THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

The Fathers for English Readers.

THE

APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

BY

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PREFACE TO THE SERIES.

WHILE all those who pretend to the character of educated people would be ashamed to be ignorant of the history of Greece and Rome, the lives and achievements of the great men of these countries, and the works of their chief writers, it is to be feared that they content themselves often with a very slight knowledge of the history of the Christian Church and of the illustrious ecclesiastics who have exercised so vast an influence upon the institutions and manners, the literature and philosophy, as well as the religion of modern Europe.

The series of volumes, of which the present forms a part, is intended to present to ordinary English readers Sketches of the Chief Fathers of the Church, their biographies, their works, and their times.

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THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS,
THE DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH (Apologists),
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It is hoped that the series will supply the intelligent Churchman with a lively, accurate, and fairly complete view of the most important periods of Church history.

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

PLATO, when he found himself in trouble from the eager and many-sided inquiries of his friends about the first principles of the moral life, turned his eyes away from the confusions of the inner individual soul, to gaze at the grander outlines of Human Society, in order that he might more easily catch sight of, and more securely seize, in that larger system, the characteristics of those laws, which built up the moral life at once of the individual and of the state. We are prone, in our day, to do the reverse. History, for us, has become such a complicated record—the life of states, the sequence of nations, have shown themselves to be problems of such infinite complexity, that we shrink back, appalled and confused, from the sight of the crowded forces that play and work, and act and re-act and counteract, in endless variety and unceasing change, above and beneath, within and without, moulding and welding that intricate whole, the living fabric of a civilized society. Our

eyes are dazzled by the quick and constant motion of a thousand mingling lights; our ears are deafened by the roar and thunder of the tumult, "the noise of the captains and the shouting"; and, sickened and dazed, we fall back from the unresting spectacle, closing our eyes to it in despair; and then it is that the possibility of fixing our attention solely on the single prominent figures that stand out from the tangle of the background, while shutting out all else that disturbs, comes to us with the comfort of an immense relief. There, in separate character, we can firmly lay hold of all the influences that spread themselves confusedly, to our eyes, through this whirl of society, just as in the shining repose of a single star there lie, gathered and concentrated, all the complex ingredients that go to the making of the shapeless and illimitable daylight. We take the stories of great men that we may see in them their age "writ small."

Unless we were more or less right in doing this, this book would never have been written. It starts with the presumption that individual men are formed and fashioned by the same principle as shape and govern the society of which they are parts: it presupposes the individual to be a true image of the polity under which he lives; and it is in view of the grander interests with which he is thus endowed that it cares to tell his tale: it is itself one of a

series, and bears witness by that to the belief that the lives which the whole series records are not mere isolated phenomena, but belong to a larger system, which holds and knits them all together, a system whose fruits they are, whose influence they illustrate, whose temper and tone they embody; so that, while the vast system itself moves along with all its mass and multitude of crowded forces down the centuries, these grouped and selected stories of the great men of each momentous era, may fitly be used to express, in briefer terms, and more definite outlines, the powers at work upon the entire Church in each successive age.

We can do this confidently, for to us Christians the belief in the power of a personal life to embody the whole principles of an organic society, of a church, is a holy thing, the spring of all our faith; and starting with this as its principle, Christianity has learnt to consecrate to its service, throughout all its long history, *individual characters*. It learnt it from our Lord Himself, when He looked upon the heart of His chief apostle, with all its hot impulses and quick susceptibilities, and said, "Thou shalt be called Peter." It learnt the lesson again and again rom the days when the personal brilliancy and intellectual courage of St. Stephen and St. Paul were caught up by the administrative Spirit of God, and made into sacred instruments for the extension of

Christ's Historic Church. What, indeed, would Christianity be without the character of its heroes, without the lives of its saints?

So we feel ourselves justified in offering to all—and above all to those who it may be have no time for the study of the larger subject—these pictures of the Apostolic Fathers; only we would warn them to remember, as they read, that it is not with the members, as it is with the Head; that, as no single one of us men, however strong and sound his character may be, can sum up all the meaning and power of his age or of his nation, so too no single one of us Christians, however saintly his temper or heroic his faith, can ever be the measure and gauge of that larger fact, which we call Christianity; that it is Christ, the Head, who uses the saint, not the saint who makes or moulds the Church; that each hero, who is the vessel of election, fulfils his apostolate by being not the personal master over men, but the "servus servorum," the minister of a society's necessities and aspirations, the limb at the service of the whole body, a sheep of the one flock, a member of the one household, a citizen of the one kingdom, a soldier of the one army, a child of the one family, bound under one covenant, born by one Baptism, through one Spirit, into one Lord, fed by one holy Food, partaker of one Resurrection, together with all those multitudes upon multitudes of Christian souls whose

obscure names, unremembered or forgotten by the rough and careless records of human histories, are yet written with the saints in the changeless pages of the Book of Life.

The lives in this book, then, are given as the noblest examples of that common life of grace which constituted the Church in the age immediately following the last of the Apostles; and certainly here this matter of portraying history by means of single heroes is allowable, for, indeed, in these early years, there is little left and recorded of the general Church except the written memorials of these single lives. Christianity, from the days of the Emperor Nero to those of the Antonines, from the year 60 to the year 160, that is, from the captivity of St. Paul at Rome to the bishopric of Irenæus at Lyons, from the persecution of St. James by the last devotees of that Jewish worship, which was even then hastening to its fall by the destruction of Jerusalem, to the death of Justin Martyr by the hand of the last great Pagan, Marcus Aurelius, in 166, Christianity lives underground. It has no connected story to tell. It carries on that dim, hidden, mysterious Propaganda, beneath the surface of public events, which so alarmed and annoyed the sentiment of Roman citizens by its secret meetings, its strange discipline, its impenetrable bonds, its unintelligible sympathies, its curious symbols and shibboleths, its suspicious isolation, its

fanciful scruples. What is it, this new society? Where is it? What is it doing? How does it come? How does it grow? Who compose it? There is darkness, difficulty, puzzle about all this, for us as for the Roman statesman. It is hard to piece it together, hard to distinguish what is happening and how it happens. We can only penetrate, for the most part, into the hiding-places of the Church by the help of these statesmen themselves. It is chiefly by means of their persecutions of the Church that the Church is driven to show herself openly to us, who long so ardently to know her thoughts, and share her hopes, and enter into her assemblies, in those days of intense devotion and young aspirations. Every now and then their suspicions grew too strong to control, or the feeling of the crowd drove them to violent measures, and they broke forcibly into those strange societies, and let the daylight in upon their secret gatherings; and we can follow in with them, and see what they saw and hear what they heard.

What was it they found? What explanation did they get?

We seem to see, looking back on those early persecutions, that their attacks brought forcibly forward into the daylight three striking characteristics which lay on the outer surface of the Christian Church, all of which revealed the advent of a new power in the midst of them to those old statesmen, and enable

us in these latter days to recognise, behind the obscurity of history, the presence of that life which is now so obvious and familiar.

The first of these characteristics is the pre-eminence in station and character of single leaders. The civil power of Rome, whenever the sense of panic that was beginning to stir in the heart of paganism rose to a height under the excitement of some disaster, and drove its authorities into action against Christianity, found ready to hand, as it were, some chief of this strange sect, marked out at once by the instinctive fury of the pagan crowd, and the confessed reverence of the Christians, as the man in whom the whole religious movement of this or that town centred itself, and on whom it was natural and expedient that the weight of vengeance should fall. These men present themselves at once to the eye of those who lift the veil and peer in upon the Church. There they are, every one knows them, they stand out clear and unmistakable; seize them, slay them, and "the sheep will be scattered." So argue the heathen; and the Christians acknowledge that, up to a certain point, the heathen are right. These men are indeed chieftains; the whole society is touched at the heart when they are taken; it is put to the proof, it is on its trial, in these its representatives; they are at once its officers, its guardians, its teachers, by whom it lives; and also

they are its models, its examples, the most perfect types of its ideal. The reverence, the honour of the whole body of believers follows them through the long tortures of their good confessions up to the agony of their martyrdoms. Yet prominent as these leaders are, it is not they who have made the society what it is; they are not themselves the founders of a worship that centres in themselves, originators of a school which has formed itself on the novelty or brilliancy of their teaching; they are not heads of a new sect, like the ordinary herd of eastern Hierophants, nor of a new philosophy like the well-known mob of doctors and sophists. This is the curious thing, they are chiefs, yet it is not "themselves that they preach, but Christ crucified." Hence comes their hopeless obstinacy against the entreaties to retract. They cannot be induced to withdraw prudently from the position they have taken up, or to consent to break up their following; for indeed they are not free to play fast and loose with their leadership; it is not their own to do what they will with it; they are not their own masters, they are servants, not lords, servants pledged to no doubtful and uncertain service. "Eighty-and-six years have I followed Christ," says the aged Polycarp to the Roman governor, "how can I leave him now?" Hence again is it that the method of ruining a society by destroying its leaders is so unsuccessful:

the leader is killed, but the sheep are not scattered, for indeed it is not the real shepherd who has been cut off. He lives untouched and uninjured, this Christ, whom the dying chiefs said they carried about with them wherever they went. The society itself, which was so ready to identify itself with these persecuted leaders, still did not appear alarmed or desperate, as if in peril of losing the head and spring of its existence; rather it wore a look of glory, of triumph, of exulting joy, in the splendour of which all anxiety disappeared or was forgotten. It had no dread, as it seemed, of becoming a dead corpse, the pulses of whose life were to be stayed for ever; for still its one Head, the Captain of its Salvation, stood secure and unhurt in the midst of His people. This then is the first characteristic that I would mention, and its typical examples are the two great bishops whose heroism lights up the first age of the Church with its chiefest and most peculiar significance, and whose nobility and beauty of character must form the main and most attractive feature of a book on the Apostolic Fathers, St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Polycarp of Smyrna.

In balance with the first characteristic, a second noticeable feature strikes upon us as we look in upon the earliest period through the eyes of the Roman persecutors. Not only do we catch sight of single heroes standing at the head of their society, pre-eminent

in office, supreme in personal vigour and holiness of character, offering themselves to the Roman swords as true shepherds who will lay down their lives for the sheep, but we see too how the spirit that fired the leaders, was one with the spirit that stirred in the followers, and Roman statesmen were astounded to find the very slaves who belonged to the new sect to be as obstinate, and intractable, and confident, and triumphant as the chiefs themselves. The very lowest of these Galileans had won from his faith such a security, such a lordliness of soul, that nothing scared, nothing crushed, his spirit. Tortures and death—these seemed but useless and ungainly tools wherewith to reach this impalpable and inexplicable courage, which had by some strange means laid hold of and inspired obscure characters whom no philosophy had touched, no culture had refined. Persecution brought to light this magnificent equality in endurance which was itself but the witness to that inner union of spiritual life which bonded together the household of God; and the Church itself may have learnt first from the common agonies of the amphitheatre, the full and intense reality of that great cry of the Apostle, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." We know how this wonder startled the heathen empire; we catch its echoes in the angry complaint

of the philosopher Celsus, that Christianity, this very Christianity which it was worth while spending all the efforts of his dialectic to attack, attracted only the worthless and degraded of mankind; we catch it again in the uneasy bitterness with which the fine and high-minded intelligence of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius seems to strive to forget how low-born and uneducated Christians had manifested that proud contempt for death which had been hitherto treasured as the peculiar note of the philosopher. All this allows us glimpses at the outward aspect of the faith; and we have one especial record of how the Church herself realized this lesson of the persecutions in the famous letter from the Churches of Lyons and Vienne to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia, telling of the great suffering and trial undergone by the faithful in southern Gaul in the year of our Lord 177.

And it is in this account that we see coming forward, above all, that capacity of the women to endure all things for Christ, which to the old heathen world of the day was even more amazing than the audacity of slaves. For we read there how "the full fury of the governors and of the mob and of the soldiers fell upon the servant-girl Blandina, that Christ might show through her that what is held cheap and worthless and mean by men, is of great value and glory in the eyes of God, through the

love for Him which is shown in power and act, not in the boastful pride of outward beauty." We hear how the Church itself was hardly yet sure of its own strength, how the believers, how the mistress "after the flesh" of the poor woman, who was herself among the martyrs, trembled for her servant's courage, lest she should fail in her confession through the weakness of the body; but yet how Blandina was filled with such power that the very energies of the torturers who took turns at racking her with every sort of trial from morning even until the evening, broke down, and confessed themselves beaten, wondering, as the men did, at her being still alive and breathing, when her whole body was so utterly torn and shattered, while yet the holy woman still, like a noble athlete, gathered her strength anew for a fresh confession, and "found for herself rest and comfort and refreshment and relief from all her pains in saying aloud 'I am a Christian.'" This was marvellous enough in its beautiful serenity of victorious faith, but it was hardly less astounding to see the woman Biblias, who in the first terror of the trial had denied the faith, wake up as out of an evil dream at the very moment that she was led out, as a poor, fragile, cowardly creature to be frightened into saying blasphemies against her old friends, and there, in the face of all the crowded horrors of the raging persecution, recover her true self and deny all the

slanders against the Church, and confess herself a Christian once more, and be numbered among the martyrs. Well might the holy pride of the Church break forth into the noble words which close the history of the long and cruel tortures of St. Blandina, words that tell how she who was in herself small, and weak, and contemptible, "clothed herself with Christ, that great and unconquerable athlete, and so beat the adversary and fortified the brethren, and, through the glory of the struggle, won for herself the Crown of Immortality." For those words announced how the Church had learnt and realized not only the touching power of St. Paul's appeal to Philemon to own as a brother beloved the slave Onesimus, and to receive him as the Apostle's son, yea, as his very heart's blood, but also the grace and sanctity which were assured and sealed to womanhood on the day that Gabriel stood before the Virgin Mary saluting her with the "Hail thou that art highly favoured."

But not only do the early persecutions show the Church to be in possession of great personal chiefs, who serve her, and of humble slaves and weak women who glorify her by their regeneration, but she is also already marked by this third characteristic, that men of intellectual capacity are ready to put themselves at her service, and to claim for her principles the authority of a philosophy. The attack at once reveals,

not only that she can endure with the heart, but also that she is prepared to defend herself with the brain. These intellectual defenders appear to be there from the very first, eager and devoted; from Quadratus under Hadrian to Justin Martyr under Antoninus. But since another volume of this series will give their history, we must pass them by; only we wanted to insist, that the very earliest picture of the Apostolic Church that we can put together from the fragmentary records of her persecutions reveals the confirmed existence and confident use of a literary and philosophical apology, in which Christianity asserted her possession of a doctrinal truth, and her claim, in virtue of that possession, to hold the key of intellectual, as well as moral, problems.

Such, then, were the three most obvious features that met the eye at the first unveiling of historic Christianity by the rude hands of her Roman opponents; but below these outward signs and appearances, there is yet another and a deeper fact, which the Roman government seemed to feel to be present, rather than to know what it signified, or how to deal with it. The phenomena which these persecutions brought to light were no isolated wonders, limited to this or that spot, wherever it might be, where a bishop was burnt or a slave tortured. Far from it; they were the outward expressions of a belief, of a life, which seemed to be one and the same wherever

they appeared. Everywhere the same charges were made against this Creed; everywhere these charges were met by the same answer; everywhere the same audacity, the same firmness, the same hope, the same appeal to Christ, the same strange mixture of guilt and innocence. So the Romans wondered and inquired; and the suspicions grew and deepened, as they noticed the deliberate and concerted withdrawal of these Christians from all those ceremonies which set the seal of religious custom on all the natural habits of daily life. The truth of the popular faiths may have seemed to the wise and educated statesman a thing of little value, or of hazardous guessing; but he was far too practical and real to underrate or ignore the immense authority and solidity given to the framework of society by that instinctive awe which harmonizes and dignifies human life, when the deep influences of spiritual faith in unseen powers can identify themselves with the forms of social order. The Roman was generous and tolerant enough towards any opinions that aired themselves in the cool halls of private villas or of public baths: he asked no questions, he passed by on the other side; but once let these spiritual fancies take shape and make for action, and form societies, and interfere with that habitual acceptance of the Roman rule as the supreme fact approved of men and ordained of the gods, then every instinct of the statesman's craft was set upon

resistance—a resistance which, if ever it was compelled to act, acted with a resolute and remorseless determination, such as no pity could check, no difficulty could gainsay. And now this strange frenzy of the Christians seemed to show itself as no casual or shifting impulse, that could be left to disappear under the mild contempt of persons in authority; rather it proved itself to belong to a formal society, a body of men under rules, with a conduct, a custom, peculiar to itself, a society living by its own laws, possessed of a clear and independent identity of its own, preferring its own habits and ways of life to those which were part and parcel of the general well-being of the empire. Here, then, was the very thing which the Roman hated and suspected so vehemently. He could not understand it; he felt himself baffled and perplexed by its presence. He asked nervously or angrily about its aims; and was only too ready to listen to the horrible rumours which crept about the market-places, rumours that the mysterious guild met in darkness to bond themselves together by bloody and cruel rites, to the general abandonment of all moral control. "They devoured the flesh of children; they broke through all the barriers of wedlock, all the distinctions of the family": so brutally did the imagination of the heathen mob play with the sacred Feast on the holy Flesh, to which Christians hastened before the morning broke, or with the Loving-

meal of the evening, where the rich and poor forgot their differences, and each saluted each as brother or sister in the unity of Christ. The statesmen listened to all this; and even if they doubted its truth, they did not scruple, on the strength of the popular passion which these wild tales excited to fury, to let their authority act against the hated secrecy of the strange society. Nor did they stay their hands because the more sober judgment of their magistrate, the younger Pliny, pronounced that all his careful inquiries tended to prove that the guild only met to sing hymns before dawn to this Christ the Crucified, whom it worshipped, and to pledge its members, by a sacrament, to the duties of a pure and perfect life. The answer from the great emperor Trajan to his provincial officer, coloured as it is by the Roman's fine and high desire for tolerance, shows still no sign of disallowing the persecution of the sect, because of this more favourable report of their aim and mode of life. On the contrary, it authorizes the persecution, as legal and needful; it advises the government, indeed, to abstain from pressing it forward, or encouraging its exercise; but, if the Christians are brought before him, and persist in their refusal to acknowledge the divine sanctity of Roman rule, they must die.

The Christian Church of the Apostolic Fathers, then, shows itself, under the light let in upon it by its Roman enemies, to be remarkable, first, for its

power to develop strong individual characters, of strange and defiant obstinacy, whether in ruler, or slave, or apologist; and secondly, as men looked deeper, for its power of holding all its members within the compass of a society which was a social, as well as a religious unity, which was bonded together by close ties of brotherhood into the communion of a common faith, and which so realized in act the idea of the spiritual communion, that it could make its own dominion felt as a counter "imperium" to the empire of Rome, with a changed centre of action, with unknown and alien points of contact between man and man, with different manners, customs, laws,—different interests, different thoughts, different feelings, different aspirations.

Rome was puzzled by this double character of the kingdom of Christ. It wondered how to deal with this passion of men to live and die, not for themselves, but for a Society—how to stamp out a Society which lived as strongly as ever, though its chiefs were cut off. It could have understood a single strong personal character, forming round itself a school of believers and disciples: this was common enough at that day, whether in the continual up-growth of new philosophies, or in the crowd of wild and weird sorcerers who burst in upon the empire from the East, hot with sudden impulses of new revelations, and thrills of hurrying mysteries. Such companies of men as rose

round these passing influences formed and vanished with the life that drew them together. They possessed no solid and abiding permanence; they easily mingled, and were lost in that vast sea of life which lay enclosed within the borders of the unchanging rule of Rome. A community originated apparently by much the same influences as these magic hierophants professed and possessed, yet which carried on a continual, and unaltered, and sustained existence, with permanent habits and fixed social fabric, whatever might be the fate of its individual members—this was, for the Imperial city, another and a different matter.

Perhaps it may be well to dwell for a moment on the import of this double-sided wonder, which was beginning to break its way upward through the hard crust of Roman civilization; this union, in one growth, of vivid personal character, and of a bonded, abiding Society, larger and stronger than all its members. For it was of immense significance to Rome, and to the Western world, at that particular crisis of history, that it should be startled into the sudden recognition, that individual characters, such as that of St. Ignatius or of the slave-girl Blandina, arose, and grew, and expanded, and put forth secure and constant force, then, and then only, when they belonged to a community of which it could be said:—"See, how these Christians love one another!"—then, and then only, when they could devote their personal energies, not to the

selfish expression of their own peculiar impulses, however good, and high, and true these might be, but to the obedience of most lowly service, for the sake of another's honour and glory, for the sake of Christ and of His holy Church, being themselves chiefs, and founders, and teachers, it might be, but not, for that, chiefs of their own band, founders of their own school, teachers of their own philosophy or their own revelation, but ambassadors of another, of Christ; moved, quickened, and sustained by another's energy, as blood is driven through the veins by the strong pressure of the central heart, as currents are sent travelling down the nerves from the hidden force of the controlling brain, as flowers, which break out upon the air under the sun, because they live, not singly and to themselves, but in intimate communion with an organic unity that holds them at one with leaves, and root, and stem, and other flowers as perfect as themselves.

Such a fact was itself a new revelation—a resurrection into a higher sphere—of that union of individuality with nationality, which had become almost an unknown and unremembered thing to the men and women who were to welcome the up-springing of the Christian Church.

For individuality, such as theirs of whom we speak, had surely long struggled in vain to find some field for its energies, under the dreary limitations of the Roman Empire. That empire, as we know, took

account of the *abstract* man, the individual citizen, the centre of fixed legal rights and legal duties; but the real, concrete, actual man, the living self which is at the root of all spiritual and moral activity—this found no home for itself in that vast scheme of law. For what did Rome offer it? Rome had taken up her own urban government, and extended it until it had covered the whole compass of the Western world under the rule of its civic system. But that outward form of civic law, which was originally to Rome herself the expression of her real inner life, the embodiment of her natural and actual character, became, when extended and transplanted to other ground, a mere idea, an abstraction. It was no longer the natural outcome of the inner life of men. They saw no longer in it their real and natural self, transfigured into a general body of law. To them it was a foreign scheme, applied to them from without, sorting them under convenient heads for certain purposes, allotting them each their appropriate pigeon-hole, weighing out certain limited privileges in consideration of a price paid down for the benefit; but it was not what we mean when we speak of the British Constitution, a thing that is, into which we are born, by which and in which we live, growing with our growth, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, part and parcel with all that makes us what we are, something to which our whole being responds in sure accord, in ready and delightful

familiarity. This is what we mean by nationality, and it is because of its being this, that we feel our whole individuality spring up into life, and grow, and strengthen itself, and rejoice, as soon as it breathes the breath of national existence. But Rome had destroyed all nationalities; it strove to ignore them, to abolish them, in order to offer to men, in their place, a legal position of free citizenship, indifferent to all distinction of blood. Such an ideal of open citizenship was not without nobility or grandeur; it was capable of large and extended tolerance; it taught men much, it widened their conceptions of humanity, it gave dignity, firmness, responsibility, permanence, to all the ordinary relations of men to each other in daily life; it stamped for ever on the imagination of the West the majesty of human government, the breadth and supremacy of human law. But to win this good it paid a tremendous price: it sacrificed to its achievement that living thing we call the soul, which cannot limit itself to the narrow lines of abstract law, or the rights and duties of legal citizenship, but which only can know and feel these, just so far as it can, on the one hand, knit them down into the kinships of flesh and blood, which this free law tried to cancel, and can, on the other hand, knit them up into that higher dependence upon a spiritual God, which this tolerant law was driven to ignore. Such life in the blood, such life in the spirit, were, both of

them, ties such as bind men into a brotherhood of race or of religion, not by abstract legal relations, but by bonds of active quickening sympathy, of passionate love; and this pulse of sympathy, this sense of common love, this "touch of nature" which could make "the whole world kin"—these had vanished out of the Roman state, or else wandered loose, disordered and astray, up and down their vast and desolate home, "seeking rest and finding none." Peace was there, peace such as statesmen are prone to dream of, and economists to admire, but such a peace as to the breathing, moving, feeling spirit of man, is only a weary solitude, a haunting despair.

It is only by recognising this, that we can remember, without too much amazement, the three especial phenomena of that Roman Empire. Over against the solid framework of this legal system, built up with such care and consistency, served with such bold and unwearied devotion by soldiers and civilians, rising with such steadiness, such fulness, such vigour, such endurance, so that all people and nations fall under its rule with welcome, with admiration, with satisfaction, accepting it into their social life, moulding themselves by its supreme standards—over against all this, that great Rome, the queen of the world, the heart of civilization, remains herself so corrupt, and sick, and ill at ease, that we cannot understand where the

strength lay in which she did these wonderful deeds. And the sickness shows itself in three peculiar ways.

First, in the famous foulness of her luxury, in the wild hurricane of vice which Nero and Domitian headed, and Juvenal lashed, and Tacitus recorded in sorrow and scorn. Already, in Augustus's day, sin had so lowered the ideal of wedded life, that marriage, the strong nurse of all noble citizenship, had to be enforced by law upon the increasing crowd of celibates, while divorce, the decay of marriage, was so incessant, that the law had to attempt to restrain it by bribes and penalties. "High and distinguished ladies," says Seneca, "count the years, not by consular fasti, but by the number of their husbands they have divorced in order to marry, and married in order to be divorced." And, with this wickedness of luxurious living we would include the well-known horrors of the amphitheatre, for that reckless cruelty was the sure companion and parasite of sensuality; these two are mated together by some mysterious tie, which belongs, it may be, to that blind disregard, which underlies both, for the spiritual sanctity which is the real life of the flesh.

Secondly, the sickness manifested itself in the ready refuge found in suicide by so many broken statesmen, to whom philosophy brought the comfort of justifying that escape which, without her,

they might have doubted, or feared to accept. This easy abandonment of an existence apparently so magnificent, throws a marvellous light upon the hollowness of this great world-scheme, upon the sadness that crept inwardly about its secret places. The moment of a nation's highest greatness has, in general, an elevation and an inspiration in it for every man in the nation, and, above all, for those who are at the head, leading its high fortunes; but here was Rome, touching the crowning hour of her splendid achievement, and yet the men who led, far from feeling themselves braced and upheld by the nobility of their task, were ready to throw up the reins at a moment's notice, with the light carelessness of hearts wearied and outworn, and were glad to occupy their quiet spaces of literary leisure with melancholy researches into the emptiness of individual existence, and the consoling possibilities of hastening its end. They kindled for themselves sparks of dreary delight by realizing, through the discipline of the Stoics, their own power of casting off, freely, the burden of existence. The soul, where there was no other way to know its own greatness, attained the knowledge, as they thought, in the calm and thoughtful and deliberate annihilation of itself. "Men ran to death instinctively, in a kind of phrenzy." They wondered why so many slaves lived, to whom escape lay so near, so easy, and so free. If we want to smell the

odours of that charnel-house of social misery and spiritual despair, which underlaid the vast and imperial temple in which men worshipped the divine genius of Rome, we have only to read that awful sentence of an old Stoic moralist, in which I know not which is saddest, the proud wail of the philosopher, or the hideous dumbness of the despised slave:—"There is nothing great in living; all slaves live, and all beasts too."

Let us pass from the dignity of this moral gloom to the third chief witness to the inner demoralization of which we speak, the swarm of strange faiths and wild dreamers which burst in upon the empire from the East. It was in these that the more excitable and the less educated sought satisfaction for their religious thirst. The staid and austere Roman worships had lost their old influence and control; Rome had undermined their power by her attempt to identify them with the crowd of other gods whom she met with in her triumphant march from Parthia to Britain: such a fusion of all gods into a universal religion dropped out all the religious reality, as it abstracted the common idea of Jove, or Mars, or Mercury, from all the differences and peculiarities of local variety in the new deities which were encountered in Illyria or Greece, in Germany or Gaul; it became a political fusion, in which imperial expediency was the end and substance, and religions the means and accidents;

and the moral result of such a process was necessarily this—that the religious spirit itself was unhinged, was loosened, was thrown off its balance; the steadiness which comes to religion by its being rooted in the soil of nationality was gone, through Rome's open admittance of all possible faiths into her Pantheism; she had, by such tolerant indifference to their growth, their history, their reality, cut the ground from under their feet. The sober security which belongs to a religion of the blood and of the heart was lost; for a religion, to be ours, must be the breath of our life, must overlap, within its constant and abiding presence, the days of our birth and the days of our death: it must be the womb that bears us, the milk that suckles us, the meat that feeds us, the home we move in, the arms that receive us, when we go hence and are seen no more; it cannot be picked up on any day we choose, it cannot be brought home in a waggon, it cannot be transplanted in a moment, without labour or care, it cannot be put on like a coat; and Rome had fallen on a weary and hopeless task when she set to work to carry off all the gods of the peoples, by cart-loads, to the Capitol. The religious spirit cannot for long divorce itself from facts: and the only real fact that remained, after Rome had shuffled the old religions about like a pack of cards, by her conquest and absorption of the nations who believed them, was Rome herself. The older national faiths

lived while they could create real national life, but when the nation was ruined, the religion ceased to be a fact; it had proved its powerlessness to save; and the logic of religion drove the spirits of men to turn their eyes upon the one solid and overmastering reality that showed itself genuinely, imperiously alive; in that conquering and irresistible city lay, surely, the divinity of power, the omnipotence of heavenly favour; in it abode, surely, the awful Presence, which makes, and moves, and ordains, and holds together, this lower world; on its shoulders lay the gracious glory of divine government; on its head shone the holy crown of everlasting success: "Worship Rome, all ye outcast and powerless gods!" And so, to Rome, to the divinity present in mighty and victorious Rome, men were eager to enjoy the honour of raising temples, or they dedicated worship to the honour of those emperors in whom, whatever might be the weakness, or even foulness, of their characters, they still recognised the embodied supremacy of all-powerful Fate. This loose and easy worship of human things we find it most difficult to understand; but it is no hard task for those with whom Pantheism is no dream of the Schools, but a vivid and real faith; and it is, after all, the most godless of us, rather than the most godly, perhaps, who see most absurdity in Indian hymns to the Prince of Wales, and laugh most at the memory of Nicholson whipping his Indian

horsemen, to stop them from praying to him as an incarnate divinity. The people of Smyrna and Ephesus, and the Asiatic cities, who competed together for the privilege of erecting a temple to the Emperor Tiberius, at least were not afraid to bring religion into actual contact with the things of earth; at least, they felt belief to be, not a treasure hid in a napkin, or buried in a field, but a real fact, a necessity, a thing of sun, and air, and life; and, even though it is miserable to see this worship so utterly divorced from the ruling spirit of truth, that it felt it no outrage, no shock, to confuse divinity with present power of whatever kind, no shock to lose all sense of the moral element essential to worship, no shock to slur and ignore all the lines which sever might from right, to be ready to fall low before the footstool of vile and abominable dominions, to dedicate themselves to the service of the temple raised to a Caracalla, or a Heliogabalus, to associate the favourite boy Antinous in prayer and ceremony with the gods, to offer sacrifices to Livia, the grandmother of Claudius, or Poppæa, the wicked wife of Nero—let us remember, with reverent thankfulness, what it is that has saved us from the very possibility of such loathsome and horrible weakness; what it is to possess a faith whose immediate dependence on a God who is the God of truth and righteousness, as well as of power, has made doctrine to be the very principle and mainstay of its worship,

has made truth a necessity of belief, and has ever made, not merely the speculative, but, far more, the devotional instincts of the soul, quick to guard, fence, and jealously preserve the object of their worship from all possible soiling, or contamination, or unworthy mixture of undivine elements.

But it was not only the worship of the Roman genius embodied in the emperors, which marked the decay of all moral earnestness, all austere authority and discipline, in the religions of the empire. A crowd of strange enthusiasms, as I said, broke over the great cities of the Mediterranean, mysteries of Isis from Egypt, so long shirking illegally about the streets of Rome, and at last publicly permitted; mysteries of Mithra, from Persia, whose symbol of sacrifice, the young god of fire plunging his dagger into a bull, became so common on stone and coin, and whose shrine, perhaps, you may still see below the pavement of the first Christian church, the unearthed basilica of San Clemente at Rome; mysteries of Ma, whose Cappadocian priests, in state of wild mesmeric frenzy, gashed themselves with knives and axes; mysteries of Anubis and Osiris; mysteries of the Taurobolium, sacred to Cybele, the divine mother of the gods, in which the blood dripped, hot from the fresh-slain bull, upon the worshipper, that he might rise, pure and hallowed, from the red rain of the sacrifice. All these rituals of mystic initiation

spread, at the time, from their original homes, and awoke the curiosity, and fed the religious passions of those huge populations which the Roman system had huddled into the crowded cities of its empire; populations mixed in blood, with none of the dignity or restraint inspired by the possession of a common history and a common fatherland; torn away, to a great extent, from the self-control of the old immemorial homes, from their established habits, their traditional laws, their steady and high associations, their ordered and hereditary comeliness. Such populations, dangerous and disordered, must they have been who peopled the vast commercial centres—Rome, Alexandria, Corinth, Antioch, Damascus; and in and out among them, mingled with these more historic mysteries, crept, now in obscurity, now in sudden prominence, sorcerers, prophets, incantators; magicians possessed of strange revelations or exalted by fierce asceticism; Chaldæans with oracles and signs, who flocked round the emperors themselves and the Roman aristocracy, becoming at times, by their weird influence, the terror of the law; wizards, like Alexander, and the Egyptian Arnuphis, from whom Marcus Aurelius himself deigned to seek for help against his foes; hierophants, like the famous Simon Magus, mingling up a medley of obscure philosophy with the excitement of sensuous images and symbols. Two most peculiar memories of this wild ferment of

spirit remain especially noticeable, preserved to us in the light pages of Lucian; Alexander of Abonitichos, who once exhibited himself as the grandson of Æsculapius, and would wreathe himself with a huge Macedonian snake, in darkened rooms, with mystic discs into which men looked to read the secrets of the future; and the famous satiric tale of Peregrinus, the wild ascetic, who, at last, after many extravagant wonders, burns himself to death on a pyre before the cynics of Olympia.

Such were the signs at the entry of the Apostolic Church into the field, at once of the decay of all earnest and deep-hearted faith, and also, of the passionate craving for religious satisfaction, for spiritual harmony with the divine powers of life, which threw up all these fantastic dreams and abnormal visions. The established religions, as it were, had grown hollow, and thin, and insincere; and the better and deeper spirit of the people revolted from the soulless forms of traditional worship into a thousand unnatural and disordered shapes, all of them, by their very extravagance, witnessing to the reality of the need, and appealing, as cries and screams in the night, for the larger and fuller help which could alone bring abiding succour. We have dwelt at some length on this part of the subject, though it has so often been dwelt upon before, because it is well to remember in what company the early Christian

Church came upon the scene; and what was the character of that society to which she made her offer of salvation. For it is absolutely necessary, if we would ever understand what our religion attempted then, and has slowly done for the world, to recognise that she boldly grappled with the very same spirit in man, which these strange creeds and magic wonders were attempting to satisfy; with that very religious public which threw itself into the arms of ecstatic Phrygian priests, and Egyptian mystics, and Chaldean incantators. We know this; for, first, it was in the company of all this strange medley of seers and priests, that the faith of the Jews appears in the midst of this seething city life, and in the streets of Rome. It is mixed up with the rest to the eye of the literary spectator; it is watched suspiciously, like the rest, by the eye of the jealous statesman; it is at times expelled, like the rest, out of terror at its dark influence, in secret, over men; its synagogue is the haunt of those women especially, who are mocked by the educated for their foolish and feverish thirst after strange religious emotion; its curious rites and scruples, its obstinate superstitions—these all seemed to the polite men of the Augustan court as unnatural and weird as any other barbarous fancies from the Orontes or the Nile: yet, of course, it was in the surroundings of the synagogues, in the footsteps of the Jewish proselytism, that Christianity found its

first standing-ground, its best entry. The Gentiles, who had been stirred by the marvel of Moses, were those who first crowded the churches of St. Paul; and therefore it was that the well-known confusion of Roman statesmen between Christian and Jew came about; they saw no reason to make any difference; and, when the difference began to grow obvious through the open enmity of the Jews to the new faith, this did not lead the Roman educated public to see anything of higher influence and more cultured tone in Christianity than in Judaism: on the contrary, the contempt for this vile and outlandish belief seemed to deepen; worse epithets than before condemned it; it symbolized the most degraded form of this subjection of old Roman faith to the wild novelties of the uncanny East; it was an "exitiosa superstitio;" it was to the high-minded historian a portent, marking the baseness of a corrupted people; it was a creed for the vulgar and the ignorant, if not for the infamous; it was to be credited with rites as savage, and morals as loose, as belonged to the iniquities of an Isis priesthood, or the sensual cunning of Alexander of Abonitichos. It corroborates this, to notice that it was just in those centres of population, where the demoralization of the Roman system was most obvious and most complete, that Christianity planted itself down with most resolute courage — Antioch, Damascus, Ephesus, Corinth,

Alexandria, Rome. For, verily, it knew its mission; the words of Christ were still ringing in its ears, "I came to call sinners to repentance;" the burning memories were still fresh of the crowd of publicans and harlots that had followed his Holy Feet, and, strong in its young faith, it dared the task of redeeming those "very dregs of Orontes," those very monsters of the muddy Nile, which Rome had set loose to her own destruction. No wonder, then, it the converts of St. Paul in Galatia still hankered after something of the wild asceticism of the old Cappadocian mysteries; no wonder if the apostles were saluted as brothers by hierophants like Simon Magus, or incantators like the seven sons of Sceva; no wonder if it was the believers in magic books at Ephesus who were first to find something that rescued them from magic in the preaching of St. Paul; no wonder that the Corinthians had to be taught that Christianity did not find its highest culmination in the ecstatic excitement of speaking with tongues. The Church bore all the blundering misunderstanding which these strange bedfellows brought upon her, because, indeed, the blundering was not all a blunder. The ground covered by all this confused rout of Comus was, indeed, the ground prepared for her, intended for her to cover. It was to these lost masses, cut loose from all the bonds of National faiths, that she offered the hope of a world-

wide religion for humanity, in which there was neither Jew nor Greek. It was to those who strained after purification through the blood of bulls and rams, in mysteries of Mithras or of Isis, after hope of immortality in Eleusinian or Idæan initiations, that she pleaded her appeal to the one and only-sufficient Sacrifice, the one perfect Oblation, the one Hope of resurrection into life eternal. It was such as those who would understand her when she cried to them, "We are buried with Christ; we are dead with Christ; we shall also rise with him: we, who have partaken of His sufferings, shall be partakers of His resurrection." May we not also venture to say that it was to those who were looking for some divine deliverance to come from Roman emperors, and who dreamed of present gods on earth, and madly saluted kings as they spoke from their splendid thrones in the majesty of royal apparel, with cries of "It is the voice of God, and not of a man"—it was to such as these that the Church brought light and salvation by the gospel of a God incarnate? It was because it was indeed true that One, and One only, could speak the words of God with the lips of a man, that the emperors of Rome, the new idols who had robbed Jesus of this His glory, "fell down and were eaten of worms" at the coming of Christianity. The one road to redemption lies always in making the corruption redeem itself, in turning the very principle which

feeds the corruption into a principle of strength; and therefore, Christianity, moved by the undaunted courage of the Spirit, was not afraid to take her stand in the very heart of the evil, and to use the material in which the corruption was fiercest, as fuel for the sacred fires of God's sanctification. "Ye who have yielded your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, yield these very members now as instruments of righteousness unto holiness." "Only sinners become Christians," mocks Celsus. "Yes; because only Christ can turn sinners into saints," answers triumphantly the Church.

Of course, this does not mean that the Church did not, very quickly, find educated adherents, men who found her philosophy stronger and truer than any to be got in the Schools. She had very soon attracted and secured men of the stamp of Melito, Bishop of Sardis; Athenagoras, Quadratus, Justin; she had very early among her treasures a beautiful bit of literary skill and refinement like the Epistle to Diognetus; but the effect of the 'Apologies' worked much slower upon the public imagination, while the other aspect, which linked her to the other manifestations of vulgar religious enthusiasm was obvious, decided, prominent. And it is this alone which will account for the general impression of the Apostolic Church, which we gain from our study of the evidence supplied us by her Roman persecutors; so that I would here close

this section of the subject by summing up what seems to me to be the main result. Christianity appeared to the Roman statesman to be no mere school, or following of some philosopher, nor, again, to be merely the loose sect of some wild dreamer, or fantastic prophet: about both of these Rome could afford to be careless; the sects would have no permanent reality; they would rise like waves on the great waters, and sink back again with the fall of their prophet. The Schools had no abiding force by which to make themselves felt outside the inner spirit-world, which Rome ignored; but this Christianity seemed to combine the religious enthusiasm, the passionate devotion, of the sect for its prophet, with the close and intimate unity of those secret guilds which Rome dreaded so thoroughly, of those societies which possessed an organic life of their own outside the imperial limits, and which, therefore, lived, and acted, and were felt as solid and energetic bodies of influence, to which the individual member was as accidental and immaterial as was the individual citizen to the legal system of Rome. This strange Church could live through, and above, its separate members, as verily and as permanently as Rome herself; like her, it held them within itself, it dominated them, it aspired to moulding their lives; and this, not only within the limits of human citizenship, but also, and primarily, to moulding and fashioning their thoughts, feelings,

sympathies, so that they became its creatures, its children throughout, with sympathies, customs, manners, independent of and paramount over those of the Roman citizen. We can surely say this was so, when we think of the degree to which all this was true of the Jews. How distinct a being he must have appeared from other citizens, how close his corporation, how intimate and clinging his brotherhood! And yet Rome's dread of this characteristic in the Jew, violent as it often was, was but unsteady and fitful, by the side of her growing and intense sense of collision with Christianity. Rome hated the Jew, because he was the typical expression of a *national* faith; he, above all others, had based his social, his national existence, upon his belief; his race, above all other peoples, had been made a nation by virtue of possessing a religion; it was this which made him cling so fast to peculiar habits, this which made him so separate from other men, so perverse and uncongenial a citizen of the all-embracing empire. And it was all this spirit of a national faith which had in Christianity re-arisen in the very midst of that immense city-life which was the very blood of Rome, re-arisen with all its old force aggravated and enlarged by being made as universal, as extended, as infinitely catholic as Rome herself. The old spirit of *national religion* renewed and glorified, embracing, as of old, in its mighty arms—and exalting by embracing,—

the whole life and substance of its every member, so that it and they live by one life, and are bonded by one blood; this old spirit, yet now no longer cut down and curtailed to this or that local tribe, no longer tied down to this or that local centre, to a temple at some Jerusalem or Gerizim, which Rome's armies could burn and sack, but broad, large, and free as humanity itself—*this* is what Rome finds herself now face to face with, this πολιτεία, of which she had not the making, this household of the elect, this Holy Family, this brotherhood of Christ, this fellowship of the Holy Ghost, this chosen nation, this peculiar people, this communion of saints, this Body, this assembly, this Church, which its sword cut through but could not sever, which its fires burnt but could not consume—this Civitas Dei, this city of God, this new Jerusalem, unhurt and undestroyed by Titus and Vespasian, descending from heaven to be a kingdom of God on earth, coming down with higher and mightier powers from above, calling up deeper and stronger devotion from her subjects, than Rome ever dreamed of claiming or possessing—this, which the splendid word of St. Augustine was to proclaim, the old imperial city already began to look upon with dim and bewildered eyes; and as she looked, already she began to feel her reign departed, and "to tremble and despoil herself with fear." The handwriting was on the wall, she had been "weighed in the balance

and found wanting"; an angel hath already cried with a strong voice mightily over the earth, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!" And in heaven there are already great voices heard, as the trumpets of judgment sound, saying, "The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ. Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

But we are not left entirely to the evidence brought out by Roman persecutors for our knowledge of the Apostolic Church. Fragments of the inner life remain to us, exhibiting both of those especial features which have been noticed, the strength of individual character coupled with the strength of a bonded and abiding society. First and earliest, we possess the most valuable relic of the last years of the first century, the letter of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthian Church, in which we have a perfect picture of the way in which the dignity and authority of a noble and pure personal character devoted itself to the preservation of that order and unity which it felt to be essential to the well-being of the faith. The quiet majesty of St. Clement's character has stamped itself upon the memory and imagination of the Church, as giving the ideal of that service of peace and reconciliation which the magic of personal influence can so wondrously supply to the system and necessities of a society; in his large and simple strength, the

jarrings of Jew and Gentile seemed to have found their common point of union; and in him, again, and in his letter, we seem to find the point of contact, where individual freedom passes up most easily into union with dominant authority, and authority applies itself most gently to the needs and claims of individual freedom. In him, command seems to be half an appeal, and appeal to be half a command.

Again, we have left to us the famous letters of St. Ignatius, letters written to the great Churches through which he made his march to death, from Antioch to Rome, and full, therefore, of that vivid, rather than abounding, light on the inner relations of the Churches to each other, and of their constitutions within themselves, which such a vigorous and intense personality as that of this saint was likely to cast. It is in these letters that we feel, at its highest and at its strongest, the immense freedom and force which is thrown into individual character, by the consciousness of belonging to a social unity, by the large inspiration of a brotherhood. We shall see this when we come to sketch his life.

In close connection with him, we have (besides the account of the saint's martyrdom, professing to be written by Christians at Rome) the letter of St. Polycarp to the Church of the Philippians, a beautiful example of the doctrine, and of the advice and exhortation, which an Apostolic Bishop would address

to another Church, exhibiting, with all the reality of incidental reference, the moral temper, the theological tone, the disciplinary order of the Christian body in typical cities, such as Smyrna and Philippi.

Such are the chief instances in which the evidence for the inner life springs out of the personal characters of the authors. We have other fragments left, in which the individuality of the writers is less interesting and less forcible, while the consistency of the Society, the unity of faith, the reality of ancient memories, become the prominent features of what we learn. Such are the records of Hegesippus and Papias, preserved to us by Eusebius chiefly, and St. Irenæus. These represent, principally, the attention paid by the Church to the unity of her system and doctrine; they are the writings of men who had nothing very original or strong in themselves, but were possessed by a clinging love for what was sure, and what was old, men who set themselves definitely to the preservation of what was most authentic in tradition, who laboured anxiously to sift novel or strange tales from the old and essential truth which had been given them by the Apostles, men who watched scrupulously, and travelled carefully up and down the Church, to discover whether anything was lacking to the prevailing unity. Our hearts may go out more readily, and rightly, towards the graciousness of Clement, and the fire of Ignatius, and the gentle loveliness of Polycarp; but now, at

this hour, when we have learnt, by the sharp teaching of literary criticism, to recognise how absolutely essential to the living reality of our faith is the evidence for the actual existence of its historic facts from the very beginning, let us not forget to be deeply grateful to those two old-fashioned and conservative chroniclers, Papias and Hegesippus, who seem as if they had felt from the very first, that, if Christianity was ever to be long-lived, it must make quite sure of its groundwork. It is through them that we can feel most vividly and acutely the reality of our own identity with the faith of the first fathers at Jerusalem, through them that we can see with most clearness how it is that we do indeed touch hands, through Bible and Church, with the Apostles themselves.

Yet, again, besides the evidence derived through Rome, and the evidence supplied by the remains of particular heroes of the faith, there is the evidence that we gain from the Church's own witness to herself. She herself shows us what she was, by leaving us examples of what she admired, and treasured, and loved. As we know a man by his friends, so we know the Church by her favourite books; as we know a man by his voice and gait, so we know the Church by her liturgies and ritual. Two of these books, of which she was so fond as to connect them closely with that body of Scripture which was gradually showing itself in its definite character of a sacred

canon, must be especially remembered in any notice of the Apostolic Church—the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas. These two, varied as they are in character and tendency, let us into the very heart of the Church's thoughts and musings, the first admitting us to listen to the fancies and interpretations which grew up under the influence of the Epistle to the Hebrews, under the shadow of the cultured humanity, probably, of Alexandria, and which may serve to link together the Bible, and the conversion of Apollos with the rise of the Alexandrian theology under the large and mystic treatment of History by Clement and Origen; the second, showing us the tone of the moral struggle, the colour and atmosphere of the piety, which were living and moving in the Church of Rome, where the temper of St. James' Epistle seems to have made its home under the influence and by the example, perhaps, of the great St. Clement.

These two books, then, we shall speak of later on, because they are connected with names of particular men; but it is the honour and privilege of a liturgy and of ritual to be rather the product of a whole body than of a single man; they represent the acts of a community; they are the moments in which many are made one; and, therefore, they are apt, though great single names may sanction and distinguish them, to bear the character which belongs to all common pos-

sessions of a whole people, to all symbols in which a nation finds its point of unity, or humanity its note of universal kinship, to all folk-lore, to all mythologies, above all, to language; the character, that is, of a heritage always found ready at hand, of a gift fallen from heaven, of something aboriginal, whose birth is hidden. The rites and ceremonies of our worship have, in their unuttered, untraceable history, something of the awe and mystery which belongs to Him who was "made a priest after the order of Melchizedec," "without father, without mother, without descent, having no beginning of days."

It will not, therefore, be our part to say anything of them in a book of lives. Only, in the general introduction, we would just record a sample of the memories handed down to us of the inner worship of this Apostolic Church of which we write. For it would be impossible to understand the Church merely from its public and secular acts on the platform of human history. Christianity shows itself outwardly, indeed, but its history is all written and acted within; it is *in* the world, but not of it; it wears, and uses, and sanctifies the flesh, but "it is the Spirit that quickeneth": the kingdom of God is come down among us, it is in our midst, it is leavening the whole lump; but it is still the kingdom of God; it has never lost its hold on Him, any more than the Son of Man, when He descended from heaven, and came into the

world, ever ceased for a moment to be ever and always "in the bosom of the Father;" any more than the Living Bread which came down from heaven ceased to retain in itself that Life which it had from the Living Father who sent it. "My kingdom is not of this world"; and just for that reason has Christ "come into the world" to bear witness that He, though not "of it," is its King. This is the famous paradox of Christianity, which stamps its seal upon the advent of the Apostolic Church upon the ground of that Roman Empire. It is this paradox which throws darts of mysterious panic into the hot blood of the heathen mob, into the cool minds of Roman statesmen, as their fingers touch this ghostly Body; there is a rising in the hair, a tremor in the voice, as they ask its name; a sudden shadow seems to pass over their sun; they tremble at they know not what. And, again, it is this paradox which fires the heart of every Christian, as he moves along, in his strong enthusiasm, to meet the crowd that hates, and sullenly growls, the statesmen who thunder with threats, and wrath, and terrible death; the breath of St. Paul is upon him with its vigour of tremendous inspiration, bidding him live "by honour and dishonour; as unknown, yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.'

So the great words rang on like a trumpet, in their unswerving conviction of strength, and ever, as the Christian thought thereon, he echoed them aloud, and went forward in the awful glee of magnificent courage, as a soldier who laughs and shouts with joy at the singing of the flying bullets, and the gleam of ringing swords. "Yea, we are a wonder to you," cries the fiery Tertullian in his splendid audacity. "We conquer when we are killed. You may call us food of the faggots, and may burn us, bound to the stake, in the circle of fire. That is the fashion of our victory; that is our festal array; that is the chariot in which we ride out our triumph." So, again, the cry of this victory which overcometh the world leaps from the lips of St. Ignatius: "Close to the swords, and close to God! In the midst of the wild beasts, and in the midst of God!"

"The Christians," says the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, "live in their homes, but live there as guests; for them every foreign land is home, and every home is foreign; they live in the flesh, but not according to the flesh; they spend their time on earth, but their city is in heaven; they obey the laws, and in their own lives surpass the laws; they love all men, and are persecuted by all; they are unknown, yet are condemned; they are slain, and lo! they are made alive; they are poor, and enrich everybody; they lack everything, and abound in all things. In

all dishonour, they are honoured; by blasphemy and scandal, they are justified. They bless when they are cursed; they give honour when they are insulted; they do good and pay the penalty of evildoers; they are punished, and rejoice as if they were made alive; they are hated by Jews and persecuted by Greeks, and yet their very haters cannot tell why they hate, nor the persecutors why they persecute."

This is the paradox which "broke the gates of brass, and smote the bars of iron in sunder"; and the strength, the secret of the paradox, lay hidden within the veil of the Church's outside fabric; this strange wonder of its external appearance had its home in the secret places where the Christians met before dawn to sing hymns to Christ, in the gathering at nightfall for holy feast and spiritual song, in the silence of those upper chambers where they met when the doors were shut, and out of the hush of the silence heard still the sweet whisper of that old "Peace be with you," as Jesus Himself once more stood in their midst."

It will be impossible, therefore, to leave a general sketch of the Apostolic Church before giving a picture of her inward, reserved, and supernatural modes of life. We must see her drink of the brook of heaven by the way, if we would understand the victorious glee with which she lifts up her head and continues her onroad of triumph. She has left

us a record of her inward life in the sure and unfailing evidence of her ancient liturgical forms, by which we may call up before the mind's eye all the spiritual apparatus, so to speak, which those forms involved and pre-supposed. We can trace in that unrecorded antiquity to which their community of character, in centres far apart and long-divided, necessarily points, the quick consciousness, even from the very first in the Church, of her proper methods, of her peculiar functions; and from these early liturgies, with their appointed ministrations, we pass back easily to the Acts of the Apostles, where we are given Christianity stamped, from the moment that the Saviour ascended, with the seal of a former community, of a regulated society with organization already provided for its spiritual needs, *i.e.*, for that "ministry of the word and prayer," which is the supreme office of its ordained chiefs, and before the importance of which all external practical service must be compelled to give way. Already, in the Acts, there are the marks of definite order in her organization of recognised gradations, of deliberate distinctions in her spiritual fabric; already there is difference between election of officers and laying on of hands, between functions of those officers, between apostles and presbyters, and deacons and evangelists; already there are prophets and teachers distinct from apostles; already there

is the ordained rite of Baptism, and a distinction between this, in its minor and potential form, from this, in its full and actual realization, the giving of the Holy Ghost; already there are well-known familiar facts that require no explanation, no history of their origin—the "prayers" and "the breaking of bread;" already there are times of coming together at the first day of the week. The machinery of a spiritual society is all there; it comes into the light with but little peculiar notice of its rise, with no need felt to account for it, or describe it, for, indeed, it appears with the appearance of Christianity; it is its "natural body," the form in which it left its Maker's hands. Christianity is born a Church; it had been so fashioned in the womb of the Gospel-life, before it had issued into independent existence on the Day of Pentecost; the idea of spiritual organization was upon it, since the Lord came down from that long night of prayer alone, in the darkness of the high mountain, and "called unto him whom he willed, and chose twelve." This body might grow after birth, might show new parts, new limbs, new functions, as the pressure of the days passed over it, and the needs of the larger years made their appeals; only slowly and by degrees, under discipline and care, might it reveal to others, or discover for itself, its true outlines, its full-formed features; but all this gradual growth is no mere accidental accretion from outside, no alien addition tacked on,

no expedient picked up at hap-hazard for the convenience of the hour; it is, rather, the essential development of that ordered frame with which she found herself first possessed, and which her Lord with His own hands had shaped, with His own words had decreed, with His own Holy Spirit had sanctified; it is something which comes into appropriate existence by the very necessity of the life committed to her; it expresses her natural character, just as a man's act of will, in word or deed, which any stress of circumstance may call out, expresses the character, long-possessed, long-fixed, of his intimate being. Such an act of a man may be called, in one sense, unessential; it is, *as an outward act*, unessential to the inner law which produces it; but, regarded in its real relation to the inner law of the will, it is most essential; it is the real expression of the man; it is that which shall be used by God Himself as a test, for "by thy words thou shalt be judged, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." So with the Church; she has done certain acts, said certain words, which come out of the abundance of her heart. In them, therefore, she sees herself, she knows herself, and henceforth those words and those deeds become part and parcel of her existence, identical with herself. She has done this, as we all know, under the violent pressure of heresy, in her creeds; she has, by struggling, found the words which spoke out of her heart's abundance; she has identified them,

therefore, with herself; as long as she is what she is, those creeds must be her creeds; they are carried along with her, they are herself; they are, as we say, the fruits of the Holy Ghost; they proceed from that very Power who was sent of the Father to mould the Body in the Virgin's womb, to seal the Church on the Day of Pentecost. And, long before the struggle of the creeds, the same process had determined her action on two main points intimately connected with her permanent solidarity, viz., the canon of her Scriptures, and the order of her sacramental service and ministry. The circumstances which determine both these points are full of obscurity; the date of their beginning, the time of their departure, the mode of their determination—all this we can only guess and wonder at; but yet, there they both are, undoubted, unconfused, undeniable; you cannot take Christianity without them; there is no room for picking and choosing; they belong to the very fact of her appearance. It is no use to say, "Once you had no canon, no Bible, no bishops." Christianity hardly cares to answer; she stands there offering *herself;* she simply pronounces that these things are her very own, originally and entirely hers, so much so, that she cannot remember how they came, any more than a man can remember how he grew. How should he remember? Has there been any gulf to spring over? Has there been any cataclysm, any convulsion in which some

former state vanished, and another new state took its place? Has there not, rather, been a unity, an unalterable identity of life, that grows, but is, nevertheless, always one and the same, throughout all changes, itself entirely unchanged? The rudiments, the germs, were there in the child, and now, lo! they have grown large and changed, but yet the man feels himself to be the same as before, knows himself to be unchanged, and this very sense of being unchanged by the change, is the sufficient witness that it is really no change, but a growth. So Christianity answers for her canonical birth, for her bishops, for her Eucharist, for her priests; these have grown with her growth, without a shock, without a break, with universal acceptance, with unanswerable spontaneity: take her with thee, or take her not at all; for, without these, she is not the actual Christianity that was really born at Pentecost, and manifested from Jerusalem to Rome, but some other Christianity of your own private dreamings, some unhistoric, unreal ideal, the creature of your own imagination. It is *you* who are presuming to judge her, when you say that these things are not hers; for she has long ago given judgment on the matter, and her judgment went the other way.

Let us listen, then, for a moment, before we pass from the picture of the Church to the stories of its saints, to the "still small voice" of her inner worship

in which she found all the secret of that strength by which she startled, and in which she encountered, the empire of Rome. It is Justin Martyr who is telling the tale of Christian assemblies.

"Prayers being over, we salute each other with a kiss. After this, bread and a cup of water and mixed wine are brought to him of the brethren who presides. He takes it, and offers praise and glory to the Father of all through the name of His Son and of the Holy Spirit; and at considerable length returns thanks to God for having vouchsafed to us to partake of these things. When the head of the brethren has finished the prayers and the thanksgiving, all those present conclude with an audible voice, saying, Amen. Now, Amen in the Hebrew tongue signifies So be it. The eucharistical office being thus performed by the head of the brethren, and concluded with the acclamations of all the people, those whom we call deacons distribute this eucharistical bread and wine and water to every one present to partake of them, and then they carry it to the absent."

So, again, Justin describes the ordinary Sunday service:—"At the conclusion of the sermon we all rise up together and pray; and prayers being over, as I have just said, there are bread and wine and water offered, and the bishop, as before, offers prayers and thanksgiving in the best way he can; and the people conclude all with the joyful acclamation of

Amen. Then the consecrated elements are distributed to, and partaken of by, all present, and are sent to the absent by the hands of the deacons."

And he supplies the key to the significance of the service :—

"For we take these not as common bread and wine, but, in the same manner as, by the Word of God, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was incarnate, and took blood and flesh for our salvation; so, also, are we taught that the food, which by a process of change nourishes our own blood and body, is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus after the Thanksgiving has been said by the Word of Prayer which comes from Him."

Here is an example of one of the earliest recorded forms assumed by the prayers, which the head of the brethren, according to Justin's account, prayed before the people.

THE EUCHARIST, OR THANKSGIVING.

The Lord be with you all :
And with thy spirit.
Lift up your hearts :
We have lifted them up unto the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord :
It is right and meet.
We give Thee thanks, O Lord, through Thy

beloved Son, Jesus Christ, Whom, in the last days, Thou has sent to us, a Saviour and Redeemer, the Angel of Thy counsel, the Word which is Thyself, through which Thou hast made all things by Thy will. And Thou hast sent Him from heaven into the womb of the Virgin. He was made flesh and was born in her womb. And he was manifested Thy Son by the Holy Ghost, that He might fulfil Thy will: and that He might gather Thee a people by expanding His hands: He suffered that He might liberate the sufferers who confide in Thee. He was by His will given over to suffer death that He might dissolve death and break the bonds of Satan, and that He might tread hell under His feet, and bring out the saints and make ordinances and bring to light resurrection. He therefore took the bread, and gave thanks, and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you: and likewise the cup, and said, This is my blood, which is shed for you; do this, as oft as ye shall do it, in remembrance of me.

(*Oblation and Consecration of People and Elements.*)

Recollecting, therefore, His death and His resurrection, we offer to Thee this bread and this cup, giving thanks to Thee that Thou hast made us worthy to stand before Thee, and perform the office of priests to Thee: and we supplicate and pray Thee, that Thou mayest send Thy Holy Spirit upon

the offerings of this Church, and likewise that Thou mayest give holiness to all those who partake of them; that they may be filled with the Holy Ghost, that their faith may be confirmed in truth, that they may praise and magnify Thee in Thy Son Jesus Christ, in whom be to Thee praise and power in the Holy Church, now and ever, and in ages of ages. Amen.

The People: As it was, is, and shall be, in generations of generations, and in ages of ages. Amen.

The Deacon: You who stand, bow down your heads.

(*Special Consecration of the kneeling People.*)

Eternal Lord, who knowest what is hidden: Thy people have bowed down to Thee their heads, and have laid down before Thee the hardness of heart and flesh. Look down upon them from Thy established habitation, and bless these men and these women. Strengthen them by the virtue of Thy right hand, and protect them from all evil suffering. Be Thou their guardian, as well of their bodies as of their souls. Increase to them, and to us, faith and fear, through Thy only Son, in whom be to Thee, with Him and with the Holy Spirit, praise and power, for ever, and in ages of ages. Amen.

The Deacon: Let us look up.

The Bishop: The Holy to those who are holy.

The People: One alone is Holy, the Father:
One alone is Holy, the Son:
One alone is Holy, the Spirit.
The Bishop: The Lord be with you all.
The People: And with thy spirit.

This is but a short fragment of a primitive service; but, short as it is, it is enough to admit us within the inner retreats of the Christian temper; a key is turned, and we pass in where no Roman persecutor ever succeeded in forcing an entry; we are in the hidden home of the Church's life, we look round her holy places, we know and understand the source of her power, the secret of her triumph. We began without, we have ended within; we began with the wonder of the Roman, we have ended with the sure knowledge of the Christian; we may, therefore, close the introduction, and may go on to the study of those heroic men whom this Christian body deemed to be its chiefs.

ST. CLEMENT OF ROME.

THE very greatness of St. Clement has made it difficult for later generations to discover the real lines of his faith and character, for a peculiar cloud, drawn to him by his renown, had gathered round him, like mists around some high peak, making him take, to our bewildered eyes, strange and fantastic shapes; and only by the steady persistent watching of criticism have we been rewarded by the sudden breaking of the cloud, and the sight of the true rock standing up high, and clear, and real, in the light and purity of heaven.

He comes at a moment which laid him particularly open to this sort of treatment, for he offered himself, not only to the memory, but also to the *imagination*, of the Primitive Church, as the one great Western name, which stands between the ordinary commonplace of later history and the marvellous glory of the Apostolic circle. On the one hand, he was there a man honoured of men, full of sober dignity, of human kindliness, just a noble example of a Roman bishop; yet, on the other hand, is he one who has talked with

St. Peter, and has, it may be, been spoken of by St. Paul as having his name written in the book of life; and so, as men wondered about him, his name became the mark of a strange curiosity, and around him, obviously historic as he was, fancy hung mysterious imaginings; and so it was that a bitter, beaten party in the Church saw in him one whose authority they might successfully invoke, if only they could get its shadow to cover and protect them; and a mass of literature was spread about, from hidden sources of obscure hereticism, attempting to draw the warm cloak of St. Clement's genial fame over the nakedness of a cramped creed, and the coldness of an obstinate spite. These writings are known as the Clementine Homilies and recognitions; they are stamped with the mark of Oriental Ebionitism, and represent the last and hopeless effort of the Judaizing party, to make good its footing within the Church lines.

This Judaizing section of the early heresies had many subdivisions, probably, but, as a whole, it was made up of all those who had failed to realise the full divinity of our Lord's person, and with that failure, had necessarily also failed to recognise the thoroughness of the convulsion which His appearance had brought about. It is by virtue of His divine pre-eminence that our Lord is the second Adam, the Father of a new race, the starting-point of a new life; it is as greater than that David who called Him Lord, that He is

Lord also of the Sabbath, the fulfiller, and therefore the abolisher of the law, the one Lamb at whose coming God looks no more for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin; and it was natural, therefore, that the Ebionites, who understood not this absolute supremacy, should not see why the past was utterly overpassed, why Judaism was altogether at an end, and should make their protest against the prevailing Christianity, partly by rigidly clinging on to the memories of the temple at Jerusalem, and to hopes of a Chiliastic restoration of the Judaic theocracy; partly, by a more refined rationalising of the Christ into a spiritual reformer of a corrupted Judaism, a second Moses, an Adam renewing the primitive perfection of the first man. It was under the influence of hopes and dreams such as these that the Ebionites haunted the deserts of Palestine, refusing to return to the Christian Church which had built itself over the ashes of desolate Jerusalem; and there, left behind, abandoned, almost unremembered, in those outcast solitudes, they fed their bitter hearts with the gall of a violent and relentless hate against that great apostle, who had read out, into letters of burning light, the end and fall of the law, the collapse of the old, the birth of the new creature, the mystery of the new covenant, in which there was no Jew or Gentile, but all were made one in the Body of Christ, the First-born from the dead. This temper

appears, in its wider and more mystical form, in these Clementine fictions, where the incarnation appears, as the revelation of the true inner Judaism, a purification of the old law, a restoration of its lost or obscured ideal, while, in the fierce polemic of one of these writings, St. Paul, whose words of rebuke to St. Peter at Antioch seem still to be rankling in the dark and angry depths of the Ebionitic spirit, is apparently caricatured, as the typical foe whom St. Peter encounters and crushes, under the name of the hateful Apostle of Antichrist, Simon Magus himself.

But what has this to do with St. Clement? How could it become attached to him?

To answer this, we must return to the many authentic notices of him in our oldest literature, and above all, to the only solid testimony we possess of what St. Clement really was; for we hold in our hands one real remnant of the actual work of that high-minded soul, whose fame was put to such perverted use; we can see in this the features of the man himself; we can catch a glimpse of that great majesty which so captivated the imagination of the early Church; and then, once sure of our main ground, we shall, perhaps, understand better how it was that his name was used to cover the self-assertion of an Ebionitic heresy.

This relic of St. Clement is his letter of advice to

the Corinthian Church. There is, indeed, a second letter of his to the Corinthians attached to the first, but the evidence seems complete for the illegitimacy of the latter. The former letter became quickly one of the most famous and well-known of the earliest Christian writings, so that we have more complete evidence for the authenticity of the very letter that we now possess, than is often the case in the works of these first days. Hegesippus, who is so diligent in tracing out the records of the succession of bishops, associates Clement's name with the Corinthian troubles, as if the two were always remembered together, and apparently refers to the letter by name. Irenæus tells the whole story, of how the "most notable letter" came to be sent from Rome to Corinth, under the guidance and authority of Clement. Dionysius of Corinth, eighty years after, tells the Church at Rome, how still, to this day, they keep the old custom of reading the great letter in public service on the Lord's Day. Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, both constantly use it, and quote it by the name of its author.

When was this letter written? If we make out that, we shall know all that well may be known from our present information about St. Clement himself.

The letter itself will point the way to fixing the date. In the first place, it is dealing with a quarrel at Corinth, over the authority of the presbyters; it

appears that a party in that place disputed the existence of any peculiar order or office in the Church. Such a dispute carries us back to the earliest days, when alone it was possible for any such question to be agitated; it takes us back behind the insistence of St. Ignatius on the necessity of bishops, to a time when, in one particular Church, at least, it was not inconceivable that the existence and rights of those presbyters whom St. Paul himself had appointed from the very first in all the Churches, should be threatened and put in question. This, by itself, leads us to think of the first century of the Christian era as the only possible time when any Church could be still so chaotic and undeveloped as this—even then it is not very easy to explain such an amount of disorder, if we remember the Epistle to the Hebrews, which we know preceded this, the Acts of the Apostles, the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul, the Book of the Revelation, and then again consider how quickly this letter must be followed by the epistles of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, with their complete acceptance of the hierarchical system.

We are far back, then, in the history of development within the Church; and it is the same with the development without; for no touch of Gnostic difficulty appears in the latter, and yet the heresies bred from Gnosticism, already moving about the edges of the Church in the days of St. Paul and St. John, have,

in the second century, become definite, acknowledged perils, by which no educated Christian could possibly be unaffected, and of which every authoritative statement of doctrine was bound to bear the traces. Here again, then, we are inclined to look for the date back beyond the years of the Emperor Trajan, with whose reign Hegesippus associated the rise of Gnosticism into active prominence. How far, then, are we to go? The indirect internal evidence has thrown us back into the first century; the direct internal evidence prevents our going too near the date of the Apostles themselves. The writer can speak, indeed, of the Apostles as belonging to his generation. "Let us come to the martyrs nearest to ourselves," he says. "Let us take the noble example of our own generation," and then he begins the remembrance of the deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul in the Neronic persecution. These martyrdoms were evidently, from his mode of reference to them, no very distant events; yet the terms must be left vague and wide enough for him to be able to address the Corinthian Church as "that ancient Church"; and to speak of St. Paul's letter to it as coming "in the beginning of the Gospel"; and so, when we come to the mention of the presbyters at Corinth, we find that a good interval has elapsed since they had felt the Apostolic hands upon them. A good number of those whom the Apostles had ordained were dead: "Happy are they

who have died before this trouble!" says St. Clement; many of the presbyters in question have been ordained by the men of note whom the Apostles left in authority, and these again have been some time in office, and have been well proved in service; a good interval, then, has gone by since St. Paul or St. Peter were moving about in the Churches; yet still, some are still alive, on whom the hands of the Apostles themselves had been laid. To this evidence it may be added that we must leave time for the Epistle to the Hebrews to have become in Rome the well-known and carefully-read work, which it obviously was to the author of the Epistle who writes in the name of the whole Roman Church sentences almost modelled on the language of that great exposition. All this internal evidence leads us at once to fall in with a date ascribed externally to the writing. Clement was made Bishop of Rome, Eusebius tells us, in the twelfth year of the reign of Domitian, *i.e.* 92 or 93 A.D., and then it was, he goes on, when the troubles began at Corinth. The evidence of Eusebius is based on that of Hegesippus, one of our earliest recorders. It is in full coincidence with this that St. Clement speaks of frequent attacks of sudden persecution at Rome, which have hindered his attention to the Corinthians, and delayed his letter. Nero's persecution was sharp, but ended quickly, while Domitian confined himself to frequent inroads on prominent men among the

Christians, killing some, and exiling, and confiscating the goods of others. Domitian died in 96. Between 92 and 96 A.D., we may say, on this evidence, was the Epistle of St. Clement written.

St. Clement, then, lived among those who had, with himself, apparently, known the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul in their martyrdom at Rome; he wrote to those among whom there still remained men who had felt on their heads the touch of Apostolic hands; yet, at the moment of writing, the days of the Apostles have already become the treasured memories of the old; new generations are springing up, who, at Corinth, seem to have forgotten for a moment the significance of what the Apostles had done amongst them; the age of a Church is already a note of dignity. This harmonizes with the record of Eusebius and Irenæus, that St. Clement, apostolic as he was, did not become Bishop of Rome until after two predecessors, Linus and Anacletus. "After Anacletus," says Irenæus, "third in office from the Apostles, Clement succeeds to the Episcopate, a man who had seen, as well as they, the Blessed Apostles, and had conversed with them, and had still the preaching of the Apostles and their traditions present actually as a visible fact before his eyes; and in this he was not alone, for there were many then yet surviving of those who had come under Apostolic teaching." So agrees Eusebius: "In the 12th of

Domitian's reign, Clement follows Anacletus, who had for twelve years been at the head of the Church of the Romans." So, too, St. Epiphanius; and so, again, St. Jerome, at least in some places of his writings. But, against this, lies the counter-tradition, that St. Clement was ordained bishop by St. Peter himself. This is what the spurious, but very early letter of St. Clement to James holds: this Tertullian, knowing Rome well, mentions. St. Epiphanius tries hard to reconcile this with the fact, which he accepts, that Linus and Anacletus preceded him in the actual government; he was perhaps ordained by St. Peter bishop, he thinks, and refused for long to take the post, until, at last, he was compelled; or Rufinus suggests that Linus and Anacletus were bishops during the life-time of the Apostles, Clement the first after their death. But none of this pleading will explain how St. Clement came to be bishop first in 93 A.D., as the other tradition firmly holds; nor does it seem to fall under the possibilities of ecclesiastical custom; it breaks down, then, as an explanation. Another, and a very ancient, explanation meets us in the Apostolical Constitutions, that famous memorial of early Church order, which Eusebius speaks of as only subordinate, in importance, to the Canonical books. In them we read:—"Linus, son of Claudius, was ordained first bishop of the Church of the Romans by Paul, and Clement was ordained the

second bishop, after the death of Linus, by me, Peter." This explanation, again, fails to effect a reconciliation with the tradition of the late date for St. Clement's bishopric; yet this is what Hegesippus records in the middle of the second century, and this is what best agrees with the character of his Epistle to the Corinthians; of course, if St. Peter consecrated St. Clement, he did not become bishop in the twelfth year of the reign of Domitian.

If reconciliations, then, fail to reconcile, it only remains to ask, which of the two traditions is the stronger? And here, it presses itself upon us, that the tradition of the consecration by St. Peter runs home, chiefly, to the story in the Epistle to James, attached to the Clementine recognitions which I mentioned above. It is this famous story which we still follow in fresco on the walls of that wonderful Church of San Clemente, which has just re-arisen from the rubbish of Rome, after a concealment of fifteen centuries. Clement, so the tale runs, was son of Faustinianus, a noble who had been brought up with Tiberius Cæsar, his relation, and was, by Tiberius, given in marriage to Matthidia, daughter of a high-born family. There were three sons, Faustinus, and Faustus, and the youngest, Clement. When Clement was five years old, the mother was urged in a dream to go to Athens with her two eldest; she went, leaving Clement with his father; and now, from that time,

nothing could be heard of her or her children. In vain the mourning father sends messengers to Athens. At last, he starts on the search himself. Clement, now twelve years old, is left behind at Rome, and, while the years go by, and nothing is heard of his parents, becomes strongly excited by the study of philosophy, and, while curbing his restless passion to go out in the search for truth, hears news of a Jew who has announced the coming of a kingdom of heaven, with the authority of many miracles. All Rome is moved; and, in the midst of the wonder, Barnabas arrives, preaching publicly the hope of eternal life through the Son of God. The philosophers begin to laugh; but Clement, with indignation at their light recklessness, takes Barnabas by the hand, and leads him home to his house that very evening. He hears from him the truth; follows after him back to Palestine, where he finds him at Cæsarea Strato, where Barnabas, in great joy, takes his hand, and leads him to St. Peter. From that day Clement never left St. Peter's side, attended him in his contests with Simon Magus, wrote his letter to James at the Apostle's dictation. Two friends he has, above all, among the companions of St. Peter, Nicetas and Aquila. One day they are all journeying in the island Aruda, when a poor woman with withered hands begs alms of St. Peter. St. Clement looks, he hears her story; it is no other than his long-lost mother, Matthidia—and lo! Nicetas and Aquila, they

too, remember this woman, they, too, are her sons, and Clement is their brother. Another day, an old man, a workman, is anxious to dispute with St. Peter; he vehemently denies the reality of divine providence; he carries on the discussion with Clement, arguing against all free will, and tracing all our actions back to the laws and motions of the stars; he appeals to his own experience as a witness, and, as he tells the tale of his life, Clement hears the story of his father, Faustinianus. No wonder that, in the joy of discovering his wife and children, the old man recovers his belief in divine providence, and accepts the faith of his son's new Father in the Lord.

This Clement, St. Peter, when he felt death to be near, named to be his successor, before an assembly of the whole Roman Church, and consecrated him formally Bishop of the Roman body.

Such is the story in which this tradition of St. Clement's immediate connection with St. Peter embodies itself; what are we to say of it? Obviously, it is legendary; and it appears under the doubtful auspices of an heretical work of fiction. The Clementine Recognitions are a sacred novel, as it were; and this story belongs to them. The only question is, how far to assume that it was necessary to the success of a novel of this kind, to be based on well-accepted history. Would it answer its purpose of recommending peculiar views to the favourable consideration of the

Church, if it did not run on sure, and general, and recognised lines?

It is difficult to say how much historical groundwork would be necessary to recommend a work obviously unhistorical to the Church of the second century; something of the true tale lies scattered about the story, possibly; but as to the immediate point in question, the consecration of St. Peter, the evidence is prejudiced, for it was the distinct object of these Recognitions, to bind up their position with the name of St. Peter by use of St. Clement's authority, so that *here* there is a conscious tendency to exaggerate at will in the author; while the other form of the tradition does supply material for such exaggeration in the memory that St. Clement was indeed in direct contact with Apostles, so that, though not consecrated bishop by them, he was most probably *ordained* by their hands. Thus the first tradition can account for the second, while the second must find it quite impossible to account for the first; especially when we recollect that Hegesippus, who hunted up the sequences of bishops so diligently, and whose tone of faith would naturally bring him into contact with what may be called the Petrine tradition, does not mention it as held at Rome, but himself distinctly holds the other, identifying the episcopate of St. Clement with the age, not of Nero, but of Domitian. This seems to me to be decisive. It is a case of un-

impeachable against impeachable evidence, with the additional testimony, (1) that the first is a possible ground for the latter, the latter an impossible ground for the first; and (2) that the first accords far best with the internal evidence derived from the letter universally ascribed to St. Clement.

If, then, St. Clement became third Bishop of Rome, after having been a disciple of the Apostles, can we extract from either tradition anything further of his personal history? All we can do is to test the facts supplied by the character of the letter itself. The story, for instance, makes him a Gentile by birth; what has the letter to say to this? In the fifty-fifth chapter, the author, speaking of the many instances of heroism and self-sacrifice that the Gentiles have to show in their history, includes himself in the number of the Romans whose heroes had done these things. "Many among *us*," he says, "have we known to give themselves up to bonds for the redemption of others." Again, he accepts the well-known heathen beliefs, in the lands beyond the great sea, and in the resurrection of the young phœnix from the ashes of its parent, and in its carrying the bones of the dead bird to lay them on the altar of the Sun at Heliopolis. Again, he is full of philosophical meditation on the grandeur and supremacy of God in Nature; he reads out the majesty of law and order in the motions of the stars and of the sun, in the currents of the winds, in the

movements of the vast circumfluent ocean, in the "untrodden regions of the abyss, and the trackless spaces of the nether world." All this seems to belong to the man of Gentile education; and so, too, when he uses, for moral example, the discipline and system of the Roman army, it is done with the genuine admiration and naturalness of one who felt at home in it:—"*Our* generals," he cries, "we know what obedience they win from their men." It is not a strong argument against this, that he is so thoroughly acquainted with Jewish Scriptures; this he naturally would be; the Old Testament is still pre-eminently the Sacred Canon of the Church, for its Gentile as much as for its Jewish members; all would know it intimately. Moreover, intimate as he is with the Old Testament, it is only the Septuagint version that he knows; with the original Hebrew he shows no acquaintance.

Such is the evidence for his Gentile origin; and it is strong enough to have induced critics of authority to attempt an identification which has many attractions for the imagination. For Clemens is a name not unknown in the Christian annals of Rome. Domitian has a cousin of this name, Flavius Clemens, and selected the sons of this cousin as his successors on the throne. Now, this Flavius Clemens is the first important person in whom Christianity makes a public appearance on the stage of history. Just as an ad-

vancing tide now and again throws some single wave high up the strand, far beyond the slower mass of its main waters, so did the rising flood of this Christian faith leap out for a moment beyond its creeping and ominous advance, and threatened already that throne which it was one day to make its own. The emperor found that the very house to which he had committed the succession was a prey to the "new, the ignoble, the deadly superstition": Flavius Clemens, consul though he had been, and colleague of the emperor, had abruptly to be put to death for his faith, while Flavia Domitilla, his wife, the daughter of Domitian's own sister, doubly of the imperial stock, was banished to an island for the same offence. Can it be that Clement the consul is also Clement the bishop? or, if this is in conflict with dates, and impossible to have been forgotten by Christian recorders, yet can the name of Clement have nothing to do with this royal believer? May he not be nephew of Flavius, as the early romance of Nereus and Achilles made him? or son, as Ewald has imagined him from the language of the Clementine Recognitions? or, at least, one of the family, and, therefore, a Gentile, of noble Roman blood?

All this is attractive, it offers delight to the imagination, as the picture grows distinct of one who could be familiar with that strange court of Domitian, with its monstrous sins and luxurious misery, and yet

could, in secret, pour out his yearning for purity, and righteousness, and love, to that holy society which, under his earnest advice, was moulding and consolidating its world-wide empire of spiritual peace.

But yet, critics who look closer at the letter, seem to find a stronger tinge of the Jewish character in it, than the mere quotations from the Old Testament would prove. Not merely the words, but the style, the modes, and methods of a Jew predominate. "It is the classical culture which is superficial," they tell us, "while the thoughts and diction alike are moulded on the Law and the Prophets, and the Psalms." It is the Greek version, indeed, of the Scriptures that alone the author knows; but, then, a Hellenist Jew might well be ignorant of the original; and, certainly, Clement is saturated with the tone of this Greek Bible to a degree almost impossible, except in one who had been reared as a child in the knowledge of this one book. The prayer at the end of the letter, which has so recently been recovered, completes the evidence, by its obvious similarity to Jewish types of devotion. "This conviction of a Jewish authorship is strengthened in my mind every time I read the epistle," is the summing-up of Professor Lightfoot; and, if so, then we guess at once how to connect a Jew with that great House to which his name allies him. He would probably be a freed-man, or a freedman's son, who had won his freedom from that

Flavius Clemens of whom we have spoken, to whose household he would then belong, and whose name he would adopt or inherit. We should thus understand how he gained that intimacy with Hellenic culture which distinguishes his letter; and also, how it was that Christian tradition dimly connected him with the Imperial family, without venturing to identify him with any distinct member of that House. As such a freed-man, or the son of a freed-man, the way was open for him to positions of honour and dignity; he might easily be of sufficient worth, education, and importance, to be selected as a Roman bishop. It is interesting to notice that the other famous Christian Clement, of Alexandria, has a name which points back to a like connection with the same house, Titus Flavius Clemens; and he, too, probably illustrates how freely the road to the highest intellectual distinction was thrown open by the Roman social system, to a man sprung originally from servile blood.

Let us suppose Clement, then, to be (as Professor Lightfoot, to whom we owe the thorough sifting of the question, argues) a Hellenist Jew, brought up in the house and under the patronage of a Roman noble, who was himself attached to, and ready to die for, the Church of Christ. This Jewish freed-man is converted to the faith in early days, when apostles are still present to guide and govern. He is baptized, probably ordained, by their hands; he lives through

the first terror of Nero's persecution, the baptism of blood; he is among that band of believers who were the first to prove that the Church could survive all human leaders, even though they were St. Peter and St. Paul—the first to realize the new life which springs from the seed of martyrdom; and now, in the last decade of the century, the eyes of the whole Roman Church are turned upon him, amid the anxieties of perilous days, that he may come forward to champion the Christian cause in the Imperial City, a worthy successor to Linus and Anacletus, through whom the Church knits itself into the memories of its famous founders, St. Peter and St. Paul. Cultured, learned, dignified, full of tender and wide affections, ruled by an earnest wisdom, disciplined, by long and large experience, into a love for orderly and chastened uprightness, possessed with the spirit of prayer, with the grace of supplication, with the fervour of a steady and unfitful faith, he sits, the chief among his presbyters, the honoured voice of his congregation, clothed with something of the majesty and awe of Rome, and worthily embodying in his person the weight and authority which belonged to the central Apostolic See. Of his episcopal administration we know nothing; only we can, perhaps, conclude, from the tradition which calls by his name the liturgy found in the Apostolical Constitution, that he took a leading part in moulding into definite shape that mass of

devotional language which had become the common and traditional material for the use of the Christian ministrant; and this conclusion is supported, to some extent, by the newly-discovered prayer at the end of the letter to the Corinthians, which, by its close intermixture of definite liturgical expressions, familiar to us in the Liturgy of the Constitution, with the natural language flowing freely out of the author's own heart, seems to chime in well with the belief that the Liturgy represents, more or less, the form which the traditional language of the office took when it fell from the lips of St. Clement, and was fed with the living breath of his personal aspirations. But this is all that we can guess of the bishop's actual work, beyond what we know from the letter so often referred to. All, therefore, that I can now do to complete this sketch, is to turn your attention to this letter itself, and let you hear the voice of the master as it spoke before the last words of the last Apostle who had seen the Lord had ceased to vibrate in men's ears, before Domitian had been slain, before the Roman historians had so much as heard of this new sect, except that it was everywhere spoken against.

The occasion of the letter has been already referred to. Dissensions had broken up that famous Church of Corinth, whose established renown Clement so powerfully recalls in this very Epistle. We do not know the details, but we gather that the quarrel turned

entirely on questions of order, not of doctrine. The authority of certain presbyters had been called in question; they were threatened with expulsion from their office, and threatened not by any properly-constituted judicial body, but by the arrogant claim to power of some lay-members of the Corinthian Church. It is difficult to determine on what right this claim was vested; it may have been based on the possession of spiritual gifts, or on a peculiar strictness of life; but, whatever it was, it broke violently into the fundamental conditions which already had everywhere become the recognised constitution of the Church; and St. Clement treats it, therefore, as an insurrection against the very principle of all lawful order, as well as a revolt against the mind with which the Apostles themselves had organized the system of presbyterial government.

He definitely upholds *both* these issues. For the first, he runs the general law, which decrees in all things a fixed order, back into the very constitution of things, into the very life which the universe holds from God. In words that worthily anticipate the magnificent appeal of Hooker to the beauty of order, St. Clement bids the Corinthians correct their disorders, "looking steadfastly unto the Father and maker of the whole world." There, in Him, "in His long-suffering will," we behold the principle of love for well-doing which issues in the perfect law of peace

and harmony. "The heavens are moved by His direction, and obey Him in peace. Day and night accomplish the course assigned to them, without hindrance one to another. The sun, and the moon, and the dancing stars, according to His appointment, circle in harmony within the bounds assigned to them, without any swerving aside. The inscrutable depth of the abysses are constrained by the same ordinances. The basin of the boundless sea, gathered together by His workmanship into its reservoirs, passeth not the barriers wherewith it is surrounded; but even as He ordered it, so it doeth. For he said, 'So far shalt thou come, and thy waves shall be broken within thee.' The seasons of spring, and summer, and autumn, and winter give way in succession, one to another, in peace. Yea, the smallest of living things come together in concord." If such is the mind of the Creator throughout the whole world, Christians cannot presume to fall outside of this vast and universal peace. "It is right, therefore, that we should not be deserters from His will. For the law of concord, which proceeds from God's goodwill towards all things, must rise to its highest intensity in those who have received the news of the fullest peace and goodwill in Christ. All these things the Creator ordered to be in peace, doing good unto all things, but far beyond the rest unto us who have taken refuge in His compassionate mercies through our Lord

Jesus Christ." The reverence for order, therefore, flows out of the primary, the essential, principle of our salvation. "Let us fear the Lord Jesus, whose blood was given for us. Let us reverence our rulers; let us honour our elders; let us instruct our young men in the fear of God; let our children learn how lowliness of mind prevaileth with God." For, indeed, where can we look, without finding examples of order to guide and to encourage? Are we Roman citizens, and yet cannot see the order which belongs to all real life? "Let us mark the soldiers that are enlisted under our rulers, how exactly, how readily, how submissively they execute the orders given them. All are not prefects, nor rulers of thousands, nor rulers of hundreds; but each man in his own rank executeth the orders of the chiefs." Surely, here, in those armies which have crowned themselves with victories innumerable, from Parthia to the far islands of the Northern Ocean, we see a stirring illustration of that law which decrees that "the great without the small cannot exist, nor the small without the great." If this is not enough, we have but to look at ourselves. "Let us take our own body as an example. The head without the feet is nothing, and so, too, the feet without the head; all the members conspire and unite in subjection, that the whole body may be saved." *So*, "therefore, let the whole body of the Church be saved in Christ Jesus."

These things, then, are "manifest beforehand. We have searched into the depths of the Divine knowledge;" we see that His will everywhere is that "we should do all things in order." We have hold on the general principle; can there be any doubt of its application to His Church and her ministrations? Has He not, rather, Himself authorized order in these, as in all else? Has He not Himself shown to us the direction of His will? "The offerings and ministrations He commanded to be performed with care, and not to be done rashly or in disorder, but at fixed times and seasons; and where and by whom He would have them performed He Himself fixed by His supreme will. They, therefore, that make their offerings at the appointed seasons are acceptable and blessed; for while they follow the institutions of the master they cannot go wrong." And then follows the famous passage in which he pronounces that the offices of the Christian ministry are as real and marked as were those of the old Tabernacle; that, in the New Covenant, as in the old, there are fixed gradations, appropriate service; so that the principle still holds good, even though the exact conditions vary, that "unto the high priest his proper services have been assigned, to the priests their proper service is appointed, upon the Levites their proper ministrations are laid; the layman is bound by the layman's ordinances." Still it holds good in law, with a Christian difference in

detail, that "not in every place, brethren, are the continual daily sacrifices offered, or the free-will offerings, or the sin-offerings, but in Jerusalem alone. And even there the offering is not made in every place, but before the Sanctuary, in the court of the altar; and this, through the high priest, after that the victim to be offered hath been inspected for blemishes. They who do anything contrary to the seemly ordinances of His will, receive death as the penalty." Those who approach nearest to the Throne of God, then, far from becoming excused from strict regard to rule, do rather incur a severer necessity of law, a more awful penalty for unseemly disorder. The rigour of the demand does not drop, but rises, as we come closer to the revealed will, to the new Jerusalem, to the worship of Holy Sion. "Ye see, brethren, in proportion as greater knowledge hath been vouchsafed to us, so much the more are we exposed to danger."

Let us pass from the metaphor of Judaism to the facts of Christianity. Here, too, we find the settled accuracy of orderly system. "Christ is from God, the Apostles are from Christ." The revelation starts from the very beginning with a graduated, a measured motion from God to man. Both Christ and the Apostles came of the will of God in the appointed order." The Apostles came as Christ had come, by virtue of a "charge received," which determined their office; so "they, too, as they preached everywhere, in

country and town," handed on the charge; "they appointed their first-fruits to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe." "And this they did in no new fashion, for thus saith the Scripture: 'I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith.'"

More than this, the Apostles took peculiar care about this, for they knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there "would be strife over the name of the bishop's office. For this cause, therefore, having received particular fore-knowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterwards they provided a continuance that, if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration." Such was the careful conduct of those, our first builders, the holy Apostles, acting under the direct guidance of our Lord Himself, in clear and deliberate consciousness of the issue; and, in so acting, they proved their accord with "blessed Moses, who was a faithful servant in all his house," and who quelled the disorder about the priesthood under the direct approval of God's manifested decision,—they showed their entire harmony with the concordant peace of all God's handiwork. Yet it is in direct collision with this their ruling, so clearly planned, so highly sanctioned, that the Corinthian faction has placed itself. It is those very men, whose appointment was decreed, and, even in some cases, actually

made by the Apostles themselves with the purpose of staying all disorder and discussion, who are now thrust out of office. "Those, therefore, who were appointed by them (the Apostles), or afterward by other men of repute, with the consent of the whole Church, and have ministered to the flock of Christ unblameably, in lowliness of mind, with all modesty—these men we consider to be unjustly thrust out from their ministration." "For we see that ye have displaced certain persons from the ministrations which they have kept blamelessly."

So St. Clement leads up to, and presses home, the nature of the charge he has to make. He suddenly applies to the case before him all the principles and precepts that he has so masterfully massed; and thus places the Corinthians in a state of flagrant contradiction with the first laws of God's dealings, with the facts of nature, with the significance of history, with the methods of social practice, with the prophetic types of Judaism, with the seemliness of God's mode of revelation through Christ, with the express inspirations and ordinances of the Apostles. Verily, then, "it will be no light sin, if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the bishop's office." No light sin, indeed, for according to St. Clement's argument, it expresses a revolt against the very character of God and of His kingdom; and therefore he is not afraid to trace its existence to a serious

moral collapse in its authors. "A detestable and unholy sedition," he calls it, "kindled by a few headstrong and self-willed men." It has brought into question and disrepute all the ancient fame of the Corinthian Church for piety and good living. "Your name," he says, "once revered, and renowned, and lovely, hath been greatly reviled." He calls to mind how all the old renown of theirs was bound up with the love of order and of submission to authority. It was impossible of old to stay in Corinth without feeling all about one the grace of holiness. "Who that had sojourned among you did not approve your most virtuous and steadfast faith?" So St. Clement speaks in the first chapter of his letter, introducing, with gracious and effective courtesy, his severer warnings, by an appeal to the lovely and pleasant memories that the Corinthian Church had stored up for itself in the heart of the whole Christian body. "Who did not admire your sober and forbearing piety in Christ? Who did not publish abroad your magnificent disposition to hospitality? Who did not congratulate you on your perfect and sound knowledge?" And why? Why was there all this evident favour about Corinth? Because "ye walked after the ordinances of God, submitting yourselves to your rulers, and rendering to the older men among you the honour which is their due. On the young ye enjoined modest and seemly thoughts; the women

ye taught to keep in the rule of obedience, and to manage the affairs of their household in seemliness. Ye were all lowly in mind, and free from arrogance, yielding rather than claiming submission; giving heed unto God's words, ye laid them up diligently in your hearts, and His sufferings were before your eyes. Thus it was that a profound and rich peace was given to all, and an insatiable desire of doing good. An abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit fell upon all; full of holy counsel, in excellent zeal and with a pious confidence, ye stretched out your hands to Almighty God. Ye were sincere, and simple, and free from malice. Ye mourned over the transgressions of your neighbours. Ye repented not of any well-doing. Ye performed all your duties in the fear of Him. The commandments of the Lord were written in the tables of your heart."

Such had Corinth been, such was the high and lovely life of an early Christian Church; and can we be surprised that a fearful wonder crept over that Roman Empire which had laboured so hard after peace, and yet found everywhere only a sword without and a famine or a plague within, as it felt in its midst the growth of a life such as here we read of, a common life of many held together in sweetness and peace by the breath of so gracious, so holy, so excellent a love? Do we not still feel the tears in our eyes to think how the picture of profound and

confident piety which St. Clement has described in many more words than I have room to quote, reads to us still like a far-off dream?

But already, for Corinth, this picture had passed into the past. Her very beauty had been her ruin. "My beloved ate, and drank, and waxed fat, and kicked." From this moral decline came the beginning of the outward trouble. "Hence came jealousy and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and tumult. So men were stirred up, the mean against the honourable, the young against the elder. Righteousness and peace stand aloof, while each man goeth after the lusts of his own evil heart, concerning an unrighteous and ungodly jealousy such as that through which death entered into the world." And so he is not afraid, in the following chapter, to connect the temper of their revolt against the presbyters with the mind of Cain, who wrought a brother's murder; of Joseph's brethren, who sold him into bondage; of Aaron and Miriam, who were lodged without the camp; of Dathan and Abiram, who went down alive into Hades; of Saul, who drove from his presence the man after God's own heart; of the persecutors by whom St. Peter had passed to his appointed place of glory; by whom St. Paul had been seven times in bonds, driven into exile, stoned, and at the end had been slain; by whom a vast multitude of the elect, matrons, and maidens, and slave girls, had

suffered cruel and unholy insults, and so had gone to that goal in the race of faith. All this came through jealousy, and by jealousy came strife, "jealousy and strife such as have, before now, overthrown great cities and uprooted great nations;" and it is this very evil of strife and jealousy which is overturning the order and discipline of the Church in Corinth; and since the revolt runs down so deeply into moral sin, it is intelligible why St. Clement proposes so solemn, so serious a cure. "Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ, that we may win the grace of repentance. Let us fall down before God as suppliants, and betake ourselves unto His compassions, forsaking the strife and the jealousy which leadeth unto death. Let us be lowly-minded, laying aside all arrogance, and conceit, and folly, and anger; let us be good one toward another, according to the compassion and sweetness of Him that made us; for Christ is with them that are lowly of mind. . . . . For as God liveth, and the Lord Jesus Christ liveth, and the Holy Ghost, who are the faith and hope of the elect, so surely shall he who in lowliness of mind hath without regret performed the ordinances of God, be enrolled among the number of them that are saved." And then he breaks out, with the memory of that epistle of St. Paul in his heart to which he had just called the attention of the Corinthians, into a noble praise of love. "Who

can declare the bond of the love of God? Who is sufficient to tell the majesty of its beauty? Love joineth us unto God; love covereth a multitude of sins; love is long-suffering in all things; love hath no divisions; love maketh no seditions; love doeth all things in concord. In love were all the elect of God made perfect; in love the Master took us to Himself; for the love which he had towards us, Jesus Christ our Lord hath given His blood for us by the will of God, and His flesh for our flesh, and His life for our lives. Let us therefore, dearly beloved, entreat of His mercy that we may be found blameless in love, standing apart from the factiousness of men."

Such is the character of St. Clement's treatment of the crisis of Corinth; and his judgment is as clear and decisive as his treatment of the question at issue would lead us to expect. If any one who is noble-minded and generous, finds himself to be in any way the cause of the trouble, "let him say, if by reason of me there be strife and faction, I retire, I depart whither ye will, I do that which is ordered by the people; only let the flock of Christ be at peace with its appointed presbyters. Thus will they do who live as citizens of that kingdom of God which bringeth no regrets."

And for those that laid the foundation of this schism, "submit yourselves unto the presbyters, and receive chastisement unto repentance, bending the

knees of your heart. Learn to submit yourselves, laying aside the arrogant stubbornness of your tongue." And for the whole body that has thus brought down to shameful and unworthy ill-fame the "very steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians," it has the way of penitence open to it. "Let us therefore root this out quickly, let us fall down before the Master, and entreat Him with tears that He may be reconciled unto us, and may return us to that pure and seemly conduct which belongeth to our love of the brethren."

The advice and decision so given are interwoven throughout with appeals to the memories which the Old Testament history has ingrained into the mind of the Church. St. Clement is never tired of bringing forward what "the Scripture saith." He quotes whole pages from the law and the prophets; he makes continual use of the old phrases and metaphors; he can hardly choose any passage of advice or exhortation, without passing into a text, and for everything he has an Old Testament example: Enoch, Lot, Abraham, Rahab, Moses, Job, Jacob, David, Elijah, Elisha, Ezekiel, Daniel, all pass before our eyes, within the brief compass of this epistle "consider such," "imitate such," "cleave to such," is St. Clement's constant cry. We feel ourselves back in the days when the old Scriptures were still the chief devotional literature of the Church, in which

she found all the food on which her spirit fed, food for meditation, for exhortation, for prayer, and praise, and penitence. The old histories were made alive in the breath of Christ who was their entire fulfilment: and Christians who live in Christ are, by that very life, made one with the saints and heroes who looked for the promises, one with those who went about "in goat-skins and sheep-skins, preaching the coming of Christ." So it is that St. Clement is so full of the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews; he is akin to all its spirit of analogy; he rejoices in its parallel of the worship of Mosaic sacrifices to that of the Christian altar and temple; he has always in his heart and on his lips the bead-roll of that magnificent aristocracy of suffering, who, by faith "obtained a good report." And, as he delights, with the Epistle to the Hebrews, to ascribe unity of ground-principle to all religious aspiration, so he is not afraid to ascribe, with St. Paul, unity of principle to all divine revelations, and, therefore, for him, it is perfectly intelligible to say of the old Davidical psalm, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered," that "this declaration of blessedness was pronounced upon them who have been elected by God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" perfectly intelligible again to assert, "Christ Himself, through His Holy Spirit, thus inviteth us: 'Come ye, children, hearken unto me: I will teach

you to fear the Lord.'" We know ourselves, in all this, to be not far removed from the spirit which speaks in the Epistle to the Romans, and the first chapters of St. Matthew, and the earliest speeches of St. Peter; and it is in tune with such a spirit to move freely about the whole compass of the old books, not over careful of context, or literal accuracy; catching up from one place as much as from another the phrases which you need; mixing, fusing, welding together passages which, however variantly produced, yet all spring from a single source, and are sealed with the same authority; and so St. Clement can, for instance, make the Scripture say, "Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, and thousand thousands ministered unto him, and they cried, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth, the whole earth is full of Thy glory," though it was Daniel that saw the vision and Isaiah that heard the voice.

It is hardly possible here to discuss the relation of St. Clement to the books of the New Testament, and especially to the Canonical Gospels; it would involve too much minute detail. I must confine myself to the general statement, that he constantly refers to sayings of our Lord, which, in the form in which he quotes them, exhibit at least as free a handling as that with which he uses the Old Testament. The sayings which he is quoting are all to be found in our four Gospels; but the form in which they

appear in our Gospel is not exactly reproduced in St. Clement; and the differences of detail are peculiar enough to make it possible (according to good critics) that he may have had access to other forms of the evangelical tradition than those which we possess. That is a cautious and guarded statement, but appears to be about on a level with the facts—at least, it cannot be accused of going beyond them. Only those can be disturbed by such a possibility, who have not faced the differences between the reports of the Canonical Gospels themselves. St. Clement does not differ more from them than they differ from one another. The living oral tradition may have been still strong enough in Rome to modify St. Clement's reliance on the written records. He and others living with him had received the Gospel story from the lips of the Apostles, not from the pens of their subordinates; and their memory of this spoken word would still affect their use of the written word. Anyhow, however, it remains positively clear that our Gospels are exact representations of the tradition known to St. Clement; they cover the same ground exactly, they tell the same tale exactly, they convey the same purport exactly, they have the same style, and stamp, and temper exactly; and he seems to assume that all he quotes will be known as definitively and familiarly to the Corinthians as the Old Testament itself.

The letter rises towards the end into a prayer (as we learn from the newly-discovered ending, which a Greek has discovered for us in the depths of a Constantinopolitan library), a prayer of peculiar beauty, known to us already in outline from the Liturgy of St. Clement attached to the Apostolical Constitutions, and bearing many traces of Jewish devotional language.

Then, finally, he concludes, urging the Corinthians to render obedience unto the things written by him "through the Holy Spirit," so valid is his counsel, and praying earnestly that "the All-seeing God and Master of Spirits, and Lord of all flesh, who chose the Lord Jesus Christ and us through Him for a peculiar people, may grant unto every soul that is called after His excellent and holy name, faith, fear, peace, patience, long-suffering, temperance, chastity, and soberness, that they may be well-pleasing unto His name through our high-priest and guardian Jesus Christ, through whom unto Him be glory and majesty, might and honour, both now and for ever. Amen."

They are to send back speedily the messengers, Claudius, Ephatus, and Valerius Bito, "faithful and prudent men, who have walked among us from youth unto old age unblamably," "with Fortunatus also, in peace and with joy."

And so, "may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all men in all places, who have been called by God and through Him, through

whom is glory and honour, power and greatness, and eternal dominion unto Him from the ages past and for ever and ever. Amen."

Such is the famous letter which the Corinthian Church laid up in its treasures as only second in value to the Epistles that had been addressed to it by St. Paul. On Sundays it would open it to read aloud in the public congregations.

Nor was reverence for this letter confined to Corinth. Its influence spread far and wide in the West; it seems to have established St. Clement in a position inferior to none but the Apostles themselves for dignity and honour, and from henceforth his fame as a writer became the common possession of the whole body in its widest extent, so that the Catholic and the Ebionite alike attempted to conjure with his name.

Thus his original work became the nucleus round which clustered literature of all kinds; letters modelled on his own, now in Syriac, now in Greek; homilies and recognitions hungry for the support of his authoritative sanction; canons, and constitutions, and liturgies, such as were felt to be attributable to the mighty administrator of the Roman see. We seem to feel, in all this, how much these first literary efforts of the Church outside the limits which we call canonical became both a model and an inspiration of intellectual achievement. Christianity recognised in them the evidence that its literary power had not exhausted

itself in the authoritative writings of the Apostles and their immediate companions. It was already, indeed, conscious that some peculiar distinction severed off from all else that body of literature which fell most directly under the undiminished control of the Spirit that came down at Pentecost; but yet it also seems to have felt that such a distinction could be drawn without in the least stifling the intellectual aspirations, or cramping the intellectual range, of the after-Church. The division between the canonical and the uncanonical work was no abstract line, hard, rigid, mechanical; rather, it was a real and concrete difference of fact, which can be recognised quite absolutely in the mass, yet can shade itself off by degrees, until the passage over the border from one state of things to the other can be effected without any violent or irrational leap. Such is the character of all actual differences in the real world of Nature; and Christianity is real and natural as Nature herself; it does not deny a difference because it breaks up into such degrees, as supply a rational connection between the differing things; and in Clement it saw the impersonation of this unity in difference between its inspired and its uninspired literature. He bridged the gulf; he wrote as many a man after him might write, and was, in this light, a symbol and a pledge of the worth of all uncanonical work, which, therefore, delighted to range itself under his sanction and fathering name; and yet,

he who thus championed the lower work stood so near to the higher, that his epistle could be bound up and read publicly, with the rest of the primary Scriptures; and the very fancy which imagined him the author of so many post-apostolic productions, was also not afraid to picture him as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or of the Acts of the Apostles.

What right the Ebionite had to do business with the name of St. Clement we need hardly discuss, now that we have read his own words; his appeal is made from the memory and glory of St. Paul to a Church honoured by St. Paul's foundation and epistles; his position is clear and undoubted, and, when we consider the wide and ready acceptance which his letter found in the Church, we must feel ourselves in possession of unimpeachable evidence for the catholic character of the Church's earliest faith. Yet, in much of St. Clement's temper, in his intense trust in the living reality of the Old Testament teaching, in his strong sense of discipline, we cannot but recognise tones that recall St. James and St. Peter; and in recognising them we have our only clue to the honour paid him by the Ebionite heretics. Only, if so, we can hardly resist the conclusion, that if Clement represents the most favourable sanction which the Ebionites could find for themselves in the high places of the Church, then the case for the existence of a strong and stormy Petrine party within the Church, in

collision with the Pauline gospel, drops out of court for ever. I will add a few words more on the subject later on.

What effect this letter had on the quarrels at Corinth we can only guess. We know how that Church prized the letter eighty years later, and we may perhaps conclude that it acknowledged in it the means of its own security and preservation. Certainly, the very continuance of the Corinthian Church would have been impossible if that spirit had prevailed which St. Clement was attacking and denouncing. The large influence of the letter, again, over the main body of the Churches would hardly be likely, unless it had succeeded in asserting its authority over the immediate case with which it was actually dealing. But it must be confessed that the disturbing elements which agitated the Church of that luxurious and undisciplined city, and which before now had taxed so severely the authority of St. Paul himself, may have been repressed, but were hardly eradicated, by the force of St. Clement's appeal. The famous and historic church of Corinth was unable to retain its natural pre-eminence; it drops quickly from the first lines of the Christian advance; it disappears out of the ecclesiastical records; it did not apparently possess the secret of stable strength; and, as we read the arguments addressed to it by St. Paul and St. Clement, and consider the conditions of life and

of moral temper that made such arguments necessary, we are no longer surprised at this swift disappearance. In both cases we are astounded by the audacity with which a principle has been pressed to some desperate conclusion, with a total lack of the balance and self-restraint which belong to common-sense: in the one case, St. Paul has to appeal to the primal principles of morality; in the other, St. Clement has to call to mind the primal laws of all organic life: in both we feel ourselves in the presence of that empty and superficial vanity which lacks all sense of submission to the complex necessities of actual reality.

Two subjects must be noticed on which the Epistle offers evidence of the first importance. First, *on the organization of the Church;* and secondly, *on its theology.*

The evidence which it offers on the first point is a little mixed. We have seen how strong, how intense, is the assertion, in the letter, of the organic character of the Church. It is justified, indeed, by expediency; but it is not expediency on which it is based. On the contrary, the existence of a definite order and system is shown to be in accord with the whole scheme of God's creation, with the mind of God Himself; so much so, that to rebel against an orderly rule is to be at variance with the will of the Creator, and in contradiction with the moral code of Christ. Every rational and pure mind would, therefore, expect a definite

scheme in Christ's Church, according to which all things in it would find their settled time and place; and it is then distinctly stated that this expectation was verified in that such a scheme had indeed been planned for the Church by Christ himself, and by His Apostles under His peculiar sanction. This scheme of organization certainly included some hierarchical gradations which corresponded (in plan and purpose, if not in exact detail) with the order of high-priest, priest, and Levite, in the Jewish system, and these gradations were appointed in view of certain liturgical offices, which belonged to an act of offering (*προσφορά*). This act of worship required a fixed and formal spot at which it should be done, and definite functions for its ministrants, on the same principle as that by which the acts of worship and sacrifice under the old covenant were confined to a particular spot in a particular temple, with an allotted place for each person engaged. The revolt against the presbyters, then, involved and intended a break-up of the regular and official modes of worship, especially of the mode in which an act of worship closely allied to the sacrifices of the old Temple was carried on. This act of worship is a "giving of thanks"—*εὐχαριστία*; it is *then* that each man is urged to confine himself to his allotted place in the holy service (*λειτουργίας*); it is *then* that he is urged to consider how the sacrifice and the oblation were offered at

Jerusalem; and it is in reference to this act, that he is solemnly warned to remember that the priest who broke the order of Jewish sacrifices was liable to the punishment of death.

He connects the form of this Thanksgiving with the express command of the Lord; it was the Lord who fixed a definite time and order for the offerings and the services, and decreed by whom they should be celebrated. It was in view of this service, and in order to guard against the troubles that were to arise concerning its ministry, our Lord commissioned His Apostles to appoint others as He had Himself appointed them; and they, therefore, wherever they evangelized, had established in office some of those who had been the first to receive their gospel, selecting them under the scrutiny of the Spirit, and with the consent of the Church; this they did with the perfect and deliberate intention that these men so appointed should succeed to their liturgical functions when they themselves had fallen asleep. These men were they of whom the prophet spoke when he cried, "I will establish their bishops in justice, and their deacons in faith."

Such is St. Clement's general position; it is clear and decisive enough. But when we come to the details, it is not so easy to seize the exact character of this ministry of which he speaks so resolutely. Does he imply two orders, or three? The answer is inde-

terminate. He is writing about presbyters; he generally uses that name; but in the passage above referred to, the whole ministry is spoken of under the two heads, bishops (ἐπισκόποι) and deacons; and so it is bishops and deacons who are appointed to the service of thanksgiving and offerings, and to whom is delegated the office of the Apostles in these matters. "Bishops," then, and "presbyters," are still to him convertible terms, to some extent; there is no mention of there being a single chief bishop in the Corinthian Church separate from the united presbytery; for, not only in the case of the worship, but also in matters of rule and governance, it is to these same presbyters as a body that the Church is subordinate. What the inner constitution of that body was, we are not told. There may have been a chief seat in it, without which it would not have had such high powers attributed to it. We do not think that the words of St. Clement exclude such a possibility, but they say nothing of it.[1] The single passage in which he may refer to a threefold ministry is that in which he applies to the Christian service the language of the Old Testament ritual, with high priest, priest, and Levite; but, in this case, it may be argued that St. Clement only

[1] Cf. Epistle of St. Ignatius to the Romans, and of St. Polycarp to the Philippians, both of which address what we know to be Episcopal Churches, without hinting at the existence of their bishops.

intends a general, and not an exact and particular, parallelism; and, moreover, even if he intends the exact parallel, it is not impossible that he might mean our Lord Himself as the High-Priest.

The language, then, addressed to the Corinthian Church is indistinct, to say the least, about its possession of a chief ruler; while, in the matter of the liturgical offices, it is apparently a dual ministry that inherits the functions and authority of the Apostles, *i.e.*, bishops and deacons. On the other hand, the position of St. Clement himself at Rome seems, from the tone and character of his epistle, to be marked by an official pre-eminence such as does not appear to have belonged, at that moment, to any single chief at Corinth. It is true, that he does not write in his own person; nor does he anywhere introduce his own name. The letter professes to be sent by the entire Roman Church. It is "the Church of God sojourning at Rome," which sends greeting to "the Church of God sojourning at Corinth." It is "We" of Rome who are anxious about the disorder; it is in the name of the whole body that judgment is given. But, granting all this, it is evident that the letter is no formal or composite production of a committee. It is full of individuality; it shows the free working of a single mind throughout; it is St. Clement himself who pours out his exhortations and advice, with unhampered and unquestioned liberty. And if

so, then, though the plural number may prove the unity of mind between him and his Church, and, more than this, may show that the weight of authority came from the compacted body of the Church, and not from its Head alone, yet the very confidence with which St. Clement puts forward his own voice and judgment as the undoubted utterance of the Roman congregation, clearly evidences the assured security of his position, and obliges us to believe that, at Rome at least, the Church had no doubt who was its spokesman and chief. St. Clement may write as the embodied representative of Rome, but there is no sign of his writing at the dictation of others, nor yet of his being merely put forward by the rest for personal merits. In the first case, the letter would not have been so characteristically individual. In the second case, he must have explained his prominence; he must have apologized, he must have gently qualified his apparent presumption of tone, his claim to speak with authority. As it is, he speaks himself, but he has no doubt or anxiety about his right so to speak; he feels no need to account for his professing so definitely to hold in himself the power of the whole Church of Rome. He is Rome; and the Corinthians will know why; they will not think of questioning it, nor will they wonder at all. So, in this confident assurance, he pronounces, in the name of his congregation, a judgment, which, without implying any positive

jurisdiction, certainly claims to be of most significant importance. "Do you, then, who laid the first foundation of this sedition, submit yourselves unto your presbyters; be instructed in penitence, bending the knees of your heart. But if certain persons should be disobedient unto the words spoken by God through us, they will entangle themselves in no slight transgression, but we shall be guiltless of this sin."

The condition, of things, then, at Rome, moves far more clearly in familiar episcopal lines, than seems to have been the case at Corinth; and, moreover, appears to assume that such a condition would be intelligible to Corinth without any explanation. It may be that Corinth was exceptionally backward in organization; yet Clement speaks with immense respect of the former condition of the Corinthian Church, before the "impious and detestable schism." It seems to have been in the very first rank of the Christian society, a high and pure model of Christian living; and this good life had been marked by peculiar respect for authority. There is no hint given of insufficient or imperfect order. Still, it would hardly be a moment, perhaps, now, when things were so much worse, for St. Clement to criticise any inadequacies in that better time which he was employing all his powers to uplift before the imagination of the Corinthians, as an ideal of blessed peace and godliness.

But, after all, had they really been without a chief

presbyter in that good time? May it not have been during a vacancy in the chief seat that the revolt against the presbyters occurred? In favour of this, it is noticeable that St. Clement speaks of some other officers in those former days, besides the presbyters. "Ye were, then, subject to *your authorities*," he says, "and used to obey the presbyters who were among you with due honour." Who are these "authorities" (*οἱ ἡγουμένοι*)?[1] It is hard to say; the name is a familiar title in early Christian literature; it belongs in the New Testament to a leadership "in the Lord," which included "admonishing" and "preaching," and "cure of souls"; but it is generally used in the plural number, and is too indefinite in its character for us to be able to identify it with the office of bishop. All we can say is, that in Corinth, before the disturbance, there were certain supreme officers who were not entirely correlative with the presbyters.

We feel in all this our lack of precise information; something is obviously wanting in our knowledge of the consolidation of the episcopal system; a question or two to St. Clement, if he were here, would clear it all up, probably, but without this it is impossible to make absolute assertions. At any rate, he himself seems to have no difficulty whatever in reconciling his own position at Rome with the state of things at Corinth.

[1] Cf. Heb. xiii. 7, 17; 1 Thess. v. 12. By Justin Martyr's time *ὁ προεστὼς* seems to mean the bishop.

To us, who hold, with St. Clement, the *essentiality* of order and system to the Christian society, and their clear derivation from the Apostles themselves, it is of no vital importance to know what gradual disentanglement that order and system may have had, here and there, to undergo, during obscure crises in the first days.

The only real question is, was there an external organization provided deliberately for the Church by Christ and His Apostles, which organization, wherever it completed itself, proved to be threefold? and if there was, what were its chief purposes? The answer of St. Clement is distinct and unhesitating; there was such an organization carefully ensured, and its purposes were to rule, and to minister the office of the Thanksgiving—the sacred service of the offerings.

A few words on St. Clement's theology.

Strong as is the stress he lays on ecclesiastical order, his doctrine is vividly Pauline. He professes enthusiastic admiration for the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who "had taught the whole world"; he constantly uses Pauline language intermixed with his own with that ease which a constant familiarity and close affection can alone give. It is enough to quote a passage from the xxxii. chapter to show how the tones of St. Paul are sounding through the letter. "We, therefore, who have been called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by

our own wisdom, or intelligence, or piety, or works which we have done in holiness of heart; but by the faith, by which the Omnipotent God has justified all men from the very first, to whom be glory for ever and ever." The constant doxologies are moulded, as this last, on the mind of St. Paul. We are redeemed by Christ's blood, "the blood so precious to God." "We fix our eyes on the blood of Christ, which He offered for all the world, poured out for the sake of our salvation." We pray that God, by the justice of Christ, may be reconciled to us. So, too, we are "hallowed in the will of God"; "we are adorned with a noble citizenship"; "we are striving in the race of life; we are made full of peace." Nor are we shut out from true γνῶσις; we are admitted into the "depth of the knowledge" of God. We have "one God" and "one Christ," "one Spirit," "one calling in Christ." We are "the members of Christ"; we belong to His very body.

It is in accord with all this that St. Clement should so constantly take pleasure in the Epistle to the Hebrews. But has St. Clement any idea of this language being in conflict with any other Christian school, or with the tone of St. Peter? with the temper of the Twelve? Far from it. It is to the Twelve Apostles that he is appealing as the undoubted authorities in the controversy with the Corinthians. It is with them that he claims to be in entire union. St. Peter stands

at the very head of all the magnificent exemplars with which the Church had endowed the world; he is spoken of as the champion, and the proud possession of the very Church over which St. Clement presides; it is implied that his heroic death is within memory; in it St. Paul is his nearest companion. Tradition emphasizes all this by definitely connecting the consecration or ordination of St. Clement with the name of St. Peter; and so strong is the Petrine relationship, that it can be pressed by the Clementine recognitions into the service of their conflict with St. Paul. St. Clement knows nothing of violent apostolic dissensions; to him the possibility of opposing Cephas, and Paul, and Apollos is already far in the past; it belonged to a former state of things. He is himself a son of St. Peter, and he writes with absolute security to a Church of St. Paul. He writes as if his theology was undoubted, and familiar; it is not argued or explained; it shows no anxiety whatever about its acceptance; it is almost entirely hortative; it is an appeal to what is acknowledged and well known. The language of the various Apostles is already mingled together into the commonplace of Christians one with another; the ardour of a Christian expresses itself instinctively in phrases that recal them all, as in St. Clement's panegyric on Love, where he links the words of St. Peter and St. Paul to the temper of St. John. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins,"

he cries with the chief of the Twelve. Charity "feareth all things, endureth all things," he continues, with the Apostle of the Gentiles. "For the charity which He had for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord, gave His blood for us in the will of God, His flesh for our flesh, His life for our life," he closes with words that are filled with the voice of the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Such was St. Clement, as far as we may know him; wide, large-hearted, clear-thoughted, devout, he united in himself the culture of the Greek, the dignity of the Roman, the piety of the Jew, the holy grace and fervour of the Christian; not distinctly originative, he possessed in himself, with depth and reality, the many thoughts of differing teachers; in these he moved freely and naturally, holding them all within the unity of a strong mind with beautiful balance and consistency. Thus trained and perfected, endowed with the gift of earnest and tender devotion, he had power to uphold the Church to the level of her mighty task of ordering the world into a catholic and harmonious unity; he sustained in it that sober stability which the East demanded of the West; he preserved to it that spirit of wide orderliness, whose secret he had perhaps known by long experience in the palaces of Rome.

He died, we know not when or how, but of this, at least, the Church was assured, as she laid his body

to rest in the Roman dust, that the faith of Christ would be no mere flash that shines for an instant and is gone—that the power of Christ had not died out of the world when the sword and the cross of Nero slew St. Peter and St. Paul, but that there still had been left to her the wisdom to see her work in all its width, the strength to control and govern her members, the force and ardour to persuade and to subdue souls, the vigour to act in her behalf in perilous days, the weight of character which upholds her authority and ensures for her reverence, the prayerful zeal which can lead and mould her worship. Such a chief she had found in St. Clement; and, with such a pledge for her enduring continuance, she might well be of good cheer.

ST. IGNATIUS.

WE have been living as yet in the company of the steady and earnest temper of the West; we have been in contact with the imposing sobriety, the persuasive dignity, the strength of the Roman citizen; we have felt how the Church drew into its ranks the wisdom and breadth of vision which personal holiness so aptly crowns with reverence and majesty.

Let us turn ourselves right round to give welcome to a very different temper. We have listened in awe to the voice, as it were, of the judge delivering his sentence from the throne; we are now to be startled by the ringing cry of the trumpet-call—sharp, stirring, penetrating—sounding for the battle. The fire of the hot East bursts in, like a sun, strong and impassioned; a vivid personality, in flame with love, flashes in upon the world, quivering as a sword of the cherubim; a rhetoric in which the rapid, electric thought breaks out of the strained and formless chaos of the *imagination*, as lightning out of the rolling and dark thunder-cloud; a theology which, by the intense passion of metaphor, forces an almost violent entrance into the

secrets of the Most High; a morality which can carry forward into the heights of holiness the madness of faith, the extravagance of zeal, the recklessness of enthusiasm, the audacity of love, dragging them all into the service of Christ at the chariot-wheels of God's triumph—such are the characteristics of Ignatius of Antioch. Let us see how the Church puts out to the use of her Lord the gifts that are brought to her by human heroism.

The story of Ignatius begins and ends with the story of his death. It is his death that stamped itself, with a peculiar vividness, on the memory of the Church; it is his death which made him a writer, a theologian. Of his life, before his death, we have only scattered hints. Born far back in the first century, we know not where, nor of what parents; given the Roman name, Ignatius or Egnatius, but possessed with a genius that drives our fancy to picture him of Syrian blood; called by the Christians θεοφόρος, the man who carried God in his heart, a hearer of the Apostles themselves, "drinking at the spiritual fountains" of the faith, a fellow-pupil with Polycarp in the school of the Beloved Disciple, he was, according to the traditions of the ecclesiastic historians, elected and consecrated to the chair of that ancient Church, as the second of those who followed St. Peter in the bishopric. The definiteness of this language may belong to the spirit of a later day than that of

Ignatius, but its stringency and general consistency at least point to an existence of a stricter *régime* at Antioch than we have to deal with at Corinth. The tradition varied as to Ignatius's connection with St. Peter or St. Paul, but it did not waver at all in its assertion that, after the day of St. Peter at Antioch, came the chieftaincy, first of Euodius, secondly of Ignatius.

It has been supposed that these two may have been coterminous, representing the two Apostles of the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision, and that only at the death of the former did Ignatius attain to the sole supremacy; so explaining how the earliest tradition attributed the appointment of Euodius to St. Peter, of Ignatius to St. Paul, and yet called Ignatius the second from St. Peter. Be this as it may (and it is not, we suppose, improbable), by the time of his death Ignatius had become sole bishop of Antioch, with a most strenuous and ardent conviction of the value of that episcopal supremacy. We know nothing of his administration, but it certainly was remarkable and energetic enough to make him the prominent object of the heathen hostility, so that, when that hostility broke out into violent opposition, he could concentrate upon himself alone all the wrath of an insulted empire. How this was effected we cannot exactly be sure; according to the Christian tradition he voluntarily exposed himself to the Emperor's

attack in order to save a Church for whose stability under menace he trembled. On the other hand, the Imperial power was, at this time, unwilling to instigate any onslaught on Christianity, unless compelled to do so by popular clamour; and popular clamour was prone to find a vent for its excitement by singling out and denouncing some obvious chief.

It is entirely in the manner of St. Ignatius to throw himself into the breach; but he would hardly have had an opening for so doing, unless the attack had already shown signs of a peculiar virulence against himself. It is perfectly clear, from his letters, that his personality is one that could not be concealed or undiscovered; his attitude of mind must have been too positive and too distinct not to be provocative; his ardent insistance on the organic unity of the congregation must have run along with a sense of the aggressive actuality of the Christian Church, which, under such auspices, would soon make itself felt, as a compact counter-fact, on the social scheme of Rome; and, evidently, as he knew himself to be the moving spirit of this former organization, so it must have happened that the heathen who first turned their eyes with fear and dismay toward this resolute growth of a new society, would find their vision filled with the presence of that champion who spent all his force on the effort of fixing and establishing this defiant solidarity. Everything, then, conspired to force

Ignatius forward; the fury of the attack, hungry for an aim, could hardly have helped fixing itself on a figure so pre-eminent. The temper of St. Ignatius was ready enough to welcome for himself the peril of the chieftaincy.

We have ventured to dwell a little on what may seem to be of small importance, because it may tend to account for what otherwise lacks explanation, *i.e.*, how the persecution came about which slew Ignatius. Every account attributes it to Trajan; the acts of his martyrdom, Eusebius, Jerome says in the tenth or eleventh year of Trajan, that is, about 107 A.D. Later critics have argued for 115 A.D., on the ground that Trajan was never in Antioch till then. Whichever of these two be the precise date, it is Trajan under whom Ignatius suffers; and with Trajan's mode of action in these cases we are already acquainted, from the famous letter in answer to Pliny's difficulties in dealing with Christians. The Emperor recognized, in that letter, the necessity of severe treatment if the Roman authorities were once definitely challenged; but he saw strong reasons for preventing, as far as possible, any such challenge, seeing that the Christians were so little inclined to press their principles to a dangerous and revolutionary issue. He would avoid action, then, if he could; he would wait for damaging information, rather than seek it. The attack is, therefore, not likely to have begun with the Emperor. But it is

in entire consistency with his old letter, if he suffered the attack to proceed when circumstances forced the question forward, and thus we arrive at a possible solution of the problem how the death of Ignatius stands so alone in those years. There is no record of a general persecution at that time; no one shares his martyrdom; his very letters seem to imply that the Churches to which he wrote were not in immediate danger; his whole tone breathes the exalted passion of one who feels himself to be uplifted into a tragic loneliness, with the gaze of the world concentrated upon him. His case is isolated, then; it presents a picture of singular severity in the midst of a general freedom from disturbance; and this has been used to discredit the probability of his martyrdom; but, surely, it is exactly in harmony with the principles of Trajan's policy towards the Church. That policy directly and obviously tended to secure a *general* peace, which nevertheless would be liable to be broken through wherever the local circumstances were violent enough to necessitate Imperial action. The action, Trajan acknowledged, must *then* be in the direction of extreme severity. The Christian society *was* a defiance to Roman discipline: there was no denying this. All he attempted was the limitation of this action. All that is needed, then, to reconcile this solitary martyrdom with the general tranquillity, is the existence of local conditions at Antioch which would bring the

acknowledged antagonism of the Empire and Christianity into peculiar distinctness. Now, the convictions of Ignatius were, as I have said, of exactly the character to sharpen and intensify the antagonism. He had thrown all the ardour of his undaunted zeal into the realization of the Church's organic structure; and this, while forcing him himself forward into the public notice as the express embodiment of the Church's structural force, would also place him before the governing power of Rome in exactly that character which that power most definitely dreaded and detested, the character of a chief officer wielding the authority of a secret society. It was the formation of an "imperium" outside her own; above all, of an alien "imperium" bonded together by an attachment to strange and unauthorized sanctities which Rome was bound to break up and annul; and the firm establishment of such an imperium was the passion of Ignatius's heart. No wonder, then, that even when persecutions were rare, and Rome was not unmerciful, Ignatius, the eager asserter of the Church's episcopal unity, should find himself condemned, suddenly, to the cruellest death by a government as gentle as that of Trajan. St. Ignatius, as, after him, so many more, was sealing with his blood the reality of that episcopal office which retained for the Church the vigour of a living organism such as would ensure her continuance when she passed from under the hands of the last of the

Apostles; there is the pathos of martyrdom in the fervour of the Saint's appeal to the Church, to cling to that unity of centre which was the reason of his own dying; and no wonder that the Church accepted and believed in the essentiality of an office which the holders were ready to prove by their death, and which the persecution of the enemy singled out as the chief object of their dread and aversion. Episcopacy was being proved by the very test that the Lord had prescribed: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you; rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

We have speculated on the general causes of St. Ignatius's trial and condemnation: we must return to the details. His "acts" are our only authorities here; and these acts, though there seems to be ground for supposing them to be a genuine representation of the memory preserved at Rome of his death, can hardly be relied on as an exact account, especially of the earlier scenes of the trial. Still, the impression of Ignatius, that is given by them, is vivid and consistent, and may well be trusted. They tell us that he had rejoiced in the quiet enjoyed by his Church, fearing lest they were too weak to bear the fiery trial of persecution, but, for himself, he had ever been anxious for that perfected familiarity of intercourse with the Lord, which could be attained and assured only in the good confession of martyrdom,

without which you could never reach to the most excellent love for Christ. So he waited in patience, enlightening his mind with constant study of the Scriptures, until he gained his secret prayer. The persecution began; death was threatened by the victorious emperor (according to these acts) against all who would not sacrifice: "the strong soldier of Christ," alarmed for the courage of his flock, was voluntarily taken before Trajan, who was then halting in Antioch for a brief pause in his hasty march against the Parthians. In this account, the reasons for Trajan's action cannot, we believe, be relied upon; but, when we come to the trial itself, the answers of Ignatius are so vivid and vigorous that it is almost impossible not to attribute them, in some measure, to him himself.

"Who are you, O ungodly one, who so hurriest to disobey our orders, and persuadest others to their own destruction?"

"No one can call the God-bearer ungodly," answered Ignatius; "unless you mean that I am the enemy of those gods who fled, as devils, from the servants of God; then I confess it, for I have a King —Christ—who brings all their counsels to nought."

"Who is the God-bearer?" asked the emperor.

"He who carries Christ in his heart."

"Have we no gods whose help we use against our foes?"

"You are wrong to call the powers of the Gentiles, gods," said Ignatius; "there is one God, who made heaven, and earth, and sea, and all that is in them: and one Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, whose kingdom would that I might win!"

"You mean the Crucified under Pontius Pilate."

"Yes, I mean Him who crucified my sin with its first father, and who has thrown down all devilish wickedness and malice under the feet of those who carry him in their hearts."

"Do you, then, carry Christ about, within yourself?"

"Yes, for it is written: I will dwell in them, and will walk up and down in them."

Then follows the sentence; a fictitious one, probably, but conveying the actual condemnation, which was that Ignatius should be taken, bound, "to great Rome," and "there be thrown to the wild beasts, for the people's pastime; and the martyr, we are told, exclaimed with joy, "I give thanks, O Lord, because Thou hast judged me worthy of the perfect love for Thee, and hast bound me in iron chains with Thy apostle Paul;" and then he took the chains with gladness of heart, and prayed over this Church, commending it with tears to the Lord, and passing out "like a noble ram, the head of a fair flock," he was carried off by the fierce soldiery to become the fodder of savage beasts in Rome.

These are touches of the memory left by the real

Ignatius on the heart of the Church; in all this, fragmentary and interpolated as it may be, it looks as if the story had been made up out of the few speeches and facts of the martyr himself which had actually been remembered, to which imaginary questions had to be supplied. We have, therefore, thought it right to write it down here.

The real reason for taking Ignatius from Antioch to Rome is not explained the least in this traditional account. We must be content with the queries and probabilities; it may have been to increase the importance of the penalties; it may have been to avoid the excitement, whether of the fury of the heathen mob, anxious for further vengeance, or of the enthusiasm of the Christians, burning to rival his martyrdom. Whatever was the reason, he was certainly so taken, and this, not for the sake of a calmer trial, but after a fixed condemnation, for he speaks in his letters of the fate awaiting him at Rome, with too real a certainty for us to suppose it merely to be prophetic of what would happen; anyhow, that he was taken at Antioch, and was slain in Rome, all positive tradition agrees. St. Chrysostom, himself so familiar with Antioch, does not presume to claim for his native city any share in the saint's martyrdom, but allows its glory to belong to Rome; and, whatever may be the cause that brought it about, this at least is clear, that it was this passage from Antioch

to Rome that was turned by Ignatius to such good account. He seized the splendour of the occasion with all the inspiration of genius; he felt the immense stir that was moving in the whole Church as he, one of its great chiefs, passed through it to his death: the chains were on him, binding him to the rough soldiers, who guarded him night and day like watching "leopards;" before him was the great amphitheatre, in mighty Rome, with its thousand thousand spectators, tier above tier, in the midst of whom he should soon stand for Christ until the wild beasts tore him limb from limb; so, through city after city, he was to pass to his glorious doom, and everywhere, he knew, Christian eyes were watching him, weeping for him, Christian hearts were lifted with noble pride, following him in anxiety and hope to his confession. It was an unparalleled dramatic moment, and, under the favour of Roman mercy, he was free to use it as he would. He might see his friends; he might write his letters, as St. Paul in prison saw Luke and Onesimus, and wrote the epistles of the captivity, bound to a Roman soldier. So deputation after deputation greeted him from the Churches; messenger after messenger bore off his inspiring farewells; gifts, interviews, salutations, surrounded him. Slowly he carried across Asia and Europe "the pageant of his bleeding heart." The passage of the prisoner, in his fetters, from the scene of

his condemnation to the scene of his execution, rises to the Christian insight into the dignity of a kingly progress; embassies pass to and fro; the royalty of a court girds him round; and he—he shows himself at home in such an atmosphere: the crisis is sharp, but its very sharpness braces his high-spirited courage, his impetuous faith; the royal isolation fortifies, instead of terrifying, his confidence; the exultation of the confessor breaks forth; he rejoices in the fierce daylight that beats upon his martyr-throne. We, too, must throw off the cold temper of the outside observer; we must, ourselves, enter into the enthusiasm that had possessed the Christian Church as men hung expectant on the martyr's last deeds and words, if we would understand, or sympathize with, the abrupt and imperious vigour of his commands to the Churches, the startling vehemence of his last utterances, the personal fervour of his longing for the glory of the final achievement. But, before entering on these famous letters which Ignatius is supposed to have written from Smyrna and Troas, on his road from Antioch to Rome, I must touch on the vexed question of these letters' authenticity. They are the objects of an historic quarrel, which has ranged over three centuries, and in which, from first to last, English critics have entered with effect and vigour into the European arena, and have made themselves the leading figures in the fight. Ussher,

Pearson, Hammond, Cureton—these are the names round which the battle has been waged: England, too, holds some of the most valuable MSS. in question; we Englishmen are, therefore, pledged to enter with interest into the conflict. Let me run over the historical outlines of the long contest.

The Ignatian Epistles, which had begun to be published from stray Greek and Latin copies about the year 1495 A.D., had, at last, taken the form of twelve Greek and three Latin epistles, known now as the Longer Recension. These were the subject of untold controversy between the rival parties of the Reformation, owing to the wonderful vigour with which they asserted the necessity of bishops. Here was the Reformation paralyzed by a power of its own production. It had summoned the dead past to its aid; it had appealed against the Latin of the scholastics to the voice of the forgotten and buried Greek; and lo! the spirit that it had aroused from its long slumber, spoke in strange accents, and uttered unwelcome oracles.

The task of unveiling the primitive truth began to exhibit its tougher aspects; and the bold genius of Calvin was the first to definitely grapple with them. He threw over the whole mass of Ignatian writings as impudent forgeries: "Nothing can be more disgusting than those silly trifles which are edited in the name of Ignatius." Here was a frank and outspoken

challenge: the battle raged henceforward with changes of give and take. Chemnitz, the Lutheran theologian, and after him Whitaker, bring into notice the important fact, that the twelve published letters do not correspond with the references to Ignatius in Eusebius and Jerome, who only mention seven, and not twelve; while a quotation from Ignatius in Theodoret does not appear at all in the published edition. Baronius and Bellarmine, on the contrary, throw over the three Latin letters, but cling to the twelve Greek as undoubtedly genuine. Socinus considers the whole set adulterated. Casaubon is, apparently, prepared to defend the antiquity of some of the letters. The Jesuit Petavius boldly allows that they are all interpolated. But what in them is genuine, and what interpolated? This remained an insoluble question, until Archbishop Ussher, noticing that three English theologians refer to St. Ignatius for that very passage which was found quoted from St. Ignatius in Theodoret, and yet was not to be found in the twelve letters, concluded that England must have possessed some copy of Ignatius which was not the same as the twelve, but which did represent the Ignatius known to Theodoret. He instituted a search in our libraries, which resulted in the discovery of two Latin copies of Ignatius's letters; one in Caius library, at Cambridge, one in the library of Montacute, bishop of Norwich, in which copies the text corresponded with that quoted by the Fathers,

and not with that of the usual twelve. At the same time Vossius unearthed, from the Medicean library, a Greek copy corresponding closely with those of Ussher; by a comparison of these discoveries it could be easily seen that seven epistles were clearly distinguished from some spurious MSS. attached to them, and those seven, the very seven referred to by Eusebius.

Here, then, was a settlement; the seven epistles took the place of the twelve, obviously—the genuine original by which the latter were to be tested; they are called the Short Greek, or the Vossian Epistles, in contrast with the Long Recension, and henceforward became the standard works of Ignatius.

But how, then, about the famous question of Episcopacy, over which the fight had begun, and had raged so hotly? Did these genuine seven corroborate the Catholic theologians? or did all the strong passages about the bishops turn out to be interpolations?

There was no denying that the seven epistles contained passages as difficult to be overcome by the advocates of Presbyterianism as any in the Long Recension. Very soon, therefore, the first enthusiasm of the discovery cooled down. Salmasius began to mutter stormy sounds. "The new letters are as much interpolated as the most reverend and learned Ussher had shown the old to be," he suggests; "they are

the false lies of an impostor, in the days perhaps of Antoninus or Marcus Aurelius," he asserts. Blondel, from Amsterdam, goes still farther than Salmasius. Grotius and Ussher retort; Hammond follows on the same side; and on the other Owen, and finally John Daillé, a Frenchman; against whom at last appeared the famous vindication of St. Ignatius's Letters by Bishop Pearson. This vindication rests on two main arguments: (1) Ignatius certainly wrote letters: (2) The seven letters of Vossius are certainly the very letters attributed to Ignatius by Eusebius; starting from these propositions, he analyses the attack of Daillé, and sifts the various editions, arriving at the conclusion that the seven can hardly be other than the genuine work of Ignatius, recognised as they are by Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Theodoret. The vindication had a great effect; but the contest has revived in these latter days of exacter criticism, when once more England gave the question a new and startling impulse. Archdeacon Tatham, in 1842, had discovered, in the remains of a Nitrian library, a Syrian version of three of these Ignatian epistles, together with some other fragments: in 1845 and 1849, Canon Cureton published them, with a Greek rendering; and started a new point of departure by eagerly maintaining these three epistles, to St. Polycarp, to the Ephesians, and to the Romans, to be the only original and genuine letters; in which

argument he was enthusiastically followed by Bunsen. Since his discovery, however, the recovery by Professor Petermann, of an Armenian version made in the fifth century from a still older Syriac than itself, has qualified the Curetonian position; for this very old version, of which the Syriac form evidently corresponded closely with the Curetonian original, contains all the seven letters, followed by six others which are obviously spurious. But both the Armenian and the Syriac texts differ widely from the Greek. The question now is, which text is the earliest, the Syriac or the Greek? Is the latter an expansion of the former? or is the former a curtailment of the latter? It is impossible to give in a book of this calibre a detailed criticism of such a question as the one here set down. It demands minute and delicate handling. But as we are bound to come to some conclusion as to what materials we may use for an account of Ignatius, so we feel compelled to make clear to our readers what those materials are and how we came to use them.

The careful examination of this question by Professor Lightfoot forces the belief that at least the Curetonian Epistles represent the genuine work of Ignatius. They are remarkable for a most peculiar and unmistakeable character, a character so personal and real, so living and unique as to make the supposition of an impostor most violent and improbable. This character tallies with all that would be natural

in Ignatius; it is consistent with the traditional memory of him. Its peculiarities belong to the circumstances of Ignatius's death, and are justifiable only from its standpoint; the fiery enthusiasm, the exaltation of spirit, the authoritative zeal, these all reach a pitch that would be daring and extravagant in the extreme, were it not that the crisis itself was extreme in its intensity. We cannot imagine the mental condition of the man who reads these fragments of Ignatius and thinks them to be a dramatic composition. They defy all dramatic law and harmony with a vigour of personal force, strong and vivid as that which shatters the shackles of grammar in the Epistles of St. Paul. The fervid insistance, the anxious repetitions, the vehement pronouncements, which seem to break forth out of a seething mass of reasons which are too manifold, too deep, too complicated, too mixed to be produced, receive their meaning and their force only when we see in them the brief, abrupt utterances of a man who is too near death to argue, too pressed by crowding and multitudinous feelings to keep within the even limit of life's usual balance. It is only reality which dares so flagrantly to violate the canons of a cool and temperate judgment, the dictates of propriety. Nor, again, can the passion which so creates dramatic canons for itself rise to a sufficient intensity, unless it breathes an atmosphere of sympathy. It must have been for

no unmoved and tranquil Church that those epistles were written: they are hardly possible or intelligible unless there were round their author as he wrote a world of passionate enthusiasm which upheld and nourished his own. Such tones of dictatorial confidence are only heard when a chief catches, in the eyes of his followers, the inspiring readiness of entire and magnificent devotion. Then it is, and then only, that there fall from him the fearless words that burn with the fire of an inspiration. The writer of these letters, then, wrote, we may be sure, at a moment when not only he, but also all those about him, were uplifted by an unwonted, an unparalleled emotion. It is difficult to believe that letters which so entirely correspond to the characteristics of Ignatius' situation and to the probabilities of his temperament should not be the letters which we are assured by external testimony that he did write at that particular crisis. The Christian writers of the 2nd and 3rd centuries quote from these three Curetonian Epistles as the works of Ignatius. Again, there is no difficulty of anachronism proved against them; the details suit the circumstances. There is, then, at present no sign of the presence of a romancer; everything is against his existence; we have come to no weakness, no haziness of construction, no vagueness, no historic breakdown; the personality with which we are in contact is real, substantial flesh and

blood, we can almost feel his breath upon us as we read, so actual and distinct is the concreteness of his spirit. We are in no dream-world of fancy, we are touching and handling living facts.

This is true of the three Syriac Epistles; is it less true of the seven Vossian?

We think it may be stated positively that no one would know, if he opened at hazard the Epistles of Ignatius, whether he was reading a passage in the three or in the seven, so identical in character is the general style. Throughout there runs the same passion, the same rugged vigour, the same convulsive energy of utterance, the same bursts of tenderness; and I would notice that this is especially noticeable *in the Greek expansions of the three Syriac letters;* in these many of the most vivid and burning phrases so characteristic of St. Ignatius appear. It is in these portions that he cries, "Only now do I begin to learn discipleship." In these he begs his fellow-Christians "to anoint him, as an athlete for the games, with their faith and long-suffering." It is in these that he exclaims, "Ye, Ephesians, are the passage through whom the slain for God pass." In these that he utters to the Romans who are planning for his safety, the passionate paradox, "Keep me not back from my life! Ask me not to die!"

That in some places the Syriac is broken off short,

it is almost impossible to doubt, as at the end of the letter to the Ephesians and of that to Polycarp: that it is so abrupt, sometimes, as to be almost inexplicable without the assistance of the Greek, is also clear, I think, though, of course, this might be turned to show that the Greek is an explanatory expansion of the genuine phrase. In such cases it is difficult to estimate the probabilities; obscurity is a mark of probable genuineness up to a certain point, but, of course, on the other hand it would be natural that an abstract should be obscurer by its very briefness than the original; and there is a limit to the obscurity and abruptness that can be conceivably attributed even to the most impulsive writer. Again, the connection is often preferable in the Greek to the Syriac version, and the reading more forcible and real. Let any one compare the two in the first sentence of the 15th chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Syriac here is unintelligible without the Greek; yet the Greek expansion of the passage is not merely explanatory or diffusive, but opens out into most characteristic and abrupt turns of expression. Yet, if it is true that the Greek text of the three Curetonian letters is the best, and if its peculiar passages are entirely Ignatius's, then the probability of the other four letters being genuine rises perceptibly. And as to these added four, it is certainly a marvellous bit of clever work if an imitator

has succeeded in adding four letters to the original three, which no slip of style makes clearly distinguishable from the latter.

Eusebius and Theodoret have no conception of there being any distinction between the three and the other four.

It appears to be certain that the seven were all in existence before the middle of the second century, for the entire ignoring of the great Gnostic heresies of that period by the whole seven, is most remarkable. The one phrase which might be supposed to refer to them could itself be justified, even if it is not to be read, as Professor Lightfoot argues, in a shape which would make the reference to the later Gnostic scheme impossible. Evidently the author does not have in dread any distinct Gnostic danger; he uses the term πλήρωμα or φιλόϋλον without fear or scruple, regardless of later Gnostic associations.

No historic detail seems to be in fault, everything runs smooth.

What, then, is the reason for denying their authenticity? First, the existence of a shorter Syriac form is itself an argument: it is more natural to suppose an expansion and addition, it may be said, than an abstract. This is of some weight; but it is qualified by the discovery that the Syriac language had also a version of the longer form from a very early date, of a character closely allied to that of the shorter

form: that an abstract is at least a possibility, and that it is easier to account for the abruptness of the shorter form on the hypothesis of an abstract or excerpt, than for the intense similarity of style between the longer and the shorter form on the hypothesis of an expansion of the original three, and an addition of four imitation epistles. Also the existence in Syriac of fragments taken from the Greek version, qualifies seriously the argument for the three Curetonian Epistles being the only Syriac representatives of Ignatius.

Again, it must be allowed that one or two at least of the Greek passages are not unlike expansions of the Syriac; as, for instance, the passage about the Epiphany star in the 19th chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Even here, if the Greek look a little expanded, the Syriac is too abrupt to be intelligible; and it is very hard to decide which way the evidence lies.

Again, there is the argument that the quotations from Ignatius in the 2nd and 3rd centuries are all taken from the three letters included in the Syriac version. This seems to me far the strongest argument; only it must be remembered how perilous it has been shown to argue from silence: and then if the Vossian seven did all exist, as we know they did, *by the time that these quotations were made from the three,* it is odd that Eusebius should have never had

an inkling of any repudiation of the added four by those who so clung to the original three. Again, the cleverness of the addition makes immense demands on our faith, if it be really true that no touch of essential difference can be detected between the original and the imitation.

But is there really no difference? Is not Episcopacy enforced with a far fiercer and stronger vehemence in the four than in the three? This is the real point of importance, and it is, no doubt, a serious question: the passages that strike us as of almost unnatural and extravagant strength are certainly in the Greek rather than in the Syriac. But then the Syriac exhibits the same anxiety on this subject, although not so frequently expressed; and the anxiety runs in the same channels, makes the same appeal in the one as in the other, "Take heed to the bishop, that God may take heed to you." "I am heart to heart with those who obey bishop, priests, deacons, with them may I take my place by God." This is in the Syriac Epistle to Polycarp; and in that same Syriac letter, it is the bishop who is the supreme sanctifier of marriage in his church, the limit of all true knowledge. The other letters cannot be said to do more than emphatically reassert the principles that are evident in such expressions as these. "Those that are God's are with the bishop;" "It is necessary to do nothing without the bishop;

and to be subject too to the Presbytery as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ." "Be obedient to the bishop as to Jesus Christ: to the Presbyters as to the assembly of God, and as the band of the Apostles."

Is this emphatic re-assertion of the Ignatian principles the work of an imitator anxious to insist on them? But when was such a continual insistance natural? When, in that second century, was the position of the bishops in question? When was such vehemence on this point necessary? When was such enthusiasm conceivable? It is just in these expressions on episcopacy that the daring uniqueness of the Ignatian character, of which we spoke before, is at its very height; it is just in them that the existence of intense excitement, both in and around the writer, is absolutely needful in order to make his manner and expression intelligible; and such excitement round such a subject is hardly possible, unless it be at a crisis such as the circumstances of Ignatius's death would interpret. It is the eye of the man who sees death swiftly approaching, which sees all the meaning of life sum itself up into the single fact on which the mind is set; to him, everything else drops away, but the one thing needful, the one thing given into his hands to do, the one work which he has done for God. Many other things there were in the days behind him; but here is the especial act in which his own peculiar generation was to do God service, and

by which it should be judged. As he looks back on what he leaves behind, from the edge of life, he sees and recognises all the eternal significances, all the divine energies, that met together and worked together, in those salient and momentous acts with which he had himself been so peculiarly concerned. He cannot explain; he has no time now to draw out the many reasons; only he declares, with distinct prophetic utterance, that those acts were indeed worked in God; and, therefore he urges, with anxious zeal, their tremendous import for the Church that he leaves behind him. There is hurry; there is abruptness; for he is bound by chains, he is held by soldiers, he is moving swiftly to his death, but he has just time left to gather up the lines of his life-works that now, in the light of the near eternity, start out into extraordinary vigour, into an intensity of meaning; that Church, that is so soon to be deprived of his masterful ministry, will not die with him under the fangs of the wild beasts, if only it is true to that divine organization with which he left it endowed, and of which he now, more than ever, recognises the priceless value. God had ensured it a mode of continuous life, which made it independent of all individual guidance or advice: let it cling true to that divine order of being, and it would never fail. From some such condition of feeling could these letters spring, and we hardly think from any other; they become intelligible as sole relics of

the immense impulse which, somehow, rooted and grounded firmly throughout the whole Church, by the hands of the first generation of Apostolic men, that episcopal system which continued the Apostolic unity of Government. There must have been an hour of supreme effort, of intense crisis, as the Apostles passed away one by one from the chief places : the ship must have shaken and trembled for a brief moment as the props were knocked away, before the movement of the launching became steady and secure. The intense anxiety of that hour must have fallen most severely on those first pupils of the Apostles into whose hands the earliest guidance passed: and we seem to become conscious of its strain and pressure as we read over these impulsive words of St. Ignatius, and catch glimpses of the mysterious forces that he identifies with this abiding government of the Catholic Church.

We hear no more after his death of episcopal difficulties; we hear no more doubts, no dissensions recorded about this office. This unanimity, this identity, remain strange and unaccountable, unless we find the explanation made manifest in these last farewells of Ignatius. Here we see traces of the very impulse that the fact of a secured episcopacy demands, —here we feel the effort that was spent in securing it, —here we are admitted to the secret springs of the Church's established system, we learn what sort of men they were who so firmly grounded it,—see in what

light they looked at it,—with what principles they defended it,—what was the value that they attributed to it. We recognise the forces which prevented, under God, any falling to pieces of that organic body which the Apostles had held together in unity: we understand how the Church was assured of that firm and steady solidity of construction with which our Lord had endowed her, and in the power of which she was enabled to stand, whole and entire and unbroken, against the flood of moving thoughts which were so soon to overflow her theology.

In a word, does not the settled acceptance of the full episcopal *régime* demand some such temper to account for it, as we find recorded in these seven epistles of Ignatius? And does it not demand it just in these first twenty years of the second century, back into which the memory of St. Irenæus carries us through an uninterrupted and unquestioned and universal array of bishops?

We shall, in view of all that has been said, then, make use of the whole seven letters of the Greek version, in giving this sketch of Ignatius, on the ground that the identity of a single remarkable character is preserved throughout them all; and again, that there seems to me no time at which their strongest sayings would be so possible or so natural as the moment of the saint's approaching martyrdom We feel fairly certain, that in so doing we shall not

be travelling off the lines of the bishop's real characteristics; but yet we confess that the problem is too delicate and complicated to allow us to do what we propose, without having first placed before my readers the condition of the case, so that they may not follow me blindly and unawares, without any knowledge of the risk that they run. If they should feel it safer, after all, to limit their acceptance to the three letters of the Curetonian version, we should still plead that the Greek version of these three letters was more intelligible, more genuine than the Syriac; and, that if this is so, then, in using the remaining four letters, we are only using some curiously exact reproductions of the saint's style, and manner, and thought, which had been modelled on his original letters, within thirty years of his death. The utmost danger we run, it seems to us, will be that of making Ignatius repeat six times anxious statements about episcopal authority which he really only said twice or thrice. The letters shall be mentioned, as we go through them, by name, so that all who read will know whether they are dealing with the three or the four; and by taking the three Curetonian first, as the main material for illustrating the saint's character, and only then passing on to the remarkable expressions in the other four, nobody will feel himself aggrieved; while everybody, we fancy, will recognise the strength of the underlying unity which has stamped the whole set with an undoubted dis-

tinctness, such as gives them, throughout, a tone and temper peculiarly their own.

Ignatius, then, has been carried by sea, we may suppose, from Seleucia, the port of Antioch, to Smyrna, where the ship has touched on her road up the coast of Asia Minor towards the harbours at which the great Macedonian roads to Rome met the sea. There are delays at Smyrna, such delays as we know well from the famous account of St. Paul's voyage in the Acts: a ship in those old days did not dash into a harbour one night to be gone the next morning; it turned in to a port for rest, for refuge, for replenishment; it waited for a good occasion to start again; it gave its people time to walk about, and breathe, and stretch themselves; sometimes, as in St. Paul's case, the question might be discussed, whether it would not be well to stay in some secure harbour for all the winter months before continuing the voyage to Rome. So at Smyrna, when the ship put in, there is time for Ignatius to be seen, to be interviewed, to be comforted; deputations are able to come to him, not only from Smyrna itself, but from neighbouring cities; Ephesus, for instance, despatches its bishop, Onesimus, with three or four companions—Burrhus, a "deacon blessed of all men," whom Ignatius begs to retain at his side for a time; Crocus, "worthy of God and of Ephesus," a "model of the Ephesians' love" for the martyr; Euplus, and Fronto.

If the whole seven letters are genuine, then it was now that Magnesia and Tralles, two towns close about Smyrna, sent in their comforting greetings; and perhaps to Smyrna, too, came the messengers from Philadelphia, sixty miles to the east. Ignatius sat in his guarded room, under the rough and jealous care of his "ten leopards," as he called the soldiers about him, in whose rude handling he felt a foretaste of the savage slaughter that lay waiting for him in the dungeons of the Colosseum. There the anxious Churches crowded about him with messages of reassurance; thence he wrote back, from amidst the pressure of a thousand ills, the brief and broken sentences in the abruptness of which we still seem to feel the weight of the chain, the discomfort of the prison, the suspicious watchfulness of the guards; but in the eager swiftness of which we still catch the tingling tone, the exultant passion of the Confessor.

Lest this publicity and freedom allowed Ignatius should appear strange or impossible, I cannot resist quoting the oft-quoted passage in which Lucian seems to parody the triumph of Ignatius. It represents so vividly the scene which we are supposing, that it is almost impossible to leave it out in telling the story of the saint. Lucian is describing, with all the sharpness of his clever scoff, the imprisonment of an imaginary enthusiast, Peregrinus, who, among many

wild adventures in search of religious excitement, has become imprisoned as a Christian. "When he was imprisoned, the Christians, regarding it as a great calamity, left no stone unturned in the attempt to rescue him. Then, when they found this impossible, they looked after his wants in every other respect with unremitting zeal. And from early dawn, old women, widows, and orphan children, might be seen waiting about the doors of the prison; while their officers succeeded, by bribing the keepers, in passing the night inside with him. Then various meals were brought in, and religious discourses were held between them, and this excellent Peregrinus (for he still bore this name) was entitled a new Socrates by them. Moreover, there came from certain cities in Asia deputies sent by the Christian communities, to assist and advise and console the man. Indeed, they show incredible despatch when any matter of the kind is undertaken as a public concern; for, in short, they spare nothing. And so large sums of money came to Peregrinus at that time from them, on the plea of his fetters." Such, probably, was the scene round Ignatius: let us hear what he then wrote: let us see whether our Christian "Peregrinus" is not dealing with forces to which the eyes of light-hearted Lucians are for ever blind, forces which, in spite of the vulgar and tasteless degradation of the dungeon, yet possess in themselves a high and delicate sensibility, by the side of which

the canons of Roman culture seem small and narrow and crude.

He begins his letter of thanks to the Ephesians with one of those magnificent salutations the secret of which he had caught from the spirit of St. Paul,—a salutation overflowing with affection, yet braced by a lofty and vigorous appeal to the very central principle of the faith, rich as a royal greeting with the large abundance of its promise and of its love, ringing and stirring as a Creed, with the splendid fervour of its announcement.

"Ignatius, called also the God-bearer, wisheth all good greeting in Jesus Christ, and in blameless grace, to the Church that is blessed in the greatness and the fulness of God the Father, to the Church that has been predestinated, before all ages, for ever to a glory abiding, immutable, single, chosen in the true passion of Christ, in the will of the Father, and of Jesus Christ, our God, the Church of highest desert, that is in Ephesus, of Asia."

So he begins: and then begins one of his broken pieces of fervent thanks, in the eagerness of which grammar vanishes, as he passes from his own gratitude to their generous deed of welcoming and comforting him. "I," he says, "having received in God thy beloved name" (when their delegates came to him in Smyrna), "which ye obtained by a fair and right nature, according to the faith and love in Jesus Christ

our Saviour, being followers of God, quickened to new life in the blood of God, ye perfectly completed a congenial deed." We have ventured to keep the sentence as it stands in the Greek, in order not to lose its characteristic abruptness. The sense is felt rather than given: before we can stop to spell out the exact meaning of one phrase, we are hurried on to another; we feel that the writer himself is too pressed for time and space, too full of many thoughts struggling for utterance, to be able to make things clear to us. We have to consent to abandon ourselves to his over-mastering impulsion, as he pours out his heart to us, "quickened to new life in the blood of God."

The next sentences are intensely typical, and may be given entire. "For ye, when ye heard that I was going bound in chains from Syria, for the sake of our common name and hope, hoping by your prayers to win my way to the fight with wild beasts in Rome, in order that by my martyrdom I may be enabled to succeed in becoming a disciple of Him who for our sakes offered Himself as an offering and sacrifice to God," ("hurried to see me," so the Latin supplies the broken Greek sentence). "Since then I have received all your full body, in the name of God, in the person of Onesimus, a man of unutterable love, your bishop, whom I beseech you by Jesus Christ to love, and to be, all of you, in his likeness: for blessed is

He who has granted to you, who are worthy of it, to possess such a bishop." So, once more, we come to the end of a sentence, without having ever reached the conclusion which our beginning demanded; there is no answer to the "Since, then," with which we started: and, yet, how intelligible it all is! how clear it is at what his whole mind is set! He has seen them all in the unity of their bishop; he means to implore them to hold that unity fast. So, after a few sentences about the other delegates, we come to the real conclusion. "It is becoming, then, in every way to glorify Christ Jesus, who glorified us; that ye may be perfectly complete in the one obedience, with the same mind and the same judgment, and may say the same words, all of you, about the same thing, that, in obedience to the bishop and the presbytery, ye may, in all things, be made holy." There follows, in the Greek version of the letter, the famous passage in which he declares himself still a beginner in faith. "I have not yet been fully perfected in Jesus Christ. For only now am I beginning my discipleship." He asks them to anoint him, as an athlete for the fight, with the oil of faith, of encouragement, of patience, of long-suffering. He returns their help by exhorting them "to run in harmony with the intention of God," which "intention of God" is identified with Jesus Christ, "our indubitable Life," and the intention of Jesus Christ is identified again with the constituted

bishops. So, in such diligent obedience, with the worthy presbytery in such harmony with the bishop as the strings with the lyre, they may, by their agreement, and harmonious love, "sing the song which is Jesus Christ;" the song which has the "tone of God:" that so, by their unity of voice, they may show themselves members of the Son.

The Church, he declares, stands to Jesus Christ as Jesus Christ to the Father. Therefore let no man make a mistake; if he be not within the holy altar-ground, he fails to share in the Bread of God; he fails to share in that powerful pleading which goes up to God with one voice from the bishops and the whole Church.

This is one of those strong passages which are found in the Greek and Armenian version, but not in the Syrian. On the other hand, it *is* found in Syriac fragments, belonging now to the Royal Library of Paris, as are many of the cognate passages in the epistles to the Magnesians and Trallians; and, by appearing in the Armenian version that Petermann has discovered, which version is so peculiarly cognate to the Curetonian Syriac, proves that it had an early existence in Syriac. The Curetonian version, at this place, seems to me unintelligibly abrupt. The whole passage seems to be ringing through the mind of St. Clement of Alexandria, as he writes, "There is our holy altar-place on earth, the gathering together in one of those who set themselves in prayer, having, as

it were, one voice common to all, and one intention." "Attend to the bishop, then, as to the Lord," Ignatius continues, according to the Greek version; "for every one whom the Householder sends to be over His own house, we must receive as we would receive Him that sent him."

So all heresy will be avoided; Christ alone will be heard speaking; and, if any evil does creep in, then they will still be sure of cure, if they so cling to the "one Physician Jesus Christ, both in the Flesh and in the Spirit, begotten and unbegotten, become God in the flesh, but very Life in His immortality, born both of Mary and of God, first, passible, and then impassible."

So will they be entirely of God, working, in the flesh, spiritual things, as stones of the Father's Temple, "prepared for God the Father's building, lifted up on high by the crane of Jesus Christ, who is the cross that carries us, using the rope of the Holy Ghost; and our faith becomes the pulley, and love the way that leads up to God." "Be companions in this way," he urges, "carrying God, carrying the Temple, carrying Christ, carrying holiness," "throughout all the earthly life, loving nothing but God." "Pray, too," he cries, "for unbelievers, unceasingly, for there is in them the hope of repentance." "Against their rage show yourselves gentle, against their pride show yourselves meek." "Everything in Christ Jesus; everything,

that they may be found in Him, for the true life." "Without Him, let nothing be deemed honourable; in whom I myself bear these chains,—chains? nay, those spiritual circlets of precious pearls in which I pray that I may rise again, by your prayer, in which may I ever have a place, that I may be found hereafter in one lot with the Ephesians, those true Christians, who have ever been in full concert with the Apostles in the might of Jesus Christ."

He goes on to urge them to come frequently together "for the Eucharist of God, and for the glory"; to hold perfectly the faith and the love for Jesus Christ,—faith, the beginning of life, and love, the end, both in one, of God; he urges this the more, since the time has come for faith to show itself in active energy, not in the mere words of high profession. The memory of their silent bishop, Onesimus, is perhaps in his mind as he goes on in a remarkable passage which is far clearer in the Greek version than in the Syrian. "Better is it to be silent and real, than loud and unreal"; "all teaching is good, when the teacher is a doer." "There is one Doctor of Doctors, who spoke and it was done; and all that He did in silence, was worthy of the Father" (such perhaps, as the silent deed of the Incarnation). "He who possesses the word of Jesus can verily hear, too, the stillness of Jesus, so as to be perfect; so that by his speech he acts, and by his silence he is known."

False doctrine corrupts and destroys the faith; it shuts out of life; truth is as the unction which the Lord received upon His Head, from Mary, that He might breathe into His Church incorruptibility. Then one of his strange expressions breaks out, "My spirit is the offscouring of that cross, which is a scandal to the unbelievers, but to us salvation and life eternal. Where is the wise? where is the boasting of the prudent? For God, our God, Jesus the Christ, was conceived of Mary, in the economy of God, of the seed of David and of the Holy Ghost, and was born, and was baptized, that by His passion He might cleanse the water; and so hid His glory from the princes of this world, who never caught sight of Mary's virginity, or of her delivery, any more than of the Lord's death; these being the three mysteries of the divine cry, which was all worked out in the still silence of God." Ignatius seems to mean that the Lord was going to "send forth a shout," to make His voice heard in the world; but He prepared it all in silence, under the secrecy of the Incarnation, away from the light of human glory and wisdom. "How, then, was it ever made manifest to the ages?" he asks. "A star shone out in heaven" (so runs the Greek version, the Syriac here being hardly intelligible), "bright above all stars, and its light was unutterable in glory, and its newness made a strange astonishment; and there was trouble at its unrivalled newness; by which all magic

charms were broken, all bonds of wickedness vanished away, ignorance was swept aside, the ancient dominion was ruined, for God had been manifested in humanity unto the newness of eternal life! So began at last the work prepared of God; so were all evil things shaken and disordered, since the devising of the destruction of death."

Here the Syriac breaks off short, without any ending; in the Greek version, he promises them another writing, to be written, if Jesus Christ will allow him, and if their prayers will help, about the Economy, or Dispensation, which is carried out in the New Man, Christ Jesus, through the faith and the love which are in Him, through His passion and resurrection; and especially will he take care to write it, if he is assured that the Ephesians meet together in common, man by man in a single faith, and in Jesus Christ, born after the flesh of the seed of David, Son of man, and Son of God, in undivided obedience to the bishop, and the presbytery, breaking one bread, that bread which is the medicine of immortality, the antidote of death."

So he closes, "My life for yours, and for his, whom you have sent to me (Onesimus) to Smyrna, whence I write, giving thanks to the Lord, and loving Polycarp, its bishop, as I love you. Remember me as Jesus Christ remembers you. Pray for the Church in Syria, whence I am being led bound to Rome, I, the

last of Syrian Christians, yet who has been thought worthy to be used for the honour of God. Farewell, in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, our common hope."

Such is the letter to the Ephesians. We have quoted it largely, that we may give a general specimen of the current of a whole letter: for the rest, we will try and confine ourselves to quoting the salient and peculiar passages.

The Epistle to the Romans, found in the Syriac and Armenian versions, as well as in the Greek and Latin copies, has a different motive from many of the others. In it the saint is not looking back to the Churches that his death leaves desolate and in peril, but his whole heart is fixed forward on the supreme moments of his own life when he will stand at last in the world's centre, under the very eyes of the imperial people, a spectacle to men and angels. For this last struggle with the powers of this world his whole being is intensely and nervously strung, he awaits it with all the exultant passion of the athlete who has long trained himself for the great day on which he is to put out all his force, and who, as he feels within himself the eager impetus of his perfected energies, cannot repress a quivering movement of anxious impatience, lest some unforeseen accident should intervene and ruin his opportunity. So Ignatius trembles lest the contest for which he has abandoned all things,

endured all things, despised all things, should, at the last, never occur. He fears lest the very kindness of the Roman believers should cheat him of his hope, by exerting themselves to save him from the utmost rigour of punishment. He writes to implore them not to stay his death. It is for this anxiety for martyrdom that Ignatius has been severely criticised; he certainly possessed that fervour of temper which made Marcus Aurelius so suspicious of the Christian's reality and steadiness in his contempt for pain and death. But then, our Lord definitely pronounced that He found His steadiest material in these ardent impulsive temperaments, when He declared the character of St. Peter to be most akin to the solid rock on which He would build His Church. He professed that faith in His Person would give to such characters as that of him who was on fire to die for Him, that very steadiness and reality which Marcus Aurelius vainly looked for in the calm of abstract idealism. He warned them, indeed, by the denial of St. Peter, against any reckless rush into danger, against any rash seeking of death; but Ignatius is not accused of having sought the occasion of martyrdom; it is not that he tempted the Romans to persecute him; only, when he found himself condemned, imprisoned, carried bound to his final agony, then he gave himself up to the glad hope of a confession; then he feared lest the penalty should be tempered with some milder

trial which would not perfect him by the purification of pain. Then he longed with an insatiable desire to drink of his Master's cup, to be baptized with his Master's baptism; and he might well find some justification for his zeal in the silence of Him who made no defence before his accusers, to ward off the sentence of death, but became dumb and opened not His mouth; or, even more, in the words of the Same, who said to His defender, "Put up thy sword into its sheath; the cup that the Father hath given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?"

He writes the letter, then, to anticipate his arrival and the efforts of his friends; and by the crowded epithets of his salutation we see what Rome meant to him.

"To the Church (so he greets it), which has won compassion in the majesty of the Most High Father, and of Jesus Christ, His Only Son, the Church beloved and enlightened in the will of Him who willeth all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ our God, the Church worthy of God, worthy of blessing, worthy of praise, worthy of honour, worthy of success, the foremost in love, having the name of Christ and the name of the Father, saluted by me, too, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, to you who are united in all His commands, both in flesh and in spirit, to you who are filled with the grace of God indivisibly, and are

purged from all things of a strange and alien colour, to you I wish all joy blamelessly in Jesus Christ our God." This is the address, as it stands in the Greek: the Syriac has it in a shorter form, but one of the Curetonian fragments supplies the very characteristic latter sentences which the version omits.

He tells them how he has prayed God that he might see their faces; and this how at last he will do, if God grants as good an end to his confession as He has given a beginning. But he dreads their love, lest it do him evil by ruining his best opportunity for "winning God." They cannot gain anything better for him than to be a victim dedicated to God, now while the sacrifice is all prepared; they may then become a chorus of love, and sing to the Father in Christ Jesus, for that He has so honoured the Bishop of Syria, in that he sent for him to be brought from the East unto the West, to become the offering on God's altar.

"Good and fair it is to sink in the West to death from the world to God, that I may rise again to Him in His own East."

He urges them to devote all their prayers to his succour in trial, that he may not only call himself a Christian, but may prove himself to be one. Christianity has to make its way, not merely by quiet persuasiveness, but by its magnificent greatness in the face of the world's hatred. He declares to them his

willingness to die, if only they will let him. "I beseech you," he cries, "do me no inopportune kindness. Suffer me to be the prey of beasts, for it is through them that I may win my way to God. I am the food of God; let the teeth of the wild beasts grind me until I become the pure bread of Christ. Spend all your blandishments upon the beasts, that they may make themselves my tomb, and may leave no fragment of my body to be a burden to any one. Then, then indeed shall I be verily Christ's disciple, when the world shall see even my body no more. Pray your prayers to Christ for me, that, by these His instruments, I may be made a sacrifice to Him. I do not command you this, as an apostle, for I am only a condemned slave. But, slave as I am, if only I suffer, then am I the freedman of Christ, and I shall rise again in Him free. Now a slave in my chains, I learn what it is to have no earthly desire.

"From Syria to Rome I fight with wild beasts, by land and sea, by night and day, bound to ten leopards, my guard of soldiers. Under their harshness I learn a fuller discipleship; but yet not by this am I justified. I long to reach the wild beasts that await me. I pray that they may be ready at my coming; I will entice them to devour me speedily; yea, if they be unwilling, I will force them myself. Pardon me; but, indeed, I know what is good for me; I am beginning at last to know what discipleship means. Come fire and the

cross! come gatherings of beasts! come rending of bones, and crushing of limbs, and tearing of all my body in pieces! come all the vile torments of the devil upon me, if only I win Christ Jesus!"

"The joys of the world shall benefit me no more, nor the kingdoms of this age; I would rather die into Christ Jesus than reign over the ends of the earth. I seek Him who died on our behalf, I want Him who rose again for us: the pangs of birth are laid upon me. Suffer me, brethren; hold me not back from my life; keep me not in that which is death to one who longs to be only God's; suffer me to lay hold of the pure light; once there, I shall be God's own."

So the flood of passionate entreaty pours on. He implores them to let him suffer as Christ suffered; it is the devil's doing to strive to hinder him from death. "Living I write to you," he breaks out, "but it is as loving to die. For my love has been crucified, and there is left in me no spark of earthly love at all, but only a spring of living water, which speaks in me, with an inward voice, saying, 'Hence and away to the Father.' I desire no more the food of corruption, nor the delights of this life. I want the bread of God, which is the flesh of Christ; and His blood it is that I want to drink, the blood which is immortal love."

This is his most ardent, most enthusiastic, most

exalted passage; after this the letter begins its farewell. The Greek version goes on with a chapter of abrupt epigrammatic entreaties to the Romans to believe and obey him, and then begs them to remember in their prayers the Syrian Church, which has God for its bishop, now that he is gone, for Christ alone will now oversee it, together with their love. He sends the greeting of the Churches who are aiding him on his journey; he is writing, he says, from Smyrna, by means of the most worthy Ephesians; he commends to their care his friends who have preceded him at Rome; and so "farewell to the last, in the patience of Christ Jesus."

Of this, the Syriac version has only one sentence, while it adds, in a chapter which, according to the Greek, belongs to another letter—the letter to the people of Tralles. This chapter is certainly a strange one, if it really belongs here; it relapses altogether from the tone of exultant certainty to which we have been listening; it speaks of fear of boasting, of dread lest he be not worthy to suffer, of the need of meekness and of self-repression. A sudden change, a reaction must have fallen upon his spirit, without sequence or visible cause. And, even then, the letter fails to attain any real termination; it would be necessary to suppose it forcibly interrupted. Altogether there does not seem much likelihood of its belonging here at all. We will, therefore, leave it until

we can see whether it fits in any better to the lette to the Trallians.

One more letter Ignatius wrote, according to both Greek and Syriac authorities, the letter to Polycarp of Smyrna, written from Troas, and sent back by the Ephesian who had accompanied him so far on his journey, to the bishop who had so warmly welcomed him at his first landing-place. It was natural that the saint who was now looking back so anxiously on the Church that he was leaving behind him, a Church whose unity and permanence he had himself so eagerly striven to secure by emphasizing the essentiality of an assured organization, should turn his eyes with a peculiar anxiety, with an appealing fervour, to the younger bishop who personified the organization in the central part of Smyrna, and who already stood forward with something of that pre-eminent dignity which in his old age stamped itself so ineffaceably on the loving memory of Irenæus. The letter is charged with the ardour of this anxiety; it is almost imperious in its abrupt and forcible counsels; it throws off all circumlocution, with a frankness that belongs to the perfect confidence of men who know and trust and love each other, a frankness, too, all the better understood and appreciated because it comes from one who stands already within the shadow of gathering death, and speaks his last words in haste, with his loins already girt for the awful exodus. "I exhort

you," he begins at once, after the first few phrases of salutation, "in the grace wherewith you are clothed, to apply yourself more and more to your course of life. Vindicate your office in all care, both of flesh and spirit. Think over the unity, than which nothing is better; raise and bear all men, even as the Lord does you; suffer all in love, even as you do; secure time for prayer, ask for greater sagacity than you now possess, watch with a sleepless spirit; bear all men's sicknesses, as a perfect champion; where the labour is great, the reward is large.

"To love the good disciples is worth little thanks to you; the higher duty is to endure in meekness the more corrupt. It is not every wound that is cured by the same plaster. You must relieve irritation by soothing lotions. It is for this that you are both of flesh and of spirit, that you may entice the outward and visible into submission, and may petition that the invisible may be made clear to you. The time requires you, as pilots ask for a wind, and as the storm-tossed ask for a haven, so that God may be won. Be sober, as God's own athlete should be; the stake is immortality and life eternal. In all this I will be soul for soul to you."

He goes on to warn him to stand "firm as a beaten anvil" against those who seem trustworthy, and yet teach strangely. The great athlete may be flayed, and yet he will conquer. He bids him be more

active and zealous; to study the times, looking for Him who is above all time, the Eternal the Invisible, who for our sakes became visible; the Intangible, the Passionless, who for our sakes suffered, for our sakes went through all manner of endurance."

He tells him to take care of the widows; to let nothing be done without his judgment, to do nothing himself without God; to hold frequent assemblies; to know all his flock personally; not to despise slaves: and here comes in a little bit of warning that carries us back into the heart of the first excitement of the early days when the light of freedom had just broken in upon the darkened home of slavery: "Let not the slaves get inflated, but let them rather serve to the glory of God, that they may gain a nobler freedom from God; let them not press to be freed from slavery by means of the common fund." Polycarp is to urge his "sisters" to love the Lord and to please their partners; the brethren, too, he must remind to love their partners as the Lord loves the Church; the celibate are to be warned against boastfulness, and against presumption towards their bishops. The marriages are more certain to be in God when they are made with the consent of the bishop. Then comes one of his strong appeals to the Church to hold to episcopacy. "Take heed to the bishop, so that God may take heed to you. I am soul for soul with them who obey bishop, priests, and deacons; may my lot be

with them in God!" He goes on to bid them be bound together in unity of work, of effort, of hope, as servants in God's household. Then, as soldiers, he would have them delight in pleasing their chief, whose pay they receive. "Let no one be found deserting; let your Baptism be your arms that may never be thrown away; faith, your helmet; love, your spear; patience, your armour; deeds, your pledge, so that you will win a worthy return."

Then he advises "Polycarp, the blessed of God," to call a solemn assembly, and to ordain some one to be a holy legate of God, to whom authority may be given to go to Syria, apparently to carry some recognition and salutation from Smyrna to Antioch; this is to be done by all the Churches possible. Some great recognition of this sort would be required by Antioch, we may suppose, in order to assist her in the crisis of appointing another bishop, and of restoring her broken organization. All this part is omitted in the Syriac, except one short sentence; but in that sentence the particular mission of this legate is referred to, though not explained: and the letter itself is cut off short without any intelligible ending; and, what is very curious, Lucian, in his famous parody of the cynic Peregrinus mentioned before, refers to this habit of sending delegates in words which it is impossible not to quote here. "They say that he sent letters to almost all the

famous cities, with testaments and exhortations, and that he ordained some elders of his companions whom he called 'Death-messengers' and 'Death-runners.'"

The single sentence common to both Greek and Syriac seems to beg them not to think this service a troublesome interference hardly worth the time. "A Christian," he says, "is not his own, but keeps himself free for God's work."

So he comes to his close, greeting all by name, praying that all may abide in the unity of God, and under His appointed government. "Farewell in the Lord."

This letter ends the Syriac version. We will just give the more salient passages in the remaining four letters of the Greek copy. To the Magnesian Church, which lies by the Menander river, he is delighted to write, knowing the sweet orderliness of their love. He bids them obey their bishop without deceit, because he represents to them the invisible Bishop, God the Father: he tells them not merely to be called, but to be, Christians; he warns them that there are two coinages, one of God and one of the world, each with its own stamp, and that one of those two stamps they must all receive.

He implores them to preserve the harmony of God, and this harmony places the bishop at the head in the place of God, the presbyters in the place of the

Apostolic College, with the deacons, "his dear favourites," entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was, before the ages, with the Father, and appeared in the latter days. Thus, without division, in perfect unity, they will be shaped into the mould and truth of immortality. Then comes the strongest passage, perhaps, of all: "As the Lord did nothing without the Father, being entirely one with Him, so do you, too, do nothing without the bishop and the presbyters; but let there be one only company, with one prayer, one petition, one mind, one hope, in love, and in blameless joy. Christ Jesus is entirely one, than whom there is nothing better. Do you, then, run one and all together as to the temple of God, as to one altar, as to one Christ Jesus, who came forth from one Father, belongs to one Father, withdrew to one Father." "There is one God," he declares again in the next chapter, "Who manifested Himself by Christ Jesus, His Son, Who is His Word, proceeding out of silence." So he binds up the absoluteness of the Church's order and worship with the absoluteness of God and of salvation in Christ. God offers *one* way only whereby we may be saved, the one name of Christ: He demands that we should resign all our private ways in favour of this His one way: and the Church is the concrete, historical expression of the singleness and the absoluteness of this one way to heaven. The

unity of the Church is the reflection of the rigorous unity of the offered salvation.

He warns the Magnesians against falling back into a trust in the old leaven of Judaism: "It was not Christianity that believed in Judaism," he argues, "but Judaism in Christianity," throwing into an epigram the whole significance of St. Paul's great argument.

Once more he repeats his entreaties for unity. "Strive to be braced in the teaching of the Lord, and of the Apostles, that you may be of a sweet savour, both of flesh and spirit, in faith and love, in Son, Father, and Spirit, in the beginning and in the end, with your most worthy bishop, and with your spiritual crown, the presbytery, and the godly deacons. Submit to the bishop and the others, as Jesus Christ submitted to the Father, and the Apostles to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Spirit, that there may be unity both in flesh and in spirit."

He asks their prayer for himself, and for his Church: and bids them farewell, "in the concord of God, in possession of an inseparable spirit, which is Jesus Christ."

To the Trallians he writes that he has seen them all in the person of their bishop, who came to see him at Smyrna; that he gloried in finding them imitators of God, for that in living subject to their bishop, as to Christ Jesus, they seemed to him to be living not by a

human standard but by the standard of Jesus Christ. Here comes in the passage found in the Syriac at the end of the Roman letter; the context is this: he expresses his fear lest he be writing authoritatively like an apostle to them; he pleads that it is because he has so many thoughts working in him, that are of God: yet he refrains and controls himself, for he knows that in this exultancy of martyrdom lies a peril of presumption: he has to be on his guard against those who tempt him into a swelling pride: it is true, indeed, that he loves to suffer for Christ, but yet that does not ensure his spiritual capacity to attain the privilege of a good confession; so he tries to use meekness, meekness which will undo and defeat the prince of this world; and even if he is rightly able to speak of heavenly things, of the ranks of the angels, of invisible hierarchies, are they able to hear it? Rather he himself is still a *learner* in all this, rather than a teacher: "we have much to do," he says, "if we are to be level with the great doings of God."

In all this, we seem to be admitted to a very genuine and vivid moral struggle in the soul of Ignatius; his whole spirit is alive with the stirring exaltation of a martyr's passion: on the edge of heaven, he could speak of many things, glorious, far-reaching, ineffable: voices of enthusiastic admiration are round about him, urging him, pressing him,

ready to listen as to one inspired: yet, in the heart of the tumult, the still strong power of conscience is whispering, "beware, tremble, restrain, pride deceives, only humility is strong, heaven has yet to be won, be prudent, and fear."

Is this not real? Is it not true, and appropriate, and natural? and in this letter to the Trallians, it explains its position fairly enough; there is no jolt or jar. We cannot help thinking that it seems to justify itself here better than it possibly can, attached on without connection or explanation, as a rough and broken ending to the letter to the Romans: it is to be observed that it is not used as a basis for the letter to the Trallians, it is not expanded as it would be if it had been taken by an admirer as the groundwork of an imaginary epistle. The letter does not go on to expound heavenly visions or to supply the inspired teachings which Ignatius refers to but suppresses. It leaves them alone untouched, and continues in the regular Ignatian strain.

It bids them beware of new heresies, "poison hidden in honey," it again warns them that only he who keeps within the sanctuary is safe and holy, and this sanctuary means the unity of bishop, presbyter, deacon; it tells them to renew themselves in faith which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, which is His blood; he bids them hold fast to the reality of the Gospel facts, the Gospel of Him who indeed was

verily born, ate, and drank, verily suffered under Pontius Pilate, verily was crucified, and died, and rose again most verily from the dead. "If all this was only an empty phantom-life," he asks, "why am I now bound in chains? why do I pray for my agony with the wild beasts? I am throwing away my life for nothing, I suppose." He bids them fly from such fatal doctrine; he salutes them all, he asks them to pray for him and for his dear Syrian Church: "Sanctify my soul, which is your own, and that not only now but when the day comes that I win my way to God; for as yet I am still in peril; but God is faithful in Christ Jesus to fulfil my prayers and yours. Farewell."

We cannot venture to lengthen the account, and will only quote one or two passages from each of the remaining letters, which are written, the one to the Philadelphians, the other to the people of Smyrna, in very much the same strain as those that we have already noticed.

To the Philadelphians he has one most striking passage on his old subject, Church unity. "Study to use one Eucharist; for one is the flesh of Jesus Christ our Lord, and one is the cup for the unity of His blood, one is the altar and one the bishop, with his presbytery and his diaconate." He claims that his own part has been to emphasize and enforce this unity as the key to the holiness of Christian living.

He refers in this letter to difficulties with some Judaizers, who seem to have tested the New Gospel by its agreement with the Old Testament; he answers that Christ is higher and older than the old writings, that He therefore and his Cross are the standard and rule by which they must be tried; He is the High Priest greater than the old priests, He is the *door* through which alone entered Abraham, and Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets. Here we may notice how the metaphor in St. John is used to enforce the cardinal argument of St. Paul.

From the letter to the people of Smyrna, we cannot but extract the noble passage in which the enthusiasm of the martyr again shatters into fragments the weak and faint-hearted gospel of the Docetæ. "If all the life of the Lord was only lived in appearance, then I too am bound only in appearance. Why, I ask, why have I given myself over to death, to fire, to the sword? Surely, because the nearer I am to the sword the nearer to God! In the jaws of the wild beasts I find myself in God. And this only in the name of Christ Jesus, that I may share in His suffering, enduring all things through the strengthening grace of Him who has been made the Perfect Man." Once more we must give his famous formula as it appears in this letter: "Where the bishop shows himself there let the congregation be; just as whereever Christ is there is the Catholic Church." Divi-

sions, he tells them, are the work of the devil; faith and love are the bonds of unity. He salutes many by name whom he had learned to know as he rested there in his journey. "Being perfect, study perfection, for God who is ready to supply help wills your well-doing. Farewell in the grace of God." So the fervent bishop wrote, pouring out his love and hope and joy and fear, in words in which mingle the spirits of the Apostle of Love and the Apostle of the Gentiles, while they enforce that ideal of order and system which traditionally belongs to the great Apostle to whom the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven were first committed. So, and amid such uplifted praise and prayer, he travelled to his death. How that death occurred we can only guess from the floating record of his traditional acts. There we are told that he restrained all the efforts to save him, bidding them not grudge him his swift passage to the Lord: that he prayed, amid all the kneeling brethren, to the Son on behalf of the Churches, for the stopping of persecution, for the love of the brethren one toward another, and then was led hurriedly to the Amphitheatre, and there attained his desire, that desire of the just which is acceptable to God; for so utterly was he torn in pieces, that only the hardest bits of his bones were left to the tender care of those who loved him; these they sent to Antioch, wrapped in linen, a most holy treasure for the Church. Those who saw the

death, we are told, went home in tears to watch out the night in kneeling and prayer; and to some of these, as at last they shortly slept, came visions of the blessed Ignatius standing over and embracing them; by others he was seen once more blessing them; to others he appeared still with the hot sweat of the death-struggle upon him, standing by His Lord. Such was the tradition, the memory which left itself in the Church; it is all we have, so it is given as it stands. We cannot entirely answer for it, but it is full of the most natural pathos, and certainly this, or something like this, was the last end of Ignatius.

We know, as we read even the scattered fragments of his memory that remain to us, why the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church. Man, in a soul of this high type, finds himself in possession of the secret which transfigures death into life, shame and suffering into the splendour of a triumph; and such a fact once achieved, the evidence for the reality of the forces which effected it becomes rigorous and unanswerable. The case is proved. Here is no phantom-dream, no trick of fancy; here, rather, is the evident action of powers that have force to transform human nature; causes are at work which can open the gates of heaven with unhesitating, unconquerable security; the actuality of such causes can no longer be denied: the fact stands like a rock on which Churches may be built, to dissipate which no doubt

or lie can avail; mankind is compelled by such a life as that of Ignatius to look this triumphant fact in the face, and to ask what is the force that can account for it; and the answer comes back clear and decisive from the lips of the dying confessor, "It is Christ, no phantom, but Christ Himself, in the power of whose death I too can safely die, in the power of whose resurrection I shall most assuredly rise again."

ST. POLYCARP.

THE name of this father has been already intertwined with the records of St. Ignatius. We know how the two had greeted and parted; we have heard some of the farewell words of the elder, that can never have ceased to ring in the ears of the younger. Who was this bishop, thus distinguished by the anxious love of Ignatius? Did his career run level with this high promise of its beginning?

We have ventured to give the stories of St. Clement and St. Ignatius, as the twin typical representatives of the early Apostolic age in East and West, at such length that we can but briefly sketch the story of St. Polycarp; but we can do this with greater readiness, since any one can read in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1875, or will read soon, we trust, in the form of a completed book, the most interesting and masterly notice of Polycarp, by Professor Lightfoot: it is impossible to do anything more than give a summary of that notice here, in the hope that all who read it will be induced to turn to this authoritative and perfect account.

From the date of St. Irenæus, the history of Chris-

tian doctrine, and order, and development, is known with clearness and certainty; the difficulty lies in passing from Irenæus back to the Apostles. Now, the high interest of St. Polycarp lies just in this, that he bridges the gulf; he himself was the pupil of St. John, and his remembrances of St. John are recorded to us by the hand of his pupil Irenæus. In the reality of his person, then, lies the unanswerable proof of the unbroken continuity of Christianity between its first Apostles and its later Apologists, its familiar historic theologians.

Polycarp was eighty-six years old at the date of his martyrdom, and this took place, it seems almost certain, in 155 or 156; "Eighty and-six-years," he says, "have I been serving Christ, and why should I leave His service now?" He was, therefore, born of a Christian family, probably in 69 or 70 A.D., on the very eve of the destruction of Jerusalem. That destruction, the death-blow of so many lingering and clinging aspirations, changed the centre of Apostolic influence from the Holy City to the coast towns of Asia Minor. There lived on St. John; there, or thereabouts, were St. Andrew and St. Philip; thither came those who were most allied to the earliest Apostolic company, the second John and the elders, to whom Papias of Hierapolis turned for the most authentic traditions of eye-witnesses of the Lord. Under the shadow of such great names, Polycarp, we

believe, grew up; and if St. John lived, as Irenæus reports, to the age of Trajan in 98 A.D., Polycarp would have felt the paramount influence of this Apostle for at least twenty years of his life; he is distinctly recorded to have received an ordination at the hands of Apostles, and certainly he used to describe to the wondering and fascinated pupils of his latter days his own familiar intercourse with "John and the rest who had seen the Lord."

We have already found him Bishop of Smyrna, by the year 115 A.D., at latest, when Ignatius was passing to Rome; we heard him then addressed as the younger man, sitting at the feet of the great Confessor, spoken to with fatherly authority, urged, advised, warned, as if he still required something of the compelling force of a chief to brace his activity. Let us hear what he appeared in his beautiful and royal old age, himself now "the father of the Christians," crowned with holy and solemn reverence. The account comes from St. Irenæus, who is striving to recal, by the tender power of these old memories, his former fellow-pupil Florinus, now fast becoming a great heretical teacher, to his first love, to his early faith. "These opinions, Florinus, that I may speak without harshness, are not of sound judgment; these opinions are not in harmony with the Church, but involve those adopting them in the greatest impiety; these opinions even the heretics outside the pale of

the Church have never ventured to broach; these opinions the elders before us, who also were disciples of the Apostles, did not hand down to thee. For I saw thee, when I was still a boy, in Lower Asia, in company with Polycarp, while thou wast faring prosperously in the royal court, and endeavouring to stand well with him. For I distinctly remember the incidents of that time better than events of recent occurrence; for the lessons received in childhood, growing with the growth of the soul, become identified with it; so that I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings-out and his comings-in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures. To these (discourses) I used to listen at the time with attention, by God's mercy which was bestowed upon me, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart; and, by the grace of God, I constantly meditate upon them faithfully. And I can testify, in the sight of God, that, if the blessed and

Apostolic elder had heard anything of this kind, he would have cried out, and stopped his ears, and said after his wont, 'O good God, for what times hast Thou kept me, that I should endure such things?' and would even have fled from the place where he was sitting or standing, when he heard such words. And, indeed, this can be shown from his letters which he wrote either to the neighbouring Churches, for their confirmation, or to certain of the brethren, for their warning and exhortation."

Such is one of the most vivid and living passages in all the early Christian writings, startling us with the universality which is given to it by the naturalness of the human instincts, which appear there in all the freshness and force with which we feel them alive in our own hearts to-day. We all know the immortality of youth's fixed impressions, of its intense and clinging wonder at old age, at ancient memories; we all know what it would mean to us if this wonder had lain round one whose memory carried him back to the sight and presence and voice of the Beloved Apostle; and this impression of Polycarp, as of one whose greatness lay in his sacred remembrances of the mighty dead, is peculiarly essential to his character. He left no original doctrine behind him, nor did any original work that was preserved; every memorial of him presents him to us as a most pure and holy representative of greater men, a witness, by the power

of his attractive spirituality, to the stability and permanence of the creative forces, which Christ's Apostles had set in motion. Thus, in the only other famous incident of his old age, which Irenæus relates at length, it is still as the preserver of the former customs and doctrines that he is signalized. He came to Rome to plead with Pope Anicetus for the Asiatic mode of observing the actual *day* of the Jewish Passover as the day of the Passion, without regard to the day of the week, as was done in the West. The great bishops failed to agree, but, in token of continued communion and friendship, Anicetus allowed Polycarp to celebrate in his place before they parted.

So, too, when Irenæus wishes to enforce the unity of the Christian tradition, and its anxiety for consistent doctrine, he finds his firmest support in the memory of Polycarp. "This undoubted and uncorrupt tradition was preserved," he argues, "by Polycarp also, who not only was taught by Apostles, and lived in familiar intercourse with many that had seen Christ, but also received his appointment in Asia from the Apostles, as bishop in the Church of Smyrna, whom we, too, have seen in our youth, for he survived long, and departed this life at a very great age, by a glorious and most notable martyrdom, having ever taught these very things, which he had learnt from the Apostles, which the Church hands down, and which alone are true. To these testimony

is borne by all the Churches in Asia, and by the successors of Polycarp up to the present time, who was a much more trustworthy and safer witness of the truth than Valentinus and Marcion, and all such wrong-minded men. He also, when on a visit to Rome in the days of Anicetus, converted many to the Church of God, from following the aforenamed heretics, by preaching that he had received from the Apostles this doctrine, and this only, which was handed down by the Church as the truth. And there are those who have heard him tell how John, the disciple of the Lord, when he went to take a bath in Ephesus, and saw Cerinthus within, rushed away from the room without bathing, with the words, 'Let us flee, lest the room should indeed fall in, for Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth is within.' Yea, and Polycarp himself also on one occasion, when Marcion confronted him and said, 'Dost thou recognise me?' answered, 'I recognise the first-born of Satan.' Such care did the Apostles and their disciples take, not to hold any communication, even by word, with any of those who falsify the truth, as Paul also said, 'A man that is a heretic after a first and second admonition, avoid; knowing that such an one is perverted and sinneth, being self-condemned.'"

It is extremely interesting to notice, that in the only writing left to us by Polycarp, the same characteristic, which we have seen in his public appear-

ances, shows itself distinctly; he is still the witness, the representative of old truth rather than the originator of new; his writing is peculiar for its crowd of quotations from what are now the canonical books of the New Testament; he seems to live in and by them; his thoughts flow out in their language; they are his guides, and his teachers, and his familiar friends; in the few pages that form his Epistle he makes between thirty and forty references to the New Testament, with a range that stretches from the Gospels themselves to the first Epistle of St. Peter; and these quotations, as Professor Lightfoot has shown, demonstrate the unity of the Church at that period, by showing that the historic and devoted pupil of St. John and of those who had seen the Lord, found full and constant expression for himself in the writings of St. Paul; it is St. Paul whom he mentions by name with awe and humility, St. Paul to whose example and teaching he appeals, St. Paul, whose Epistles he uses with natural and spontaneous ease.

This writing of his consists of an Epistle to the Church of Philippi, written after a request from that Church that he would send them a copy of the letter of Ignatius to him; he writes back, enclosing a copy, together with copies of other of Ignatius's writings which he had in his possession, and takes the opportunity to ask for quick news of the death of Ignatius, whom he believes to have already suffered, but the

details of whose martyrdom had not yet passed through Macedonia to Smyrna.

The genuineness of the letter is witnessed to, primarily, by the direct assertion of Polycarp's pupil, Irenæus. "There is an epistle of Polycarp addressed to the Philippians which is most adequate, and from which both his manner of life and his preaching of the truth may be learnt by those who desire to learn and are anxious for their own salvation."

The appeal to this letter here is most serious; it is made in connection with St. Irenæus's vivid memories of his old master, and for the decisive purpose of bringing forward solid and reliable testimonies of Apostolic truth.

The internal language seems to correspond with this date. The quotations are chiefly made anonymously, as if the canon were not yet formal. The dogmatic statements are still unsuspicious and free. Of later controversies it makes no sign. On the hypothesis of a fabrication, it would belong to the fabricator of the great Ignatian epistle, being written, as is supposed, to recommend those fictions on the authority of a great name. Yet, oddly enough, the epistle is remarkable for omitting all mention of that episcopal system which, on this supposition, it would be manufactured to uphold. He urges obedience to the presbyters and deacons, yet even still without a mention of a bishop.

Nor, again, does he make use of any of the familiar formulæ of style that appear in the Ignatian epistles. His epistle, too, shows but little independence of mind; the Ignatian, on the contrary, startle with originality.

These arguments, brought forward with remarkable force by Professor Lightfoot, seem to me so strong, that I think I may omit the discussion of the minor objections to this conclusion of the letter's genuineness; the case is peculiarly strong: and I will pass at once to the letter itself.

It is addressed to the Philippians "by Polycarp, and the Presbyters with him;" it prays for them mercy and peace from the Omnipotent God, and Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour; he thanks them for their model of perfect love, in giving hospitable reception to those who were bound in worthy chains, the jewels of the elect; he rejoices that the root of their faith stands sure, their faith in Him who endured the shame of death for their sins, to whom they look and believe, and rejoice with joy unutterable, knowing that "by faith we are saved," not "of works," but by the will of God, through Christ Jesus.

Let them gird up their loins, and leave all vain and empty disputing, and believe in Him who raised their Lord from the dead; for He will also raise up in Him those who do His will, and love what He loved, and

keep away from all wrong, "not giving back evil for evil," remembering that the Lord said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," and "Blessed are the poor," and "Blessed are the persecuted."

He does not presume to speak in the place of the blessed and glorious Paul, who himself showed to the Philippians the word of truth: let them mould themselves by the Epistles, and so be built up into faith, which is the mother of us all, while hope follows close, and love leads the way. He goes on to warn against covetousness, the root of all evil, reminding them that they brought nothing into the world, and can carry nothing away; he urges justice as the true armour of manliness: the women, too, they must live in faith and sanctity, loving their husbands in all verity, loving all men equally in all continence, bringing up children in the fear of God; the widows must keep clear from all slander, evil-speaking, knowing that they are the altar of God, of God who sees into all things, whom nothing escapes, not even the secret things of the heart.

The deacons are to be blameless, of a single mind, pitiful, walking in the ways of the Lord, who was the servant of all; the young men are to bridle themselves from all evil; for indeed it is fair and noble to cut oneself off from all worldly desire, so that they must keep away from all lust and effeminacy, submitting themselves to presbyter and deacon, as to God and Christ.

This is the passage where no mention is made of the bishop, we know not why; for we are past the period in which the episcopal position is observed; but it is most noticeable that Polycarp uses the strong parallel between the Church's orders and the relation of the Father to the Son, which is the one real argument which lifts the system of the Church clear above all the pleadings of mere expediency, and endues it with the character of a sacramental institution. Polycarp addresses himself next to the presbyters themselves; they are to be full of kindness and charity, caring for widows, orphans, and poor; to keep off all wrath and unjust judgment; not to be credulous of accusations, nor sharp in judging, knowing that we are all debtors in sin. We must forgive, as we pray to be forgiven, living under the eyes of a just and forgiving God. They must beware of offences and of false brethren; and it is in this matter of false teaching that Polycarp shows himself most forcible and idiomatic. "Every one," he quotes, "who does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is antichrist, and every one who does not confess the witness of the cross is of the devil; and every one who twists the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and denies the resurrection and the judgment to come, he is the first-born of Satan."

Let them turn back, he urges, to the old traditional word of truth, keeping sober in prayer, instant in

fasting. So he continues his preaching and earnest appeals for godliness, exhibiting, at its highest and purest, the intense efforts made by the early Church to pursue after righteousness, holiness, and the perfect life of piety. Still he goes on, again and again, pressing upon them, with crowded texts from St. John, St. Peter, and St. Paul, the beauty of patient self-discipline, bidding them follow after the saints, who loved not the present world, but only Him who died for us.

The last five chapters exist only in the Latin Version, but the Greek of one of them is recovered from a quotation of it by Eusebius. In these chapters he grieves for Valens, a presbyter, who has forgotten his appointed place. Again he urges abstinence from all form of sin, especially from avarice, warning them, apparently, by the example of Valens.

He prays that God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Eternal High Priest, may build them up in faith and truth, and in all kindliness, in patience, long-suffering, chastity, giving them a lot among the Saints.

He speaks, in the Greek fragment, of the mission intrusted to them and him by Ignatius, to the Syrian Church: of the letters from Ignatius to him and others which he has sent them, as they asked him to do: he asks them to give him definite news of Ignatius, and of his companions.

He commends to them Crescens, by whom he sends his letter; he bids them good speed in Christ Jesus. Amen.

A good, holy man, full of moral earnestness, and of steady devotion; persuasive by the force of his spiritual holiness; a man to be beloved, and who would grow up into a calm and lovely old age, wearing his grey hairs as a crown of reverence, and sweet graciousness; such is St. Polycarp, as we feel his spirit alive in these old words that he once wrote. Let us see how he can die.

The account of his martyrdom takes the form of a letter from the Church of Smyrna to the Church of Philomelium, an obscure place, probably in Phrygia, "and also to the other neighbouring dioceses of the Holy Catholic Church." There seems to be every reason to suppose it genuine; it is itself natural and life-like, and betrays no anachronisms.

"We have written down for you, brethren," they begin, "the martyrdoms that have occurred, and especially that of Polycarp, who, by setting the seal of his death, as it were, closed the persecution."

They claim that Christ's example has been well followed, both in willingness to die, and also in the true love which is ready to die for others. For the martyrs bore unflinchingly the tearings of scourges until the inner mechanism of vein and artery was all laid bare; yet, though bystanders were weeping, they

themselves gave no groan, nor cry, proving that they were already gone to the far-country, or rather, that the Lord was even now standing near and among them. So they redeemed themselves by a short hour of agony from eternal pain; the very fire of their fierce torturers felt cold to them, as they thought of the unquenchable flames, or of the good things laid up for them, such as ear hath not heard, nor eye seen, nor heart conceived. So, too, they who were condemned to the wild beasts, endured bravely all the tortures with which they were carded or buffeted; for many a device did the devil plan against them, yet, thanks be to God, he never prevailed. For the noble Germanicus, when the deputy began to plead with him, and to pity his youth, dragged the wild beast by force upon himself, longing to be free from this unjust world; and then it was that all the mob grew excited at the Christian's courage, and shouted, "Away with the Atheists! let Polycarp be fetched!"

One man there was who shrank and failed,—Conitus, a Phrygian. He had eagerly volunteered for martyrdom; but the deputy enticed him with many luring words, and he was persuaded to take the oath and to offer the sacrifice. "Brethren, let us take care not to encourage those who offer themselves for trial; the Gospel does not so teach."

But to return to Polycarp. He was not disturbed at the report, and wished to stay in the city, at home;

but, at the entreaties of his friends, he withdrew to a little field-house, not far off the town, and stopped there, with a few companions, praying continuously for all men, and for the Churches about the world, as was his habit. And as he prayed, he saw a vision, three days before his capture: his pillow seemed to him all burning in flames, and he turned to those with him and said, "I must be burnt alive." And to escape the pressure of his pursuers he moved to another field-house; and they, the pursuers, came just after to his first hiding-place, and caught two boys, one of whom, under torture, confessed where the hiding-place was. So he was caught through the treachery of his own household. The officer of the peace, whose ill-omened name was Herod, was in a great hurry to carry him off to the ground of the public games. If he be a Herod, may Polycarp win, as Christ won! may his betrayer receive the wages of Judas!

It was the hour of the evening meal, and the day was a day of preparation, when this new Herod came with horses and arms, as if against a thief. The little boy led them, and so they found the house, where Polycarp lay in an upper chamber. He could have fled again, but he refused, saying, "No! the will of God be done!" and he came downstairs to them: and they wondered, when they saw him, that they had spent so much effort, all to capture so old a man.

He invited them to eat and drink what they wanted, and begged them to allow him one hour for prayer, and they allowed him. And so he stood there and prayed, full of the great grace of God, until two hours were passed, and before they could bear to silence him; and now some began to repent a little that they had come after so holy a man.

When he had stopped praying for all men whom he had ever known, they led him, on an ass, into the city, and the day was a great feast-day. Herod met him, and made him mount on his chariot, hoping to persuade him by kindness, and pressing him with entreaties;—saying what a little thing it was that was asked of him: just to cry "Cæsar!" twice, and to sacrifice, and then he would be safe. And he at first made no answer, but at last he said: "I am never going to do what you are advising." Then they got angry, and pushed him down from the chariot so roughly that he bruised his ankle. So he was brought to the place of the Games, and there the noise was so tremendous that no one could be heard speaking. But Polycarp, just as he entered the place, heard a voice from heaven: "Be strong and brave, Polycarp!" No one saw any speaker, though some of those with him heard the words. After a great deal of shouting, the deputy asked him if he was Polycarp; and, on his confessing it, said that he ought to have more respect for his grey hairs, and many other things like

that, as they have a way of doing, and at last he said, "Now, swear by the fortune of Cæsar, and cry, 'Away with the Atheists!'"

Polycarp looked round with serious eye upon all that mad and cruel mob, and then, waving his hand towards them, with a sigh and a look up towards heaven, he said, "Yes; Away with the Atheists!"

Then the deputy pressed him harder to take the oath and to revile Christ, and then he would set him free. But Polycarp answered: "Eighty-and-six years I have been in the service of Christ, and He has never done me wrong; how, then, can I blaspheme Him now,—my King and my Saviour?"

Again the deputy urged him to take the oath, until Polycarp said: "If you fancy that I shall ever swear, or pretend to be ignorant who I am, pray know at once, and without a doubt, that I am a Christian."

The deputy begged him to satisfy the demands of the people; but he declined even to explain himself to them, as he would have done to the constituted authorities, if they had allowed him.

Then said the deputy: "I have wild beasts ready; you had better repent." But he declined to repent of the better course in order to be converted to the worse.

The deputy added the threat of fire; but Polycarp answered: "You threaten me with a fire that burns

for a moment and soon is quenched; you know not of the flame that is kept waiting for the impious, the flame of judgment and of eternal punishment. Why do you delay? Do with me what you will."

So the deputy sent his herald to proclaim to the people, "Polycarp confesses himself a Christian," and the crowd of heathen and of Jews, living in Smyrna, shouted in answer, "This is the man, the impious teacher, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods!" So they cried, and demanded of Philip, the priest of the Games, that he should let the lions loose upon Polycarp: but Philip declared that he had no authority for it, now that the time of the Games was past. Then they took to yelling, with one voice, that Polycarp should be burnt alive; thus his own prophecy was fulfilled. For, quicker than words can tell it, the crowd had begun sweeping together wood and faggots out of the workshops and baths, the Jews, as usual, eagerly helping. When the pyre was ready, he himself stript off his clothes, and loosed his girdle, and was going to take off his sandals: but this he could not do, for a crowd of believers pressed round him, eager, each one of them, to touch his body, fair as he was, even before the glory of his martyrdom, with the sweet grace of a virtuous life. Quickly they heaped round him the materials for the fire: and, when they came to nail him up to the stake, "Leave me as I am," he said. "He who gives

me grace to bear the flame, will enable me to stand unshaken without the help of your nails." So they did not fix him with nails, but only bound him to the stake: and he, with his hands bound behind him, like a noble ram, the chief of the flock, offered, as an offering acceptable unto God, looked up to heaven and said, "O Lord God Almighty, Father of Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have known Thee, O God of angels and of powers, and of all creation, and of the generation of the just, who are alive in Thy sight, I bless Thee, for that Thou hast thought me worthy of this day, and of this hour, that I should be suffered to have my part in the number of Thy martyrs, to drink of the cup of Thy Christ, for the resurrection into life eternal, a resurrection of both body and soul in the immortality of the Holy Spirit; in which body and soul may I be accepted before Thee this day for a rich and acceptable sacrifice, even as Thou hast fore-ordained, and foretold, and fulfilled, O most true and unfailing God. For this, and on behalf of all, I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, with Thy eternal and heavenly and beloved Son, Christ Jesus, with Whom, to Thee, and to the Holy Ghost, be glory, both now, and for ever. Amen."

As he gave the Amen, and closed his Eucharistic prayer, the men lighted the fire; and, as the huge flames shot up a wonder happened, which must be

recorded for ever; for the fire took the shape of a hollow, as of a sail bellying in the wind, and enclosed his body in a rounded chamber of flame: and he stood within, as a loaf in an oven, or rather as gold and silver in a refiner's furnace; yea, and we all smelt a sweet odour, as of breathing spices, or of other precious scents. But the crowd got impatient at his body not burning; and they made the executioner go near and thrust his sword into him; and, as he did it, the blood streamed out in such quantities that it quenched the fire, and the people marvelled at the strange difference that there seemed to be between unbelievers and the elect.

The wicked one, who wars against the just, jealous of this blameless life and splendid death, crowned with a crown of a glorious immortality, prevented any relic of the martyr's body from being found, eager as many were to secure them; for he prompted Nicotes, father of Herod, to persuade the Governor not to give up the body for burial, "lest," as he said, "these Christians abandon their crucified hero, and take to worshipping this Polycarp." The Jews, too, pressed this violently, and watched round the pyre to prevent us coming near; as if it were possible for us to worship any other but Christ, who suffered for the salvation of the world! Him, indeed, we worship, as Son of God; but the martyrs we only love, with all honour, as followers of the Lord, because of their

supreme devotion to their Master and King. So his body was entirely burnt: but we were able afterwards to gather together his bones, precious to us above all gold and jewels, and to bury them in fitting places: and there now we hope to meet, when we can, with gladness and joy, to keep, if the Lord permits, our Martyr's Day, for a memorial of those who have fought the great fight, for a holy preparation of those who remain.

So died Polycarp; he, who was always a famous teacher, had become a glorious martyr, and now glorifies God the Father, in the glad triumph of the Apostles and the saints, and blesses our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of souls, the Controller of our bodies, the Shepherd of the Church.

We, of Smyrna, have now answered your frequent request to hear the tale of Polycarp's death.

To God, who is able to bring all to His eternal kingdom through His only Son Jesus Christ, be glory, and honour, and power, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen. Salute all the saints: we here salute you, and especially Evarestus, who writes the letter.

Then follows the date of the martyrdom, with the month, the day, and the hour; it was at the eighth hour of a great Sabbath; the officer who took him was Herod, the priest in office was Philip, the deputy was Statius Quadratus; and, above them all, Jesus

Christ was reigning for ever and ever, on His eternal throne, from generation to generation.

Below this, the various copyists who have passed down the letter record their names, beginning with one Gaius, who was a friend of St. Irenæus, the pupil of Polycarp: ending with Pionius, who prays that, in return for his good work of gathering together the story of Polycarp, he too may be gathered by Christ Jesus, together with His elect, into His heavenly kingdom for ever. What better can we do than join his prayer, that we, too, who have reverently read, in these last days, the record of this old tragedy, may thank and bless God for this most holy and most lovely work of His Spirit, by which He long ago perfected, through suffering, the sweet old age of blessed Polycarp, and of which He has preserved for ever a memorial in His Church, that all those who read it may brace themselves for lives as noble, and for deaths as true, and may, with uplifted and confident hearts, pass as their fathers have passed triumphantly before them, through terror and shame and agony, into the light and glory of immortality; through Christ, who strengtheneth now, as He strengthened them, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever?

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS AND THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS.

WE have now summed up the chief characteristics of the age that followed the Apostles, and have seen those characteristics lit up by the light of its pre-eminently heroic examples. These three personalities, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, stand out fairly sharp and firm in outline: we feel as if we had been close to some of their thoughts, and knew them now as familiar friends in whom the faith of the first century lives for us with something of the reality and substance with which it meets us in the Christianity of to-day.

Others there are who move about in those early years, whom we can still single out by name from the unknown crowd, and with whom we can still converse. Hegesippus and Papias, the two patient recorders of so many early memorials of the Church's faith and practice, are felt continually in her history, they have a definite place and influence, they can still be appealed to for corroboration; but only fragments of their writings remain, imbedded in Eusebius and elsewhere, and of the actual character and track of their

lives we know too little for them to be lifted into illustrative samples of Apostolic Christianity.

Two famous books yet remain to which we must refer, the Epistle (called) of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas: these, it is well known, were so highly thought of by the Church that they were continually bound up with the Canonical Scriptures, and were considered good for public reading in church. Only when the Church had definitely to turn her mind to a decision on the constitution of her Canon, did she clearly determine their exclusion. They are, therefore, of the highest importance to us: but we are concerned with lives more than with writings, and of the two authors of these books one is unknown, the other's history is brief and obscure. The books themselves, moreover, can easily be procured in an English translation, and can be read in a few hours. We will, therefore, not attempt to make many extracts from them, but will lightly touch on their peculiarities, so that they may not be altogether absent from our picture. The Epistle of Barnabas, written, probably, by some Barnabas who was afterwards assumed to be the Barnabas of the Bible, at a date earlier than 130 A.D., is a work of the Alexandrian schools, following the type of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is crowded with strange imagery, and subtle, if not strained, allegory. It is written by one who is persuaded that he has had some success in the higher understanding of

the law, and is anxious to expound his interpretations to those who would not only make a beginning of faith, but also go "nearer to the altar," so that, as their faith, so their *knowledge*, too, might be perfect.

He writes to his "sons and daughters," to whom he "wishes all happiness, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ who loved us:" yet he writes not as a teacher, but as "one of them," whom "he loves as his own soul," and "before whom he will endeavour to lay a few things" by which they may "become the more joyful." He insists on the necessity, in these evil days, when the adversary possesses the powers of the world, of inquiring diligently into the full meaning of God's design, of studying His judgments, of searching His secrets. He portrays the failure of ignorant and careless understanding in the fate of the old covenant. Consider, beware, inquire, meditate, study—these are his watchwords: "take heed," he cries, "lest, by sitting still, we that are called fall asleep in our sins." He seems to be re-echoing something of the awful warning against a fall after grace in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Although ye have seen so great signs and wonders done among the Jews, yet notwithstanding this the Lord hath forsaken them; beware lest it happen to us." Against all this peril, he has one great counsel: to use understanding, to seek knowledge—knowledge, deeper knowledge of hidden things—this is what is the privi-

lege of Christians, this is the true security. "Blessed be our Lord," he says, "who has given us wisdom, and a heart to understand His secrets." This knowledge requires a discipline of temper; its assistants are fear and patience; its fellow-combatants are long-suffering and continence. We see from these names that the author is no believer in the easy simplicity of the Gospel mysteries: their meaning is to be mastered, not at first sight or by anybody, but only by long and close and severe spiritual training, which would reach the joy of understanding only through painstaking labour, and anxious subdual of the unruly elements that disturb the eye of purity. This flavour of mystic abstraction penetrates the tone of the whole book. The clearer knowledge, of which the author speaks, and to which he would lead on his sons and daughters, is identified by him with an understanding of the spiritual significance that lay hidden from the Jews behind the old law. "The people which God has purchased to His beloved Son, are to believe in simplicity;" they are to know things "as they really are;" and "therefore he has shown these things to all of us, that we should not run as proselytes to the Jewish law." Some things had been written in the law for the Jews, but some had been written in it for the Christians who should come after; and it is to bring forward, out of the entanglement of the partial condescensions by God, and of the bewildered

misunderstandings by the Jews, that deeper Gospel which the condescensions obscured, and the misunderstandings confused and degraded—it is *this* that the perfected Christian intelligence must gird itself to undertake. The author sets to this work at once: he begins with the great sacrificial system; the Jews have erred in supposing that God has any occasion for man's sacrifices and burnt-offerings; all through the old dispensation He was making manifest His true design, which we Christians now at last apprehend; He had no need of vain oblation, of the fat of fed beasts; His real sacrifice is the broken and contrite heart. So, too, with the past.

What reality, then, had the old covenant? The answer is not always clear. Sometimes all its reality is made to be in its allegorical character; it is, throughout, *typical* of what was to be; and this typical character is regarded as entirely super-imposed upon it, without any vital significance for the actual surroundings of its earlier day. It is, from this point of view, nothing but a type of Christ, only intelligible in the light of Christ's doings. This explanation is pressed into the veriest details; thus, the scapegoat, a type throughout of the sin-bearing Saviour, is crowned with scarlet wool, because, at the great day, the Jews shall see Christ with a scarlet garment about His body, and shall say, "Is not this He whom we crucified? Certainly this is He who then said that

He was the Son of God." So the two goats represent the mocked and the glorified Christ, that the Jews, when they shall see Him whom they pierced coming in the clouds, "may be amazed at the likeness of the goats." And, again, the scarlet wool was to be put upon a thorn-bush, so that they who would remove that wool might have to undergo many difficulties, because they that will see Christ and come to His kingdom must through many afflictions attain to it. These things and many more are made evident to us who know Christ, but "to the Jews are obscure, because they hearkened not to the voice of the Lord." How they ought to have hearkened is not explained; probably they ought to have regarded all these appointed rites as symbols of something coming which as yet they knew not; certainly, the author would argue, they had not learned their real lesson, since they refused to believe on Him who alone gave their ceremonial its intelligibility. Even circumcision, the typical pledge of the old covenant to Abraham, is refused by Barnabas any real value in itself as a sign of promise. How is it a sign, he asks, of peculiar privilege, when Syrian and Arabian and other idolatrous priests are all circumcised? yea, even the Egyptians themselves! Surely the promise to which Abraham looked forward was not pledged to him by the act of circumcision, but by the "mystery of the three letters"—the mystery contained

in that number of souls whom the forefather circumcised, three hundred and eighteen, the numeral letters of which number, IH and T, point forward to Jesus and to the Cross of Grace.

Another mode of treating the Old Testament is to discover in it a type, not so much of Christ's actual life, as of the moral law. Thus circumcision is said to represent the obedience of the heart. The most curious instance of this treatment is in the case of the forbidden meats. Barnabas is anxious to insist that, according to the expressions used in Deuteronomy in ordaining the meats, it is not God who commands that they should not be eaten. It is Moses who gives the statutes, and Moses spoke it in the Spirit. Moses said, ye shall not eat of the swine, in order to forbid them to join themselves to those who live in pleasure and forget God; nor of the eagle or the hawk, in order that men should not company with robbers and ravishers; nor of the lamprey, nor the cuttle-fish, which swim not as other fish, but tumble and wallow in the mire at the bottom of the deep, and are, therefore, like men sunk in brutish vices. This was the meaning of Moses, and therefore David took aright his sense when he said in like manner: "'Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly,' as the fishes before-mentioned in the bottom of the deep in darkness,—'Nor stood in the way of sinners,' as they who

seem to fear the Lord but yet sin, as the sow,—'And hath not sat in the seat of the scornful,' as those birds that sit and watch that they may devour." "Here," says Barnabas, "you have the law concerning meats perfectly set forth, and according to the true knowledge of it." The Jews, he considers, "according to the desires of the flesh, understood Moses as if he had only meant it of meats."

It is good to remember, as we smile at this method of interpretation, that its absurdity springs from the dread of attributing to God any visible and tangible expression of His Will, a dread still active enough to make us often as unreal and fanciful as Barnabas in our modes of dealing with the positive facts of revelation; and to make us still fight shy of discovering any actual manifestation of God in the things of daily life, in the ways and rules that govern nature, and society, and the progress of nations. Barnabas does not exactly explain the relation of Judaism to God, but he sees a picture of the unreality of divine authority for the old covenant, and of its quick loss of its original motive, in the breaking of the five Tables of the Law which were written by the hand of God. "They have for ever lost," he writes, "that which Moses received. For Moses received the covenant from the Lord, even the two tables of stone, written by the hand of God. But having turned themselves to idols they lost it:

as the Lord also said to Moses, 'Go down quickly, for My people have corrupted themselves and, have turned aside from the ways which I commanded them.' And Moses cast the two tables out of his hands: and their covenant was broken: that the love of Jesus might be sealed in your hearts, unto the hope of His faith."

The Jewish prophets are spoken of as receiving from Christ the gift of prophecy: they are the true forerunners of the promise, and spake before concerning Him. And Christ came and suffered to fulfil this promise. "He, that He might abolish death, and make known the resurrection of the dead, was content to appear in the flesh, although He was the Lord of the whole earth, to whom God said, before the beginning of the world, let us make man after our own image: that He might make good the promise before given unto the fathers, and prepare to Himself a new people: and by teaching the people of Israel, and doing many wonders among them, He might show the exceeding great love which He bare them." But they filled up the measure of their iniquities by slaying Him, as they had slain His. Therefore, they are not the true children of the covenant, but, as Jacob crossed his hands over the heads of the children of Joseph, and blessed the younger, Ephraim, and not the elder, Manasseh, so the blessing pronounced in the first covenant came not to the elder,

the first-born, but to the younger, the Gentile. God verily, indeed, gave the covenant to the Jews, "but they were not worthy to receive it by reason of their sins. Moses received it, but the people were not worthy. So Christ was made manifest that they should fill up the measure of their sins, and that we being made heirs by Him should receive the covenant of the Lord Jesus."

From this point of view Barnabas has naturally, as we have already seen, no real significance to give to the Mosaic Law, as it stood, in all its minute details of "carnal" rites and customs, written in the pages of the Pentateuch.

To all the ordinances he gives a spiritual interpretation, but in such a way as to oppose, not to reconcile, the ordinance and its interpretation. His matter therefore is abstract and unreal; he is not sensitive to the reality and value of that rigorous discipline of historical facts, which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews understood and justified. He makes the actual Judaic history one long blunder instead of one long growth; he makes his Christianity, as it advances higher, lose its primary significances, instead of enlarging and transfiguring them. Thus we miss in him the robust solidity of the broader doctrine of St. Paul; he has not steadied himself on the rock of the Incarnation, by which spirit and flesh are bonded and sanctified,

not opposed. Still with all this he has some beautiful passages in which he portrays his subjective, his inward religion of the Spirit, as for instance, when speaking of the temple of God which is within us not without, he asks, "How does God dwell in us? By the word of His faith, the calling of His promise, the wisdom of His righteous judgments, the commands of His doctrine; He Himself prophesies within us, He Himself dwelleth within us, and openeth to us who were in bondage of death the gate of our temple, the mouth of wisdom."

The final chapters are full of earnest appeals for righteousness: "Call to thy remembrance, day and night, the future judgment." "Thou shalt confess thy sins and not come to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of light." So, at the end he beseeches them to follow after perfect holiness: "and if," he asks, "there be among you any remembrance of what is good, think of me. I beseech you, I ask it as a favour of you, whilst that you are in this fair vessel of the body, be wanting in none of these things. Farewell, children of love and peace. The Lord of glory and of all grace be with your spirit. Amen."

The Book of Visions seen by Hermas as he walked in the fields round Rome, and known by the name of "The Shepherd," who is the chief figure seen in the vision, is probably of a later date, being written, as is

recorded in the Muratorian fragment on the Canon, by Hermas, the brother of Pius, bishop of Rome, about 140–150 A.D.: but the record is not quite decisive.

Here we pass into a very different atmosphere. The book is indeed visionary and metaphorical; but the metaphors and the images and the allegories are not now rich, fanciful, exuberant, fantastic, as they often seem to us in the book of Barnabas; rather they are the work of a quiet, pensive, almost homely mind; they are meditative, but it is the meditation of a sober and practical spirit, whose intensity is tempered and controlled by a steady and serious judgment, whose imagination is chastened and subdued, until its handiwork assumes something of the calm strength, the sharp outline, the solemn unwavering persistence of Dante's clear-cut visions.

His vision, too, begins, like the great Italian's, with a lady, a slave-maid at Rome, whom he greets with something of that delicate awe which long afterwards struck Dante dumb at the sight of his love; let us listen to his pure, tender, quiet tones, as he remembers the maid to whom he had once reached out his hand, as she was bathing in Tiber. "When I saw her, I thought with myself, saying, How happy should I be if I had such a wife, both for beauty and manners! This I thought with myself, nor did I think anything more. But not long after, as I was walking and musing on

these thoughts, I began to honour this creature of God, thinking within myself how noble and beautiful she was."

So he walked, and fell asleep: and the Spirit caught him away to a narrow place among rocks, where he fell on his knees, praying to the Lord, and confessing his sins, until the heaven opened, and the lady of his love reproved him for the thoughts of his heart, and left him in sadness; and an ancient lady came to him, in a bright garment, with a book in her hand, and said unto him, "Why art thou sad, Hermas, who wert wont to be patient, and modest, and always cheerful?" And, after he has confessed his sinfulness, she speaks to him of the compassion of God; and she added, "Wilt thou hear me read?" I answered, "Lady, I will." "Hear then," said she, "and opening the book, she read, gloriously, greatly, and wonderfully such things as I could not keep in my memory. For they were terrible words, such as no man could bear. But her last words I committed to remembrance, for they were but few. They were these, 'Behold, the mighty Lord who by His invisible power and with His excellent wisdom made the world, and by His glorious counsel beautified His creature, and with the word of His strength fixed the heaven and founded the earth upon the waters; and by His powerful virtue established His Holy Church, which He hath blessed. Behold, He will remove the heavens, and

the mountains, the hills, and the seas; and all things shall be made plain for His elect; that He may render unto them the promise which he has promised, with much honour and joy; if so be that they shall keep the commandments of God, which they have received with great faith.' And when she had made an end of reading, she rose out of the chair; and behold four young men came, and carried the chair to the east."

So she departed, going away cheerfully; and as she was going, she said unto him, "Hermas, be of good cheer." A little later on, after another vision of the same lady, who handed him a book full of warnings and beseechings, it is revealed to him who the lady is, after this manner.

"Moreover, brethren, it was revealed to me, as I was sleeping, by a very goodly young man, saying unto me, 'What thinkest thou of that ancient lady from whom thou receivedst the book; Who is she?' I answered, 'a sibyl.' 'Thou art mistaken,' said he, 'she is not.' I replied, 'Who is she then, sir?' He answered me, 'It is the Church of God.' And I said unto him, 'Why then does she appear old?' 'She is therefore,' said he, 'an old woman, because she was the first of all the creation, and the world was made for her.' After this I saw a vision at home in my own house, and the ancient lady, whom I had seen before, came to me and asked me, 'Whether I had yet delivered her book to the elders of the Church?'

And I answered, 'that I had not yet.' She replied, 'Thou hast well done, for I have certain words more to tell thee. But when I shall have finished all the words, they shall be clearly understood by the elect. And thou shalt write two books, and send one to Clement and one to Grapte. For Clement shall send it to the foreign cities, because it is permitted to him so to do; but Grapte shall admonish the widows and orphans. But thou shalt read in this city with the elders of the church.'"

Once again, after a long and interesting vision given him, through the same lady, after often fasting and praying, of the age-long building of the great tower of the Lord, he ponders over the appearance vouchsafed to him.

"Now, brethren, in the first vision the last year, she appeared unto me exceeding old, and sitting in a chair. In another vision she had indeed a youthful face, but her flesh and hair were old; but she talked with me standing, and was more cheerful than the first time. In the third vision she was in all respects much younger, and comely to the eye; only she had the hair of an aged person; yet she looked cheerful, and sate upon a seat. I was therefore very sad concerning these things, until I might understand the vision. Wherefore I saw the same ancient lady in a vision of the night saying unto me, 'All prayer needeth humiliation. Fast, therefore, and thou shalt

learn from the Lord that which thou dost ask.' I fasted therefore one day. The same night a young man appeared to me, and said, 'Why dost thou thus often desire revelations in thy prayers? Take heed that by asking many things thou hurt not thy body. Let these revelations suffice thee. Canst thou see more notable revelations than those which thou hast already received?' I answered and said unto him, 'Sir, I only ask this one thing upon the account of the three figures of the ancient lady that appeared to me, that the revelation may be complete.' He answered me, 'you are not without understanding, but your doubts make you so; forasmuch as you have not your heart with the Lord.' I replied, and said, 'But we shall learn these things more carefully from you.' 'Hear then,' says he, 'concerning the figures about which you inquire. And first, in the first vision she appeared to thee in the shape of an ancient lady sitting in a chair, because your old spirit was decayed, and without strength, by reason of your infirmities, and the doubtfulness of your heart. For as they who are old have no hope of renewing themselves, nor expect anything but their departure, so you being weakened through your worldly affairs gave yourself up to sloth, and cast not away your solicitude from yourself upon the Lord: and your sense was confused, and you grew old in your sadness.' 'But, sir, I would know why she sate upon a

chair?' He answered, 'Because every one that is weak sitteth upon a chair by reason of his infirmity, that his weakness may be upheld. Behold, therefore, the figure of the first vision. In the second vision you saw her standing, and having a youthful face, and more cheerful than her former, but her flesh and her hair were ancient. Hear, said he, this parable also. When any one grows old, he despairs of himself by reason of his infirmity and poverty, and expects nothing but the last day of his life. But on a sudden an inheritance is left to him, and he hears of it and rises; and being become cheerful, he puts on new strength. And now he no longer sits down, but stands, and is delivered from his former sorrow; and sits not, but acts manfully. So you, having heard the revelation which God revealed unto you, because God had compassion upon you, and renewed your spirit, both laid aside your infirmities, and strength came to you, and you grew strong in the faith; and God, seeing your strength, rejoiced. For this cause He showed you the building of the tower, and will show other things unto you, if you shall have peace with all your heart among each other. But in the third vision you saw her yet younger, fair and cheerful, and of a serene countenance. For as if some good news comes to him that is sad, he straightway forgets his sadness, and regards nothing else but the good news which he has heard; and for the rest he is

comforted, and his spirit is renewed through the joy which he has received: even so you have been refreshed in your spirit by seeing these good things. And for that you saw her sitting upon a bench, it denotes a strong position; because a bench has four feet, and stands strongly. And even the world itself is upheld by the four elements. They, therefore, that repent perfectly, shall be young; and they that turn from their sins with their whole heart shall be established. And now you have the revelation fully, ask no more to have anything further revealed unto you. But if anything be to be revealed, it shall be made manifest unto you.'"

Such is a sample of the visions of Hermas, described in his first book. In the second, he receives "from this venerable messenger" the sight of a man with a reverent look, in the habit of a shepherd, clothed with a white cloak, with his bag upon his back, and his staff in his hand; under whose guidance he writes down the commands and the similitudes which make up the rest of his work. This Shepherd is "He to whom he is committed, the Angel of Repentance;" he is to abide with Hermas all the remaining days of his life, counselling him continually to "be patient and long-suffering, that the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in him may be pure; to be chaste, and modest, and truthful; to listen to the Angel of Righteousness, who is mild, and modest,

and gentle, and quiet, and who will talk with him of forgiveness, of charity, and of piety; to put away sadness; to endure needful grieving; to show himself humble, to make his repentance firm and pure." This done, he is made worthy to see and hear many things—at the end of which he is committed to the care of the Virgins who are the virtues of God, without whom the commands may not be kept, and he is told to go on manfully in his ministry, to declare to all men the great things of God, and so to find grace.

"Patient, and modest, and cheerful," with a touch of sadness come over him for his sins,—this is the character of Hermas: and, written in this Western spirit, the book has a most wonderful charm for us; it is the first in which we seem to breathe the earnest, pathetic tranquillity, the solemn peace, that entrances us in the Imitation. There is a stillness in the air, as we read, such as dwells in tender times of twilight, or in early dawns before the world is stirring, or in the deep quiet of Perugino's skies. We cannot allow ourselves to quote: we would only beg all to read it; it is full of wisdom, as of beauty, and ought not to lie so wholly outside a Christian's reading, as it does at present.

The tone of the whole is that of the Epistle to St. James, "Stand fast ye that work righteousness." This is its motto. Endurance, patience, steadiness,

in holiness—these it requires above all things; but in enforcing individual piety it does not forget the universal company of the elect: it sees the Church built as a great tower of many stones, and the highest office of each stone is to be true to its fitting place in the building of the tower. That tower is built up in square and white stones, agreeing exactly in their joints; and these stones are the Apostles, and bishops, and doctors, and ministers, who through the mercy of God have governed holily and modestly. This tower embraces those that are already asleep: and is built continuously out of all generations. Seven fair women support the tower: Faith, and manly Abstinence, the daughter of Faith, and then Simplicity, Innocence, Modesty, Discipline, and last of all is Charity. "Whosoever shall hold fast to these, shall have his dwelling in the tower with the saints of God."

In parts of the book there seems to be something of that fretting anxiety which is the token of an undue stress on good works; beautiful as it is, it offers but a partial conception, which requires to be kept fresh and pure by ever-renewed inspirations of the spirit of St. Paul; but, braced and freshened by these, it is full of true and searching instruction in the ways of Christ: and it, too, can shake off for itself any anxious mistrust of forgiveness and free grace, as when it urges, "Put away sadness from thyself, the sadness of doubt and of repentance: for the Spirit of the Lord

endureth no such sadness. Wherefore, clothe thyself with cheerfulness, which has always favour with the Lord: for the sad man does always wickedly."

It has been impossible, in a work of this compass, to discuss the difference of theological tone in these Apostolical Fathers. This would be a long business, and a laborious one. We must confine ourselves to the hope that the amount of quotations given from them in the book will be enough to suggest the various expressions which Christ's truth received from them. But, interesting and instructive as these differences are, there is one fact not less instructive and of far fuller interest, which will have shown itself clearly enough in the course of those quotations; and that is, the marvellous and overwhelming unity of their common hold on the faith. Undoubting, unfailing, unhesitating, they live and move within the compass and the dominion of an acknowledged, œcumenical truth. The historic work of Christ the Lord, Master, Saviour of their souls, the actual love of God displayed in that work of redemption, the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, realized in the whole body of the Church, —all this is clear from every confusion, and haze, and scruple; it is not being developed; it is already accepted, already a living tradition, already old, already the ground of dogmatic appeal, in east and west, in Ephesus and Rome, in Syria and Egypt.

These Apostolic Fathers are rather heroic than theological; their cause is given to them, not made by them: they die as followers of Apostles, as servants of Christ, not as discoverers of new doctrines, or founders of fresh schools. They are curiously conservative. They assert; they defend; they insist; but they do not appear to develop: if there be development, it is only in details of organization; and still, even here, the appeal is all backwards, not forwards: they preserve principles, they do not profess to originate. Christian doctrine, as it came from the lips of Apostles, steadies itself for a generation, steadies itself on the firm ground of the mighty heart-instincts, winning to itself all the steady passion of loyalty, of endurance, of noble heroism, before it launches out into the new and uncertain domain of a wider speculation. The faith must grip, first, the souls of men, it must make its home sure and solid, it must weld together a body for itself, out of the weltering chaos of human life, it must throw its foundations deep and strong, it must knit into itself all the wealth, and vigour, and undying, invincible courage, that live in the hearts of men. So it is that, while these fathers advance but little on the doctrine of the Apostles, they spend such wonderful energy on the *moral* issues of that doctrine. All through the books that we have summarised, it is surely most striking to notice the unceasing, untiring fervour after holiness of life.

They may not have seen all the many intellectual applications of their cardinal truth, but, most certainly, they were alive to its moral, its spiritual application. What God's great act in Christ signified for our spirits, how it necessarily flowed out into moral effects within us—this is what we everywhere meet in their writings, this is what they thoroughly understand, this is what they burn to make sure. They urge on the believer the result of his faith in a new life of holiness, with a vigour, a force, a subtlety that leaves nothing to be desired; they seem to have scanned the heights and depths of this spiritual life: as we read, we do not seem as if we had at all advanced in moral appreciation of our creed's significance. It is wonderful, — the force of this moral enthusiasm for righteousness, the completeness and solidity with which they expounded its fulfilment in Christ through the Spirit upon our souls and bodies. This united recognition of the full reality of Christ's work in regeneration, is the strongest testimony to the actual and solid unity of the doctrine from which it is all made to flow: the spiritual life, which they all interpret, is one and the same in them all, throughout all its sources, and details, and manifestations, and issues: and again, it was this, their united recognition of the one Righteousness, which it was their peculiar office to hand down to their children, assured and secured by the seal of their confident confessions, of their

glad and glorious martyrdoms. A new type of life, a new race of men, were, henceforth, undoubted and permanent facts upon the earth; the victory is certain, the higher law, once in work, must prevail, the offer of Christ to renew mankind has been accepted, and tested, and proved. What matter to the Church now, that the world's powers stood still in array against her? She had endured the worst, and had prevailed, had known herself more than conqueror; from henceforth, though storms might beat, and foes rage furiously, she is at peace and without anxiety, with the whisper ever alive within her, "My heart is established, and will not shrink, until I see my desire upon mine enemies."

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