partake of food in honour of some deity. Subse-

quently the mother, all ignorant of this, brought her to the Eucharist. She at once showed signs of uneasiness, and when her turn came to partake (for this was thought the logical sequel of infant baptism, now largely in vogue), she averted her face 'by instinct of the divine Majesty.' The ministering deacon persisted, and forced the cup upon her. Her outraged system revolted and rejected the 'draught sanctified in the Lord's blood.' 'Such is the Lord's power, such His majesty!' And all this in the case of an 'infant!' Cyprian himself tells the story (*On the Lapsed*, 25). But is this any longer the 'Lord's Supper'?

Closely related to this magical view of the Lord's Supper was that which went along with the **new Sacerdotal idea** of the ministry; for 'a priest must needs have somewhat to offer,' and the sacrifices of the people's praise no longer sufficed, now that semi-pagan ideas of priesthood had crept in. Accordingly, in the absence of real insight into the finality of the Great High Priest's sacrifice of Himself, 'once for all,' and through a confusion of thought as to the essence of that Sacrifice, which lay in the holy Will, not in the Body which gave it effect on earth, the notion grew up that in presenting the people's free-will offerings (from which the elements of the Supper were taken) the 'priest' was continuing, as it were, the offering of Christ's body. Hence, eating of these elements, besides serving to prepare the receiver's body for immortality, had an atoning or sin-forgiving effect. Thus Cyprian says, 'that priest truly celebrates in Christ's stead, who *imitates* that which Christ did (*i.e.* offered Himself, as the first so to do, a sacrifice to the Father), and in church offers a real and full sacrifice to God the Father:' provided, that is, he fail not to offer wine *and water* in the chalice, so making 'the sacrifice correspond to the Passion' in full. And this represents the simple Eucharist of the first century! Verily the soil can tell on the seed as well as the seed

on the soil; and tradition as such is of little worth, where facts and usages involve interpretation.

His end, however, shows the man at his best. Practice was his forte, not theory. Here that vivid sense of the reality of Divine grace in his own experience, which made him jump to hasty and crude theories because these made things most real to his imagination, came out in splendid and calm loyalty. Refusing to compromise any of his brethren by his answers, he received his own sentence with a cheerful 'Thanks be to God,' and was beheaded among a populace which, since the devotion shown by the Christians during the recent plague, no longer had it in its heart to raise the old cry, 'Cyprian to the lions.'

If Irenæus recalls Hooker, it is Laud of whom Cyprian reminds us. Full of personal nobility and piety, his strength and weakness alike lay in a certain concentrated common sense, which, while it made him a great bishop, left him devoid of the higher insight in which Origen excelled. Self-reliant, and full of the lawyer's spirit, his aim was not so much to convince as to bend men to his Church-policy. For the consciences of others he had far too little reverence; it was not there that he could recognize the Holy Spirit at work. Yet he has coined a thought of Tertullian's into a watchword of spiritual freedom, 'Custom, apart from Truth, is hoary Error.' And no man's views, as they have passed on into history, more provoke the rigid application of the test.

When we turn again to the East, the chief figure that meets us is **Dionysius the Great**, once Origen's pupil, now Bishop of Alexandria (248–265) and 'one of the purest, noblest souls of the early Church.'[1] His lot fell in troubled times, in times of controversial bitterness, fierce persecution, and physical calamity. In all he bore a high part, carrying the

[1] So Cruttwell, to whose pages we are here indebted.

temper of Origen into active life, but not escaping misunderstanding. He had all his master's faith in the power of truth when discussion is mingled with charity. This comes out finely in his account of a conference held with the rural presbyters, teachers, and other brethren in the district of Arsinoë, where Millennarians abounded. Their leader had been a certain Bishop Nepos, whose *Refutation of the Allegorists* (aimed at the more spiritual views of the Alexandrine School which disputed a literal reading of the Book of Revelation), was the standard authority. Dionysius first pays a tribute to the good qualities of Nepos, who seems to have been valued as a hymnologist; but adds, that truth must be loved more than all, whereas some allow his book to throw even Scripture into the shade. Thus in this as in the Re-Baptism controversy, while he showed himself no less a lover of unity than Cyprian, he was more pervaded by the spirit of mutual docility necessary to reach this end without breach of brotherly love. As to his views of the Apocalypse itself, we content ourselves with noting that, if he concludes that the John named in chap. i. is some other than the author of the Gospel and its companion Epistle, he does so on the basis of a piece of literary criticism not inferior to that of Origen himself upon the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews: which is high praise.

A chief incident in his career, one significant, too, of the way in which men were getting a new feeling or sensitiveness for precision in doctrinal formulas, is his correspondence with his Roman namesake as to **his Trinitarian orthodoxy**. Suspicion as to this had arisen through the zeal with which he emphasized Origen's doctrine of the Son's subordination to the Father, over against Sabellianism which tended to efface the reality of such distinctions within the Godhead. His plea, urged with wonted modesty, is that a man must not be made 'transgressor for a word,' but

that regard must be had to the drift and spirit of the context—a caution much needed in the days soon to come.

The fact was that *Origen* had thrown out one or two **fruitful ideas** touching the relation of the Logos or uttered Reason, to the Father or fontal aspect of Deity. The former was the dependent element in God, as is implied in the metaphor of generation. But this mutual interdependence was of the essence of the Godhead; or, in other words, the generation was an eternal fact. With these great ideas his Alexandrine successors were grappling, thus paving the way for Athanasius and Nicæa. Meantime at **Rome** thought was content to rest in **older traditions**, mainly using phrases of the unstudied biblical type, rather than undergoing the travail-pains of forming fresh traditions by striving after a unifying theory. Hence misunderstanding between the heads of these two Churches, soon to be cleared up by an explanation, which involved no notion of official authority on Rome's side, but simply concern on both sides that frank communion should continue as before.

On the whole, then, Dionysius may be taken as an index of the state of the Græcized **East**, as Cyprian of the Latinized **West**. Between the two men instructive affinities may be traced, and also no less instructive contrasts, big with the divergences of the future, which taking shape in the next two centuries led finally to the schism between East and West. Of the Greek 'Orthodox' and the Roman 'Catholic' Churches, the one boasts its doctrine, the other its polity, as the condition of that salvation which both alike promise in the name of Christ.[1]

Before proceeding, however, to sketch an incident sadly prophetic of the great strife of the next century, we must refer very briefly to certain **leading men**

[1] For the contrasted genius of the Greek and Latin Fathers, see Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, 74 ff.

and to some features of this latter half of the century. It was an age of learned and philosophic minds both outside and within the Church. *Neo-Platonists* and Christians were acting and reacting one upon another, and were realizing more and more that they were rivals in such a sense that one or other must suffer absorption. Of this embittered feeling we find traces in *Porphyry*, the disciple of the great Plotinus who had made philosophy definitely the handmaid of religion, in making its chief problem a practical one, the salvation of the soul. In such hands philosophy ever more and more becomes theosophy. Porphyry, while admiring Christ as a great religious genius, criticises sharply and with ability the Christian religion as he knew it both from the Scriptures and from its current forms. His work called forth a new class of *Greek Apologists* in the East, such as Methodius and after him Eusebius of Cæsarea, the one the critic, the other the panegyrist, of Origen. Meantime *Latin Apology*, in the hands of Arnobius the North African rhetorician and his pupil Lactantius, at one time professor of eloquence at Nicomedia in Bithynia (the seat of Diocletian's court), took the more practical line of exposing the follies and immoralities bound up with pagan religion, and at the same time rebutting the common charge that the misfortunes and decadence of the Empire were due to the anger of heaven against the Christian atheism. On the threshold of the next century Porphyry's case was taken up afresh by *Hierocles* governor of Bithynia, whose *Truth-loving Discourse* was answered by Eusebius.

In the Diocletian persecution suffered *Lucian*, a presbyter of Antioch, who calls for special mention as the joint founder with Dorotheus of **the Antiochene School** of sacred learning, in some respects the rival to that in Alexandria. In method and spirit it was Aristotelian rather than Platonic. This means that it kept closer to observed facts, and only gradu-

ally framed its theories by their aid; whereas the sister school allowed theory derived from the highest spheres of thought to dominate its use of the same facts. Thus in Biblical exegesis, the latter saw allegory everywhere, while the former contented itself with trying before all things to fix the historical and contextual sense of each passage. The indirect connexion of this school with Arianism will be noted in its place. Meantime, it is enough to mention that Lucian produced a revised version of the Septuagint (the Greek form of the O.T.), and that his methods have since the Reformation risen in repute.

Outside the circles hitherto considered in this chapter, we see arising a little cloud of paganized Christianity which was destined to grow, until within a century it overshadowed a large part of Christendom, especially in the West; showing thereby that it fell in with sentiments already widespread in society. This was **Manichæism**, or the view which regards the world as the scene of conflict between too well-nigh equal Powers, those of Light and Darkness. It originated in the New Persian empire about the middle of the century, taking its name from Mani (c. 216–276), who, after a life of missions extending far beyond Persia to the East, finally met a cruel death at the hands of the Magians or native priests of the Parseeism which he was trying to reform by the aid of Babylonian and Gnostic (Christian) ideas. As the religion spread West it took on more and more Christian features, yet without ceasing to be a rival religion with universal claims, as we shall see when we come to Augustine. But the measure of temporary success achieved by a religion so marked by asceticism resting on confusion of the material and spiritual spheres, is an instructive parallel to contemporary developments in the Catholic Church.

Certainly we find a taste for asceticism as well as for a crude supernaturalism, especially as to the sacra-

ments, in the **Apocryphal** Gospels and Acts of various Apostles, which underwent Catholic revision probably about this period. The age has indeed left us but few works which we can attach to great names. But it was one of great literary activity; one, too, in which a process of crystallization in thought and usage was steadily going on. To it much **codification of local ecclesiastical usages** as to organization and worship may be traced. Thus the first six books of the so-called *Apostolical Constitutions*, defining the duties and functions of various classes within the congregation, now took shape, though on the basis of older materials, written or oral, of various dates. Much the same applies to a large part of the *Greek Liturgies* or Prayer-Books, like those of 'St. James' and 'St. Mark' (*i.e.* the forms current in Jerusalem and Alexandria), though it is only in the next century that they emerge into definite form, together with the Clementine or Syrian type and that compiled by St. Basil (c. 370–9).[1] Towards the former class, also styled Canon Law, the growing habit of meeting for conference on topics like re-Baptism may have contributed, by calling attention to the need of recognized usages. But the areas thus represented were very informal, as we may see from the most famous case known to us, that of the heresy of Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch. To judge this, famous bishops from various parts of Asia Minor were called in to aid the local authorities.

The case was as follows. **Paul**, who besides being bishop was also in the pay of Zenobia Queen of Palmyra, had adopted views on the Person of Christ similar to those of certain second-century Monar-

[1] Such local forms, as well as Versions like the Latin, Syriac, and Egyptian, at once expressed and helped to preserve, amid centralizing tendencies which culminated in the mediæval papacy, the 'richly-variegated' nature of the Gospel, as reflected in local or national types of humanity.

chians, holding that the *impersonal* Logos or Reason of God dwelt in Christ as in no other man, so that He was sinless and Saviour of men. In the last of several councils at Antioch (c. 268), in which finally he was pinned down to these views by an acute presbyter, Malchion, the term *homöousios* as applied to the impersonal nature of the Logos incarnate in Christ was rejected. This later on weighed with some at least, when it was proposed as the test word in relation to the *personal* Logos in Godhead, over against Arianism. The history of the term is too long and subtle to be here given. Suffice it to note that it was highly philosophic in origin and nature, and that it was for long liable to much misunderstanding. Yet it came to be the test of Christian brotherhood—a term which none of the early Christians would have understood.

These facts, taken together, show how great was now the danger of mistaking the essence of Christian 'faith' and letting the centre of gravity shift from experimental religion to metaphysics, to the great detriment of piety and character. True, the council which condemned Paul was as indignant at the reputed moral laxity of one who was certainly a rather worldly-minded bishop, as they were shocked at his speculative views. In this they still belonged to the old order, which was soon to fade away, in part at least, under the joint action of bitter theological conflicts and an alliance of State and Church, which, while adding to the Church's numbers, seriously changed the quality of her average ideal and practice.

These new relations were presaged by the sequel to the council's decision. As long as Zenobia retained her power, her minister, the deposed bishop, was left in possession of the Church property. But when Aurelian soon after overcame her, the accusers appealed to the Emperor, who decided, like a Roman, that those should be recognized by him who were recognized by the home bishops, those of Rome and

Italy. It was a rough test; but it was hard at first to find a new principle. And in any case it has no bearing upon the claims of the papacy. It was a pagan emperor's way of looking at things; and though 'Christian' emperors came to count for much, the time was not yet.

[As for ch. v.; and any good history, *e.g.* Neander, Robertson, Moeller.]

CHAPTER IX.

AGE OF AUTHORITATIVE COUNCILS AND MONASTICISM (IV. V. CENT.).

Schisms about discipline. Donatism, its history and lessons. The Meletian schism milder. The Arian controversy: the Imperial standpoint, its worth: that of the Conservatives: Nicæa largely a surprise, followed by reaction: reflexions. Subsequent developments and their effects. Monasticism, its antecedents and full growth: Celibacy of the clergy: East and West.

BEFORE passing to the main themes suggested by the Nicene Council (325), it may be well to notice **two typical schisms**, one of which was dealt with at Nicæa. It is a noteworthy fact that hitherto schisms which had really taken root beyond their original circles, had arisen out of practical rather than theoretic questions, discipline rather than doctrine. So too was it now. The original stimulus in each case seems to have come from divergent ideals as to treatment of the Lapsed.

In the more famous case, that of **North Africa**, it is clear that the old Cyprianic problem was in principle again involved. The occasions, however, differed. In the present instance we find a strict and enthusiastic party of Montanist temper, led by Donatus of Casæ Nigræ and countenanced by Secundus, the leading bishop of Numidia; and a less strict party, led by Mensurius of Carthage and his archdeacon Cæcilian, who discouraged anything like forwardness in martyrdom. The actual breach arose soon after the cessation of persecution in 311, when Cæcilian was ordained to succeed Mensurius without the concurrence of the Numidian bishops and at the

hands of Felix of Aptunga who was suspected of having been a *traditor*, *i.e.* one who had delivered up sacred writings to heathen persecutors. The election was also offensive to some in Carthage, including certain 'lay elders' and presbyters, and in addition an influential widow, Lucilla, who had already been offended by Cæcilian. Secundus and seventy Numidian bishops proceeded to depose Cæcilian and elect the 'reader' Majorinus instead; and then, on his death in 315, another Donatus, styled by the party that henceforth bore his name, 'the Great.'

As usual, each party had tried to win over the Churches abroad. But the **Donatists** took the unhappy step of *appealing to Constantine*, who first referred the matter to Miltiades of Rome and five Gallican bishops, then to the Council of Arles (314), and finally, at their own request, judged the case himself in 316. But always with the same adverse result, to which was added the threat of exile for their bishops and the loss of their churches. On this, they found out all too late that the State had no real voice in such matters; while the Emperor himself, after trying force for a time, reverted to non-interference in 321, and exhorted the other side to patience. Thus in 330 the Donatists numbered 270 bishops. Constans (337–50), however, took the other line, incited thereto partly at least by the extravagances of the *circumcelliones* or mendicant ascetics, who as 'Christian athletes' were always ready to provoke martyrdom. These, as the struggle with the Catholics and their imperial allies became more and more conceived as one of poverty against worldly wealth, showed a strongly socialistic bent in their intercourse with the peasantry. Yet they are not to be taken as typical of Donatism as such. At length, under the impartial contempt of Julian 'the Apostate' for a religion which he had known only on its baser and more cramping sides—against which he could with

pathetic sincerity marshal for the last time the demoralized forces of paganism—both parties had to keep 'peace' for a short season (361–3), only to be followed by renewed distractions, including a formal split in the Donatist camp.

This went on till the end of the century, the better men on both sides longing more and more for real peace. Then it was that **Augustine** came upon the scene, and finally, at a synod of arbitration in 411 (attended by 286 Catholic and 279 Donatist bishops, and presided over by Marcellinus, the imperial arbitrator and a friend of Augustine), succeeded in getting the State once more to sanction the one side and persecute the other. In 415 their religious meetings were forbidden under pain of death. For even Augustine's faith had given way; while he justified the disregard of conscience in religion by a shallow perversion of the text, 'Compel them to come in' (Luke xiv. 23), applied to the 'Catholic Church.' The embers of the controversy were stamped out by the ruthless heel of the Arian Vandals, who entered Africa in 429.

This sad history has been given at some length because it shows how easily men may drift from one attitude to another that is its very negation. Largely under the influence of political analogies, allied Christian communities had come to regard the *uniformity* which they took to be implied in the unity which Christ had prayed for, as something to be enforced upon reluctant minorities: and then they drifted yet further and felt no incongruity in adopting physical *force* to attain it, the force of their late persecutor, the State.[1]

Happily a more conciliatory spirit sometimes

[1] It is greatly to the honour of Ambrose of Milan, Martin of Tours, and other leading Western bishops, that they protested against the first bloodshed by Christians for religious opinions, that of the Priscillianists at Trèves (386).

prevailed. So was it with the **Schism in Egypt,** which though prior to the other (c. 305) and due probably to the same conditions, yet failed to assume similar proportions. According to Neander,[1] Meletius Bishop of Lycopolis in the Thebaid, next in rank after Peter of Alexandria, while yet in prison took rigorous views as to the Lapsed; and on being released proceeded to act on them, even in other parishes than his own. In this he ignored the rights of Peter, then in hiding, let alone those of ordinary bishops. Four bishops yet in prison protested against his action, as also did Peter, but in vain. At length, probably on his own return, Peter suspended him from his office and from fellowship, but was martyred in 311. Things remained much the same when, under his successor Alexander, the Arian trouble arose (319) and further complicated matters. The Nicene council, however, tried to heal the schism by mild measures, such as the Meletians could honourably accept. And though Arian disputes kept the sore still open for a century or so, it gradually closed for want of irritations like those in North Africa.

As other instances of the serious problems raised by the Lapsed; we may note that the earliest fourth-century synods whose canons survive, that of Elvira (Granada) in S.E. Spain (c. 306) and that at Ancyra in Galatia (c. 314), deal mainly with this matter, and with sins of impurity; the former very severely in each case. Elvira is the more noteworthy in that the name of *Hosius* of Cordova appears high on the list of those present. This far-seeing statesman 'seems to have conceived the idea of reconciling the Empire with the Church, and influenced Constantine' to that end, especially in the calling of the Nicene council.

The events leading up to this momentous crisis were as follows. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria,

[1] Vol. iii. 308 ff. The original sources are rather at variance.

had somewhat rashly broached among his clergy the philosophic question as to *how* Trinity and Unity belonged at the same time to Godhead. A presbyter named **Arius** took up the challenge, the more so that the bishop's language seemed to savour of the dreaded Sabellianism recently recalled by the case of Paul. In so doing he himself went to the opposite extreme, by crudely urging that Son must be subsequent in being to Father, and that therefore 'time was when He'—the Son, the Medium of Creation (cf. Prov. viii. 22)—'was not.' This led to mutual charges, and then to the excommunication of Arius. But the little spark had kindled a general blaze, inasmuch as men were in the stage of curiosity, not of definite theory, as to the rationale of the Biblical Trinity. An instinct for dialectic was native to the Greek intellect. And this was aroused not only in the trained philosopher, but also in the cruder though equally ardent disputants of the market and wharf. And in Alexandria, of all places, this temper was at its strongest.

No one was more concerned than **the Emperor.**[1] With all a statesman's dislike of that which unsettles men, he saw with dismay that the new religion upon which in place of the old he was relying for the unification of the Empire, was in danger of splitting up into rival theological camps. He therefore strained every nerve to restore the old status, saying that it was wrong to plunge the whole Church into a bitter controversy which but few could really appreciate; that Alexander and Arius were really at one religiously, as to 'the precepts of the Divine Law' and the 'worship of God,' the real basis of Church communion—which was largely true; and that the differ-

[1] Constantine's Christianity has been questioned, no less than the legend of the Heavenly Cross. Lightfoot (Sermons, *Contemporary Pulpit Library*, p. 71) declares for his sincerity, once we allow for his political position.

ence was mainly one of words, about which only over-subtle theorizers cared anything—which was largely false. The fact was that there were, and had long been, different schools of thought within the unity of the Church. Thus it was inevitable that gradual selection should go on among these tendencies, until the relatively best should win its way to the general acceptance which its own merits must in the long run secure. On the other hand, it was both untrue to the past and a grievous wrong to the present, to make such agreement a test of fraternal communion, ruling the men of one school henceforth outside the Church by the brute force of a majority.

To say this was not to adopt the imperial policy or indifferentism but **the policy of faith**—faith that it could never be right to force conscience, to which Christ had given a new sanctity, as to the shrine in which God Himself claims the final word. The end could not justify unholy means. In fact the very means used by either side as compatible with the end in view, showed clearly that it was not the true end at all, the Divine idea of salvation. There was too much of the Gnostic spirit in the notion of salvation, when the majority felt free to force what they believed the Holy Spirit was teaching the Church, upon those brethren whose Christian conscience did not at once feel the *Gnosis* in question to be involved either in past or present piety. If such lacked insight into the real bearings of the rival theories, surely the 'unction from the Holy One' would not fail to guide them, in the light of further experience, into the deeper truth.

Something of this sort may have floated before the minds of men like *Eusebius* of Cæsarea—the man most saturated with the mind of earlier Christian piety—when he took up a **conservative position** between the eager theorists. He urged that the great Eastern Council (as it was practically in composition, though meant by Constantine to be 'œcumenical')

should not go beyond reaffirming the older type of creed current in great Churches like his own Cæsarea. Beyond this no theories should have binding force, but should remain the convictions of this or that school of Christian thought.[1] Doubtless this was not easy, once further inferences had been drawn in so marked a fashion. But could the Church go farther, if it involved a breach with Christ-like methods of suasion?

However this may be, we now subjoin the older type of creed as used in the Church of Cæsarea, together with the clauses (in brackets) added at Nicæa.

'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God. God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life. Son Only-Begotten [that is of the substance (*ousia*) of the Father], born before all creation,[2] before all ages begotten of the Father [begotten, not made, of one substance with (*homöousios*) the Father], through Whom also all things came to be. . . . We believe also in one Holy Spirit. We believe in the existence and subsistence of each of these, the Father as truly Father, the Son as truly Son, the Holy Spirit as truly Holy Spirit.' (Then follows Matt. xxviii. *end*).

Such was the creed which with certain other alterations and transpositions, including the explicit negation of Arianism in the final Anathema, went forth from Nicæa. But those alterations cost some sixty weary and desolating years, ere the more deliberate definition of Constantinople (381) ratified **the Surprise of Nicæa.** For certain it is that a large part of the council was there hurried beyond its convictions, partly by the splendid advocacy of one man, Athanasius, who already knew his own mind

[1] Largely connected, as already hinted, with divergent methods, philosophic and exegetical, current in Antioch and Alexandria. To the former the martyr Lucian, Arius' master, belonged; while the latter school lived in Alexander.

[2] Quoted from Col. i. 15, 'Firstborn of all creation' (R.V.).

perfectly; partly also by concurrence in the imperial anxiety to secure peace at almost any price.

But short cuts do not always lead straight home. Hardly had they parted, when old traditions revived. **A reaction** set in, which, while fomented by intrigue, had far deeper causes. And ere 381 each and every one of the many parties and combinations had soiled the garments of its piety by unchristian feelings, speech, and conduct. The character which best bears the strain—though he, too, was not quite free from the prevalent vice of vilifying theological opponents—is Athanasius, the great successor of Alexander as he had been his deacon at Nicæa. Even Eusebius, large-minded as he was and inclined to a mild 'orthodoxy,' could not resist personal bias, especially against Athanasius, and allowed the spirit of court intrigue to creep over him.

Thus was the Gospel as a life 'wounded in the house of its friends.' Not that we can hesitate for an instant as between the *logical tendencies* of Athanasian and Arian thought. The former was far more biblical in spirit than the latter, which indeed made the Word (Logos) a sort of demi-god. Salvation mediated by such a being would still fall short of a real indwelling of God as Word and Spirit in man. But what we are now concerned to note is that both alike, though here the Arians at first went farthest, *ignored great principles* underlying 1 Cor. ii. in wishing to enforce from outside by 'words which man's philosophy teacheth' things 'spiritually discerned'; instead of allowing the inherent truth to win its own way by growing inward enlightenment, as the Spirit rendered Christians 'perfect' or mature in holy insight. They overlooked the lesson of 1 Cor. xiii. 8 ff. Their philosophic and exegetical 'knowledge,' like all other science, is to-day largely antiquated. Yet they assumed it to be final, in trying to force on all the theology framed by its aid out of the abiding data of Christian faith.

Like oblivion to the tolerance befitting human limitation, dogs the process of dogmatic definition which lies outside the scope of our sketch. Suffice it to say that, starting from the Athanasian alternative, which indicated the truer line of progress in theology because that which did most justice to the nature of Christian piety—**three other great Councils** met with general acceptance and so became 'œcumenical' or universal. Seen in the more modest light in which we can now view them as helping, mainly by way of exclusion, to narrow down the conditions under which thought may approach to an adequate theory, their net results may be summed up by the aid of certain **key-words.** Nicæa's contribution to a theory of the Incarnation was the assertion that the Word, incarnate in Christ for man's salvation, was *truly* or essentially Divine : this Constantinople (381), in view of an extreme use to which Apollinaris put it, balanced by adding that the Christ of the Gospels was *perfectly* or in all essential respects also human. How then were these two elements in Christ's person related? To this the Church replied at Ephesus (431), against Nestorius, that the union of the two 'natures' in the one 'person' was nothing less than *inseparable*; and on the other hand at Chalcedon (451), against Eutyches, that in this union in one person the natures were *unconfused* even after the union, each preserving its own proper capacities or limitations, as the case might be.

In all this there is much to admire, if once we forget the fatal use to which the results were put, viz. as barriers for excluding numbers of the most strenuous and not less pious souls from Christian fellowship. And at what loss! But we must admire also the childlike wisdom of a certain layman, whose faith had stood the hard test of confession ere pagan persecution had given way to that of Christian by Christian. He, dazed by the subtle disputation in which eager

dialecticians engaged at Nicæa ere the council itself met, said in his simple way, that 'he, for his part, supposed that Christ and the apostles had not handed down to us the dialectic art nor any vain subtleties, but an ingenuous spirit kept safe by faith and good works' (Socrates, *Eccl. Hist.*, i. 8). Surely this good man had the true grip on 'fundamentals.' Exceptions, no doubt, there were; like Chrysostom, the preacher of a new life of humble Christ-like righteousness, and many another of less note. But on the whole, salvation, especially in the East, meant orthodoxy, until a certain revival of evangelic religion with Augustine; to whose deeper experience of the Gospel as renewing the will, is due much of the reality with which Christianity took hold of the consciences of the northern peoples who came within the sphere of Latin Christianity. In the East, however, dogma as such tended to divert the soul's attention from heart-religion. And at the same time the healthy expression of piety in the normal relations of domestic, social, and civic life, was hampered by a new but artificial ideal of sanctity, the beginnings of which are apparent even at Nicæa.

This brings us face to face with **Monasticism** as the final type of the ascetic ideal. In treating of this we must be on the outlook for 'the soul of good' in a thing so heroic, yet so evil. Its origins lie far back, both in certain aspects of the Christian spirit and in the state and ideals of the pagan society in which its lot was cast. The early Christian communities were in temper *Puritan*: each was a community of saints, who, 'passing their days on earth, were in reality citizens of heaven.'[1] Amid a highly corrupt society this temper easily assumed an *ascetic* hue. But this

[1] *Ep. to Diogn.*, 5. What follows is based on Dr. Hatch's searching but highly sympathetic account of Monasticism. For details see Gregory Smith, *Christian Monasticism* (Cent. iv.–ix.).

occurred the more readily that many second-century philosophers had moulded their efforts at reform on kindred lines. Thus abstinence from marriage and from animal food were urged and practised as 'counsels of perfection,' especially by the 'men of self-control,' like Tatian the Apologist. Life was regarded, and that not only by Montanists, in the light of an athletic contest with the world, the flesh, and the devil; and the bodily training involved was called, as in the moral gymnastic of philosophers, *askēsis*.

As the Church and world came into closer relations from the end of the second century, such Puritans became **a Church within a Church**, and stood out also for rigour in discipline towards the lapsed. Hippolytus, and in more extreme degree Novatian, represent this tendency. And as the newer theory of the Church as a 'mixed mass' of the baptized in which the bishops had the real power of the keys, came to prevail, those who while Puritan yet stopped short of schism began to stand to the rest of the Church as the Church itself to the world at large. But while Clement's ideal 'Gnostic' takes his part in ordinary human affairs, 'acting the drama of life which God has given him to play,' towards the end of the third century Christian *ascetics* began to follow the more individualistic example of pagan professors of the 'philosophy' of renunciation, known by 'the rough blanket and the unshorn hair.'

Next, not content with a special garb indicative of an ideal nobler than that of average Christians, they began to **retreat from the world** and in solitude devote themselves to self-discipline and contemplation, just as ordinary philosophers had sometimes gone into 'retreat.' The retention of the old names shows the continuity of the ideal. These *anchorets* ('retreaters') were practising *askēsis* or 'philosophy'; and their place of retreat was a 'school of *askēsis*,' or

a 'place for reflexion.' To these were soon added the terms 'solitaries' (monks), and 'place for solitude' (monastery). So naturally were the ties of social duty first relaxed and then dissolved by the pressing ideal of 'that sublime individualism which centred all a man's efforts on the development of his spiritual life.' Henceforth there existed side by side with the clergy and laity, *a third order*, that of the Ascetics.

With the subsequent history of the ideal, which in the West is full of ups and downs, we are not here concerned. But it meant sore loss to a Christendom deserted by many of its most zealous sons and daughters, whose example from outside could not atone for their absence as a leaven from within. Suffice it to add that the loss was all the greater that it coincided with the era when the new 'orthodoxy' was slipping into the place of honour once held by a godly life.

The new ascetic legalism was not indeed allowed to encroach upon the domestic and social ideals without some protest at least. Even at Nicæa a certain bishop, Paphnutius, himself a veteran ascetic, deprecated saddling all clergy with an intolerable yoke of necessity. But the plea was not one of principle, but of expediency. Second marriage had early been in ill repute; and now the growing gulf between the laity and clergy tended to suggest a distinct moral code for the two orders, analogous to that between the more and the less aspiring members of the Church in general. Hence, in spite of the check at Nicæa, celibacy became more and more the rule as to bishops, though marriage before ordination has always been allowed to the other clergy in the Greek, though not in the Latin, Church. Thus the tendency steadily gained in power, having as advocates men like Athanasius who is credited with a *Life of Antony*, the typical hermit; Pachomius who c. 340 reorganized the old Monasticism on a more communistic

(*cœnobite*) basis; the three great Cappadocians, especially Basil whose 'Rule' or constitution for cloister life became the typical one in the East; and Chrysostom the bold preacher of self-denial in Constantinople, the New Rome of the Eastern Emperor. The East had been its birthplace, the chief haunts being Egypt and Syria. But if later in appearing in the West (the foster-child, it is said, of the exiled Athanasius), its life has there been more vigorous. Its power begins with the age of Ambrose (374–397) the saintly statesman-bishop of Milan, the contemporary of Chrysostom, and unlike him able to humble an erring emperor, the great Theodosius himself. But great was the stimulus which it received in Rome, the last stronghold of the old paganism, through the fanatical zeal of Jerome. Though his eloquence was too prone to turn aside to invective even against former allies (as Rufinus of Aquileia knew to his cost), Jerome has left his mark deep upon the Church. His scholarship lives in the Vulgate, the official Bible of Rome down to to-day. It was, however, reserved for a greater than he, a man with a higher mission and a more potent personality, to create the atmosphere of thought in which Latin Monasticism, as well as all the other forms of Latin Christianity, lived and had that being which made the Middle Ages what they were.

[Besides Fisher, Smith, and Neander, see Carr's *Church and the Roman Empire*, and Gwatkin's *Arian Controversy* (Epochs of Church History series), and *Athanasius His Life and Lifework*, by Principal Reynolds (R.T.S.). We may also name Milman, and Bright's special work on the period (*History of the Church from* 313 *to* 451). Schaff is here very full.]

CHAPTER X.

AUGUSTINE AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY.

Augustine moulds the Latin Church : influences abroad : Election the kernel, the Church the husk of his thought, which lacks logical unity. His life : its phases and crisis. The Pelagian controversy : its merits on either side. Personal religion Augustine's *forte* : his own theology of Grace its outcome. His influence on the Latin Church twofold, and lasts to-day. Betwixt Old and New.

Augustine indeed gave Monasticism, especially in the form of common clergy-houses, its final impulse in the West ; so that Benedict, a century after him, had only to put his own special stamp upon a sentiment already to hand. But he did more : he gave tone to the West. This was true in the ecclesiastical sphere no less than in the theological. But while thus creative of the future, Augustine was, in the forms which his thought assumed, eminently a child of the past. Even so regarded, apart from the individuality of his religious experience, his greatness is evident ; inasmuch as he was able to graft something of the Greek genius upon the practical temper of the Latin mind.

The same had been true of Tertullian in his day. The Greek Apologists lived in him, as well as Roman jurisprudence and the kindred Stoic philosophy. But now the ruling non-Roman ideas in the West were represented by **Neo-Platonism** (the support of dying paganism, specially in Rome) and **Manichæism**, each in its own way inclined to overdo the contrast between flesh and spirit. The breaking up of the almost deified Empire under the pressure of the

barbarians on the frontiers, gave the latter in particular a text from which to preach its lesson of a world-conflict between darkness and light. Thus while we find Neo-Platonism in men like Hilary of Poitiers (d. 366) and Ambrose, we find also strong dualistic tendencies in Priscillian, whose views spread widely in Spain and South-west Gaul during the end of the fourth century.

But after all, the most potent element at work was the influence on the mind produced by **the framework of society** itself. As the imperial polity had been idealized until to admiring eyes it seemed something quite divine; so now the Church began to stand forth as an even more august polity, to which belonged the eternal substance of which the Empire, now largely in decay, was but the shadow. How fully Augustine came under the influence of this parallel and contrast, we can see from the splendid use which he makes of it in his *City of God*, his apology against the deep murmur that the Empire's decadence was itself due to the parasite Church which in alienating the gods had sapped its vital energies. But indeed the idea pervaded his whole system of thought; or rather, by crossing the tenor of the underlying Platonism which fitted in best with his own religious experience, prevented Augustine from ever reaching a coherent system.

As 'a brand plucked from the burning' by the sheer grace of God, made manifest in an experience probably deeper than any since St. Paul, he felt in his conversion that God was all in all. And this feeling took shape in a **theory of Election** resting on a Platonic notion of the absoluteness of God, as the real ground and agent in all things. But from this standpoint he neither could nor did reach his other idea, that of the Church or ecclesiastical polity as necessary to all incorporation in the Kingdom of God—the real assembly of the elect to the eye of

God. 'Where Christ is'—and that can only be where God's electing love is active, removing the bondage of will native to the 'corrupt mass' which Adam's posterity now is—'there is the Church': this is Augustine's inmost thought. 'Where the Church has not naturalized the citizen, there Christ cannot be recognized'; this is the traditional sentiment that came to him from his environment. And much of his language reflects it without even the semblance of harmony with the *unconditional* Divine election just indicated.[1] Had he risen to the clear distinction between the Invisible Church of the Elect or Saved—real down to its exact limits to God's eye, but to man only ideal—and the Visible Church known to ecclesiastical politics, then indeed he would have attained consistency of thought. But then, too, the distinction between him and Calvin would fade away, and with it much partisan polemic. As it was, he stopped short at recognizing the mixed character of the phenomenal Church, the Church conceived under the forms of Roman polity and yet treated as marking the boundary line of salvation.

The fact is, **Augustinianism is not a logical unity**, but only a body of thought cast off by a single yet complex personality during different phases created largely by different controversial exigencies. Thus we are referred straight back to the history of the man, whose *Confessions* and *Retractations* are mines for psychological study.

Born in 354 at Tagaste in Numidia, the son of a Christian mother yet unbaptized in infancy, Augustine received the training of a rhetorician, though the love for philosophy lay deeper. During his student days at Carthage, his passionate nature led him into profligacy. But conscience was only latent; and the perusal of Cicero's *Hortensius* aroused him to earnest search after truth. Still his lower nature was not van-

[1] See A. M. Fairbairn (as above), 115 ff., 542 ff.

quished; and deterred by the attitude of the Catholics to Old Testament difficulties whose force he felt, he became a catechumen or hearer among the Manichæans for several years (372–81). Their dualistic teaching found an echo in the dark conflict within his own being; and it is doubtful whether his view of human nature was not to the end more Manichæan than Christian. But seeing that these teachers were unable to clear up the mysteries of life, as they had promised to do, he gradually drifted into scepticism.

In this state he was when he came to Milan to teach rhetoric (384). Here the influence of *Ambrose*, to whom as a model of eloquence he was at first drawn, gradually laid hold of him. Several influences were converging to bring him nearer to the Church of his boyhood. Ambrose's Allegorism suggested a solution of the Old Testament problem. The very frankness of the Catholic demand upon faith, in contrast to Manichæan failure to fulfil its promises to reason, fell in with his mood. Meantime *Neo-Platonism*, reaching him through the Latin version of Victorinus Rhetor, was helping him to solve the Manichæan problem by the recognition of evil as having only negative reality over against the spiritual God the one real ground of being. Interest in the *Pauline Epistles*, in spite of defects of style, was awakened; and the ideas of Divine holiness and the grace that was able to overrule even evil to its own ends, began to grow on him. The *Life of Antony* and others impressed him deeply. Finally the crisis came when upon his distracted mind the light broke through the medium of St. Paul's words, 'But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof'; and he was apprehended of Christ. This was in 386. At Easter of the next year he was baptized, and after a brief period at Rome went into retirement near his old home, founding with

a few friends an informal religious community. But after three years he was, much against his will, made presbyter and subsequently bishop at Hippo.

He had already used his pen against both Scepticism and Manichæism; and between now and 400 he continued this apologetic activity, especially in reply to his old associate Faustus. But from about 400 he was mainly engrossed in his struggle with Donatism (as already noted) and with **Pelagianism.** It was this latter which brought out his most marked features as a theologian. As one who had thus been brought out of darkness into 'marvellous light,' and that 'by a way which he knew not,' he was very sensitive upon such topics. Great as was his interest in the doctrine of Godhead (*cf.* his book *On the Trinity*), his piety was yet more bound up with the theory of Salvation and the twin doctrines of Grace and Human Nature. Thus when *Pelagius*, a British or Scottish monk of blameless character and bent on reforming the piety of his day, began at Rome to emphasize the duty, because ability, of men to amend their lives by means of the Gospel, Augustine took alarm at the tone in which he spoke of human ability. The conflict was precipitated by the cruder statements of Pelagius' disciple *Cœlestius*, who at Carthage took up the following positions: (1) Adam's sin was purely personal, and affected directly none but himself; (2) each man is born as incorrupt as was Adam at the first, and only falls into sin under force of temptation and evil example; (3) children, therefore, who die in infancy, being untainted by sin, are saved without baptism.

These statements are cited, not as accurately giving Pelagius' own views, but as indicating the tendency in his teaching which Augustine feared, and which traversed both his own experience and the traditional doctrine of the Church.

Augustine conducted the controversy from 412 onwards in some fifteen treatises, which show both

his strength and his weakness to the full. Upon the merits of the case it befits one to speak with diffidence. But we can at least see that each had sight of a side of the truth, but neither was able to gain the apex from which both sides could be discerned at once. Pelagius stood fast by the axiom that responsibility implies real ability in degree at least. In this view he was supported by Greek theology, which taught a still uneffaced affinity of God as man through the abiding presence of the Word, even where 'shining in the darkness' of human self-will. But in so far as he may have suffered these views to obscure the actual frailty of will in human nature at large, and the fact that in repentance the initiative is on the side of God's grace in stimulating the soul with ideals of holiness, he gave his case away. For Augustine had on his side the facts of heredity, which were in the teeth of Cœlestius' position at least; as also the deepest piety, which lives in the humble sense of dependence on God as working in the heart so as to make 'the means of grace' efficacious.

But when he proceeded to ride rough-shod over conscience by his theory of the Adamic sin having reduced his posterity to a state of guilt, of which total bondage of will as regards all *good* was the due penalty, he confused the ideas of sin and guilt. In this he follows the jurisprudence of Tertullian rather than anything in Paul. From amid this 'mass of perdition' God's election chose certain, whom 'irresistible grace' set free to will good, the rest being severely left alone. It was this latter feature, especially when reduced later to the logical form of 'double election' (to death as well as that to life), that roused Catholic sentiment to a partial reaction against Augustinian views which took a *media via*, called semi-Pelagianism. In its better forms this theory anticipated Wesley's position, though it was framed mainly in the interests of the Church's baptism of all infants and not only

of souls proving themselves elect. The churchly aspect also weighed with Augustine in his polemic against the universal salvation of infants, when he argues, 'men must be by nature guilty and condemned, otherwise infant baptism would not be necessary.' And on the main issue we may say that Christians to-day are more and more inclined to view the matter in the light of the maxim, that 'men have erred rather in what they deny than in what they assert,' and so to assent to *both* positive positions, God's initiative and man's responsible freedom for obedience. It is, says Vinet, the mark of heresy to 'belittle either man or God.' This smites both parties. But it was not Pelagius alone who tended to the latter extreme; unless indeed the God of Neo-Platonism and Roman Law be greater than the God and *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Augustine had not let Christ's own thought rule his theology through and through. He set himself indeed to understand St. Paul, as none before him, save Marcion, had done; and largely succeeded. Yet, like his Master, the great apostle still remained for the Church, in much of his spirit, the great Misunderstood.

To sum up then. Augustine's **real service** lay in what *his own experience* had *restored*, for a moment at least, to the consciousness of mankind. Salvation was not to be thought of so much as a 'making divine' the corruptible nature of manhood (the Greek theology); still less as a state of favour with God dependent first upon admission to the privileged society of the baptized, and then upon abstinence from certain mortal sins, performance of an indefinite number of good works enjoined by the Divine Judge, and participation in the Eucharist vaguely conceived as a means of propitiation and of quickening both of soul and body (the Latin theory). It was, in more Pauline fashion, a divinely restored freedom from bondage to sin. In this was involved: (1) a deeper

view of **sin**, as an attitude of the whole man alienated by the self-seeking or carnal principle, which clothes itself in the twin forms of pride and passion; (2) a truer sense of the meaning of **grace**, as a 'power of God unto salvation' from sinful self-love by the expulsive energy of a new affection, which is received gratuitously from God through faith. This conception of grace contained the seed of an *assurance* which was lacking to the old Latin theory. It was, however, even in Augustine's teaching, often overlaid by the latter, which again reigned in Mediæval Catholicism, until a true Augustinian friar, Luther by name, once more lived himself into it and then preached it.

Thus **his influence** on Western Christendom has been twofold. On the one hand, his name was invoked in support of Catholic sentiment, with its undue dependence upon Church and the Church's sacraments, its notion of faith as 'assent' to the creed, its dubiously filial consciousness towards God, its ambiguous estimate of the present life, its peculiar and negative ideal of saintliness. On the other hand there were the more Evangelic or distinctively Augustinian elements in Augustine, which made almost every reformatory movement in the Middle Ages, up to and amid the Great Reformation, start from something in his manifold thought. These elements all converged upon the emancipation of the personal soul into direct and free dependence upon the grace and love of God. Here 'faith' has but little relation to the Church's creed; is rather trust on the gracious Christ of the Gospels, made by Divine grace the mystical Christ of the heart, and sole mediator between God and man; and leavens even the doctrine of the Eucharist with the principle, 'Believe, and thou *hast* eaten.'

In other words, as Augustine's works sum up the past both pagan and Christian, seen in the light of the problems of his own age, so they contain the

germs of both future Catholicism and Protestantism. What in him was most relative to his age most influenced the ages immediately succeeding, in which the new peoples were moulded by that Papal Church which was indeed 'the ghost of the old Roman Empire, seated crowned upon the grave thereof.' But what was rooted in his own personal experience under the influence of St. Paul and the New Testament at large, was most prophetic of the future, and emerged to full strength after many days when the new peoples were growing adult.[1]

the end of the old order. Augustine breathed his last while the Vandals, part of the vanguard of the Northern hordes, were surging round Hippo in 430. In this respect then he marks On another side of the general situation he did the same. Within a decade after 430, *Leo the Great* became Roman Bishop, and we may well add, the first veritable *Pope*. For he did much, both by what he was and what he achieved, to confirm a tendency already on the increase since the Western council of Sardica (343), and to translate a primacy of actual influence, based on merit and local advantages, into a primacy based on theory also. The development of this theory is marked by a series of fictions, unconscious and otherwise, as pre-eminent as the position finally reached by the Papacy. But what here concerns us in leaving our subject with Augustine—the greatest of Western churchmen—is to note that his own *African Church* was almost the last to bow its neck to the new spiritual imperialism.

[As for ch. ix.: see also art. 'Augustine,' in *Encycl. Brit.* Allen's *Continuity of Christian Thought* (Ward, Lock & Co., 1884), and Cunningham's *St. Austin* (Cambridge, 1886) serve to balance one another.]

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[1] See A. M. Fairbairn (as above), 111 ff.

CHAPTER XI.

RETROSPECT AND CONCLUSION.

So far we have traced the growth to which the Gospel Seed has given rise. It now remains to estimate the actual product in the light of earlier days. In other words, What was Christianity at first, and what has it become?

1. The first and most striking contrast is in its external aspect. The little leaven has leavened an enormous mass. The Church has become **universal** in a sense undreamt of by primitive Christians, whose horizon was bounded by an immediate and visible Second Advent. Even here God's thoughts have proved not as man's thoughts. What then is the explanation of this immense revolution? Gibbon suggested five secondary causes employed by Divine Providence; viz. the inflexible zeal of the Christians, the Christian doctrine of a future life, the miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive Church, its pure and austere morals, the union and discipline of the Christian republic. These causes, so far as they go, and apart from the spirit in which Gibbon urged them, are indeed true to the facts. But they all, especially in their combined appearance at one supreme crisis, point in turn for their own explanation back to a creative Person, Jesus the Christ, and to the living Father whom He declared. Here lie the real springs of the Church's growth amid all its own shortcomings and mistakes.

The period at which this universal destiny began to dawn upon the Church (so that it could, in Tertullian's words, 'pray for the delay of the end'), was the same as that in which the corporate conscious-

ness of the Christians began, for the first time, to take on certain distinctive features in doctrine, discipline, and organization. These mark off the end of the second century as the epoch which saw the birth of '**Catholicism**,' or the stereotyping of the universal spirit of the Gospel into semi-legal forms, which made 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' assume the meaning they have since borne. Henceforth the primitive freedom of faith, with its deeply personal and spontaneous nature, is largely a thing of the past. Such a change sacrificed at the altar of uniformity and precision, something in the way of reality and inwardness of religious experience which was of the essence of evangelic faith—religion as Christ Himself desired it. But its authors, like many good men before and since, knew not fully what they did.

2. Let us look then more closely at the final result, the **developed Catholicism** of the fourth and fifth centuries, in the light of the influences which helped to shape it. Broadly, these were threefold—Jewish or legal, Greek or speculative, Roman or political. The germ upon which they operated was the essential Hebrew faith as transformed and enlarged by Christ into the Christian Gospel. We have already had to note, time and again, how the actual forms assumed by this Gospel in the Church's life were often due less to the essential nature of the germ, as laid bare in the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, than to one or more of the three prime forces active in the human soil. But let us try to sum up very briefly.

(*a*) To begin with the more obvious, we note that **elaboration in Polity** has replaced the simple and homely machinery by which the social aspect of the Christian life found expression. An altogether fresh emphasis attaches to it in connexion with a special order, the clergy, inherently distinct from their

brethren the laity. It is ceasing to appear in its true light as a means, more or less imperfect, to an end of highest worth, the training of the people of God up to the stature of Christ-like manhood. Its advance is marked by the over-riding of the original social unit, the local brotherhood, by the will of ever larger areas: or rather of the clergy of the former by the higher clergy of the latter. The more primitive parochial bishop has to bow to his dignified colleague, the metropolitan; he in turn to his superior, the patriarch; while even the latter is held to owe allegiance to the supreme patriarch, whether at Constantinople or at Rome. It was not in the New Testament—least of all in the Gospels—but in the civil sphere, that such a polity found its type; and when moral suasion failed to win unity of action, the forceful methods of the State were adopted. Rome, it is true, stood more on her spiritual claims than did the ecclesiastical princes of the East; but this was due to accident rather than principle, to geography rather than religious conviction. Indeed it was in the West that polity, and the related theories as to the episcopate and Church unity, earliest passed out of the sphere of religion into that of law. Unity was made to spell uniformity; and Carthage contributed even more than Rome to this result.[1]

(*b*) There was a similar drop in the ideal of **personal piety** from simplicity and freedom of motion under Christ's own laws of love and purity, to the artificiality of prescribed works of merit, whether by way of almsgiving or asceticism. Imitation of the lives (often legendary, if nothing worse) of the saints served to overlay the imitation of the veritable Christ of the Gospels. To this correspond the changes in worship, where the spontaneity of the spirit, once the rule, was replaced by the exclusive use of liturgies. The idea and forms of the sacraments significantly

[1] See Prof. Sanday in *Expositor* (3rd series, vol. viii. 321 ff.).

reflect the change, which was here mainly achieved under the influence of non-Christian traditions, especially those belonging to the Mysteries. Both sacraments underwent developments which affected the idea of the one no less than of the other.[1] The Eucharist of the fifth century had drifted in spirit as far from the primitive Lord's Supper as its Baptism from that known to the Apostolic age.

(*c*) Finally, a great change had passed over **the notion of faith** itself, the root of all. Originally, Christ-like conduct had been the fruit whereby to test that trust which is the essence of faith. Now this test was made secondary to an intellectual act, or rather passive assent, of which the philosophically defined creed was the object. And it was often taken for granted, as before in the case of the Gnostics, that error in this sphere was proof presumptive of moral depravity. The wonderful unity between doctrine and life which meets us in the Pauline Epistles, no longer strikes us in the fourth century. For faith has no longer its old vital, experimental hue. To this result Alexandria had contributed most, in the way of the philosophy which made the newer type of theology possible. But the Alexandria of Origen had never confused theology with piety, as now was done. It knew better the merely limited value of its own metaphysics, helpful as they might often be. But rougher minds went farther in their estimate of theory. And in practice it was found far easier to base membership on assent to the Church's creed than on an expressed purpose, once on a time solemnly pledged in conscious baptism into Christ, to conform to the Christian type of life through love of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ. It was, too, more than a mere coincidence that, just when Christians were beginning thus to be defined, a special class, devoted to a higher moral

[1] See Hatch's *Hibbert Lecture*, ch. x.

ideal than that of the mass, was retiring to practise that ascetic life which it took to be enjoined by the Gospel.

East and West differed as to the aspect of Christianity which each emphasized; the former magnifying the Church's creed, the latter the Church, as the medium of a Divine life or of Forgiveness. Otherwise, as in sacramental feeling, they were at one. Yet Augustine's return in part at least to St. Paul and his conception of salvation, shows by its very uniqueness how far both Greek and Latin Christianity had wandered from New Testament types. Additional evidence of the changed angle from which the early Fathers saw the Gospel, is furnished by their comparatively slight appreciation of the Scriptural doctrine as to sin, atonement, justification by faith, and the work of the Spirit. But after all, when we reflect on the difficulties of the task in hand, the wonder is rather that the early Church achieved what it did.

The above contrasts between old Gospel and new Catholicism are, we believe, true to the spirit of the ages contrasted. But no new theology has ever suddenly or altogether superseded the older order of piety. Nor did it in the ancient Church. Old and new often co-existed; but the flowing tide was with the latter. To balance the exact gain and loss involved in such changes, or to discuss how far they were inevitable and to that extent justified for their own age, is not our present duty. To have indicated them with a firm hand as real changes affecting the very structure and spirit of the Gospel, is but to have recognized the duty of the serious historian.

[Allen's *Continuity of Christian Thought*, together with Fairbairn's *Christ in Modern Theology* (chs. ii.–v.).]

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